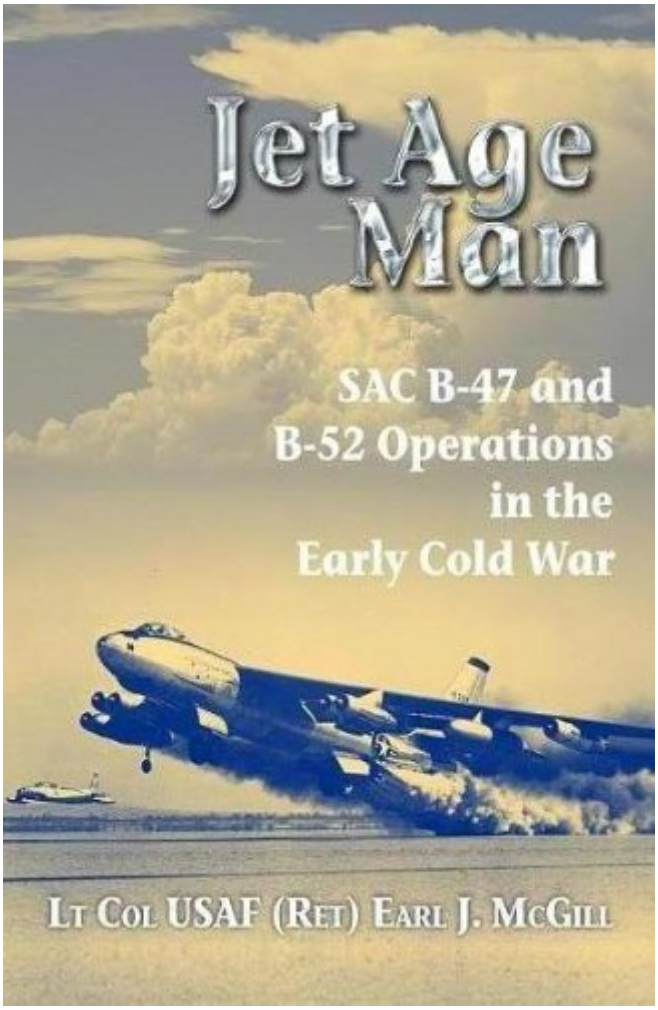
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Jet Age Man: SAC B-47 And B-52 Operations In The Early Cold War



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Synopsis

The events in Jet Age Man took place during the early Cold War, an era that will go down as a period when civilization teetered on the edge of the abyss. To some, nuclear deterrence appeared as utter madness, and was in fact commonly referred to as M.A.D. The concept of Mutually Assured Destruction provoked protests and marches, and the architect of M.A.D, General Curtis LeMay, became a symbol of madness himself. Raised during those turbulent times, most contemporary historians conclude that we were lucky to have survived. What they fail to recognize is that for LeMay and the thousands of Cold War warriors who fought and won while serving in the Strategic Air Command, the proof of concept lies not in the "what if?" but in the reality, "what did." Historically, M.A.D. succeeded where appeasement, diplomacy and even hot wars failed. When The Wall came down, strength, not weakness, had prevailed. Most of this story takes place in the Cold War trenches of the Strategic Air Command. It is about those who served and the many who died, told by someone who, as a young man, literally held the fate of all mankind within reach of a switch. More particularly, this is a story of man’s interaction with two bombers that changed the course of political history, and were perhaps the most influential aircraft in the annals of aircraft development. The author piloted and instructed in both the B-47 and the B-52, starting out as a copilot in the B-47, then aircraft commander and finally, instructor pilot in both aircraft. Jet Age Man chronicles his fifteen-year relationship with the B-47 and the aircraft the B-47 became, the B-52 - a bomber still in service today.

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Customer Reviews

I had earlier read Mr. McGill's Black Tuesday over Namsi and think that it is an outstanding book on USAF Bomber Operations in Korea. Jet Age Man continues where he left off by providing his history and perspective of the early days of jet operations in SAC. I grew up listening to stories of my grandfather, a gunner in B-17s, B-29s in Korea, and in B-52s. I myself am close to finishing a 20 year career as a pilot in the US Navy, and have flown the P-3C, which is the closest you could get to B-29s and B-52s in the Navy, as well as a modern Boeing jet, the C-40A (B-737). From both perspectives I have thoroughly enjoyed this book and it has given me some important background in understanding my grandfathers service, and as a 737 pilot it was extremely interesting in reading how these early big jet pilots discovered the hard way on how to operate them without the glass cockpit of today. These pioneers made a large contribution to the safety of todays airliners. If you have any interest in B-47s, B-52s, UASF history, or just plain old flying stories, you will not be disappointed. Our heros from WW2 got plenty of attention in the history books, and rightfully so, their Korean counterparts not as much. The early cold war operations are nearly forgotten and as time passes and these heros age, these memories will be lost. Thanks to LT COL. McGill for documenting his experiences for future generations.

Suprisingly little has been written about this important facet of the Cold War. This book, painstakingly accurately researched, brings the reader squarely in the middle of the dangers inherent to flying on the bleeding edge of technology. The B47 was a tradeoff of the lives of the best and brightest for a technological edge against the Russian. The author follows this with stories and experience of when we got it right, the B52. Throw in some intrigue, atomic weapons and some insane flying requirements, and you have a book you can't put down.

I read a lot of books on military aircraft. My military aircraft library holds approximately 600 books. I was a member of SAC in the 1970s, as an Air Force firefighter. This book gives us an insight into the true, first hugely produced swept-winged aircraft (over 2,000 aircraft), the B-47, its many

troubles, its place in history, and the transition to what it brought about, the B-52, which still flies. The B-52 is my favorite aircraft, but the B-47 is said to be, and I agree, that it is the most beautiful bomber aircraft ever built. It was sleek, it was new, it was revolutionary. That caused its many problems and over 200 crashed with the loss of over 400 lives, but, ... it was the workhorse of the early-mid Cold War, taking over from the lumbering and vulnerable piston-engine SAC bombers such as the B-29, B-36, and B-50. In fact, from another book, I know that a certain Air Force general wanted to build more B-50 bombers, an un-graded B-29, when the first two XB-47s were being tested. One day he stopped at the field where they were being flown from, and was convinced to take a ride. From that flight came the order to stop building B-50s, and put the B-47 into full production.I remember seeing my first B-47 when I was 6, which was also when I first sat in the seat of an Air Force Crash-Fire-Rescue truck. The experience changed my life, and I am proud to say that I was a part of SAC, though in the B-52 era, and at the end of the war in Southeast Asia. This book is a hit with me, and will be with anyone interested in the history not only of aircraft, but of their progression, their lesser-known stories, and the Strategic Air Command. I whole-heartedly recommend this book!

This book brought back many memories my 23+ years in SAC with 1st Combat Evaluation Gp, Barksdale AFB, LA. I was a crew chief in RBS at various locations involved in combat crew training and for over. 3 years with Arc Light that controlled and directed bomb releases off Sourh Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. My ground crew setup and dropped half of all the B52 bombs dropped at Kay Sanh and we did so against the NVA trying to cutoff SVN into the Kontom and and Pleiku area for a 90 day operation against the 25,000 troops, armor and supplies. This operation had 3 B52’s dropping 324 five hundred poubd bombs every 36 minutes for a solid 90 days starting at midnight Jan 1st, 1972 if I recall correctly

The transition from big propeller driven airliners and bombers to jets took place over a relatively short time. I’ve been around the military and aviation my entire life. I’ve always enjoyed people’s stories of "there I was." Author Earl McGill’s book describes the dangers associated with technology so new the bombers were faster than the fighters. I’ve never seen a B-47 fly. I’ve seen a couple in museums. Now, I have some understanding of the juggling act involved in making one fly safely - "safe" being a relative term. After the B-47 the author flew the B-52. After years of planning for nuclear strikes against the Soviet Union, the B-52s were used for conventional strikes in Viet Nam. (As a flight instructor, I enjoyed the stories about his students in both jets.)It was fascinating to read

about training, how accidents changed training, how changes in technology changed how the Air Force prepared for war, how dull life could be on alert a week at a time, and about life at home and stresses on the family.If you have an interest in the Cold War, the history of aviation, the great-great grandfather of today's airliners, "there I was" war stories, or military history, I expect you will enjoy this book.

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