



When the skies weren't friendly

Battle of Britain recalled at air museum ceremony

Ken Rose, left, and British Acting Consul General Dominic Meiklejohn

BY DAN JANISON

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KEN ROSE wept, just for a moment, as he wrapped up his brief speech by quoting Winston Churchill's famous declaration during the Battle of Britain:

"Never was so much owed by so many to so few."

Rose, 83, a permanent U.S. resident, lives these days in East Meadow. But during that crucial phase of World War II, 70 summers ago, he was growing up in Ridgewell, England, 50 miles from London. His father's job was to bicycle around the tiny village and warn of coming air raids. Rose, who joined the Royal Air Force later, would help scan the skies for the dropping of German paratroopers in an anticipated Nazi invasion.

They never landed in En-

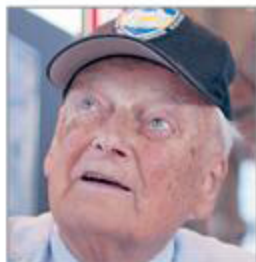
gland. "And thank God," Rose recalled. "All my father had was a whistle, and I had a dog."

He spoke yesterday in the sun and strong wind outside Republic Airport's American Airpower Museum in Farmingdale, in a ceremony highlighting the museum's weekend-long commemoration of the pivotal World War II clash.

Then, vintage planes roared to life and took off in front of camera-clicking visitors to the museum. On this same site, thousands of P-27 Thunderbolts were produced by the Republic Aviation Corp. later in the war.

There, too — helped in and out of a chair for the outdoor speeches — was Gottfried Dulias of Patchogue, now 85, who was 16 during the Battle of Britain. Dulias piloted planes for the enemy air force, the German Luftwaffe, later in the war. His plane was shot down in March 1945 on the Russian front.

Dulias' recollection of three



Gottfried Dulias, 85, of Patchogue, a Luftwaffe pilot.

subsequent years as one of a few prisoners of war to survive the Gulag is told in a 2004 memoir titled "Another Bowl of Kapusta" — copies of which Dulias, an American citizen since 1958, sold and autographed at the museum yesterday.

Among those on hand, helping to represent the museum, was Jack McMullen, 88, of Seaford. He produced a list of his World War II missions — hav-



Paratroopers board C-47 in re-enactment of Normandy invasion.

ing flown 32 of them over Europe in just 65 days in 1944 in what was then called the U.S. Army Air Corps.

He also pulled from his pocket something else; pieces of flak.

That is, McMullen — who retired from American Airlines in 1985 after three decades — displayed in the palm of his hand three pieces of artillery shrapnel he said were pulled out of the No. 3 engine of his

aircraft following missions.

From the podium, British Acting Consul General Dominic Meiklejohn proclaimed, "Seventy years ago this summer, an embattled but defiant island nation stood alone. Its weapons and armor left on the shattered beaches of Dunkirk, Great Britain was protected by elements of the home fleet and the fighter squadrons of the RAF."

There was one hitch to the

weekend celebration, the gusty winds. Even with Hurricane Earl gone, it wind was deemed too strong for the single-seat Spitfire to take off, given a narrow-track design "that is unforgiving in a cross wind," explained museum spokesman Gary Lewi. But owner Tom Duffy did bring the plane's Merlin propeller engine to life for the guests.

Other planes from the era took off and buzzed overhead: the B-25 Mitchell bomber, the P-47 Thunderbolt, the C-47 transport, and a two-seat T-6 Texan. Dominating the landscape on the ground was an Avro Lancaster, the British four-engine heavy bomber that first saw active service for the RAF in 1942 — which hundreds of visitors lined up to board and examine.

Exhibits including the Spitfire, the Lancaster and World War II armored cars remain on display today at the museum, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

The battle for air supremacy

THE CAMPAIGN.

The Battle of Britain, as it was first called by Prime Minister Winston Churchill, refers to the unprecedented months-long 1940 air campaign in which Nazi Germany's air force, the Luftwaffe, attempted to subdue Britain's Royal Air Force.

THE TOLL.

It lasted for several weeks during summer and fall. In addition to hundreds of casualties, the RAF and Luftwaffe lost more than 2,000 planes combined. In the end, it marked the first major military setback for the Third Reich and prevented Adolph Hitler from forcing the British to surrender.