

## The Turret Fighters Defiant And Roc

Flight remains one of humanity's most spectacular triumphs, and Canada especially has much to be proud of.

The turret fighter was predicted by many before World War II to be the only effective way of dealing with the new threat of the heavy bomber. In the event of the concept of a two-man fighter with its armament concentrated in a power-operated turret did not turn out to be the answer. The Boulton Paul Defiant and the Blackburn Roc were only two examples of the concept to enter service and only the Defiant was able to claim any success in combat.

Originally a town that was built of wood by the Anglo-Saxons, it was later burned down and then rebuilt as England's second city, after London, by William the Conqueror. Riots between the church and the citizens saw Norwich at war with the Pope in 1272 when a gate was constructed as a penance. The Norfolk Regiment has seen its men in combat from the Napoleonic Wars, the Crimean War, the Boer War and both World Wars. The more recent conflicts in the Falklands, Iraq and Afghanistan have also witnessed the bravery of the Norfolks. A comprehensive list of military personnel who gave their lives is examined, including Norwich-born Second Lieutenant Wilfred Edwards VC, as well as an account of 9694 Private John Henry Abigail of the Norfolk Regiment who, on 12 September 1917, aged 21, was executed for being AWOL. It would not be until November 2006 that Private Abigail was pardoned by the British government.

The 'Castle' class 4-6-0 locomotives designed by Charles Collett and built at Swindon Works were the principal passenger locomotives of the Great Western Railway. The 4-cylinder locomotives were built in batches between 1923 and 1950, the later examples being constructed after nationalisation by British Railways. In total 171 engines of the class were built and they were originally to be seen at work all over the Great Western Railway network, and later working on the Western Region of British Railways. The highly successful class could be described as a GWR work in progress, because further development took place over almost all of the locomotives working lives. In addition to inspiring other locomotive designers the 'Castle' class engines were proved to be capable of outstanding performances, and when introduced were rightly described as being 'Britain's most powerful passenger locomotives'. Some of the 'Castles' survived in service for over 40 years, and individually clocked up just a little short of 2 million miles in traffic. In this book, Keith Langston provides a definitive chronological history of the iconic class together with archive photographic records of each GWR 'Castle' locomotive. Many of the 300 plus images are published for the first time. In addition background information on the origin of the names the engines carried, including details of the many name changes which took place, are also included. The extra anecdotal information adds a fascinating glimpse of social history. Collett CASTLE Class is a lavishly illustrated factual reference book which will delight steam railway enthusiasts in general and in particular those with a love of all things Great Western!

Boulton Paul aircraft

Boulton Paul Defiant. The purpose of this volume is to provide a comprehensive detailed study of the operational and combat

operations of the RAF's Boulton Paul Defiant MK.I turret armed fighter aircraft during the hectic air battles of mid and late May 1940, the latter period of which the Defiant was heavily involved in operations against Luftwaffe fighters and bombers attacking the British Expeditionary Force evacuation operations on the channel coast, particularly around Dunkirk. It also covers the Defiants operations in the air battles of July and August at the height of the Battle of Britain, when 264 Squadron and 141 Squadron flew day and night operations, suffering severe losses. A brief description of the genesis and development of the Defiant MK.I fighter is laid down, but the volume is not designed to be a comprehensive monograph on that subject. A brief description of the Defiants main fighter adversary, the German Me.109E, is also provided. The volume is copiously supported by a wealth of operational documents including Squadron Narratives, Group Intelligence Combat Reports, Squadron operational Records and pilot Personal Combat Reports, many of which are reproduced verbatim. Operational documents have been tied up against German reports whenever possible which naturally results in areas of disputed figures, particularly with regards to numbers of German aircraft shot down.

The Boulton Paul Balliol was the last British aircraft powered by the iconic Rolls-Royce Merlin engine. Also, the Balliol was the last piston-powered advanced trainer in both the Royal Air Force and the Fleet Air Arm, and yet it began life as the world's first turbo-trainer. Conceived in the last days of the Second World War as a new trainer to be powered by a revolutionary turboprop engine, it became the first aircraft to be powered by a single prop-jet, beating the rival Avro Athena into the air by just two weeks. Policy was to change and it went into production powered by the trusty Merlin and Boulton Paul hoped for huge orders with a second production line opened at Blackburn Aircraft. Yet, policy was to change again and in the end only 200 planes were built as the RAF decided to switch to all-jet training. A dozen were sold to the Royal Ceylon Air Force and as yet another footnote in aviation history, the Balliol became the last aircraft built by Boulton Paul who were world leaders in the production of power controls such as its famous machine-gun turrets that saw action in the Second World War. Illustrations: 164 black-and-white photographs

A prolific sub-contractor building airframes during the first World War, Boulton & Paul entered the field of design and manufacture in 1917 with the formation of an Aeronautical and Research Division under John Dudley North. Never destined to be one of the big players, they produced a relatively modest output of prototype aircraft and then in 1937 a series of bombers and a small batch of civilian two-seaters. The relatively unsuccessful Defiant was their best-known aircraft. However, hidden from public view was a prolific output of proposals, trials and inventions. From biplane fighters through the novel turret fighters and into the supersonic age with VTOL lift-fan jets, Boulton Paul were always at the forefront of development. Based upon over 60 years of research, this book recounts many of these radical and innovative projects using development layouts, final schemes, drawings and photographs of mock-ups, models and prototype airframes. Many projects are recreated in CAD and other drawings by the author previously an apprentice and a technical engineer with the company and archivist of the Boulton Paul Association. This book sheds much new light on the activities of an often overlooked company which was in many respects at the forefront of aeronautical innovation in Britain for several decades.

Bristol Blenheim MK.IF The purpose of this volume is to provide a comprehensive detailed study of the operational and combat operations of the RAF's Bristol Blenheim MK.IF twin-engine long-range fighter aircraft from the start of World War II in September 1939 through the battles of May and June 1940 following the German invasion of France and the Low Countries. The volume covers Fighter Commands day fighter sweeps and day/night fighter operations against enemy bombers on both sides of the English Channel including operations over Dunkirk in the latter part of May and early June. Although primarily aimed at covering Fighter Command MK.IF operations, some Coastal Command MK.IF and Blenheim MK.IVF combats with enemy aircraft are also detailed when appropriate. A brief description of the genesis and development of the Bristol Blenheim is laid down, but the volume is not designed to be a comprehensive monograph on that subject. The volume is copiously supported by a wealth of operational documents including Squadron Narratives, Group Intelligence Combat Reports, Squadron operational Records and pilot Personal Combat Reports, many of which are reproduced verbatim. Operational documents have been tied up against German reports whenever possible.

John Killen's exhaustive work is a study of German air power between 1915 and 1945, from the early days of flying when Immelmann, Boelke, Richtofen and other First World War aces fought and died to give Germany air supremacy, to the nightmare existence of the Luftwaffe as the Third Reich plunged headlong to destruction. Here are the aircraft: the frail biplanes and triplanes of the Kaiser's war; the great Lufthansa aircraft and airships of the turbulent Thirties; the monoplanes designed to help Hitler in his conquest of Europe. Here are the generals who forged the air weapon of the Luftwaffe - the swaggering Goering, the playboy Udet, the ebullient Kesselring and the scapegoat Jeschonnek; here, too, are the pilots who tried to keep faith with their Fatherland despite overwhelming odds; Adolf Galland, Werner Molders, Joachim Marseille and Hanna Reitsch. Not least are the actions fought by the Luftwaffe from the Spanish Civil War to the Battle of Britain, through the bloody struggle for Crete and the siege of Stalingrad to the fearful twilight over Berlin.

This work examines the evolution of the RAF's operational requirements for its home defence air force - for bombers to mount a deterrent counter offensive and for fighters to provide direct defence of Britain. It discusses the management processes, policies and decisions relevant to operational requirements on the basis of a detailed study of Air Ministry papers of the time. By tracing the development of operational requirements, the author exposes the thinking behind the RAF's quest for effective fighter and bomber aircraft. He describes the ideas and concepts of air warfare that were adopted in the 1920s, and shows how these evolved into the Air Staff's requirements for the aircraft which the RAF entered and fought in World War II.

The British Secret Projectseries covers the design and development of UK military aircraft since the mid-1930s with strong emphasis on designs that were never built, particularly those types generated by the various design competitions held. The original Volume Three (Fighters and Bombers 1935 to 1950) has now been split into separate volumes with this book covering fighters and a new Volume Four in preparation solely devoted to bomber designs. This split has allowed space for the inclusion of much new information and many new photographs. This book describes the design and development of the British fighter from the end of the biplane fighter to the start of the jet era. The projects and programs which feature in its pages begin with those prepared in the mid-1930s in the knowledge that war was coming and go through to some which appeared after the war had ended. During this period the art of fighter design took some big and important steps forward and here can be found fixed-gun fighters and turret fighters, in both single and twin-engine form, plus the first generation of jet fighters. Types such as the Folland Fo.118 and the Westland P.13 and many more which were designed to meet the requirements of both the Royal Air Force and the Fleet Air Arm are included. As with the companion volumes, the author has undertaken extensive research and made

full use of primary source material. Three-view drawings plus photographs of models or original artist's impressions combine to show how these unbuilt designs would have appeared. Data and appendices summarize the projects, contracts and specifications and provide a detailed insight into many fascinating aircraft.

In May 1940, the opposing German and Allied forces seemed reasonably well matched. On the ground, the four allied nations had more troops, artillery and tanks. Even in the air, the German advantage in numbers was slight. Yet two months later, the Allied armies had been crushed. The Netherlands, Belgium and France had all surrendered and Britain stood on her own, facing imminent defeat. Subsequent accounts of the campaign have tended to see this outcome as predetermined, with the seeds of defeat sown long before the fighting began. Was it so inevitable? Should the RAF have done more to help the Allied armies? Why was such a small proportion of the RAF's frontline strength committed to the crucial battle on the ground? Could Fighter Command have done more to protect the British and French troops being evacuated from the beaches of Dunkirk? This study looks at the operations flown and takes a fresh look at the fatal decisions made behind the scenes, decisions that unnecessarily condemned RAF aircrews to an unequal struggle and ultimately ensured Allied defeat. What followed became the RAF's finest hour with victory achieved by the narrowest of margins. Or was it, as some now suggest, a victory that was always inevitable? If so, how was the German military juggernaut that had conquered most of Europe so suddenly halted? This study looks at the decisions and mistakes made by both sides. It explains how the British obsession with bomber attacks on cities had led to the development of the wrong type of fighter force and how only a fortuitous sequence of events enabled Fighter Command to prevail. It also looks at how ready the RAF was to deal with an invasion. How much air support could the British Army have expected? Why were hundreds of American combat planes and experienced Polish and Czech pilots left on the sidelines? And when the Blitz began, and Britain finally got the war it was expecting, what did this campaign tell us about the theories on air power that had so dominated pre-war air policy? All these questions and more are answered in Greg Baughen's third book. Baughen describes the furious battles between the RAF and the Luftwaffe and the equally bitter struggle between the Air Ministry and the War Office - and explains how close Britain really came to defeat in the summer of 1940.

Turret equipped fighters became operational with the Royal Air Force during WW2 as the result of the British Government's ongoing concern about German aerial attacks on the United Kingdom during World War One. The possibility of enemy bombers, and not just German ones, once again flying over the country and dropping their deadly load on British soil had troubled them ever since. In the 1930s a fighter fitted with a gun turret was considered to be an effective way of attacking bombers and would be a feasible alternative to conventional fighters. The result of this concept was the Defiant, which was developed to meet this operational requirement. After a promising start during the dark days of the Battle of France the Defiant was withdrawn from day operations, after having sustained heavy losses, during the Battle of Britain, the switched to the night fighter role until the spring of 1942. This publication is illustrated with 80 photographs and four colour profiles and included all the confirmed and probable claims made by Defiant crews between 1940 and 1942. All losses of Defiants used as fighters are also listed, squadron by squadron.

Innumerable books have been published on the two most famous fighter aircraft of all time, the Supermarine Spitfire and the Messerschmitt Bf109. But books setting out to tell the story of both aircraft are very much rarer - probably fewer than the fingers of one hand. Yet their joint story is one which bears retelling since both were essential to the air campaigns of World War Two. Incredibly, the men who designed them lacked any experience of designing a modern fighter. R J Mitchell had begun his career working on industrial steam locomotives, Willy

Messerschmitt had cut his aeronautical teeth on light and fragile gliders and sporting planes. Yet both men not only managed to devise aircraft which could hold their own in a world where other designs went from state-of-the-art to obsolete in a staggeringly short time, but their fighters remained competitive over six years of front-line combat. Despite the different ways their creators approached their daunting tasks and the obstacles each faced in acceptance by the services for which they were designed, they proved to be so closely matched that neither side gained a decisive advantage in a titanic struggle. Had either of them not matched up to its opponent so well, then the air war would have been a one-sided catastrophe ending in a quick defeat for the Allies or the Axis powers, and the course of twentieth century history would have been changed beyond recognition.

The Boulton Paul Defiant is one Britain's most famous night fighter aircraft. First used as a day, then night during the Battle of Britain; and thus saw service as an auxiliary aircraft. Details are provided of a wide selection of historic machines and fascinating color schemes, as well as full technical details. The book is very well illustrated with many period black and white photos as well as a number of walk-around color photos, taken at the RAF Museum Hendon, of the only surviving Defiant. Also included in the book are a number of excellent 1/72nd scale plans and multiple view drawings of all the significant variants as well as numerous color profiles for both RAF and USAAF operated aircraft. It contains 53 black and white wartime photos, 18 black and white line drawings of various marks in 1/72nd scale, 136 color photos that are walk-around shots of the last existing example of a Defiant in the Hendon Museum, UK, several information charts, 16 illustrations out maintenance manuals and 35 full color side profile paintings (a couple of which are three-views). This book will have great appeal to model builders, aircraft enthusiasts, and aviation historians. **REVIEWS** ...well over a hundred color photos of the Defiant from all angles and in great detail. Even if you can go to the museum and see the aircraft, you would not be able to see it in such great detail...If you are about to open the Airfix Defiant box, you will find this book and invaluable companion to your project. Model Airplane International A

This book tells the story of Australians and New Zealanders in one of the Second World War's defining and most memorable campaigns. From July until October 1940, the German air force (the Luftwaffe) sought aerial supremacy in skies over England as a prerequisite for an invasion of Britain (Operation Sealion). The ensuing conflict of Luftwaffe and RAF aircraft in the long summer of 1940 became forever known as the Battle of Britain. Of the 574 overseas pilots in the campaign, the New Zealand contingent of 134 airmen was second in size only to the Polish contribution. The Australian involvement, though smaller, was a healthy 37. Thus a fifth of overseas pilots were Anzacs. Among these colonials were some of the Battle of Britain's widely admired aces. Of the top ten pilots with the greatest number of victories two were New Zealanders (C. F. Gray and B. Carbury) and one an Australian (P. Hughes). Australian and New Zealand aircrew were also employed in attacking enemy Channel ports and airfields as part of Bomber and Coastal Command's attempts to thwart invasion preparations and blunt the Luftwaffe aerial onslaught. The Anzacs also had a fellow compatriot at the highest level in the Fighter Command system: the highly regarded New Zealander Air Vice-Marshal Sir Keith Park, who was instrumental in devising and implementing the integrated air defence of Britain around Spitfire and Hurricane aircraft, radio control and radar. In the spring of 1940, he was given the command of Group 11, which would face the brunt of the German aggression in south-east England. The success of Park's plans and operational initiatives, and the role played by Anzac pilots and aircrew, would all contribute to the conflict's eventual successful outcome.

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This work describes the vital role of the Air Ministry in the development of the RAF's fighters and bombers before WWII.

The Hawker Hurricane matched the best aircraft of Britain's enemies at the moment of greatest crisis and went in to fight in more campaigns,

on more fronts, and in more theaters and countries than any other Allied airplane in World War II.

Covering the aircraft of 21 nations, this book offers illustrated portraits of 330 of the best-known and most significant military aircraft in history, from the canvas-covered biplanes of World War I to the technological marvels of today, and includes technical data and aviation lore.

In this book, Andy Saunders journeys back in time into the cockpits of RAF fighters and Luftwaffe bombers to show precisely where the Battle of Britain was won and lost. It was a savage aerial campaign: the world's first ever strategic, decisive air war on which the fate of Britain and the Allies as a whole rested. Losses were high on both sides, but the determined, and crucially, well-directed RAF fighter force began to take its toll on the overextended, under-protected Kampfgruppen of Heinkel He 111s, Ju 87s and 88s, and Dornier Do 17s. Using the famous Spitfire and Hurricane, but also the lesser known Havoc and Defiant fighters, Fighter Command could really maul the Luftwaffe bombers if they avoided falling foul of the formidable Bf 109 escorts. Both sides learned and adapted as the campaign went on, with the Luftwaffe switching from massed daylight raids to round-the-clock bombing, eventually bombing only by night, often hitting civilian targets in the dreaded Blitz. This lavishly-illustrated study dissects the tactics and technology of the duels in this new kind of war.

Filled with the Mosquitos operational record and supplemented with tables, drawings, maps and charts. Describes every operational sortie, verifying battle claims wherever possible against Luftwaffe records. Sharp and Bowyer combine their talents to produce this exceptional record of de Havillands legendary Wooden Wonder. Foreword by Sir Geoffrey de Havilland. Fully revised and up-dated.

The Blenheim IF flew some of Fighter Command's early offensive operations, and the type soon proved vulnerable when pitted against single-seat fighters. However, for much of 1940 the Blenheim fighter squadrons provided the RAF's main long-range convoy escort and nightfighter capability. In the mid-1930s, in an attempt to capitalise on its expertise in power-operated gun turrets, the Boulton Paul Company developed the Defiant, a single-engined fighter in which all the armament was concentrated in the turret behind the pilot. Intended as a 'bomber destroyer', the Defiant had its combat debut over Dunkirk, and initially achieved some considerable success. A number of American-built aircraft called Douglas DB-7 light bombers (named Havoc by the RAF), were fitted with radar for nightfighter duties and others successfully replaced the Blenheim as night intruders. A total of 11 pilots claimed five or more victories when flying these three types to become aces, whilst no fewer than 33 who became aces claimed at least part of their scores when flying the Blenheim, Defiant or Havoc.

'Robert Verkaik makes a revisionist case for an unsung aircraft, the Boulton Paul Defiant. This two-seat gun-turret fighter is, argues Verkaik, the forgotten fighter of Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain; the effectiveness as well as the courage of its crews is overlooked in standard accounts. To advance his case, he notes that a Defiant squadron still holds the record for the number of enemy aircraft shot down in a single day, with a claimed figure of 38' Times 'Robert Verkaik tells the story of the Battle of Britain's unlikeliest hero with verve and phenomenal grasp of detail. He brings the Defiant fighter back into focus as an important part of the victorious RAF in the hour of its greatest trial' Mark Urban 'Meticulously researched and rich in human and social as well as military interest, Defiant fills a crucial gap in our understanding of that most perilous time' David Kynaston, author of Austerity Britain 'Firmly establishes the aircraft's role in those crucial aerial battles of 1940 and elevates the brave aircrews who fought and died in their forgotten Defiants, to rank alongside their comrades in the better remembered Hurricanes and Spitfires.' David Fairhead, director of Spitfire 'Verkaik is an excellent

guide, making his case with a restrained passion, taking us through the inter-war rearmament before cataloguing the muddled thinking, the political infighting, the inter-service and personality rivalries. His research was clearly a labour of love, leaving no Whitehall paper or airman's letter unturned in his search for the truth, and he never forgets the human dimension behind the losses' Simon Humphreys, Mail on Sunday, five stars 'Defiant is both a stirring testament to the courage of the men who flew them and a welcome new examination of one of the Second World War's most famous conflicts' Alexander Larman, Observer Praise for Jihadi John: 'An exemplary account . . . The book's most important contribution is to highlight the difficulties faced by the intelligence services . . . a first-class primer on Muslim extremism in Britain.' Max Hastings, Sunday Times Praise for Posh Boys: 'The latest in the series of powerful books on the divisions in modern Britain, and will take its place on many bookshelves beside Reni Eddo-Lodge's Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race and Owen Jones's Chavs.' Andrew Marr, Sunday Times 'Inspired, committed, careful and kind.' Danny Dorling, author of Inequality and the 1% In this startling new perspective on the Battle of Britain, Robert Verkaik reveals the surprising truth about the battle's forgotten fighter, the Boulton Paul Defiant. The crucial role played by the Spitfire and the Hurricane has been exhaustively recorded, but, to date, next to nothing has been written about the third British fighter which took part in the battle. By writing from the unique perspective of the pilots who flew the Defiant and their air-gunners, Verkaik helps to set the record straight. The Air Staff regarded the Defiant as a state-of-the-art bomber destroyer and wanted to equip a third of all Fighter Command squadrons with this new plane. But the head of Fighter Command, Hugh Dowding, had other ideas and went to war with Whitehall over its plan to saddle him with hundreds of 'obsolete' turret fighters. Then at Dunkirk, a Defiant squadron scored a huge success against the Luftwaffe by shooting down more German planes in one day than any other RAF unit before or since. Fighter Command, enthusiastically urged on by the Air Ministry, now committed its third fighter to the coming air battle over southern England. In the desperate dogfights of the battle, Defiants shot down both German bombers and fighters but suffered heavy losses too - one squadron was almost wiped out when it was ambushed by a superior force of Messerschmitt 109s. On 30 August 1940 all Defiant squadrons were withdrawn from the front line. The families of the Defiant air crews believed that their husbands, brothers and sons had died in vain, but the truth is that their vital contribution to the battle over Dunkirk and their role in the Battle of Britain has been all but erased from the official history. The story of the Defiant has not been allowed to mar the glorious victory won by the Spitfire and the Hurricane. But Verkaik has uncovered new records, including top-secret memos written by Hugh Dowding and his deputy Keith Park as well as correspondence with the Air Staff, combat and squadron reports, pilot logs and recordings of the last interviews with Defiant crews. He has also succeeded in tracing relatives of Defiant pilots and gunners to tell the story of the Battle of Britain as it has never

been told before. He reveals how the myths which have grown up around the Defiant mask some inconvenient truths. The recent 70th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, combined with the threat of significant cuts to the current RAF, have highlighted the importance of Fighter Command in the early days of World War II once more. The role of the "few", as described by Churchill, during the Battle of Britain has been the subject of much mythologizing both at the time and in the years since. This title will put Fighter Command in context; describing the lack of funding and attention which it received during the interwar period, until it was almost too late. The myth of the fighter pilot will be humanized, with first-hand accounts quoted which put nervous but brave human beings from all walks of life in the cockpit. Although the Battle of Britain may not have in itself been the decisive encounter that it has historically been portrayed as, the moral victory won by the RAF, the victory that proved that Germany could be defeated, was just as important as a military-strategic victory. This is the second volume of the classified history of air defence in Great Britain. Written while World War II was still being fought, the account has an analysis of the defensive tactics of Fighter Command, and attempts a day-by-day analysis of the action as it took place.

"A history of the first military working dog in the Royal Air Force"--

Over 200 rare and previously unpublished illustrations of this iconic aircraft - the Boulton Paul Defiant.

The Turret Fighters Defiant and Roc Crowood Press

Provides descriptions, data, models, and photographs of British prototype military airplanes, from 1935 to 1950.

From Hell Hawks! author Bob Dorr, Mission to Berlin takes the reader on a World War II strategic bombing mission from an airfield in East Anglia, England, to Berlin and back. Told largely in the veterans' own words, Mission to Berlin covers all aspects of a long-range bombing mission including pilots and other aircrew, groundcrew, and escort fighters that accompanied the heavy bombers on their perilous mission.

Describes the design, development, and operation of the Typhoon, Tempest, and Sea Fury fighter planes.

'An extraordinarily gripping and powerful story' Evening Standard 'An intimate account . . . rich in detail' James Holland \_\_\_\_\_  
Two months before the outbreak of the Second World War, eighteen-year-old Geoffrey Wellum becomes a fighter pilot with the RAF . . . Desperate to get in the air, he makes it through basic training to become the youngest Spitfire pilot in the prestigious 92 Squadron. Thrust into combat almost immediately, Wellum finds himself flying several sorties a day, caught up in terrifying dogfights with German Me 109s. Over the coming months he and his fellow pilots play a crucial role in the Battle of Britain. But of the friends that take to the air alongside Wellum, many never return. \_\_\_\_\_ 'It took him 35 years to turn his notebooks into a narrative, and the result is a highly personal account of what it is like to face mortal combat, day and night, and what it does to a man who is barely more than a boy' Ben Macintyre, author of The Spy and the Traitor 'An extraordinarily deeply moving and

astonishingly evocative story. Reading it, you feel you are in the Spitfire with him, at 20,000ft, chased by a German Heinkel, with your ammunition gone' Independent 'Vivid, wholly convincing, compelling. One of the best memoirs for years about the experience of flying in war' Max Hastings

Describes the design and testing of British fighter planes during World War II.

In time for the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, we now have—thanks to Swedish historian Bergström—perhaps the most thorough, expert examination of the topic ever written. Illustrated throughout with maps and rare photos, plus a color section closely depicting the aircraft, this work lays out the battle as seldom seen before. The battle was a turning in point in military history, and arguably in the fate of the world. By late summer 1940 Nazi Germany had conquered all its opponents on the continent, including the British Army itself, which was forced to scramble back aboard small boats to its shores. With a Non-Aggression Pact with the Soviet Union in hand, Hitler had only one remaining object that season—the British Isles themselves. However, before he could invade, his Luftwaffe needed to wipe the Royal Air Force from the skies. Thus took place history's first strategic military campaign conducted in the air alone. This book contains a large number of dramatic eyewitness accounts, even as it reveals new facts that will alter perception of the battle in the public's eyes. For example, the twin-engined Messerschmitt Bf 110 was actually a good day fighter, and it performed at least as well in this role as the Bf 109 during the battle. The Luftwaffe's commander, Hermann Göring, performed far better than has previously been his image. The British night bombers played a more decisive role than previously thought; meantime this book disproves that the German 109 pilots were in any way superior to their Hurricane or Spitfire counterparts. The author has made a detailed search into the loss records for both sides, and provides statistics that will raise more than one eyebrow. The "revisionist" version, according to which the courage and skill of the RAF airmen is "exaggerated" is scrutinized and completely shattered. There is no doubt that it was the unparalleled efforts of "The Few" that won the battle. The Germans, on the other hand, did not show the same stamina as they had on the continent. The following summer they would show it again when they went in to Russia. In the skies over Britain this work verifies where credit was due. The development and operational history of the Skua, and its turret-fighter derivative the Roc, are told in this book. Designed as a dive-bomber, a role it excelled in, the Skua was also used (with much less success) as a fighter, and later as a target tug. The Roc, naval equivalent of the Defiant, was even less successful than its RAF counterpart. The book contains: superb color illustrations of camouflage and markings, rare b/w archive photographs, and first hand accounts of Skua operations. Essential reading for aviation enthusiasts, historians & scale aeromodellers.

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