

As a certified space professional with over 20 years' experience in space operations and engineering, I've never seen such a detailed record of the world history of rocketry and spacecraft. In the 18 chapters of *Blazing the Trail*, Mike Gruntman covers the "humble beginnings" to the "first thousand years" and provides a thorough description of the "long road that led us from simple fireworks to intercontinental ballistic missiles and powerful space launchers that open the ways to the cosmos" (p. 455). He also discusses the infrastructure required to support the development and testing of rockets and spacecraft, including the building of test and launch sites. Gruntman combines a heavy dose of engineering details with some political insights and sprinkles of humor to produce a well-written space-reference book.

Although it provides encyclopedia-type detail, overall, *Blazing the Trail* is easy to read and well formatted. However, since the term *spacecraft* comes first in the title, I expected more history on spacecraft than on rocketry. Just the opposite is true—about 70 percent on rockets and 30 percent on spacecraft. The first detailed discussion on spacecraft occurs in chapter 15, "The Breakthrough," after over 300 pages on rocketry. Nevertheless, Gruntman interweaves technical and engineering facts, such as the size and performance of early rockets, with some key political factors behind both their successes and failures. For example, in chapter 16, "Opening the Skies," the author outlines in detail the geopolitical environment and factors leading to development of the United States' first reconnaissance satellite and formation of the National Reconnaissance Office. Additionally, the book contains over 300 figures, helping to bring the words to life and providing a unique perspective of the faces and places instrumental in "building the foundation" of future systems. The pictures of early systems make it easier to visualize how early rockets and spacecraft evolved from the fairly simple to the extremely complex. Given the extensive number of illustrations, I was surprised that the book does not include a "Table of Figures" to support quick reference and research. However, the frequent sidebars do help in this regard.

Although not outlined as clearly and consistently as the history of spacecraft and rockets, the book offers a unique discussion of the heritage of many US space corporations. For example, Gruntman cites how disagreements with Howard Hughes led to the resignation of two leading specialists (Simon Ramo and Dean Wooldridge [Ramo-Wooldridge]) and, with financial help from Thompson Products, eventually to the formation of Thompson Ramo

Wooldridge (TRW) (p. 233). The author also covers the "why" behind the formation of Aerospace Corporation as a nonprofit institution to help the US Air Force make advances in ballistic-missile and military-space systems (p. 233).

Gruntman spices up the book with "engineering humor." For example, in discussing the development of one satellite, he notes how a specially produced, expensive white paint was "required" for thermal control. However, it turns out that a common household paint was used by mistake. Nevertheless, the thermal control worked as required, offering an early lesson in cost control (p. 427).

Fundamental courses in space operations and extended research projects on rocketry and/or spacecraft should acquire this well-written, single-source "encyclopedia" as a must-use reference. Also, *Blazing the Trail* is definitely a must-read for all military and/or space-history enthusiasts.

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**The Cambodian Campaign: The 1970 Offensive and America's Vietnam War** by John M. Shaw.  
University Press of Kansas (<http://www.kansaspress.ku.edu>), 2502 Westbrooke Circle, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-4444, 2005, 352 pages, \$34.95 (hardcover).

In describing his greatest victory, Field Marshal His Grace the Duke of Wellington called the Battle of Waterloo "the nearest run thing you ever saw in your life." In an impressive debut work, John M. Shaw has produced a study suggesting that Wellington's quotation is far more descriptive of the American experience in Southeast Asia than most people might think. Prior coverage of the American invasion of Cambodia has focused on the political ramifications of this campaign. In an account that emphasizes the operational level, Shaw accepts Richard Nixon's argument that the move into Cambodia was the most successful operation of the war: "While historians debate the political fallout of the Cambodian incursion, there can be no doubt of the military consequences. At a comparatively light cost in friendly casualties, the incursion crippled Hanoi's principal forward stockpiles along South Vietnam's borders" (p. 169). As a result, the balance of power shifted towards Saigon in the early 1970s.

A now-retired US Army lieutenant colonel with a PhD in history who has taught at both the US Military Academy and Air Force Academy, Shaw

brings a good deal of military and academic expertise to bear in this account. He bases his findings on an impressive and extensive examination of American military records, showing that by 1970 the Americans had essentially defeated the Vietcong and that the North Vietnamese Army posed the most direct threat to the Saigon government, with bases less than 100 miles away. The North Vietnamese, though, were vulnerable to attack after having operated out in the open for so long in Cambodia. The Army of the Republic of Vietnam gave an adequate showing in the invasion. Americans performed well and were hardly a military falling apart from political dissension at home, poor leadership, and heavy drug use among its troops. Shaw, though, is quick to show that the US Army had clearly declined in quality from its first days in Vietnam. These findings in and of themselves are provocative, much less his claim that the operation was an enormous success. What is particularly impressive about this book is how even small features—such as the photo section—support its overall focus.

*Cambodian Campaign* is also well written and has already won the Army Historical Foundation's Distinguished Writing Award. Shaw conducted a number of interviews for this project, and he uses quotations in an effective fashion to enliven his narrative. The text, though, is littered with military acronyms, but that will hardly be a problem to readers of this journal.

This book will not be the last word on the offensive into Cambodia. There are a number of topics that Shaw does not address at length, such as the perspective of individual soldiers at the tactical level or what Wellington called "the other side of the hill." But if one stops to compare the state of the literature on war 40 years after the fact to a comparable stage of two other big conflicts—the Civil War and World War II—it seems likely that this book will remain the authoritative account of US actions at the operational level for decades to come.

Should military officers read *Cambodian Campaign*? Yes. In fact, it should end up on reading lists at various schools in the professional military education system. Shaw has produced a study that highlights a troublesome fact about military operations in Vietnam and many other wars: operational success does not always bring with it strategic victory. It is altogether possible for soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen to achieve their objectives and for that to mean nothing in the end.

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**And Nothing Is Said: Wartime Letters, August 5, 1943–April 21, 1945** by Michael N. Ingrisano Jr.  
Sunflower University Press, 2002, 540 pages,  
\$22.95 (softcover).

The title of Michael Ingrisano's book—*And Nothing Is Said*—is misleading. In fact, he had a lot to say to his fiancée, Bettejeane Louise Hill, while he served with the Army Air Corps in the European theater during World War II. Between 5 August 1943 and 21 April 1945, "Mike" sent "Bette" 343 letters that recounted his daily routine (minus operational details), expounded on a variety of topics from books to a wife's place in the workforce, and voiced hopes for their future together. The book collects these letters, discovered after Bette's passing in 1985. Unfortunately, the other half of the conversation is missing since Bette's letters to Mike never made it back from the war.

The Ingrisanos' story resembles accounts told by many other members of their generation. A native of Brooklyn, New York, Mike graduated from high school in 1942 and then took a job with Sears, Roebuck, and Company until September of that same year, when he left to enlist in the Army Air Forces. Bette grew up in Kansas and attended a year of college in Kansas City before leaving to go to work. The two met while Mike was attending advanced radio/mechanic training in Kansas City. By the time he finished, he knew that Bette would play an important role in his life. But after parting in Kansas City, except for a brief visit before Mike left for Europe, they wouldn't see each other again for almost two years. For the next 21 months, he flew as a C-47 crew member with the 316th Troop Carrier Group stationed in Egypt, North Africa, Sicily, Italy, and England, receiving an honorable discharge exactly three years after the date of his enlistment—a proven combat veteran with nine Battle Stars.

A touching account, *And Nothing Is Said* succeeds on one level but disappoints on another. The book does well in providing some insight into one early Airman's war experiences. Though mission details, by necessity, are limited, the reader can still gather from Ingrisano's letters a sense of the operational tempo and emotional toll that the dangerous flights had on crews. To provide some context, he inserts entries from the squadron's war diary between the letters (both the diary excerpts and the letters are largely unedited). Although these entries fill in some detail, their abbreviated descriptions of events still deny the reader a complete picture.

Readers looking for a riveting account of an Airman's journey through World War II should look elsewhere. Despite the wealth of material con-