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Spitfire Stories: True Tales from Those Who Designed, Maintained and Flew the Iconic Plane by Jacky Hyams, out now in hardback, priced £16.99 (Michael O'Mara Books). Previous article America's Most Notorious Gangsters Brought To Life In Colour For The First Time

Spitfire Stories, published in association with Imperial War Museums, is a fascinating anthology of first-hand stories from Spitfire heroes and heroines of the Second World War. The Spitfire is the world's most iconic aeroplane. Coming into its own during the Battle of Britain, it became famous during the Second World War as the only plane that could match the enemy fighters in the sky. Yet, even today, the history of the Spitfire contains many hitherto hidden or

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little-known stories of the men and women behind the plane; not only the gifted creators and inventors who brought the Spitfire to life, or the brave fighter pilots from many countries who triumphed in battle, but also the thousands of other people whose lives were affected by their personal connection to it - engineers, ground crew, factory or office workers, and their families. Spitfire Stories recounts the memories and stories of these people, from the birth of the iconic Spitfire in the 1930s to the present day. Among these accounts is the extraordinary tale of the fighter pilot who only discovered, fifty years on, the tragic truth of his last Spitfire flight, the businessman whose blank cheque changed the course of the war, the ninety-five-year-old Royal Air Force engineer who was determined to be reunited with his beloved Spit before he died, and the little girl who inspired the plane's creation - and went on to marry a movie star. Using documents, letters and photographs from the Imperial War Museums' unparalleled archive, plus exclusive first-hand interviews, these stories of the Spitfire are a revelatory collection of small but significant histories, to be treasured by all who love and admire the iconic plane.

Through the darkest days of the Second World War, an elite group of courageous, gifted women risked their lives as courier pilots, flying Lancaster Bombers, Spitfires and many other aircraft in hundreds of perilous missions across the country. The role of these women pilots of the Air Transport Auxiliary was to deliver the planes to the male RAF pilots who would take them into battle, dangerous work which the women carried out unarmed, without radios. Fifteen would lose their lives. In *The Female Few*, five of these astonishingly brave women tell their stories for the first time, awe inspiring tales of incredible risk, tenacity and sacrifice. Their

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spirit and fearlessness in the face of death still resonates down the years, and their accounts reveal a forgotten chapter in the history of the Second World War. As Yvonne Macdonald, now 90 and living in Cape Cod, says: 'It was a kind of freedom you never get any other way, it was as if you had wings sewn on your back. A lot of people here in Cape Cod don't even know I was in World War Two. Or what I did.' They do now.

'The best book you will ever read about Britain's greatest warplane.' Patrick Bishop, bestselling author of *Fighter Boys*. 'A rich and heartfelt tribute to this most iconic British machine. By focussing on the men (and women) who flew the Spitfire, John Nichol has brought a fresh and powerful perspective to the story. And by recording their bravery, humility, camaraderie, tragedy and sheer joy in flying their beloved Spits he has done them - and us - a valuable service' Rowland White, bestselling author of *Vulcan 606* 'A superb and compelling book. Brilliantly written with some incredible and astonishing stories; it is gripping, moving, emotional and sometimes humorous - just perfect' Squadron Leader (Ret) Clive Rowley, former Officer Commanding RAF Battle Of Britain Memorial Flight 'A superb journey through the remarkable tale of that British icon, the Spitfire. Brilliantly and engagingly written, this is the most readable story of the aircraft and her pilots that I have ever had the pleasure to read in a period spanning some forty-odd years of personal study and research. Truly stunning.' Andy Saunders, Editor, *Britain at War Magazine*. 'This is not just a tale of heroism in the skies . . . This is a tale of victory . . . Magnificently told in lip-biting detail' - Daily Mail (*The Red Line*) The

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perfect complementary narrative to the bestselling memoir by Geoffrey Wellum - *First Light. Achtung, Spitfire!* The iconic Spitfire found fame during the darkest early days of World War II. But what happened to the redoubtable fighter and its crews beyond the Battle of Britain, and why is it still so loved today? In late spring 1940, Nazi Germany's domination of Europe had looked unstoppable. With the British Isles in easy reach since the fall of France, Adolf Hitler was convinced that Great Britain would be defeated in the skies over her southern coast, confident his Messerschmitts and Heinkels would outclass anything the Royal Air Force threw at them. What Hitler hadn't planned for was the agility and resilience of a marvel of British engineering that would quickly pass into legend - the Spitfire. Bestselling author John Nichol's passionate portrait of this magnificent fighter aircraft, its many innovations and updates, and the people who flew and loved them, carries the reader beyond the dogfights over Kent and Sussex. Spanning the full global reach of the Spitfire's deployment during WWII, from Malta to North Africa and the Far East, then over the D-Day beaches, it is always accessible, effortlessly entertaining and full of extraordinary spirit. Here are edge-of-the-seat stories and heart-stopping first-hand accounts of battling pilots forced to bail out over occupied territory; of sacrifice and wartime love; of aristocratic female flyers, and of the mechanics who braved the Nazi onslaught to keep the aircraft in battle-ready condition. Nichol takes the reader on a hair-raising, nail-biting and moving wartime history of the iconic Spitfire populated by a cast of redoubtable, heroic characters that make you want to stand up and cheer. 'A rich and heartfelt tribute to this most iconic British machine. By focussing on the men (and women) who flew the Spitfire, John Nichol has brought a fresh and powerful perspective to the story.' - Rowland White - author of *Vulcan 607*

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First published in 2007. The accounts of women who flew aircrafts for the British Royal Air Force (RAF) to the frontline of World War II. The women of Air Transport Auxillary came from every continent. They were not allowed into combat, but delivered warplanes to the male pilots who would fly them into battle.

This book tells the tale of the brilliant aerodynamicist Beverley Shenstone MASC, HonFRAes, FAIAA,AFIAS, FCASI, HonOSTIV. As R.J. Mitchells chief aerodynamicist, it was Shenstone who designed the Spitfires wing the wing that gave the Spitfire it crucial advantage in the Battle of Britain and beyond. A quiet man, Shenstone never sought glory for his work, yet in recent years he has been credited as the man who persuaded Mitchell to adopt the ellipse a modified ellipse that was unique in its shape and its combined use of two integrated aerofoil sections. Shenstones knife-edge shape reached far back into early aeronautics for its inspiration. This book also names the other forgotten Spitfire design contributors who were Mitchells men Mr Faddy, Mr Fear, Mr Fenner, Mr Shirvall, a Prof Howland and others. Intriguingly, Shenstone had left his native Canada and early training as an RCAF pilot, to study at Junkers and then under the father of the delta wing Alexander Lippisch in Germany in the early 1930s. There, he became immersed in delta wings and flying wings. He also became a glider pilot. The story of how Beverley came to be in the right place at the right time is revealed for the first time. So too are the enigmatic tales of his involvement with the military, the intelligence world, Lord Beaverbrook , the USAF, and Canadian aviation. During the war Shenstone worked at the top secret Wright Patterson air force base and was involved with the Air Ministry and the pro-

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British movement in America when Shenstone worked for Air Chief Marshal Sir Wilfrid Freeman, the unsung hero behind British defence procurement. Shenstone achieved high office a President of the Royal Aeronautical Society, technical director at BOAC, chief engineer at BEA and a consultant to several aircraft makers. He was courted by Avro, de Havilland and Vickers, and was the force behind the renaissance of human-powered flight. Using exclusive access to his family documents, his unpublished autobiography and many notes and stories, as well as forensic research, this book details for the first time, a new twist to the Spitfires story and the secrets of its advanced science. A tale of design and military intelligence reveals a story of a man whose name should be more widely known in the UK, Canada and the aviation world.

A World War II fighter pilot recounts his crash landing in occupied France, capture and torture by the Gestapo, imprisonment in Stalag Luft III, and heroic years as a serial escape artist.

Exciting, first-hand accounts from Lightning aircrews—the sequel to the bestselling book from the author of the Hunter Boys and Phantom Boys volumes. Lightning Boys 2 is a must-have companion to the first collection and continues the theme of tales from pilots and other crew connected with this iconic aircraft, giving a rare insight into postwar fighter operations. In 20 separate stories to intrigue, amaze, and amuse, the book has also been compiled and written by Richard Pike. The reader is taken to situations as diverse as intercepting 60-plus enemy aircraft, a desperate struggle in a cockpit flooded by tropical downpours, the difficulties of being affected by sudden and painful toothache at high altitude, and the curious encounter with an

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unidentified flying object. Yet another chapter paints a dramatic reconstruction of a scene in Germany when a Lightning, having entered an inadvertent, out-of-control spin, began an earthwards plunge towards a town center.

Sunday, 3 September 1939: the dawn of a new conflict that would engulf the world, following the words of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain: 'This country is at war with Germany'. By the time World War II ended in 1945, nearly half a million people from Britain and its empire had lost their lives, and the world had changed forever. Eighty years on, a look back at the lives of British people in September 1939 reveals a very different world from the one we know today. Unprecedented hardship lay ahead for a country where free healthcare for all was unknown: strict rationing of food and petrol, conscription for both sexes, and personal tragedy year after year amidst the chaos of Britain's bombed out cities and ports. What was it really like to be living in Britain in September 1939? *The Day the War Broke Out* is a fresh insight into the hearts and minds of a nation on that fateful day. With exclusive personal interviews, untold stories, wartime diaries and newspaper reports, it reveals the innermost fears and hopes of a society on the brink of war: through the eyes of young mothers fearful for their families, bewildered children painfully cut adrift from loved ones, and men of all ages, many now facing combat for the second time in their lives. These are personal, intimate snapshots from eighty years ago - when the entire world, virtually overnight, seemed to have been turned upside down - and of how a nation faced this new world with courage, humour and stoicism.

Spitfire Pilot is the exhilarating and moving memoir of D. M. Crook, an airman in the legendary

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609 Squadron - one of the most successful RAF units in the Battle of Britain. Beginning with his fond recollections of his halcyon days in training - acrobatics, night flying and languorous days spent playing sport and nights off visiting Piccadilly Circus - Crook goes on to recount in thrilling detail the dogfights, remarkable victories and tragic losses which formed the daily routine of Britain's heroic aerial defenders in that long summer of 1940. Often hopelessly outnumbered, the men of 609 Squadron in their state-of-the-art Spitfires committed acts of unimaginable bravery against the Messerschmitts and Junkers of Germany's formidable Luftwaffe. Many of Crook's fellow airmen did not make it back alive, and the absence they leave in the close-knit community of the squadron is described with great poignancy. Spitfire Pilot offers a unique and personal insight into one of the most critical moments of British history, when a handful of men stood up against the might of the German Air Force in defence of their country. This definitive edition, the first for more than sixty years, includes a new foreword by David Crook's daughter and Air Vice Marshal Sandy Hunter, Honorary Air Commodore of the 609 Squadron. The book also has an introduction by Professor Richard Overy.

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