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Carrier Pilot: One Of The Greatest WWII Pilot's Memoirs



Synopsis

It has everything a war memoir should have. LEN DEIGHTON OF ALL THE AIRCRAFT I HAD EVER SEEN, THESE WERE THE MOST WICKED-LOOKING BASTARDS. THE CORSAIR LOOKED TRULY VICIOUS. In 1942 Norman Hanson learnt to fly the Royal Navy's newest fighter: the US-built Chance Vought Corsair. Fast, rugged and demanding to fly, it was an intimidating machine. But in the hands of its young Fleet Air Arm pilots it also proved to be a lethal weapon. Posted to the South Pacific aboard HMS Illustrious, Hanson and his squadron took the fight to the Japanese. Facing a desperate and determined enemy, Kamikaze attacks and the ever-present dangers of flying off a pitching carrier deck, death was never far away. Brought to life in vivid, visceral detail, *Carrier Pilot* is one of the finest aviator's memoirs of the war; an awe-inspiring, thrilling, sometimes terrifying account of war in the air. PRAISE FOR *CARRIER PILOT* 'Just outstanding. *Carrier Pilot* is up there with *First Light* and *The Big Show* as one of the best pilot's memoirs of WWII.' ROWLAND WHITE, AUTHOR OF *VULCAN 607* 'Hanson's thrilling memoir takes you right into the cockpit in a way few writers have ever managed. The lethal world of the wartime Royal Navy carrier pilot, with its casual and shocking violence, horrific attrition, yet extraordinary camaraderie is so vividly brought to life that one can almost smell the smoke, oil and sweat. Real, adrenalin-charged, and ridiculously dangerous flying, Hanson's account is an aviation classic that has to be read.' JAMES HOLLAND, AUTHOR OF *DAM BUSTERS* and *THE WAR IN THE WEST*

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Customer Reviews

Norman Hanson was a 26-year-old Civil Servant at the outbreak of World War Two. Although

working in a reserved occupation Hanson was allowed to join the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm in 1941. After pilot training with the US Navy in Florida he served in Egypt, before serving aboard the HMS Illustrious in the Far East. For his courage, skill and determination while leading 1833 Naval Air Squadron he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. Hanson returned to civilian life in 1946. He died in 1980 shortly after the publication of the critically acclaimed Carrier Pilot.

This is a story of British naval pilot training and duty in the Middle East prior to being assigned to a major aircraft carrier. Sea duty begins for him in the Indian ocean campaign down through to Australia and then up through the Pacific war theater against the Japanese.. It is unbelievable that more pilots probably died in accidents and mechanical problems than from actual combat. The author's training took him from England to Florida and back again to shore duty in the Middle East. Finally aboard a major British aircraft carrier he ended the war fighting Japanese pilots off of Okinawa at wars end. I recommend the book.

Mr Hanson tells exciting stories commencing prior to his enlistment as a young boy, to the end of the conflict. His time in early flight school in England then on to Pensacola was a fun read. The ride to the Indian Ocean with the British fleet and the action which followed was spellbinding. The naval nomenclature was a bit different from what I was accustomed, but I caught on quickly. I was a aviation mechanic in the USN during the Korean War. We were a ASW squadron flying TBM & AF2 planes. Having served on six small carriers (CVE) I found myself serving along side the author. This was a very good read.

We are losing the last of the Greatest Generation. People from this era had their childhood in the great depression and then went off to war. We don't currently have any frame of reference for this. Most of us have had a "normal childhood". Norman does a great job of describing the experiences of one of the Greatest Generation. You get a feeling for both the drama and absurdity of war and the preparations for it. It seemed that there were almost as many pilots killed in training as in actual battle and this underscores the seriousness of the situation. I have been reading a fair amount of WWII history because my father served at the end of the war, and at 90 I don't know how much longer he will be with us. This was of special interest because Dad served on an escort carrier. Norman's writing style is good and he is able to bring you into his experiences. One of the reviewers complained that he spent too much time describing the training, but I felt this added a lot

to the total experience he was describing.

Outstanding detail on the sort of things these kind of books don't cover. The author goes into details about flying his Corsair, about landing on aircraft carriers about the terrible accidents which can befall brave men but also covers the other side of the war, the socialising which so many soldiers and airmen really enjoyed in spite of the huge pressures. The author's dispassionate coverage of the engineering and practical side of his work and his passionate observations about the terrible side makes this a most valuable book. Who would have thought for example the biggest curse on a carrier was the lack of air conditioning and the terrific heat generated below deck. He is also less biased than some British writers when it comes to assessing America's role on WW2. An author who can see both sides of an equations is so much more interesting to read.. First rate Mr Hanson

A decent read by a well versed in composition and articulate author. A little disappointing for seekers of detailed, hands on combat knowledge in a fighter plane but for those who enjoy a personal reflection on flying in general and life along the way during war and tours of duty, it provides a good story..

A very interesting and well written account of a British carrier. I had not known that they any till now. Great book.

This is an outstanding book. Extremely well written, the dry humor and tragedy make it an exceptionally good read. Flight details are excellent and you feel like you know the Corsair when you are done. No other book has ever had that impact on this non-flier. I would think that a pilot would find this book a must read, but anyone is going to enjoy it. Highly recommended.

A ripping yarn from page one. Veteran pilot Norm Hanson describes the life, the loving and the sudden deaths of these swaggering young heroes. A carrier based airfield that sails into the boom of battle, a chance to strafe enemy ships in super fast fighters... and uniforms the girls would die for! If you had a dad or granddad in this unit you will understand what shaped him as a young man... for better and for worse. Hanson puts you right in the cockpit. Often the FAA is left in the shadow of the RAF. Yet these pioneering naval airmen changed the whole face of modern warfare. Couldn't put it down.

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