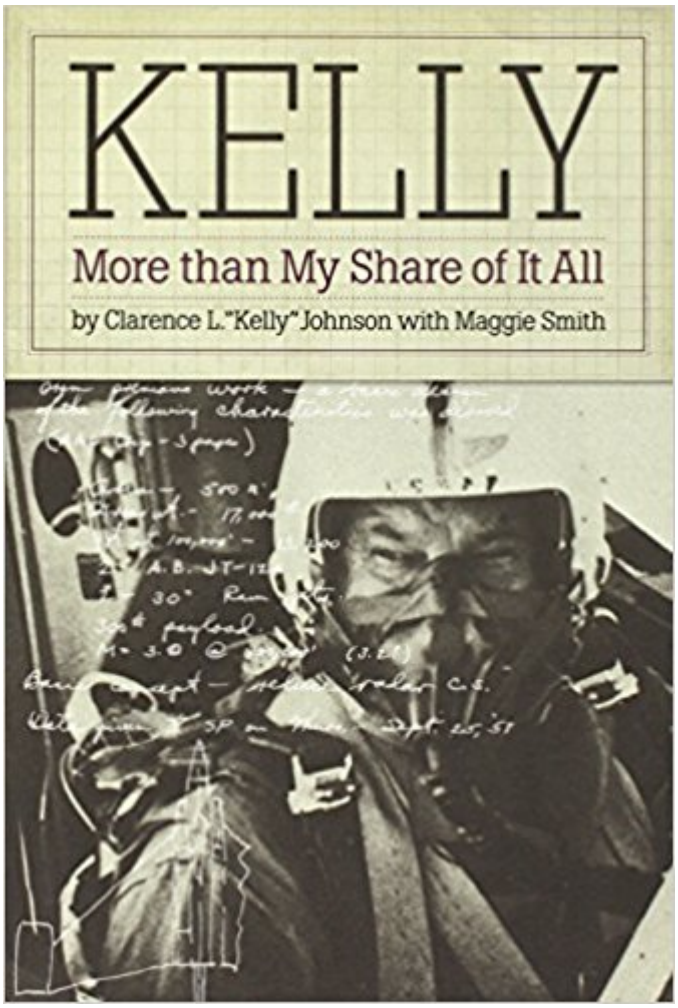
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Kelly: More Than My Share Of It All



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Synopsis

Clarence L. Ã¢â ¬Å“KellyÃ¢â ¬Â• Johnson led the design of such crucial aircraft as the P-38 and Constellation, but he will be more remembered for the U-2 and SR-71 spy planes. His extraordinary leadership of the Lockheed Ã¢â ¬Å“Skunk WorksÃ¢â ¬Â• cemented his reputation as a legendary figure in American aerospace management.

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Customer Reviews

Ã¢â ¬Å“Reads like the autobiography of the American dream. . . A readable collection of the people and influences that touched his life and remarkable career. Highly recommended.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Library JournalÃ¢â ¬Å“The highly objective autobiography of one of the real giants of the aerospace world, . . . written so clearly that the average person cannot only understand it but gets caught up in it.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •Aerospace HistorianÃ¢â ¬Å“Fast-paced, very readable, and technically interesting. It covers a fifty-year span of American aviation without being a history book. . . What makes this book so valuable is Mr. Johnson’s exposition of the mind-set to find the simplest, least expensive fix to each technological problem. . . . Recommended for all harried technologists and defense planners, it will encourage one’s faith that a better way is possible.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â •H. Lawrence Elman, National DefenseÃ¢â ¬Å“A good look at a fascinating man who has led, and who continues to lead, a perfectly charmed life."Ã¢â ¬â •Air Force

Clarence L. Ã¢â ¬Å“KellyÃ¢â ¬Â• Johnson was an aviation engineer best known for his work on the Lockheed U-2 and SR-71 Blackbird planes.

Being an aviation enthusiast, I've always been fascinated with the Skunk Works, and those who have worked there. As others have said, the book is a bit skimpy on Skunk Works details, but is an interesting look at Kelly Jonson's life at and away from his work.The thing I'll remember most is his work ethic and ability to complete a project and produce a product for much less time and money than perhaps others in the industry could. I think that if his methods were to be applied broadly in today's manufacturing industries, the U.S. could return to being a superpower of productivity.

Clarence "Kelly" Johnson is probably the most recognizable name in the Aerospace Industry, rising to an iconic level as the designer of or major engineer involved with aircraft from the P-38 Lightning to the F-104 Starfighter and from the Lockheed Constellation to the SR-71 blackbird. He is widely regarded as a supremely capable engineer and aircraft designer, if not, THE supreme figure of the aerospace design and engineering industry. One of his principles was to seek the simplest solution for any problem, and this autobiography fits squarely in that mold, being a taut, quick, and easy to read story of what was a truly amazing life.Kelly was born into rural northern Michigan to a working class family in 1910, a very modest begining for a meteoric career, but one which would prove fundamental. His family left him with a solid work ethic and a drive for learning, which he married to an intense interest in aviation he found by age 12. Working early in construction taught him the value of practicality and gave him a good knowledge of machinery. Guided half by accident and half by design he attended the University of Michigan gaining an excellent engineering degree - where aerospace engineers had to first complete strings of courses in all other engineering fields and where one of the nation's first wind tunnels was located. For someone who has suffered through engineering school, particularly being up till 2:00AM for days in a row studying in the dorms with a 8:00AM class looming while it seemed like over 50% of the rest of the students were running through the halls drunkenly fondling each other with classes in hyphenated American studies no earlier than noon, Kelly's experiences in college were, sadly, reassuring. He did not drink, nor did he have any time left over from his studies to go on any more than two dates his entire time at U of M, and he also suffered from ulcers that would last his entire life. He loved his studies though and what he got was a strong foundation in physics and engineering, and the discipline and know-how to teach himself to stay abreast of aerospace technology for what would be aviation's heyday of seemingly daily major advances.Kelly's career at Lockheed is relatively well known and I won't go

into it in detail, although the book does satisfyingly so. What was best for me from this majority section of the book were the timeless lessons learned about how best to design aircraft, build an aerospace company, deal with customer, etc. compared to how these things normally go in real life in contrast. Throughout the book he is straightforward and to the point, never embellishing, never bragging. He does however find room for levity, especially with regards to trying to teach Howard Hughes how to fly the Connie, and also for his philosophy of what is important in life which is quite morally inspired and rests on good values.What emerges from this book is a picture of a patriotic, hard working, dedicated, and brilliant man who attained his genius more through work ethic and common sense than what was surely a healthy dose of natural ability. Near the book's end are his predictions for the aerospace industry, circa 1985. Many did not come to pass (not foreseeing the fall of the Soviet Union he predicted laser and particle beam weapons being common by 2000), some did (the shift in commercial transportation from speed to economy and fuel efficiency), and some may still (his predictions of mostly unmanned combat aircraft.) Throughout the book you get a well worthwhile glimpse into the reasoning behind the design decisions he made and the reasons for his beliefs and predictions for aerospace, which become more interesting in the limelight of hindsight rather than less so.A passionate advocate for ethics and direct, straightforward management in the aerospace industry Kelly has set an example worthy of emulation by today's engineers, designers and managers. Definitely recommended for workers in the aerospace industry, or aerospace history buffs.

superb history of our greatest aircraft designer

Very interesting story about the life of Clarence L. "Kelly" Johnson. It does not matter where you grow up, if you have a desire to design and build something as sophisticated as a supersonic jet, opportunities are available even if you are a young boy growing up in northern Michigan. One of the most impressive things I have ever seen in my life is the scrap book that Kelly Johnson began assembling when he was 12 years old. The boy was brilliant and the man proved it.

Looking for much more detail on the projects. This book was a tad discontinuous, with the first section a great read, but the second half as though it belonged in another title.

Very good and interesting book. Had heard of him throughout my airline career. I was privileged to fly both the Connie and the L1011 Tristar, both wonderful airplanes.

Inspiring and candid autobiography from an entrepreneurial engineer who helped to create or nurture the development a number aircraft that pushed the of state of the art. His rules for how to run a skunkworks are worth the price of the book alone.

Mr. Johnson had contact with some of the greatest people in aviation during his tenure at the Skunk Works. This book barely mentions any of them. Even though thesis sort of a biography of Kelly, part of his personality is influenced by those contacts.

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