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Last Flight From Singapore



Synopsis

Donahue makes no attempt either to dramatize or underplay his experiences. He tells them in a simple, unvarnished manner, much as if he were sitting down with some friends back home. The result is pretty close to what the real thing must have been. " New York Times

In June 1940 a young commercial pilot from Minnesota, Arthur Donahue, signed up to become a pilot in the R.A.F. He would spend the next two years fighting for the British in their Spitfire and Hurricane planes over the Channel and in the Far East. During the Battle of Britain and Battle for Singapore he distinguished himself and was greatly respected by his comrades who flew alongside him. Eventually he would lose his life fighting for the Allied cause. Last Flight from Singapore documents Donahue's life from the autumn of 1941 through to the evacuation of Java after being wounded in the greatest military disaster ever suffered by British arms. It is an incredibly personal account that highlights the dangers of the path that Donahue had taken. With his vivid description of the dogfights, the humor of the pilot's mess, technical details of the planes and the constant threat of danger Last Flight from Singapore transports the reader back to the skies of World War Two. As a bonus for the reader the publisher has also included Donahue's previous work Tally Ho! A Yankee in a Spitfire at the end of this book, which covers his life during the Battle of Britain. These two memoirs truly show the bravery of those to whom "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few". While in Singapore Donahue won the Distinguished Flying Cross, his citation reads: "This officer carried out many low level reconnaissance sorties and successfully attacked enemy shipping and ground objectives. On one occasion while attacking enemy troops who were attempting a landing in the Singapore area, he silenced the enemy's fire and enabled the rest of the squadron to press home attacks with impunity. He has destroyed several enemy planes." Arthur Donahue was an American fighter pilot who volunteered to fly for the British Royal Air Force in World War II. He was killed in action in September 1942. Donahue wrote two books about his RAF service, Tally-Ho! Yankee in a Spitfire (published in 1941) and Last Flight from Singapore (published in 1943).

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Arthur Donahue was among the first eight or nine Americans who flew fighters for the RAF in World War II, even before the establishment of the Eagle Squadrons. He was a Battle of Britain veteran who was sent to be part of the doomed defense of Singapore and the Dutch East Indies in early 1942 against the Japanese wave of victories in the first six months of the war in the Pacific. Even though the reader is aware that he does escape Singapore before its surrender to the Japanese, one is wondering through the first part of the book how he will get out: Operating Hurricane fighters from the colony's besieged airfields became increasingly dangerous and untenable as Donahue tried to get in his licks against the invader. The danger continues and worsens as he flies one of the last RAF fighters from Singapore to Sumatra, where the Allies make another futile, costly stand against the Japanese. He does escape the Far East to receive the British Distinguished Flying Cross and resume combat missions against the Germans in Europe, but the book ends with his death on one of those missions in September 1942. This particular publication also includes "Tally Ho," a memoir describing his service in the Battle of Britain in 1940, as an appendix. Donahue's book is short, but is a pleasant surprise in the amount of drama it offers as well as an inside look at a frustrating effort in one of the worst Allied defeats of World War II.

The book was very insightful and full of information. It really lets see you how the British WWII pilots coped with the stress put on them. It is sometimes very surprising. A book that is hard to put down and has you grieving with some of the survivors and for those lost. If you are a Hurricane and Spitfire fan this book is for you. This book is written by an American who flew for R.A.F. .

A story that is familiar to me, not as a pilot in WWII but as a six to ten year old who wanted to become more than anything just like 'Him'. I found this book to be honest and truthful, filled with the young man's plain speak that was normal at that time. No puffery, no dodginess, just well written in his farm boy language. And if you love History as do I, it is filled with details of flying the Spit and the Hurry in combat for a very modest sum of money each month!. No drama, just plain farm boy speech. I loved it. There are two books included in one publication. It sucks you effortlessly into an age and quiet heroism shown in so often in videos or film of that era. Just as powerful now as it was then. Since that time I accomplished my dream, learning to fly and making than a few of those solo journies up into the clouds and beyond, so I will admit at my advanced age, to share a few tears with so many others who may have found the book ending - a death in a singularly quiet and and painful epilogue. Enjoy a cheap and warm evening with this book. You'll likely thank me for the pointer. Ray Toronjo

Good description of war in Singapore area. Good information about how American pilots operated in the British air force, in the air and on the ground.

This is a first hand account of a Minnesotan who flew for the RAF in WW2. The personal experiences made, for me, an endearing story. I was unaware that this purchase included .2 published books during the war before he died in combat. And another available in non kindle format .com in the UK.. I have read plenty of WW2 books, mostly nonfiction. A DFC is a distinguished flying cross a British medal that is title not a rank, but is included as any description is addressed about him. I am fascinated that he was able to get his books published whilst his day job as a full time aviator at war. His matter of fact reporting does not make him a special aviator during the books. Some how this book escaped my 20 plus years of WW2 history. I thank kindle for providing this and other memoirs from the American Civil war to the present forever war.

outstanding example of "one man's war" an early American pilot in the Royal Air Force but mainly about the defence of Singapore. Really brings the reality of war to life because Donahue was a practiced writer and could target what the reader would want to know. Unbelievable he would survive so much for such an anti climactic ending. Had the "contemporary" feel of a book written "on the run" so to speak which gave it genuine atmosphere not always found in war books. There is no better account of the day to day existence in the Asian war by an Allied pilot

if you are a Kindle reader and read a lot of history, the British in the Pacific after Dec 7 is not covered toughly. Even Churchill's multi volume set don't go far beyond his second guessing the lack of guns covering the straights. First person account of Singapore and beyond, the slow day to day pace makes it clear what would have happened even with second guessing, lacking good airplanes/pilots and supply lines is what decided things all the way to Java. Also has an earlier Battle of Britain book, which brings the page count up to 200+.

This is a first hand account of a American pilot flying with the royal air force, in Singapore and in book two England. The story is engrossing made all the more so in that he did not survive the war. He details the raw emotions of aerial combat, from fear to boredom , then courage as the fight is joined. Though America was not yet in the war pilots like him , brave young men went to England to fight. I stand in awe of them, so far from home , fighting on foreign soil to keep the fight from reaching America's shores.

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