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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.

'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

"Spitfire Pilot" remains the best British Air Force memoirs of World War II. Flight Lieutenant David Crook tells the story of the British Auxiliary Air Force's 609 Squadron, which shot down 100 German aircraft during the Battle of Britain, killing some 800 Luftwaffe pilots and crewmen while losing only 13. It was units like these, from the Royal and Auxiliary Air Forces, manned with young pilots like David Crook that won the Battle of Britain, devastating the Luftwaffe. Crook's first hand accounts of the lives and deaths of British fighter pilots in World War II are both insightful and powerful. The author, who won Britain's Distinguished Flying Cross, survived the Battle of Britain only to die in a training accident in December 1944.

I purchased this book for research. I thought it a just a book to pick up on a few pointers for my writing project. I was instantly captivated by the author and his uncanny ability to put the reader in the cockpit. I promise you that this is an unusual story. It is about a great pilot, airplane, the men who flew them, the time that they lived in, and most of all a small band of dedicated, beyond words, young men fighting a formidable enemy against unbelievable odds. The author conveys well what it is to lose a loved friend and brother in arms. To have breakfast with him, and then know he's gone by 10:00 A.M. that morning... and more. D.M.C. (the author) is speaking through a very personal pilot's log, a diary. His writings will be read by my children as they will be home schooled. He and his fellow pilots are heroes of freedom, Liberty. This book will be on my shelf for a very long time. I kid you not, is worth a lot more than its cover price.

I bought this book as a Christmas present for my father, who is a Spitfire enthusiast and spent the better part of the last decade helping his brother-in-law restore one. He read it in less than two days. He simply couldn't put it down and said he felt as though he was right in the cockpit with the pilot for every word. After that note of praise I'd say this book is a must read for anyone who is passionate

about this amazing aircraft!

If you are looking to read a good first person pilots account of The Battle of Britain, this is it. David Crooks' diary yields day by day blow by blow accounts from the 609 squadron during the Battle of Britain. You get an understanding of just how quickly a pilot/s life was snatched away in the daily encounters over the channel and England. The zest and zeal these pilots took to the air with is metted out each day they took to the air, often returning with one or more less comrades. This is the only first hand novel I have ever read (concerning this subject) and was more than satisfied with it. I recommend it to anyone interested in The Battle of Britain. It is important to note the 609 squadron was responsible for shooting down Helmut Wick, the leading German ace to that point of the war. At the time the diary was written I do not believe they understood the significance of the loss. When Wick was lost most german fighter pilots concluded The Battle of Britain was lost. Good reading to you, you will only wish the book was longer.

This is a delightfully informative narration clearly describing not only every day life in the UK during the war years but also the appalling loss of life in the air. It is hard to imagine the fear and extreme adrenaline rushes these pilots were exposed to and then to return to base at the end of the day and try to resume some normality in life....what an extreme contrast and emotional roller coaster. This is a recommended read to all with an interest in aviation.

The English have had a history riddled with war and bloodshed. In a war to end oppression and evil, one British pilot, David Crook recorded his memoirs of day to day life and illustrated the hardships of life during an era of uncertainty in a journal now published as Spitfire Pilot during World War II. This recollection of memories was some of the harshest battles the modern world has ever witnessed. From the famous Battle of Britain to the numerous long painstaking escort bomber missions over Germany, this pilot and others alike were the last obstacle Hitler had to overcome before a German invasion of England. Crook understands this and quickly learns that everyday might be his last. Overall this one mans experiences in the darkest times of humanity are both breathtaking and horrifying for any military buff.

I give it 4 stars because its exactly what it is advertising. A personal account of the Battle of Britain. I wish it had more substance and more about the dogfighting stories, (because that's what I am more interested in) but it really is his personal account of the war. Today we mostly think about

which dogfight was where and who shot down who, but when you were the person in the cockpit you were also thinking about your wife and if you will ever see her again, your buddy who you were going to visit London with who was shot down yesterday, and wondering what's happening tomorrow... His "diary" covers all of this and so it is about the battle but with much more daily life and emotion. If you want to learn about the Battle of Britain I would recommend a different book, but if you already know the historical details and want a quick personal, story telling narrative, then this quick read is for you. I read it in just a couple hours.

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