



Perilous Moon : Occupied France, 1944 - the End Game

Stuart Nimmo



The detail in the book, including scores of photos and maps, is remarkable. What a story he had to tell. And what a story his son Stuart has written. - Arnie Wilson Huffington Post Perilous Moon is a lavishly illustrated book that observes Occupied France during World War II through the eyes of British bomber pilot Neil Nimmo and newly discovered period photographs. Shot down by Luftwaffe nightfighter pilot Helmut Bergmann, Nimmo and his crew were the Germans sixth of seven victims in 46 minutes. With seven wrecked Lancasters and 38 Allied airmen killed, Bergmann had singlehandedly turned what should have been a relatively simple RAF raid into a life-long nightmare. With barely time to parachute from Q-Queenie, his stricken Lancaster, Neil Nimmos unholy adventure had only just begun. Unusually, Perilous Moon follows both pilots, Nimmo and Bergmann, through the war after that April night, and continues to observe them as the Occupation of France comes to a sticky end. Three weeks after landing on a ploughed field between Amiens and Abbeville, Neil Nimmo was in Paris, the endlessly mysterious Nazi-occupied French capital. Seething with Nazis and intrigue, the beautiful city remained remarkably unscathed, but steeped in political and moral ambiguity. Alongside the occupying forces, the Gestapo and French collaborators, Paris held its share of remarkably brave, often-fearless Resistance workers. But for the moment, average Parisian life would go on, stubborn French individualism triumphing over politics, and hardship met by resignation or stiff resolve. This odd normality wouldnt last once D-Day came, and after it became clear the desperate Allied gamble had worked, the Germans were caught wrong-footed, and both the Luftwaffe and Wehrmacht supply lines were failing. When the Allies broke out from their beachheads and raced south to Paris, many French changed sides or swayed yet further in the Allies favour. Toward the end, as France became a bloody battlefield, with it came intrigue, score-settling and murder. As the tide turned Neil Nimmo was close to it all-things had changed, the previously reluctant and confirmed collaborator now found his stance a dangerous liability, and an evading Allied airman was now an invaluable and possibly life-saving asset. In the late 1980s Neil Nimmo fell ill and is no longer with us, but in Perilous Moon his son Stuart Nimmo, a Paris based documentary maker, closely chronicles the period with over 200 original, previously hidden photographs. This unusual, fascinating book cuts through the fog that shrouded the Occupation, and which continued to linger for decades to come.

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