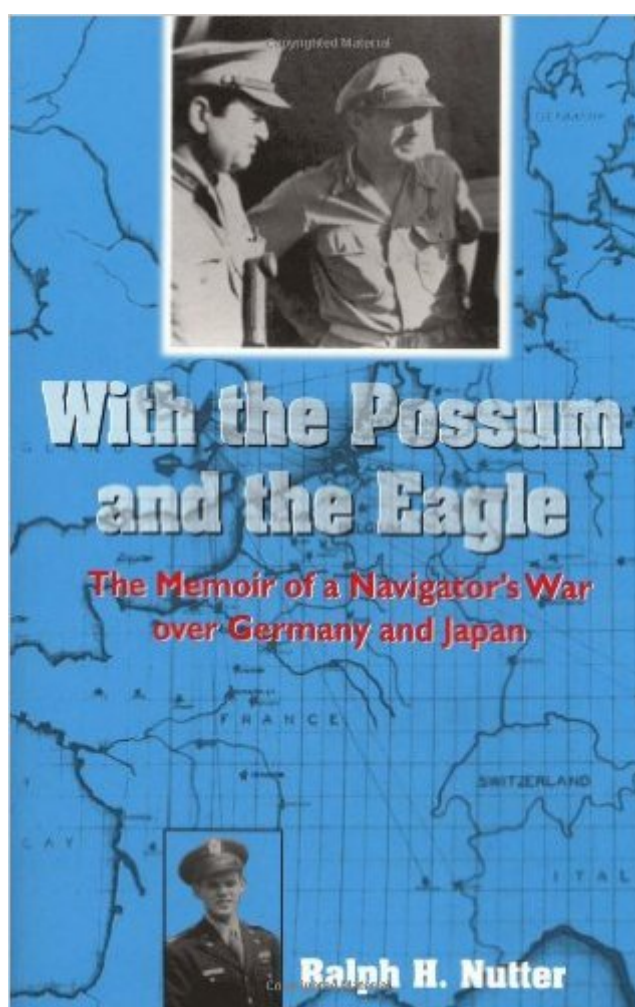


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With The Possum And The Eagle: The Memoir Of A Navigator's War Over Germany And Japan (North Texas Military Biography And Memoir)



Synopsis

Ralph H. Nutter was the lead navigator for Eighth Air Force raids over Germany when he was assigned as Maj. Gen. Curtis LeMay's group navigator. Later, as the strategic air war over Europe was winding down, the ace navigator was transferred to B-29 Superfortress duty with the Twentieth Air Force in the Pacific, where he was picked by Brigadier Gen. Haywood Possum Hansell to be his bomber navigator. After LeMay succeeded Hansell as bomber commander, Nutter returned to navigation duty with LeMay. Hansell and LeMay were two of our country's leading combat commanders in Europe and the Pacific. They pioneered the concepts of strategic airpower and high-altitude daylight precision bombing. With the Possum and the Eagle affords a rare insider's perspective on aviation leadership and strategic issues, melded with extraordinary accounts of courage under fire.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Although we had to wait until after General LeMay's death, we finally find within "With the Possum and the Eagle" the real story of the leadership of General Curtis LeMay. If you're interested in the history of World War II and the significant role aviation had in both the European and Pacific campaigns, Ralph Nutter's account is difficult to put down. Nutter's close proximity to senior aviation leadership during the war gives the reader a rare glimpse into what those wartime leaders faced and the decisions they had to make vis-a-vis both logistical and environmental constraints to operations.

A superb account.

This is an excellent memoir by a navigator who saw deeply into the lives of the generals of the title, Haywood "Possum" Hansell and Curtis "Eagle" LeMay. Hansell was an idealist who was committed to the doctrine of precision bombing with minimal civilian losses. LeMay was committed to using the tools he had, the B-29s, in whatever way would most quickly win the war, despite collateral damage. Nutter also had occasion to work with actor Ronald Reagan. Reagan was in an Army film unit that was supposed to help Nutter with a training film. He records that Reagan was charming but useless. His enormous ego vastly overshadowed any dedication he had to the war effort. Though Nutter was on a tight schedule to complete the project prior to being deployed to the Pacific, Reagan couldn't be bothered with putting in any extra hours as might cut into his home life. The technicians told Nutter that Reagan would butter up anyone he thought might help his career but treated the little people as mere tools. I sense a pattern here.

Possum was General Haywood Hansell; Eagle, General Curtis LeMay. Ralph Nutter was a student at Harvard Law when Pearl Harbour occurred. A few weeks later he was in the Army Air Corp headed to navigator school. (A few years later he was the only survivor of his 22 fellow graduates.) A few months later and he was in England as a navigator on a B-17. In an incident where he knew where they were and none of the others did, Eagle made him the lead navigator of the group. As the European war was winding down, he was transferred to the Pacific and B-29's. Again he was made lead navigator. Eventually LeMay was sent to the Pacific and Nutter returned to work with him. This book is both a story of the war, and a story of leadership in war time. His insights on LeMay are enlightening and impressed me. LeMay's general reputation is a lot lower than that held by Mr. Nutter.

Ralph Nutter writes with extraordinary candor and clarity about a period in our history when he and others of his generation faced terrible odds in the struggle to save the world from Fascism. His account is as compelling as it is straightforward and unvarnished. A must-read for anyone fascinated by the true meaning of courage under fire.

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