



Combat Aircraft of the United States Air Force: Rare Photographs from Wartime Archives (Images of War)

By Michael Green

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When the United States Army Signal Corps created the Aeronautical Division in August 1907, it had a mission 'to take charge of all matters pertaining to military ballooning, air machines, and all kindred matters.' That small inconsequential portion of the US Army would grow progressively over the many decades to become a separate service named the US Air Force in 1947 following the Second World War. Overnight, it became the world's most powerful military establishment, able to deliver conventional and nuclear ordnance anywhere around the globe.

Today's cutting-edge example of this power-projection is the supersonic, bat-winged B-2 Spirit stealth bomber, which can fly at an altitude of 50,000 feet, and is built of carbon-graphite composite materials. The B-2 Spirit is a far cry from the early days of the service when it relied on fragile prop-driven wood and fabric aerial platforms, such as the Wright Type B, which could barely reach an altitude of 100 feet.

In between have been such iconic Second World War aircraft as the P-51 Mustang and P-47 Thunderbolt fighters and bombers such as the B-25 Mitchell, B-17 Flying Fortress and B-29 Super Fortress which dropped the first A-Bomb in 1945. The Cold War demanded ever more powerful aircraft, such as the B-58 Hustler and B-52 Stratofortress, and fighters including the F-86 Sabre, F-104 Starfighter and F-4 Phantom. All these aircraft and more are vividly illustrated and described in detail in this superb Images of War publication.

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Editorial Review

Review

Something just a little bit different from usual for this new addition to the Images of War series, for the bulk of the pictures in this one are in colour, though there are still some black and white archive pictures. As usual, this is a photo book, but with some informative and well balanced background text to introduce each chapter, along with helpful captions on all of the photos as well. A good collection of photos which make a good job of illustrating the many combat aircraft used by the USA over 100 years plus of history, from those flimsy, early biplanes, through to the supersonic and stealth aircraft of the 21st Century. (*Military Modeling*)

About the Author

Michael Green is the author of numerous acclaimed books in the Images of War series including Armour to Vietnam, US Navy Aircraft Carriers, US Battleships, The Patton Tank, US Naval Aviation, American Infantry Weapons and M1 Abrams Tank.

Users Review

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