

# The Battle of Britain:

## 'Never Was so Much Owed by so Many to so Few'...



*The Battle of France is over. The Battle of Britain is about to begin. The survival of Christian civilization depends upon this battle. Our British life, and the history of our institutions and our Empire depend upon it. The whole fury and might of the enemy will soon be turned on us. Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this Island or lose the war. If we can stand up to him, all Europe may be free and the life of the world may move forward into broad, sunlit lands. But if we fail, then the whole world, including the United States, including all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age. Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, so that, if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, "This was their finest hour."*

Winston Churchill  
House of Commons, June 18th 1940

to owe [əʊ] (to) быть в долгу перед кем-либо, быть обязанным кому-либо  
survival [sə'vaɪvəl] выживание, эд. само существование  
Christian ['krɪstʃən] христианский  
civilization [ˌsɪvɪlaɪ'zeɪʃn] цивилизация  
institutions [ˌɪnstɪ'tjuːʃnz] устои, обычаи, порядки  
empire ['empaɪə] империя  
fury ['fjʊəri] ярость

might [maɪt] мощь  
to lose the war проиграть войну  
to stand up to смело встретить, противостоять  
sunlit ['sʌnlɪt] залитый солнцем  
to fail [feɪl] терпеть неудачу  
to care for любить  
to sink into the abyss [ə'bɪs] кануть в бездну, погрузиться в хаос  
Dark Ages средневековые  
therefore ['ðeəfɔː] поэтому

to brace oneself to one's duty собрать себя в кулак и исполнить свой долг  
Commonwealth ['kɒmənweɪlθ] Содружество (государственное объединение Великобритании и большинства ее бывших колоний)  
in order to для того, чтобы  
to invade [ɪn'veɪd] вторгаться, оккупировать  
Luftwaffe ['lʊftwæfə] Люфтваффе (военно-воздушные силы Германии)



Because Britain was an island, Hitler needed control of the skies in order to invade. He ordered the Luftwaffe to destroy Britain's Royal Air Force in preparation for an invasion from the sea. Here is a brief description of the Battle of Britain, the first battle to be fought in the skies alone. The records kept of aircraft destroyed by either side were quite accurate. The numbers tell their own story very well.

**The Opening Phase: July-August 1940.** The Luftwaffe makes small raids on Britain and tries to sink ships in the Channel.

Total Aircraft	BRITAIN	GERMANY
Losses	73	157

**The First Phase: August 1940.** The Luftwaffe tries to destroy the British airfields. This was the correct tactic. Up to now the British secret weapon, radar, had allowed the Royal Air Force (RAF) to concentrate their defence against the higher numbers of German aircraft.

Total Aircraft	BRITAIN	GERMANY
Losses	175	332

**The Second Phase: mid-August-September 1940.** Soon the RAF was near to collapse. There were not enough pilots, never enough sleep and too many enemy planes. Then a German bomber dropped its bombs over London by mistake. Churchill ordered raids on German cities in revenge. This angered Hitler who ordered the Luftwaffe to change tactics and destroy London. This gave the British airfields the chance to recover.

Total Aircraft	BRITAIN	GERMANY
Losses	278	365

**Royal Air Force** Королевские ВВС  
(военно-воздушные силы  
Великобритании)  
**invasion** [ɪn'veɪʒn] вторжение, налет  
**brief** [brɪ:f] краткий  
**records** ['rekɔ:dz] документы, отчеты  
**aircraft** ['eəkrɑ:ft] самолеты, авиация  
**to destroy** [dɪ'strɔɪ] уничтожать  
**accurate** ['ækjʊrət] точный  
**phase** [feɪz] этап (наступления)

**raid** [reɪd] воздушный налет  
**to sink ships** топить корабли  
**the Channel** ['tʃænl] Ла-Манш  
**losses** потери  
**airfield** ['eəfi:ld] аэродром  
**collapse** [kə'læps] крах, крушение, провал  
**weapon** ['wepən] оружие, боевое средство  
**radar** ['reɪdɑ:] радар, радиолокационная установка  
**defence** [dɪ'fens] защита, оборона  
**bomber** ['bɒmə] бомбардировщик

**bomb** [bɒm] бомба  
**in revenge** [ɪn'vendʒ] в отместку  
**to recover** [rɪ'kʌvə] оправляться, приходит в себя  
**skilled** [skɪld] искусный, умелый, опытный  
**commander** [kə'mɑ:ndə] командир, военачальник  
**effective** [ɪ'fektɪv] действенный, эффективный  
**fighter** ['faɪtə] истребитель  
**determined** [dɪ'tɜ:mɪnd] решительный

**The Third Phase: September-October 1940.** Now the autumn had arrived, invasion was no longer a real possibility. Hitler was already planning his attack on Russia. The German pilots were skilled and brave, but their commanders were not allowed to use effective tactics. The fighters had to protect the bombers, which meant things were easier for the British. September 15: the biggest raid on London. This day is called 'Battle of Britain Day'.

Total Aircraft	BRITAIN	GERMANY
Losses	271	503

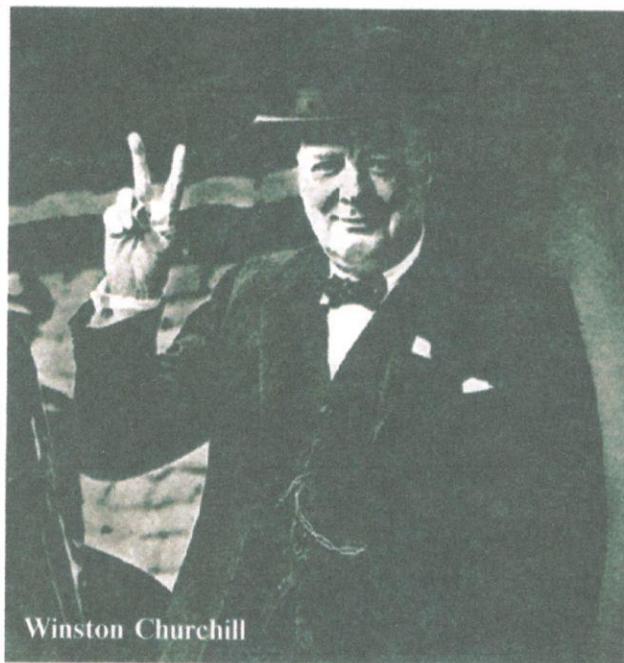
**The Final Phase: October-November 1940.** The Germans slowly realise that they are losing the fight statistically. By the end of the month the raids are much smaller and less determined. By the middle of the next year Hitler had invaded Russia. England had been saved, it would have been impossible for Germany to invade Britain while fighting in Russia too.

Total Aircraft	BRITAIN	GERMANY
Losses	133	266

**All Phases – Total Aircraft Losses July 10th – October 31st.**

Total Aircraft	BRITAIN	GERMANY
Losses	930	1623

Jeremy Morris



Winston Churchill

# STALINGRAD

# REMEMBERED

Few battles on the Eastern front in World War Two are remembered by people in the West. Ask anyone about the battles around Kharkov, or the perfect breakthrough of Operation Bagration, and you're unlikely to get an answer. But mention Stalingrad, and most people will know that a titanic battle happened there, even if they couldn't tell you where it is.

Stalingrad is probably best remembered as the place where the Nazi expansion into Europe came up against Russian heroic defence. For Russian people, it is one of their proudest

episodes, one of their best military operations of the War.

By the winter of 1941, the Germans had been victorious in every theatre of war. They had taken Poland, Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Holland and France in a series of quick campaigns that stunned the world. Britain was next, but it was only bombed from the air. Next, the Nazis turned east, taking Yugoslavia and Greece, and parts of North Africa.

Hitler's main aim had always been to take Russia. The Germans began their war on Russia in June 1941. Initially, the invasion of Russia

**breakthrough** ['breikθru:] прорыв  
**unlikely** [ʌn'laɪkli] вряд ли  
**to mention** ['menʃn] упоминать, называть  
**Nazi** ['nɑ:tsi] нацистский, фашистский  
**expansion** [ɪk'spæʃn] экспансия, продвижение  
**to come up against** натолкнуться, столкнуться  
**defence** [dɪ'fens] оборона  
**theatre of war** фронт, театр военных действий  
**to be victorious** [vɪk'tɔ:riəs] одержать победу  
**Denmark** ['denmɑ:k] Дания

**Norway** ['nɔ:wei] Норвегия  
**Belgium** ['beldʒəm] Бельгия  
**campaign** [kæm'peɪn] кампания, поход, операция  
**to stun** [stʌn] потрясать, ошеломлять  
**to bomb** [bɒm] бомбить  
**Yugoslavia** [ˌju:geɪ'slɑ:vɪə] Югославия  
**initially** [ɪ'nɪʃli] вначале  
**invasion** [ɪn'veɪzən] вторжение, нападение, оккупация

**defences** [dɪ'fensɪz] укрепления  
**to encircle** [ɪn'sɜ:kl] окружать  
**pocket** «котел»  
**unit** часть, подразделение  
**to squeeze** [skwi:z] сжимать  
**destruction** [dɪ'strʌkʃn] уничтожение  
**to stall** [stɔ:l] застопориться  
**counter-attack** ['kauntə'reɪtæk] контратака  
**to test smb to the limit** устроить кому-либо настоящее испытание

went well for the Germans. Tanks drove deep into Russian defences, encircling great pockets of Russian units. These were then “squeezed” to destruction.

But the German plan stalled at the gates of Moscow and Leningrad as winter began. Russian counter-attacks during the winter tested the Germans to their limits.

The German plan for 1942 was to continue the push south-east to the rich oilfields of the Caucasus. The plan failed because of ideology. North-east of the Caucasus was the city of Stalingrad (now Volgograd). Militarily it was useful to take. It could be used to start attacks into the Siberian industrial heartland. But its main prize was that it had the name of Hitler’s enemy: Josef Stalin, the leader of the Soviets.

The open plains of Russia were good country for the mobile German tanks supported by air-attacks: *Blitzkrieg*, literally, “lightning war”. However, the block-by-block, house-by-house and room-by-room fighting that happened in the city of Stalingrad didn’t suit the German method of war. Heroic Russian defence made the Germans pay for every yard of ground, and the Germans were shocked by the ferocity of Russian defence.

Summer turned to autumn, and the battle became a matter of survival. Losses on both sides were huge.

By the middle of September, Hitler had a whole army (about 250,000 men) in Stalingrad.

Soviet High Command — under Marshal Georgi Zhukov — had realised the opportunity. With Stalingrad as the bait, they planned to tempt a large German force into this giant trap.

On either side of the German forces in Stalingrad were Germany’s allies: the Rumanians and Italians. Militarily weaker, these units had been left to defend hundreds of miles of “quieter” parts of the massive front.

Zhukov built up a big reserve facing these weaker units on the “flanks” of Stalingrad. He was



push продвижение  
oilfield ['ɔɪlfi:ld] нефтяное месторождение  
Caucasus ['kɔ:kəsəs] Кавказ  
ideology [aɪdɪ'ɒlədʒi] идеология  
militarily ['mɪlɪtəri] с военной точки зрения, в военном отношении  
Siberian [saɪ'biəriən] сибирский  
heartland ['hɑ:tlænd] центр, сердце страны  
to seize [si:z] захватывать  
plain [pleɪn] равнина

Blitzkrieg ['blɪtskri:g] блицкриг  
lightning war [ˌlaɪtnɪŋ 'wɔ:] «молниеносная война»  
to suit [s(j)u:t] соответствовать, подходить  
ferocity [fə'rɒsɪti] жестокость, свирепость  
matter of survival [sə'vaɪvl] вопрос жизни и смерти  
losses [si:z] захватывать  
huge [hju:dʒ] огромный, колоссальный

Soviet High Command Верховное Командование СССР  
opportunity [ɒpə'tju:nɪti] удобный случай, благоприятная возможность  
bait [beɪt] приманка, наживка  
to tempt [tempt] заманивать  
trap [træp] ловушка, капкан  
ally ['ælaɪ] союзник  
Rumanian [ru:'meɪniən] румын  
flank фланг



**They all defended Stalingrad.**

waiting for the winter snow that would slow German tank movement, and leave German aircraft grounded, all to Russian advantage.

Finally, on the 21st of September the Russian counter-attack started. The Rumanian and Italian lines collapsed. Now it was the Germans' turn to learn what it was like to be encircled.



**The average lifespan of a soldier was 24 hours.**



**The Germans called them the "night witches"...**  
*(There is an article about them on page 22)*

Within days Stalingrad was isolated from the rest of the German Army. Like an expert boxer, Zhukov had timed his blows to perfection.

A breakout was still possible for the Germans trapped in Stalingrad, but Hitler's pride would not allow it.



**General I. Liudnikov**



**"Russian soldiers are fanatics... some kind of iron creatures... They never get tired and are not afraid of fire..."**  
*(from a diary of a German soldier)*

**to leave aircraft grounded** зд. не дать самолетам взлететь  
**to smb's advantage** [əd'vɑ:ntɪdʒ] в чьих-либо интересах, к чьей-либо выгоде  
**tiny** ['taɪni] маленький  
**to collapse** [kə'læps] потерпеть крах, поражение

**within days** в течение нескольких дней  
**lifespan** ['laɪfspæn] продолжительность жизни  
**to be isolated** ['aɪsəleɪtɪd] быть отрезанным  
**expert** ['ekspɜ:t] квалифицированный, опытный

**to time one's blows to perfection** безупречно выбрать момент для нанесения удара  
**breakout** ['breɪkɑʊt] прорыв  
**to chase** [tʃeɪs] гнать, преследовать противника  
**ammunition** [æmju'nɪʃn] боеприпасы



They fought for every street, for every house ...



... for every stone ...

Russian troops now began to “squeeze” the German pocket, chasing the Nazis deeper into the city, and into a smaller area.

In the city, German ammunition, food and medicine were in short supply. Hitler ordered the Sixth Army to fight on, indifferent to the suffering of his men. On 31 January 1943 the German Sixth Army surrendered to the Russians. Almost 65,000 Germans were prisoners.

It was the first serious defeat the Germans had suffered in the war, and it was the start of Russian military ability to assert itself. They had outfought, outsmarted and defeated the German “super-man”. Stalingrad was a ruin, but now people in the west understood the bravery and military power of Russia.

In 1943, the Germans were only able to make small attacks, not the big advances of 1940-1941. Meanwhile, the Russians were continuing to develop their arms, and in 1944-45 would crush the Germans. By April 1945, the Russians were in Berlin, knocking on the door of Hitler’s bunker, and raising the flag of the hammer and sickle, where the swastika had been.

Mark Concannon



Sergeant Pavlov defended this house with a handful of defenders from constant

German attacks. They were surrounded and held out for 59 days until help arrived! They say that more German soldiers died outside PAVLOV'S HOUSE than during the invasion of Paris. The building was left the way it was as a memorial site and a symbol of Russian soldiers' endurance, determination and courage. It can be still visited today.

to be in short supply [se'plai]

истощаться

to fight on продолжать борьбу

indifferent [in'difrənt] безразличный, равнодушный

to surrender [se'rendə] капитулировать, сдаваться

defeat [di'fi:t] поражение

to assert [ə'sɜ:t] oneself самоутверждаться,

приобретать уверенность в собственных силах

to outfight [aut'fait] перебороть, победить

to outsmart [aut'smɑ:t] перехитрить

advance [əd'vɑ:ns] наступление,

продвижение

meanwhile ['mi:nwail] тем временем

hammer and sickle ['sɪkl] серп и молот

swastika ['swɒstɪkə] свастика

sergeant ['sɑ:dʒənt] сержант

handful ['hændfəl] горстка

to hold out стойко держаться

endurance [in'djuərəns] стойкость

determination [di,tʃ:mi'neiʃn] решительность, стойкость

courage ['kʌrɪdʒ] мужество