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The Battle of Britain

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WHY WE FIGHT A SERIES OF SEVEN INFORMATION FILMS
THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN
SPECIAL SERVICE DIVISION
INFORMATION FILM #4

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JUNE 1940

The shadow of the conquering German armies,
covered western Europe.

The self-styled master race,
was riding high.

DUNKIRK

Calais

Now Adolph Hitler stood, just as Napoleon had stood,
more than 100 years before.

And looked across the English Channel to the one
fighting obstacle that stood...

..between him and world domination.

The chalk cliffs of Britain rose sheer
and white, out of the choppy waters.

And beyond, a little island, smaller
than the state of Wyoming.

Crush that island, and its stubborn people and the
way was open for world conquest.

The fall of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Denmark,
Norway,

..Holland Belgium, France had given him more than
100 million slaves,

..to work for him or starve.

The preliminaries were over, it was time for the main
event. The battle of Britain.

Berlin

Where Napoleon failed, I shall succeed. I shall land
on the shores of Britain."Adolph Hitler

Hitler and his Generals feverishly drafted their plans
for the conquest of Britain.

Every detail must be anticipated. A slip now, might
wreck the timetable of world conquest.

Six weeks of final preparation went into
those plans.

Six weeks to determine the history

of a thousand years.

The thing was fool-proof. See for yourselves how simple the whole operation was meant to be. Look.

GERMAN PLAN FOR INVASION OF ENGLAND

PHASE I

Knock out the Royal Air Force and its bases.

Get control of the air and sea lanes across the channel.

Follow the blitz plan that wiped out the low countries, Poland and France.

Destroy communication and transport lines.

Above all, get command of the air.

PHASE II

Pulverize the coast line with dive bombers.

Drop parachute troops to take over the air fields and establish beach heads.

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PHASE III

Actual invasion.

Pour the German Panzer divisions across, in high speed barges,

..under an umbrella protecting fighter planes.

then send spear-heads of armed might, to divide, surround, destroy all opposition.

That's all there was to it.

Conquer Britain. Force the surrender of the British fleet.

then with the combined sea-power of Germany,

Britain, Italy, France and Japan,

..he could control the seas, and

tell us whereto head in.

The torch of freedom flickered low.

On the invasion coasts, more than 100 fully equipped German divisions were singing the Nazi theme song, "We are sailing against England.", as they waited the word from Hitler.

Here, for weeks, all the supplies and weapons of the Nazi war machine...

..had been turned toward Britain.

The jaws of the Nazi whale,

were set to swallow Jona.

And what about Jona?. How was he doing?.

Well, Britain also had an army

But it was an army dragged from sea at Dunkirk.
An army without weapons. These had been
left behind on the roads of France.
Tanks, guns,
..motorized equipment,
..all abandoned to save the one
priceless item...
.. men!
In all of Britain, there was not enough equipment for
one modern division.
Only one tank for every thousand square miles of
territory.
Only one machine gun, for every 1 500 miles of
beach.
Britain had a navy too, but it was
scattered all over the globe,
..guarding vital food and supply lines.
And the British knew it would be suicidal to use their
fleet in the narrow waters ofThe English Channel,
..with the German air force in control
of the air.
Britain also had an air force.
An air force outnumbered 10 to 1 by the enemy
..both in men and machines.
There was Britain herself.
The people of Britain.
The people who would be terrorized
and forced to surrender.
They knew every man, woman and child,
in uniform and out,
..would be Hitler's target, in the onslaught that could
come at any moment.
They knew they had a job to do
and not much time to do it in.
The young, the not so young and the old.
The clerk, the butcher, the farmer, the member of
Parliament,
..they formed the civilian army,
Britain's Home guard.
They started from scratch.
Experience, equipment, supplies...
..all were scarce.
Only one shell to fire at each practice.
The women of Britain refused to be left out.

We're in this too."
We'll put up the barrage balloons."
Man the air cat guns."
We'll run railroads and get the trains
through on time."
Ferry the planes."
Carry the dispatches."
Drive the ambulances and run the buses."
And we'll see our male are fed,
and don't go hungry."
Others worked.
They worked full time.
Overtime.
Double time.
Forty hours a week, fifty, sixty, seventy.
Hours meant nothing.
Fatigue meant nothing.
Until the government forced them to cut down hours,
because over-fatigue was...
..hurting production.
And when they weren't working the men
patrolled the moors for parachutes...
..blocked the roads...
..rehearsed invasion defenses.
For something had happened here
the Germans could never understand.
In a democracy, it is not the Government
that makes war...
..it is the people.
To lead them, the people had chosen Winston
Churchill as their Prime Minister.
To lead them, the people had chosen Winston
Churchill as their Prime Minister.
And he spoke the word in every British heart, when he

said:

We shall defend our island, whatever the cost may
be."
We shall fight in landing grounds,
in fields, in streets,
and on the hills."
We shall never surrender."
This was Britain in its darkest hour.
The people knew they were in for the worse

the Nazi mind could invent, yet...
..they didn't panic or run away
They patrolled and waited.
They drilled and waited.
They worked and waited.
Waited for the terror they knew was coming.
Then it came!
That is the sound that became part of life,
for every man, woman and child in Britain.
August 8th, 1940 and the battle for Britain is on.
Thirty enemy aircraft over the channel,
flying due west."
Here comes the Luftwaffe.
In dozen of flights, hundreds of planes.
Bombers, fighters, dive-bombers,
across that 21 miles of channel.
That eight short minutes of water.
Their first tactics were to bomb convoys
in the channel.
Convoys loaded with food and munitions,
bounded for the great port of London.
German fighters waited overhead for the defending
planes of the RoyalAir Force, the RAF to appear.
They didn't have long to wait.
The RAF came, facing of 6, 8, 10 to 1,
..and dove in, shouting the old hunting cry: "Tallyho!"
Phase one of the Nazi plan, called for
the RAF to be knocked out of the air...
..but the men of the RAF,
hadn't read the Nazi plan.
In the first 4days, the RAF knocked
182 German planes out of the sky
For the next week the Germans attacked the coast
cities from the Thames River to Weymouth.
Mr. Getty, take cover!"
Spitfire!"
And Hitler paid off with 180 more planes.
Then the Luftwaffe battered
the great towns of Southampton,
..Plymouth....
..trying for a knockout, before the flow
of supplies from overseas reached port.
The ports took a terrible pounding,
but they couldn't be knocked out.

Cargos went on being unloaded, with
the protection of the RAF overhead.
Battling the Spitfires and Hurricanes
in the air wasn't panning out.
So Gring switched his main attacks to the fighter
airfields, Dover,
Deal, Bucking.
Maybe he could destroy the planes
on the ground.
He bombed the air fields, and
the fields were hit...
..but the planes were saved.
For Britain, unlike Poland and
the low countries,
didn't make the mistake of bunching its planes on the
runways.
The planes of the RAF were scattered
and hidden.
Only a few on any one field, and those
in the far corners.
The Spitfires still went up to meet the enemy
In the first 10 days of the Battle of Britain, Gring
launched 26 major attacks to get command of the air
And lost 697 aircraft. The British lost 153.
And 60 British pilots bailed out.
Valuable trained men were saved,
and ready to fight again,
..but the crews to Gring's planes,
were lost to him forever.
The pace was too hot.
Something was going haywire.
The Nazis had to call "timeout".
On a 2000 mile front, from Norway to France,
..the whole Nazi blitz program was being stalled,
because the RAF was still in the air.
The long-range German guns were getting hot,
..from throwing shells across the channel.
In public, Hitler assured the Germans,
Mr. Churchill tells his people
that England will win...
..but I tell you victory
will belong to Germany"
But in private, he sent for Gring,
the boss of the Luftwaffe,

and put him on the hot seat.

Gring was told to do something

and do it quick.

So on August 30th, he ordered all out attacks on inland air drones and industrial centers.

Maybe he could knock out the RAF on the assembly line.

And he adopted new tactics too.

More fighters and fewer bombers, or maybe he just had fewer bombers to send.

Anyway, those he did send were well protected.

Fighters above at high altitudes.

Fighters on both sides.

Fighters in the front and in the rear Fighters weaving in and out of the bomber formations.

Fighters in the front and in the rear Fighters weaving in and out of the bomber formations.

Britain, winner of the first round, was ready

With higher morale and sharper defense.

Improved listening posts were set up all along the coast.

And warned of the enemy's approach, before he left the continent.

A quick flash from the control station to the fighter station.

And pilots were on their way to meet the enemy while he was still over the channel.

Day after day, out of sight, an almost out of sound of the watchers on the cliffs.

Four, five and six miles above, the battles raged over the Dover area.

The Dover area became known as Hell's Corner.

By sheer weigh of numbers, the enemy again and again broke through the coastal defenses.

And reached inland to the air drone.

Aircraft plants.

Munitions, factories and machine shops.

Hello, gunfire in the southeast. Right."

But the workers kept on working.

And the RAF kept on flying.

These few men with wings, alone in the sky

..behind their motors and machine guns,

..were shooting down more than the Luftwaffe.

They were smashing the whole Nazi plan

of world conquest.

Any claims Johnny??'

109 destroyed, yes."

"Oh, good show!"

How did you get on sir??'

"Oh, I had a wonderful party, thanks."

Are you all right?. Have you hit any of the batters??'

"Yes, I got a Messerschmitt 109."

Between August 24th and September 5,

35 major attacks were launched.

They cost the Germans 562 planes, while the British lost only 219 planes and...

..and saved 132 pilots.

Invasion plans were going completely haywire.

Berchtesgaden

The Nazis were blind with rage.

The German mind has never understood why free people fight on against overwhelming odds.

Hitler knew he was now superior in every weapon, expect the weapon of spirit.

So he told Gring, break that spirit, crush the people, crush the spirit of democratic life itself.

Invasion now, would have to wait.

The Nazis would avoid the RAF and smash the great city of London,

..into the rubble heap they had made of Warsaw and Rotterdam.

Could London take it?. Even the people themselves didn't know the answer.

The defenses they trusted in, were London's hastily assembled anti-aircraft.

The Ack-Ack guns. The balloon barrages which kept the raiders at high altitude.

The Royal Air force, now down to its last reserves.

And the plain down-right guts of people.

They sent more children out of the city

Tightened air-raid precautions.

Stationed more aero plane spotters.

Rehearsed firefighters.

Moved into bomb shelters.

They blacked out their city, and carried on.

The first blow, aimed to crush the British spirit,

..came on September 7th.

Control room speaking."

"Customers and staff, will now take cover...

.. in the basement. Please do not run,
keep moving."

Down the stairs or you can use
the escalator."

Third floor clear. Second floor clear.

First floor, clear."

That day when 375 German planes
came roaring up theThames River,
The battle of Britain, became
the Battle of London.

The German's broke through the charge of Spitfires
and Hurricanes that went out to meet them.
Gone was any pretence of aiming at military
objectives.

This was just savage destruction.
Bombs fell alike on the homes of
the east-end poor,
..and the Mayfair rich.

On shops.

Hospitals.

Churches.

For 28 days the Nazis were to drop everything in the
book on the city of London.

Tons upon tons of high explosives.

Delayed action bombs had exploded days later
Torpedo that had sheered away whole buildings.

And underneath the war in the air the war of the man
in the street went on.

He learned to exist with very little food.

He forgot what it meant to have a night's sleep.

Spending most of his time underground,
in the damp, dark and cold.

Good-evening folks."

"You're in early tonight."

Well, I quite a sight, aren't I??'

I think that will be all right now."

"Yes, that's grand."

How are we going to get you up there??'

"Get the young man to lift you up."

Brady!"

"Hello."

Come give this young lady a lift up."

- "Right you are."

The air-raid wardens stayed at their posts.

Doctors and nurses worked on steadily, as the bombs crashed around them.

Rescue squads labored night and day

Hey Warden, I found one."

Is she dead??'

- "Quite dead."

Firemen said, nuts to the bombs,
and battled to put out the fires.

This was life in the blitz.

Against all the rules of Nazi warfare,
Britain was refusing to crumple up.

Across the Channel, the enraged Gring took
personal command of the operations.

And on September 15, he sent the Luftwaffe
into one of its greatest attacks.

Five hundred German bombers and Messerschmitt
fighters, roared over the English coast.

Bomass calling. Planes heard three miles
southwest."

Hostile planes approaching from southwest."

The British met the challenge by
throwing in everything they had.

An historic 3 dimensional battle took place.

Inside an area 60 miles long, 38 broad
and from 5 to 6 miles high.

Two hundred individual dog fights took place within
the first 30 minutes of the raid.

Right on our own doorstep. Oh, what is that??'

Centre calling mountain one."

- "Thank you centre, we'll keep an eye on them."

Hostile formation to the south."

Some of the German bombers broke through
London's defenses.

And reached the centre of the city

Doughy?. Where are you??'

Blimey, I thought they'd got you."

- "Who me, nah. I had my fingers crossed."

140 destroyed, 70 probable.

Dear Ministry Communicant,

..the biggest bag yet. One hundred and
eightyfive enemy aircraft shot down.

End of message."

Of the 500 German planes that came over that day
..more than 1/3 were shot down.
In the 28 days of terror,
from September 7th to October 5,
..the Nazis dropped 50 million pounds of bombs on
the city.
Killed 7000 helpless civilians,
..and wounded 10,000 more.
Bombs fell on Buckingham Palace.
Westminster Abbey.
The Houses of Parliament.
Fleet Street, the centre of the news.
St. Paul's Cathedral.
Bombs blasting the historic past,
out of the lives of Englishmen.
But in these 28 days, the Nazis lost
900 planes and their crews.
The more were sent over, the more
were shot down.
The British Spitfire proved to be one of the deadliest
weapons ever put into the hands of man.
If this kept up, pretty soon, no more Luftwaffe.
The frantic Nazis had to pull a new one.
They did. On October 6, they changed to night
attacks.
Maybe that way they could avoid those deadly
Spitfires and Hurricanes.
Maybe that way they could crush the stubborn British
spirit.
Never mind control of the air. Never mind Phase one,
Phase two and Phase three.
Never mind control of the air. Never mind Phase one,
Phase two and Phase three.
Now concentrate on bombing the people themselves
into submission.
And make them cry for mercy.
Hostile raid sir."
The RAF wasn't much help at night. This was just
German bombs against British guts.
Hello Jerry."
-"They sound happy enough down there tonight."
The great docks of London, were left roaring infernos.
Homes were destroyed by incineration.
Business blocks were a flame.

And still the people of London took it.
Night after night they burrowed underground.
And morning after morning they dug
themselves out of the wreckage.
Good-morning."
-"Good-morning."
Would you like to sit down??'
-"Thanks."
Morning ladies. Sleep well??'
-"Fine thanks."
What about the one that came down about 2??'
-"I didn't hear it."
Don't you think you ought to go away from
this for a bit??'
Of course not. It will take more than this
to get me out of my home."
Now go on, you've got to get to work."
-"Okay."
The Battle of London, was the battle
of the people of the century
In spite of bombs, and fire and death,
They got to their desk and workbenches, to spend
another 10-12 hours working...
..working...
..working.
The British spirit was stronger than ever.
And the RAF was flying higher than ever
Not only higher, but further
S.I.O.?. Operations for the night."
GP1 562"
EP781 Ten aircraft."
You'll find a decent photograph
of the submarine yard there."
There was a very good one taken
the other night."
That's it. There's the submarine yards."
All right chaps. This is your target for the night.The
submarine and ship-building yards at Bremen."
It's a vitally important target.
And it's got to be hit hard."
In the midst of this life and death struggle,
The British found strength not only to defend but to
counter-attack with what...
..Q-bombers they could get together

Hello air-gunner, can you hear me??'

"Coming okay skipper."

Hello operator. Everything okay??'

-"Well it seems to be all here sir."

Stand by, I'm going in on a glide."

Steady!"

I got a bulls eye with the last one."

Here was the RAF giving it back.

Hitler cried:

I will exact at thousand fold revenge.

November 14, 1940.

All the available German night-bombers,
were put into the air.

A thousand fold revenge was Coventry.

On November 14, a million pounds
of bombs were dropped on the city
Coventry was smashed as flat as Warsaw
and Rotterdam.

The people of Coventry, dug their
loved-ones out of the blasted ruins...

..a them to their last resting place,
in a common grave.

Hitler could kill them, but damn
if he could lick them.

They went back to their lathes and machines.

For they knew the machine-bench was
as deadly a weapon as a rifle.

And in their hearts, was a grim determination, that this
enemy must be destroyed.

That the day was coming when they
would strike back.

And how they would strike back!

Christmas 1940.

Christmas. Season of Peace on Earth,
Good Will toward men, was the ironed...

..quiet before Hitlers great burst of rage against a
people who couldn't be licked.

PLANES!"

He couldn't bomb them into submission,
so he would burn them to ashes.

Millions of fire-bombs, rained down
on the great city of London.

In a matter of minutes, more than 15 hundred diferent

sections of the city burst into roaring flames.
Flames that swiftly merged into
the greatest fire in recorded history.
In the midst of all the fire and destruction,
..vital water mains were shattered. Water pressure
was almost entirely cut off.
Heroes of the night, were men of the London Fire
Brigade,
who stretched temporary hose lines
out to the centre ofThames River,
..struggling through mud and slime.
For the Nazis had carefully picked
the night on which theThames River
..had one of the lowest ebb tides on record.
And while London burned above them,
the people of the city held on.
Chin up and thumbs up.
They knew this was the peoples' war.
And they were the people.
And the people that couldn't be panicked couldn't be
beaten.
In the months to come, the British were to suffer many
such bombings and burnings.
But a nation that calls on cold courage,
when hot courage runs thin,
..may die, but it can't be defeated.
The Battle of Britain was won,
but not by Hitler.
Hitler had lost the battle. He had lost
2375 German planes and their crews.
For the first time, it was the Germans
who ate the bitter dirt of defeat.
Gone was the legend of their invincibility
For a solid year, the Nazis struck Britain
with all their might.
They leveled thousands upon thousands of homes.
And damaged millions of others.They killed more
than 40thousand men, women and children.
And seriously wounded 50thousand more.
But not one single Nazi soldier,
set foot on British soil.
But Hitler couldn't stop. In our next film, we
will show how he had to turn to the east again.
Why did the Nazis lose the Battle of Britain?.

First, because a regimented people, met an equally determined free people.

And the free people made them quit cold.

We've been bombed, dive-bombed, high-level bombed,

..machine gunned, been through two invasion scares...

..and the last lot we had, we had the house down about our ears."

But we're still sticking it and we're going to stick it."

Second, because this was a new kind of war.

And the RAF were the men who could fight it.

These are the men who belonged to what Hitler called,

..those weak, soft democracies.

The British did more than save their country

..they won for the world a year of precious time.

It was not only for the people of Britain, but for the people of the world that Winston Churchill spoke,

when he said:

was so much owed by so many."

Victory of the democracies can only be complete with the utter defeat of the war machines...

..of Germany and Japan.

C.G. Marshall Chief of Staff