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The Wrong Stuff: The Adventures And Misadventures Of An 8th Air Force Aviator



Synopsis

Between April and July 1944, Truman Smith Flew thirty-five bombing missions over France and Germany. He was only twenty years old. Although barely adults, Smith and his peers worried about cramming a lifetime's worth of experience into every free night, each knowing he probably would not survive the next bombing mission. Written with blunt honesty, wry humor, and insight, *The Wrong Stuff* is Smith's gripping memoir of that time. In a new preface, the author comments with equal honesty and humor on the impact this book has had on his life.

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Customer Reviews

LtCol USAF, Retired. Flew combat as Commander of B-17 Aircraft in World War II. An Air Force friend sent me a copy of the *WRONG STUFF*. From the opening page, this book took me back to those war years, and kept me totally absorbed. It hit me like "a ton of bricks" when I discovered that Truman, and I, flew with the same 8th Air Force Group in England. Upon reading Truman's Chapter 5, aptly titled "THE WORST," I discovered for the first time how I lost my plane and crew, while participating on a bombing mission to Berlin, Germany, on April 29, 1944. His vivid description of that raid kept me mesmerized, and it would take a great deal of writing for me to express the large

number of superlatives this book deserves. Chapter 5 is a book within a book. Only 6 ships of 30 in our group returned to home base, while the entire 8th AF lost 63 bombers on that raid alone. I thank God that my friend placed THE WRONG STUFF in my hands, for it enabled me to learn the details of the largest air battle in history. I was unable, for the most part, to view the battle, since I was fully engaged in formation flight. Truman was flying copilot in the highest of our 30 ship formation, and had an unobstructed view of all enemy aircraft, and the raging air battles. It is difficult to imagine such a frightening experience for Truman, a 20 year old copilot, as he peered out the right window of his aircraft, and spotted some 200 enemy aircraft, like a hive of bees, ready to swarm on our hapless group of 30 bombers, which had been carelessly led from the bomber stream. Somehow Truman survived, complete his tour of 35 missions, and luckily for us, remembered, in detail, the ingredients of this great book. Truman describes aerial combat with excellence.

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