

[Download] Sidewinder: Creative Missile Development at China Lake

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Von Ron Westrum

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SIDEWINDER



Creative


Missile

Development

at

China Lake

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Von Ron Westrum : Sidewinder: Creative Missile Development at China Lake before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sidewinder: Creative Missile Development at China Lake:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich.
Interesting story marred by flawed writing.Von Ein KundeThe development of the successful Sidewinder (AIM-9) heat-seeking missile deserves a book. This one is almost it. The author discusses not only technical problems and their solutions but also the managerial side of weapons development. Unfortunately, there is too much chronological back-

and-forth to allow one to get an idea of how the technical solutions worked off preceding developments; a graphic timeline would have allowed the reader to know what happened when. Westrum doesn't discuss the what the China Lake center was doing, and how it was doing it before the scientists and engineers responsible for Sidewinder showed up. While there is some discussion of the social activities of the Sidewinder personnel, this reviewer never got a feel for the whole China Lake setting. Westrum relies too heavily on "telling" and not "showing" ; in some places he says that certain defense contractors had problems managing their programs, but provides little evidence of what he would base that on. (Not to say that private industry contractors haven't had problems; this reviewer's knowledge of McDonnell Douglas problems makes him sympathetic to any story of How The Navy Could Do It Better.) The author wants to use China Lake and the Sidewinder project as a possible model of how to correctly manage a weapons project, but his story comes off more as a paean to certain personnel. If the secret of success is the right manager or designer or technician, this book might give us some guidance on selecting those people (flexible, open-minded, creative, informal, dedicated, technically competent) but there must also be some managerial methods and organizational that get lost in an emphasis on personality. Still, recommended for anyone interested in modern air combat, aerospace technology, or defense management.

KurzbeschreibungIn the mid-1950s a small group of overworked, underpaid scientists and engineers, working on a remote base in the Mojave Desert, developed a weapon no one had asked for but that everyone was looking for. Sidewinder is the story of how that unorthodox team at China Lake, lead by the visionary Bill McLean, overcame Navy bureaucracy and more heavily funded projects to develop the world's best air-to-air missile. Based on years of research and hundreds of interviews, Westrum's study examines the unique military-civilian cult of creativity that helped Mclean and his China Lake team produce an amazing array of technological and engineering marvels. In the intellectual pressure cooker provided by the desert isolation, the scientists dreamed and tinkered while test pilots such as Wally Schirra and Glenn Tierney took to the air, often risking life and limb to test a fledgling system. Against the ongoing story of billion-dollar weapons development contracts, astronomical cost overruns, and defense acquisitions scandals, this revealing, highly readable account of the development of one of the most successful weapons in history provides an instructive contrast.