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Spitfire Pilot: A Personal Account Of The Battle Of Britain



Synopsis

The battle for the skies of Britain has just begun. At the outbreak of the Second World War D. M. Crook, of No. 609 Squadron AAF, was at Yeadon, still undergoing his training; by the winter of 1939-40, he had his wings. Successfully applying to return to his Squadron, then on defence duties in northern England, Crook began to familiarise himself with their new fighter: the Spitfire. Soon they were posted to RAF Northolt, and it was at this time that Crook, much to his chagrin, was left grounded, undergoing knee surgery as they flew over Dunkirk. Following the Allied evacuation from France, Crook returned to the air and found himself facing the relentless sorties as the skies above Britain transformed into a battlefield. In one particularly frank passage, Crook recounts how he mistakenly shot down a Blenheim, going on to illustrate how easy it was for pilots to misidentify aircraft. 'Spitfire Pilot' is a remarkable account of one officer's life in 609 Squadron, the excitement, the anxieties and the camaraderie, during one of the most famous battles of the Second World War. 'Crook and his colleagues committed acts of unimaginable bravery against the German aircraft. Many did not make it and the author describes the absence they leave in the squadron with great poignancy. His descriptions of aerial conflict will rarely be bettered.' Magazine 'A brilliant first-hand account of the life of a fighter pilot before and during the Battle of Britain.' - Spectator 'A unique personal insight into one of the crucial periods of the war ... I cannot recommend this highly enough.' - World War II Magazine Flt. Lt. David Moore Crook, D.F.C. (1914-1944) was commissioned into the Auxiliary Air Force in September 1938, as an Acting Pilot Officer. In May 1940 he was promoted Pilot Officer, in December of the same year Flight Officer, before reaching the rank of Flight Lieutenant a year later. One of 'The Few' who fought in the Battle of Britain, where he won the D.F.C., in December 1944 he failed to return to base: his Spitfire was reported to have dived into the sea. He is commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial.

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Customer Reviews

An honest personal account of flying The Famous Spitfire in the Battle of Britain!! Flight Lieutenant David Crook ETC does not embellish the account, but tells it the way it was. No heroics, just the truth...good and bad, but the absolute truth. His modesty and insight is really refreshing and makes the book a page turner!! This account is Impressive in that it allows the reader to feel as though he (or she) was in the aircraft with the author. Enjoy!! I really did!! K.

Well written, with attention to details. Very easy reading, with continuing of action progression. A lot of information that has never been told.

It is very British and some of the wording leaves one wondering what they meant. Well written.

The Spitfire was the darling fighter aircraft of the Battle of Britain and did a lot to help Britain win this battle. Great Britain took a group of young men and formed a magnificent fighting machine that held off the German Luftwaffe until the United States got on a war footing. The Spitfire squadrons won the battle with the German Messerschmits and protected the Hurricanes so that they could defeat the Bombers, The free world owes much to these brave men and their counterparts in the other period aircraft.

WWII is not addressed properly In schools any more because it is old history.In the book you ride in the cockpit and understand the formation of WWII defenses from England.,I enjoyed the book very much.Thank you David Crook for sharing part of your life with us.Dale's Trails

The writer does a good job telling about his experiences flying a Spitfire. My only criticism is that he only flew during the early years of WWII. Therefore, his story is cut short and left me wanting to hear more about his adventures.

Nothing like a firsthand account. Crook has a jolly good time flying and shooting down the Hun in between being grief-stricken while attending funerals for his many fallen comrades. The book is very short and doesn't go into the subjects at hand in any detail. It was first published in 1942 and assumes that the reader lived through the battle and is already familiar with the details thereof. The modern reader is not, and so some annotation and a map would be of great help. However, the reader easily understands how a fighter pilot develops his skills, provided he lives long enough to do so. Crook also makes clear the ghastly mortality rate the pilots accepted as part of their job.

I enjoyed the book; it had a very personal touch to it. If you are looking for a detailed account of the Battle of Britain this is not for you. If you are looking for a lot of firsthand descriptions of actual fighting this is not for you. Rather, this is a very personal account of one pilot's life during the battle: the despair at the loss of fellow pilots, the relief from going on leave, the fear of getting shot down, and thrill from being part of something bigger than himself. It was a rather short but personal read. The account was written during WWII while the story was very fresh in the author's mind.

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