



The Flying Greek: An Immigrant Fighter Ace's WWII Odyssey with the RAF, USAAF, and French Resistance

Steve N. Pisanos

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Steve N. Pisanos's *The Flying Greek* is both the classic tale of an immigrant's bond with America and an aerial adventure. When young Pisanos arrived in the U.S. in 1938, he worked, studied English, and learned to fly. He earned a private pilot's license in 1941, and soon after Germany invaded Greece, he volunteered for the embattled British Royal Air Force. He served with the 268 and 71 Eagle Squadrons. The 71 Eagle Squadron was one of three Eagle squadrons comprised of U.S. volunteers. In 1942, he became a naturalized U.S. citizen while in London, England. He was the first individual in American history to become a citizen while outside the U.S. border, and his becoming a citizen allowed him to be commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army Air Forces.

In riveting detail, Pisanos recounts his combat record, from fighter sweeps and bomber escort missions to dogfighting, flying the Spitfire, the P-47, and the P-51. While flying a P-47 named *Miss Plainfield*, he scored his first aerial victory on May 21, 1943. By January 1, 1944, he had become an ace. After his tenth confirmed kill, he crash-landed his P-51 in France and spent six months with the French Resistance, successfully evading capture. Because of his exposure to the French operations, the Air Force could not risk his capture again, so he returned to the U.S. and became a test pilot at Wright Field where he also attended the Air Force's test pilot school.

Despite grave danger, Pisanos set aside his pride, fears, and misgivings to help achieve a greater good. *The Flying Greek* is an entertaining and remarkable journey that will interest historians and aviation enthusiasts.

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