



TURNING POINT...THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN



"We shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight on the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender."

4th June, 1940, Winston Churchill speaking to the House of Commons in Westminster

During Blitzkrieg (April 1940–June 1940), The Nazis conquered Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium and France. The British Expeditionary Force was trapped at Dunkirk, but managed to withdraw by sea back to Britain. Churchill warned of invasion.

In September 1940, the German the Luftwaffe bombed British towns and cities in attacks which became known as 'The Blitz'. London was bombed for 57 nights in a row, and it looked as though the Germans were gaining strength. However, on 15 September 1940, the RAF managed to successfully fight off two massive German attacks. Germany was running out of aircraft and supplies, and two days later Hitler postponed the plans to invading Britain. September 15 became known as **Battle of Britain Day**.

People took cover in air raid shelters; some were made of corrugated iron in gardens; others were located inside train stations and tunnels.

The British ran out of money, and had to sign the Lend-Lease Agreement with America (America sold arms to Britain, to be paid back after the war).

The tide turns (1941–1943) During this time, the Allies gradually began to win the war. In 1944, the Nazis launched V-1 rockets, known as doodlebugs, which fell randomly in southern Britain.

But:

After D-Day on 6 June 1944, Germany was gradually driven back in Western Europe by the British, Americans and their allies.

Hitler took his own life.

Germany surrendered and war came to an end in Europe shortly afterwards and VE Day was announced on 8 May 1945.

'The Few'

During the battle, the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill made a famous speech which included the line, *"never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."* After this, the RAF pilots who fought in the battle became known as "the few".

The Battle of Britain was a series of game-changing battles in World War Two, which were fought entirely in the air.

BATTLE OF BRITAIN IN NUMBERS:

- Around **3,000** aircrew served with RAF.
- The average age of British pilots was **20**.
- **1,023** RAF planes were lost in battle.
- **1,887** Luftwaffe planes were lost.

