

EPITAPHS OF BOMBER COMMAND



By: Steve Darlow and Dave Gilbert
Publisher: Script Books
Price: RRP £25

During WWII, RAF Bomber Command suffered

unprecedented casualty rates. Almost 30,000 headstones bear emotive and poignant epitaphs to these men. Chosen by their next of kin, they express in various ways the loss they felt.

Some families selected literary quotes, some wished to reflect the sacrifice made in defence of their country, and there were those who chose mild humour. Often the epitaph would mention the wife and children of the casualty, or the bereaved may have selected a phrase from the last letter they received from their loved one. Others found, in their hearts, their own words.

This book presents 100 such epitaphs, providing detail about the casualty and an insight into the words chosen for the inscriptions, offering a direct and sombre insight into the personal cost of war.

20% off for Association members at rafa.org.uk/darlow or by calling 01226 734 222 with discount code RAFA20. Valid until 30 September 2025.

WE'VE ALL LIFE BEFORE US



By: Caroline Cecil Bose
Publisher: Fonthill
Price: RRP £29.99

Twenty-five-year-old Bob Keddie died on

16 May 1942 when his Catalina flying boat disappeared over the Norwegian Sea. He had been

on a reconnaissance patrol for the protection of convoys carrying vital supplies to the Russians. No trace of him, his nine crew members or his aircraft was ever found.

For Diana, his young wife who was four months pregnant, the disappearance brought an abrupt and agonising end to a two-year love story. Innocent and intense, played out mostly in letters overflowing with tenderness and anticipation for a future free of war.

Based on personal letters, diaries, sketches and photographs, all previously unpublished, the book charts Bob's progression through every stage of RAF training during the Battle of Britain to his command of a Catalina flying boat, the revered 'aristocrat of the skies', at RAF Sullom Voe in the Shetlands.

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KAMIKAZE



By: Adrian Stewart
Publisher: Pen & Sword
Price: RRP £14.99

This book examines the Japanese concept of

Kamikaze, the deliberate self-sacrifice of life in the cause of victory. This attitude, while incomprehensible to their American and European enemies, has its roots in the samurai tradition of fighting for their master or nation regardless of personal safety.

By late 1944 the Japanese had already proved themselves fanatical but the actions of the Kamikaze Corps of pilots took matters to a new level. Allied forces were shocked to find themselves the subject of widespread

deliberate suicide attacks by pilots.

These continued during the invasion of the Philippines in early 1945 and reached a climax during the Battle of Okinawa from 1 April to June 1945. In total over 1,000 Kamikaze airmen perished.

The author's in-depth study of the historic and cultural reasons for this seemingly reckless courage is important and illuminating.

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IMPERIAL ENTANGLEMENTS: THE RAF IN FRENCH INDO-

CHINA 1945-46

Stuart Hadaway
Virtual lecture



The abrupt end of the war against Japan in

August 1945 caught the vast majority of the Allied forces in the Far East completely by surprise. Operations across South East Asia and the Pacific had to be rapidly abandoned or refocused, and forces and resources reallocated to fit the new strategic and political realities. This led to a myriad of ill-prepared and ad-hoc operations.

This talk focuses on the air elements, particularly the RAF's 908 Wing and 273 Squadron, who were tasked with supporting the Indian Army deployed to deal with the situation. Hampered by lack of intelligence and highly restrictive rules of engagement, the RAF struggled to adapt from a war-fighting stance to a new posture somewhere between Imperial policing and peace-keeping operations.

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