

# WRITTEN IN THE SKY

by **MARK CARR**

*Strap yourself in for a ride in a jet cockpit!*

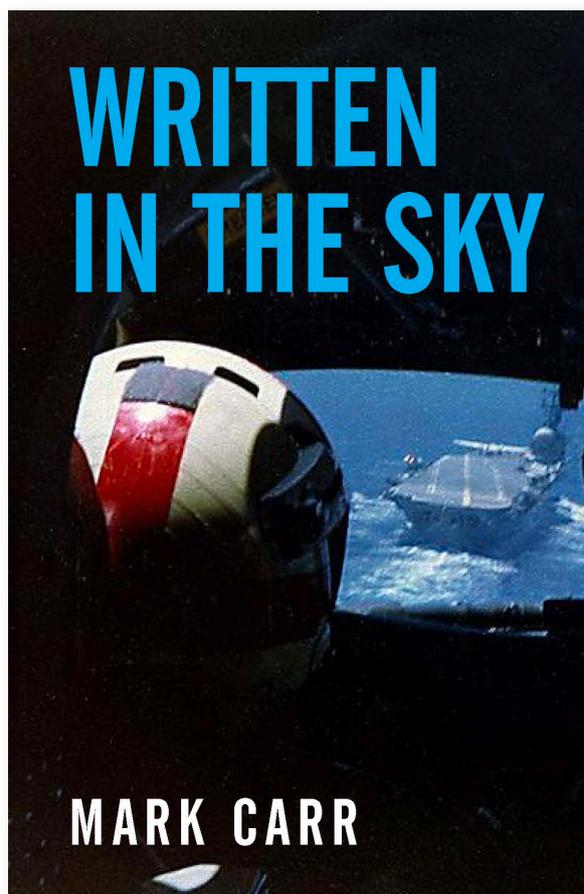
Since childhood, Mark Carr wanted to fly, and fly he did ... firstly as a naval aviator, a jet instructor and then pilot for Cathay Pacific Airways.

This 'techno-biography' is written for those who, like him, seemingly have hydraulic oil flowing through their veins. However the book also gives readers of a non-flying background an insight into military and civil aviation.

Sit in the cockpit with Mark and gain a rare insight into how these amazing machines, that we now take for granted, work, and how the men and women in the cockpits and flight decks operate them safely and efficiently.

*I wanted to do justice to all of the wonderful aircraft that I have flown, a credit to their designers, manufacturers, and the people who maintained them ... I sincerely hope that the reader, of whatever age or background, finds the work informative, entertaining, and possibly even inspiring.*

His story is also entwined with historical context including his first-hand account of the infamous Australian Pilots' Dispute of 1989 and life as an expatriate in Hong Kong.



## The Author

Mark Carr was born in Wagga Wagga, Australia, in 1957. At a young age he developed an obsession with aviation. After moving to Victoria where he attended high school, he made his first solo flight at the age of sixteen, and joined the Royal Australian Navy as a pilot at eighteen in 1976. After personal struggles he developed into a seasoned carrier pilot, operating Grumman 'Tracker' aircraft, and later became a flying instructor on jets.

In the early eighties he transferred to the Royal Australian Air Force and continued instructing on jets then 'Orion' patrol aircraft before joining Ansett Airlines of Australia in 1987, where he flew Fokker and Boeing aircraft. However, just two years later Mark was caught up in the bitter Australian Domestic Pilots' Dispute, and he and his young family left Australia to fly with Cathay Pacific Airways Limited in Hong Kong, where he flew Boeing 747 and Airbus aircraft.

After sixteen years in Hong Kong Mark was able to move back to Victoria, where he continued flying for Cathay Pacific until his retirement as an Airbus captain in 2018. With aviation still in his blood he conducts 'Adventure Flights' for the public in restored military training aircraft, and supports the Benalla Aviation Museum. He lives near Euroa, Victoria and is married with a son, daughter and a grandson.

## Extracts from WRITTEN IN THE SKY

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I was sweating, despite the several kilometres high we were in the upper atmosphere. Two of us grunted under the g as I pulled the Macchi out from a plunge toward the blue sea. The g suit squeezed legs and stomach and I fought against it to clear my vision. Now the jet's nose was arcing up and its speed began to wash off. I kept back pressure on the control column until I began to feel a 'buzz' through it, then the vibration and shuddering of the whole aircraft as the wings approached their stalling angle. We were locked in a simulated aerial combat.

The pilot tried to throw the Boeing onto Runway 13, but there was confusion in the cockpit as the aircraft, not slowing on the rain-slick runway, floated and kept floating. Belatedly, the captain had pulled back on the reverse thrust levers on the backs of the four throttles, and his feet pressed the tops of the big rudder pedals to apply maximum braking. Now, he had overridden the automatic brakes that he had set at too 'soft' a setting for the conditions. Too late. The far-end of the runway loomed. They would soon be over the rocky sea wall and into the choppy grey-green water as, despite their efforts, the Boeing would just not slow down enough. In a desperate attempt to avoid running off the far-end of Runway 13, the captain kicked the left rudder pedal and the jet yawed left into a grinding 'ground loop'. It swerved off what remained of the runway and bucked and tore through the sodden grass. Then, with the momentum of well over two hundred tonnes of metal, fuel, cargo and humanity, it lurched over the rocks of the sea wall, the landing gear now ripped off and the airliner on its belly and finally slowing; but, still, the jet fell into Hong Kong harbour. It surfed along for a few metres, then came to rest floating alongside the rocks and ended up almost parallel to the runway, its nose incongruously pointing back in the direction from whence it had come.

