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# At The Controls: The Smithsonian National Air And Space Museum Book Of Cockpits



## Synopsis

This is perhaps the finest collection of cockpit photographs in existence. The National Air and Space Museum holds the world's premier collection of historic aircraft, but visitors to the museum must maintain a respectful distance. In *At the Controls*, NASM photographers Eric Long and Mark Avino use creative lighting techniques and photography to duplicate the sensation of actually being at the controls inside the cockpit of 45 legendary aircraft, with access not only to the instrument panels but to the consoles as well. The reader experiences a pilot's-eye view. This book will be a treasured addition to every aviation library. (20011124)

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

If you love aircraft, this is a book for you ! The photography of the cockpits is stunning. The information about the control and instruments of flying from the day Wright Brothers, to the Spirit of St. Louis, the Warbirds of WW II, to today's Spacecraft is extraordinary ! I bought the book just to have a photo of the greenhouse of the B-29 Superfortress, my plane in WW II. I was not disappointed. A plus was a view of the A Squares of my 497th bomb Group, 73rd Wing of the 20th Air force in formation.

This is a very nice, broad look at lots of cockpit interiors and aircraft exteriors. It's not as good as Nijboer and Patterson's *Cockpits of the Cold War*, but I found the pictures very clear and devoid of the overly-dramatic (and obscuring) artsy-fartsy photography typical of aviation history books. This is

a Smithsonian book, covering aircraft in the Smithsonian collection, so the authors and photographers had unfettered access to each of the aircraft involved. This is evident in the consistent image quality. The images are still not as inspiring as Patterson's work, though, and he had to go traipse across the world to get his aircraft. The thin volume covers the Wright Flyer to the Space Shuttle, which is a little overreaching in my opinion. I tend to like more narrow focus. The prose is a historian's perspective, not the gritty pilot first-person accounts captured in Cockpits of the Cold War. It's not bad prose, but it's clear that the cover of the book correctly lists the writers as "editor" rather than "author." Still, this is a must-have tome for any serious aircraft aficionado.

Having spent my entire adult life in cockpits of one sort or another, I look at this book and take a trip in time and space with each reading. Even my beloved UH-1 Huey is there, which is a bit like the delight and surprise of finding an old friend on the page of a new book. The volume has enough background information to provide context for each aircraft without becoming bogged down with it. The true delight in the book is the crystal clear, full page, photos of each plane's cock pit. The photographers did a masterful job of capturing those wonderful places their pilot occupants called their offices through so many adventures through the years. Where else would the authors start but with the Wright Flyer? The famous and mundane aircraft are represented to current times. Order the book at 's very attractive price and get ready for a flight of fancy in your own home. You won't want to come back down to Earth.

I bought this book as a Christmas gift for a brother-in-law who pilots small planes. His review as a technical guy was very positive. I liked the great photo's--literally taken from a pilots seat. The descriptions of each plane provided history of the aircraft as well as issues in flying it. I've never gone wrong with a Smithsonian book.

Best of the series thanks to the more detailed commentary.

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