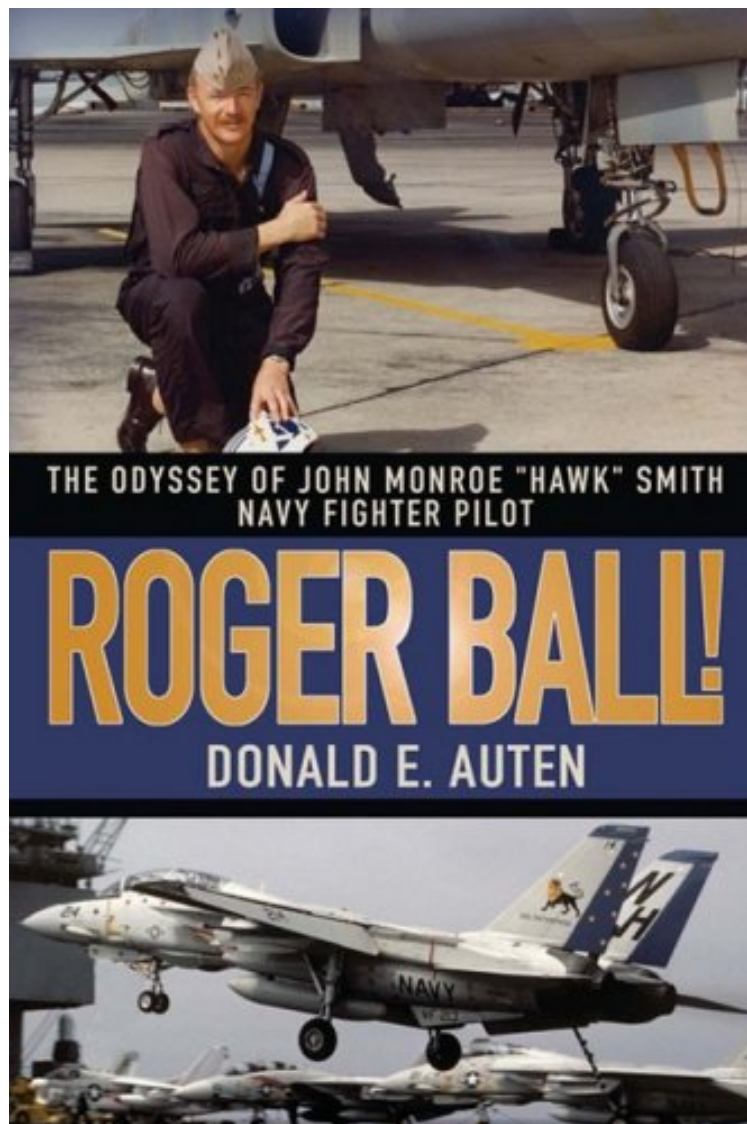


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## ROGER BALL!: THE ODYSSEY OF JOHN MONROE "HAWK" SMITH NAVY FIGHTER PILOT

*Donald Auten*

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**Donald Auten : ROGER BALL!: THE ODYSSEY OF JOHN MONROE "HAWK" SMITH NAVY FIGHTER PILOT** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised ROGER BALL!: THE ODYSSEY OF JOHN MONROE "HAWK" SMITH NAVY FIGHTER PILOT:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great man, good history.... Must read no matter the year By Rob

Kunzig Well even though it goes back some years I found it a wonderful history lesson about a man and the machines of his day. And what a life, straight forward standing on fact and integrity - a well lived life where this reader, Rob, wants to find a way to say thank you. Ten times. Well written Donald Auten and many thanks for your passion, dedication and work Mr. John Monroe Smith - peace to you Sir. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Been there, loved the flying! By Aqua Man As a Naval Aviator during the same time period, I found this book very enjoyable. It brought back many fond memories that I experienced flying with some excellent pilots on the East coast... Med Cruise type. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good Source By Jeff O'Byrne Valuable book about an important person in the ongoing effort to keep Naval Aviation tactically effective. It is cited almost entirely from the subject's recollections and direct quotes from official publications. For the serious student this is a strength not a weakness. For example, the description of Hawk's passage through both the RIO and NA education process provides a specific chronology for the researcher that more adroit penmanship might have covered up. By ending the tale with the horrible competition with the nominal supervisor, COMFITWINGPAC the reader might be left with a bad impression of Naval Leadership. To mitigate that, read Paul Gillcrist's 'Sea Legs' Part Nine. Rear Admiral Gillcrist was Rear Admiral Fenner's relief in 1979 just after Hawk left Top Gun. His story of correcting the conditions that seriously damaged the Naval fighter community will change your view of senior leadership in the U.S. Navy.

Roger Ball! is a magnificent read about a great and distinguished life well lived. John Monroe Smith is a living legend in Naval aviation: an all-American boy living his dream, a dream of becoming the best fighter pilot and carrier aviator in the Navy. He succeeded in being the best in a way that only one with unbridled passion, fierce commitment, boundless energy, unconditional dedication and relentless resolve can experience. -Ed Allen, Rear Admiral, USN (Retired) In the wake of the hard lessons of the Vietnam War, a pantheon of committed naval aviators struggled valiantly to modernize fighter aircraft and overhaul tactics. It was a seemingly titanic task marked by political intrigue, doctrinal apoplexy, and sadly, petty politics. This is the personal story of one of those naval aviators, Captain John Monroe "Hawk" Smith. It chronicles his growth as a naval officer, his seasoning as a fighter pilot, and his hardening as a commanding officer. It tells of the raw courage of naval aviators and captures the visceral loyalty, unswerving commitment, and the unsinkable camaraderie that is the brotherhood of naval aviation. Roger Ball! is a seven-g, heart-in-the-throat story of the very unforgiving profession of naval aviation.

From the Publisher "Roger Ball!" straps the reader to a high-G odyssey and catapults him into the life of John Monroe "Hawk" Smith—Navy fighter pilot. It captures the adventures and hardships of deployment, the pressures of command, and the unforgiving and very lethal nature of tactical flying. "Roger Ball!" heralds the disciples of fighter doctrine, the inauguration of TOPGUN, and articulates the monumental success it had in resurrecting the Navy's air dominance during the Vietnam War. "Roger Ball!" traces the selfless sacrifices of Hawk and other key fighter crews in developing the world's deadliest fighter—the Grumman F-14 Tomcat. Finally, it captures the spirit, the commitment, and personal sacrifices of the men and women of naval aviation. "Roger Ball!" is a highly personal story of an extraordinary fighter pilot set during one of the most tumultuous times in naval fighter aviation. All those who also have been there and all those who have a desire to understand life as a Navy fighter pilot will savor the telling of Hawk's story. From the Author This work reflects the efforts of numerous people who improved the technical accuracy, the historical fidelity, and offered small clusters of important personal recollections that could not be found in official documents or historical records. For their efforts in breathing life into "Roger Ball!" I wish to thank the following individuals: Admiral Leighton W. Smith, USN (Retired); Vice Admiral Michael T. Bucchi, USN (Retired); Rear Admiral John R. Wilson, Jr., USN (Retired); Rear Admiral Paul T. Gillcrist, USN (Retired); Rear Admiral Jay A. Campbell, USN (Retired); Captain Ronald E. McKeown, USN (Retired); Captain Clinton L. Smith, USN (Retired); Commander Richard K. Pottratz, USN (Retired); Commander Katherine S. Auten, USNR (Retired); Commander Joseph H. Zahalka, USN (Retired); Commander Richard A. Redditt, USN (Retired); Colonel Earl Young, USA (Retired); Commander Joseph F. Satrapa, USN (Retired); Commander Jeremy Gillespie, USN; Major Chris Guarnieri, US! MC; Mr. John Sherwood (Naval Historian); Senior Chief Robert L. Lawson, PHCS (AC), USN (Retired); Sergeant Alan J. Weiss, USAF (Retired); Technical Sergeant Yancy Mailes, USAF; Mr. Mark Evans (Naval Historian); Mr. Robert Young (Naval Historian). Finally, but most importantly, I also wish to thank the person who, more than any, gave me criticism, enthusiasm, and a steady wind over the deck: Colonel John Grider Miller, USMC, (Retired). John Monroe "Hawk" Smith will never be a household name, but I hope this work paints a portrait of a U.S. military officer, like thousands serving America today, who was willing to work and struggle, often at great personal risk, for those principals, people, and institutions he held dear. If "Roger Ball!" is enlightening, these men and women helped make it that way. If it is poignant, I have successfully told Hawk's story. From the Inside Flap In the field of naval aviation, the term "Roger Ball!" simply means, "You're looking good. Keep it coming!" It's a phrase that John Monroe "Hawk" Smith had heard many times throughout his illustrious thirty-year career in the U.S. Navy. Blessed with high energy, an analytical mind, cat-like reflexes, and a proclivity to push the envelope, Hawk was born to be a fighter pilot! "Roger Ball!" chronicles Hawk's life, from his earliest days and his budding infatuation with jet aircraft,

to the many adventures he experienced during his career as a Navy fighter pilot. Author Donald E. Auten takes you through the daily events that pilots and naval flight officers endure in the training command, the squadron, and overseas deployments. He captures the hardship of cruise, the thrill of piloting a fighter, the terror of night-arrested landings, the heartbreak of losing squadron mates, and the euphoria of returning home. "Roger Ball!" is a poignant story of loyalty and leadership and one man's unswerving dedication to his people and to his Navy.