



An Expendable Squadron: The Story of 217 Squadron, Coastal Command, 1939-1945

Roy Conyers Nesbit

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Roy Nesbit's highly illustrated history of Coastal Command's 217 Squadron – the squadron in which he served – gives a first-hand insight into the hazardous low-level missions the squadron flew against enemy shipping and ports during the Second World War. He chronicles the squadron's operations from the outbreak of war when it patrolled in Avro Ansons over the Western Approaches to the English Channel. Then came the most intense period of its wartime career when, flying Beauforts, it concentrated on minelaying and attacks on shipping along the west coast of German-occupied France. It also mounted daring raids on huge U-boat bunkers and other enemy installations. The story of these dangerous operations, in which many aircraft were lost and airmen were killed, makes up the most memorable section of the narrative. But Roy Nesbit takes the squadron's story right through to the later years of the war when, after a short and even more dangerous period flying from Malta in order to sink enemy shipping in the Mediterranean, it was based in Ceylon and was re-equipped with Beaufighters for the battle against the Japanese. In addition to telling the story of the squadron and the men who served in it, the narrative describes the conditions endured by the French people in the ports 217 attacked, and it covers the raids launched against German coastal bases after the squadron had moved to the Far East. An Expendable Squadron will be absorbing reading for anyone who has a special interest in the history of Coastal Command, in the aircraft 217 Squadron flew, and in the experience of combat flying seventy years ago.

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