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Doorknob Five Two



Synopsis

DOORKNOB FIVE TWO is the story of the coming of age of a young man, as seen against a backdrop of World War II. With unusual emotional power and artistic sensibility, Fredric Arnold renders an extraordinary account of his personal experiences as a fighter pilot in combat, recording events with the authenticity of an eye witness. As the story unfolds, we accompany him in the cockpit of his fighter plane, sharing the beauty and wonder of flying as he engages the enemy in aerial combat and is himself shot down. We live as he lived — exposed to the primitive emotions of sex and war, while bound to his ancient heritage and ever-present influence of his father. A crash in the Sahara, rescue by nomadic tribesmen, capture by the Germans — we are firsthand observers to his terrifying escape and will to survive. There is nothing more intensely haunting than the truth. Nor is it merely a war memoir. Rather, it is a dramatic insight into the horror of war and a testament to the power of family love.

Book Information

Paperback: 274 pages

Publisher: S E Maxwell Pub Co (March 1984)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0914961004

ISBN-13: 978-0914961000

Package Dimensions: 8.5 x 5.8 x 1.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 22 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

Doorknob Five Two describes the ironies of battling discrimination on the ground and Messerschmitts in the air. -- New York Times
Doorknob Five Two is one hell of a book! I never put it down. It's going to do a lot of good and we need a lot of good done these days. -- Barry Goldwater, U.S. Senator
Doorknob Five Two is recommended reading by the United States Air Force Academy. It has a veracity and intensity that convinces. -- US Air Force Academy
Doorknob Five Two, better than anything ever written, it tells how, in those early day in Algeria, we were all learning the job on

the job. -- General James "Jimmy" DoolittleBest book by a World War II fighter pilot. It has a place of honor in my bookshelf. I will read it again and again. -- Col. Erich Hartmann, Luftwaffe, World's Top AceBest book by a combat fighter pilot since Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. -- Thomas Lanphier, the Adm. Yamamoto missionGreat pilot, great author, great guy -- Capt. R.T. Smith, Flying Tiger Ace.It is not often that I read a book cover to cover in one day. However, that is exactly what I did with DOORKNOB FIVE TWO. Adjectives such as thrilling, gripping, and fascinating seem so inadequate to describe this graphic depiction of life as a World War II fighter pilot. The story is courageous yet poignant; entertaining yet provocative - a must for anyone interested in the history of our twentieth century. -- Warren Rudman, U.S. SenatorSuch forthright expression of fear, doubts and human feelings gives this autobiography guts of its own. The action is gripping and well-written. -- Los Angeles Times

Was told by a friend that I would enjoy this novel about a P-38 pilot. Over the years I have read many WW II books and had many of the veterans speak with my students about their experiences. Since Arnold lives in CA and he they will not meet him personally, I can have them read the book and watch the pilot on the DVD that was nominated for best documentary in 2003. It was difficult to put the book down and finished it in three days. Well worth the time and thank you Major Arnold and all the WW II veterans for serving our country

I thought the book was well written but I expected more of the dialogue to touch on actual combat missions and not the author's personal struggles with a fellow pilot. Given the author flew 50 combat missions, reading the story I felt he really only mentioned less than 10 so from that point of view I was disappointed.

fantastic read....don't believe the negative B.S. you'll read on line about the author....if you do enough research on some of his claims you'll find some very surprising answers.....keep in mind he wrote the book decades after being in WWII and before the ability to "Google" and actually find evidence of the other pilots

I actually met the author before I read his book. I was so amazed and intrigued after speaking with him I was elated to stumble upon his book. It did not disappoint, it is an incredible glimpse into the life of a WWII fighter pilot. I've already purchased the kindle version but I am going to order the hardcover as well. I am certain I'll read it again.

This an excellent account of a few months in the spring and summer of 1943 in Northern African theater. The author flew p38's with the 71st squadron and tells it like it was.

I read my first military book sometime around the 6th grade, inspired by mock air attacks on our little desert town of El Centro, California. Corsair fighters stationed at the Naval Air Station in Seeley swooped and buzzed the town for several minutes and had children all over town running out into the streets to see what was happening. I'll never forget the one who singled me out. He pointed his nose right at me and did not pull up until he was about fifty feet over my head. I'll also never forget that distinctive gull wing of the plane and the smile on the pilot's face. It was close to the end of the Korean War and we were all dutifully ducking and covering to the regular sound of nuclear attack warnings. From that point on, I could not get enough of air combat histories, vowing that one day I would join their ranks to do my duty. I ended up reading hundreds of them, including both fictional and non-fiction historical books. At some point, I began to realize that all of the stories were being written by American and British authors, and wondered when we would start hearing from our old enemies. Finally, Adolph Galland, Eric Hartman and numerous other German WWII pilots began to stand up to tell their own stories. Then, Japanese pilots decided to break the rules and tell of their own experiences. Finally, one man, Tameichi Hara, wrote what I consider the best non-fiction account of the Pacific war and the Japanese navy's actions during the conflict. He had fought in virtually every naval battle in the South Pacific as captain of the destroyer, "Shigure;" the man who invented modern torpedo doctrine, and somehow managed to survive. All this humanized the enemy to me, and brought me to understand that no matter what politicians have to say during wartime, there will always be another side. Often times, we are victims of our own internal views, such as those inflicted on Fred Arnold by men trained to hate, usually for reasons even they do not understand. We see a little of that now as a retired officer or two in the Air Force take offense at a combat veteran turning his own experiences into a novel, a work of fiction that incorporates a few of the experiences of others in order to make the story come alive. I heard no complaints from the author of "Flight of the Intruder," who having been an naval aviator created a masterpiece of fiction about the Vietnam War. As long as the work is described and explained as fiction, including the heroism of others, it is just fine. My dream of becoming a fighter pilot never came to fruition. I became a police officer, then a probation officer, a lawyer, juvenile court referee, a writing instructor and finally retired to write novels. I now have four, the last one, "Charming Billy," a mixture of romance and air combat during the Battle of Britain. I have a pilot's license and so was able to write

effectively about flight and the nature of that battle. I think that is what Fred Arnold has done, very well I might add. He has put it all down on paper before the memories drift away. I give this novel five stars regardless of some of the formatting errors that were present in the Kindle version. At the time Mr. Arnold wrote it, the software was not up to the task of catching and correcting them.

Wrap-around errors were common, as were uncaught typos. People should hire professionals to do this work and not attempt to edit them by themselves. There are now many very good companies who will do this for writers and I encourage all take advantage of their skills. My last novel was edited and uploaded by an Australian lady, Patti Roberts of Queensland. Her skill at creating beautiful book covers is unsurpassed and her pricing is outstanding. To see my novel, go to and search the book section for "Gerald Lane Summers."

Intense real life personal story of being a young pilot in WW2. Easy read. Could not put the book down.

I purchased this book for my husband. I bought the a lithograph signed by all the crew and noticed there was a book by one of the plane's crew - Door Knob Five Two. Ordered it and was so happy that it came before the scheduled date and was in such great condition. My husband stayed up all night reading the book and now it will be included with the lithograph for future generations to enjoy. Excellent service.

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