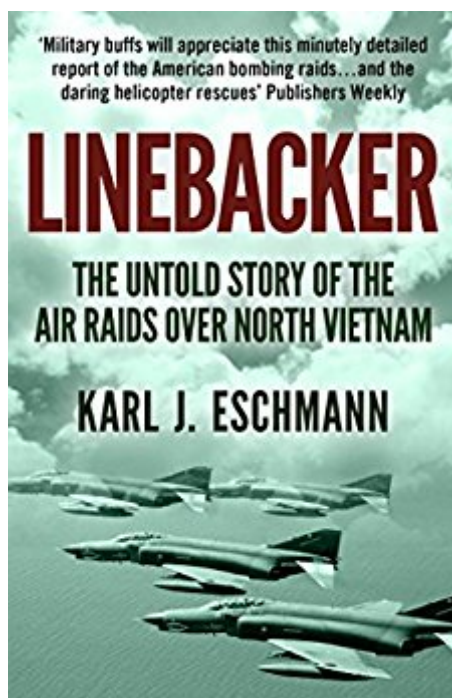


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# Linebacker: The Untold Story Of The Air Raids Over North Vietnam



## Synopsis

Twelve days that shook the world. The beginning of the end. By the end of Day 9, the bombing of North Vietnam had taken an enormous toll. The planners were running out of suitable targets because the damage inflicted on most targets was higher than initially predicted. It became questionable whether those few targets remaining in the high threat areas were even of sufficient worth to continue attacking. The commander of the air force in the Pacific even suggested that it was time to look for targets in lower threat areas. As on previous days, the TACAIR support effectively countered the enemy defenses. The few MiGs which had managed to get airborne were driven away by the American fighter patrols. Although up to 70 SAMs had been fired at the B-52s, the accuracy was noticeably poorer. The last desperate attempts to defend Hanoi were being made and it appeared the offensive was rapidly coming to a conclusion. In late 1972, the Vietnam peace talks were stalled, with the war at perhaps its most crucial point. The United States was searching for a way to strangle North Vietnam's war-waging capabilities by shutting down its supply pipelines in order to force it back to the negotiating table. The solution: Linebacker II, a massive, intricately coordinated twelve-day assault by over 700 combat aircraft against vital targets around Hanoi and Haiphong, enemy cities heavily guarded by MiGs, SAM missiles, and radar-guided anti-aircraft. Here is an unprecedented look at one of the most critical campaigns of modern air warfare, a previously untold story, documented in rich, fascinating detail. It is told in the vividly personal words of the pilots and crews who flew the missions • men who dramatically helped to end the American role in the Vietnam conflict and to bring the POWs home. Praise for Linebacker II "Military buffs will appreciate this minutely detailed report of the American bombing raids over North Vietnam and the daring helicopter rescues." Publishers Weekly Karl J Eschmann graduated from Texas A&M University in 1971 with a Bachelor's Degree in Aerospace Engineering, and a Master's Degree from the Air Force Institute of Technology in Logistics Management in 1989. As a Second Lieutenant in 1972-73, he was a flight line maintenance officer responsible for two squadrons of F-4E Phantom IIs during the Linebacker I & II air offensives, as well as the Cambodian and Laotian campaigns. Since then he has had a distinguished air force career. He retired as a Full Colonel in 1998.

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## Customer Reviews

I was in grade school when Operation Linebacker was initiated by President Nixon to force North Vietnam to the negotiating table. This was a great, eye opening, and very complete technical account of the air war over North Vietnam. The author fills you in on more of the tactics and mistakes in tactics that the US employed. I enjoyed the personal accounts of the pilots that flew the missions and the tremendous peril that they endured. It also opened my eyes to the immense logistical effort involved in putting together "strike Packages" that included hundreds of supporting aircraft and helicopters. A highly recommended read.

I knew Karl while I was working at the Pentagon; i found him to be detailed and accurate yet approachable. if you really want to understand Linebacker, this is the book to read.

I flew 114 B-52 combat missions in Vietnam (1966/67/68) and this is by far the best chronology ever written about the B-52's role in the Vietnam war, and Linebacker II in particular. The Aircraft Comander of Lilac 3, the first B-52 to be hit by a SAM on Linebacker II (see page 101) was a former roommate of mine, and the best damn pilot I ever had the privilege of knowing! A great book, ...a must read for anyone who was associated with that great airplane (the mighty BUF)!

Very few histories of the Linebacker raids have been written, but between this one and "The Eleven Days of Christmas" the subject is well covered. Eschmann goes into detail on the planning, tactics, and concepts of the Linebacker I and II raids, and has produced a very readable and accurate account.

This is a good account and a very technical written account of how the interdiction was used and what lessons were learned while it unfolded. It shows the shortcomings in the military for not wanting to grant control to any one group and just have the needs and options of each voiced so that all sectors were properly utilized for a greater outcome. Lastly it shows what really happens when you fall in the hands of the enemy. Torture was real and it started as soon as you were taken captive. Not just the physical torture which was brutal, but the mental tear down and abuse. You can almost feel what some of our men went through. Almost. As I have said before I did not have the privilege of serving so I cannot salute you, but I will stand at attention, silent and show you the respect that you have earned. Thank you for your service. P. Stiles

There is really a lot of detail in this book. Good for the serious historian, a bit much for the casual reader. In fact the first part of the book was a real snore. So many XX planes from such and such base, so many from another base and so on. I was looking for stories from the people in those planes. As I got further into the book, those stories appeared but there was still a lot of detail that I really didn't care about.

Not for the casual reader. The book is really heavy on detail, written in the dull, matter-of-fact style that operations types use when filing official after-action reports. The writer assumes the reader understands certain military terms, which may or may not be the case. But if you know what the term Linebacker means without being told, and if you're interested in the details about that operation, written by somebody who's apparently been there, done that, and bought the t-shirts, then this book may interest you. And if you read between the lines, you might sense frustration over the efforts made by the brave guys flying the missions being hobbled by the bureaucratic weenies at the top of the chain of command.

I was an electronic warfare officer in the B-52 Arclight operation. I accumulated 116 missions during two different deployments. I was not in the December Linebacker operation. In April of that same

year my crew tangled with a surface to air missile. We sustained some damage to fuel tanks, the gunners compartment and shut down three engines due to fire warning lights. Our pilot made a safe landing at Da Nang. As this narrative unfolded, I could "see" what was happening since I had been there. I kept it on my mind for many days. It's hard to realize that 45 years have past. I would recommend reading this book.

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