

About the Author



Elliott V. Converse III

A retired Air Force colonel with a doctorate in history from Princeton University, Dr. Converse was the lead historian on the Defense Acquisition History Project team. His Air Force career included assignments as an air intelligence officer in Thailand during the Vietnam War, a faculty member at the U.S. Air Force Academy and the Air War College, a strategic planner on the staff of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and commander of the Air Force Historical Research Agency. He is the author of *Circling the Earth: United States Plans for a Postwar Overseas Military Base System, 1942–1948* (2005); principal author of *The Exclusion of Black Soldiers from the Medal of Honor in World War II* (1997); and editor of *Forging the Sword: Selecting, Educating, and Training Cadets and Junior Officers in the Modern World* (1998).



REARMING FOR  
THE COLD WAR  
1945–1960

In *Rearming for the Cold War*, the first publication in a multivolume series on the history of the acquisition of major weapon systems by the Department of Defense, author Elliott Converse presents a meticulously researched overview of changes in acquisition policies, organizations, and processes within the United States military establishment during the decade and a half following World War II. Many of the changes that shaped the nature and course of weapons research and development, production, and contracting through the end of the century were instituted between 1945 and 1960; many of the problems that have repeatedly challenged defense policymakers and acquisition professionals also first surfaced during these years.

Although a large body of published literature exists on specific aspects of weapons acquisition, primarily studies of individual systems, this study is the first to combine the histories of the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and the military services into one account. The volume is organized chronologically, with individual chapters addressing the roles of OSD, the Army, Navy, and Air Force in two distinct periods. The first, roughly coinciding with President Truman’s tenure, covers the years from the end of World War II through the end of the Korean War. The second spans the two terms of the Eisenhower presidency from 1953 through early 1961. The volume approaches the subject through discussion of the evolution of acquisition policies, organizations, and processes; the interservice and intraservice political context of acquisition; the relationship between rapidly advancing technology and acquisition; the role of the defense industry in new weapons development; the origins and growth of a specialized acquisition workforce; and acquisition reform. Case studies of individual systems illustrate the various forces influencing weapons programs.

These instruments of warfare—aircraft, armored vehicles, artillery, guided missiles, naval vessels, and supporting electronic systems—when combined with nuclear warheads, gave the American military unprecedented deterrent and striking power. They were also enormously expensive. This study documents the efforts of political and military leaders in the Truman and Eisenhower administrations to overcome intractable political, technological, organizational, and financial challenges to arming the United States military for the Cold War struggle.