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THE BOOKSHELF

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TO FLY THROUGH THE AIR: THE EXPERIENCE OF LEARNING TO FLY by Tom Morrison. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1991, 188 pages. Ames, Iowa 50010.

Written in the first person, this book fulfills its promise to be a "what-it's-like" story and not a "how-to" manual. The reader becomes a third person in a Cessna 152. From the "discover flight" onward, the language is aviation layman. The writing is entertaining with graphic similes and clear, informative contrasts. Example: "It dawns on the aspiring pilot that . . . in many weather conditions the freedom of the skies is about as desirable as the freedom of some of the nastier parts of a big city on Saturday night" (7).

Some flight knowledge is required to fully comprehend the events. A glossary would have given the book wider appeal.

The beginning flier can empathize with, and the long time professional can be reminded of, how it felt to experience that first spin—that first stall—that first realization that "instructors are maniacs" (30).

Pleasant, light reading.



DONALD W. DOUGLAS: A HEART WITH WINGS by Wilbur H. Morrison. Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1991, 255

pages + Index. Ames, Iowa 50010.

This is a story of the evolution of the airplane as experienced by Donald W. Douglas, his Douglas Aircraft Company, and his competitors in aircraft design, production, and sales.

One of the world's first aeronautical engineers, Douglas was a strong, loyal, visionary leader; a brilliant man of skill who valued honesty above all. He moved his company forward while gaining world recognition and the confidence and trust of world leaders. Example:

During the summer of 1960 . . . [Mexican] President López Mateos and his entire cabinet flew with him on a demonstration flight. Douglas, his eyes wide with wonder and astonishment, told a company official, "It's incredible the confidence they have in a Douglas airplane. If it had crashed the entire government of Mexico would have been wiped out!" (218)

Douglas is shown in the context of his times which includes relevant information about his family, his peers, his competitors, the economy, and world events. His strange failure to act decisively concerning a prototype of the DC 8 was a turning point in the affairs of the Douglas Aircraft Company.

Facts are detailed as to dates,

times, places, events, and persons involved, and presented in an interesting and easily readable manner.



BURT RUTAN: REINVENTING THE AIRPLANE by Vera Foster Rollo. Lanham: Maryland Historical Press, 1991, 277 pages + Bibliography + Index. 9205 Tuckerman Street, Lanham, MD 20706.

This book is a must for Burt Rutan fans and/or those desiring a history of the record-making flight of his Voyager aircraft, flown by his brother, Dick Rutan, with co-pilot Jeanna Yaeger. It is a thoroughly researched and documented biography containing his ancestry (including a family tree beginning in 1852), with detail and dialogue covering his life beginning with 1962 and continuing through 1990. The tone is chatty and familiar, allowing for rapid reading.

Some of the facts could have been summarized, however, italicized sub-headings keep the reader aware of location and events.

A Glossary would have been useful.



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