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Basic Airman To General: The Secret War & Other Conflicts: Lessons In Leadership & Life



Synopsis

"This book covers the remarkable success of a second-generation Polish kid who, at the age of eighteen, enlisted in the United States Air Force during the Korean War. He was one of less than a handful of basic airmen who rose to the rank of four-star general. More importantly, it covers the reincarnation of WW II Air Commandos under the code name of Jungle Jim, as well as US combat air operations from 1961 through 1967 flying obsolete B-26s and the newest jet fighter, the F-4D."--Book jacket.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I first met the author when we started the F-86 course at Williams Air Force Base in 1958. By a strange convergence of probabilities, we both came from large Polish-American families of modest means. Even more unusual was that we were both the top graduates of our pilot training classes, at different bases, and each had been awarded the Commander's Trophy. Pete does a good job of describing the thrill of training in the F-86, but in the spirit of friendly rivalry that existed at the time, I would remind him that my top score in air-to-air gunnery was a 42 percent. My best in strafing was a 65 percent. Our careers diverged after completing the course, and except for two chance encounters in the 1960s; we knew nothing of what each of us was doing. Reading this book is like running into Pete, asking him what he did for the last 50 years, and having every curiosity satisfied. This book is well worth reading because it tells a story of dedication, hard work, and willingness to sacrifice in rising through the ranks of a complex organization where the opportunities to fail were abundant. The amount of personal detail illustrates the moral courage of the author. The interactions of personalities at the highest levels of command, including civilian leadership, are revealed as I have

never seen them before. In addition to this being a story of personal success, it is a good historical document. It covers in some detail the evolution of Air Force missions, systems, strategy, and tactics from the early years of the jet age to the space systems that we have today. The relatively few factual mistakes are readily recognized and easy to ignore when caught up in the drama of the narrative.

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