



Pushing the Envelope: The American Aircraft Industry

Donald M. Pattillo

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Pushing the Envelope, a survey history of the American aircraft (now aerospace) manufacturing industry, is the most comprehensive history on the subject ever completed. Though it covers the development of the industry from the beginnings of flight to the present, it provides far more than a simple chronology by analyzing key economic, military, technical, and international influences on the industry and showing how the industry has been instrumental in American military and technological leadership from its modest beginnings.

Using original sources whenever available, *Pushing the Envelope* focuses on the business of aircraft. It is neither an aeronautical nor a production history of the industry, although both aspects are addressed. Instead, Donald M. Pattillo features the development and production of aircraft in different periods in the context of aeronautical progress. *Pushing the Envelope* also establishes that the central fact of the industry's existence, its dependence on military contracts, has been simultaneously its greatest strength and greatest vulnerability. Even during periods of military expansion, Pattillo illustrates, it has always been an unstable and insecure enterprise.

Carefully researched, *Pushing the Envelope* also assesses the environmental impacts on the industry, including those pressures that have often led it into ethical dispute. Unlike any other technological industry, the unique qualities of the aircraft industry are truly paradoxical--although it provides vital technical and production capability to the nation, demand for its capabilities may be influenced by external developments that it cannot foresee or influence.

Pushing the Envelope transcends narrow disciplines, commingling aeronautical science and technology, business management, international business, the history of science and technology, national security studies, and international relations. Written in nontechnical language, it can easily be understood by a diverse audience, including industry and military professionals as well as the general public interested in aviation and technology. With *Pushing the Envelope*, Pattillo fills a most conspicuous gap in the literature of both aviation and industrial history.

Donald M. Pattillo is an educational consultant in Acworth, Georgia.

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