



ANDY BROCKMAN AND TRACY SPAIGHT

THE BURIED
SPITFIRES
OF BURMA
A 'FAKE' HISTORY

FOREWORDS BY
SIR TONY ROBINSON AND AL MURRAY

Reviewer Quotes

"A cracking read told in a vigorous and amusing way. But it also uses the travesty of the Spitfire hunt to discuss the nature of archaeology, its social context, and the problems and challenges that surround any search to ascertain historical veracity. It's written with great flair, and buzzes with innovative storytelling ideas. But in these days of deliberate political misrepresentation, it's also a salutary reminder that whatever the temptations, we always have a duty to use our best endeavours to uncover the truth."

-Sir Tony Robinson, actor, author, & television presenter

"An entertaining tale packing a warning, but also, god wouldn't it have been great if it had been true? Even now, knowing the depths of dim-wittery involved, there's its appeal – the rational drops its guard and in charges fake history, knocking over the truth, and smashing it to the floor. And if you break it, you pay for it."

-Al Murray, comedian & television presenter

"This book demands your attention as both a documentary novel and as a gripping story of archaeological detection. Within its pages lie many important lessons that we will need to understand if we are to navigate the turbulent half-truths of the 21st Century."

-Francis Pryor: Presenter of "Time Team" and author of "The Fens"

'A riveting read and a must for all World War II mystery buffs.'

-Bruce Crompton, Star of TV series Combat Dealers

Book Information:

Title: The Buried Spitfires of Burma: A Fake History

Authors: Andy Brockman and Tracy Spaight

Forwards: Sir Tony Robinson and Al Murray

Hardcover: 336 pages

Publisher: The History Press (1 May 2020)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0750993855

ISBN-13: 978-0750993852

Book Dimensions: 15.6 x 23.4 cm

Available: [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Author Bios



Andy Brockman holds a Master's degree in Archaeology from Birkbeck College of the University of London and is a specialist in the archaeology of modern conflict.

In addition to leading the research and fieldwork for the 2013 expedition to investigate the myth of the buried Spitfires of Burma for Wargaming.net, Andy has directed excavations on one of the earliest anti-aircraft gun sites in south east London dating from the Zeppelin raids of 1915 and the famous Home Guard training school at the Stately Home of Osterley Park in West London.

Media work includes originating and appearing in an episode of Channel 4's iconic archaeology series "Time Team" which took a counterfactual look at the defenses of London against a German invasion in World War Two. He acted as historical advisor for Channel 5's documentary "What the Dambusters Did Next", and accompanied author and presenter John Nicol on a visit to Sweden to investigate the story of Lancaster bomber Easy Elsie which crash landed north of the Arctic circle after attacking the German Battleship Tirpitz. He also worked as a researcher on Channel 4's "the Real Dad's Army" and the BBC's the Reel History of Britain episode which looked at home movies showing the World War Two, Home Guard.

He currently owns and edits the heritage current affairs website thePipeLine, where his work investigating the commercial looting of historical shipwrecks and maritime military graves such as HMS Queen Mary, has attracted the interest of the mainstream media including the BBC One Show, the Guardian and the Times and led to questions in the UK Parliament.

Andy is a regular contributor to academic conferences having delivered presentations about the ethics of conflict archaeology, investigative journalism and heritage crime and Communicating Archaeology on Social Media to the Theoretical Archaeology Group [TAG] Conference, and the Fields of Conflict conference. A presentation at the Images of Conflict conference at the Flanders Field museum in Ieper, which looked at the use of air photography in conflict archaeology, resulted in a publication of a paper in the conference proceedings "Images of Conflict".

Andy has also written a number of news and feature articles for the bestselling "Britain at War" magazine covering subjects including the threat to sunken warships from illegal salvage, the RAF and Sweden in World War Two, the Royal Navy's involvement in evacuating child refugees from the Spanish Civil War and the hanged traitor who is commemorated alongside war heroes in Britain's largest Commonwealth War Graves cemetery. With Tracy Spaight Andy co-edited and contributed chapters to the official technical report on the 2013 Burma Spitfires expedition.



Tracy Spaight holds a bachelor's degree in history from Santa Clara University and a master's degree in Science & Technology Studies from Cornell University. He was a visiting scholar in the History of Science at Cambridge University in 1998-1999. He has held fellowships from the Deutsche Akademische Austauschdienst, the National Science Foundation and the Russell Sage Foundation, as well as media grants from the Texas Council for the Humanities and the Texas Commission for the Arts.

Tracy is the author of "Who Killed Miss Norway," which first appeared in Salon, and is the co-author of *Alter Ego: Avatars & Their Creators*. The project was featured in the *New York Times* magazine, NPR's *Morning Edition*, the BBC, *El Pais*, *L'Espresso*, and numerous other publications. He has published several articles in academic journals such as the *Journal for the History of Astronomy*, *Rittenhouse Journal*, and *Science, Technology & Human Values*. He wrote an article for *Sky & Telescope* and a book chapter for *The State of Play*, an anthology on internet culture published by New York Law School.

Tracy is a frequent speaker on virtual worlds and mixed reality technology. He has twice been a speaker at the State of Play conference at New York Law School, the BIART Conference in Russia, Gamelab in Spain, Digital Taipei, the Integrated Media Conference in Seattle, and VR Connect in London in 2017 and 2018. He was the keynote speaker at the IEEE conference in Cyprus in 2015, the 28th International Conference on Artificial Reality and Telexistence (ICAT 2018) and the 23rd Eurographics Symposium on Virtual Environments (EGVE 2018), and the European Media Management Association in 2019.

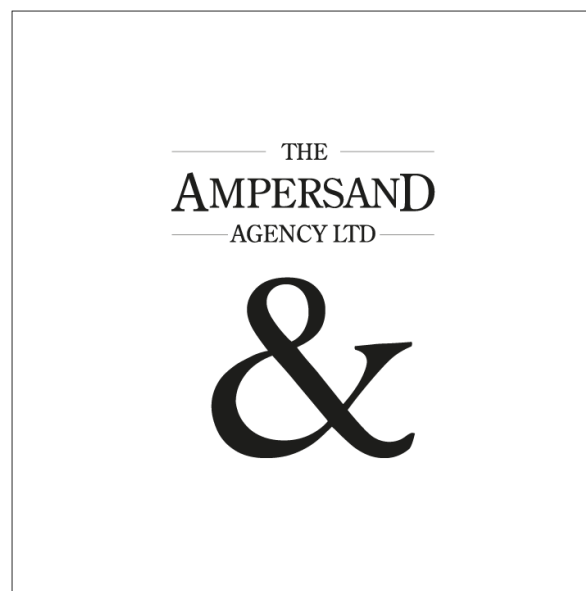
From 2012-2019, Tracy Spaight was the Director of Special Projects at Wargaming.net, an international video game developer and publisher. Since 2012, he has developed interactive exhibits, 360 VR films, Augmented Reality Applications for history museums around the world. Some of his recent projects include developing an AR experience for the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Kursk (featured in *Wired* and *Mashable*) and the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Jutland for the National Museum of the Royal Navy.

Literary Agent



Peter Buckman was the youngest member of the editorial board of Penguin Books before moving to New York to be a commissioning editor with the New American Library. He then became a full-time writer, producing books, films, plays, journalism, and many scripts for television and radio.

In 2003 he set up The Ampersand Agency with the family support of The Buckman Agency and the guidance of Peter Janson-Smith, the veteran agent who counted Ian Fleming among his clients. The first writer taken on by Ampersand was Vikas Swarup, whose book turned into *Slumdog Millionaire*, and among Peter's other clients are crime writers Quentin Bates and Helen Black, historical novelists J D Davies and Cora Harrison, thriller writers Jamie Doward and Mark Roberts, and non-fiction writers Aris Roussinos and Alex Rogers. Peter also looks after the Estates of Georgette Heyer, Angela Thirkell, John James, and Winifred Foley. He loves a good story, whether fiction or non-fiction, that is peopled by credible characters and told in a distinctive voice, and he's soppy about happy endings.



Publisher

The Buried Spitfires of Burma: A Fake History is published by The History Press, the UK's largest dedicated history publisher. The History Press publish across a broad range of topics and periods, covering the exceptional people, places and events that have shaped our lives today. The History Press is dedicated to keeping history alive through publishing content which tells us about interesting places, important events and intriguing people – revealing little-known stories to new audiences.



Press Contact

Jess Gofton

jgofton@thehistorypress.co.uk

Telephone: 01242 895318

General Inquiries

Frazer Nash Communications & PR

frazer@fncpr.co.uk

+44 07788971810

Synopsis

In April 2012, the *Telegraph* and the *Guardian* both report that British Prime Minister David Cameron negotiated an agreement with Myanmar President Thein Sein for the recovery and repatriation of twenty crated Spitfires buried at RAF Mingaladon, just outside Yangon, shortly after the end of WW2. The agreement came about through the single-minded determination of an ordinary farmer, David Cundall. Beginning in wartime Burma, 'Buried in Burma' explores how David's dream unraveled over the course of a historical 'whodunnit' that spans seven decades. In so doing it follows one of the most bizarre, colorful, and off-the-wall stories since the sensational *Hitler Diaries* transfixed the World in the 1980's.

Airworthy Spitfires are eagerly sought after by museums and collectors all over the world. They are worth millions of pounds. Not surprisingly, a race developed to secure the contract to excavate this treasure trove of aviation history, with competing teams putting in applications from Singapore, Israel, and the UK. After months of lobbying, the Myanmar government finally awarded the contract to David, staging a formal ceremony (with the UK Ambassador) in the new capital of Naypyidaw, the City of the Kings. News of the signing ceremony quickly circled the globe and correspondents and TV crews gathered in Yangon, waiting with increasing excitement as David prepared to fulfill his life's dream of recovering the planes.

Our story begins in the chaos of August and September 1945, when Japanese forces in the Burma theater finally surrender, almost a month after the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Although the War was over, war material continued to arrive in southeast Asia for many months, since the supply chain stretched all the way back to the UK and ships already underway continued to arrive well into 1946. Shipments included at least 124 crated Spitfires which were delivered to Calcutta in 1945. The fighters were bound for operation squadrons across South East Asia, to help destroy what remained of Japanese air power. But according to legend, before they could be unpacked, they disappeared!

Some say that the orders came from the very top of the British Government, perhaps from Prime Minister Winston Churchill himself, perhaps from the King's own cousin Lord Louis Mountbatten, the Supreme Allied Commander in Burma, but whoever gave the order it saw the Spitfires buried amid the deepest "need to know" secrecy, by engineers of the famous Construction Battalions, the CB's. Others say that the British could not be bothered to return to England what was, by late 1945, just so much surplus aluminum, particularly as thousands of warplanes were being scrapped on airfields from Norway to Australia.

The only fact that anyone has been sure of is that no one – not the world press, not the British Government, not the Myanmar Government – got to the bottom of the story. That is until now. The core of our book explores how a team of researchers and archaeologists, funded by video

game developer Wargaming, solve the mystery of what exactly happened at Mingaladon in 1945-46. Readers follow the clues as we sleuth through the archives at the UK National Archive in Kew, the RAF, and the US Navy archives in Britain and the USA, examining operational log books, shipping manifests, and the recollections of veterans who served at Mingaladon in 1945-46. It's CSI Yangon where we visit the scene of the 'crime' (Mingaladon), interview 'witnesses' (veterans who saw and heard things), forensically examine clues (the documents, photographs and evidence in the ground) and look for the 'body' – the missing planes!

The result is a fascinating, surprising, and elegant mixture of Indiana Jones AND Sherlock Holmes. There **were** crated planes shipped to Burma. Our living witness **did** see crates on the airfield at Mingaladon. Those crates almost certainly **did** contain airplanes. But as the team stares down into the deepening trench at Mingaladon airfield in January 2013, we realize that we have uncovered an even bigger mystery. Someone has already dug up the site!

We interweave David's quest with an uncannily similar expedition to Ottoman controlled Jerusalem in 1909-1911, led by Captain Montague Parker and Dr. Walter Juvelius, who sought the lost treasures of Solomon's Temple beneath the Haram esh-Sharif – including the Ark of the Covenant itself. This ill-fated expedition ends with a mob of citizens chasing the British team through the labyrinth of streets of old town Jerusalem, in the biggest public relations debacle for westerners since the sack of the city by crusaders in the First Crusade. David's quest similarly ends when senior officers of the Tatmadaw, who have a reputation for brutality, arrive with trucks full of military police and shut down the Spitfire dig.

David Cundall's quest features a supporting cast of unforgettable characters ranging from Foreign Office officials at the Yangon Embassy to Burmese Generals; from a former head of Israeli Intelligence to a billionaire real estate tycoon; from a shady Treasure Hunter reviled throughout Asia for looting historical sites to the British Prime Minister David Cameron and President of Myanmar, to some of the key players in the international networks engaged in WW2 aircraft recovery for wealthy private collectors and museums. We include fictional characters like the Naga snake and the Hinthe bird to represent Burmese spirituality, and historical figures like British Special Operations Executive (SOE) agent Willie Willis.

Our team proves through a careful desktop study, geophysics and field archaeology that the legendary Spitfires of Burma are exactly that: a legend. David refused to accept this conclusion and began attacking the competency and conclusions of the research team in the press. Like the conquistador Lope de Aguirre in Werner Herzog's 1972 film *Aguirre Wrath of God*, David believes so firmly in the legend that he turns his back on the team and spends the next two years digging up Mingaladon airfield. No planes are ever found. We later discover that David dug at the airport at least eight times between 1998-2000, and again in 2004-2005!

We explore David's Spitfire obsession through the lens of the classic work, *When Prophecy Fails* – and make comparisons with the legend of the Oak Island Money Pit, Yamashita's Gold and other legendary quests in search of fabled modern treasures. We also survey the landscape of modern culture which enables conspiracy theory and pseudo history to thrive, drawing upon David Aaronovitch's *Voodoo Histories* and Michael Shermer's *Why People Believe Weird Things*. Finally, we examine the role of the broadcast and print media, 10 Downing Street, and the Burmese government in creating and sustaining the Burma Spitfire legend. 'Buried in Burma' highlights the conflict between archaeologists and treasure hunters, those who believe and those who demand evidence; all against the backdrop of a former Colony emerging from decades of military rule and transitioning to Democracy and full participation in the community of nations.

Book Excerpt

When the Second World War came to an end in August 1945 the legends began and one of the greatest of those legends, the subject of innumerable books, films, comics, and plastic models hanging from the bedroom ceilings of teenage boys, was about the British Spitfire fighter.

In the legend the Spitfire was the aircraft with the film star looks that won the Battle of Britain as the mount of popular heroes such as Douglas Bader and the Royal Air Force's highest-scoring ace Johnnie Johnson, and later of cinematic heroes played by David Niven, Kenneth Moore and Michael Caine.

Supermarine designer R.J. Mitchell's brainchild was even granted the honour of its own biopic, albeit somewhat romanticised, in the shape of Leslie Howards's 1942 film *First of the Few*. The film even premiered complete with its love theme to the Spitfire, Sir William Walton's soaring 'Spitfire Prelude', a work that remains a concert hall favourite to this day.

However, when the war came to an end in 1945 the surviving Spitfires met the same fate as many veterans of war in that their peacetime masters did not know what to do with the thousands of aircraft that were now surplus to requirements, with the result that in every theatre of war aircraft that had cost tens of millions of pounds were lined up to be broken up and recycled.

But almost as soon as the cutting torches and wrecking bars had been put to work rumours began to circulate in the bars and NAAFI canteens of the Far East that some aircraft at least had escaped destruction and, like the legendary King Arthur, the Once and Future King, they were lying in a secret underground vault, ready to fly again in time of Britain's need.

By the 1970s, such rumours have become commonplace and part of the currency of a new breed of aviation enthusiasts that have begun to track down and recover aircraft, particularly Spitfires that had gone missing for various reasons during the war. One of the most active and successful of these aviation wreck hunters is David Cundall's mentor, Jim Pearce. However, like many aspects of this story, there is another layer beneath the obvious and public. In fact, 'Jim' is a name Pearce has adopted. Documents in the UK's Companies House, which keeps the names of people who are company directors of UK companies, records that his full name is Gordon Bramwell Edwin Pearce, who was born on Trafalgar Day, 21 October 1929.

Like many of the enthusiasts, Jim is too young to serve in the Second World War, but he does serve in the Royal Air Force in the troubled British enclave of Aden in the 1960s.

This is the time when Lt Colonel Colin 'Mad Mitch' Mitchell, of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders is making his reputation in the British media as the swashbuckling leader of what is actually a grubby counter-insurgency campaign; a campaign that comes to be called 'the last stand of the British Empire'.

After retiring from the RAF Jim undertakes certain unusual 'contract work' around the world for the British Government. He also takes advantage of the booming demand for agricultural spraying as the UK moves to large-scale industrial farming, based on the liberal use of agrochemicals, and he sets up a crop-dusting business based at the former wartime Lympne airfield, now renamed Ashford Airport, in Kent. Subsequently he moves to North Farm Airfield near the small village of Washington, which nestles on the edge of the rolling South Downs National Park in Sussex, north-west of Brighton.

Jim's new base even has its own grass airstrip, like those at local flying clubs across southern England where Fighter Command dispersed its Spitfire and Hurricane fighters during the height of the Battle of Britain in August and September 1940.

Looking towards the cropped grass of the runway it is easy to imagine the floppy fringed, pipe smoking pilots lounging on the ground or sitting in deck chairs trying to relax, a black Labrador lying asleep at their feet. All the while waiting for the pulse quickening ring of the field telephone and the hellish clang of the scramble bell which will send them racing to their parked fighters.

If they are lucky they will live to fight and fly another day, and, as the sun sinks and the "stand down" comes from "Group", they will pile into the battered J type MG sports car which is parked behind the dispersal hut and, after a breakneck trip up the A23 to the fleshpots of Soho, where they will drink cheap champagne at the Bag of Nails alongside other pilots on the lash including Richard Hillary of 603 City of Edinburgh Squadron, who will become the author of the classic Battle of Britain memoir *The Last Enemy*; catch the risqué nude tableaux at the Windmill Theatre; or, if they are very lucky, meet a date for a meal and a dance to the music of Ken "Snakehips" Johnson and his West Indian Orchestra at the Café de Paris, on Coventry Street.

Jim also appears to have operated in Yugoslavia, using contacts developed when purchasing crop-dusting aircraft for his business. The former Eastern bloc had developed an expertise in the design of such aircraft, perhaps because, Western intelligence agencies suggested, such technology could also be used to deliver chemical warfare agents on the battlefield.

In the late 1980s and early '90s, Jim's interest in aviation, and the contacts he has made on both sides of the Iron Curtain, leads to his becoming increasingly involved with the niche economy of recovery and importation of Second World War aircraft from the former Soviet Union.

This is because as so-called disaster capitalism kicks in, everything is for sale from the state oil industry to lonely broken relics of the Great Patriotic War lying in the forests and marshes of eastern Russia. Thus, while his contemporaries on the aviation memorabilia scene remember him as a regular at the annual Shoreham airfield aero jumble, selling aviation relics at reasonable prices, Jim makes his real mark on the wider international historic warbird scene.

In February 1992 two Luftwaffe casualties of the Eastern Front, a Messerschmitt Bf 110 heavy fighter and an incredibly rare Focke-Wulf Fw 189 twin-engine reconnaissance aircraft recovered in 1990, arrive in the UK, and by the mid-1990s records from Companies House show that Jim

Pearce appears to have been the director of two companies involved in Historic Aviation FW189 Ltd, and Property and Aviation (UK) Ltd.

By 2012 Jim's reputation was well established, as the website warbirdfinders.co.uk recorded, 'Renowned as one of the most experienced warbird recovery specialists in the world, Jim Pearce and his team have recovered over 50 of the most historic aircraft in museums and private collections throughout the world today.'

While some have questioned the number of actual recoveries undertaken directly by Jim and his team in the field, it is a reasonable claim.

Jim's operation is credited with importing several Focke-Wulf Fw 190 fighters, a sinister gull-winged Junkers Ju 87 Stuka dive bomber that spearheaded the Blitzkrieg in Poland and France and its bigger brother from the Junkers stable, the highly versatile Junkers Ju 88 medium bomber.

Jim also imports from Russia a number of Messerschmitt Bf 109 fighters in addition to that first Messerschmitt Bf 110 heavy fighter and two US-built aircraft sent to the Soviet Union under Lend-Lease; a Curtiss P-40 Kittyhawk, which arrived in 1995, and a Bell P-39 Airacobra, an aircraft that Russian pilots appear to have appreciated more than their American counterparts, who were nervous of sitting in a cockpit located between the engine and the propeller, with the propeller shaft between their legs and a notoriously difficult means of escape. That aircraft was brought to England in 2004.

In total Jim is credited with importing at least fifty-one airframes.

Some of these find their way into museums, while others become the property of private collectors with deep pockets and a yearning to own an example of one of the best of big boys' toys, a historic warbird.

Jim's clients, who ultimately fund the recovery and importation efforts, include the helicopter and deer-farming millionaire Sir Tim Wallis's Alpine Fighter Collection based at Wanaka, New Zealand; the Brooklands Museum in Weybridge Surrey, which uses £681,000 of public money from the National Heritage Memorial Fund to purchase Hurricane fighter Z2389 recovered from a swamp near Murmansk in north-west Russia, and the Flying Heritage Collection (now renamed the Flying Heritage & Combat Armor Museum) belonging to the co-founder of Microsoft, the late Paul Allen.

As Jim's client list suggests, these highest of high-end designer objects demand both passion and deep pockets of any would-be owner. This is because, depending on its war record, or lack of it, a Spitfire restored to flying condition might achieve a hammer price of at least \$3 million, while its opponent, the yet rarer Messerschmitt Bf 109, might fetch as much as \$4.5 million and that is before you factor in the running costs of getting these airborne thoroughbreds off the ground and back into the sky.

It follows that while Second World War aircraft recovery and restoration can be a very lucrative business, with aircraft recovered and restored to order for well-resourced museums and well-to-do collectors, it is also risky.

Airframes are often passed from owner to owner as time takes its toll on enthusiasm and interest wanes or, most often, ambition exceeds available funding.

With this ongoing interest and an international following among owners, enthusiasts and historians, it is not surprising that the recovery and restoration of historic aircraft has generated its own specialised media, both in magazines such the venerable *Aeroplane*, which traces its roots back to 1911, and the more recent *FlyPast*, and increasingly in websites and online forums such as that operated by Key Publishing, the owners of *FlyPast*.

One of the most active members on the historic aviation section of the Key Publications forum, Spitfire expert and author Peter Arnold, even posts under the name Mark XII – the twelfth incarnation of R.J. Mitchell's classic fighter.

Peter begins his career in historic aviation as a 'spotter' carrying a copy of the *Observer's Book of Aircraft*, subsequently upgrading his involvement to the real thing. However, his working life begins on the ground with the British sports car manufacturer Aston Martin, where he works as an engineer. It is while he is working for Aston Martin that his ongoing love of historic aviation leads him to rebuild his first airframe, a Vickers Supermarine Seafire (serial number LA564), in the 1970s.

This exploit leads to an appearance on the BBC's early evening magazine programme *Nationwide*, which can still be found on YouTube.

The pre-recorded package, which is fronted by one of the programme's lead presenters, Sue Lawley, seems to set out to portray Peter as an eccentric cross between Captain W.E. Johns' heroic RAF pilot Biggles and one of the louche characters played by the actor Leslie Phillips in British farces such as *Don't Just Lie There, Say Something!*. Like Phillips, Peter has for a long time sported an immaculately groomed moustache.

However, the TV producer's cheap shot serves to mask the fact that Peter has become a shrewd and effective operator who has seen an opportunity to indulge his own passion for the aircraft and at the same time supply an emerging commercial market, where a single propeller hub might be worth £60,000.

The result of this vision is that by the 1980s he begins to put together kits of Spitfire parts that can be sold on to the growing band of wealthy collectors such as Charles Church and later Steve Brooks, who share the same passion for Spitfires as Peter, but who can couple it with the cash to turn boxes of castings, pressings and manufacturer's plates into fully restored, airworthy aircraft.

As a mark of his success, at least four of the Spitfire 'projects' that pass through Peter's hands in the 1980s and '90s are flying again in the twenty-first century; Something of which he is understandably proud.

He can be equally proud that along the way he amasses a body of knowledge and a sizeable collection of research notes and photographs, which ultimately lead to his co-authoring the standard two-volume work *Spitfire Survivors*, detailing the surviving examples of the aircraft.

It is during this period that Spitfires also become currency on the international historic warbird circuit. In 1992 Peter is involved in the purchase and repatriation to Britain of a rare Handley Page Hampden bomber (P1344) shot down in northern Russia in September 1942. In return for the remains of the Hampden, the Royal Air Force Museum hands the importer, Jeet Mahal of Vancouver, British Columbia, Mark XVI Spitfire SL542 from its store.

The RAF Museum may have had the better of the deal as in 2017 Peter will describe the Spitfire as a 'fairly mediocre low back'.

However, by 2002 while he remains active on the forums and retains his reputation within the sector as a researcher and consultant regarding all things Spitfire, Peter has sold on his last two active projects to new owners and he is no longer a member of the elite Spitfire owners' club to which he had belonged for almost thirty years.

That he is able to re-join the club in May 2012 is thanks to the British Army's habit of dumping unwanted vehicles and aircraft on its training ranges, including those on Salisbury Plain.

A fellow collector obtains letters of permission to enter the range on the plain on days when there was no firing in order to remove anything of significant historical value from a griffon-engined Spitfire Mark XXII (PK519), built in 1945, which had been left on the range as a target.

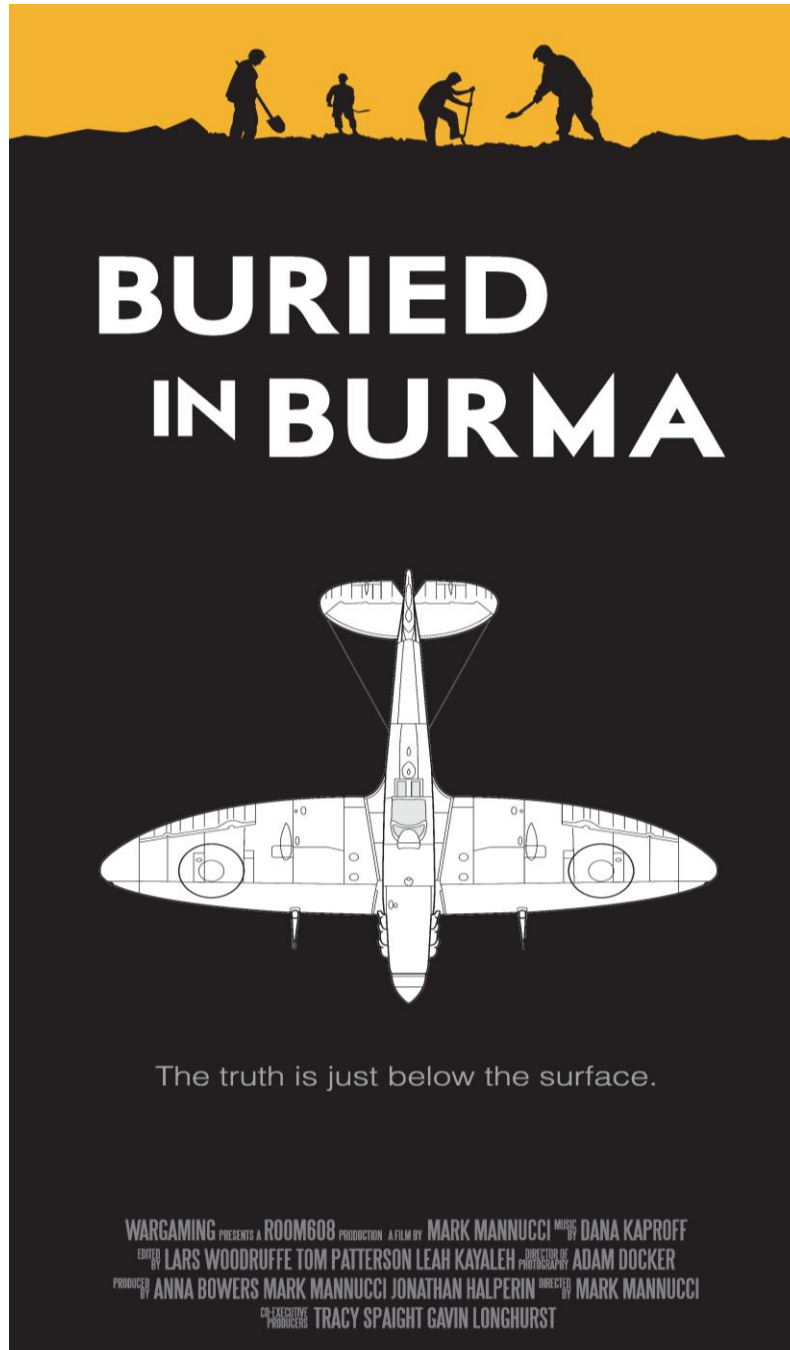
Peter obtains the parts and is able to quote the permission to prove his legal ownership when he registers the aircraft with the UK Civil Aviation Authority with the result that, as David Cundall prepares to go once again to search for Spitfires at Mingaladon, the disarticulated parts on a wooden armature in Peter's garage now have an official civilian aircraft registration, G-SPXX.

Peter Arnold and David Cundall appear to have begun to work together in the 1990s through their shared passion for Spitfires, and their relationship is such that Peter accompanies David on four of his early expeditions to Myanmar. He will also be present for the 2013 dig sponsored by Wargaming.net.

As David and Peter report it, one day in the mid-1990s, while the two men are talking about the possibility of fresh recoveries of historic aircraft with their colleague Jim Pearce, Jim tells them a story that began on RAF Mingaladon just outside Rangoon in Burma during the first days of peace in autumn 1945.

Award-Winning Documentary Film

Tracy Spaight is the co-executive producer of a feature length documentary film titled 'Buried in Burma', which follows our surreal adventure in Myanmar from 2012-2014. In the film as in the book, Andy Brockman led the archaeological team that ground-truthed the legend of the buried Spitfires. The film was directed by Mark Manucci and produced by Anna Bowers and Jon Halperin.



Logline

Buried in Burma is the story of Lincolnshire farmer David Cundall's quixotic quest to dig up a squadron of Spitfire aircraft he believes were buried at RAF Mingaladon at the end of WWII.

Synopsis

In 2012, a video game company and a British farmer join forces on an expedition to recover a cache of Spitfire aircraft reportedly buried in Burma at the end of WWII. The British press declares the search to be 'aviation's holy grail' and vows to be there for the recovery. If the expedition is successful, it will mean accolades for the company and glory for the farmer, who has spent a quarter of his life chasing the planes. But as the true color of David's obsession emerges, it's clear that this will be no simple recovery mission. Instead, the expedition descends into a dark comedy that holds up a mirror to the ways in which we all deceive ourselves.

Premier

The documentary was an official selection at the London International Cinema Festival in February 2020. Buried in Burma was nominated for best documentary feature, best director of a documentary feature, and the historical education award. The film took the award for best director of a documentary feature.



Stills from the Documentary



David Cundall on his farm in Lincolnshire



A Spitfire fighter at Duxford Airfield, UK



Myanmar, where our story unfolds



Archaeologist Andy Brockman with the geophysics team

Social Media

Official Website: www.buriedinburma.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/buried.burma>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BuriedinBurma>

Instagram: <https://instagram.com/buriedinburma/>