



Talewinds

James B. McConville

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Passion and warmth infuse these essays on aviation that will send interest soaring to the skies.

The essays in James B. McConville's *Talewinds* travel the globe, from the test fields of Lockheed Martin to the skies above Germany and Japan, all connected through stories of excitement, bravado, and more than a little humor. Drawing from his own experiences as an engineer and pilot, as well as stories passed on to him by some of the great fliers of the twentieth century, McConville assembles a collection fit for any pilot, even for those who fly from the comfort of their living-room recliners.

Each essay is dedicated to either a particular pilot McConville met during his fifty years in aviation or to an anecdote of his own escapades as a pilot and engineer for Lockheed Martin. Told from memory, the tales reflect McConville's admitted bias for World War II history but still manage to touch on just about every era of the history of aviation.

From the more legendary figures of American aviation—such as Bob Hoover, who flew missions in World War II for the British before his own American government was involved—to those who might otherwise have been lost to history—like Howie Hansen, who, in the 1950s, nearly took out now-Senator John Glenn in a heart-racing accident as Hansen attempted to refuel Glenn's plane mid-flight—McConville recounts his stories with a reverent air and infectious enthusiasm.

Even in more somber moments, McConville maintains a comfortable tone without sacrificing respect for his fellow pilots. His voice manages to give the collection an almost casual feel, as if McConville is actually there in the room as he relates his adventures. The inclusion of black-and-white and full color (albeit occasionally pixelated) photographs of the planes in question enhances the experience, particularly for those interested in the aeronautical technology of yesterday and today.

Even with McConville's convivial writing style, his dips into the technical aspects of various planes may pose a challenge for those with only a passing interest in aviation engineering. It's obvious, though, that these detailed breakdowns of plane engines come from a place of real interest on McConville's behalf, a fact which can make it easier to regard them as charming textual quirks.

In *Talewinds*, McConville has managed to compile a touching tribute to the brave, and often unsung, aviators in his life. His passion and warmth infuse the essays, opening them up to readers of all ages, regardless of their preexisting interest in flight.

CONSTANCE AUGUSTA A. ZABER (May 1, 2018)

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