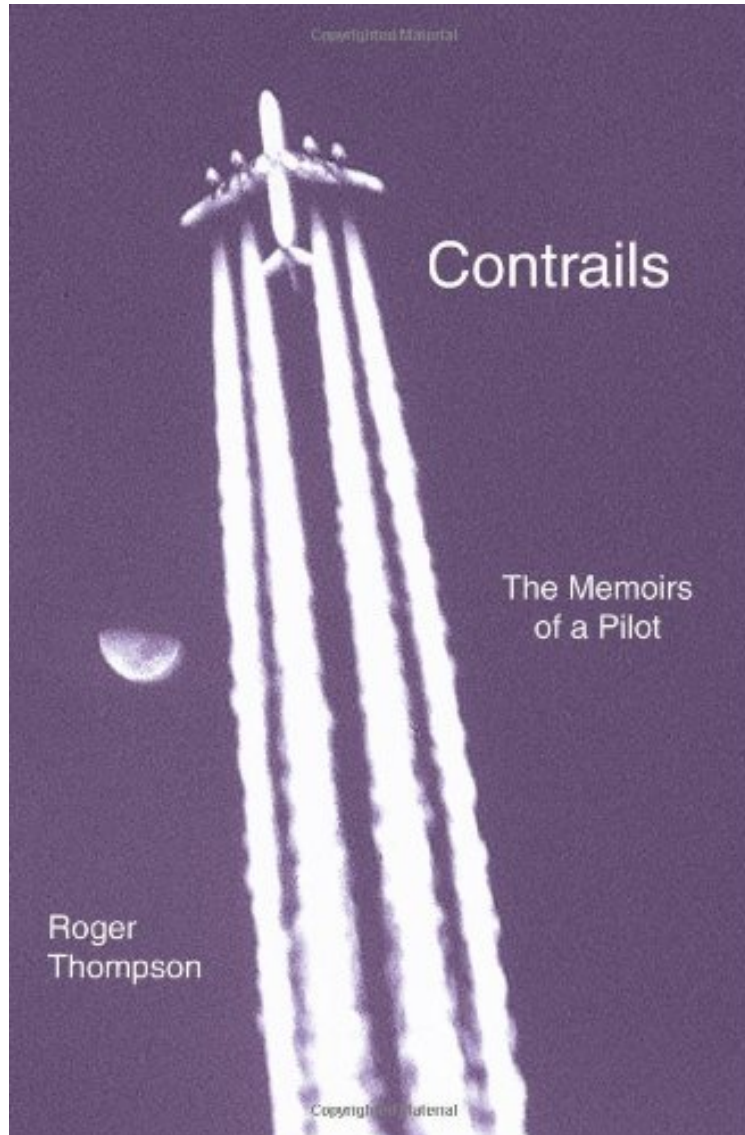


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Contrails: The Memoirs of a Pilot

Roger Thompson

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Roger Thompson : Contrails: The Memoirs of a Pilot before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Contrails: The Memoirs of a Pilot:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Carolyn C. Bennett My retired pilot friend thought it was the best birthday present he received! 2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Airline Industry Challenges By Richard Geil Extremely well written history of one person's employment in the airline industry challenging one's desire to remain a long term employee who loses seniority by mergers of succeeding unstable airlines.

It illustrates how professionalism of good employees is undermined by poor management practices. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars
By Ben W
The seedlings arrived in good shape, and have been transplanted on some recreational property. So far so good.

In the last year of his career as an American Airlines captain, Roger Thompson met a man who claimed military experience identical to his own. The man was an imposter, but the incident inspired *Contrails*, a collection of aviation stories spanning Mr. Thompson's 37-year career. Some of the stories in *Contrails* are tragic; some are exciting. All are true. *Contrails* includes Mr. Thompson's introduction to aviation, a discussion of the 1960's military draft, and a description of the training regimen and assorted aircraft mishaps associated with naval aviation. It describes jet combat over Laos and Vietnam from the perspective of a Navy carrier pilot. *Contrails* details the untold story of TWA flights that almost ended in catastrophe as a direct result of the 1986 merger between Ozark Airlines and TWA. It explains the interaction of airline crews during routine and emergency situations. *Contrails* exults in the beauty of flight and narrates harrowing close calls experienced in the cockpits of jet fighters and jet airliners. It looks behind that locked cockpit door to reveal the strengths and weaknesses of airline crews in flight. *Contrails* is a book about the adventures and the incredible good luck of an aviation survivor.

"Roger Thompson takes the reader to new heights a personal and very poignant behind-the-scenes look at commercial aviation." -- Art Giberson, Pensacola News Journal, February 19, 2005
About the Author
Roger Thompson flew single-engine attack-fighters aboard the aircraft carriers *Ranger* and *Midway*. He flew 156 missions over North Vietnam, South Vietnam and Laos. Mr. Thompson was a captain for Ozark Airlines, Trans World Airlines and American Airlines. He retired in 2002 with 37 years of aviation experience.
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After parking the aircraft at Gate D-14 at St. Louis Lambert International Airport, I popped out of my seat, slipped on my coat and hat and stepped onto the jet bridge to wait for my "Navy buddy." He approached me without hesitation, his wife nowhere in sight. "Look, that was all a lie," he blurted out. "I flew Navy prop planes for awhile, but I washed out of jet transition. I had trouble keeping up with the airplane." I paused for a long, awkward moment, allowing his words to sink in. "Your secret is safe with me," I told him. He skulked into the terminal like a dog with its tail between its legs. I'm sure his wife had no idea what a phony he was. In fact, he had probably told his story so often that he'd come to believe it. This time, he made the mistake of telling it to the only pilot at American Airlines who was really there, day and night, flying the missions off the deck of the *Ranger* in 1969. What were the chances that this imposter would tell his story to me? Later, I was angry. Many stories have been told in recent years of distraught "veterans" at the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C., who, as it turned out, were never anywhere near the Vietnam conflict. In 2003, for example, a professor teaching at Luzerne County Community College in Pennsylvania was humiliated when his claims of being an ex-Navy SEAL and a combat veteran were exposed as lies by real SEALs. He had claimed disability status with the Veterans Administration and was drawing 100% disability pay, \$2367 per month, based on exposure to Agent Orange during close combat in Vietnam. When his fraud was discovered, he committed suicide. I feel sorry for these cowards who feel the need to invent a personal history to validate their lives. I'm proud of my life, but I don't regard it as extraordinary. I've been privileged to have survived some harrowing experiences and to have met some wonderful, genuine people along the way. I write this book in an attempt to recall the blessings, the luck and the joy that I've known. Of course, aviation stories do get more interesting with age and fighter pilots are notorious liars. But in these pages I've tried to hold fast to the truth. Really.