

Whirlwind: Westland's Enigmatic Fighter by Niall Corduroy

The Westland Whirlwind was a British twin-engine, two-seat fighter aircraft that served with the Royal Air Force (RAF) during World War II. It was a unique and enigmatic aircraft, with a distinctive twin-boom design and a powerful armament of four 20 mm cannons. Despite its promising performance, the Whirlwind was produced in limited numbers and saw only limited operational service.

The Whirlwind was designed by Westland Aircraft in response to Air Ministry Specification F.18/37, which called for a fast, heavily armed fighter with a maximum speed of 400 mph (640 km/h). Westland's design team, led by W. E. W. Petter, came up with a radical design that featured a twin-boom layout with a central nacelle housing the pilot and gunner. The twin booms housed the engines and fuel tanks, and were joined by a short center section that carried the armament.

The Whirlwind's twin-boom design offered several advantages. It gave the aircraft a high degree of maneuverability, as the booms could be moved independently of each other. It also allowed for a clean and efficient aerodynamic shape, with minimal drag. However, the twin-boom design also had some drawbacks. It made the aircraft more difficult to control, and it limited the pilot's field of view.

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★★★★☆ 4.1 out of 5

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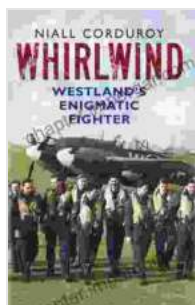
The Whirlwind was powered by two Rolls-Royce Peregrine engines, each producing 2,035 horsepower (1,518 kW). These engines gave the Whirlwind a top speed of 408 mph (657 km/h) at 19,000 feet (5,800 m). The Whirlwind was also heavily armed, with four 20 mm cannons mounted in the nose. These cannons gave the Whirlwind a powerful firepower that was comparable to that of the Hawker Hurricane and Supermarine Spitfire.

The Whirlwind entered service with the RAF in 1941. It was initially used as a night fighter, but it was later converted to a day fighter role. The Whirlwind was a successful fighter, and it quickly gained a reputation as a formidable opponent. It was particularly effective against German bombers, and it was credited with shooting down several enemy aircraft.

However, the Whirlwind's production was limited by a number of factors. The aircraft was complex and expensive to build, and it was also difficult to maintain. In addition, the RAF had a number of other successful fighters in production, such as the Hurricane and Spitfire, which were more readily available and easier to operate. As a result, only 115 Whirlwinds were built, and only a small number of these aircraft saw combat.

The Westland Whirlwind was a unique and enigmatic aircraft that never reached its full potential. It was a powerful and maneuverable fighter, but it was also complex and expensive to build. As a result, it was produced in limited numbers and saw only limited operational service. However, the Whirlwind remains a fascinating aircraft that is still studied and admired today.

In his book, **Whirlwind: Westland's Enigmatic Fighter**, Niall Corduroy provides a comprehensive history of the aircraft, from its design and development to its operational history. The book is illustrated with numerous photographs and diagrams, and it includes first-hand accounts from pilots who flew the Whirlwind in combat. **Whirlwind: Westland's Enigmatic Fighter** is the definitive work on this fascinating aircraft, and it is a must-read for anyone interested in the history of aviation.



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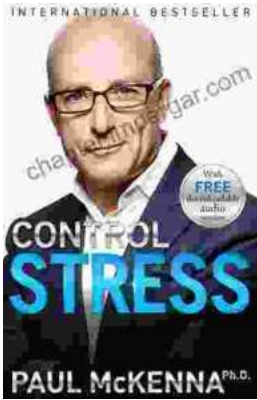
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