



Through Blue Skies to Hell: America's "Bloody 100th" in the Air War over Germany

Edward M. Sion

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This book provides a comprehensive look at air war over Europe during the climactic year of World War II, combining firsthand experience with expert analysis. The centerpiece is a mission-by-mission diary of 1st Lieutenant Richard R. Ayesh, bombardier on a B-17 Flying Fortress, who flew with the 100th Bombardment Group, 13th Combat Wing of the 8th Air Force—the legendary “Bloody 100th.” He received the Distinguished Flying Cross, Croix de Guerre and the Air Medal with Four Oak Leaf Clusters, amongst others.

This book follows Ayesh’s progress from his youth during the Great Depression in Wichita, Kansas, which was rapidly becoming the air capital of the nation, to his arrival in England as a Lieutenant in a bomber crew assigned to assault the Third Reich.

Once in Europe, the author provides a look at the principles of American daylight strategic bombing, while relaying the overall military situation on the ground and in the air just after D-Day. This work is uniquely self-contained and covers all aspects of Air War in a clear, concise, yet nontechnical manner. Topics include photo-reconnaissance, munitions and bomb types, aircraft characteristics, fighter and bomber tactics, bomber formations, strategic target selection, radars, countermeasures and counter-counter measures. The unaltered diary of Lt. Ayesh is presented mission-by-mission, punctuated by tragedy and heroism, with explanations and commentary of the significance of events and actions described en route. The result is one of the most frank and exciting works on the air war over Europe to date.

There is no varnishing of words in this book, instead, after Lt. Ayesh is followed on his perilous return home in U-boat infested waters, the book assesses the effectiveness of US strategy in ultimately paralyzing the Nazi war machine. Finally, the complex moral issues raised by area and city bombing are explored with 21st century implications.

EDWARD M. SION Ph.D. currently resides with his wife and two children in Radnor, PA

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