

# VOICES

in the

# AIR

1939 — 1945

Incredible stories of the World War II airmen  
in their own words



EDITED BY  
LADDIE LUCAS

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# EXPLANATORY NOTE

This anthology is designed to typify the air war of 1939–45. It embraces the writings of most of the combatant countries. It balances the views of enemy and ally. Its principal aim is not so much to provide an extensive historical record as to offer a readable sequence of experiences and anecdotes, opinion and fact, which combine to form an authoritative impression of the great aerial campaigns. Forty years on, some of the personal descriptions of achievement – and disaster – still seem barely credible.

Most of the operational theatres and flying roles are covered. The editor has not, however, disguised his preference for the unusual and unconventional selection. His concern, in the main, has been to marshal together a collection of first-hand, individual accounts of particular incidents and themes rather than to labour a more commonplace and comprehensive approach.

Much of the writing is new. There was a heartening readiness on the part of a number who had made their special, and often distinguished, contributions to the fighting to set down, before it was too late, their own version of the controversies, topics and operations in which they had earlier been involved. In some cases they have made assessments of contemporary leaders which, in the past, they might have felt inclined to avoid. Time changes attitudes.

It is, however, regrettable – and in some ways surprising – that the Soviet Union has chosen not to contribute to the collection. There was so much for a selected few of her surviving airmen to relate – much, indeed, that the rest of the world would have liked to know of the heroics over the Eastern front.

A unique and enthralling anthology compiled by WWII flying ace, Laddie Lucas, *Voices in the Air* tells the story of the air battles of the Second World War in the voices of those who took part. Drawn largely on the writings of the combatants themselves from all sides of the conflict, this book offers a vivid and highly individual account of the great aerial campaigns of WWII.

From a thrilling account of the first sustained dogfight between Spitfire and Messerschmitt in 1940, to an eighteen-year-old Japanese suicide pilot's last letter home and the Luftwaffe leaders' analysis of 'what went wrong' after the Battle of Britain, the book dramatically deals with every aspect of the war.

Full of stories of astonishing escapades, incredible bravery, dogged persistence and moving feats of arms, *Voices in the Air* honours both the sung and the unsung heroes of the war.

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