



'What did I think of the Spitfire? Every single one was different, with her own characteristics and foibles; if your own was unserviceable and you took somebody else's, you could feel the difference at once. During the war I never wanted to operate in any other type of aircraft; the Spitfire was a darling little aeroplane.'

Flight Lieutenant Raymond Baxter,
No 602 Squadron RAF, Spitfire pilot, TV presenter and commentator

Chapter Four

The pilot's view



From the time it entered service, the Spitfire gained a solid reputation as a pilot's aeroplane. With a skilled pilot at the controls, it could perform with all the subtlety and sureness of touch of a prima ballerina. At the other extreme, handled by inexperienced pilots who lacked the training or the flying hours to know better, it would stoically accept all manner of indignities yet still bring them safely home. The purpose of this Chapter is to put the reader 'in the cockpit', to get the feel of what it was like to fly the aircraft both in war and in peace.

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