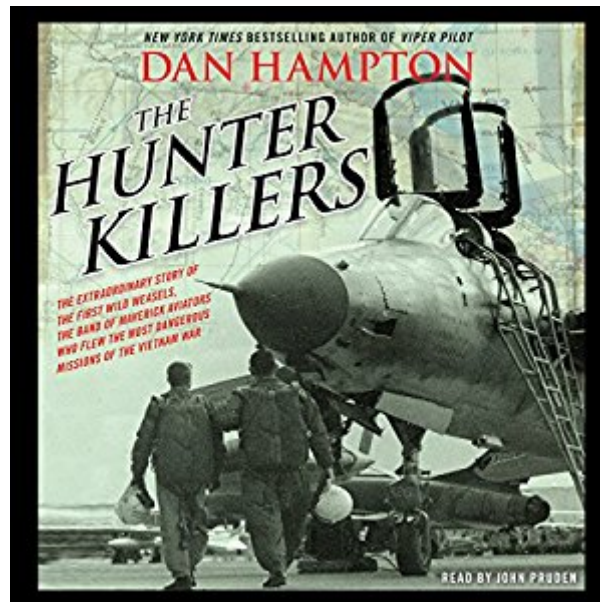


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The Hunter Killers



Synopsis

The Extraordinary Story of the First Wild Weasels, the Band of Maverick Aviators Who Flew the Most Dangerous Missions of the Vietnam War A gripping chronicle of the band of maverick aviators who signed on for the suicidal, dangerous top-secret "Wild Weasel" missions during the Vietnam War - which used controversial and revolutionary tactics to combat Soviet missile technology - from New York Times best-selling author Dan Hampton. On July 24, 1965, Soviet advisors to North Vietnam launched an SA-2 surface-to-air missile (SAM), blowing an American F-4 Phantom out of the sky - the first of several kills using this menacing system. To counter this new weaponry, stunned Pentagon officials created a classified program - "Wild Weasel I" - pairing experimental equipment with a highly select group of electronic warfare officers and fighter pilots to combat this deadly threat. The men who did this became the "Hunter Killers" - and it is time to know their names. Fifty years later Dan Hampton provides a cockpit view of this highly classified military program that was a radical departure from conventional fighter jet tactics. These courageous, daring, and skilled warriors risked their lives to fight the SAMs and save their brother aviators. Using firsthand accounts and declassified documents from both sides of the conflict, The Hunter Killers takes listeners into the skies and up close to the bloody duels that left half the Weasels dead or captured. At its center are the men who risked everything to fight the most dangerous antiaircraft weapons the world had seen. Acclaimed Texas historian Stephen L. Moore's Texas Rising, the official companion to the epic History series of the same name, brings to life the violent Texas frontier and the Rangers' heroic deeds during the Texas Revolution. Texas Rising is an unforgettable history of this iconic band of fighters.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The whole Megillah of the Aviators, planes and equipment that were known as Wild-Weasels and fought the SAM's in Southeast Asia. In accordance with the "principle of full disclosure", let me state up front that I made some inputs to this book, and that my story is told in Chapter nine. First Dan Hampton told his story in "Viper Pilot", allocating some 10 pages to the early history of the Wild Weasels. Then came Dan's second book, "Lords of the sky" where the fledgling Weasels garner almost 20 pages and we meet Ed Rock, a Weasel Pilot (WW# 185) and editor of another Weasel compendium, "First In Last Out". With all his research for these books and his own experiences as a latter day Weasel, it was only natural for Dan to want to tell the whole story of how the Wild Weasels came about. Finally in an organized, coherent and humanized format Hampton tells the why, the who, the politics and where the Wild Weasels are birthed. It is not difficult to gather the facts-Gulf of Tonkin, first SAM kill, the abortive retaliatory mission-and the follow on responses. But Hampton puts a face on the players, lets you sit in the cockpit and ride along as the Weasels become Hunter-Killers. Dan provides the geopolitical actions of the combatants and the onlookers. We see some of the internal Air Force battles and the JCS inputs disregarded by LBJ and McNamara. Learn about the very first Wild Weasel I deployment led by Gary Willard and Allan Lamb and his Bear, Jack Donovan of YGBSM fame who make the first SAM Kill.

The world of electronics, computers, and related gadgetry has developed at a dizzying pace in the last several decades. Imagine a kid today who is handed a smartphone with all its integrated functions: contact list, internet, telephone, camera, etc. He will think, of course; why would you do it any other way? Little does he know of how it evolved, how we used to have to juggle address books for our contacts, another little book for the calendar, portable phones (those first ones were real clunkers with football-sized batteries), a separate camera, etc. Well, electronics warfare evolved in a similar way. For Dan Hampton and others of his generation who came to Wild Weaseling in the 1990s, when so much of the electronics was already integrated, it was a revelation to learn that in the earliest days of anti-SAM warfare, the mission absolutely required two men—a pilot to fly the airplane and an EWO to do all the signal analysis, threat identification and location, etc. And somehow the two had to coordinate their thinking while being targeted, and hopefully arrive at a solution that would defeat the SAM without themselves being shot down. The essential Wild Weasel mission has not changed, but now the electronics are fully integrated and the glass cockpit displays are marvelous. Today's Weasels are like that Millennial being handed a smartphone. It is the origin of the Wild Weasel mission that is the theme of this book. Military aviation started in

World War I, where it was just planes dogfighting other planes. Missiles were developed in Germany toward the end of World War II, but they were strictly ballistic ground-to-ground missiles, aimed at the time of launch, sent on their way but not guided in flight.

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