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They Flew Hurricanes



Synopsis

The Hawker Hurricane, together with the Spitfire, is the most famous aircraft of the Second World War. Many pilots including Douglas Bader thought it was superior to the Spit but together they saved Britain from Nazi invasion and possible defeat. Adrian Stewart has produced a gloriously atmospheric and nostalgic book capturing the spirit of this great aircraft and the pilots who flew them. It tracks the aircraft as it was developed and improved and follows it to the many theatres of the war where it saw service. Among the lesser known are Burma and the hazardous convoy protection both in the Arctic and Mediterranean, flying from makeshift "carriers". This book will fascinate specialist aviation historians and those who enjoy a rattling good war story, backed by a superb selection of rare photographs.

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Customer Reviews

THE BOOK "THEY FLEW HURRICANES" From turned out to be a very good reader. If there is anything you want to know about the WW II Hurricanes this is the place to look. The Hurricanes flew in all the theaters of WW II leaving a record to be proud of. It was and is a plane that likes pilots, light wing loading makes it fly easy (compared) to many other war planes. Like all planes it had a

couple of things I felt could have been designed differently. One is a 35 gal. reserve fuel tank placed behind the instrument panel (almost in your lap) and a larger capacity of ammunition. Flying around with empty machine guns is not much fun. I liked the engine, vision through the canopy. The landing gear was very well designed with a spread that made landing much better than the Spitfire or Boeing PT-17. All and all I enjoyed the book and learned a lot from it. If you like airplanes you will like this book. I liked it reading it through my kindle, try it. Col. De Vere Woods Ret.

Hurricanes are completely overshadowed by Spitfires in WW2 literature. This book sets the record straight. Hurricanes were a great aircraft that made a major contribution in many theaters of the war. This book documents the many strengths of Hurricanes over other fighters and the tremendous skill and bravery of the pilots who flew them. Highly recommended for WW2 aviation buffs.

So which fighter really won the war? Was it the Mustang? The Spitfire? The Hurricane? Your answer will almost certainly be biased by your origin (hint - it's not the Mustang). The Hurricane is often overlooked because the Luftwaffe pilots refused to believe that they'd be shot down by an aeroplane with fabric wings. Whilst it's true that the Hurricane couldn't be developed as far as the Spitfire was it had some advantages. It was easy to make and repair. It could out turn both the Bf 109 and Spitfire under certain circumstances, it could soak up a lot of damage and was a very stable gun platform. The development of the Hurricane and the theatres it fought in are covered by referencing pilot and squadron diaries and the whole is told at a slightly breathless pace. I certainly learnt a few things. Did you know that there was a 12 gun Hurricane; I certainly didn't. So this is a great book filled with exciting stories and facts about an under-praised aircraft. The references alone could keep you reading for weeks. Highly recommended.

Adrian Stewart provides a comprehensive and informative review of the Hawker Hurricane's wartime record in an easily readable little book. There's just enough detail and plenty of excerpts from squadron diaries and pilots' memoirs to keep it interesting; some of the accounts are straightforward and a little dry, while others can be witty or exciting, depending on who's writing them. The book's main argument is that the Hurricane was every bit the equal of the more famous Supermarine Spitfire, and that, contrary to orthodox histories, it more than held its own during the early months of the Battle of France and the Battle of Britain. Mr Stewart is guilty of a little bias here. He makes the point that the Hurricane could outmaneuver its main opponent, the Messerschmitt 109, and he presents ample evidence from the pilots' own testimonies. I believe him, but I couldn't

help but feel he was a little too quick to take the pilots at their word. He brings up the issue of victory claims and the accusation other historians have made that RAF pilots over-claimed their kills; his counter-argument is that the Luftwaffe under-reported their own losses. He's trying to prove the RAF right by proving the Luftwaffe wrong, but that only gets us halfway to the truth. In making this point about the Hurricane's strengths, he emphasizes the stories of the successful pilots and downplays those of the less successful ones -- that is, the young men who didn't survive long enough to write their memoirs. After several pages recounting an engagement in which half a dozen German fighters or bombers were shot down without loss, Mr Stewart will include a brief mention of a later encounter in which, for example, an RAF squadron lost five pilots in a single day. By quietly stressing the victories over the defeats, he paints a rather rosy picture of these early battles, glossing over the Hurricane's deficiencies: no back-armor, fabric-covered wings, fixed-pitch propellers, and outdated formation tactics that got a lot of pilots killed. Appreciating the obstacles the pilots had to overcome makes their victories even more amazing; it's too bad that Mr Stewart missed that. Once he gets past the first year of the war, the book gets more interesting: he covers Malta, the Atlantic convoys, Burma and Sumatra, and the North African desert. All of it is delivered in quick, clear prose that generally gets out of the way in favor of men like Roland Beamont and Peter Townsend. They both wrote books of their own, of course, but Mr Stewart offers a chance to get the highlights of the Hurricane's story before you have a go at the deeper stuff.

This is an interesting book about an airplane that really does not get the recognition it deserves.. It was a mainstay in the Battle of Britain but the Spitfire seemed to get all the limelight. As the author points out the Hurricane served through all of WWII The author does a good job of pointing out the virtues of the Hurricane but sometimes he seems a bit overly zealous in his praise. He infers that the Hurricane was the pivotal factor in many of the operations of the war. Without question the Hurricane did give outstanding service as did many other fine airplanes. But to thrust the Hurricane to the forefront without mentioning other planes, such as the P-40 which fulfilled many of the same functions of the Hurricane it tends to make the reader, me anyway, a bit dubious about the objectivity of the author. These are small gripes however and are my opinions only. In sum, this is a well written book about an interesting subject.

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