



# **Flying Among Heroes: The Story of Squadron Leader T C S Cooke DFC AFC DFM AE**

*Norman Franks, Simon Muggleton*

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T C S Cooke joined the RAF as war began in 1939, aged 18, and trained to be a bomber pilot. Rising to the rank of squadron leader and decorated three times, Cooke bombed Berlin on 7 October 1940 in a Whitley Mk V, nearly ditching in the North Sea. Throughout this tour he faced the usual dangers of wartime aircrew, his aircraft being hit by AA fire on several occasions, once almost having to order his aircrew to bail out but landed safely at the last minute. They were also attacked by night fighters, encountered icing and even shot up a train and bomber station at tree-top level. Flying Wellingtons and Stirlings, Cooke took part in the infamous 1,000-bomber raid on Cologne and Essen, before returning to operations flying Special Ops Halifax aircraft, dropping agents into enemy-occupied France. After a dozen missions, he was shot down but he and his navigator survived and evaded capture. Helped by the French resistance, they got into Spain and returned home via Gibraltar. Both men received the DFC for their bravery. While their story is not totally unique, their adventures and courage make this tale akin to an adventure novel.

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