

Citation metadata

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Date: Spring 2009
From: Air Power History(Vol. 56, Issue 1)
Publisher: Air Force Historical Foundation
Document Type: Book review
Length: 579 words

Main content

Article Preview :

Battle of Britain Memorial Flight: 50 Years of Flying. By Jarrod Cotter. South Yorkshire, UK: Pen and Sword Books, 2007. Photographs. Diagrams. Index. Pp. 240. \$60.00 ISBN: 978-1-84415-566-8

A review of Memorial Flight must start with a disclaimer: This is not a coffee-table photo book. In conjunction with the Flight's fiftieth anniversary, Jarrod Cotter has created a solid history of the Royal Air Force's Battle of Britain Memorial Flight (BBMF).

The BBMF began humbly with a Hawker Hurricane and three Supermarine Spitfires as the Historic Aircraft Flight "with the primary aim to provide aircraft for the annual Battle of Britain flypast over London." From those modest beginnings, Cotter traces the movements, changes, and expansions of what has truly become a national treasure with a fleet of two Hurricanes, five Spitfires, one Douglas C-47 Dakota, and one Avro Lancaster bomber. These conduct over 700 flypasts...

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Source Citation

Source Citation

Simonsen, Daniel J. "Battle of Britain Memorial Flight: 50 Years of Flying." *Air Power History*, vol. 56, no. 1, 2009, p. 57+. Accessed 7 Nov. 2020.

Gale Document Number: GALE|A195917884

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Some 58 years after it last flew, TE311 was put back in the air in 2012, having undergone a painstaking re-build to flying condition by BBMF technicians, which was started in October 2001. TE311 is currently painted as Spitfire XVI TB675 '4D-V', the aircraft of Squadron Leader Tony Reeves DFC, who was the Commanding Officer of No 74 Squadron from the end of December 1944. However she was restored at Waddington and had her turrets replaced and eventually joined the Battle of Britain Flight in November 1973. The starboard side of PA474 will wear the 50 Squadron code letters 'VN-T' representing Lancaster LL922 in which Flying Officer 'Dougy' Millikin (grandfather of the current OC BBMF, Andy 'Milli' Millikin) and his wireless operator John Tait flew 33 operations together. The history of the Flight began with the formation of the Historic Aircraft Flight in July 1957 which was to become The Battle of Britain Memorial Flight.

Countless displays and fly-pasts have enthralled audiences and enthusiasts all over Britain and in many parts of Europe, when the traditional Avro Lancaster, Spitfire and Hurricane can be seen in their wartime colours. This book is written with the wholehearted support of the Flight's Commanding Officer and the author has access to archive material. The book includes a Foreword from the OC BBMF, a complete history of the unit, chapters on ea