

## The Last British Dambuster

It was a night that changed the Second World War. The secret air raid against the hydroelectric dams of Germany’s Ruhr River took years to plan, involved an untried bomb and included the best aircrews the RAF Bomber Command could muster—many of them Canadian. The raid marked the first time the Allies successfully took the war inside Nazi Germany. It was a mission that became legendary. On May 16, 1943, nineteen Lancaster bombers filled with 133 airmen took off on a night mission code-named Operation Chastise. Hand-picked and specially trained, the Lancaster crews flew at treetop level to the industrial heartland of the Third Reich and their targets—the Ruhr River dams—whose massive water reservoirs powered Nazi Germany’s military industrial complex. Each Lancaster carried an explosive that, when released just sixty feet over the reservoirs, bounced like a skipping stone to the dam, sank and exploded. The raiders breached two dams and severely damaged a third. The resulting torrent devastated power plants, factories and infrastructure a hundred miles downstream. Every one of the 133 airmen on the mission understood that the odds of survival were low. Of the nineteen bombers outbound, eight did not return. Operation Chastise cost the lives of fifty-three airmen, including fourteen Canadians. Of the sixteen RCAF men who survived, seven received military decorations. Based on personal accounts, flight logs, maps and photographs the Canadians involved, Dam Busters recounts the dramatic story of these young Commonwealth bomber crews that were tasked with a high-risk mission against an enemy prepared to defend the Fatherland to the death.

On 16 May 1943, nineteen Lancaster aircraft from the RAF’s 617 Squadron set off to attack the great dams in the industrial heart of Germany. Flying at a height of 60ft, they dropped a series of bombs which bounced across the water and destroyed two of their targets, thereby creating a legend. The one-off operation combined an audacious method of attack, technically brilliant flying and visually spectacular results. But while the story of Operation Chastise is well known, most of the 133 ‘Dambusters’ who took part in the Dams Raid have until now been just names on a list. They came from all parts of the UK and the Commonwealth and beyond, and each of them was someone’s son or brother, someone’s husband or father. This is the first book to present their individual stories and celebrate their skill, heroism and, for many, sacrifice.

A special edition of *The Dam Busters* by Paul Brickhill reissued with a bright retro design to celebrate Pan’s 70th anniversary. On 17 May 1943, nearly 350 million tons of water crashed into the valleys of the Ruhr when the Lancaster bombers of 617 Squadron breached the giant Moehne and Eder Dams with colossal ‘blockbuster’ bombs. The Dam Busters tell the story of the raid and the squadron of fearless airmen who carried it through. Again and again, the crews of 617 Squadron Bomber Command used their flying skills, their tremendous courage and Barnes Wallis’ highly accurate bouncing bombs to deal devastating blows to Nazi Germany. One of the most daring true stories to emerge from the Second World War, Paul Brickhill’s *The Dam Busters* inspired the famous 1955 film starring Michael Redgrave and Richard Todd.

At the end of the Second World War when it became clear that nothing could slow the advance of the German army, Hitler set his sights on the Mediterranean island of Crete, the ideal staging ground for domination of the Middle East. But German command had not counted on the strength of the Cretan resistance or the eccentric band of British intelligence officers who would stand in their way, conducting audacious sabotage operations in the very shadow of the Nazi occupation force. The Ariadne Objective tells the remarkable story of the secret war on Crete from the perspective of these amateur soldiers who found themselves serving because, as one of them put it, they had made ‘the obsolete choice of Greek at school’. John Pendlebury, a washbuckling archaeologist with a glass eye and a swordstick; Ian Fielding, a writer who would later produce the English translations of books like *Bridge on the River Kwai* and *Planet of the Apes*; Sandy Rendel, a future Times reporter, who prided himself on a disguise that left him looking more ragged and fierce than the Cretans he fought alongside; and Patrick Leigh Fermor, the future travel-writing luminary who, as a teenager in the early 1930s, walked across Europe, a continent already beginning to feel the effects of Hitler’s rise to power. Having infiltrated occupied Crete, these British gentlemen spies teamed with Cretan partisans to carry out a cunning plan to disrupt Nazi manoeuvres, culminating in a daring, high-risk plot to abduct the islandæ(tm)s German commander. In this thrilling and little known episode of Second World War history, Wes Davis paints a brilliant portrait of some extraordinary characters and tells a story of triumph against all the odds.

**The Ariadne Objective**

**One Man’s Life and the Raid that Changed History**

**The Last Battles of the Bomber War 1944-45**

**Spitfire**

**One Man’s Life and the Raid that Changed History**

**Tail-End Charlies**

A gripping account of the epic hunt for Hitler’s most terrifying battleship – the legendary Tirpitz – and the brave men who risked their lives to attack and destroy this most potent symbol of the Nazi’s fearsome war machine.

The Second World War is famed for being the conflict that changed the face of warfare, and it is the last that changed the face of the world. In addition to remembering those that passed away to those dark days of war, a sincere debt of gratitude is owed to all those now in their twilight years who gave all that they had for King and Country.Here Gary Bridson-Daley presents forty-two of over a hundred interviews he conducted with veterans over recent years, adding to the historical words and the original poetry of those that fought and supported the war effort to ensure freedom, peace and prosperity for generations to come. From each corner of the British Isles and every armed service, from Dam Buster George ‘Johnny’ Johnson through to riveter Susan Jones: heroes, all.

This is the true story of Second World War fighter pilot, Richard Hillary. After being shot down in September 1940, Hillary spent several months in hospital, undergoing numerous operations: a member of Archibald McIndoe’s ‘Guinea Pig Club’. Originally published in 1942, just months before he died in a second crash. The Last Enemy recounts the struggles and successes of a young man in the Royal Air Force. Told through Hillary’s eyes, this incredible story shows that even in our darkest moments there is a glimmer of enduring hope.

The story of the British-made bombs, Upkeep and Highball, successfully dropped on Nazi dams “has never been told in such depth before” (Daily Mail, UK). The night of May 16, 1943: Nineteen specially adapted Lancaster bombers take off from an RAF airfield in Lincolnshire, England, each with a huge nine-thousand-pound cylindrical bomb strapped underneath it. Their mission: to destroy three hydroelectric dams that power the Third Reich’s war machine. It was a suicide mission from the outset. First the men had to fly extremely low, at night, and in tight formation over miles of enemy-occupied territory. Then they had to drop with pinpoint precision a complicated spinning cylindrical bomb that had never before been used operationally. More than that, the entire operation had to be put together in less than ten weeks in order to hit the dams when water levels were still high enough for the bombs to be effective. The visionary aviation engineer Barnes Wallis drew up plans for his concept when the bouncing bomb was green-lighted. What followed was an incredible race against time that, despite numerous setbacks, became one of the most successful and significant bombing raids of all time. “Holland has delved into the new trove” of declassified documents “to shed light on this weapons program, the politics of its development and the eventual mission” (The Wall Street Journal). “An impeccably researched work in the style of a fast techno-thriller.” —Publishers Weekly “Extremely detailed but never dull . . . Holland offers a definitive, nuts-and-bolts history.” —Kirkus Reviews “A well-written study of engineering and invention operating under great pressure. . . . For all World War II history buffs.” —Library Journal, starred review

Pressure Politics in Contemporary Britain

Voices of British and Commonwealth Veterans

The Dam Busters

Lancaster

Filming The Dam Busters

The 133 Men Who Flew on the Dams Raid

*THE SUNDAY TIMES* NON FICTION BESTSELLER WHSmith NON-FICTION BOOK OF THE YEAR 2018 ‘The best book you will ever read about Britain’s greatest warplane’ Patrick Bishop, bestselling author of *Fighter Boys* ‘A rich and heartfelt tribute to this most iconic British machine’ Rowland White, bestselling author of *Vulcan 607* ‘As the RAF marks its centenary, Nichol has created a thrilling and often moving tribute to some of its greatest heroes’ Mail on Sunday magazine *The iconic Spitfire found fame during the darkest early days of World War II. But what happened to the redoubtable fighter and its crews beyond the Battle of Britain, and why is it still so loved today? In late spring 1940, Nazi Germany’s domination of Europe had looked unstoppable. With the British Isles in easy reach since the fall of France, Adolf Hitler was convinced that Great Britain would be defeated in the skies over her southern coast, confident his Messerschmitts and Heinkels would outclass anything the Royal Air Force threw at them. What Hitler hadn’t planned for was the agility and resilience of a marvel of British engineering that would quickly pass into legend - the Spitfire. Bestselling author John Nichol’s passionate portrait of this magnificent fighter aircraft, its many innovations and updates, and the people who flew and loved them, carries the reader beyond the dogfights over Kent and Sussex. Spanning the full global reach of the Spitfire’s deployment during WWII, from Malta to North Africa and the Far East, then over the D-Day beaches, it is always accessible, effortlessly entertaining and full of extraordinary spirit. Here are edge-of-the-seat stories and heart-stopping first-hand accounts of battling pilots forced to bail out over occupied territory; of sacrifice and wartime love; of aristocratic female flyers, and of the mechanics who braved the aircraft in battle-ready condition. Nichol takes the reader on a hair-raising, nail-biting and moving wartime history of the iconic Spitfire populated by a cast of redoubtable, heroic characters that make you want to stand up and cheer.*

*Operation Chastise, the audacious RAF bombing raid that struck at the heart of industrial Germany on the 17th May 1943, brought catastrophic damage to the three dams that served the Ruhr Valley. Water and electricity supplies were disrupted in a key area of the manufacture of Germany’s war munitions, and the consequences were disastrous. The German war effort was set back substantially, the Allies celebrated, and Dr. Barnes Wallis became a national hero as the designer of the famed ‘bouncing bomb’ that inflicted such damage.Considered from an Allied perspective, the Dambuster was a brilliant success, not only of British engineering but also of pilot endeavour. View it from the German perspective however, and an entirely new story emerges. That is precisely what we have here. In this image-heavy publication, Helmut Euler explores all facets of the operation in fascinating detail, offering a host of illuminating insights into this much-studied event of twentieth century history.*

*“A fascinating biography of one of the most important figures in Bomber Command during the Second World War.” —History of War Ralph Cochrane was born in 1895 into a distinguished naval family. After joining the Royal Navy, he volunteered in 1915 to serve with the RNAS in airships and was an early winner of the Air Force Cross. In 1918 he transferred to the fledgling RAF and learned to fly, serving in Iraq as a flight commander under “Bomber” Harris. His inter-war career saw him as a squadron commander in Aden before he became the first Chief of Air Staff of the Royal New Zealand Air Force. During the Second World War he served mainly in Bomber Command and commanded 5 Group from early 1943. He formed 617 Squadron and was instrumental in planning the legendary Dambuster Raid, the most spectacular of the War, as well as the sinking of the battleship Tirpitz. An inspirational leader, he trained 5 Group in low level target marking skills. Post war, Cochrane held a string of senior appointments commanding Transport Command, Flying Training Command and finally as Vice Chief of Air Staff, retiring in 1952. He died in 1977. “A brilliantly researched biography of a fascinating fighter. . . . adds a new name to rank alongside Great Britain’s most heroic warriors.” —Argunners “The Dambusters is one of my absolute favourite stories from WWII. . . . and this bio of Cochrane tells the story of an extraordinary man. Brilliant.” —Books Monthly*

*In 1938 Johnny Sherwood was a young professional footballer on the brink of an England career, touring the world with the all-star British team the Islington Corinthians. By 1942 he was a soldier surrendering to the Japanese at the siege of Singapore. Taken prisoner he was sent to a POW camp deep in the heart of the Thai jungle, where he was starved, beaten, and forced to build the notorious ‘railway of death’ on the River Kwai. Johnny kept his and his men’s spirits up with tales of his footballing past, even organising matches until he and the other prisoners became too weak to play. One day, he even encountered a brutal Japanese guard, and was shocked to recognise him as a Japanese footballer Johnny had played against many years before. Many years after Johnny’s death, his grandson Michael discovered an old manuscript hidden in the attic of his mother’s house. It was Johnny’s own account of his wartime experiences - the story too horrific to reveal in full to his loved ones. In the tradition of bestselling memoirs like *The Railway Man*, *Lucky Johnny* is an inspirational tale of survival against the odds.*

*The Life of Air Chief Marshal Sir Ralph Cochrane*

*The Lancaster*

*The Last Enemy*

*Guy Gibson: Dambuster*

*Aviation, Nationalism, and Popular Cinema*

“An extraordinarily gripping and powerful story” Evening Standard “An intimate account . . . rich in detail” James Holland \_\_\_\_\_ Two months before the outbreak of the Second World War, eighteen-year-old Geoffrey Wellum becomes a fighter pilot with the RAF . . . Desperate to get in the air, he makes it through basic training to become the youngest Spitfire pilot in the prestigious 92 Squadron. Thrust into combat almost immediately, Wellum finds himself flying several sorties a day, caught up in terrifying dogfights over Britain. But of the friends that take to the air alongside Wellum, many never return. \_\_\_\_\_ It took him 35 years to turn his notebooks into a narrative, and the result is a highly personal account of what it is like to face mortal combat, day and night, and what it does to a man who is barely more than a boy’ Ben MacIntyre, author of *The Spy* and the traitor ‘An extraordinarily deeply moving and astonishingly evocative story. Reading it, you feel you are in the Spitfire with him, at 20,000ft, chased by a German Heinkel.’

Wing Commander Guy Gibson writes affectionately about his beloved aircrews.

Night after night, they swallowed their fears and flew long distances through packs of enemy fighters to drop the bombs that could destroy Hitler and bring about the end of the war. Tens of thousands of young men never came back, blown up or bailing out from burning aircraft to drop helplessly into enemy hands. Yet history has condemned their brave and valiant actions, denouncing them for the destruction of German cities and civilians, rather than acknowledging them for the heroes that they are. For the first time, the eyes of the heroic men who fought them.

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Johnny Johnson has been awarded an MBE for his remarkable services in World War II 'I was anxious to fight. Hitler was the bastard who had started all this and he needed sorting out. We were under threat. Everything we stood for: our country, our families and our way of life was being attacked by this maniac. He could not be allowed to win. So for me and many, many others like me, there was no alternative. We were in a pickle and something had to be done.' Johnny Johnson is 95 years old and one of very few men who can recall first-hand the most daring and ingenious air raid of all time. He can also vividly remember his childhood spent working on a farm with his controlling father, the series of events that led him to the RAF and the rigorous training that followed. But it was his decision to join 617 Squadron, and the consequences, that have truly stayed etched in his mind. On 16 May 1943, Johnny, alongside 132 specially selected comrades, took off from Scampton airbase in Lincolnshire. For six weeks they had been trained to fulfil one mission that was near impossible: to destroy three dams deep within Germany's Ruhr Valley. It was a daring task but, against the odds, Johnny and his crew survived. Sadly, 53 comrades did not. For the first time, Johnny relives every moment of that fatal night - and the devastating aftermath. He recalls with unique wit and insight the difficult training conducted in secrecy, the race against time to release the bombs, and the sheer strength and bravery shown by a small unit faced with great adversity and uncertainty. Embodying a whole squadron, and leaving a lasting legacy for generations to come, Johnny's story is like no other.

Target Tirpitz: X-Craft, Agents and Dambusters - The Epic Quest to Destroy Hitler's Mightiest Warship

Enemy Coast Ahead

Canadian Airmen and the Secret Raid Against Nazi Germany

Vulcan 607

RAF Bomber Command in Film and Television Drama

The Complete Dambusters