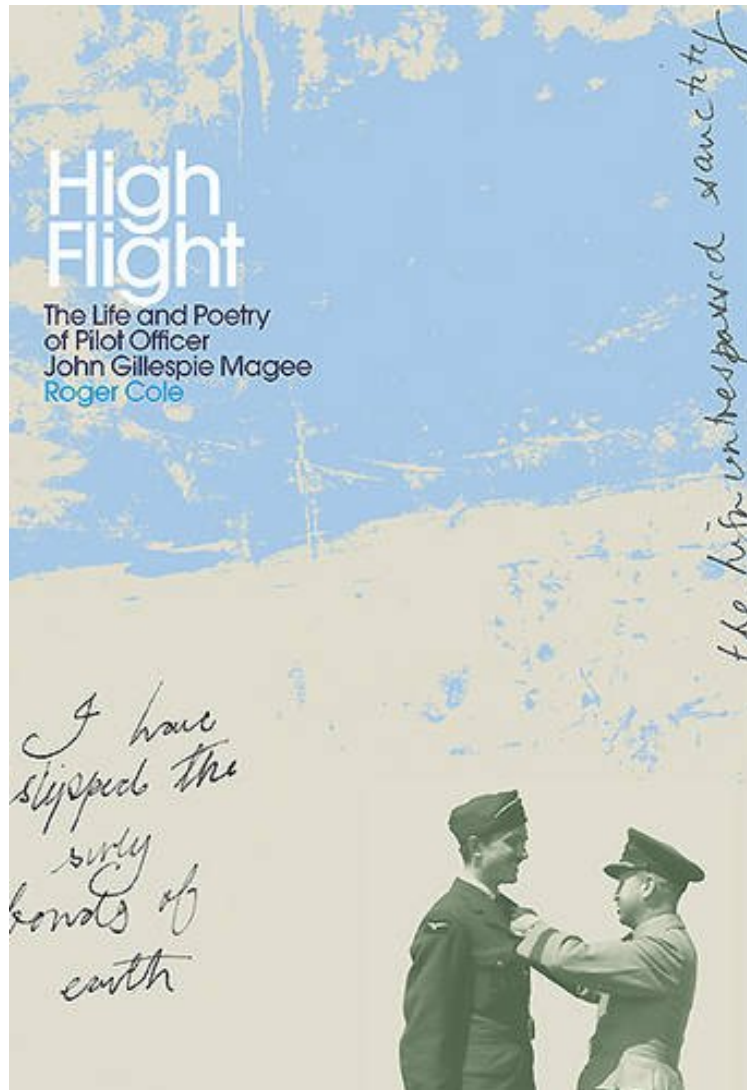


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# High Flight: The Life and Poetry of Pilot Officer John Gillespie Magee

Roger Cole

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**Roger Cole : High Flight: The Life and Poetry of Pilot Officer John Gillespie Magee** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised High Flight: The Life and Poetry of Pilot Officer John Gillespie Magee:

When Second World War Spitfire pilot John Gillespie Magee penned his poem 'High Flight', little did he know that

his words would inspire legions of aspiring aviators who had a similar wish to fly their 'eager craft through footless halls of air'. Founded on years of detailed research, Roger Cole's book *High Flight* tells John Magee's extraordinary story, describing hitherto-unknown details of his short life, and providing insight into the inspiration for the poems that have found a unique place in history. Born of an English mother and American father in Nanking in China, Magee grew up and was educated in different parts of the world, proving to be a highly accomplished student. Through his experiences, he developed principles that made him determined to defend the rights of those he loved and respected. Exhilarated by flight and finding unique language in poetry, John was able to use words to express the emotions and sentiments of all who fly in a manner that is acknowledged and applauded throughout the world. The outbreak of war in Europe violated his beliefs, and, determined to fight for freedom, John left America and joined the Royal Canadian Air Force, qualifying as a pilot and travelling to England to fight Nazism. Tragically, John would lose his life, aged 19 years, in an accident, so never know how his words would serve posterity. Roger Cole's *High Flight* traces the path of John Magee's achievement, revealing an incredible story of human endeavor, vision, determination and self-sacrifice.

'An excellent biography of this extraordinary young man.' (Yorkshire Gazette and Herald, January 2014) '... the author has eloquently traced his life, achievements, human endeavour, vision, determination and self-sacrifice. Photographic plate sections add to the text, rounding the picture. This is a military history that will appeal to all those interested in understanding the military past, but it is also a very personal history and a look into the creativity of Pilot Officer Magee that should appeal to a very much wider readership.' (Firetrench, January 2014) 'Excellent book ... beautifully written.' (War History Online March 2014) About the Author Born in Lincolnshire Roger Cole was educated at Brigg Grammar School, Kings College Cambridge, Bretton Hall in Yorkshire, Birmingham and Nottingham Universities. He is a writer and lecturer and has published other biographies entitled 'Burning to Speak', and 'Gaudier Brzeska, Artist and Myth'. His acclaimed book 'Creative Imperative' is regarded as a seminal work. The author still lives in Lincolnshire in the village of Wellingore where John Magee was billeted with the Royal Canadian Air Force for the last months of his life. Because of enquiries from all over the world about this exceptional young man he was inspired to research and publish a complete biography. Since the main features of the village, its airfield, and surrounding landscape are largely as John Magee would have known them he has been able to draw on his knowledge of its geography and historical features to inform his writing. He has recorded the recollections of people who knew Magee both locally and in other countries and brought together photographs from far afield which illustrate the text. Wellingore is the village where John Magee wrote his now famous poem 'Per Ardua'.