

# Spitfire strikes - a New Zealand fighter pilots story

## Murray - Spitfire



Description: -

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World War, 1939-1945 -- Aerial operations, New Zealand.

Spitfire (Fighter planes)

New Zealand. -- Royal New Zealand Air Force. Spitfire strikes - a

New Zealand fighter pilots story

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## Dawn of the Spitfire < skynet2550.us.to :: A Magazine for Aviators, Pilots and Adventurers

Perhaps the fairest assessment of what happened that September morning is to attribute it to the fog of war.

## Spitfire strikes a New Zealand fighter pilot's story

Above: Chester John Butcher, shown above well after the war as a Brigadier General. Both sides suffered heavy losses during the Battle of Britain — 544 pilots, which was about one in six, from RAF Fighter Command and 2,500 Luftwaffe airmen lost their lives.

## Aussies in the Battle of Britain; 'The Few'

An exceptional swimmer, Keefe struck out for the harbor entrance. I had two shocks in my life, these sort of shocks. P-38 pilots shot down more Japanese aircraft than any other fighter and, as a reconnaissance aircraft, obtained 90 percent of the aerial film captured over Europe.

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Many perished while awaiting rescue, as the shock to their system of hitting the cold water could lead to death.

## Aussies in the Battle of Britain; 'The Few'

A rescue force had been quickly organized while sections of Corsairs kept watch overhead to prevent Japanese attempts to capture Keefe. This deficiency was soon remedied by Houlton's flight commander, who sent Houlton off to fly his own Spitfire! American experience had shown, particularly with regard to fighter squadrons, that aircrews should remain in a combat area only for a short time if they were to remain effective.

## The Few

That just about sums up the male-dominated aviation establishment of 1939. The P-40s, and later Vought F4U Corsairs, were the backbone of the RNZAF.



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