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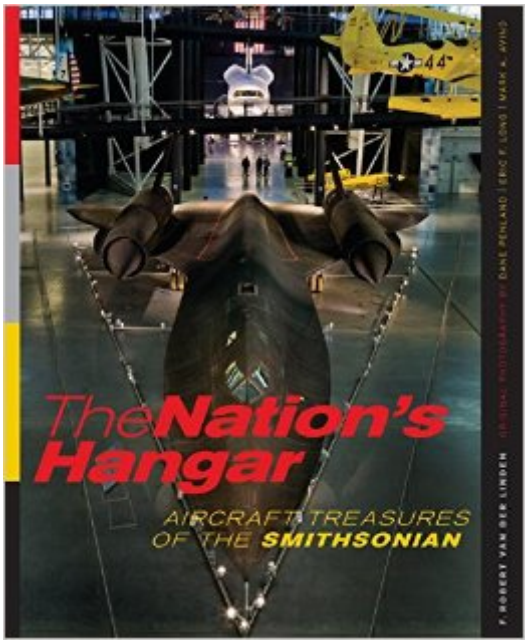
The Nation's Hangar: Aircraft Treasures Of The Smithsonian



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Synopsis

The Nation’s Hangar: Aircraft Treasures of the Smithsonian offers a fascinating textual and visual history of civilian, military, and commercial aviation from the earliest balloon flights to today’s most advanced aircraft. The Nation’s Hangar charts the awe-inspiring history of flight around the world. F. Robert Van Der Linden, a Smithsonian curator and leading expert on aviation history, explains the fascinating stories behind aviation’s great technological advances and provides historic and social context that highlights the many ways in which these innovations have changed the course of human history. The Nation’s Hangar is also a visual delight. The Smithsonian aircraft collection has never looked so compelling and sleek. The Nation’s Hangar is a must-have for that fly boy or fly girl in your flight pattern.

Book Information

Paperback: 256 pages

Publisher: Smithsonian Books; 1St Edition edition (November 1, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1588343162

ISBN-13: 978-1588343161

Product Dimensions: 9.1 x 0.6 x 11 inches

Shipping Weight: 2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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Customer Reviews

There are some really great photos of some of the planes in the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center in this book. It’s an introduction to aviation, a sample of some of the more famous planes from the original Wright Brothers plane to the Concord. If you are ever visiting the DC area and have an interest in aviation, leave at least a Ã Â day to tour this museum, it is fantastic.I was hoping for a book that would list each plane on display and in restoration, but instead, this book gives a brief history of the museum, restoration projects and specific planes, information serious aviation buffs would already know. I would recommend this book if you’re planning to visit, have been there & want to know some general knowledge of the absolutely fantastic planes they have there.As an intro

book, it’s very good, but for the more seasoned reader, it’s too general. Not good for modelers, there are limited photos/views of some of the planes on display.

The Smithsonian maintains the world’s largest collection of historic aircraft and spacecraft in the world. About 20 years ago I toured its National Mall facility (the Wright Brothers’ first plane, the Spirit of St. Louis, the Apollo 11 module, etc.), unfortunately without a camera. ’The Nation’s Hangar’ offers an up-to-date tour of its other facility (200 aircraft), near Dulles Airport, memorialized via excellent photos. Visitors to either facility will be overwhelmed by the incredible progress made in air and space travel within little over 100 years, thanks to the incredible innovativeness and bravery of those involved.Slightly more reflection also brings awareness of the great skills and efforts made to preserve and restore the aircraft. The effects of rot, sun and ultraviolet light, corrosion, rust, hardening and cracking of rubber parts, wear and tear, and animal damage all have been miraculously reversed through careful research, work, and in some instances, replacement. Lots of polishing, waxing, and skilled repainting are de rigueur.The collection, along with accompanying history and photographs depicts not just the first aircraft, but their first use in combat - reconnaissance, ’bombers’ (throw grenades over the side), fighters, flying boats, etc. The U.S. built over 300,000 aircraft during WWII, and the Smithsonian contains WWII planes from Japan, Germany, Great Britain, Russia, and the U.S., including early jets and rocket-powered planes. Visitors to the museum and readers of the book also will realize that many of the early manufacturers are no longer with us, just like most of the early pilots. The Smithsonian facility at Dulles contains a Concorde, an early 707, and a Blackbird (cross-country in 64 minutes and 19 seconds in 1990, average speed 2,144), among many, many others.

It’s no secret that the most oft visited venue in Washington, D.C., is the Air & Space Museum along the Mall. If you have never been there, go. If you think nothing there will interest you, go. I guarantee something there will mesmerize you; fill you with awe and wonder. Go.Now,to the book. The amount of room available at the museum on the was just not large enough to do justice to the museum’s collection of aircraft. Far too many aircraft had to be kept in storage and various aircraft were rotated off or into display at the space on the mall. The solution, long in coming to fruition , was to build a special hanger just for the aircraft. Thus came into existence the Udvar-Hazy Center, which houses not only the spacious hanger, but is also home to the Mary Baker Engen Restoration Hanger, where miracles of restoration of what sometimes,to the layperson appear to be piles of junk and scrap. So much painstaking love, patience, meticulous attention to detail and dedication result

in near miracles when a project is completed. In this massive space, so much more of this nation's collection of the artifacts of the world's history of aviation can be respectfully displayed. This book does it's best to show the wonder of aviation history, and it does it's job in both pictures and text. It is a remarkable achievement.I give fair warning to the reader: if your interest is in the realm of passing historical interest, the book will likely suffice. However, if the reader is more of a fanatic about aviation, the longing to go in person may become overwhelming. Located bear Dulles International Airport, the hanger is not hard to reach, once you are in the D.C. area. The book is nothing short of a treasure;it is a "must have" for the aviation historian. I feel I must add that the hanger itself is a "must see: for those same people. I am pretty sure where one stop my next vacation will include, and I have this book to thank for that. Highest Recommendation.

I have to say after reading reviews and advice from my more knowledgeable aviation friends, this was a superb book to read before visiting the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center also known as the National Air and Space Museum at the Dulles airport. It doesn't cover every plane in the hanger, but it really highlights the more significant ones that had historical impact on the world in both the military and commercial segments.I would highly recommend buying a used book since most of the time, books that are text book thick, such as this, tend to be taken better care than smaller, paper back books. Save some money, learn some history and hit the museums!My other recommendations is to pick up Flight: The Complete History by R. G. Grant (Shoot, anything made by Grant is pretty interesting) as its really a great cliff notes to all of aviation history.

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