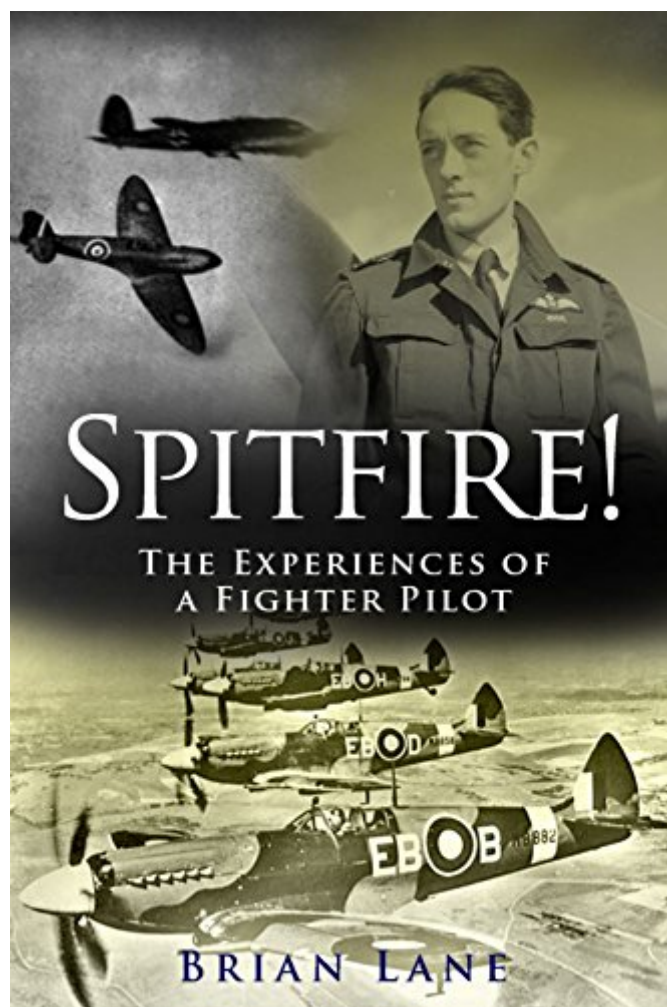


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# Spitfire!: The Experiences Of A Battle Of Britain Fighter Pilot



## Synopsis

•What is it like up there?• Spitfire first became a household word during the Blitz, but it was not the first service the valiant aircraft had performed. At Dunkirk a year earlier, pilots had provided aerial support as the allied forces began their evacuation from France. In an attempt to answer the questions of the man on the street, Brian Lane, who wrote under the pseudonym of B. J. Ellan, tells of what it is that a fighter pilot thinks and feels when he is fighting in the skies, from the sunlit coast of Belgium to the lovely countryside of Kent. Having been with the squadron since the beginning of the war, as a flight commander and C.O., the character and bravery of the men he knew and served with are deftly rendered. Self-deprecating and richly detailed, Spitfire! is a classic Battle of Britain memoir, and one of only a few to be published in that dramatic period of history. Brian Lane (1917-1942), was an R.A.F. officer, fighter pilot and author. He was awarded the D.F.C. for bravery during the evacuation of Dunkirk, and his abilities were recognised in his promotion to Squadron Leader in September 1940. In December 1942 he failed to return from a mission over the North Sea; he was 25. 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](http://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

Sorry, but to be honest, this is one of the most boring books I ever read. Not just because of the authors style, or lack there of, but basically he had a boring assignment. On the plus side he does a decent presentation of historical facts about his unit and their duty. If your interested in this unit you will find this quite informative. Keep that in mind and the dull repetition of how he landed and took off for each flight becomes a little more bearable. Don't buy the book with expectations of an account of the fierce air battles over London in the Blitz (like I did). That is not this story.

I came across this beauty recently while on a trip to the UK and a more authentic account of the battle you will not find; "So Few" Mr. Churchill said-but no debt here as he would have you believe; rather few so lucky to be able to get on with the job whilst the less fortunate folk looked on and awaited their chance. I think he was really referring to our mess bills, anyway!" The date of publish tells it all; 1942. It is just not possible to write with this kind of detail fifty years after the fact. Some get close or compensate with style ('First Light' for example) but this really has to be placed alongside 'enemy coast ahead' or 'the last enemy', where it will be in very good company. Truly authentic and written at a time when the memory was fresh. I cannot understand how this has never been re-published, a remarkable picture of the fighting spirit of the RAF in the battle. Rarely does a book convey a sense of the man as here, made all the more poignant by reference to colleagues who went on to lead full and rewarding lives after the war while the author died as we see him here, a 1940 picture in time in 116 pages.

Many years ago I saw a picture in one of my Battle of Britain books of an armourer working on a beautiful Spitfire with the squadron code QV-K. That plane was flown by the author of this book, and he scored some of his victories whilst\* flying it. I had always wanted to find out more about this man who was one of "the Few" who stopped the Luftwaffe's blitz in the opening years of WWII. These are the words of a young Englishman who loved his country and ended up giving his life to protect it. I think the best thing about the book -- slight as it is with only 116 pages of text -- is that it was written while the events were still fresh in the author's memory. Anyone who collects books on the Battle should understand that their collection is not complete without this memoir. By the way, I have

to mention that the volume is filled with typos and punctuation marks showing up in random places. Still, it's well worth the time to enjoy this inspiring story filled with wit, courage and, ultimately, sacrifice.\* I had to put a "whilst" in here as the book is full of them.

Bear in mind the fact that, according to all accounts available, Brian Lane was a great fighter leader and Squadron Commander, who knew the names of the people under his command on a first name basis. But that fact alone, unfortunately, does not make him a good writer. Not even an average writer. Yes, it was a first hand account. But this book is everything but "dramatic", contrary to the text in says. The writing style is almost non-existent, the urgency of the battle can barely be felt at all, due to the sheer pleasure the writer (and apparently all the pilots of his Squadron) have in getting airborne to tangle with the "wretched Huns" (his words). There is no sense of fatigue, urgency, despair, or even pilots getting killed a lot. There is almost no complaining about doing useless night fighter patrols. Yes, this in part due to the fact that 19 Squadron was not on 11 Group during most of Battle of Britain. The battle is always one-sided, with Lane ignoring the simple concept of over-claiming. Every single time they find the enemy, the score is close to 10:1 or something like that, to the British side, which we know today was blatant and outrageous over-claiming (both sides did it). The good part is that Dilip Sarkar at least got most of the names in the book (in original form, since it was published in 1942, the book was heavily censored). That said, it is a shame that such a daring, vibrant and able young officer died by the hands of a Fock Wulf 190, flying an outdated Spitfire V. But this does not make this a good book.

This book was highly praised but I found it shallow & repetitive. I shouldn't dis a man who gave his life for his country but he does not do much fighting and just repeats information about the plane (that's good), and about flights where he loses sight of enemy planes. A boring read RAG

Very light and flippant diary of a young Spitfire pilot during the Battle of Britain...the terrifying episodes of fighter attacks and cannon fire (Me109) are not there ...and no account of the fear of combat ...come through. I am left in awe of the endless multiple sorties needed daily...but miss a tougher and graphic of the air experience and combat.

Brian Lane is a fine writer and a keen observer. His descriptions of handling the Spit are excellent, especially when he describes landing procedures real-time. As an aviator myself, I felt like my reflexes were right with his on final as the green airfield flattened out on touchdown. Perhaps the

most poignant reason to read "Spitfire" is that it was written the year after the Battle of Britain when the war was still in high gear. Lane, of course, writes of squadron mates who fail to return and that tragic sense of loss. Alas, Brian Lane himself failed to return after a flight a short time after "Spitfire" was written. The loss is ours.

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