

The Battle of Britain Anniversary

IWM Duxford

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USPA NEWS - IWM Duxford is Britain's best-preserved Second World War airfield, with a fascinating history that dates back to the First World War. Its story reflects the landmark achievements made in aviation history.

IWM Duxford, close to Cambridge, is Britain's best-preserved Second World War fighter station with a remarkable history that dates back to its establishment in 1918. This famous heritage site began life as an airfield during the latter stages of the First World War. It went on to play a vital role during the Second World War, firstly as an RAF fighter station during the Battle of Britain and later as a United States Army Air Force fighter base. IWM Duxford is still a working airfield today from which historic aircraft fly on a daily basis.

The Battle of Britain (German: Luftschlacht um England, literally "Air battle for England") is the name given to the Second World War air campaign waged by the German Air Force (Luftwaffe) against the United Kingdom during the summer and autumn of 1940. The Battle of Britain was the first major campaign to be fought entirely by air forces, and was also the largest and most sustained aerial bombing campaign to that date.

... What General Weygand has called The Battle of France is over. The battle of Britain is about to begin. Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilisation. Upon it depends our own British life and the long continuity of our institutions and our Empire. The whole fury and might of the enemy must very 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 uplands. 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 made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of a perverted science. Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that, if the British Empire and its Commonwealth last for a thousand years, men will still say, "This was their finest hour".

""Winston Churchill

Winston Churchill summed up the effect of the battle and the contribution of Fighter Command with the words, "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few". Pilots who fought in the battle have been known as The Few ever since; at times being specially commemorated on "Battle of Britain Day", the 15th of September. On this day in 1940, the Luftwaffe embarked on their largest bombing attack yet, forcing the engagement of the entirety of the RAF in defence of London and the South East, which resulted in a decisive British victory that proved to mark a turning point in Britain's favour.

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