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Once A Fighter Pilot



Synopsis

* The true adventure tales of a U.S. Air Force fighter who flew more than 400 combat hours while on duty in Vietnam* Provides a rare insider's glimpse into the world of the flying elite, detailing their education, training, emotions, and day to day experiences* Poignant, sometimes funny, brutally honest, always exciting, and an eye-opening look at one of the most tumultuous eras in U.S. history.

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Customer Reviews

Let me say that as a former crew chief on the F-4 Phantom, I can appreciate the detail Mr. Cook included in his book. I thoroughly enjoyed it and can relate to some of the things he describes since I was stationed on the flight line at Udorn RTAFB in northern Thailand (13th TFS, F-4D Phantoms) in 1972-1973, during Operation Linebacker II and more. Back then pilots did not really associate with crew chiefs and we just didn't know much detail in their missions. I wanted to be a fighter pilot

so bad, but lack of a college education at the time along with 20/70 vision stated otherwise and I didn't get these things until later in life. I like the way he writes with numerous short and focused chapters. This was a good read for me and I'm glad he took the time to keep the memories and share them with others later on.

Jerry Cook writes a good story, he tells what it was like to fly at a very interesting time in the US Air Force. His viewpoint is one not often seen. Although ahead of me by only nine years, his experiences were totally different than mine in many respects and exactly the same in others. I really enjoyed the format of the various and sundry short stories and snippets. A great read, highly recommended. LTC Hap Arnold, CA ANG, USAF, Retired Phantom Pilot

Jerry Cook's "Once A Fighter Pilot..." is one of the finest, best-written, and most absorbing books I have ever read about military aviation. There are three principle reasons for my saying this: 1. General Cook writes in a very informal, almost conversational style, which flows naturally and puts the reader at ease. Reading OAFP, I felt as comfortable as I would have if I'd been sitting down with an old friend over a couple of beers, discussing his career. He writes as he would speak, and there is nothing at all pretentious or stilted about him. 2. OAFP is written not with long, drawn-out chapters, but in a series of short vignettes, some only a page or two long. This makes for a very easy read. 3. OAFP is one of those rare books about military aviation that is written for pilots and non-pilots alike. General Cook knows that not everyone reading his words will be intimately familiar with Air Force jargon and terms, and he takes that into account, explaining technology, terminology, and procedures, where necessary, in plain English. Jerry Cook began his military career during a time of great technological development and political turmoil, and for those interested in that period of history -- the late 1950s to the late 1960s -- his recollections are fascinating. Whether describing his first encounter with an SR-71 Blackbird, offering his insights into the military hierarchy of the era, or conveying the life-and-death intensity of his 200+ combat missions in Vietnam, he provides the reader with a valuable perspective. Some of General Cook's tales are hilarious, some are gripping, some are tragic, and some are keenly insightful about that period of time in US Air Force history. Put them all together, and combine them with his superb writing style, and you have one of those great books that you simply won't want to put down, and don't want to end.

The author makes a good description of his tours in Vietnam flying the Phabulous Phantom, telling his story from his personal point of view. You may disagree with some of his opinions, but at least

he makes it clear that they are his and spares no praise nor punches to whom he thinks deserves them. Overall it is an interesting story well told, although not much different from the dozen very similar ones already published - recommended.

I just lost a friend who flew same place same time ..He did not talk about the war until his last day's .
" But when he did it was right out of the book ." To busy and focused to be afraid ... Bless our Vet's...scs

This well written book is about a rural American boy seeing a plane pass over and knowing right then he wanted to be a pilot. It goes on to tell of his schooling in flight and into the air force as a young man and then called to duty in Vietnam. Several humorous parts as he is still in flight school and some antics including a run in with ranchers and their cattle at the Mexico and United States border. The schooling and gaining of skills in flight school are kept interesting and keep the pages turning. As the story brings the pilot to Vietnam with it's never ending heat and humidity the flying is much more serious as the missions and risks increase. The action is paced well and once again the lighter side comes about while chasing a bandit at mach speed, unable to catch the elusive plane, a very interesting chapter, you'll see why. I would recommend this book highly to aviation and conflict aviation enthusiasts alike. It was a very good read front to back.

Fantastic and well written. I really enjoyed this book, a must read for all aviation enthusiasts. I have so much respect for all who fought during the Vietnam war. It was truly wild !.

Gen. Cook's book is very bit as good as others about flying the heavy and fast metal during Vietnam (F-4s, F-105s, F-100s). I absolutely loved the gritty details given from an aviators perspective. Defying gravity in any machine is dangerous; doing it in a Phantom II with people shooting at you is another thing all together. As an aviator hearing or reading the stories of these warriors helps me reflect on how lucky I am to have had men like guarding my freedom. A must read if you have an aviation library. A big plus were the common sense but example supported stories about how bad judgement in a cockpit can and does catch up to you.

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