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Mosquito Mayhem: De Havilland's Wooden Wonder In Action In WWII



Synopsis

“The flak started about four or five minutes before the target and immediately it was apparent that it was intense and extremely accurate. Oboe entailed the pilot flying dead straight and level for ten minutes on the attack run. Suddenly a tremendous flash lit up the sky about 50 yards ahead of our nose and exactly at our altitude. Within a tenth of a second we were through the cloud of dirty yellowish-brown smoke and into the blackness beyond. I shall never forget the spontaneous reaction of both my pilot and myself. We turned our heads slowly and looked long and deep into one another’s eyes - no word was spoken - no words were needed.”

The Mosquito was probably World War II’s most versatile combat aircraft. This book contains hundreds of firsthand accounts from many of the two-man crews who flew in them; pilots and navigators. It portrays the dramatic experiences of flying in its many roles as pathfinder, night fighter, reconnaissance aircraft, precision bombing and low-level ground attack aircraft. It describes many of the RAF’s most audacious raids on prime but difficult targets where carpet bombing by heavy bombers was likely to be ineffective and cause unnecessary casualties to civilians. It is a remarkable record of the aircraft and the men that flew them.

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Customer Reviews

This book was a bit of a disappointment for me. It is neither a narrative nor a very good technical description of the unique airplane itself. Rather Martin Bowman appears to have cut and pasted dozens of after action reports together, segregated by the several types of Mosquito missions which the RAF engaged in: i.e. Bombing, Decoys, ground support, pathfinders etc. The result in the first half of the book is a series of short, strung together mission descriptions after the fact. The organization of each one is the same. Even the language used to described shooting down a German plane is repetitious. Dates, times, squadron numbers in an endless procession. The second half of the book picks up a little with some first person narratives. My second comment is that nowhere does the book attempt to describe the airplane, the systems, the layout or the specifications of the one and only "wooden" fighter/bomber of WW II. The title says "Wooden Wonder", I had to go on the web and hunt for details up on my own to tell me why so.

Great book and heroic stories. The 'Mossie' was a great plane but they had far too many crashes that killed many brave men. There seems to have been something wrong with its Rolls Royce engine with guys getting blown up on take off or landing. If only they had invented the ejector seat before so many lives would have been saved. The poor German pilots also who had this plane in their rear view did not seem to have had a chance. Horrible death, diving flat out into the ground and blowing up! Too many great young guys killed on both sides in a hideous manner. I feel awed by their heroism.

The book is interesting enough, but one Mosquito mission runs into another Mosquito mission - the book is not always clear if it's just one mission, being flown by multiple aircraft or a series of missions being flown over a time frame. The book also has the problem, that lacking clear performance data about the Mosquito, it's not understandable why the Mosquito was performing a given particular mission - basically it comes out as, on 'X' date, a particular aircraft, did this particular thing, with that particular results, and was (or was not) shot down, and this and that particular crewman survived (or died, or became a POW).

While it was a bit too wordy it certainly demonstrated why the the Mosquito was by far the best overall aircraft in World War II.

Love that plywood super fast aircraft.

Good information and well written. A little too much detail about crew member names but you can't complain about mentioning a hero.

+++++ good book

A vivid history of machines made of wood, aircrews made of steel and all are enveloped with Lots of soul. Have 60 hours on the Mossie.

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