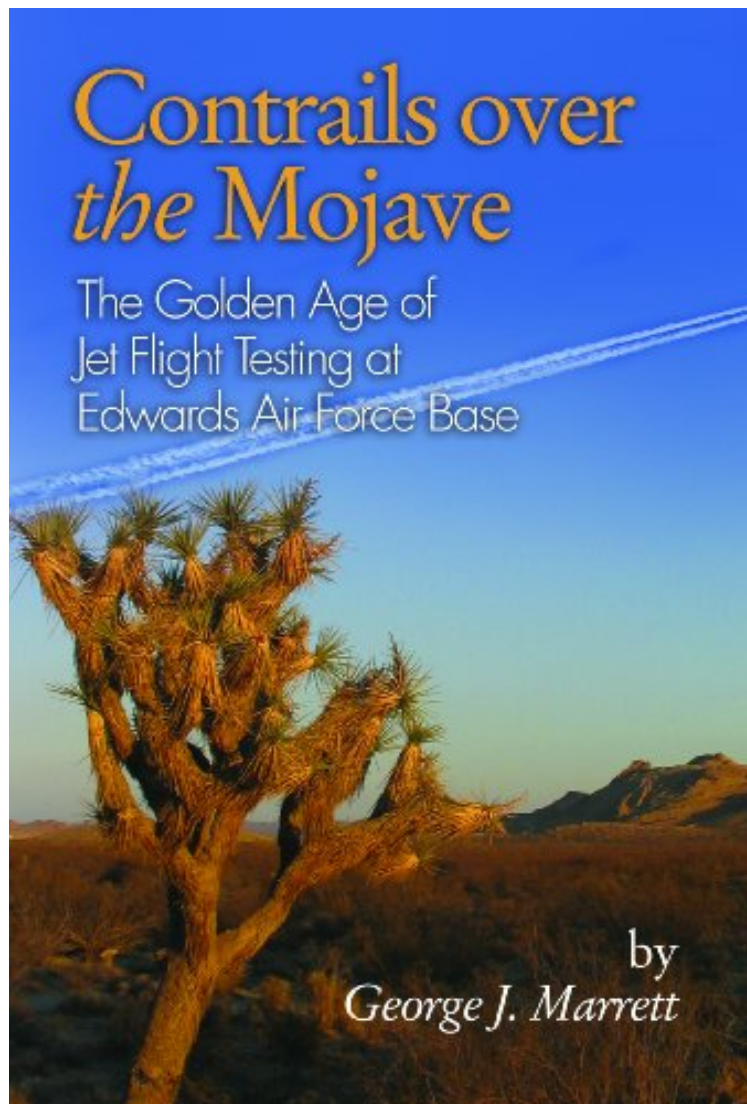


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Contrails Over the Mojave: The Golden Age of Jet Flight Testing at Edwards Air Force Base

George J. Marrett

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George J. Marrett : Contrails Over the Mojave: The Golden Age of Jet Flight Testing at Edwards Air Force Base before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Contrails Over the Mojave: The Golden Age of Jet Flight Testing at Edwards Air Force Base:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. George Marrett does it again!By J. ClintonThe first I heard of

George Marrett was in reading a book about my favourite (the F-14 Tomcat). Mr Marrett having left the Air Force and Test Pilot program, wound up flying for the Hughes Aircraft company and subsequently went on to fly many hours in the Tomcat while developing the legendary AIM-54 Phoenix/AWG-9 combination that was to give the Tomcat capabilities other aircraft could only dream of. Mr Marrett recounts details of this program and others in the 3rd of three books he's written about his flying exploits - Testing Death. The next time I came across his name was when I ordered a book called Cheating Death and went on to read about his time flying the A-1 Skyraider (another favourite aircraft of mine) in Vietnam. I'm not reviewing that book here obviously, but if you haven't read it, I suggest you remedy that situation at your earliest convenience. So to Contrails Over the Mojave. This details stories of the heady days at Muroc/Edwards when the newest, fastest, hottest aircraft were showing up to be rung out by the brave men of the test pilot fraternity. Mr Marrett details his own experiences and many of those experienced by his friends and colleagues. Many of the stories don't have happy endings for those involved as this was an inherently dangerous occupation. Many of the stories are amusing. ALL of them are compelling and well written. For anyone interested in flying, this is a great read. For those interested in military aviation, this is a must read. I highly recommend this book to all and thank Mr Marrett for sharing his experiences with us. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Contrails Over The Mojave: The Golden Age of Jet Flight Testing By Patricia L. Schwatka I live near Edwards AFB and I have seen Space Shuttle landings, and watched them load the shuttle onto the 747 to ship back to Florida several times, and I've met quite a few of the 9 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Entertaining book. However... By C. Wyndham "Contrails Over the Mojave" is certainly an entertaining book about one of my favorite subjects. I learned a lot of details about some of the famous and not-so-famous flight test projects at Edwards. The author's qualifications to write this book are beyond reproach. However... There are at least two pages in the book (pages 68-69, Chapter 6) that are nearly identical to text found in Chapter 10 of a book entitled "Aerospace Pilot," by Charles Coombs, published in 1964 by William Morrow and Company, Inc. There is no attribution or acknowledgement of the source of the text in either book, so I don't really know what to think here. Using substantial portions of material without attribution has a name -- it's called plagiarism. To be fair, perhaps the section of text in question was actually written by Marrett originally, and used by Coombs first in his 1964 book. I don't know. What I do know is that SOMEBODY wrote it, and one of the authors appears to have lifted it from another. This was a minor detraction from what is otherwise a very good book.

In Contrails over the Mojave George Marrett takes off where Tom Wolfe's The Right Stuff ended in 1963. Marrett started the Air Force Test Pilot School at Edwards AFB only two weeks after the school's commander, Col. Chuck Yeager, ejected from a Lockheed NF-104 trying to set a world altitude record. He describes life as a space cadet experiencing 15 Gs in a human centrifuge, zero-G maneuvers in a KC-135 "Vomit Comet," and a flight to 80,000 feet in the F-104A Starfighter. After graduating from Yeager's "Charm School," he was assigned to the Fighter Branch of Flight Test Operations, where he flew the latest fighter aircraft and chased other test aircraft as they set world speed and altitude records. Marrett takes readers into the cockpit as he "goes vertical" in a T-38 Talon, completes high-G maneuvers in an F-4C Phantom, and conducts wet-runway landing tests in the accident-prone F-111A Aardvark. He writes about Col. "Silver Fox" Stephens setting a world speed record in the YF-12 Blackbird and Bob Gilliland testing speed stalls in the SR-71 spy plane, but he also relives stories of crashes that killed test pilot friends. He recounts dead-sticking a T-38 to a landing on Rogers Dry Lake after a twin-engine failure and conducting dangerous tail hook barrier testing in a fighter jet without a canopy. A mysterious UFO sighting in the night sky above the Mojave Desert, known as "The Edwards Encounter," also receives Marrett's attention. Whether the author is assessing a new aircraft's performance or describing the experiences of test pilots as they routinely faced the possibility of death, this look at the golden age of flight testing both thrills and informs.

"George Marrett is that rare individual who is not only an expert on his subject?from flying experimental jets to training to be an astronaut?but he's also a wonderfully talented and intuitive writer who will keep you up late at night with the power of his words." ?Wayman Dunlap, editor, Pacific Flyer Newspapers, Inc. "Contrails over the Mojave is a major contribution to the literature of flight testing and flight research. Rich with anecdotes and insight, it illuminates some of the most significant aerospace programs of the 1960s, a time when America was locked in a no-holds-barred struggle for supremacy with the Soviet Union, and Edwards Air Force Base?the nation's premier flight test center?was grappling with Space Age challenges and training test pilots to meet them." ?Richard P. Hallion, Verville Fellow, National Air and Space Museum, and former historian of the Air Force Flight Test Center "George Marrett has done it again! Contrails over the Mojave is a must-have book for every lover of aviation. Marrett writes as well as he flew, which is to say with authority, accuracy, punch, and color! The wonderful thing about Marrett is the amazing way he puts you in the cockpit of a complex Mach 2 aircraft and makes you understand just how far he is pushing the envelope." ?Col. Walter J. Boyne, USAF (Ret.), bestselling aviation historian, former director of the Smithsonian's National Air Space Museum, and a member of the National Aviation Hall of Fame From the Back Cover In Contrails over the Mojave George Marrett takes off where Tom Wolfe's The Right Stuff ended in 1963. Marrett started the Air

Force Test Pilot School at Edwards AFB only two weeks after the school's commander, Col. Chuck Yeager, ejected from a Lockheed NF-104 trying to set a world altitude record. Marrett describes life as a space cadet experiencing fifteen Gs in a human centrifuge, zero-G maneuvers in a KC-135 "Vomit Comet," and a flight to 80,000 feet in the F-104A Starfighter. After graduating from Yeager's "Charm School," he was assigned to the Fighter Branch of Flight Test Operations, where he flew the latest fighter aircraft and chased other test aircraft as they set world speed and altitude records. About the Author George J. Marrett flew 188 missions in the Douglas A-1 Skyraider in Vietnam and tested more than forty types of military aircraft in twenty-five years as a test pilot for the U.S. Air Force and Hughes Aircraft Company. He is a member of the Society of Experimental Test Pilots and the Board of Trustees, National Test Pilot School, Mojave, California. Marrett is also the author of *Howard Hughes: Aviator*; *Cheating Death: Combat Air Rescues in Vietnam and Laos*, and *Testing Death: Hughes Aircraft Test Pilots and Cold War Weaponry*. Now retired, he lives in Atascadero, California.