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Bombing Europe: The Illustrated Exploits Of The Fifteenth Air Force



Synopsis

Get the complete story of one of the most ambitious aerial campaigns in history--the bombing of Europe under the Axis powers--illustrated with over 200 compelling photos. Created in November 1943, the Fifteenth Air Force was the direct descendant of the American Ninth and Twelfth Air Forces that had fought in the Mediterranean since the summer of 1942. Its force included 210 B-17 Flying Fortress and 90 B-24 Liberator bombers escorted by P-38 Lightning, P-47 Thunderbolt, and P-51 Mustang fighters. They took the air battle against the Axis to areas Allied bombers based in England could not reach: southern Germany, Austria, eastern Europe, and the Balkans. Their reach in the Balkans included the oil refineries at Ploesti, Romania, vital to Germany's war effort. Its crews fought the weather, as well as the enemy, by flying over the Alps to reach many of their targets and made a significant contribution to the victory over the Axis powers and Nazi Germany. Although enemy fighter planes were a major menace during the first nine months of the Fifteenth's air war, ubiquitous antiaircraft fire, called flak, also took a toll on American bombers throughout the campaign. This book tells the story of the brave airmen who bombed the majority of Europe in an effort to win the war.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The U.S. Fifteenth Air Force was tasked to destroy or incapacitate the Axis forces in Central and Southern Europe from 1943 through 1945. It did not enjoy the glamour of bases in Great Britain but flew logistically tough missions such as the shuttle missions which landed in Russia, rearmed and sortied back to southern bases. The low level Ploesti raids also belonged to the Fifteenth so hardly

more need be said for their combat challenges. Mahoney is more than familiar with the history of the Fifteenth and is accomplished as an author. Bombing Europe is no archetypal history book. Instead, it is a concise history laden with trials and tribulations of the aircrews and generously stocked with images. The text relates the thinking and the context of the events while the photos bring these events jumping off the book's pages. The images are many, often dramatic and too often tragic. Death and injury in the cold skies are recounted in one event after another with no two being the same. The photographs are large—a welcome characteristic of Mahoney's fine book along with his engaging but never wasteful writing. Bombing Europe is a small size coffee table book well at home in a library or on a side table. It tells as well as shows the trajectory of the battle with chapters dedicated to all aspects of the struggle—from the flak to reconnaissance; from the Lone Wolf missions to rescues in Slovakia; and from combat with the Axis forces to War Crimes plus so much more. The photographs show so many happy and good looking combatants as well as fatally hit aircraft and everything in between. This book is gritty, accurate and complete—no Hollywood scripting or imagery here, but what happened and the way it happened.

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