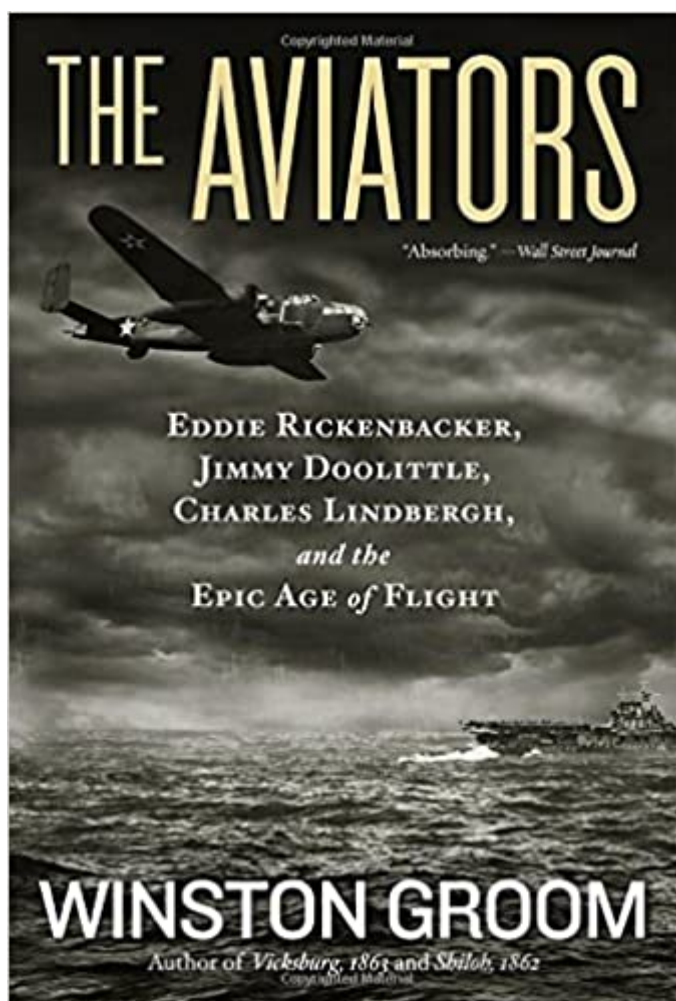


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The Aviators: Eddie Rickenbacker, Jimmy Doolittle, Charles Lindbergh, And The Epic Age Of Flight



Synopsis

Written by gifted storyteller Winston Groom (author of *Forrest Gump*), *The Aviators* tells the saga of three extraordinary aviators--Charles Lindbergh, Eddie Rickenbacker, and Jimmy Doolittle--and how they redefine heroism through their genius, daring, and uncommon courage. This is the fascinating story of three extraordinary heroes who defined aviation during the great age of flight. These cleverly interwoven tales of their heart-stopping adventures take us from the feats of World War I through the heroism of World War II and beyond, including daring military raids and survival-at-sea, and will appeal to fans of *Unbroken*, *The Greatest Generation*, and *Flyboys*. With the world in peril in World War II, each man set aside great success and comfort to return to the skies for his most daring mission yet. Doolittle, a brilliant aviation innovator, would lead the daring Tokyo Raid to retaliate for Pearl Harbor; Lindbergh, hero of the first solo flight across the Atlantic, would fly combat missions in the South Pacific; and Rickenbacker, World War I flying ace, would bravely hold his crew together while facing near-starvation and circling sharks after his plane went down in a remote part of the Pacific. Groom's rich narrative tells their intertwined stories--from broken homes to Medals of Honor (all three would receive it); barnstorming to the greatest raid of World War II; front-page triumph to anguished tragedy; and near-death to ultimate survival--as all took to the sky, time and again, to become exemplars of the spirit of the "greatest generation."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"This is a winner, combining an engaging narrative and appropriate documentation into one solid study of three iconic aviators and their times." --Library Journal, starred review
"A gripping document

of a brilliant era in our history and a few of the men who helped make it so." --Kirkus Reviews, starred review

As Mr. Groom's absorbing narrative unfolds, we see one man enduring a horrendous ordeal on the open sea; another nearly losing his life in a bombing run; and yet another finding a sort of redemption for his battered public image.

"The Wall Street Journal" Groom's rich narrative tell the intertwined stories of these aeronautical pioneers as they took to the air to become exemplars of the spirit of the greatest generation.

--Flight Journal "That the imagination that conceived Forrest Gump could conjure up fresh ways to tell stories of American history is astonishing...Groom's epic story is a tribute...Readers of all his fiction and nonfiction might well feel inclined to testify that he is fast becoming a national treasure. Forrest Gump would agree."

--The Advocate "Winston Groom writes history like a novelist. Readers will appreciate his careful and accurate use of aviation and military terminology, and description of each aircraft in the narratives. Groom handles this complex subject in clear, understandable terms, woven into a great air war story."

"American Aviation Historical Society" Groom is at his best sharing history through the personal stories of the people involved. Not only is this history a learning experience, it is a joy to experience the suspenseful adventures of these extraordinary aviators as they spent their lives developing and promoting aviation in this country. An important narrative not to be missed!"

--Stephanie Crowe, Page and Palette Bookstore This will be an alternate selection in History Book Club, Military Book Club, and Book-of-the-Month Club. From the Hardcover edition.

WINSTON GROOM is the author of 14 previous books of nonfiction and fiction, including *Shiloh 1862*, *Vicksburg 1863*, *Patriotic Fire*, *Shrouds of Glory*, *Forrest Gump*, and *Conversations with the Enemy* (with Duncan Spencer), which was a Pulitzer Prize finalist. He lives with his wife and daughter in Point Clear, Alabama.

I had high hopes for this book, but I ended up being a little disappointed and questioning of the author's credibility. While giving an overview of German conquests early in WWII, he includes the assertion that Finland and Sweden were conquered by Nazi armies. First, Finland was a German ally throughout the war, and second, Sweden was famously neutral throughout the war! It's such an egregious factual error that it made me question the credibility of the rest of the book. He later asserts that a "significant portion of the American Army...including the 101st Airborne Division" was surrounded by the Germans during the Battle of the Bulge. Again, this is just plain dead wrong...the 101st was the ONLY division (of nearly 50) of the American Army in Europe surrounded by the Germans during that battle...or any battle, for that matter. These are issues of the most basic

military history that he gets absurdly wrong. I didn't keep notes, so those are the ones that stood out in particular, but there were others that weren't as patently obvious. He also seems to exaggerate the influence of the three Aviators at several points. For instance, he claims one was directed to inform air corps personnel during speeches in N. Africa and the Mediterranean theaters that their minimum tours had been extended. I highly doubt a visiting civilian would be tasked with personally informing thousands of airmen of a MAJOR policy change in their assignments. I suppose it's possible in the remotest sense, but I rolled my eyes at the likelihood of it. He also claims the Doolittle raid essentially led to what ultimately became the Japanese defeat. Hmmm, every other historian and war leaders at the time agreed it's only real value was a morale boost...and nothing more. He also refers to the German JU-88 light bombers that attacked Doolittle's B-17 as one of the most dangerous German planes in their arsenal. Ha! Not exactly. Any single-engine fighter (the JU-88 was a twin-engine light bomber) would have been MUCH more dangerous. These may seem like nit-picks, but they're such basic mistakes, and the more subtle exaggerations were sufficiently commonplace that it left a poor taste in my mouth and led me to be skeptical of the overall factual accuracy of the book. Also, there's really nothing new in it that one couldn't get from any number of biographies of the principals that has already been written. He doesn't really tie in the experiences of the three into any cohesive or overarching premise as to how they collectively...as a coordinated threesome...advanced aviation. Still, I gave it 3 stars, because it IS a fairly entertaining read, I learned a few things (I think...if they were fully accurate anyway), and it's a fast read. Just remember to have some grains of salt on-hand if you do read it.

A jumble of facts (some mistakes) put together to form a book. Not enough time for a good biography of any of the three men chosen. Not really a history of aviation due to lack of timeline and failure to include so many other contemporary contributors. Had way too much personal information on Lindbergh in comparison with the other two men. Made poor use of a great deal of good research. Would recommend spending your time on true biographies/autobiographies in order to get a better sense of the things that these pioneers accomplished. Chuck Yeager, Jackie Cochran, Beryl Markham, the Wright Brothers, and so many other amazing people have written some of the most interesting books I have ever read. Berg's book on Lindbergh is superb along with Doolittle's own book on his life.

I have been a fan of Winston Groom since *Better Times Than These*. I am an even bigger fan of his non-fiction, finding him a very readable historian with the ability to make the reader

history. This book is no exception as the author looks at three larger than life men from the early age of flight. Rickenbacker managed to cram more adventure into one life than most could do in several. Groom presents him as he was, tough, determined and very intelligent. Doolittle is an extraordinary pilot, instrumental in the development of instrument flight and famous for raiding Japan in 1942. Lindbergh, the "Lone Eagle" is best known for flying the Atlantic and the kidnapping of his son. Somewhat infamous as a supporter of Hitler, his WWII activities are a surprise. This is a very well written book, alternating between the three men while keeping the times in perspective. This is a complete look at these men as the author covers their good and bad activities.

These Aviators were remarkable individuals and shaped modern aviation as we know it today. The true brilliance of this book comes from the Author, Winston Groom, he is an extraordinary writer and he does his research. I wish as a child going through school, I could have been lucky enough to have Mr. Groom write the history books/ social studies books etc. that I muddled through, I may have become a better student.. If Winston Groom has not reached your library I suggest taking a glance at his work. I will wager a glance will not be enough!JH

This book deals with the three aviation pioneers Charles Lindbergh, Eddie Rickenbacker and Jimmy Doolittle who are responsible for their achievements to the development of aviation history. All three men have one thing in common: all contributed to the development of the American aviation. Rickenbacker became the top US flying ace in World War I, Doolittle became the top military test pilot in the 1920s and of course renowned by the Tokyo Raid and Lindbergh became the most famous man alive by flying from New York to Paris. In this book, Winston Groom traces their lives from their boyhoods until their deaths. Rather than being a biography, central theme in this book are the attributions they made to the American aviation. He handles the most remarkable events which defined them personally and places them in the context of political events. By solely concentrating on these attributions, the book may not earn the title of biography. However, especially in the case of Lindbergh, the author attempts to give his opinions about Lindbergh, the events surrounding the trial of Richard Hauptmann ("The Crime of the Century") and his controversial views on Nazism and communism before America's involvement in World War II. This would not be a problem if Groom would have focussed more on the developments of aviation in general, but this unfortunately is not fully addressed. Overall, this book is a fine one, with a good, sometimes dry, narrative style which serves well as an introduction to the three aviators, but

anyone who expects a comprehensive biography may be left somewhat disappointed.

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