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John Warden And The Renaissance Of American Air Power

JOHN WARDEN and the RENAISSANCE of
AMERICAN AIR POWER

John Andreas Olsen



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Synopsis

****Included on the Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force's reading list for 2008 and the Royal Air Force's Centre for Air Power Studies 2008 Reading List****Dr. John Andreas Olsen has written an insightful, compelling biography of retired U.S. Air Force colonel John A. Warden III, the brilliant but controversial air warfare theorist and architect of Operation Desert Storm's air campaign. Warden's radical ideas about air power's purposes and applications, promulgated at the expense of his own career, sparked the ongoing revolution in military affairs. Legendary in defense circles, Warden is also the author of *The Air Campaign: Planning for Combat* (republished by Brassey's, Inc. in 1989). Presenting both the positives and negatives of Warden's personality and impact in this objective portrait, Olsen offers a trenchant analysis of his revolutionary ideas and great accomplishments.

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Customer Reviews

John Andreas Olsen's "John Warden and the Renaissance of American Air Power" is an excellent

and thorough analysis of the importance of operational art and strategic thinking in the application of air power, told through the career of Air Force Colonel John Warden. The book combines elements of biography, campaign history, and strategic theory to present the story of the United States Air Force's attempts to move from a tactical, systems approach to warfare to one focused on applying air power to achieve decisive strategic effects. Olsen succeeds in demonstrating Warden's impact on the service's culture and war fighting focus. Olsen is at his best when discussing Warden's contributions to air power theory, as well as his ideas on professional military education, air force doctrine, and the development of the Instant Thunder air campaign plan in support of Operation Desert Storm. His writing is less focused on Warden's early career and operational assignments, details of which are mostly provided for context. Readers looking for accounts of dodging surface to air missiles over North Vietnam, or detailed discussion of weapons systems will be disappointed. Those interested in the application of theory and doctrine to real-world contingency operations have a great deal to learn from Olsen's efforts. He brings an educated air officer's perspective to his analysis, and provides an objective discussion of the role of air power at the operational and strategic levels of war. "John Warden and the Renaissance of American Air Power" is very well researched, with excellent footnotes and a great selected bibliography. Serious students will enjoy reading these sections of the book to see where they can learn more about the subject. I highly recommend this book to military officers of all services, students studying national security topics, and anyone interested in defense issues.

This is an excellent book indeed. Not only does it have a lot to say about the way airpower is and should be used in modern war, but it also explains how the U.S military, and presumably not only the U.S military, REALLY work. All this is done on the basis of extremely thorough research that is a model of its kind. A very good book--highly recommended for anybody interested in airpower. Go and get it!

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