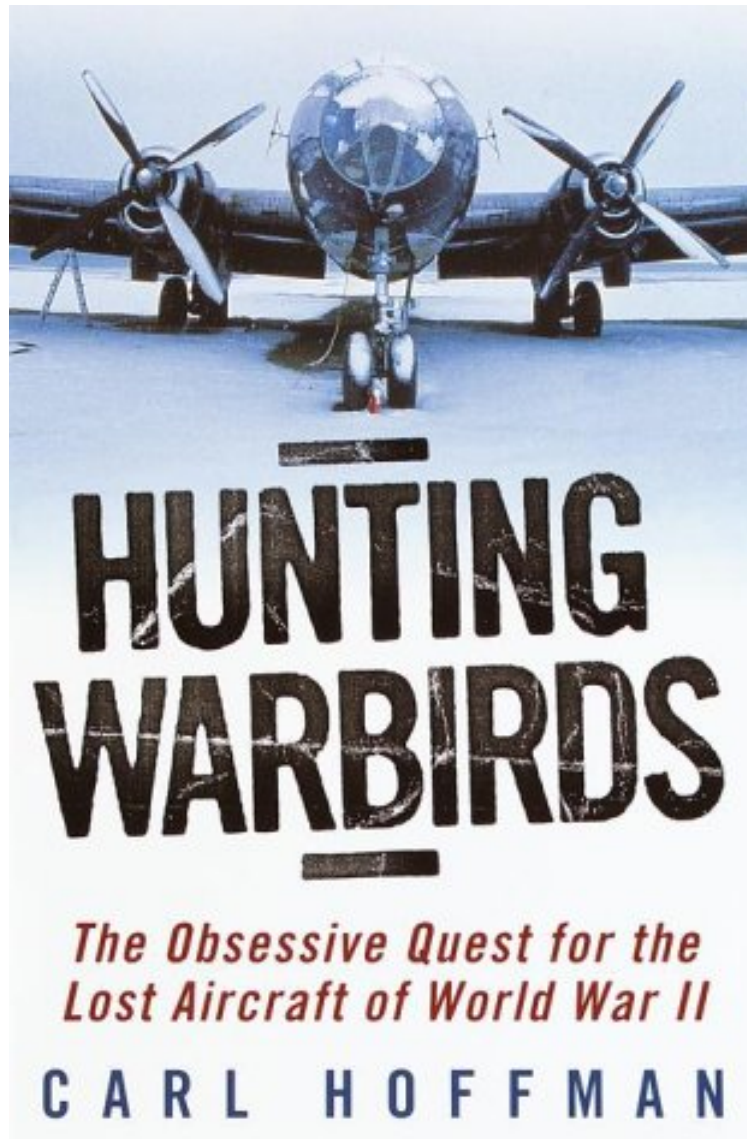


[FREE] Hunting Warbirds: The Obsessive Quest for the Lost Aircraft of World War II

Hunting Warbirds: The Obsessive Quest for the Lost Aircraft of World War II

Carl Hoffman

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Carl Hoffman : Hunting Warbirds: The Obsessive Quest for the Lost Aircraft of World War II before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Hunting Warbirds: The Obsessive Quest for the Lost Aircraft of World War II:

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“Winged treasure” they call them—the lost remains of the great American fighter planes and bombers that won World War II. Hellcats and Superfortresses, Corsairs and Dauntlesses. Produced by the thousands at the height of the war, and then cast off as scrap in the decades that followed, these warbirds are now worth literally anything—fortunes, families, even lives—to the people who search for them. Like many men, writer Carl Hoffman was bitten by the warbird bug as a child. But he never imagined that he would one day witness and participate in a heroic adventure himself—the most audacious warbird rescue attempt of all time. The crash of the Kee Bird B-29 Superfortress made banner headlines in 1947 when a team of Air Force pilots pulled off the near-miraculous feat of locating the wreck in Greenland and snatching its stranded crew from the teeth of the arctic winter. For nearly half a century, the almost perfectly intact warbird lay abandoned on a lake of ice—but not forgotten. Fifty years later, with collectors paying upward of a million dollars for salvageable World War II planes, two intense fanatics, legendary test pilot Darryl Greenamyer and starry-eyed salvage wizard Gary Larkins, hatched the insane idea of launching an expedition to Greenland to find the Kee Bird, bring it back to life, and fly it out. In this riveting adventure of man, machine, and history, the quest for winged treasure ultimately extends far beyond the search for the Kee Bird. Hoffman literally crisscrosses the country to track down the key players in the high-stakes warbird game. He meets a retired Midwestern carpenter who crammed every inch of his yard with now-precious warbirds during the lean years when they were considered junk; attends an air show where crowds go wild at the sight of four of the twelve air-worthy B-17s flying in formation; speaks to pilots and mechanics, millionaire businessmen and penniless kids—all of them ready to drop everything in pursuit of these fabled planes. “These planes are a sickness, that’s all there is to it,” one warbird fan tells Hoffman as he lovingly polishes his vintage B-17. In this superbly crafted narrative, Hoffman turns the warbird craze into the stuff of high drama and awesome adventure. *Hunting Warbirds* takes us to the heart of one of the most fascinating obsessions of our time.

From Publishers Weekly Sent to Greenland by Smithsonian magazine to write a piece about Navy P-3 Orion aircraft and their search for submarines, freelance journalist Hoffman was taken up by the crew he was interviewing, with a detour past the ruins of a WWII-era B-29 "Flying Fortress," the Kee Bird. Hoffman became hooked, and he found he was not alone in his obsession about the downed plane, which had crashed at the edge of a lake 40 years earlier, and was nearly perfectly preserved. In a painstaking blow-by-blow reconstruction, Hoffman charts three separate expeditions that were made by an assortment of amateur obsessives to salvage read: restore and fly the Kee Bird, writing in the first person when he went along on a trip, and in the third when recounting the adventures of the diverse subculture of plane salvagers when he couldn't. Their efforts go for naught, and anyone who doesn't already have the flier bug will have shut the book before the marooned bird's engines catch and then catch fire. Written with assurance, Hoffman's debut will certainly hold the buff market rapt, and will also find some readers of extreme sports and travel narratives, but it doesn't have the breadth to break out, though a 5-city author tour could help draw in readers. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal A select group of people, fanatic about fabled World War II warplanes, expend vast sums on the recovery of battered wrecks from unlikely places, then spend even greater sums restoring the planes. Most of them want to fly the warbirds, but some just like the detective and engineering challenges involved. Like any special interest group, they have their politics, relationships, successes, and failures. It is now 56 years after the war, and most of the planes have been melted down; little tangible remains of that part of history. For instance, of more than 100,000 B-29s built, only two are still flying. Journalist Hoffman (Smithsonian, New York Times Magazine) had the good fortune to have been an observer at the attempted salvage of the Kee Bird, an almost undamaged B-29 that crashed gently in northern Greenland. This epic tale of unbelievable risk, tragedy, heroism, and obsession, details a strange hobby, yet the author spins it into an intriguing tale. Recommended for libraries with aerospace or World War II interests. Edwin B. Burgess, U.S. Army Combined Arms Research Lib., Fort Leavenworth, KS Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Warbirds are vintage World War II aircraft. They are among the world's prize collectibles and the objects of an often affluent, always dedicated, sometimes wonderfully mad affection. Hoffman takes us questing for rare aircraft with warbird hunter Gary Larkins and air racer Darryl Greenamyer, partners in repairing a B-29 and flying it off the Greenland icecap, where it crash-landed in 1947. After that venture, Greenamyer actually had Kee Bird executing a takeoff run until it caught fire--the end of an epic struggle that recalls the more peril-ridden of Himalayan expeditions. If he looked high, Larkins looked low, plumbing the depths of Alaska's bogs and Greenland's fjords for B-17s. A fine, noncondescending introduction to those who have warbirds in their hangars, written in clear journalistic prose by a clear-headed journalist who managed to remain on speaking terms with all the colorful characters he was covering. Suitable for aviation, true adventure, and travel collections alike, not to mention the plain-old-entertaining-reading

