

THE HISTORY OF US ELECTRONIC WARFARE

VOLUME III

Alfred Price

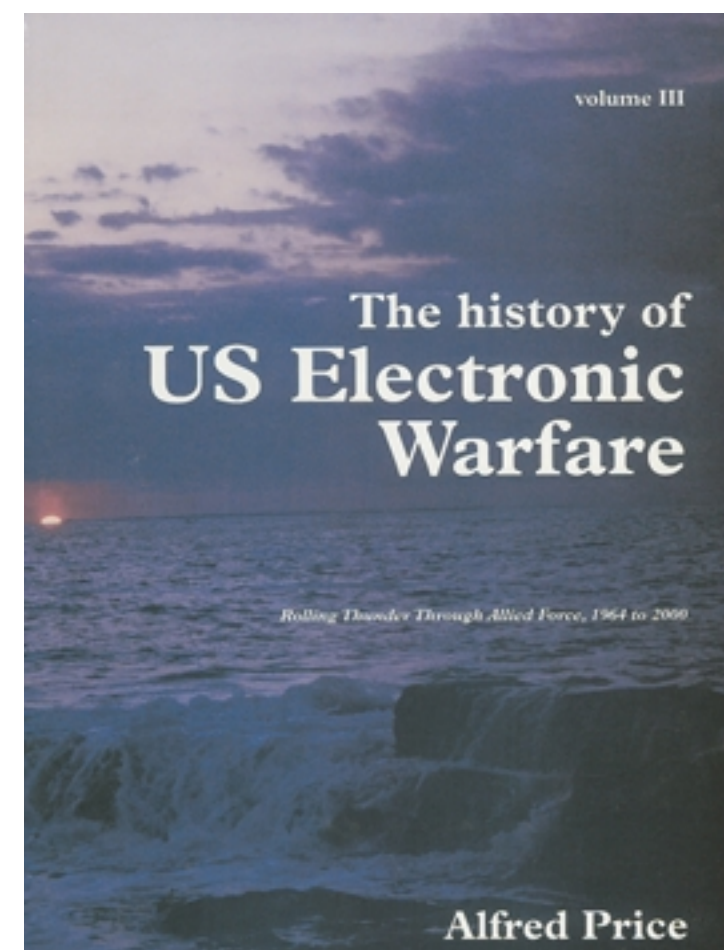
Volume I in this series, “The Years of Innovation,” told the story of US electronic warfare from its beginnings until the end of the Second World War in 1945. Volume II, “The Renaissance Years,” opened in 1946. It covered developments during and after the war in Korea and ended in 1964 with the Gulf of Tonkin Incident, which drew the US into its full-scale military commitment in Vietnam.

This work, Volume III in the series, carries the sub-title “Rolling Thunder Through Allied Force.” It opens in 1964 with the start of the bombing of North Vietnam later code-named “Rolling Thunder.” The US air campaign suffered a major reverse in the summer of 1965, when the North Vietnamese began using Soviet-built surface-to-air missiles against the raiders. Initially, US fighter pilots were quite unprepared to meet the new challenge. They quickly learned that bravery and flying skill, alone, were not enough to ensure survival in the face of the new menace. Losses soared. Then, with a series of countermeasures with varying levels of effectiveness, the missile threat was gradually tamed. By the fall of 1966, US attack fighters could operate over North Vietnam without risk of serious losses. For the B-52 heavy bombers it was another matter, however. The LINEBACKER II attacks on Hanoi and other defended targets at the end of 1972, in which huge fleets of the heavy bombers were committed, are described in unprecedented

detail using information from the participants and from recently declassified official documents.

Volume III provides new insights into the use of electronic warfare by the US fighting services during Operation Desert Storm against Iraq in 1991, and during Operation Allied Force against the Former Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999. Separate chapters cover the Intelligence battle, the evolution to stealth techniques and the effects of the burgeoning new electronic technologies on countermeasures systems. There is coverage of the shift towards Information Warfare, and a review of likely future developments in electronic warfare. Funded by and with assistance from the Association of Old Crows, the author was able to conduct lengthy and detailed interviews with key players in each of these areas.

For much of its sixty-odd year history, US electronic warfare has remained hidden beneath a cloak of security. Volumes I and II in this series cast shafts of new light on its progression during the time periods they covered. Volume III does the same for the period leading to the present day.



This article has been republished online with Open Access.

Ministry of Defence © Crown Copyright 2023. The full printed text of this article is licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0. To view this licence, visit <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/>. Where we have identified any third-party copyright information or otherwise reserved rights, you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned. For all other imagery and graphics in this article, or for any other enquires regarding this publication, please contact: Director of Defence Studies (RAF), Cormorant Building (Room 119), Shrivenham, Swindon, Wiltshire SN6 8LA.

 **ROYAL
AIR FORCE**
**Centre for Air and
Space Power Studies**

OGL