



Strike from the Sky: The History of Battlefield Air Attack, 1911-1945 (Smithsonian History of Aviation)

Richard P. Hallion

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Smithsonian [Published date: 1989]. Hard cover, 323 pp. Includes a 48 page section with black and white photos. [From front jacket flap] Strike from the Sky is the first book to trace the evolution of battlefield air attack and its impact on military operations worldwide. Noted aerospace historian Richard P. Hallion probes the context in which air-land operations occurred and how they influenced the outcome of specific battles and campaigns. While it is popularly believed that the idea of "air-land battle" came about within the last two decades, air-land attack actually began as early as World War I. Even though aircraft development was in a primitive stage, air-land attack by air and land forces working together had a deadly synergy; for example, battlefield air interdiction played a decisive role in the collapse of Turkish forces in Palestine during the summer of 1917. At first only of nuisance value, air attack against ground forces assumed critical importance by the late 1930s (the time of the major interwar conflicts in Abyssinia, Spain, and China), and was of decisive significance during the Second World War. The need for aircraft capable of undertaking such missions led to the development of entire categories of specialized attack, dive, and medium bomber airplanes. By the Second World War, such specialized attack planes had proven vulnerable both to opposing fighter planes and anti-aircraft fire. World War II thus witnessed the evolution of the more potent, more flexible, and more survivable fighter-bomber: aircraft such as the P-47, the Typhoon, the FW 190G, and the Yak 7B. These became devastatingly effective weapons for the two principal missions of battlefield air interdiction and close air support. Using case studies from World War I through 1945 to illustrate the evolution of battlefield air attack, Hallion examines such issues as technology choices, doctrine, military strategy/ battlefield experience, and lessons learned.

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