

PROFESSIONAL  READING LIST

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# DEFENSE ACQUISITION PROFESSIONALISM AND LEADERSHIP

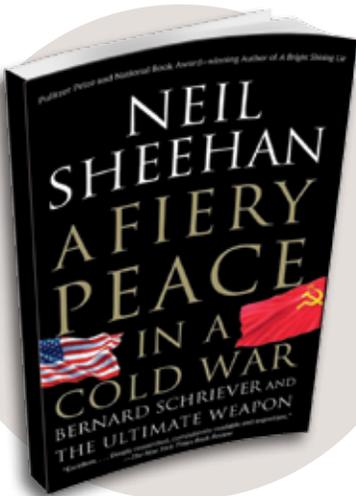
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## ***A Fiery Peace in a Cold War: Bernard Schriever and the Ultimate Weapon***

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**Author(s):**

Neil Sheehan

**Publisher:**

Random House

**Copyright Date:**

2009

**ISBN:**

978-0679422846

**Hard/Softcover:**

Hardcover, 560 pages

**Reviewed by:**

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**Publisher Summary**

In this long-awaited history, Neil Sheehan, winner of the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award, describes the US-Soviet arms race through the story of the colorful and visionary American Air Force officer, Bernard Schriever.

This never-before-told story details Schriever's quest to prevent the Soviet Union from acquiring nuclear superiority, and describes American efforts to develop the unstoppable nuclear-weapon delivery system, the intercontinental ballistic missile, the first weapons meant to deter an atomic holocaust rather than to be fired in anger. In this sweeping narrative, Sheehan brings to life a huge cast of some of the most intriguing characters of the cold war, including the brilliant physicist John Von Neumann, and the hawkish Air Force general, Curtis LeMay. Melding biography, history, world affairs, and science, *A Fiery Peace in a Cold War* transports the reader back and forth from individual drama to world stage.

**Review**

With an attention to detail seldom encountered, coupled with penetrating psychological explorations into the minds and motives of many of those involved, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Neil Sheehan provides a comprehensive look at the Cold War development of the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile

(ICBM), written around the story of the life and career of General Bernard Schriever, commander of the Air Force Systems Command—the brilliant man who brought the ICBM to life. He does this while exploring the birth of the United States Air Force and the formation of the Strategic Air Command. The importance of the ICBM among U.S. weapon systems, and how the people involved came together to give it birth, is masterfully recounted.

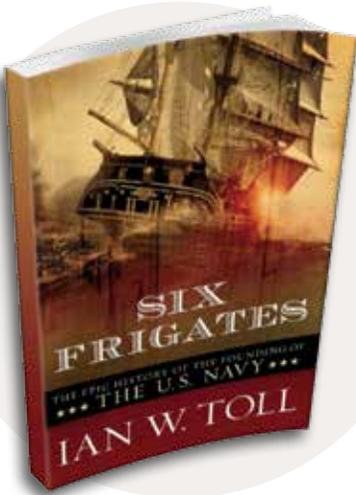
Schriever's influence was palpable. He had battled the likes of General Curtis LeMay, first commander of Strategic Air Command, who believed bombers were the ultimate strategic weapon. Sheehan shows how they lacked the vision to see how useless bombers would be in the event of a strategic nuclear war where the ICBM, capable of striking a target continents away in a matter of minutes, would be the primary—and deciding—weapon. By 1963, Schriever controlled 40 percent of the Air Force budget.

Sheehan captures in fascinating detail the relationship between Schriever and the head of the U.S. Army Air Force, Henry “Hap” Arnold, and shows with clarity seldom seen elsewhere the influence a visionary leader like Arnold is able to exert to shape the career and open the doors to advancement of someone as brilliant and visionary as Schriever. He shows how Schriever's vision and strategic thinking ability enabled him to see with absolute clarity the need to develop the ICBM to protect his adopted country from the growing menace of the Soviet Union, in spite of encountering resistance from LeMay at every turn. Sheehan also describes how Schriever set up research and development labs as a critical element in the advancement of weapon systems, while addressing the problems with Soviet spies who had infiltrated the research labs. He was able to stay on target, to continually shift tactics to reach his strategic goal, working through and around challenges from people, budgets, family obligations, and Air Force top brass. All those who worked with Schriever really did walk with a legend whose story deserved to be memorialized. For this, we owe Sheehan a debt of gratitude.

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## ***Six Frigates: The Epic History of the Founding of the U.S. Navy***

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**Author(s):**

Ian W. Toll

**Publisher:**

W. W. Norton &amp; Company

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2008

**ISBN:**

978-0393330328

**Hard/Softcover:**

Softcover, 592 pages

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**Publisher Summary**

Before the ink was dry on the U.S. Constitution, the establishment of a permanent military became the most divisive issue facing the new government. The founders—particularly Jefferson, Madison, and Adams—debated fiercely. Would a standing army be the thin end of dictatorship? Would a navy protect from pirates or drain the treasury and provoke hostility? Britain alone had hundreds of powerful warships.

From the decision to build six heavy frigates, through the cliff-hanger campaign against Tripoli, to the war that shook the world in 1812, Ian W. Toll tells this grand tale with the political insight of *Founding Brothers* and the narrative flair of Patrick O’Brian.

**Review**

*Six Frigates* focuses on the building of the first powerful warships—*USS Constitution* and her sisters—of the United States and their operations in peace and war. As Ian Toll reveals, however, the story of how the ships were created is just as interesting as how they served at sea. It might surprise readers of *Six Frigates* to learn that the sorts of problems that challenge today’s acquisition professionals also plagued their predecessors of the 1790s.

President George Washington asked for the ships in 1794 to force the Barbary States of North Africa to stop capturing American merchantmen and enslaving their crews. Because at that time there was no United States Navy, Congress gave the task of procuring the ships to Secretary of War Henry Knox. Knox, however, was not given a free hand. The authorizing legislation required four of the ships to have 36 guns and two 44 guns; the law also specified the numbers of officers and enlisted sailors for the frigates, as well as their ratings. Congress “laid out details of pay and rations” and gave Washington the authority to appoint the ships’ captains.

Finally, the authorization required the Secretary of War to halt construction of the ships if the Barbary States agreed to cease capturing American vessels. No builder could have confidence that work once begun would be completed.

Knox began by choosing to build new ships instead of converting existing merchant ships. He rejected the argument that conversions would be more (to use current terminology) cost-effective. But he then had to accede to Washington’s decision to construct the six ships in six different ports in order “to spread the financial benefits” and to prevent the shipwrights in Philadelphia from monopolizing warship construction. Knox was aware that spreading the work as Washington wished would increase the cost of the six-ship program, but he proceeded to lease six available shipyards and then hired “master builders” to oversee the work in each. There was no way that Knox could avoid managing his “industrial base.”

How should the ships be designed? Ideally, they would be well armed, fast enough to run away from more powerful ships, and handy enough under sail to outmaneuver their opponents. Joshua Humphreys, a Philadelphia shipwright, proposed building ships “superior to any European frigate,” and put forward his own design. But other shipwrights differed with Humphreys, leaving Knox with the unenviable task of making a difficult choice in a field where he was anything but an expert.

Once begun, construction of the ships was hampered by a lack of the right building materials, adequate guns, and the lack of a “well-established principle to guide shipwrights in the masting and sparring of ships.” As a result, no two ships were identical. Each captain selected “mast and spar dimensions for the frigate under his command,” and each also learned through trial and error how best to sail his particular ship. “Configuration management” didn’t exist.

*Six Frigates* documents classic acquisition dilemmas, from how to manage competition among potential vendors to shielding actual work from interference by members of Congress intent on pressing for their own special agendas. The book also goes on to cover the operational histories of the ships. It is indeed “an epic history,” and the first 200 pages are of special interest to those engaged in military acquisition today.