



In Hostile Skies: An American B-24 Pilot in World War II (North Texas Military Biography and Memoir Series)

James M. Davis

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James “Jim” Davis lived what he considered “an impossible dream” as he piloted a B-24, as part of the 8th Air Force, on nearly thirty missions in the European Theatre during World War II. In this memoir, Davis offers heart-wrenching detail concerning the difficulties of qualifying for the U.S. Army Air Forces pilot program, the strenuous nature of the pilot training program, the anxiety caused by a wartime marriage, and the dangers of flying combat missions over Nazi Germany. Few, if any, other memoirs provide the genuineness and honesty of his story. From his struggles to become a pilot, to seeing death up close on his first mission, to his expected deployment to the Pacific Theatre in the fall of 1945, Davis takes the reader through a fast-paced and exciting narrative adventure. Davis and his crew flew support missions for Operations Cobra and Market Garden and numerous bombing missions over occupied Europe in the summer and fall of 1944. He piloted his B-24 on missions over twenty German cities, including Cologne, Hamburg, Metz, and Munich, and attacked enemy airfields, airplane factories, railroad marshalling yards, ship yards, oil refineries, and chemical plants. While he and his crew survived without serious injuries, they witnessed the destruction of many of their friends’ planes and experienced serious damage to their own plane on several occasions. Readers of his memoir will come away with a much greater appreciation for the difficulties and dangers of the air war in World War II. David Snead happened upon the memoir and its author during his time at Texas Tech University. He was immediately hooked and began the process of preparing it for publication. Snead met with Davis on several occasions, examined his military records, researched in detail at the National Archives, and investigated numerous published sources in order to corroborate the account and add explanatory notes for context.



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