



Attack Aircraft and Bombers of the World

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Reviewed by Wg Cdr Gerry Doyle

Any summary of current attack aircraft that includes types as small as the armed variant of the SF-260 piston-engined trainer, as large as the B-52, as old as the MiG 17 and as modern as JSF is trying to cover a lot of ground. A reader seeking a brief summary of the current status of 43 types, fitting the (ground) attack definition of the title may have found what

they want. The book has good coverage of both western and eastern bloc types, and includes the various Chinese 'clones' of former Warsaw Pact types still in service.

The format of each entry is roughly standard. A brief description of the history of a type, its derivation from earlier aircraft or other models of a common design is followed by a short summary of key design features. Subsequent upgrades, and avionic, propulsion and weapons characteristics are then covered, along with a list of original and subsequent operators. A brief combat history, where appropriate, is then followed by leading particulars. Photographic coverage (in black and white) is included with at least one and up to three photographs per type.

The text is clear and the quality of the photography, which comes from a variety of sources, good. Specifications of each type follow a common format, although not all information is included for each type. The units chosen, however, although they should appeal to an international readership and are at least consistent, may not be to UK taste. Ranges are in km, speeds in kph and ceilings in metres, for instance.

My main reservation about the book is the gaps in its coverage. Omission of the Typhoon, Rafale and Gripen are justified in the foreword on the grounds that those types 'are fighters first'. Equally, there is no mention of the F-4 or the F-16, though both types remain in service in several countries, (surely in greater numbers than the A-7 Corsair, which is included, for example) carrying a variety of air to surface weapons. Also if the Aermacchi family and the Alpha Jet merit a mention, the omission of the Hawk seems strange.

If these gaps are acceptable to a prospective reader, then this may be a useful reference. However, in my eyes, the gaps mar the book. Additionally, anyone seeking a book to support recce training should note that although there are photographs of each type, there are no three-view drawings.

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