

The Airplane Crash That Killed John Denver

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The unexpected, tragic and premature death of John Denver came as a shock to all those that loved and admired the singer and his music. Denver, a lifelong aviation enthusiast; was killed while undertaking one of his favorite pastimes; that of piloting his own small aircraft. Denver owned and flew many different types of airplanes over the years. He owned and flew vintage Waco biplanes, performed aerobatics in his Christen Eagle aerobatic sport plane and even flew a business jet that he purchased from his 1974 royalties that he earned from his hit album, "Back Home Again." Denver eventually flew himself to concerts in his jet plane. As a long time pilot – John loved the sense of freedom and excitement that aviation could provide. He could soar like an eagle over his beloved mountains while at the controls of his airplane. However, John Denver's love of flying finally caught up with him. He had just purchased an experimental airplane, took some flying instruction in it, had two mechanics look it over thoroughly and had it repainted. He crashed it the day after he brought it home from the paint shop. He died instantly in the accident. Some question how John Denver could have died in such a well proven airplane. It was already 10 years old and had hundreds of test hours on it. The airplane's design came from one of the foremost aeronautical engineers that ever lived. Was the crash purely a result of pilot error, or were there other contributing factors? I heard one of John's family members say on television that he believed that this must have been a suicide. I myself, as a longtime pilot; assumed at first that this must have been a suicide. After all, this airplane had a great safety record. The design was safe. Denver was an extremely competent pilot. It seemed highly suspect that this type airplane would just stop in mid air, slow its engine and peel over to the right to crash into the ocean. Then I learned the facts. This was not a suicide. I read all the evidence, no stone was left unturned. I finally concluded that this was no suicide. This book provides the answers to every question anyone could ever pose about the flight that killed John Denver. But it cannot bring him back. John Denver is gone forever. Before he died he wrote songs that touched our deepest emotions. I have watched his audiences laugh, cheer, sing out loud with him, clap their hands and cry; all while listening to Denver perform in person. John Denver will be deeply missed by several generations of fans. I am fortunate to have met the designer of John Denver's airplane back during the 1970's and 1980's. I have seen dozens of airplanes like the one John crashed up close. I have a thorough knowledge of this airplane, its design and its designer. I have over 500 hours of personal flying time at the controls of airplanes. I have personally attended FAA flight safety seminars involving fuel management. I have met and talked with Captain Al Haynes, the pilot that cart-wheeled his airliner into the Iowa corn fields and lived to tell about it. I have survived three forced landings myself when my airplanes malfunctioned. I once ran out of gas in an airplane during flight. This book brings all my experiences and aviation knowledge together as I investigate the crash and explore the pilot, the airplane, and the mistakes that led to John Denver's death. It is my hope and intent to bring every John Denver fan to a knowledge that will allow them to fully understand this tragedy - to be able to discuss it intelligently with family and friends. I think John would like that!

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