

THE HEART OF LONDON, A CITY AT WAR

A mighty German military managed to get through as witnessed by this photo showing the destruction in September of 1940.

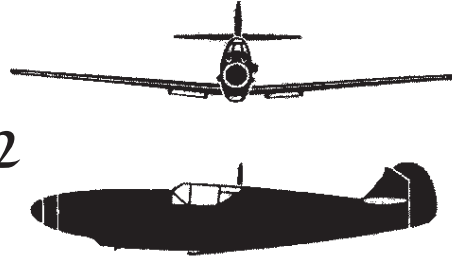
The population of Greater London in 1940 before the Blitz was 8,655,000. St. Paul's Cathedral in the background was only slightly damaged. This is a personal - rare panorama of Greater London.



Far out at sea: shades of help from the New World. Absolute necessity for naval strength involved overwhelming movement of men and materials. America needed two-ocean protection. But, the British Navy needed destroyers desperately. So under camouflage war paint, a WW I era destroyer, traded with Britain, sails for European shores. The other side of life, the unsung early days of developing Second World War pilots.



The Gallant Battle of Britain



Beneath the skies of hundred miles of wayward fluffy clouds, a British Royal Air Force Flying Officer by the name of Jimmie Coward bailed out from his smoking aircraft before he disappeared into a vapor of death. His tiny frame dangled beneath his giant parachute. All about him, fellow pilots were still flying and dogfighting. Before he touched earth safely, he had fainted twice. The first time, he had summoned all his courage by taking off his belt, ripped open his pants and while blood was spewing all over had somehow managed his nervous fingers to tie his mangled foot that was still precariously attached to his ankle by shreds of flesh, and nothing else. The story of how one man balances between life and death is but one of the episodes of the many which took place in 1940, and which symbolizes a focus on the bravery in the Second World War. It is called the Battle of Britain. Democracy's history of the liberal world and its intention to remain free.

Adolf Hitler knew nothing but victory before he chose to hurl all of Nazi Germany's might against the people of Britain in the summer of 1940. Early that summer, Britain seemed too weak to turn back a military onslaught that it was ready to collapse. It had few guns, leaving over 2,000 guns besides 63,000 vehicles and 400 tanks in France. In a few short months however, Hitler and his general staff began to feel the bitter taste

"The whole fury and might of the enemy must very soon be turned on us."

Winston Churchill

chapter **5**

THE BLITZ



of defeats, without achieving gains.

In August and September of 1940, the Battle of Britain reached a crescendo. Individual combat action across miles and miles, known as aerial combat, meant dogfights. Dogfighting formed part of the air offensive Germany had decided to pursue as the first step toward control of the British people. It seems so inconceivable to look back on history and wonder why Germany did not win, for it had everything going for it.

In spite of insufficiencies, a people figured the so-called *inevitable* of history differently. With the seas surrounding their country, with a virtually unscathed Royal Navy—and spirit and prayers—the British people held their defensive lines. It was the British Royal Air Force (the RAF) which became the main part of the chain that defended Britain, and they were struck with all of Hitler's fury. . . but, the chain never broke.

During the height of the air-raids in Britain many American reporters covered the air-war from Dover, from the Grand Hotel. Dover is the English city that is closest to France, for it is only 22 miles distant from the French coast, and was part of a unique bombardment; although London was the center and main target there were other concentrated strategic areas in existence.

The port city of Dover and all surrounding municipal areas witnessed great air battles and bombardment but, it was also on the receiving end of long-range German guns which were based inside France. When German aircraft flew to bomb targets elsewhere, they quite often assembled near this coastal section. It was in such frequency, that it was not unusual for the inhabitants to have seven to eight siren warnings per day or night. During bombardment, residents secured shelter in subterranean caves and especially built tunnels in the chalk rock cliffs of Dover.

The various war targets were protected by a screen of

RAF pilots, anti-aircraft batteries, and some radar. When the bombers came the Britons, more often than not, were ready to curb the onslaught at the right time.

Two of the turning points in battle are the introduction of radar and the breaking of Germany's secret code. Long-range scanning radar began (one must remember that in early 1940 English night defenses and radar were zero; and not until the beginning of autumn did radio and receivers form part of operations and eventually a standard link of defense) as a forewarning for the Allies as soon as the Germans were airborne over France. Long-range scanning radar, plus the methodology of British counterintelligence pre-signaling the onslaught, helped the gallant RAF fight back so that it did not succumb. The RAF lost many, but it was able to resist with enough ferocity to decentralize the authority of the Luftwaffe.

One of the greatest turning points in battle, of which today historically we can state it, occurred in the first week of September when Britain's undermanned and exhausted air force, being hit hard at its airfields and radar towers, was almost at its breaking point when General Hermann Goering, the chief of Luftwaffe operations, decided to remap priority operations. Instead, the Luftwaffe was ordered to go all out against London, the capital of England. The few isolated airfields and Royal Air Force squadrons and radar outposts were left alone for another time.

London beforehand had been subjected to sporadic attack, however, beginning on Saturday, September 7, 1940, all the Nazi Luftwaffe saturated the capital with bombs, by day and night, then exclusively by night.

After a week of straight bombardment Britons realized London "was the frontline and place to be." This is

"Should we stop the hope?... France is not alone."

Charles De Gaule

from London June 18, 1940

not to say that it was never considered the main target, but when the saturation began to be felt throughout London, the Londoners were unprepared; Churchill admitted this after the war.

On the seventeenth of September, the last daylight raid on London took place. (The reason being that the Luftwaffe was losing too many aircraft in daylight.) Two days earlier occurred the largest battle involving both air forces; the date is still commemorated in England as Battle of Britain Day. After these series of raids, the German air squadrons were never the super masters of the skies over Britain again.

Night after night America listened to the pounding that Britain received. From September 7 to November 3, 1940, heavy bombardment rained on the ancient capital; for fifty-seven consecutive nights horror, destruction and bombing went nonstop in London.

People were able to hear and see through radio and the movie newsreels (largely uncensored) the war as it was fought in the English cities and countrysides, besides burning London. The presence of U.S. reporters gave the fighting a headline coverage; overseas correspondents' descriptions could not be ignored in the United States.

By the end of nineteen forty, the British people across the ocean were knee-deep in the throes of war, and remained in it for many months. The main targets of London were the shipyards, transportation arteries, warehouses, and military factories, and somewhere in between came the civilian thousands, the people, the innocents. War made people sick and war killed. Safe and sound Americans received eye-opening history lessons on war life from live radio accounts given to them by brave newscasters, similar to the way brave newscasters reported live from Iraq in 2003. London was a city dotted with shelters and shelter signs, which ranged

from a variety of safe places to little itzy-bitsy cocoons of earth and boards—which by today's standards seem unbelievably unsafe.

Shelters were located in store basements, underground restaurants, backyard surface shelters, bank vaults, and the subways called the tubes. During the bombings, Britons awaited the gas-bomb attack, (Some 25,000 casualties were attributed to gas attack in 1915-17.) In open spaces there were gas detectors. These were a flat sheet of brass-colored metal on top of a waist-high post, resembling a sun dial. If and when terrifying fumes of poison descended, it was claimed the metal changed color.

Humanity found itself holding its breath for the impressions of poison-gas attacks were horrendous. During World War I, gas had killed over 1000 people directly. However, gas masks and gas attack never turned into the procedure for war which it was thought could have been. Indispensable as it may have seemed, to some, people were so afraid of nasty gas with its invisible way of killing, that agreeing with a ban numerous countries had implemented as soon as the war had started in 1939, Hitler forbade its use as a potent weapon. And, not a single country in the 1940's used it as a potent weapon. From firsthand accounts, we will trace a little bit of life in that insidious world of a war.

Across the airwaves, the focus of the war was on London, with daily reports personified in the voice of London, America's Edward Murrow. The sound of his radio narration was a nightly event and probably was the most listened to voice of the war at that time. There were other famous newsmen from the United States like W. L. Shirer, Eric Sevareid, Lowell Thomas, and Ernest T. Pyle. With a brief anecdote from 1940-41 by the latter, we give an account of what it was like to live in war-torn Britain. The following narrative was written in 1940 and

1941 for the syndicated Scripps-Howard Newspaper Alliance. It was later turned into a book. [Oddly enough the owner of the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain was anti-Roosevelt and anti-U.S. intervention.] The following are the words of reporter Pyle, known to millions as Ernie Pyle. His words are inscribed from a last outpost of freedom, at that time the last major European country left free:

"...we left the city and its wreckage behind and were out in green country again. Every open field had something in it to keep enemy planes from landing. Some fields were crisscrossed with row after row of tall white poles. Others had rolls of wire. Some had shallow ditches. Some had mounds of earth piled up in rows so geometrically regular that you would have thought they were planting crops....

Every tree, every field, every cricket ground, every house and street seemed to be doing its bit. In the backyards of suburban homes along the railroad tracks there were somber marks of what war has done to the English way of life. I mean private bomb shelters; almost every backyard had one. From the train window a shelter looked like just a large mound of dirt....All this you must remember, was still a long way from London....

Now, dusk came on, and we could no longer see fields nor bomb shelters. The conductor came through and asked us to black out the compartment. The windows have black shades on rollers, which you pull down and hook at the bottom. The windows themselves are painted black except for a square in the middle, and this is fully covered when you pull the curtain. A faint blue light shines at the top of the compartment.

Thus, we rode on toward London [by train]....

Coventry represents to Americans, and to most Englishmen too, the all-out one-night blitz at its worst. Many other cities have been blitzed since then, but Coventry remains the No. 1 example in our minds.

The Coventry blitz occurred on the night of November 14, 1940. I have read a great deal about it, and have seen many pictures of it. Further, I have seen so much hideous damage in London that you could no longer call me an amateur at viewing wreckage. However, when we drove into Coventry I was horrified.

We walked and drove around for three hours. And, late in the afternoon I realized that I had been saying to myself half out loud...over and over again like a chant: "My God, this is awful."

The center of Coventry is in ruins. All of the hotels are gone. A big newspaper office is a jumble of wilted presses and Linotype machines, with twisted steel girders sagging among them. There are not many public eating places left. You can stand on what used to be a main corner in downtown Coventry, and in three directions see nothing but waste. You can walk what was a street but, now you walk in ankle-deep mud....

Nobody has been able to put that night of Coventry's into words. The noise was fiendish. It seemed that the entire city was burning down. They say the final death toll was a little over 500. It seems almost impossible that the loss of life should have been no more than that, for Coventry is a city of a quarter of a million people.

The city had two mass burials, with more than 200 bodies in each. And such is Coventry's opinion of the Germans that they kept the time of the funerals secret...[many] were buried privately by their families. Scores of bodies were unidentified. The only way the death of some of the people was known was from the fact that their families never saw them again. I feel certain that they will still be finding bodies in Coventry long after the war is over, when the final removal of tumbled debris is undertaken.

Daylight found Coventry in a daze. I have friends in Birmingham who were here by dawn. As they drove into town they found people leaving the city by any means at hand. My friends say the look of horror in the faces of these people was something they can never forget. Everyone was stunned. YOU COULD ASK A SIMPLE QUESTION and they either did not know the answer or would just stare at you. Their minds seemed dead...most of Coventry ruins will have to lie where they are until peace comes. Coventry will not look like a normal city again until many years after the war.



Any American apprehended overseas in a foreign uniform could receive a stiff penalty of \$20,000, 10 years and loss of citizenship. Before December Seventh, three squadrons of swift fighter pilots, mostly sneaky volunteer Americans, were covertly flying in the Royal Air Force, in the "Eagle" squadron.

	Men who took part	Men killed
United Kingdom	2,331	418
Poland	144	30
New Zealand	129	14
Canada	91	19
Czechoslova- kia	87	7
Belgium	27	6
Australia	21	14
South Africa	22	9
Free France	14	0
Ireland	10	0
United States	9	2
Southern Rho- desia	2	0
Jamaica	1	0
Palestine	1	0

Nationalities of the world who flew with the Royal Air Force in the summer of 1940.

Poison gas drills are held in various suburbs. Recent tests showed some masks out of fit—gas gets in through the side. Four hundred masks a day are being lost or left on subway trains. The newspapers continually berate the public about not carrying masks, yet not one person in a hundred does it.

The whole spirit of the war is different from that of the [first] World War. Over here there doesn't seem to be the pumped-up, hysterical hatred that we had for Germany in the World War. I've heard Germans referred to as "the Boche" only once in London. You don't hear atrocity stories told around here about the Germans...the spirit of bravery in the face of death is different in this war too. You all remember, or at least have read about, the eat-drink-and-be-merry-for-tomorrow-we-die attitude of soldiers on leave...champagne and girls and on with the dance while there's still time.

That is not true in this war. There is night life in London, but not that daredevil kind of night life. Late parties are rare. Drunkenness is not common. Allied soldiers on leave act much like civilians in peacetime. For in this war it isn't the soldiers who may die tomorrow—it's the people.

Maybe you would like to hear something about Americans in England. Well, there are approximately 4000 of them. If you would tell that to any individual American who lives

To coordinate the national economic segments in the war and to keep the strength of the national and American hemispheric defense, various agencies were set up to supplement the work of the Federal, State and local governments in the mobilization program.

National Defense Research Committee, created June 27, 1940, to correlate and support scientific research on mechanisms and devices of warfare.

Selected Service Act, created by Act approved September 16, 1940, extended August 12, 1941; extension passed by one vote. Act to provide needed personnel for the mobilization program. Selectees were strictly meant to serve in the Western Hemisphere.

Office of Production Management (OPM), created January 7, 1941, to increase, accelerate and regulate the production and supply of materials, articles and equipment, and the provision of emergency plant facilities and services required for the national defense.

Office of Lend-Lease Administration, created under Act approved March 11, 1941, and Executive Order of October 28, 1941, to provide for the manufacture, procurement, lending, leasing, transferring or selling of defense articles for export.

Office of Price Administration (OPA), created April 11, 1941, with the maintenance of relative price stability and protection of the consumer.

Office of Scientific Research and Development, created June 28, 1941, for scientific and related research activities. Organized under OSRD, the Committee of Medical Research had its directive to "initiate and support scientific research on medical problems affecting the national defense".

Office of Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, created July 30, 1941, to further the national defense and to strengthen relations among the countries of the Western

APPENDICES

“To Defend a Way of Life”

May 16, 1940

These are ominous days—days whose swift and shocking developments force every neutral nation to look to its defenses in the light of new factors. The brutal force of modern offensive war has been loosed in all its horror.

New powers of destruction, incredibly swift and ready, have been developed; and those who wield them are ruthless and daring.

No old defense is so strong that it requires no further strengthening, and no attack is so unlikely or impossible that it may be ignored.

Let us examine, without self-deception, the dangers which confront us. Let us measure our strength and our defense without self-delusion.

The clear fact is that the American people must recast their thinking about national protection. Motorized armies can now sweep through enemy territories at the rate of 200 miles a day. Parachute troops are dropped from airplanes in large numbers behind enemy lines. Troops are landed from planes in open fields, on wide highways and at local civil airports.

We have seen the treacherous use of the “fifth column” by which persons supposed to be peaceful visitors were actually a part of an enemy unit of occupation. Lightning attacks, capable of destroying airplane factories and munition works hundreds of miles behind the lines, are part of the new technique of modern war.

The element of surprise which has ever been an important tactic in warfare has become the more dangerous because of the amazing speed with which modern equipment can reach and attack the enemy’s country.

Your own vital interests are widespread. More than ever the protection of the whole American hemisphere against invasion or control or domination by non-American nations has the united support of the twenty-one American republics, including the

United States. More than ever in the past this protection calls for ready-at-hand weapons capable of great mobility because of the potential speed of modern attack.

Let me analyze for a moment:

The Atlantic and Pacific Oceans were reasonably adequate defensive barriers when fleets under sail could move at an average speed of five miles an hour.

But, the new element-air navigation-steps up the speed of possible attack to 200 or 300 miles an hour. Furthermore, it brings the new possibilities of the use of nearer bases from which an attack or attacks on the American Continents could be made. From the fjords of Greenland it is four hours by air to Newfoundland, five hours to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and to the Province of Quebec, and only six hours to New England.

The Azores are only 2,000 miles from parts of our Eastern seaboard, and if Bermuda fell into hostile hands it is a matter of less than three hours for modern bombers to reach our shores.

From a base in the outer West Indies the coast of Florida could be reached in 200 minutes.

The islands off the west coast of Africa are only 1,500 miles from Brazil. Modern planes starting from the Cape Verde Islands can be over Brazil in seven hours.

And Para, Brazil, near the mouth of the Amazon River, is but four flying hours to Caracas, Venezuela; and Venezuela but two and one-half hours to Tampico, Mexico; and Tampico is two and one-quarter hours to St. Louis, Kansas City and Omaha.

On the other side of the continent, Alaska, with a white population of only 30,000 people, is within four or five hours of flying distances to Vancouver, Seattle, Tacoma and Portland. The islands of the Southern Pacific are not too far removed from the west coast of South America to prevent them from becoming bases of enormous strategic advantage to attacking forces.

Surely the developments of the past few weeks have made it clear to all our citizens that the possibility of attack on vital American zones ought to make it essential that we have the physical, the ready ability to meet those attacks and to prevent them

from reaching their objectives.

This means military implements-not on paper-which are ready and available to meet any lightning offensive against our American interest. It means also that facilities for production must be ready to turn out munitions and equipment at top speed.

We have the lesson before us over and over again-nations that were not ready and were unable to get ready found themselves overrun by the enemy. So-called impregnable fortifications no longer exist. A defense which allows an enemy to consolidate his approach without hindrance will lose. A defense which makes no effective effort to destroy the lines of supplies and communications of the enemy will lose.

An effective defense by its very nature requires the equipment to attack the aggressor on his route before he can establish strong bases within the territory of American vital interest.

Loose talking and loose thinking on the part of some may give the false impression that our American Army and Navy are not first-rate, or that money has been wasted on them.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

Here are facts:

In recent years the defensive power of our Army, Navy and Marine Corps has been very greatly improved. The Navy is stronger today than at any time in the nation's history. Today also a large program of new construction is well under way. Ship for ship, ours are equal to, or better than, the vessels of any foreign power.

And the Army likewise. This may not be known but it is a fact. It is today at its greatest peacetime strength. Its equipment in quality and quantity has been greatly increased and improved. The National Guard and the reserve strength of the two services are better equipped and better prepared than during any other peacetime period.

On the other side of the picture, we must visualize the outstanding fact that since the first day of September, 1939, every week that has passed has brought new lessons learned from actual combat on land and sea.

I cite examples. Where naval ships have operated without adequate protection by defending aircraft, their vulnerability to air attack has of course increased. All nations are hard at work studying the need of additional anti-craft protection.

Several months ago the use of a new type of magnetic mine made many unthinking people believe that all surface ships were doomed. Within a few weeks a successful defensive device against these mines was placed in operation; and it is a fact that the sinkings of merchant ships by torpedo, by mine and by airplane are definitely much lower than during the similar period in 1915.

Combat conditions have changed even more rapidly in the air. With the amazing progress in the design of planes and engines, the airplane of a year ago is out of date now. It is too slow, it is improperly protected, it is too weak in gun power.

In types of planes we are not behind the other nations of the world. Many of the planes of the belligerent powers are at this moment not of the latest models. But, one belligerent power not only has many more planes than all their opponents combined, but also appears to have a weekly production capacity at the moment that is far greater than that of their opponents.

From the point of view of our own defense, therefore, great additional production capacity is our principal air requisite.

For the permanent record I ask the Congress not to take any action which would in any way hamper or delay the delivery of American-made planes to foreign nations which have ordered them or seek to purchase more planes. That, from the point of view of our own national defense, would be extremely shortsighted.

During the past year, American production capacity for war planes, including engines, has risen from approximately 6,000 planes a year to more than double that number, due in greater part to the placing of foreign orders here.

Our immediate problem is to superimpose on this production capacity.

I should like to see this nation geared up to the ability to turn out at least 50,000 planes a year. Yes, but I go further, I believe that this nation should plan at this time a program that will provide

us with 50,000 military and naval planes.

The ground forces of the Army may require the immediate speeding up of last winter's program to procure more equipment of all kinds, including motor transport and artillery, tanks, including anti-aircraft guns and full ammunition supplies. As you know, it had been planned to spread these requirements over the next three or four years. We should fill them at once.

And, so at this time I am asking the Congress immediately to appropriate a large sum of money for four primary purposes:

First, to procure the essential equipment of all kinds for a larger and thoroughly rounded-out Army;

Second, to replace or modernize all old Army and Navy equipment with the latest type of equipment;

Third, to increase production facilities for everything needed for the Army and Navy for national defense. For it is clear that we require the ability to turn out quickly infinitely greater supplies.

Fourth, to speed up to a twenty-four-hour basis all existing Army and Navy contracts, and all new contracts to be awarded. I ask for an immediate appropriation of \$896,000,000, and may I say that I hope there will be speed in giving the appropriations. That sum I would divide approximately as follows: 1. For the Army, \$546,000,000. 2. For the Navy and Marine Corps, \$250,000,000 3. To the President to provide for emergencies affecting the national security and defense, \$100,000,000.

In addition to the above sum, I ask for the authorization for the Army, Navy and Marine Corps to make contract obligations in the further sum of \$186,000,000.

And to the President an additional authorization to make contract obligations for \$100,000,000.

The total of authorization is, therefore, \$286,000,000.

It is my believe that a large part of the requested appropriation of \$100,000,000, and the requested authorization of \$100,000,000 to the President, will be used principally for the increase of production of airplanes, anti-craft guns and the training of additional personnel for these weapons.

And, may I point out that these requests for appropriations and

authorizations would be in addition to the direct estimates for these purposes in the other items requested.

The proposed details of the appropriations and authorizations asked for will be given to the committees of the Congress.

These estimates do not, of course, duplicate any item now in the pending war and Navy appropriation bills for the fiscal year 1941. Nor so they include supplemental or deficiency estimates which may become necessary by reason of pending legislation or shortage of funds under existing legal programs.

There are some who say that democracy cannot cope with the new techniques of government developed in recent years by some countries-by a few countries which deny the freedoms which we maintain are essential to our democratic way of life. That I reject. I know that trained officers and men know more about fighting and the weapons and equipment needed for fighting than any of us laymen; and I have confidence in our officers and men.

I know that to cope with present dangers we must be strong in heart and mind; strong in our faith-strong in faith in our way of living.

I, too, pray for peace-that the ways of aggression and force may be banished from the earth-but I am determined to face the fact realistically that this nation requires also a toughness of moral and physical fiber. Those qualities, I am convinced, the American people hold to a high degree.

Our task is plain. The road we must take is clearly indicated. Our defenses must be invulnerable, our security absolute. But our defense as it was yesterday, or even as it is today does not provide security against potential developments and dangers of the future.

Defense can not be static. Defense must grow and change from day to day. Defense must be dynamic and flexible, an expression of the vital forces of the nation and of its resolute will to meet whatever challenge to future may hold. For these reasons, I need hardly assure you that after the adjournment of this session of congress, I will not hesitate to call the Congress into special session if at any time the situation of the national defense requires it. And the Congress and the Chief Executive constitute a team where

the defense of the land is concerned.

Our ideal-yours and mine, the ideal of almost every man, woman and child in the country-our objective is still peace - peace at home and peace abroad.

Nevertheless, we stand ready not only to spend millions for defense but, to give our service and even our lives for the maintenance of our American liberties.

Our security is not a matter of weapons alone. The arm that wields them must be strong, the eye that guides them clear, the will that directs them indomitable.

These are the characteristics of a free people, a people devoted to the institutions they themselves have built, a people willing to defend a way of life that is precious to them all, a people who put their faith in God.

THE TRI-PARTITE PACT BETWEEN JAPAN, GERMANY AND
ITALY

Berlin, signed September 27, 1940

The Governments of Japan, Germany and Italy, considering it as the condition precedent to any lasting peace that all nations of the world be given each its own proper place, have decided to stand by and cooperate with one another in regard to their efforts in Greater East Asia and the regions of Europe, respectively, wherein it is their prime purpose to establish and maintain a new order of things calculated to promote the mutual prosperity and welfare of the people concerned. Furthermore, it is the desire of the three Governments to extend cooperation to such nations in other spheres of the world as may be inclined to put forth endeavors along lines similar to their own, in order that their ultimate aspirations for world peace may thus be realized. Accordingly the Governments of Japan, Germany, and Italy have agreed as follows: