

# BOOKS



Reviews of books relating to the military profession and of particular interest to Marines are welcomed. Prospective authors are encouraged to contact editor prior to submission. Preferred length 300-750 words. Any book published in the United States and still in print may be purchased through the MCA Bookservice, but listed prices are subject to change.

## Planning the Air Campaign

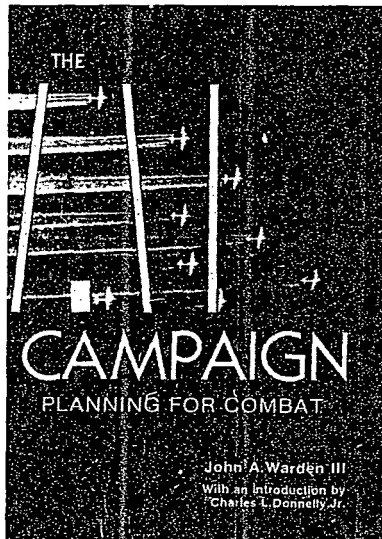
reviewed by MajGen John R. Dailey

**THE AIR CAMPAIGN: Planning for Combat.** By John A. Warden III. National Defense University Press, Washington, DC, 1988, 172 pp., \$6.00. (Member \$5.40)\*

If this book sounds Air Force, that's what it is. But it also has an important place in any professional library. It will probably receive mixed reviews because the orientation of the reader may color his or her opinion of its value. For example, it may not be appreciated by those who argue that there is no such thing as an air campaign—that it is a supporting annex to the land campaign and therefore to treat it as an entity detracts from the ground commander's plan. But that is the subject for another book.

Col Warden says that his work provides a philosophical and theoretical framework for conceptualizing, plan-

ning, and executing an air campaign. It certainly does that, but it does much more—and we Marines should pay close attention to what he says. He has



\*Hardcover edition available in July 1989 from Pergamon-Brassey's. 212 pp., \$18.95. (Member \$17.05)

provided a valuable service to the commander who will be charged with making decisions regarding allocation of resources in combat. Although he says that his target is the planners, I think what he has to say is even more important to the commander who must understand these principles to employ his forces properly.

Col Warden has carefully laid down some rules for the employment of air power and documented them with historical precedent. Here again, many readers may disagree with his interpretation of the lessons learned, but that is of minor importance. The value of the book is that he has logically arranged his thoughts and given us an outstanding checklist of factors to consider in the application of combat air power. Even if one chooses to do the opposite of what Col Warden recommends, which he agrees may be proper in some cases, at least the factors will have been considered in the decision.

Perhaps this book's greatest service will be the professional discussion (read argument) that it should stimulate over what the proper organization and application of air power should be. Any Marine air-ground or joint task force commander who expects to employ his force properly without consideration of the factors articulated by Col Warden is courting failure.

I recommend this book not only for individual study but also for inclusion on the required reading lists of our professional schools. USMC

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## The Air Campaign: Additional Comments

reviewed by Maj James P. Etter

In 1921 Giulio Douhet, the most prominent airpower thinker of that era, published *The Command of the Air*. Its main thesis was that:

... to conquer the command of the air means victory; to be beaten in the air means defeat and acceptance of whatever term the enemy may be pleased to impose. . . . Any effort, any action, or any resources diverted from this essential aim makes conquering the command of the air that much less probable; and it makes defeat in case of war that much more probable. Any diversion from this primary purpose is an error.

During the last 68 years of combat since *The Command of the Air* was published the battlefield has proven that wars cannot be won by airpower alone. World War II, Korea, the Arab/Israeli conflicts, as well as many others have demonstrated that a combined arms approach is essential to success on the battlefield.

Yet in 1988 Col John A. Warden III authored *The Air Campaign: Planning for Combat*, which states that:

... central to our thesis is the idea that air superiority is crucial, that a campaign will be lost if the enemy has it,

that in many circumstances it alone can win a war, and that its possession is needed before other actions on the ground or in the air can be undertaken.

This is typical USAF—Douhet 70 years later. It is advocacy of something that has not happened since the innovation of the airplane.

Although *The Air Campaign* has serious theoretical flaws, it does give the reader an excellent analytical approach to conceptualizing, planning, and executing an air campaign at the operational level—arranging one's thoughts for the projection of airpower.

Col Warden talks extensively about planning considerations in the offense and defense, about air interdiction, close air support, and the use of re-