
The battle of Britain

❶ Hitler's instructions on August 1st, 1940. *the viewpoint of the enemy, in which we learn about his plans*

1 "In order to establish the necessary conditions for **the final conquest of England** I intend to intensify
2 air and sea warfare against the English homeland. I therefore order as follows:

3 – The German Air Force is **to overpower the English Air Force** with all the forces at its command, in
4 the shortest time possible. The attacks are to be directed **primarily against flying units**, their **ground**
5 **installations**, and their supply organizations, but also against **the aircraft industry**, including that
6 manufacturing anti-aircraft equipment. [...] – I reserve to myself the right to decide on **terror**
7 attacks as measures of reprisal. "

a dogfight

Hitler wanted to get rid of the RAF.

Hitler could not invade England, unless the RAF had been destroyed before the landings. Therefore he targeted the airfields and the aircraft and engine industry. Besides, Hitler's cruelty is obvious: he liked terror, liked killing people.

❷ The narrative of a British fighter pilot.

a good storytelling, part of war propaganda.

1 "I turn off, and spot a single Messerschmitt Bf 109¹ below and ahead. I follow it through the **thick**
2 **smoke** billowing over the Thames and finally catch up with it over the Estuary. I fired for three
3 seconds. The 109 is hit and a stream of **black smoke** trails behind his tail so I close in to 50 yards
4 and fired for the last time. Pieces of the German fighter are torn away before it suddenly bursts into
5 **flames** and then **explodes in fire** and **brimstone** with pieces of wreckage going in all directions."

The viewpoint of a war hero. What heroes do is to

perform heroic deeds. Newton shot down an enemy fighter. His narrative brings us in the midst of action. It looks like an inferno. But the good prevails over the evil.

*Dennis NEWTON **A Few of the Few**. Churchill called the RAF pilots "the few"*

❸ Battle of Britain: **gun camera film** showing tracer ammunition from a British Supermarine **Spitfire** fighter, **hitting a German Heinkel He 111 bomber**.

Doc 3 is very much like doc 2: both are the story of a kill. In that case, the German aircraft is a bomber.

Another piece of war propaganda, showing that the British were winning.

We see a bomber being hit, and shot down, while another bomber escapes. It represented the RAF in action.

People, whose houses were being bombed by the Luftwaffe, could see that they were protected and avenged: many of the Huns would not make their way back to Germany.



Such films, shown in movie theatres, would boost the morale of the population.

To conclude, Hitler's strategy failed. He could neither destroy the RAF, nor break the fighting spirit of the British people. Eventually, Sea Lion, the invasion of England, had to be postponed and was later cancelled.

➤ Using the documents and your knowledge, explain **how the British faced the Nazi onslaught in the summer of 1940.**

¹The Messerschmitt Bf 109 was the most produced German fighter of the Second World War.