



Biggles in the Baltic

W.E. Johns

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Toen de tweede Wereldoorlog uitbrak, zat de veteraan uit de eerste oorlog, majoor Biggles, op zijn kamer met een paar oude vrienden te praten. zij werden natuurlijk een beetje stil van het radiobericht waarmee de oorlogsverklaring bekend werd gemaakt, en Biggles begreep meteen dat hij waarschijnlijk niet buiten spel zou blijven. Een telefoontje van het Luchtvaartministerie liet inderdaad niet lang op zich wachten en in een minimum van tijd werd Biggles door een geheime opdracht verwickeld in een aantal avonturen waarbij je haren steil overeind gaan staan. Het is ook waarlijk geen kleinigheid om onder de neus van de vijand op een heel klein eiland een soort miniatuur-luchtbasis te vestigen en van die basis uit op de meest onverwachte momenten aanvallen te doen op kwetsbare punten van de vijand. Biggles had voor dat doel een kleine club van vertrouwde oorlogsmakkers gevormd en hij werd per onderzeeër naar het geheimzinnige plekje gebracht. En toen kwamen per geheime radiocode de opdrachten uit Engeland! Biggles zou Biggles niet zijn als hij ze niet keurig uitvoerde, maar je moet niet vragen of het gemakkelijk ging. Bij heel wat gelegenheden kropen Biggles en zijn kornuiten door het oog van de naald!

Biggles in the Baltic Details

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From Reader Review Biggles in the Baltic for online ebook

Suzie says

Ah, Biggles. Ripping yarns, bags of unfortunate innuendo and lashings of repressed homosexual angst. I love 'em.

Hans says

nice moment in time demarcating the start of WW2.

Though several illogical plot holes, (again near the end)

The team 'takes over' a German amphibian airplane, that is later on used to fly home,

But strangely, when Biggles is captured by Erich, HIS plane is demolished, and only the engine is removed.

As it was an experimental airplane to begin with, the Germans would have for certain captured the whole machine...

Also, it was a small rock in the Baltic-sea, but Algy could land on the top of it.

What kind of runway could one find on a tiny rock?

If the island otoh was not so small, the Germans would have made it a base themselves.

Daniel Bratell says

I do read these books because they are not remotely like real life, but I still demand that they seem plausible. This book just contained too many events that were unlikely to work for me.

The Second World War has just started and Biggles is sent to a tiny stone island in the south east Baltic Sea to use it as a secret air base. W. E. Johns really like his amphibian airplanes by the way. Yes, Biggle is equipped with a super modern amphibian airplane.

There are parts of this book I like. That it's set in a real historical setting for instance. And that there is flying. But all in all it's just ok.

Jonathan says

Actually I liked this alot when I was young, but the action is very fast paced and reads quite differently to me now.

Manny says

The episode I like best in the Norse myths is when Loki, Thialfi and Thor are challenged to a series of contests by the Frost Giants. They do really badly. First Loki has a sprinting contest against the Giants' champion runner, and is hopelessly outdistanced. Then Thialfi contends with the Giants' best eater. He puts away plenty of food, but nothing even approaching what the Giant manages to eat.

So Thor, the strongest of the Æsir, enters the ring. In the wrestling match, he's miserably beaten by an old woman. In the weight-lifting round, he's asked to lift a cat, but all he can manage is to get one of its legs off the ground. Finally, there's the drinking contest. (I kind of like the rules of the Old Norse pentathlon - I'm sure it would make a fantastic TV program). They give Thor the drinking horn, and to his embarrassment he can't even empty it. The level goes down an inch or two, and that's it. The gods are appalled at their failure.

The next day, the Giants reveal that it's all been a trick. Loki was running against Thought, and Thialfi was trying to outeat Fire. The hapless thunder-god had in turn wrestled with Old Age, attempted to lift the Midgård Serpent, and tried to drain the ocean. His partial success on the final task is why we now have tides. In fact, the gods did superlatively well.

Biggles in the Baltic, one of my favourite books when I was eight or nine, is a sort of Boys Own adaptation of the myth. World War II has just broken out, and Biggles and his merry men are sent out on an unusually hazardous mission. Britain has somehow acquired a Baltic island with a huge natural cave. It's been fitted out as an air base, and is ideally placed for sneak attacks against the German mainland. Of course, it's imperative that they keep its location secret.

At first things go well; despite all their precautions, though, after a couple of weeks they're spotted by the enemy. They manage to see off the first wave of German attackers, but they know full well that it's now just a matter of time, and resolve to sell themselves as dearly as they can. They've discovered a huge lake, pent up behind a natural dam deep in the cave. They install explosive charges. When a German cruiser comes in to finish them off, they blow up the dam, unleashing a flood that sinks the ship. Somehow, they manage to escape and get back to England.

They're expecting their superiors to be mad at having lost the base, but to their surprise the guy who planned the operation is very happy. "How long did you think we expected you to last?" asks the Special Ops colonel. Biggles doesn't know. "Well," says the strategist, "we were planning on about forty-eight hours, and all of you being killed. You've done an incredible job."

Perhaps these stories will comfort you next time you're handed an assignment that turns out to be tougher than you first realised.

Edwin Kort says

Drie vragen die me steeds bezig houden als ik dit boek lees:

- 1) Hoe hebben ze die vliegtuigen in de grot gekregen? Niet gevlogen, anders waren ze gezien. In onderdelen?
- 2) Hoeveel werk moet dat wel geweest zijn om de gestrande didgeree-du te verstoppen onder een laag zand.

en 3) Waarom wordt Ginger niet een keer bij zijn naam genoemd, maar iedere keer 'Rooie'. Dat is net alsof je Arie Roos alleen maar 'Dikke' zou noemen

Angie Rhodes says

really enjoyed re reading Biggles in the Baltic,, have other Biggles adventures to read,,, heaven

Rob Markley says

Such a long time since I read Biggles. Still has the classic element that I knew and loved so much...however not quite the excitement of younger years
