

Spitfire Girl: My Life in the Sky - The Extraordinary Story of a Female Fighter Pilot in World War II

Eileen Collins was born in 1922 in a small village in England. At the outbreak of war, she joined the Air Transport Auxiliary, a civilian organization that ferried aircraft from factories to airfields. In 1943, she was recruited into the Royal Air Force and became one of the first women to fly Spitfires, the iconic British fighter planes.

Spitfire Girl is the story of a remarkable woman who overcame prejudice and danger to live her dream of flying. Collins's memoir is a gripping account of her experiences as a female fighter pilot in World War II. She describes the challenges she faced, both from within the RAF and from the enemy. She also recounts her many successes, including her role in the D-Day landings.

Collins's story is an inspiration to anyone who has ever dreamed of achieving something great. It is a story of courage, determination, and perseverance.



Spitfire Girl: My Life in the Sky by Satya Nadella

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 2801 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
X-Ray	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 256 pages

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Early Life

Eileen Collins was born on May 26, 1922, in the village of Weston, Hertfordshire, England. Her father was a farmer and her mother was a schoolteacher. Collins had two older brothers and two younger sisters.

Collins was a tomboy from an early age. She loved to play outdoors and get dirty. She also loved to ride horses and motorcycles.

Collins's father was a strong believer in education. He encouraged his children to read and learn about the world around them. Collins attended Weston School, a small village school. She was a good student and enjoyed learning.

In 1939, when Collins was 17 years old, World War II broke out. Collins was devastated by the news. She wanted to do her part to help her country, but she was too young to join the military.

Air Transport Auxiliary

In 1941, when Collins was 19 years old, she joined the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA). The ATA was a civilian organization that ferried aircraft from factories to airfields.

Collins was one of the first women to join the ATA. She was initially assigned to fly small, single-engine aircraft. However, she quickly proved

herself to be a skilled pilot and was soon flying larger, more powerful aircraft.

Collins flew a variety of aircraft during her time with the ATA, including Spitfires, Hurricanes, and Mustangs. She also flew bombers and transport planes.

Collins's work with the ATA was dangerous. She often had to fly in bad weather and over enemy territory. However, she never lost an aircraft or crashed.

Royal Air Force

In 1943, Collins was recruited into the Royal Air Force (RAF). She was one of the first women to fly Spitfires, the iconic British fighter planes.

Collins served with the RAF for the rest of the war. She flew Spitfires on a variety of missions, including fighter sweeps, bomber escort missions, and ground attack missions.

Collins also participated in the D-Day landings. She flew a Spitfire over the beaches of Normandy on D-Day, providing air support for the Allied troops.

Collins's service with the RAF was distinguished. She was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) for her bravery and skill. She was also awarded the Air Medal for her outstanding service.

Post-War Career

After the war, Collins continued to fly. She flew for the RAF for several years and then became a commercial pilot. She flew for a variety of airlines, including British Airways and Pan American Airways.

Collins retired from flying in 1976. She spent her retirement years in Spain, where she enjoyed playing golf and painting.

Collins died in 2015 at the age of 93. She was one of the last surviving female fighter pilots from World War II.

Legacy

Eileen Collins was a pioneer for women in aviation. She was one of the first women to fly Spitfires and one of the first women to fly combat missions in World War II. Her story is an inspiration to anyone who has ever dreamed of achieving something great.

Collins's legacy lives on today. The Eileen Collins Scholarship Fund was established in her honor to help young women pursue careers in aviation. The fund has awarded scholarships to over 100 young women since its inception.

Collins's story is also told in the book "Spitfire Girl" by Katherine Sharp Landdeck. The book is a biography of Collins's life and her experiences as a female fighter pilot in World War II.

Collins was a remarkable woman who overcame prejudice and danger to live her dream of flying. Her story is an inspiration to us all.

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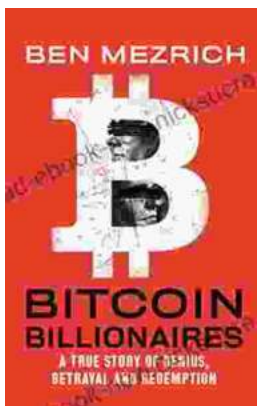
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