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Fighter Pilot



Synopsis

After two years spent in the infantry at home and no sight of being posted overseas, William MacLanachan, later known simply as McScotch, followed the advice of a friend and applied to transfer into the Royal Flying Corps. Determined to become a single-seater, or 'scout', pilot, his ambition was fulfilled when he made it to the front, joining 40 (Scout) Squadron at Bruay in 1917. At this time, a fighter pilot's 'expectation of life' was journalistically computed at three weeks. Amongst the men of 40 Squadron was Mick Mannock, who became a celebrated flying ace and an early theorist of aviation tactics: the two became close friends as war took its toll. It was Mannock who later dubbed him McScotch, in order to be able to distinguish between the two Macs under his command, and the name has endured. First published in 1936, 'Fighter Pilot' is a detailed and exciting account of squadron life in the latter years of the First World War, showing the true bravery and camaraderie of these early aviators and the effect that combat had on them.

William MacLanachan, known as McScotch, was a flying ace of the First World War, credited with seven victories. He joined the Royal Flying Corps from the Army, being posted to No. 40 Squadron in the spring of 1917. His lucky mascot, a teddy bear called Scotch Jock, is displayed at the RAF Museum Cosford. Albion Press is an imprint of Endeavour Press, the UK's leading independent digital publisher. For more information on our titles please sign up to our newsletter at www.endeavourpress.com. Each week you will receive updates on free and discounted ebooks. Follow us on Twitter: @EndeavourPress and on Facebook via <http://on.fb.me/1HweQV7>. We are always interested in hearing from our readers. Endeavour Press believes that the future is now.

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Customer Reviews

This author of his experiences as a pilot in World War 1 brings to life the first use of airplanes used in combat. The problems faced by the men flying these craft were many; still these "stout fellows" preferred the risks involved better than life in the trenches. However, those who were in the infantry preferred trench life after watching planes do down in flames. The author singles out individual and includes an analysis of some of the men in his squadron; especially his friend who was credited with 40 victories over the Germans. The language is very proper British with no cursing and no mention of any sex life even though it must have existed when they frequently went into towns at night. I enjoyed the book since some of the aircraft mentioned I had made models of as a kid growing up in the thirties.

Well written and thoughtful - this seems to be consistent with other memoirs from the time period and is better written and clear about the stress that pilots encountered in this situation. Since the role of the pilot developed along with the planes it took time before they worked out that they could better train them before sending them into combat. That they gave them a pistol to kill themselves with instead of a parachute to save themselves with was especially grievous in aircraft that burned easily.

The book was informative but I felt a little uncomfortable with the author. I assume the book was written in the mid 1930s because he spoke of the regeneration of the German armed forces. There were many interesting accounts of aerial combat and tactics that I enjoyed reading. But I really did not like the author's general attitude. He stated that he was not a snob but he was offended when an enlisted pilot came to the squadron. A good portion of the book concerned his relationship with Mick Mannock, a fighter pilot of some repute. He seemed to admire Mannock greatly and considered him to be his mentor. All this is fine, but when he put words into Mannock's mouth he seemed to make him out to be some sort of artificial person. Perhaps the fault lies in me but I came to dislike the author. Consequently, though I enjoyed the factual information in the book my teeth were constantly a little on edge while reading. I realize this review is not as objective as it should be but all in all it is a book worth reading. You may not find the writing style offensive as I did.

An autobiographical account of the the first world war in the air, specifically late 1917. I would recommend this book to anyone with an interest in the period, and to 'Biggles' fans for a dose of reality. This is a factual book by a real fighter pilot.

Very interesting book on WWI British fighter pilots flying wood and canvas planes. Badly damage your lower wing on landing? No problem! a new one can be bolted on in about 30 minutes, and you can be on your way up again.

I found this to be a very enjoyable read. The book described the everyday life of a fighter pilot in Europe during WW1 seen from the perspective of a British pilot who was there. This is not a book that describes the grand strategy of the war, just the activities and action encountered by the author's squadron. The author recounted the engagements he was involved in and the personalities of his fellow pilots. The book is written in an informal style that makes it enjoyable and easy to follow, as if the author was telling the story in your presence. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in the subject matter.

I really hated for this one to end. He is a very good writer, able to capture the sound and the smell of life in a fighter squadron in WWI. As his focus is largely on life in the squadron and the missions he flew, this book makes an excellent compliment to Flying Fury by T.B. McCudden, which focuses much more on each dogfight and the development of tactics. I highly recommend them both.

Best air war book covering WWI. A real treat and eye-opener about the work of the RFC, often forgotten when compared with romanticized, colorful accounts of German pilots. The truth will surprise and amaze you -- it did me.

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