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Peter C. Smith

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Peter C. Smith : Skua!: The Royal Navy's Dive-Bomber before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Skua!: The Royal Navy's Dive-Bomber:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The Skua, a run what ya' brung airplaneBy JCALThe dichotomy of so many of the previous reviews is interesting. Several complain about the how mundane the Skua was while other complain there was too much technical detail in the book.It's important to remember the era in which the Skua was conceived and built. The Skua is the perfect representation of the Fleet Air Arm and Blackburn in the late 1930's. The FAA was seeking a transitional all metal do-it all aircraft within the restrictions imposed by budgets,politics and the

RAF while Blackburn had the ability to build aircraft that exactly met customer specifications. (Not always a good thing, given the number of failed designs they produced.) The result was the Skua. As far as the complaints of too much detail? Don't read the sections that aren't of interest to you. Considering the overall performance of the Skua, its accomplishments and length of service are quite amazing. The Skua was there for the FAA to develop dive bombing tactics, provided the initial cadre of trained pilots, and was in service when it was needed. Highly recommended as a volume on the Skua, as a prewar and early war history of the FAA. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Ok book on a very limited subject - worth a full book, maybe not so much. By Jonathan Mattson Mr Smith's books are always interesting. He sure drives his personal viewpoint home. It is kind of interesting to see his strong opinions on a plane that really seems to do not much besides bombs one cruiser. Otherwise just seems like a mediocre dive bomber/horrible fighter just finding its limited niche. But he does a good job giving the history of this plane. You learn about the long development period, how once it was finally completed just how obsolete it was. It's always a shame to have to read how good men were forced to make virtual suicide missions in such horrible planes. Some parts of the book are good to read, but after the Norway campaign it gets very repetitive (planes fly scouting missions from this carrier or from that carrier and do not much combat) 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Finally, a book on this neglected type. By o. migillicuddy Hundreds of titles on Mustang, Spitfire and ME109; finally we see about a minor actor. An interesting book about a little known aircraft that could have been much better used had there not been so much infighting with the ranks of the RAF. It is an object lesson on the dangers of bureaucratic empire building. The Skua was a weapon that, properly wielded, could have done so much more, as England's aircraft carriers, like those of other nations, are only as good as the aircraft embarked. One wonders how much could have been done to close the Mid Ocean Gap had the RAF really cooperated with equipping the Fleet Air Arm. It also speaks to the virtues of a separate naval air force. There is a photo that gives one pause - What kind of thinking put the fuel tanks in the cockpit between the pilot and the observer-gunner? Ahh, well, all aircraft have their weaknesses!

The Blackburn Skua was the first monoplane to be designed and built for the Royal Navy in the 1930s. As a result of continued debate, it became a compromise between the Navy's desire for a carrier-based dive-bomber and RAF's preference for a fighter. Despite being the first to shoot down a Luftwaffe aircraft in World War II, early operations in Norway found the type woefully inadequate as a fighter. As a dive-bomber, the Royal Navy put the design to good use from the outset of WWII. It was involved with the hunt for the Graf Spee, sunk the major warship Koln, suffered with great loss in an attack on the Scharnhorst, helped to keep the German advance at bay during the Dunkirk evacuation and attacked the French rogue battleship Richelieu in the Mediterranean. This book relates how the final design was created, how the dive-bombing technique was developed and perfected by naval pilots and traces the wartime operational career of the type with many first-hand accounts.

About the Author Peter C. Smith is a renowned aviation historian and author.