

36 Peacemaker Units of the Cold War: Combat Aircraft at the Cutting Edge



B-36 'Peacemaker' Units of the Cold War (Combat Aircraft) by Peter E. Davies

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

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Screen Reader : Supported
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The Cold War, a period of intense geopolitical tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union, marked a time of unprecedented technological advancements, particularly in the realm of aviation. At the forefront of this aerial arms race were 36 elite Peacemaker units, equipped with cutting-edge combat aircraft and entrusted with the critical mission of nuclear deterrence. This comprehensive book delves into the fascinating history of these units, shedding light on their aircraft, strategies, and the pivotal role they played in shaping the course of the Cold War.

The Aircraft

The Peacemaker units were equipped with a diverse array of aircraft, each meticulously designed for specific roles in nuclear warfare. Among them were:

- **B-52 Stratofortress:** A massive, long-range bomber capable of carrying nuclear payloads across vast distances.
- **B-47 Stratojet:** A swept-wing bomber renowned for its high speed and altitude capabilities.
- **F-105 Thunderchief:** A supersonic fighter-bomber designed to penetrate enemy airspace and deliver nuclear weapons.
- **KC-135 Stratotanker:** A refueling tanker aircraft essential for extending the range of bombers.

The Units

The 36 Peacemaker units were strategically located across the United States, Europe, and Asia, forming a formidable network of nuclear deterrence. Each unit had its own unique history, traditions, and aircraft, reflecting the diverse nature of the Cold War era.

- **5th Bombardment Wing (Heavy):** Based at Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota, the 5th Bomb Wing was equipped with B-52 Stratofortresses and played a crucial role in nuclear deterrence during the Cuban Missile Crisis.
- **42nd Bombardment Wing (Heavy):** Known as the "Mighty Eighth," the 42nd Bomb Wing was based at Loring Air Force Base in Maine and operated B-52 Stratofortresses.
- **303rd Bombardment Wing (Heavy):** Based at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Arizona, the 303rd Bomb Wing flew B-47 Stratojets and participated in numerous training missions and nuclear exercises.
- **380th Bombardment Wing (Heavy):** Located at Plattsburgh Air Force Base in New York, the 380th Bomb Wing operated B-52 Stratofortresses and was one of the first units to receive the newly developed SRAM (Short-Range Attack Missile).

The Strategies

The Peacemaker units employed a range of strategies to maintain nuclear deterrence. These included:

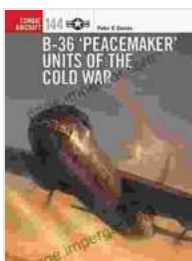
- **Continuous Airborne Alert (CAA):** Bombers were kept in the air 24/7, ready to respond to any potential threat.

- **Dispersal:** Aircraft were dispersed across multiple bases to reduce the risk of a single nuclear strike taking out the entire force.
- **Penetration Techniques:** Fighter-bombers were developed to penetrate enemy airspace and deliver nuclear weapons, using high speed, altitude, and electronic countermeasures.
- **Nuclear Exercises:** Regular exercises and drills tested the readiness and effectiveness of the Peacemaker units.

The Role in History

The Peacemaker units played a critical role in shaping the geopolitical landscape of the Cold War. Their presence and capabilities served as a constant reminder of the potential consequences of nuclear war, helping to prevent a direct confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. The units also contributed to the development of nuclear strategy and technology, leaving a lasting legacy in the annals of military aviation.

36 Peacemaker Units of the Cold War: Combat Aircraft at the Cutting Edge is an essential read for anyone interested in aviation history, military history, or the Cold War era. Through captivating stories, detailed descriptions, and stunning photographs, this book provides an immersive account of the elite units that stood at the forefront of nuclear deterrence. It is a testament to the skill, ingenuity, and dedication of the men and women who served in these units, ensuring peace through the balance of terror.



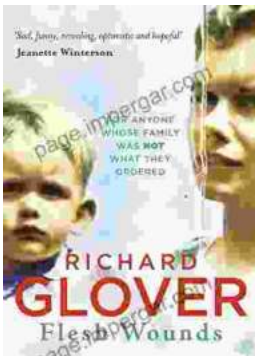
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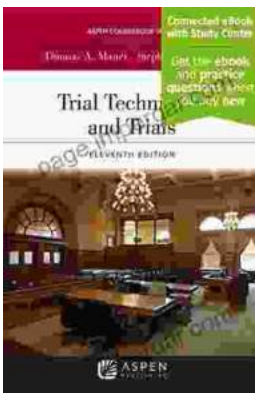
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