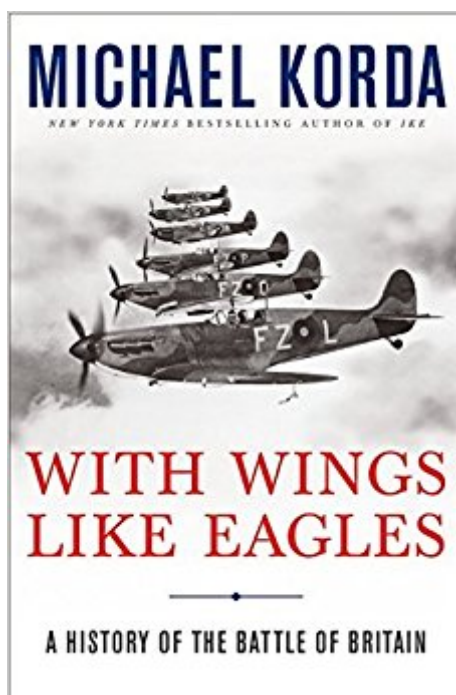


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With Wings Like Eagles: A History Of The Battle Of Britain



Synopsis

â œ[With Wings Like Eagles is] bold and refreshingâ | Korda writes with great elegance and flair.â •â "Wall Street Journal From the New York Times bestselling author of Ike and Horse People, Michael Korda, comes With Wings Like Eagles, the harrowing story of The Battle of Britain, one of the most important battles of World War II. In the words of the Washington Post Book World, â œWith Wings Like Eagles is a skillful, absorbing, often moving contribution to the popular understanding of one of the few episodes in history â | to deserve the description â ^heroic.â ™â •

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It's tough to predict the future, especially because public attitudes and technology keeps changing and thus messing up the facts used to make predictions. One emphasis of this book is the arguments in the 1930s about the need for fighters or bombers to defend Britain. A massive fleet of heavy bombers was sought by military experts as an aggressive retaliatory force to deter bomber attacks. Politicians who wanted to keep taxes low wanted fighters as cheaper defence against bombers. Stanley Baldwin and Neville Chamberlain won the "cheap" arguments, which is why Britain had a large force of Hurricanes and Spitfires to defend the country in the summer of 1940. Luck? Foresight? Cost conscious wisdom in favour of low taxes? Or simple decency in not building an offensive force? Those issues of "Why?" are still open for debate. This book deals decisions and personalities of leaders in Britain and Germany, and outlines the almost inevitable reasons that Germany couldn't win a war in the air against an equal opponent. Thus, a cross-channel invasion was impossible. The RAF simply made it unthinkable. Instead, Hitler settled for what he thought he

knew best -- a foot soldier's invasion of Russia in the summer of 1941. This isn't a tacka-tacka-tacka account of aerial warfare; instead, it examines the personalities and decisions that produced the Battle of Britain. There are plenty of books from both sides about the aerial combat; it's one of the few which analyze policy decisions.

Michael Korda's history of The Battle of Britain is a masterful synthesis of the myriad factors that constituted what was arguably the seminal military battle in the history of Western Civilization. He weaves together the technical and strategic aspects of the battle along with the personalities who directed it in a way that will give newcomers to this slice of the history of World War II a gripping and compelling view from 25,000 feet. He even breaks new ground by suggesting that the "appeasers" within the British government were at least responsible approving many of the technological and material innovations which aided Britain in its "finest hour". He quite rightly places Dowding as the man who should be most credited (along with Keith Park) with the success the RAF enjoyed during the Battle of Britain. And, refreshingly, Korda reinforces the idea that Dowding's dismissal from the head of Fighter Command was--in large part--due to the failure of Britain's night fighter defenses rather than the controversy over "Big Wings" or other factors. Korda is perhaps on less solid ground when he suggests that Winston Churchill harbored a grudge against Dowding for standing up to him when the Prime Minister was seeking to send additional squadrons during the Battle of France. It is the view of this reviewer that Churchill supported Dowding to the hilt during the Battle of Britain itself and that Dowding's downfall was only a question of time given his strained relationship with the RAF hierarchy. However, for those BoB enthusiasts who have perhaps read Wood and Dempster's "The Narrow Margin", Korda's book will not be as satisfying.

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