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Flying Against Fate: Superstition And Allied Aircrews In World War II.

By Mackenzie, S. P.

University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, 2017. Hardcover. Condition: New. 264 pages. Hardcover with dustjacket. New book. WORLD WAR II. During World War II, Allied casualty rates in the air were high. Of the roughly 125,000 who served as aircrew with Bomber Command, 59,423 were killed or missing and presumed killed—a fatality rate of 45.5%. With odds like that, it would be no surprise if there were as few atheists in cockpits as there were in foxholes; and indeed, many airmen faced their dangerous missions with beliefs and rituals ranging from the traditional to the outlandish. Military historian S. P. MacKenzie considers this phenomenon in *Flying against Fate*, a pioneering study of the important role that superstition played in combat flier morale among the Allies in World War II. Mining a wealth of documents as well as a trove of published and unpublished memoirs and diaries, MacKenzie examines the myriad forms combat fliers' superstitions assumed, from jinxes to premonitions. Most commonly, airmen carried amulets or talismans—lucky boots or a stuffed toy; a coin whose year numbers added up to thirteen; counterintuitively, a boomerang. Some performed rituals or avoided other acts, e.g., having a photo taken before a flight. Whatever seemed to...



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