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Malta Spitfire: The Diary Of An Ace Fighter Pilot



Synopsis

Twenty-five thousand feet above Malta – that is where the Spitfires intercepted the Messerschmitts, Macchis and Reggianes as they swept eastwards in their droves, screening the big Junkers with their bomb loads as they pummeled the island beneath – the most bombed patch of ground in the world. One of those Spitfire pilots was George Beurling, nicknamed ‘Screwball’™, who in fourteen flying days destroyed twenty-seven German and Italian aircraft and damaged many more. Hailing originally from Canada, after hard training and combat across the Channel, Beurling finally made it to Malta in the summer of 1942. Malta Spitfire tells his story and that of the gallant Spitfire squadron, 249, which day after day climbed to the ‘top of the hill’™ to meet the enemy against overwhelming odds. The reader has almost the sensation of being in the cockpit with him, climbing to meet the planes driving in from Sicily, diving down through the fighter screen at the bombers, dodging the bullets coming out of the sun, or whipping up under the belly of an Me for a deflection shot at the engine. This is war without sentiment or romance, told in terms of human courage, skill and heroism. A classic, first published in 1943.

Book Information

File Size: 10709 KB

Print Length: 256 pages

Publisher: Grub Street Publishing; Reprint edition (July 14, 2011)

Publication Date: October 6, 2013

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00FOGFZU0

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #649,428 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #30

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Customer Reviews

Canadian George Beurling was a phenomenally courageous and expert combat pilot for the RAF during the Second World War. He started out flying missions over Nazi occupied France but wound up in Malta in 1942 at the height of the air siege of that fortress island by Italian and German bombers and fighters. Beurling became a famous air combat ace, shooting down four Nazi aircraft over Western Europe and 27 German and Italian planes demolished, eight damaged, and three more scored as probably destroyed in only 14 days of fighting over Malta. In addition, he won four decorations (including the prestigious Distinguished Service Order, the Distinguished Flying Medal with Bar, and the Distinguished Flying Cross) for bravery and an officer's commission from Britain in less than two months during the Malta conflict. Beurling in collaboration with Leslie Roberts wrote a book entitled *Malta Spitfire: The Diary of an Ace Fighter Pilot* about his life and his experiences as a combat pilot and published it in June 1943, when he was in Canada recuperating from war wounds. If you want to learn what it is like to have been in Malta in World War II and fought in raging aerial dogfights overhead, then this is the book for you. It is comparable in tone and descriptive accounts about the details of combat and pilot camaraderie with the book *First Light* by Geoff Wellum, a similarly excellent book about the Battle of Britain. The story delves into Beurling's love of flying from the time he was a kid and his obsessive ambition to become the best pilot and ultimately the best combat pilot there ever was. Once you read this book, you may be convinced that indeed he became that.

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