

Robert and the War

By Rory Davidson

Robert woke to the sound of screaming Spitfire engines, the great Rolls Royce Merlin was powerfully lifting the planes off the ground to fight for Britain. He sat up stiffly, leapt up from his hard wooden bed and grabbed a tin can full of lumpy boiled beef. Robert stumbled around shivering in the cold while spooning the beef into his mouth, trying to ignore the horrible taste. He found his light green flying suit and sprinted out of the shelter holding his goggles in one muscular hand.

Robert stepped out on to the deafening airfield and met John, his gun man. John was excited about this day because it was the day of an assault! Today they would fly above the German lines dropping tons of bombs like they were just little drops of rain. Robert's mission was to protect the bombers. He knew it was going to be hard, but he kept saying to himself, "I can do it. I can do it!" Robert was the leader of this assault. Friends had been lost through these many months of flying Spitfires and Hurricanes and every time Robert flew over to Germany he would always see his friend's plane buried in the soggy mud. The plane belonged to Stanley. It would have a black and blue square as he knew it was Stanley's favourite colours and shape. He missed Stanley more than ever and he wished he was there to be with him today. Robert hopped into the cockpit of his Spitfire, named Hunter. Breathing deeply, he pushed the throttle forward and in seconds they were whizzing down the runway!

A few hours later Robert and John were looking down at the large dirty field filled with bomb craters and barbed wire. About a mile further on Robert could see the remains of his friends, the ones that he had made during the war and also his good friends, the ones who had been loyal and had stuck with him since his childhood. He stared at their planes smoking down below on the wet ground. Fighting back the urge to cry, he pushed the throttle further.

Concentrating hard on the steering, they reached the dreaded German lines. Robert and John took a deep breath and shouted, "Open fire on those anti-aircraft guns!"

John did what he was told and swiftly aimed the gun and let the bullets fly. They could feel the vibrations. It felt like they were on a bouncy fairground ride bumping all over the place. Suddenly the Luftwaffe came out of the sky. Robert could see the daring Messerschmitts, the lethal guns targeting every one of the British spitfires and hurricanes. The Luftwaffe was the highly experienced German Air Force! Each one of the planes had targeted an enemy plane already. It was chaos. Robert started to sweat. The terrifying sound of bullets rang in his ears. BANG! A bomber had been shot down. Robert gripped the steering stick tightly and looked over his shoulder. John was dead. Another shot, he knew he was being followed. As quick as a cheetah he twisted around and flew through clouds, trying to shake his pursuer off. Robert went back into the devastating chaos and, to his horror, saw that every British bombers had been shot down. He knew he had no alternative but to use his radio and call the assault off.

Robert's commanding officer was pacing up and down the main hanger, his head low. Robert knew what was coming: he was going to be punished for not looking after the bombers and failing to keep the formation right. It was probably going to be scrubbing all the officer's boots again or cleaning the officer's toilets as all of his other mates who had done something wrong had suffered one of these

punishments. Robert was sulking and inside he felt so angry; it was like he was a bull that had seen too much of the colour red.

One hour later, after Robert had scrubbed the officer's boots until they sparkled, he was lying on his bed waiting for the bland meal to come. He sat around watching half the other soldiers on stretchers with either a limb blown off or just lying there, dead. He got up and wandered over to his plane. The green paint was peeled off and various bullet holes covered the fuselage.

The next day a different set of pilots were in the planes and Robert was in a Lancaster bomber. Robert helped load the bombs that were each the weight of an elephant! There were about 75 tons of explosives in the bomber and if one of them was hit there would be a massive explosion. Robert shuddered at the thought of this.

Sitting on the runway, Robert thought about his family and his younger brother who was an evacuee. The runway was cleared and he was ready to fly. Robert pushed the throttle forward and he was off the ground.

Once they reached the German lines Robert was swarmed by Hurricanes all around him protecting the vital bombs. Everyone knew the German Luftwaffe would pop out of somewhere, it was just a matter of time before it did. There, Robert caught a glimpse of the plane. He knew it would dart out of the cloud once he reached it. Suddenly the anti-aircraft guns started up and the RAF burst into action. Bullets were sprayed everywhere, but they kept formation and they drove on.

Half an hour later they reached the battlefield from above, it looked like tiny toy soldiers were fighting and miniature tanks were throwing bombshells at the British. But Robert knew it was all real and just as terrifying up here. Now they were hovering over the German position, Robert hesitated ... did he really want to kill all those people down there? He had no choice, he pushed the big, red button and let the bombs go. It was madness below their as men screamed in pain and tanks turned from strong and powerful to wrecked and useless.

Smiling Robert returned to a cheering hangar where there was chocolate and drinks for all. That night a gathering took place and everyone sat around a huge table smoking cigarettes and talking.

Commander Thompson stood up and looked into the starry sky as he congratulated his men. Seconds later everyone was standing listening to the sky and now everyone could hear it. It was the sound of ... German fighter planes! Suddenly the ground was shaken by the heavy bombing of the Germans and Robert was taken off balance. He leapt on to his weary legs and started to sprint. BOOM! A bomb exploded right in his path! Pieces of the hangar flew towards him one splitting into his arm. Robert tried to ignore the pain, but it was too sore. He stumbled to his feet and was horrified to see that ... his arm had been torn right off! He sat down clutching his bleeding shoulder, another piece of the broken hanger came hurtling towards him and slammed right into Robert's forehead! The world turned black and that was the last thing Robert remembered before passing out.