Encyclopedia of U.S. Air Force Aircraft and Missile Systems: Post-World War II Bombers 1945-1973 (Reference Series) (Volume 2)

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The second in a series of encyclopedias of U.S. Air Force aircraft and missile systems, this volume covers the development and fielding of bomber aircraft between 1945 and 1973, commencing with the Convair B-36 Peacemaker and ending with the development of the Rockwell International B-1A. Marcelle Knaack's detailed and comprehensive discussion of each bomber type provides a wealth of technical material painstakingly extracted from official Air Force sources. The researcher will find the information readily available and easy to use. Equally critical to our understanding of bomber development, however, is the author's treatment of the policy issues and the technological decisions that molded each bomber program. During the postwar years, the nation's emerging nuclear capabilities placed new emphasis on developing bombers capable of delivering the atomic weapon. Subsequent military needs in Korea and Southeast Asia, however, required a return to conventional weapons. New technologies continually spawned modifications in the weapons systems. And throughout, the Air Force adapted developmental programs and modified production aircraft to fit new roles, from strategic reconnaissance to tactical operations for the Southeast Asia theater. These pages contain essential data for a wide spectrum of audiences inside and outside the U.S. Air Force. Mrs. Knaack's exacting research and her ability to translate difficult and often conflicting documentation into clear and concise capsule histories will enable planners and those engaged in the research and development of aircraft to benefit from the Air Force's experience. As she points out, the success of the postwar bomber program has been the result of the Air Force's willingness to consider several different developmental pathways simultaneously, to modify existing aircraft as technology permits, and above all, to assume continually the development risks required to keep the service at the forefront of technology.

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