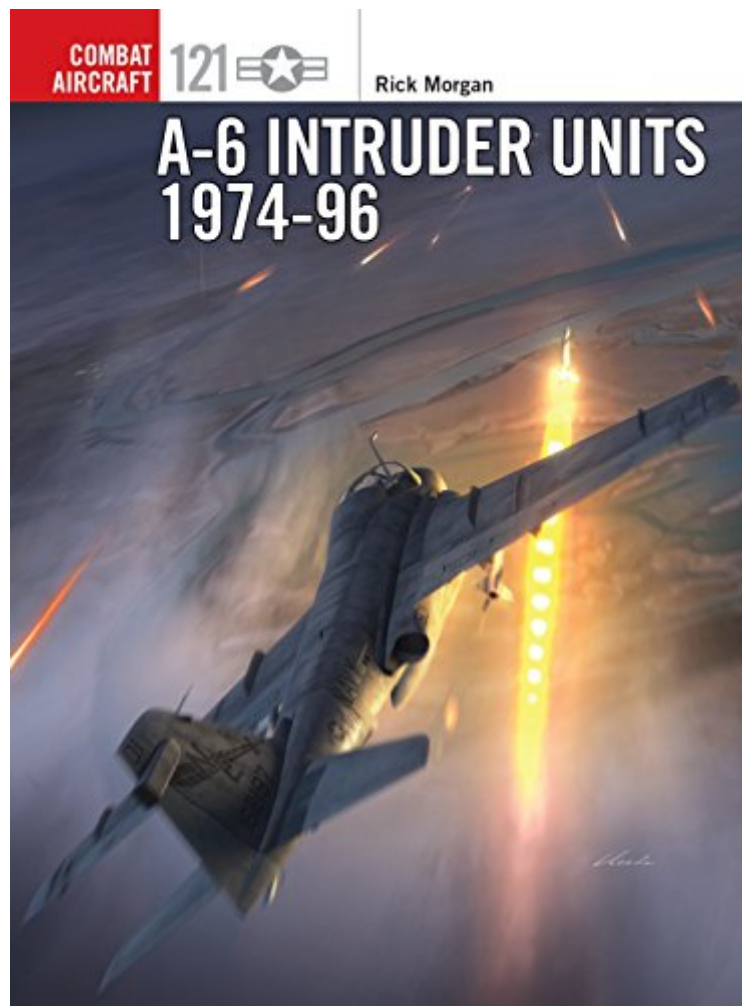




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A-6 Intruder Units 1974-96 (Combat Aircraft)



Synopsis

In the three decades following Vietnam, the veteran A-6 Intruder remained the most powerful strike aircraft available to the US Navy and Marine Corps. Engaged in operations over Cambodia, Lebanon and Libya during the 1970s and 80s, the A-6 maintained its reputation as the 'Main Battery' of carrier aviation, remaining in service through the First Gulf War up until 1996 when its duties were taken over by the F-14 Tomcat. Following on from his study of the A-6 Intruder's exploits during the Vietnam War, Rick Morgan details the technological developments that were introduced to the airframe after that conflict and how it shaped the operational employment of the aircraft. Filled with first-hand accounts from pilots and navigators, as well as profile artwork and photographs, this is the complete story of the US Navy's main medium attack aircraft in the latter part of the Cold War.

Book Information

File Size: 42563 KB

Print Length: 96 pages

Publisher: Osprey Publishing; 1 edition (July 27, 2017)

Publication Date: July 27, 2017

Sold by:Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B01N784DGA

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Not Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #546,363 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #37

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Customer Reviews

Grumman's A-6 Intruder became an immediate world standard when it became operational in 1963. The world's foremost all-weather attack aircraft arrived on U.S. carrier decks and in Marine air wings in time for the Vietnam War, detailed in the author's previous Osprey title,

Intruder Units of the Vietnam War. The author is eminently qualified: a former naval aviator and naval flight officer, Rick Morgan's hands-on experience as a fleet operator tell throughout both volumes, reinforcing his status as an award-winning historian. The post-Vietnam Intruder saga, marked full transition from the original A-6A to the ultimate "Echo" model in 1976-1977. In that period U.S. Navy operations focused on the Atlantic and Mediterranean, although Intruders logged combat sorties in venues as far-flung as Southeast Asia (Cambodia 1975), the Caribbean (Grenada 1983), and the Mediterranean (Libya 1983). The text also traces operational evolution with the two-Intruder air wing of the 1980s, wherein carriers deployed with two A-6 squadrons, one of them often being a Marine unit. At the same time, Morgan explains how KA-6D tankers became so important to air wing ops. Combat increasingly focused on the Persian Gulf, including Operation Praying Mantis, the 1988 strike against Iranian ships and facilities in retaliation for attacks on Western shipping. Praying Mantis came closest to realizing the A-6's war-at-sea mission when Enterprise jets sank one Iranian warship and crippled another. Naturally, much space is devoted to Operation Desert Storm in 1990-91. Despite thousands of sorties, only three A-6s were lost to enemy action against Iraq. The text includes a variety of compelling narratives from Navy and Marine Corps aircrews in addition to a well-deserved tribute to maintainers who consistently provided "up jets." Illustrations maintain Osprey's well-established standard with 80 high-quality photos (mostly in color) and 30 of Jim Laurier's profiles, including the EA-6A electronic warfare variant. Six appendices provide ready reference for A-6 units, actions, and losses. A welcome addition is a section describing various ordnance common to A-6s throughout the last two decades of its career.

The A-6 Intruder was the mainstay of U.S. Navy strike aviation at sea for three decades, from Vietnam to post-Desert Storm. This Osprey Combat Aircraft Series book covers the years 1974 to 1996, from the Mayaguez Incident in Cambodia to the no-fly zones over Iraq, and lots of events in-between. Author Rick Morgan provides the history and some no-holds-barred commentary on Navy carrier strike aviation, not least on the aircraft and their pilots. The A-6 was one of the first aircraft to incorporate the electronics that made it such a precision day/night, all-weather bomber. As the ordinance and the avionics improved, so did the A-6. The U.S. Navy went from dropping lots of bombs to destroying targets with single smart munitions. As the author relates, successive models of the A-6 became more capable, fulfilling carrier roles for strike, aerial refueling, and even electronic warfare. The highly readable narrative is backed by lots of period photographs, color plates, and diagrams. Highly recommended to the general reader and the student of carrier aviation.

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