



Spitfire Pilot: A Personal Account of the Battle of Britain

Flight Lieutenant David Crook DFC

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1939. 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.' Magazine

'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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