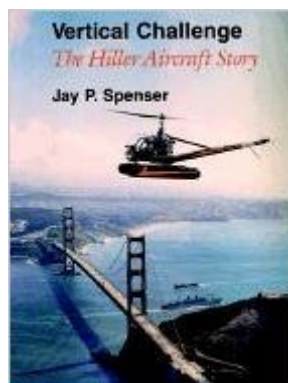


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Vertical Challenge: The Hiller Aircraft Story



Synopsis

Vertical Challenge: The Hiller Aircraft Story Chronicles the most innovative and least remembered of the helicopter industry's pioneering companies. Founded by Stanley Hiller, Jr., Hiller Aircraft produced conventional and ramjet helicopters, flying platforms, and other fascination flying machines.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I haven't finished reading this book yet, but have completed several chapters and so cannot offer a complete review as of yet (I had to photocopy the sections I wanted out of a reference book in the library). The incredibly meanspirited review offered previously is clearly from someone with an axe to grind. To say that this book only merits 1 star is absurdly out of line, hostile and defamatory. Although this book does suffer a slight penchant for Hiller hero worship, and it does appear to be an "authorized" biography, it provides the facts of the Hiller story in a generally straightforward manner. Facts that I haven't found anywhere else on arcane subjects such as helicopter tip-jet propulsion and it's fascinating development history at Hiller. And as far as hero worship is concerned, in most aviation circles Hiller is/was widely acknowledged as a brilliant innovator unafraid to pursue what were cutting edge/unproven technologies in the 40's and 50's. So far I've read a section on Tip-jet helicopters that is worth the purchase price of this book alone; from the one man civilian Hornet, to an open framed military gunship, to a proposed gargantuan 300' rotoed heavy lifter requested by Von Braun to retrieve his Saturn V boosters, to flying platforms, to

tiny collapsible "roto-cycles" to be used as a method of escape for downed pilots in enemy territory. If any of these concepts or ideas intrigue you, and you're at a loss to find information elsewhere (as I was), then snag a copy if you can. I know I'm heading back to the library to copy the rest of the book quicker than you can say "flying shoes" (you'll have to get the book yourself to see what I'm talking about!)

I read this book a few years ago and have been wanting to read it again, but I loaned it out and haven't seen it since. I'll have to buy it again! I'm a helicopter pilot and love to read about the rotorcraft development pioneers. This is one of the best books on the subject I have read. Don't know where that other guy is coming from.

Great book about Hiller and His helicopter. If my name was Bell I might give this book a bad review!

Extremely pedestrian corporate history told by a rank amateur writer. His whole intro ("Just like Wilbur and Orville") reads as if it were a junior high-school essay, and a very poor one at that. The rest of the book is no great shakes, either. What you get is a book that goes on ad-nauseum about the various projects this company engaged in, with no real explanation as to what they were, why they were built, or what real purpose they served. It is the story of a failure, although the writer doesn't have the nerve to say as much (the book was also sponsored by Hiller, although the man has not had anything to do with aviation for over 35 years and had made his living as a corporate raider, picking away at the bones of companies such as Bekins and Keytronics, and looting the corporate treasury after he's done. Just something else you won't learn from this book). The truth about this book is that it is written from the perspective of S. Hiller, the individual who founded Hiller Aircraft. There is no depth to this story and no explanation about why Hiller Aircraft really failed (too many oddball prototype projects and lack of focus on attaining the LOH Army helicopter contract in 1966). There is also no attention on the people who may have worked or developed projects at Hiller. Reading this book will give you the idea that it was a factory of robots, with no individuals at the heart of the story whatsoever. Bottom line: written by a syncophantic scribbler with no integrity or drive to write past the surface layer. A D- effort, at best.

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