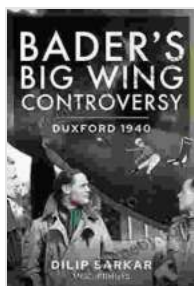


Unveiling the Bader Big Wing Controversy: Duxford 1940

In the annals of aviation history, the Battle of Britain stands as a pivotal moment. It was during this epic struggle that the Royal Air Force (RAF) valiantly defended the skies of Great Britain against the relentless onslaught of the German Luftwaffe. At the heart of this conflict lay a controversial plan known as the "Bader Big Wing," which ignited a heated debate within the RAF's high command.



Bader's Big Wing Controversy: Duxford 1940 by Dilip Sarkar

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 9206 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 294 pages



The Origins of the Bader Big Wing

The concept of the Bader Big Wing emerged during the early stages of the Battle of Britain. Wing Commander Douglas Bader, a legendary fighter pilot who had lost both legs in a pre-war flying accident, proposed the formation of a large, centralized force of Hurricanes and Spitfires. Bader believed that such a force would be more effective in countering the Luftwaffe's massed bombing raids than the RAF's existing system of dispersed squadrons.

Trafford Leigh-Mallory's Opposition

Bader's plan met with strong resistance from Air Vice-Marshal Trafford Leigh-Mallory, the commander of Fighter Command. Leigh-Mallory argued that a centralized force would be vulnerable to attack and would not be able to respond quickly enough to defend against localized threats. He also believed that dispersal provided greater resilience to the RAF's fighter force.

The Duxford Meeting

On August 13, 1940, a meeting was held at RAF Duxford to discuss the Bader Big Wing proposal. In attendance were Bader, Leigh-Mallory, and Air Chief Marshal Hugh Dowding, the commander-in-chief of Fighter Command. The meeting was heated, with both sides passionately defending their positions.

Ultimately, Dowding sided with Leigh-Mallory and rejected Bader's plan. However, the debate had a significant impact on the RAF's strategy in the Battle of Britain. The RAF adopted a more flexible approach to fighter deployment, combining centralized control with local flexibility.

The Legacy of the Bader Big Wing Controversy

The Bader Big Wing Controversy remains a subject of debate among historians and aviation enthusiasts. Some argue that Bader's plan was visionary and could have significantly altered the course of the Battle of Britain. Others maintain that Leigh-Mallory's decision was sound and that dispersal proved to be the key to the RAF's ultimate victory.

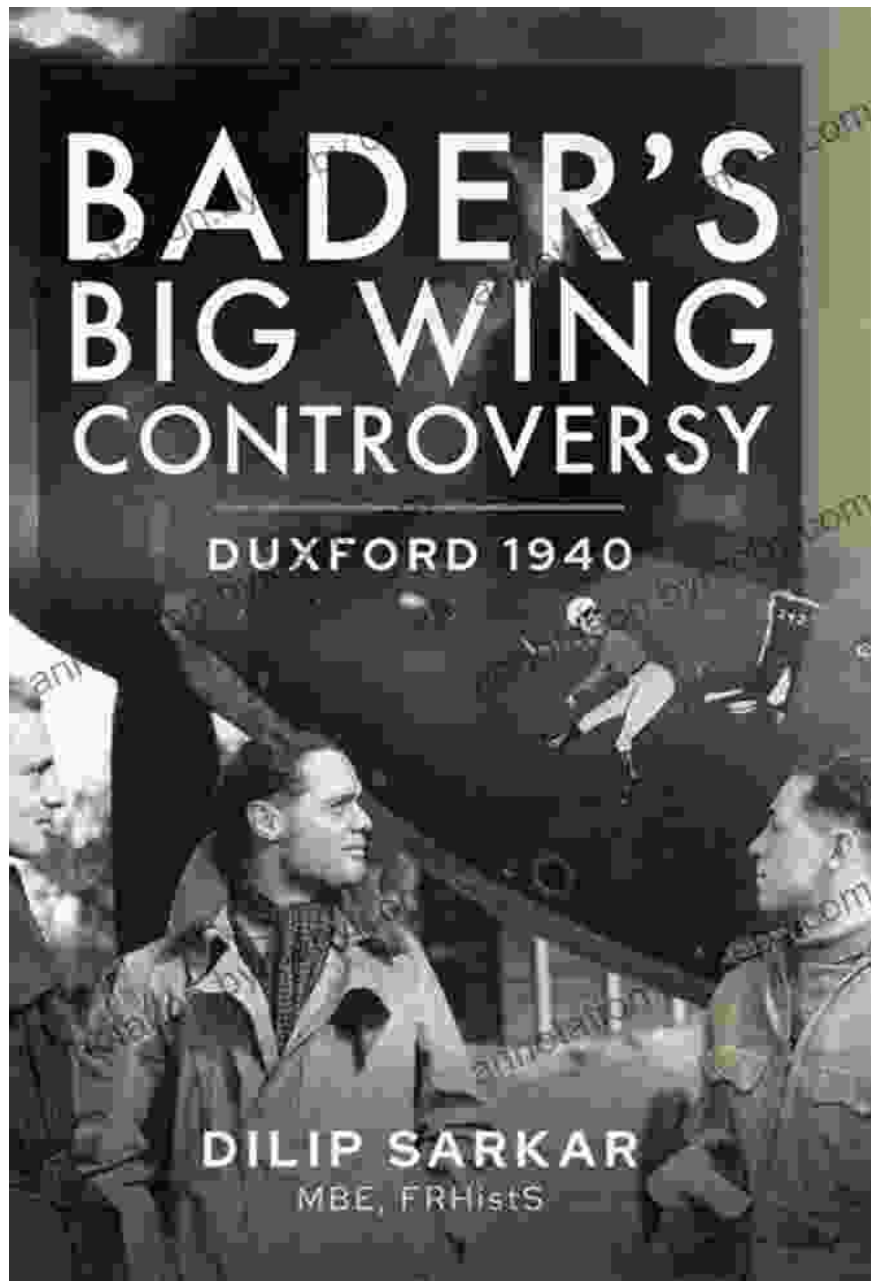
Regardless of the outcome, the Bader Big Wing Controversy is a fascinating chapter in aviation history. It highlights the challenges and

complexities of decision-making in the midst of war, as well as the extraordinary leadership of men like Douglas Bader and Trafford Leigh-Mallory.

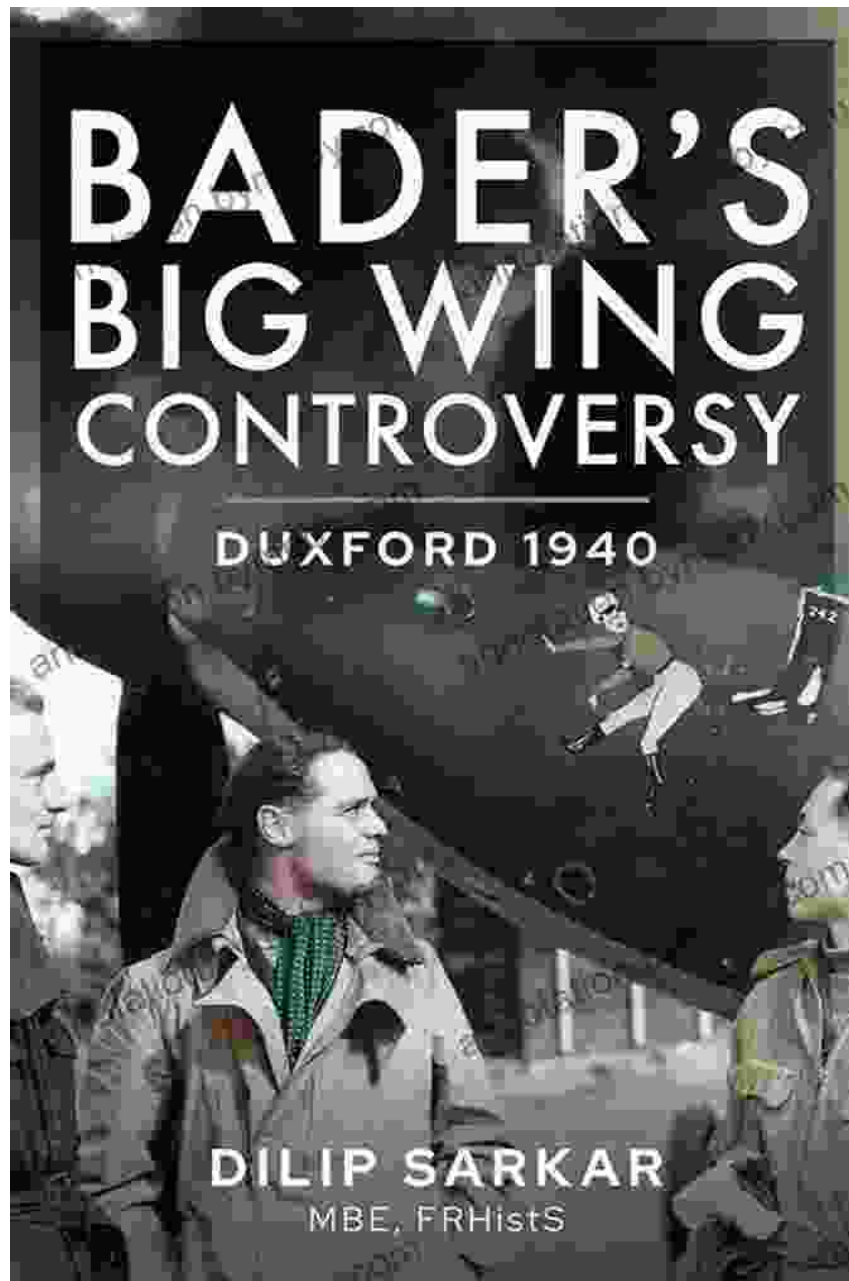
Additional Resources

- [History of RAF Fighter Command During the Battle of Britain](#)
- [The Great Fighter Controversy of the Battle of Britain](#)
- [The Bader Big Wing](#)

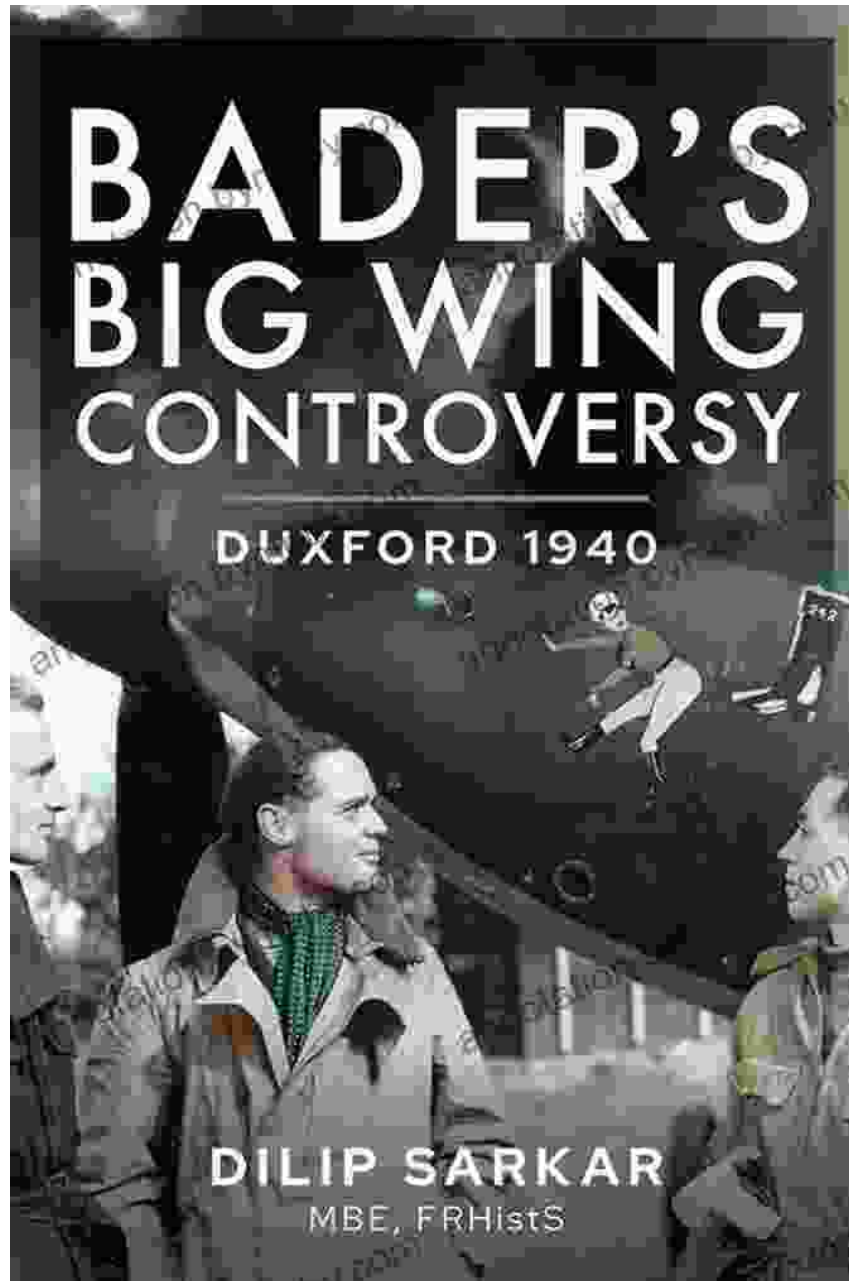
Image Gallery



Douglas Bader, the legendary fighter pilot and proponent of the Bader Big Wing



Air Vice-Marshal Trafford Leigh-Mallory, commander of Fighter Command



RAF Duxford, where the Bader Big Wing meeting took place



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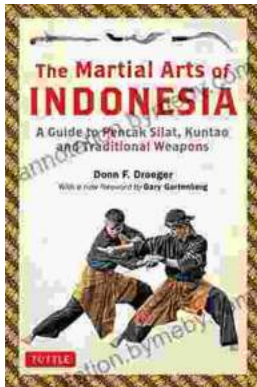
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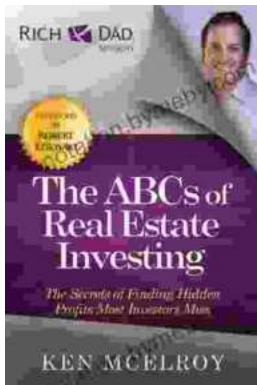
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