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## *The battle of Britain.*

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❶ On the left, Squadron leader Brian Lane, a British fighter ace with the visible strain of combat on his face after a sortie. Lane, who shot down at least 6, possibly 10 German planes, was reported missing in action on 13 December 1942, aged 25. On the right: a German Heinkel 111 bomber flying over London during a raid in 1940. Pictures: Imperial war Museum.



❷ Winston CHURCHILL, *The Second world war*, p. 359.

On August 15, about a hundred bombers, with an escort of forty Me 110s, were launched against Tyneside<sup>1</sup>. At the same time a raid of more than eight hundred planes was sent to pin down our forces in the South, where it was thought they were already all gathered. But now the dispositions which Dowding<sup>2</sup> had made of the Fighter Command were signally  
5 vindicated. The danger had been foreseen. Seven Hurricane or Spitfire squadrons had been withdrawn from the intense struggle in the South to rest in and at the same time to guard the North. They had suffered severely, but were nonetheless deeply grieved to leave the battle. The pilots respectfully represented that they were not at all tired. [...]

August 15 was the largest air battle of this period of the war; five major actions were fought,  
10 on a front of five hundred miles. It was indeed a crucial day. In the South all our twenty-two squadrons were engaged, many twice, some three times. And the German losses, added to those in the North, were seventy-six to our thirty-four. This was a recognisable disaster to the German Air Force.

It must have been with anxious minds that the German Air Chiefs measured the conse-  
15 quences of this defeat, which boded ill for the future. The German Air Force however had still as their target the Port of London, all that immense line of docks with their masses of shipping and the largest city in the world, which did not require much accuracy to hit.

➤ Using the documents and your knowledge, describe the battle of Britain and assess its consequences.

<sup>1</sup>Tyneside: an industrial conurbation on the banks of the River Tyne, in the north-east of England, stretching from Newcastle upon Tyne to the coast.

<sup>2</sup>Hugh Dowding (1882–1970) was Commander-in-Chief of the British air defence forces that defeated the Luftwaffe during the Battle of Britain in 1940.