

# NEW EDITION DEVON AT WAR

1939 – 1945

Gerald Wasley

The county of Devon is said to have been the most militarily active county in England during the course of the Second World War. *Devon At War* can claim to be one of the few books that fully covers events on the Home Front during the war years, setting them against the ebb and flow of the conflict between the Allied and Axis forces.

From Plymouth sailed Royal Navy warships that were to take part in epic sea battles. On Devon's beaches were trained the men of the Allied armies who took part in the D-Day invasion of 6 June 1944, including tens of thousands of American troops who sailed from Devon's ports. Away from the front line, ordinary citizens found their lives turned upside down, food rationing and war work, and the sudden influx of thousands of evacuees brought a new urgency to quiet rural backwaters, while Hitler's sustained bombing campaigns saw death raining down from the skies, inflicting massive destruction on Plymouth and Exeter. Using contemporary reports and formerly secret documents combined with eye-witness accounts and over 200 photographs the author tells the remarkable story of those turbulent years.

*Devon At War* is a fascinating photographic and written record of the county at war.

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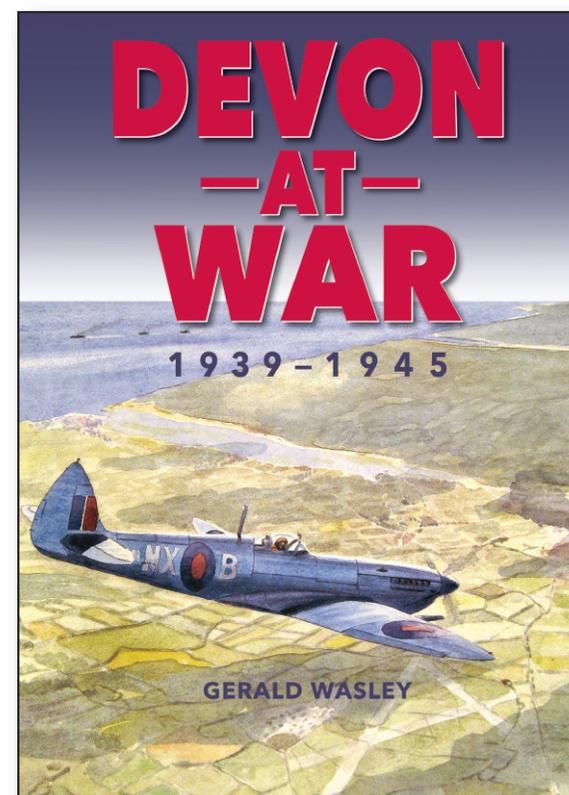
## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Gerald Wasley** was formerly a Clinical Immunologist based at St Thomas' Hospital, London. He is the author of several books on medical laboratory science and scientific papers, including 'Naval Medicine and Surgery at the time of the Armada'.

As a schoolboy, evacuated from Acton in Middlesex to Dartmouth, he can remember looking at the red glow in the sky as Plymouth burned under the German bombers in the spring of 1941. On the fortieth anniversary of the Plymouth Blitz he wrote a number of articles for the *Western Morning News* newspaper and also collaborated with the regional television service in the production of a documentary 'City Under Fire'. Later he published *Blitz - An Account of Hitler's Aerial War over Plymouth*, the culmination of many years' research. *Devon At War* has grown directly out of this original research.

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DEVON AT WAR



Exeter, May 1942. A view over rooftops towards the Cathedral.



American troops are disgorged from the bows of a landing craft during exercises at Woolacombe beach, 1943.



Slapton Beach, July 1938. A Fairey Swordfish, playing the role of a bomber, flies over the beach from HMS Courageous anchored in the bay.

Right: While on his visit in May 1941, Churchill surveys the destruction at the naval dockyard at Devonport.



Below: A RAAF Sunderland flying boat over the South Devon coast c. 1940.



Example of a double-page spread.

**Woolacombe Beach**... **THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN**... **THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN**... **THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN**...



Two tiny figures gaze out on the ruins of their homes following the raid on Plymouth in November 1940. Smoke billows from the blazing Turnchapel oil tanks.