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## Spitfire Aces of the Channel Front 1941-43 (Aircraft of the Aces)

Andrew Thomas

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#1187173 in Books Osprey Publishing 2016-06-21 2016-06-21 Original language: English PDF # 1 250.95 x 8.51 x 6.071, .65 #File Name: 147281258196 pages9781472812582 | File size: 68.Mb

**Andrew Thomas : Spitfire Aces of the Channel Front 1941-43 (Aircraft of the Aces)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Spitfire Aces of the Channel Front 1941-43 (Aircraft of the Aces):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. After the Battle of Britain, the Battle of the Channel...By HMS Warspite  
At the conclusion of the Battle of Britain, with the threat of German invasion receding, the Royal Air Force began an offensive of its own, with regular counter-air missions into the air space over France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. The Spitfire fighter was the mainstay of the so-called Channel Front, as the RAF "leaned into Europe" during 1941 to 1943. "Spitfire Aces of the Channel Front 1941-43" is an Osprey Aircraft of the Aces Series book, authored by Andrew Thomas, with illustrations by Chris Thomas. The narrative picks up the story in early 1941, as the RAF gradually went over to the offensive, and carries through to the eve of the D-Day invasion. The story discusses

aircraft, tactics, and leaders, but mostly it is a surprisingly detailed account of the aces who flew Spitfires during this period. There is a table at the end of the book summarizing the men who qualified as aces based on five or more aerial kills, but much of the story is told as a series of almost breathless vignettes of aerial combat. The narrative is nicely supported by an excellent selection of period photographs and some color plates of examples of Spitfires from the period. A couple of items stood out to this reader. One was the development of the Spitfire IX as an agile opponent of the German FW 190 fighter, which rather overmatched earlier versions of the Spitfire. The second was the appalling casualty rates of the RAF offensive, as large numbers of the heroes of the Battle of Britain succumbed to too much aerial combat, dying in action or spending the balance of the war in a German POW camp. Victory came at a huge cost. Highly recommended to students of the aerial operations of the Second World War.

6 of 8 people found the following review helpful. British Wishful Thinking By Sepp Dietrich This publication covers the aerial combats in Northwestern Europe from the Spitfire pilots' point of view which was very difficult for them prior to the USAAF participation even though the RAF outnumbered their Luftwaffe opponents and sustained far greater losses than the Jagdwaffe. The RAF heavily overclaimed and at the time it was believed that the RAF daylight offensive was succeeding thanks to British propaganda which many to this day still buy into. This work shows the losses sustained even among experienced British pilots, including many aces. Unfortunately, the author seems to accept at face value the description given by some of these aces when, upon examination of German records, their tales could not be true. A good example is the painting on the cover of the book which shows the Spitfire VI flown by Sq. Ldr. Tommy Balmforth shooting down in flames a Fw 190 of JG 26, with B-17s in the background. Balmforth claimed two Fw 190s in this combat. The fact is that JG 26 lost no aircraft on 12 December 1942, the date of this combat. British fighter pilots claimed a total of seven destroyed/probably destroyed for the loss of five Spitfires. The B-17 gunners claimed an additional 26. The Germans sustained no losses. JG 26 claimed four Spitfires and two B-17s. Allied losses were five Spitfires and two B-17s. Unfortunately, the author fails to state these facts. There are many more examples of British overclaiming. A good example is the date that Douglas Bader was shot down. The RAF claimed 33 German fighters but the Luftwaffe lost only two fighters on this date. I was particularly interested in the claims of a top ace, Paddy Finucane, who had claimed to have shot down the Bf 109F flown by Adolf Galland over England on 15 April 1941, on the lobster and champagne flight when Galland brought down three Spitfires (although he claimed only two). Galland's Messerschmitt sustained no hits but Finucane was credited with one destroyed. Finucane also claimed two Fw 190s on 13 March 1942 including the blowing off of the Fw 190's tail which the author describes. In fact no German losses occurred on this date. I have to wonder about the rest of Finucane's claims. History is fortunate that most of the British pilots' accounts have survived which cannot be said of the German combat reports which were destroyed by Allied bombing or by deliberate destruction on Goering's orders. Fortunately we do have survivor's accounts, many of which Don Caldwell used in his histories of JG 26 which this author, Andrew Thomas, should have used, in addition to Jochen Prien's histories of the Jagdwaffe with claims and losses (in German).

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Channel Front By Jeffrey A. Carle An interesting read, detailed and an excellent resource.

Eighty years after the Spitfire was first developed, it remains an icon of military aviation. Though many associate its victory during the Battle of Britain as the high point in the history of the Spitfire, the years following were of equal importance. Having weathered the initial storm, at the start of 1941 Fighter Command took the fight to the Germans with offensive missions over the Channel. This book reveals how RAF squadrons, first using the Spitfire I and II and then, following the introduction of the Bf 109, the cannon-armed Spitfire V, embarked on a range of missions which included one of the most important air battles of the war, over Dieppe on August 19, 1942. Alongside British pilots were squadrons manned by exiled Europeans and pilots from the RAAF, RCAF, and RNZAF. In just three years, over one hundred of these racked up ace status in the Spitfire.

"\*\*\* Three stars." - Air Classics Magazine "This one is something that I can highly recommend to Spitfire boffins and enthusiasts of the air war in Europe as well as fans of the series." - Modeling Madness "If you are an aviation history enthusiast you are going to enjoy reading this book." - IPMS/USA About the Author Andrew Thomas joined the RAF straight from school and maintains his enthusiasm for the service even after retirement. Specializing in the history of the RAF and the Commonwealth Air Forces, he has published more a dozen volumes in Osprey's Aircraft of the Aces series. Chris Thomas's illustrations have appeared in Air Enthusiast, Aeroplane Monthly, Flypast, and Le Fana de l'Aviation. He also illustrated the 2nd Tactical Air Force series with over ninety profiles of the types employed by that force.