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## Spitfire Stories True Tales From Those Who Designed Maintained And Flew The Iconic Plane

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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.

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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

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 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. The Spitfire Story recounts the memories and stories of these people, from the birth of the iconic Spitfire in the 1930s to the present day.

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 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.

This WWII biography recounts the heroic contributions of a female pilot who flew Spitfires, Hurricanes and Wellington Bombers for the RAF. A farmer's daughter from Oxfordshire, Mary Ellis fell in love with flying at the age of eleven, when she rode in a biplane at a flying circus. Already a licensed pilot by

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the time the Second World War broke out, Mary joined the Air Transit Auxiliary in 1941. As a ferry pilot, she transported aircraft for the Royal Air Force, including more than four hundred Spitfires and seventy-six different kinds of aircraft. After the war, Mary accepted a secondment to the RAF as one of the first pilots to fly the new Gloster Meteor, Britain's first fighter jet. By 1950, she became Europe's first female air commandant. In this authorized biography, Mary and biographer Melody Foreman vividly recount her action-packed career spanning almost a century of aviation. Mary says: I am passionate for anything fast and furious. I always have been since the age of three and I always knew I would fly. The day I stepped into a Spitfire was a complete joy and it was the most natural thing in the world for me.

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 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.

When *Spitfire at War* first appeared in 1974, it enjoyed critical acclaim, for the aircraft had never been described in such terms and detail before. It was followed by a second volume in 1985 and a third volume in 1990. All three volumes sold well and are hailed as classic works on the subject. These important works were long out of print until this collected volume appeared in 2012. Now available in paperback, this single volume is the result of author Alfred Price's "cherry-picking" among the choice cuts to produce the finest title on the mighty and beloved Spitfire.

"A good read both to aviators in general and to the Lightning fraternity in particular" (Royal Air Force Historical Society). According to a recent international study, the Lightning is the fifth most popular military aircraft of all time. With over twenty individual stories from former Lightning pilots, this book relates the highs and lows, the dramas and the demands of those who operated this iconic aircraft until its sharp end. Tales include the recollections of an aerobatic display pilot, an implausible yet true account of telepathic communication, and an extraordinary episode in which a Lightning pilot on an exchange program with the French Air Force became embroiled in a mid-air collision. An unverified, but likely genuine, world record is also revealed in one of the chapters. In addition to the original photographs that accompany the text, the renowned aviation artist Chris Stone, a former Lightning pilot himself, has provided a unique sketch as well as copies of some of his paintings, offering a look at this amazing aircraft that will appeal to the general reader as well as the enthusiast.

'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

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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 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

From the highly successful author of Lightning Boys and Lightning Boys 2, Richard Pike, comes a welcome addition to the iBoysÍ series, Hunter Boys. A fascinating insight into the experiences and affections of those who flew the iconic Hawker Hunter. Fifteen aircrew relate their individual recollections of the highs and lows, the dramas and demands of this incredible aircraft, which came into service in July 1951 and changed the future of fighter development. Including a chapter by Neville Duke, Hawker AircraftÍs chief test pilot, other tales recount the Aden emergency, the 1971 Indo/Pakistan war and a race against the odds in Gibraltar. All instances demonstrate the exceptional performance of this aircraft and illustrate its well-renowned lengthy service life with the RAF and internationally. In addition to the original photographs that accompany the text, renowned aviation artist Chris Stone has provided paintings especially for the book. The scope, style and pace of the writing in this book will appeal to the general reader as well as to the enthusiast.

Why would the well-bred daughter of a New England factory-owner brave the U-boat blockades of the North Atlantic in the bitter winter of 1941? What made a South African diamond heiress give up her life of house parties and London balls to spend the war in a freezing barracks on the Solent? And why did young Margaret Frost start lying to her father during the Battle of Britain? They - and scores of other women - weren't allowed to fly in combat, but what they did was nearly as dangerous. Unarmed and without instruments or radios, they delivered planes for the Air Transport Auxiliary to the RAF bases from which male pilots flew into battle. At the mercy of the weather and any long-range enemy aircraft that pounced on them, dozens of these women died, among them Amy Johnson, Britain's most famous flyer. But the survivors shared four unrepeatable years of life, adrenaline and love. The story of this 'tough bunch of babes' (in the words of one of them) has never been told properly before. The author has interviewed all the surviving women pilots, who came not just from the shires of England, but also from the U.S.A, Chile, Australia, Poland and Argentina. Paid £ 6.00 a week, they flew - in skirts - up to 16 hours a day in 140 different types of aircraft, though most of them liked spitfires best.

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