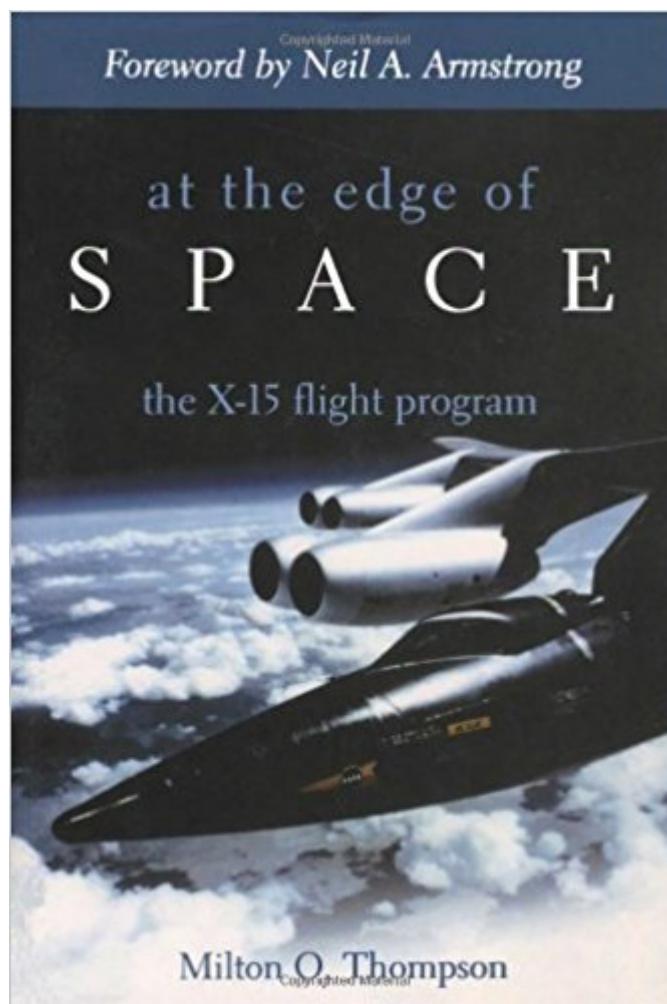


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At The Edge Of Space: The X-15 Flight Program



Synopsis

In *At the Edge of Space*, Milton O. Thompson tells the dramatic story of one of the most successful research aircraft ever flown. The first full-length account of the X-15 program, the book profiles the twelve test pilots (Neil Armstrong, Joe Engle, Scott Crossfield, and the author among them) chosen for the program. Thompson has translated a highly technical subject into readable accounts of each pilot's participation, including many heroic and humorous anecdotes and highlighting the pilots' careers after the program ended in 1968.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Initiated in the 1950s, the X-15 program tested a unique rocket-powered aircraft at supersonic speeds in the atmosphere's outer limits. The stubby-winged, needle-nosed craft achieved speeds of 4000 mph, could fly at altitudes of well over 200,000 feet and yielded data crucial to NASA's space missions. Thomson, one of the test pilots, traces the technical developments of the program, emphasizing the viewpoint of the men who (barely) controlled the unpredictable plane in the air. He demonstrates through a series of vivid anecdotes the effect of g forces, extreme vertigo and other mental and physical problems associated with supersonic flight. Thompson includes accounts of hair-raising emergency rescues and a somber description of the death of one of his colleagues during a 1967 test flight. Retired in 1968 along with the program itself, the X-15 now hangs in the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum. Surprisingly, it is still the world's fastest airplane. Thompson's well-written history of the program captures the technical challenges, the camaraderie and, most of all, the high adventure of X-15 flight. Highly recommended. Photos. Copyright 1992

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The X-15 was perhaps the most famous of the X series of rocket planes designed to explore supersonic flight regimes. Thompson's engaging account of the joint U.S. Air Force/NASA program is part memoir (he flew 14 X-15 missions), part history. He describes the plane, the pilots, and the program that explored high altitude hypersonic flight, setting altitude and speed records that remain unbroken more than 25 years later. His firsthand account is filled with humorous insider's anecdotes that successfully humanize the technical aspects of these demanding and dangerous flights that paved the way for the space shuttle. Appendixes provide detailed data on all 199 X-15 flights that, in retrospect, make the reader wonder how the program was accomplished with only one in-flight fatality. Recommended for academic and public libraries.- Thomas J. Frieling, Bainbridge Coll., Ga.

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Really enjoyed this book. I have always been interested in the X 15 and this book tells you all you need to know in a concise fun fashion. I am not a physics geek. This book does not load you down with info you can't understand. It is an easy read You get to know the people who flew it, how, when and where. Flight profiles were explained in detail which were very interesting. Don't think Alan Shepherd was the first American in space. I really enjoyed reading about all the pilots who flew the X 15 and their backgrounds. Neil Armstrong was one of them. The author tells many personal stories about his exploits and the other pilots. Overall this is a very well rounded book about one of the most advanced aircraft ever built and a lot of fun to read. Highly recommend it.

I was stationed at Edwards Air Force Base, CA in 1962 and 1963 and we supported the X-15 project. I knew of Milt Thompson the test pilot and the Lifting Body tests. A friend recommended this book and I was reluctant to read it, but am SO glad I did. He brings up so many wonderful memories for me. I was in the H-21 helicopter at Mud Lake on November 9, 1962 when flight 74 was aborted. Several other stories are very familiar as well. This is not just a book about Milt Thompson, it brings the whole program into view in a very interesting light. I recommend this book to all of my friends. Thanks, Milt.

Few people have heard of Milt Thompson, but those who follow the groundbreaking flight testing of the late 1940s through the early 1970s know of Milt and his (in)famous exploits. As both an amazing

and experienced test pilot, having flown the X-15 and the wingless M2-F1 amongst others, as well as a dry-lake water(less)skier, Thompson lends his considerable insight and knowledge, as well as his sprightly sense of humor to this book. A truly fascinating read, this is one of very few books concerning the fastest powered manned aircraft program, the hypersonic X-15, which ultimately reached an unofficial record of Mach 6.7. Thompson, along with Scott Crossfield and Neil Armstrong, amongst others, flew the X-15 in the early 1960s. This book does justice to the historic program, while maintaining the interest of even the most casual reader, which cannot be said of NASA's X-15 Mission Reports. This book is a must-read for anyone interested in the X-15 flight test program or those interested in the early X-plane projects, as is Thompson's "Flying Without Wings." Those looking for an exciting and engaging non-fiction read should also pick up "At the Edge of Space."

once I started reading I couldnt put it down. exccelent read from Milt Thompson, I wish there were more pictures but the riveting text more than made up for it. some of the stories told may never be known by those outside the EAFB circle, Milt does an entertaining job of describing some of the day to day activities associated with this fine airplane and the people he knew. I have a keen interest in the X-15 since early childhood when I watched some news reels about its flights in grade school, I live near EAFB and have traveled to the X-13 #3 crash site on Trona Rd, a few times, reading Milt & Pete's account of Mikes last flight and the loss of 15 # 3 really hits home while standing in the very place out in the desert. thanks for a really enjoyable book !

Am halfway through the book, a fascinating read, great information and great history of one of our greatest achievements. There are some photos but not as many as some of the other books, however this is a book for people who like to read words and learn the details of the project If you are a grade schooler and want pictures get one of the other books, if you have those books and have enough intelligence to read a book and understand science , this book is for you, my only critique...I wish the book was longer

Great book. I have read a lot of the NASA astronaut and test pilot books and this is one of the best. Milt's candour about the "way it was" is great, and would have today's politically correct management reeling. The X-15 pilots were truly pioneers of flight. I also liked his candour when describing his fellow test pilots.

I bought this to write a paper on the X-15 and Thompson did a very good job. It was really

interesting to see things from the pilot's perspective, and he has a lot of stories to share. He puts in some technical details, but doesn't bog down the book with them. If you're looking for a book that has a lot of information about the X-15, yet has fun stories in it, then this is it!

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