

# Flight Bag

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## YOUR CAPTAIN SPEAKING – VIEWS FROM THE FLIGHT DECK

Book: 351-page softback

Author: Captain Scott Birrell

Price: £12.99

"This is your captain speaking." How many times have we heard those words? Captain

Scott Birrell began flying in the 1970s and was a professional pilot for 37 years. This book is a collection of his stories from many different kinds of private and commercial flying. From learning on a Piper Cherokee as a teenager to flying the Boeing 747, Scott takes the reader with him in the cockpit on several incredible journeys such as flying Douglas Dakotas from Uganda to very challenging approaches in terrible weather taking passengers on holiday.

Birrell grew up in a suburb of Glasgow and worked as a baggage handler to pay for flying lessons. After becoming a private pilot, a qualified flying instructor, and then a commercial pilot, he was hired by Loganair. He subsequently worked for many airline companies including Britannia Airways and Virgin. His logbook is filled with multiple aircraft types, but most of his airline flying was on the Boeing 737, 747, 757 and his beloved 767.

This book is a riveting read of amazing and sometimes funny stories from around the world. Scott has faced many challenging situations in the cockpit and he is very candid about how working with other crewmembers is both rewarding and sometimes demanding. There are only four photographs in the book but Scott paints a vivid picture of his flying in each chapter. What really comes through is his passion for flying. This is a book for any flyer, especially those interested in becoming a commercial pilot.

Published by Wetsocks Books: ISBN 9781527273641, available from [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)



## THE FLYING MATHEMATICIANS OF WORLD WAR I

Book: 269-page hardback

Written by: Tony Royle

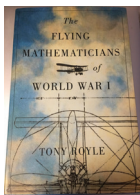
Price: £22.50

Tony Royle has found a unique and somewhat hidden story of World War One aviation, a time when aeronautical engineering was in its infancy. This is the account of a group of mathematicians and scientists mostly from institutions like Cambridge University who dove into the field and who in some cases became pilots themselves.

Famous designers such as Geoffrey de Havilland teamed up with these academics and explored issues such as load factors, spinning and stability. Royle, himself an ex-RAF and commercial pilot, includes the mechanics of how the early test flying was conducted and the mathematical computations used to test and improve airframe design and discover limits that led to safer operation of Allied aeroplanes during the Great War.

A high level of research is evident throughout this book and each chapter is filled with photographs of the experiments, personnel and mathematical notes that led to so many discoveries in aviation. The author also takes a look at the aviation periodicals and publications of the time and their influence on the aviation industry and the public. This is a book unlike most previous works and it tells a story of mathematics, science and the bravery of many academics, many of whom took to the air to better understand the actual conditions that their testing was trying to improve. It is a fascinating book that will appeal to both World War One aviation historians and anyone wanting to learn more about the history of early test flying.

Published by McGill-Queen's University Press: ISBN 9780228003731, available from [www.mqup.ca](http://www.mqup.ca)



## THE GENERAL STAFF AND THE HELICOPTER – BRITISH ARMY HELICOPTER PROJECTS AND WEAPONS

Book: 64-page softback

Author: Chris Gibson

Price: £11.95

The latest in a series of Project Tech Profile books, this volume explores the development and procurement of helicopters for the UK Ministry of Defence. It looks specifically at the initial resistance from the RAF to allow 'armed' helicopters to be fielded by the British Army, the challenging history of selecting and testing various scout and attack helicopters and takes a brief glimpse at the future.

Early helicopters such as the W.14 Skeeter and the Scout are described, as are foreign developments such as the Gazelle, Tiger, A129 Mangusta and the AH-64A Apache. A major part of the first half of the book is devoted to the Lynx, a scout, attack and light transport helicopter. The remainder concentrates on the search for a dedicated attack helicopter, ultimately leading to the selection of the AH-64 Apache. Some designs never left the drawing boards and these are discussed as is the development of air-launched weapons for the Lynx and Apache.

This book is filled with company drawings, photographs, line art by the author and specially commissioned artwork. It is short but is packed with information outlining the history of the British Army's protracted attempts at finding an effective scout helicopter, and its later acquisition of the Apache attack helicopter.

The technical and historical aspects will be of appeal to many readers, but especially so for those with an interest in the British Army's rotary aviation. Published by Blue Envoy Press: ISBN 9780956195173, available from [blue.envoy.services@googlemail.com](mailto:blue.envoy.services@googlemail.com)



## MODERN USMC AIR POWER – AIRCRAFT AND UNITS OF THE FLYING 'LEATHERNECKS'

Book: 253-page softback

Written by: Joe Copalman

Price: £35

The United States Marine Corps (USMC) has a long tradition of using air power to directly support its ground elements in a way that is unique. Joe Copalman has compiled the most comprehensive and up-to-date source on USMC air power since the 1990s, with the main focus of this book being on the first two decades of this century.

After a brief introduction and glossary, Copalman follows the path of a USMC aviator from the training pipeline to the frontline. The somewhat complicated structure and order of battle is then explained in easy to understand diagrams, tables and maps with the basing locations annotated.

The chapters then follow a structure based on the various roles and missions performed by the fixed wing and rotary assets in the United States Marine Corps. Light attack, medium lift, aerial refueller/transport, and electronic warfare are just some examples.

The level of detail and the easy-to-read format is to be commended. The author combines technical detail with first-person accounts that connect the development and employment of marine aviation platforms in a way that not only informs the reader but also makes it an enjoyable read. The quantity and choice of sharp action-filled photos is another highlight along with graphics of the various squadron insignias.

This is a book for anyone with an interest in current United States Marine Corps aviation and it should be on the shelves of all professional military education institutions.

Published by Harpia Publishing: ISBN 9781950394029, available from [www.harpia-publishing.com](http://www.harpia-publishing.com)



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