

[PDF] First Light (WWII Collection)

GEOFFREY WELLUM - pdf download free book

Books Details:

Title: First Light (WWII Collection)

Author: GEOFFREY WELLUM

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Description:

Review This may turn out to be the last great undiscovered memoir of the Second World War. Ex-Spitfire pilot Geoffrey Wellum wrote the book with no intention of ever seeing it published. Penguin picked it up, and since its appearance such luminaries as Max Hastings have been full of praise. First Light tells the story of Wellum's time as a pilot during the war. In the Battle of Britain, he and his comrades began to live each day with a fierce intensity. The thrill of flying a Spitfire was coupled with the sheer terror of combat, and when the day was over, the Squadron drank and played as hard as they could. One by one his friends stopped returning home. By the age of 21, Wellum was drained, mentally and physically. A harrowing book, but also a celebration of life. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

From the Inside Flap "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

□Winston Churchill, 1940

Geoffrey Wellum was one of Churchill's "few," the gallant pilots of the RAF who streaked through the skies to repel the massive, brutal Nazi bombing assaults that killed thousands and leveled entire cities throughout the endless months of the Battle of Britain. To a man, they were courageous, determined, and oh, so young. Geoffrey, known as Boy to his comrades, was a good deal younger than most.

In *First Light*, Geoffrey Wellum tells the inspiring, often terrifying true story of his coming of age amid the roaring, tumbling dogfights of the fiercest air war the world had ever seen. It is the story of an idealistic schoolboy who couldn't believe his luck when the RAF agreed to take him on as a "pupil pilot" at the minimum age of seventeen and a half in 1939. In his fervor to fly, he gave little thought to the coming war.

Writing with wit, compassion, and a great deal of technical expertise, Wellum relives his grueling months of flight training, during which two of his classmates crashed and died. He describes a hilarious scene during his first day in the prestigious 92nd Squadron when his commander discovered that Wellum had not only never flown a Spitfire, he'd never even seen one.

Boy soon learned the golden rule of the dogfight: "Never fly straight and level for more than twenty seconds. If you do, you'll die." Wellum's vivid accounts of ferocious aerial combat contrast the mortal terror of an innocent teenager with the grim determination of a highly trained warrior intent on doing his job—blasting the enemy one moment, desperately trying to shake off a pursuer the next. Few writers have succeeded more completely in evoking the chaos and horror of war.

A battle-hardened ace by the winter of 1941, though still not out of his teens, Boy flew scores of missions as fighter escort on bombing missions over France. Yet the constant life-or-death stress of murderous combat and anguish over the loss of his closest friends sapped endurance. Tortured by fierce headaches, even in the midst of battle, he could not bear the thought of "not pulling your weight," of letting other pilots risk their lives in his place. Wellum's frank account of his long, losing bout with battle fatigue is both moving and enlightening.

Filled with affectionate portraits of Boy's fellow fliers—many of whom did not survive the war—*First Light* tells an unforgettable true story of patriotism and fear, pride and humility, self-sacrifice and triumph. Already a bestseller in England, this powerful and compelling memoir is destined to become a classic, not only of military history, but also of literature. --This text refers to the edition.

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