

Over the Beach: The Air War in Vietnam

By Zalin Grant

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Over the Beach: The Air War in Vietnam By Zalin Grant

"The Right Stuff* without the hype, Yeager without the ego."?*Washington Post Book World

"While the jet-jockey competitiveness, the undercurrent of fear, the victories and foul-ups of jet sweeps have been described many times, few such chronicles have done it so grippingly and with such a ring of accuracy. Mr. Grant explores the emotions felt not only by the men in battle but by the wives and others left behind, and the questions the war raised in their minds. To put in larger context the war's impact on individual participants, the author periodically reviews the high-level struggles over how to fight the air war. "What is most impressive is to find an analysis so clearly stated, so seemingly on track in locating the weak spots in the policies of various political and military officials....Written in a straightforward yet stylish prose, *Over the Beach* carries tremendous conviction."?Richard Witkin, *New York Times Book Review*

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
As a Time correspondent, Grant (Survivors frequently visited the fighter pilots who flew missions over North Vietnam from the carrier Oriskany, and interviewed many of them anew after the war. The material he collected, combined with diligent research and considerable journalistic talent, comprises a first-class account of an important aspect of the war that has not received major attention. The pilots are portrayed in a dimensional way rarely found in war literature, and Grant conveys vividly what it was like to live through intense anti-aircraft fire, dogfights with MIGs, downing and rescue (as well as downing and capture) and psychic burnout. This is more than an air-combat book, however: the author follows the course of disagreements between the high command and Defense Secretary Robert McNamara over the usefulness of the air war, the reaction of the pilots to charges of bombing civilian areas, the struggle of a pilot's widow to confirm that he has been killed and then to reconcile herself to his death. First serial to Vietnam Veterans of America; Military Book Club dual main selection.
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From Library Journal
In this sympathetic and penetrating history the pilots of a fighter squadron aboard the U.S.S. Oriskany battle the internal politics of their unit, their own doubts about the Vietnam War, and fears for their safety, while acting like fighter jocks, all bravado and hard living. Laced through this diverse, personality-filled work are the words of wives and many of the pilots themselves and the author's telling assessment of the bombing policy, which was tentative and ineffective despite the courage and skill of the men who carried it out. The action begins in July 1966 and ends as a final run is cancelled due to bad weather in 1972. This is a valuable examination of the Navy's bombing of the North, with less emphasis on hardware than a pilot might wish, but biting and insightful. A gem. Mel D. Lane, Sacramento, Cal.
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Review
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