

***AIR DEFENCE OF GREAT BRITAIN: VOLUME II,
GROWTH OF FIGHTER COMMAND***

T C G JAMES WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY SEBASTIAN COX
Whitehall History Publishing,
Frank Cass & Co
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Even the most superficial glance around the shelves of a military library, or indeed the displays of one's local bookstore, reveal many works on a given campaign. Some of these works will be based on the increasingly popular use of oral evidence. Others make extensive use of photographic

archives. More detailed works in turn examine twists in policy, personality clashes or even attempt to describe the operation in full. The historiography of the Battle of Britain is no exception with copious quantities of material from 'spotters' books of colour schemes through to serious monographs. The vast majority of these books have one thing in common – they have drawn on the original official history as their starting point for research.

This book represents the Second volume of the Narrative commissioned by the Air Historical Branch while the War was still in progress. The first volume is due to be published next year and covers the period immediately prior to the outbreak of war. The work has been declassified, and thanks to Frank Cass (and more particularly, Mr Seb Cox as Head of the AHB and Series Editor), it is now widely available.

Volume II covers the Battle of Britain and its publication has, inevitably, been timed to coincide with the 60th Anniversary of the Battle. The first part covers the effect of the German occupation of Europe on the air defence of the UK. This makes the work a natural starting point for any review of the battle of air superiority (or parity) over Dunkirk as well as setting the scene for the exploits of 'The Few'. James then covers the now familiar five phases before concluding with a survey of the Battle.

This book does not purport to be the ultimate work on the Battle – it could not possibly be so having been written whilst the war was still underway. But its wide availability should now ensure that the potential author of even the shortest essay on the Battle of Britain has no excuse not to start with original source material. This book therefore is of serious relevance to any scholar and contains so much interesting material that it is worthy of a place on any bookshelf.

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