

AIR CLASSICS

VOLUME 13, NUMBER 3 MARCH/1977

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COVER: New Zealand Mustang breaks away from Ben Harrison's camera plane. (J. Larsen)

INSIDE REAR COVER: One of the last designs from the famous firm of Miles was the Balliol trainer powered by a Rolls-Royce Merlin. Note the typical Miles features such as the windshield and inverted gull wing.

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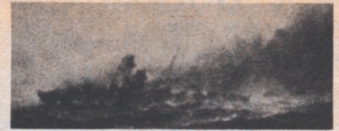
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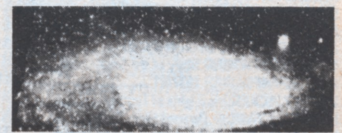
On 0600, May 24, 1941, a Black Monster loomed out of the fog. It was Bismarck, the Biggest Battleship in the world. In only 2 minutes, the mighty Battle Cruiser Hood disintegrated under one broadside while the Prince of Wales was driven off badly wounded! Could anything STOP her now? **Raiders of the North—** (\$12.95), is proudly presented in its revised 3rd edition. All of the British and German ships (and French Battle Cruisers) used during the entire war, including the Scharnhorst, Graf Spee, U-Boats, Carriers, Disguised Commerce Raiders, in an accurate historical portrayal of every Naval battle of WW II! Every ship with exact strength and data. YOU are in command! Could you change history?

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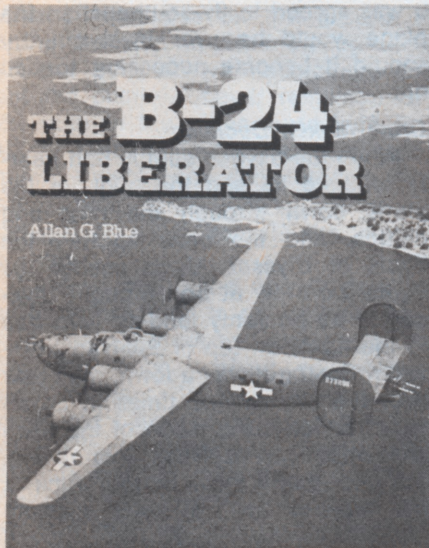
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Allan G. Blue

THE B-24 LIBERATOR

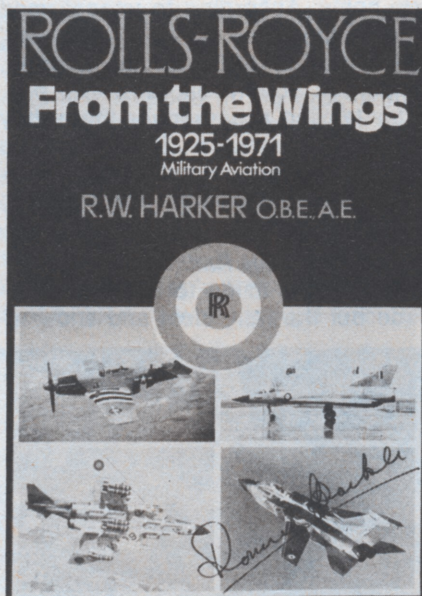
Ian Allan, England

\$10.00

No more than a handful of people had seen or heard of the Consolidated Liberator before December 1941 and by December 1945—only four years later—it had virtually passed unmentioned into history. Yet, in that brief span of time, it had been produced in the thousands, had borne tens of thousands into the skies and had been seen there by millions of people in every part of the world. Depending upon when you listened, during those epic four years, you could have heard that the Liberator was the white hope of the Allied Air Forces, a killer ship that pilots were scared to death of, a superb and versatile weapon unmatched in the Allies' air arsenal, or a hard-to-handle, underpowered and over-rated flying bomb. In reality and at times it was all of these and more.

In this book aviation writer Allan Blue has produced a carefully researched and heavily illustrated study of the multifarious Liberator variants and how they came to be developed—the technical and operational reasoning which lay behind each change in configuration and armament.

This fascinating history of a remarkable aircraft is probably the most detailed available to date. It is an essential addition to the library of the aviation historian. Review copy courtesy of Airline Publications and Sales.



R.W. Harker

ROLLS-ROYCE FROM THE WINGS 1925-71 MILITARY AVIATION

Oxford Illustrated Press, England

\$10.00

Ronnie Harker served Rolls-Royce from 1925-1971, forty-five years of unparalleled advance in technology and performance in aviation. The author and his contemporaries in engineering and aircraft design were involved with pre-war re-armament, war-time development, and post-war advance into the jet and V/STOL era, and supersonics.

The narrative describes the vital part that Rolls-Royce played in the development of military aircraft in World War Two; how a most successful family of aero engines evolved from the Kestrel to become the "R" engine which won the Schneider Trophy for Britain and the Merlin

engine which powered all the British fighters in the Battle of Britain, and also the Lancaster, Halifax and Mosquito bombers. Probably the most significant personal contribution made by the author at this time was his realisation that the Merlin engine should be installed into the Mustang fighter. The Merlin Mustang fighter became the most successful all-purpose fighter of the War and effectively turned the tide of the War in our favor.

When the War ended, a very serious slump in aircraft production was averted by the emergence of the jet engine, pioneered by Sir Frank Whittle and Rolls-Royce. The RAF had to be re-equipped and Rolls-Royce soon established a valuable export market in America and France (and inadvertently the USSR!). A civil market too was opened up and keen competition soon materialised with the US engine makers, who, by taking licences from Rolls-Royce, had quickly learned the necessary technology to produce them.

An insight is revealed into the tough battle for the military market of 1956 to the present day, when one gradually learned that the days of producing the best possible engine/plane combination for a direct operational requirement were over and that decisions were becoming complicated by economic, commercial and political pressures and by government policy. In spite of this, successes were achieved; those described include the Spey Phantom, the VTOL Mirage, and the LTV Corsair.

The final triumph, and tragically, the final downfall of the Company, was the production of the large fan engine, the RB-211 for the wide-bodied airliners. Towards the end of the author's career, the civil side had been absorbing increasing amounts of development and production time and money—often at the expense of military requirements—and the RB-211 engine finally sent the company into bankruptcy at a time when the military side had won the order for the RB-199 engine for the European MRCA, and the Olympus engine was