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E.T. Wooldridge, ed. *Into the Jet Age: Conflict and Change in Naval Aviation, 1945-1975.* Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1995. xxiii + 321 pp. $36.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-55750-932-1.

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An excellent study of the transitional stage of naval aviation from the post-war era to 1975, this work is based on personal records in the U.S. Naval Institute's Oral History Collection. The men interviewed range from flight leaders to the various Chiefs of Naval Operations (CNOs). This study gives a far reaching and comprehensive analysis of the thirty years of dynamic growth in Naval aviation in the United States. The focus of the study is the aircraft carrier and this theme is elucidated by the author: "the carrier becomes the principal focus of discussion for a variety of reasons. It played a predominant role as an instrument of diplomacy in peacetime and was the leading offensive weapon of the U.S. Navy in any conventional conflicts during the thirty-year period under consideration" (p. xxii).

The interviews focus on the operational changes that took place in the Navy–such as the conversion from prop to jet all-weather flying, as well as the introduction of British flight innovations such as the angled deck, the mirror landing system, and the steam catapult. The importance of the conflicts within the bureaucracy of the navy over these operational changes are also discussed within the unique prevailing analysis of the interviews. Moreover, the reader obtains a sense of the problems of implementation of innovations in the face of traditions in a military service. Wooldridge discusses the introduction of the F-4 Phantom project of the 1960s and the automatic carrier landing system (ACLS) along with the later F-14 and F/A 18 fighter projects which represent the multi-role purpose of naval aviation. These fundamental changes represent the problematic adaptation of new technological paradigms in naval warfare.

Wooldridge gives a unique and interesting perspective of the military and political leadership of the navy, which is summed up by the author with "The year 1958 in terms of naval affairs, has often been called a transition year, when the navy was turning from guns to missiles, going into the realm of nuclear power, and going from subsonic to supersonic speeds in the air" (p. 66). These changes are reflected in the political and military leadership roles and the bureaucratic conflicts that arose.

By far, one of the most interesting conflicts that created a fissure between the political and military leadership of the Navy was the conflict over the TFX (Tactical Fighter Experimental) or F-111 project. This turmoil was spawned from the lack of understanding by the political officers, led by Secretary McNamara, of the practical military aspects of the implementation of a new aircraft. Wooldridge outlines this well with, "So, first of all, the concept was commendable one but impractical. Secondly, they disregarded the approved procedures of the Joint Evaluation Board. Thirdly, they violated the recommendations made by the chief of staff of the air force and the chief of naval operations and, lastly, without referring back to the military chiefs that they were going to be overruled, they arbitrarily made the decision and did not have a good justification for making it" (p. 120). Here, indeed, is a lucid illustration of the cultural dynamism of the American political military system in operation. This is an example of the degree of research and analysis that marks this book as an important work that provides an understanding of the many aspects of the military and political relationship within the prevailing bureaucratic structure of the United States Navy.

Wooldridge's book is highly recommend for its erudite analysis of the primary source materials and its unique inside look of the naval operations during a very dynamic period for the service. The historian should welcome this work as an important socio-military study that aids in the understanding of military operations in a democratic society.

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