



Tally Ho!: From the Battle of Britain to the Defence of Darwin

Wing Commander R W Foster DFC AE

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Bob Foster is a well known figure at book and print signings in many parts of the UK. Although recognized as a Battle of Britain veteran, little is known of his life, or the details of his war service with the RAF. Persuaded to tell his story to air historian and well established aviation author Norman Franks, the result is a very readable account of his flying years.

These began shortly before WW2, when he learnt to fly with the RAFVR. Called up for war service in September 1939, he completed his training and was posted to 605 Squadron, equipped with Hawker Hurricanes. By early September 1940 he and his Squadron were in the thick of the air fighting over southern England, operating from Croydon.

Surviving the Battle, he later became an instructor, but shortly after joining 54 Squadron, which had Spitfires, he and this unit became part of a group sent out to Australia to help defend the Darwin area. Bob's squadron and two others, 452 and 457, engaged the Japanese incursions throughout 1943. Awarded the DFC for his efforts, he returned to the UK and was given an assignment with a RAF public relations outfit, ending up in Normandy within three weeks of the invasion of 1944.

Often serving right up in the front lines, Bob saw the war at very close hand, and then quite by chance became one of the first, if not the first RAF officer to enter Paris with the liberating French army, and again, by chance, was in General de Gaulle's triumphant procession down the Champs-Élysées.

His memoir is an entertaining collection of stories and reminiscences of two distinct areas of WW2, which also shows how luck often shaped the lives of the fighter pilots involved. Bob Foster later became a successful sales manager with Shell-Mex and BP, as well as serving with the Royal Auxiliary Air Force. He now lives with his wife Kaethe near Bexhill in East Sussex.

Norman Franks is a well-respected and world-renowned author and has over seventy-five books to his name. Author of *Jasta Boelcke*, *Ton-Up Lancers*, *Air Battle for Dunkirk* and *Frank 'Chota' Carey* he has also been co-author of many titles with distinguished fighter pilots such as *Neville Duke (War Diaries of Neville Duke)*, *Jimmy Sheddan (Tempest Pilot)* and *Paul Richey (Fighter Pilot's Summer)*. He lives with his wife Heather in East Sussex.

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