



Billy Drake, Fighter Leader: The Autobiography of Group Captain B. Drake DSO, DFC and Bar, US DFC

Group Captain B. Drake, Christopher Shores

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Born in London of an English father and Australian mother and educated in Switzerland, Billy Drake was to become one of the most illustrious RAF fighter pilots of World War II, indeed of all time.

He flew in many theatres with various squadrons on different aircraft - starting with 1 Squadron in France in 1940 on Hurricanes, then with 421 Flight (later 91 Squadron) on Spitfires over the Channel, then in West Africa with 128 and the Desert with 112 'Shark' Squadron (of which he was a very successful commander) on Kittyhawks. Taken off ops at the end of 1942, he was posted to Malta leading the Krendi Wing. On return to the UK he led a 2nd TAF Typhoon Wing, flying numerous sorties over the French coast prior to the Invasion. He eventually accounted for more than 20 enemy aircraft destroyed or damaged.

He was then despatched to Fort Leavenworth USA with Peter Brothers, then to Operations Staff SHAEF HQ for the rest of the war. Postwar he was to be found in Japan, at HQ Malaya and Singapore, followed by a succession of staff appointments, including Air Attaché in Switzerland. His final posting was a Group Captain commanding RAF Chivenor, Devon, until retirement in July 1963. His adventures continued, however, during over 20 years in Portugal, and he is now living and working (at the age of 84!) in London.

An extremely colourful personality, he gives Christopher Shores and the reader tremendous insights into his exceptional career, his widely differing experiences, the characters he knew and flew with and the often amusing highlights of an RAF lifestyle. Includes never before published photographs and a cover painting by Nicolas Trudgian.

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