

# The Extraordinary Story of John Freeborn DFC: From Humble Beginnings to Extraordinary Valour



## Tiger Cub: A 74 Squadron Fighter Pilot in WWII: The Story of John Freeborn DFC\* by Alison Colwell

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

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John Freeborn was born in the small farming community of Great Gidding, Huntingdonshire, England, on May 12, 1918. His parents were farmers, and young John grew up surrounded by the rolling countryside and the simple yet demanding life of rural England.

From an early age, John displayed a keen interest in aviation. He would often spend hours gazing up at the sky, watching the birds soar and the occasional airplane pass overhead. As he grew older, his fascination with flying only intensified.

In 1936, at the age of 18, John joined the Royal Air Force. He quickly proved to be a talented pilot, and after completing his training, he was

assigned to the No. 56 Squadron, flying Hawker Hurricanes.

When the Second World War broke out in 1939, John Freeborn was one of the first pilots to be called into action. He flew in the Battle of Britain, where he quickly earned a reputation as a skilled and courageous fighter pilot.

On one fateful day in August 1940, John Freeborn's Hurricane was shot down over the English Channel. He managed to bail out of the aircraft and landed in the sea. He was eventually rescued by a British destroyer and returned to base.

Despite his brush with death, John Freeborn remained determined to continue fighting for his country. He was soon back in the air, flying Spitfires and Hurricanes. He went on to achieve remarkable success, shooting down numerous enemy aircraft.

In recognition of his bravery and skill, John Freeborn was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC). He was also promoted to the rank of Squadron Leader and given command of the No. 303 Squadron, a Polish fighter squadron.

John Freeborn continued to fly throughout the war, and by the end of the conflict, he had flown over 300 operational sorties. He had shot down 21 enemy aircraft and was one of the most successful fighter pilots of the Second World War.

After the war, John Freeborn remained in the Royal Air Force, serving in various roles until his retirement in 1963. He then worked as a civilian pilot and flight instructor.

John Freeborn passed away in 2014 at the age of 96. He was a highly decorated war hero and a true aviation legend. His story is an inspiration to all who dream of achieving great things.

## **Legacy and Recognition**

John Freeborn's legacy lives on today. He is remembered as one of the most successful fighter pilots of the Second World War. His bravery and skill were instrumental in helping to secure victory for the Allies.

In recognition of his achievements, John Freeborn was awarded the following decorations:

- Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC)
- Distinguished Flying Medal (DFM)
- 1939-1945 Star
- Air Crew Europe Star
- Defence Medal
- War Medal 1939-1945

In addition, John Freeborn was inducted into the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators in 1946. He was also awarded the Freedom of the Borough of Huntingdon and Godmanchester in 1997.

## **Image Gallery**





John Freeborn DFC standing next to a Spitfire



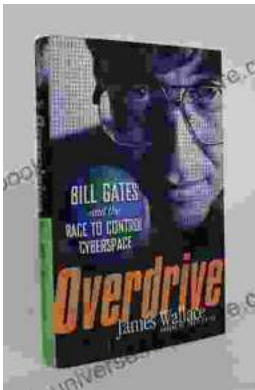
John Freeborn DFC was a true hero of the Second World War. His bravery, skill, and determination were instrumental in helping to secure victory for the Allies. He is an inspiration to all who dream of achieving great things.

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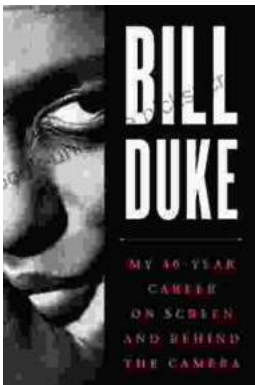


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