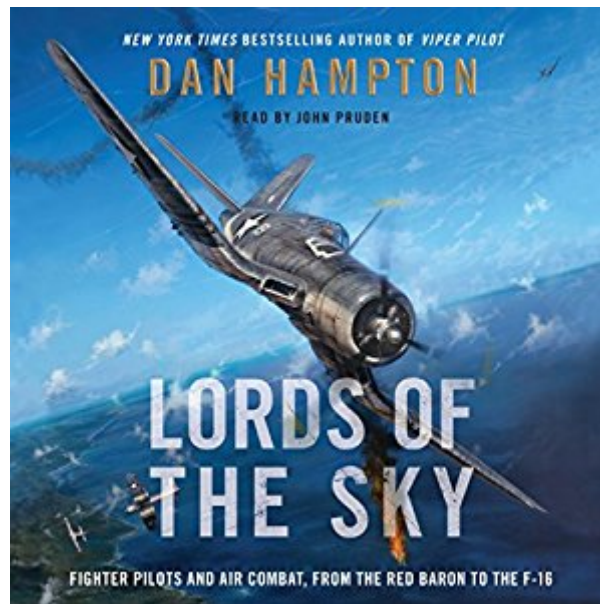


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Lords Of The Sky: Fighter Pilots And Air Combat, From The Red Baron To The F-16



Synopsis

The New York Times best-selling author of *Viper Pilot* and retired USAF F-16 legend Dan Hampton offers the first comprehensive popular history of combat aviation - a unique, entertaining, and action-packed look at the aces of the air and their machines, from the Red Baron and his triplane in World War I to today's technologically expert flying warriors in supersonic jets. One of the most decorated fighter pilots in history, U.S. Air Force Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.) Dan Hampton goes back 100 years to tell the extraordinary story of the most famous fighter planes and the brave and daring heroes who made them legend. Drawing on his expertise, Hampton shines a spotlight on the pioneers who have ruled the air from World War I through the Cold War to today. He provides unique insight into gutsy pioneers such as Manfred von Richthofen and his red triplane, and the flyboys in the iconic P51 Mustang who faced the Nazi Luftwaffe. Here, too, is a thoughtful look at modern air warriors, including his own exploits in the high-tech f-16 Falcon. Interwoven throughout this sweeping narrative history is Hampton's personal account of traveling the world to find these storied aircraft. Strapping himself into the cockpit of such planes, he shares the thrill and experience of flying each. Exhilarating, told in his acclaimed high-octane style, *Lords of the Sky* is a fresh look at the development of aviation for history and military buffs alike.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Pros: 1-Interesting discussion on the inter-war years between WW1 and WW2. How the Luftwaffe and Soviet Union worked together to develop aircraft and used the Spanish Civil War as a testing

ground for equipment and pilots. I had heard this before, but never really knew any of the details.

2-Profiles of some little known fighter pilots. I especially enjoyed the profile of the woman ace who flew for the USSR.

3-Excellent discussion on the death of The Red Baron. I had seen a History Channel show that called into question that he was shot down by Roy Brown, but they themselves missed a few important details. Suffice to say, the author convinced me as to how The Red Baron died.

4-Great sections on Wild Weasel mission. That was expected since that is what the authors profession.

Cons:

1-While discussion of the overall strategic and tactical situation on the ground or sea is vital to understanding the air war, he could go on far longer than was necessary. Even if some readers were unfamiliar with these histories, they still seemed long. This left less room to discuss other things, such as...

2-No discussion about how the various maneuvers used in air to air combat developed. While it may be obvious that Max Immelmann developed The Immelmann, what about all the other maneuvers? Indeed, what are the other maneuvers? Do we know who developed them? When they came about? I'm sure (I guess) that not all the maneuvers were possible right from the start. I'm guessing that as airplanes grew more powerful and designs progressed, more and more maneuvers became possible. Who developed the Chandelle, Yo-Yo, Wing-Over etc, and when were they developed? Perhaps some illustrations of the more common maneuvers and when they are employed.

3-The WW2 section was particularly disappointing. The profiles on the pilots were interesting, but some of the dogfighting descriptions are hard to visualize, and could have benefited from a few illustrations. Other than that, WW2 was battle overviews. Nothing that couldn't be found on Wikipedia. Some of the details about Midway were wrong, according to other things I've read on the subject.

4-I would like to have heard more regarding the Israeli conflicts since they have quite a bit of experience in air to air and air to ground combat using American equipment. It didn't match my, admittedly high, expectations. Several times I almost put it aside and started reading something else. But I stuck with it and it did end with some strong sections. It's not worth the hard cover price for sure. I'm guessing if you are a military history buff, like me, you may be disappointed. But, if you are starting with little knowledge of the conflicts it discusses, then you may enjoy it more since it is all new information on interesting times in history.

Lords of the Sky covers 100 years of aviation history at a thrilling pace. Each chapter starts with a gripping, well-chosen scene (chapter 1 begins with Roland Garros battling German Albatrosses in his Morane Saulnier equipped with jerry-rigged Hotchkiss machine guns; chapter 11 sees the legendary Robin Olds in his P-51 in 1944; and so on). Hampton does a great job of placing the combat episode (the exciting part) in the larger context of history, politics, and technological

innovation. Overall a great read and very highly recommended.

When I first began this book, I thought I could see how it was going to unfold... in this case, that was a good thing; explaining the primitive state of early aviation and how it progressed, plus the most welcome extra context of what was happening on the ground and how it drove and shaped what was happening in the air. Excellent touch. As it entered WWII, the author began to give much more information regarding the ground war and its machinations. I was fine with that, it's a great way of providing perspective. Except, and with great respect to the author, I feel he lost the plot here as he proceeded to go on and on and on about it, entirely shifting emphasis from aviation to land warfare. This was space that would've been far better dedicated to aircraft development and Flying. To be fair, the author's flying sequences are absolutely superb... I felt I was in the cockpit. In natural progression, we moved to the Korean War, then Viet Nam, then the middle east and wrapping up with Iraq rounds 1 & 2. One glaring omission, I thought, was not covering the introduction of stealth technology (especially considering the amount of information he gives regarding the development and refinement of radar). I'm aware that the F-117 was merely called a "fighter" even though it was unarmed and its mission was strictly air-to-ground, but it still should have been mentioned considering its impact on aerial warfare. I really did enjoy this book. After I realized that the author was wont to go off on tangents here and there, I just gave up on my preconceptions and went with the flow. Certainly, it was all nevertheless informative and very readable. I undoubtedly learned many things I was previously unaware of and I'd consider myself a fair student on the subjects herein. It's a pity I couldn't sit down with the author over a beer or two and ask him about a lot of things I found odd which he'd left out. It is a compliment that the greatest criticism I offer is that it's not long enough! Still, I'm most grateful for the book and unreservedly give it my recommendation. Thank you, Mr. Hampton.

I found the book a good read and enjoyed it. I have always been a reader of Air Combat starting with a group of WWI novels 60 years ago. Though this is mainly a history I found it engaging and it kept me pushing forward. The BUT comes from the inability to quickly look ahead to the footnotes and thus I think you lose a lot of the information as you read through the book. It would be a lot better if the footnotes for a page were put at the bottom of the page rather than at the end of the book. I understand that this would involve a lot of time but it would make the digital book better.

IMHO

I found "Lords of the Sky" to be a very good read. There were tons of facts and history in there to satisfy a technical reader like myself along with "hold on to the edge of your seat" action. There was obviously a tremendous amount of research that went into this. I was doubly rewarded with answers to questions I had wondered about for years and an exciting story. Great job!

This was a much better book than I expected. I only expected a book about fighter pilots and dogfights, but instead, the author also included considerable detail of the histories of the conflicts and the people who affected the way that the air battles were fought.

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