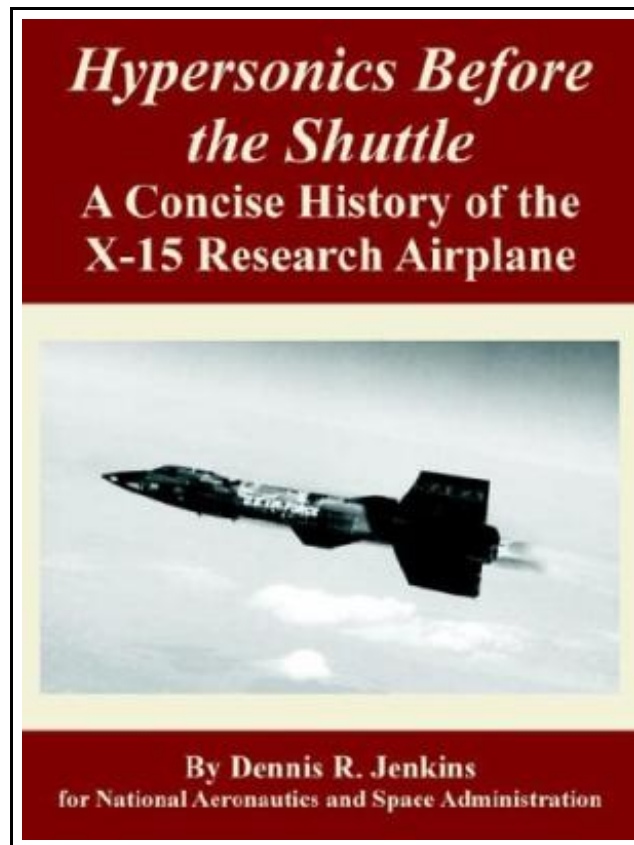


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HYPERSONICS BEFORE THE SHUTTLE: A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE X-15 RESEARCH AIRPLANE

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University Press of the Pacific. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Paperback. 132 pages. Dimensions: 10.9in. x 8.2in. x 0.5in. It is a beginning. Over forty-five years have elapsed since the X-15 was conceived; 40 since it first flew. And 31 since the program ended. Although it is usually heralded as the most productive flight research program ever undertaken, no serious history has been con-assembled to capture its design, development, operations, and lessons. This monograph is the first step towards that history. Not that a great deal has not previously been written about the X-15, because it has. But most of it has been limited to specific aspects of the program; pilots stories, experiments, lessons-learned, etc. But with the exception of Robert S. Houstons history published by the Wright Air Development Center in 1958, and later included in the Air Force History Offices Hypersonic Revolution, no one has attempted to tell the entire story. And the WADC history is taken entirely from the Air Force perspective, with small mention of the other contributors. In 1954 the X-1 series had just broken Mach 2. 5. The aircraft that would become the X-15 was being designed to attain Mach 6, and to fly at the edges of space. It would be accomplished without the use of digital computers, video teleconferencing, the internet, or email. It would, however, come at a terrible financial cost-over 30 times the original estimate. The X-15 would ultimately exceed all of its original performance goals. Instead of Mach 6 and 250, 000 feet, the program would record Mach 6. 7 and 354, 200 feet. And compared against other research (and even operational) aircraft of the era, the X-15 was remarkably safe. Several pilots would get banged up; Jack McKay seriously so, although he would return from his injuries to fly 22...



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