

Plane That Killed Knute Rockne



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On March 31, 1931, an F-10A carrying six passengers crashed in a wheat field in Kansas, killing all aboard. Knute Rockne, head coach of the Notre Dame football team, was one of the people killed in the crash. In 1931 Rockne was one of the most famous figures in America, considered a national hero by many. He had singlehandedly raised the Notre Dame football program to the prominent position that it continues to enjoy to this day. His death was a tremendous shock to the American people. In this book, James Stone looks at the life of Knute Rockne, the life of Tony Fokker, the aircraft's designer, pilot Robert Fry, and at the early history of aviation, so that we can understand why an airplane with so many inherent design flaws would be used as a passenger plane by a major airline, and why someone like Rockne would willingly place his life in the hands of the pilot of such a plane. After the crash, regulators and engineers would place a primary emphasis on passenger safety that still rules today. Unfortunately the changes came too late for Knute Rockne and the others aboard that doomed airplane. As happens so often, something disastrous had to occur - and someone great had to die - before attention could be brought to some very real problems.

作者介绍:

目录:

[Plane That Killed Knute Rockne 下载链接1](#)

标签

评论

[Plane That Killed Knute Rockne 下载链接1](#)

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