

What was the Battle of Britain and how did it lead to the Blitz?



By 1940...

- Every country in brown was under German control.
- Every country in yellow was an ally of Germany.
- Every country in purple was neutral in the Second World War.
- The USSR (in red) had not joined in the war.
- The United Kingdom was alone in Europe.

Look at the map.

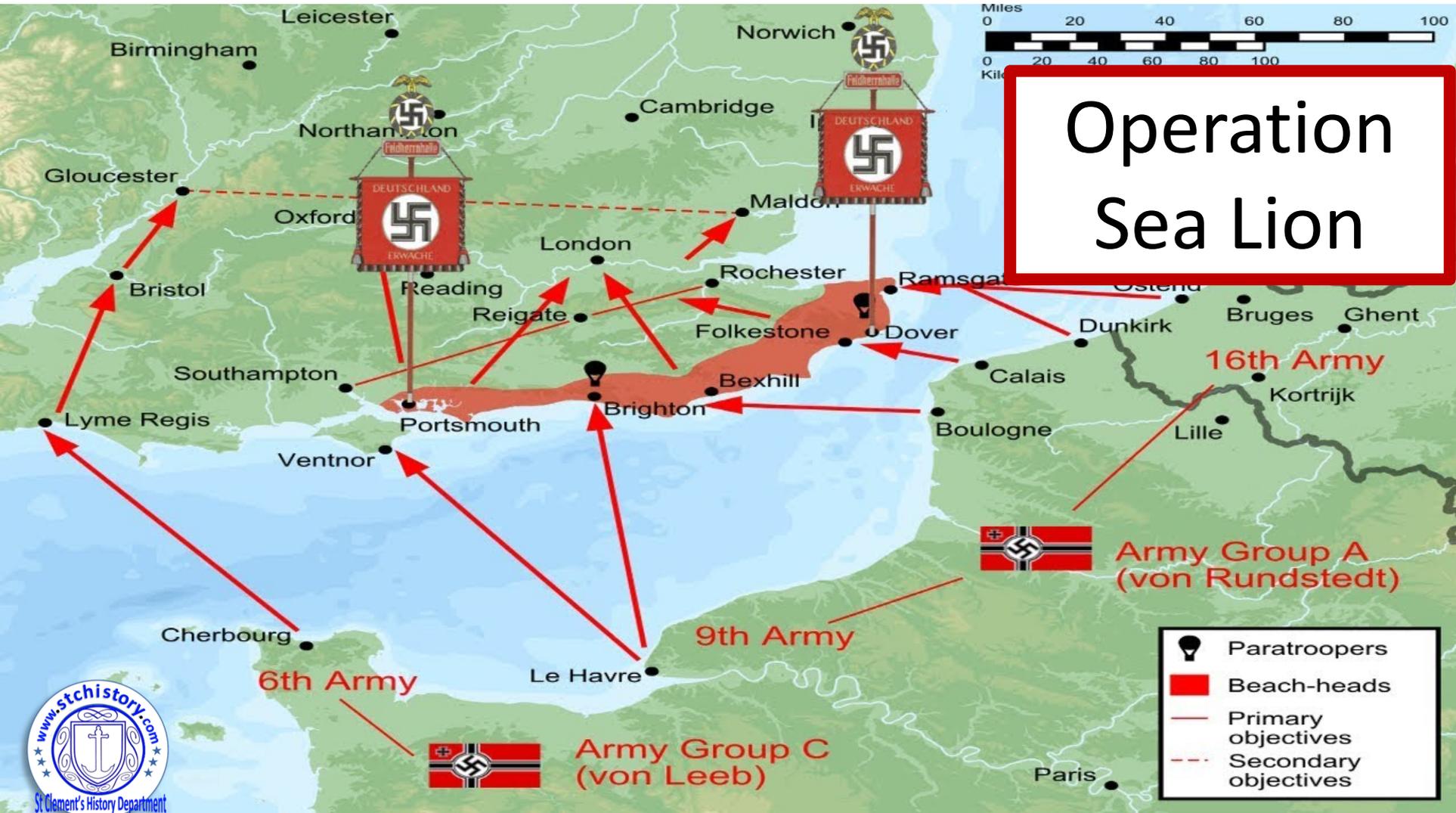
What advantage did the United Kingdom have that the other countries didn't?

Britain is an island. The German army and their tactic of Blitzkrieg had proved almost unstoppable on mainland Europe. The English Channel was an obstacle to them doing the same here.



Operation Sea Lion was the German name for the planned invasion of Britain. Before an invasion could be launched, Germany had to gain air and sea superiority or their transport ships would be vulnerable to attack as they crossed the English Channel.

The Battle of Britain is the name we have given to the battle for air superiority over the skies of Britain in 1940.



The main planes of the Luftwaffe in the Battle of Britain



MESSERSCHMITT BF 109



Max Speed: 575kph

Weapons: Two machine guns mounted on the engine and two cannons on the wings

Crew: Pilot only

Recognition: This fast, shark-like plane had square-tipped wings and a bright yellow nose. It was the most deadly and feared of all the German aircraft.

MESSERSCHMITT BF 110



Max Speed: 562kph

Weapons: Four machine guns and two cannons in the nose, one rear-firing machine gun in cockpit

Crew: Pilot and gunner

Recognition: Heavily armed and able to fly long distances, this twin-engined plane was slow and clumsy to turn and was an easy target for the RAF fighters.

HEINKEL HE 111



Max Speed: 398kph

Weapons: Three machine guns in the nose, top and belly; 2000kg of bombs

Crew: Pilot, gunner and bomb-aimer

Recognition: The most common German bomber, the Heinkel was slow, lightly armed and had large sections of glass over the cockpit. This allowed the pilot to see clearly – but offered no protection from a hail of bullets. When they did get past the RAF, they inflicted heavy damage on British airfields, towns and cities.

The Battle of Britain saw the Luftwaffe (German air force) attempt to destroy British airfields as well as British planes whilst they were still on the ground, in order to gain air superiority. The German bombers were escorted by fighter aircraft.

The main planes of the RAF in the Battle of Britain

HAWKER HURRICANE



Max Speed: 528kph

Weapons: Eight machine guns mounted on wings

Crew: Pilot only

Recognition: A short, sturdy plane with a wooden body (fuselage) that could turn sharply and take a lot of damage before the pilot had to 'bail out'. The Hurricane was the most common RAF fighter and shot down more German aircraft than the Spitfire.

SUPERMARINE SPITFIRE



Max Speed: 583kph

Weapons: Eight machine guns mounted on wings

Crew: Pilot only

Recognition: Sleek and beautiful, the Spitfire is one of the most famous planes in the world. It was fast, handled extremely well, and was more than a match for the German fighters.

RAF (Royal Air Force) fighters were scrambled to intercept them, leading to **dog fights** over the skies of Britain.

The **Spitfire** was the most famous and effective British fighter, but the **Hurricane**, built in much larger numbers at the beginning of the war, was responsible for the most aerial victories.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2LFk_j7u8LM



Why did Britain win the Battle of Britain?

Look at your information sheet. There are ten facts about the Battle of Britain.

You'll need 3 highlighters / colours

KEY

Very Important



Quite Important



Less Important



Read the information and highlight each box within your categories above

This task is subjective, but be prepared to justify what you have decided.

Challenge: Can you identify which of your facts are advantages for the Nazis?

Write a paragraph arguing, in YOUR opinion why Britain won the 'Battle of Britain'. Your argument will probably contain the information you decided was VERY important...

**“NEVER WAS SO MUCH
OWED BY SO MANY
TO SO FEW”**
THE PRIME MINISTER



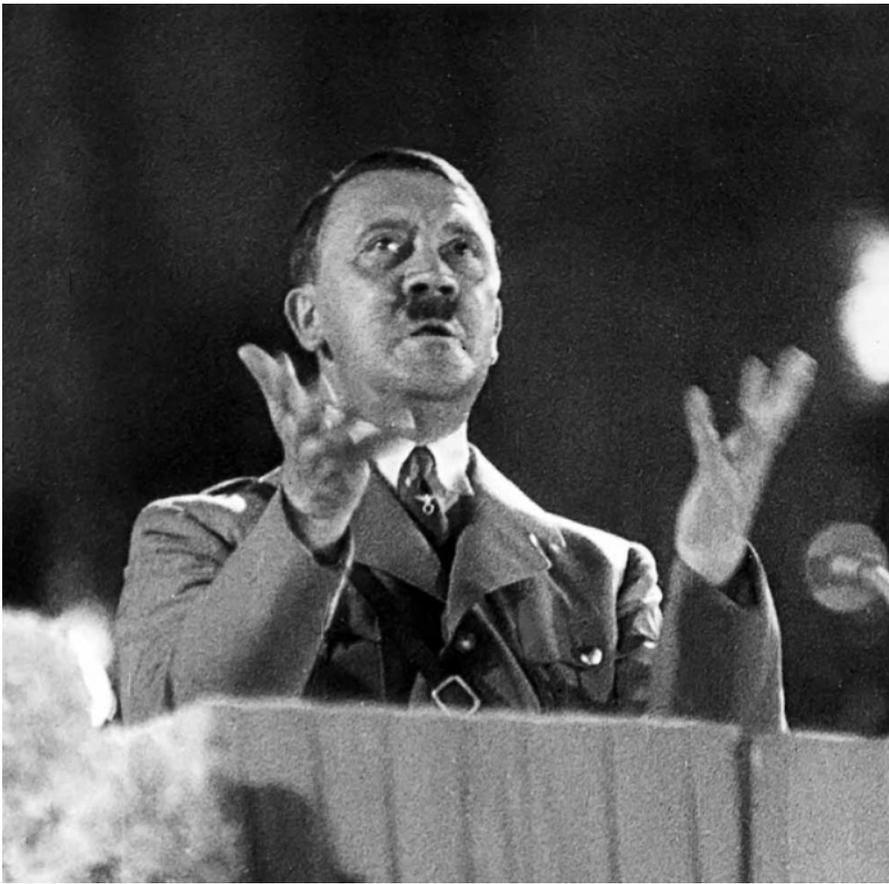
“The Few”

What does Churchill mean by this quote?

The Battle of Britain ended the possibility of a German invasion.

Do you think he is right?

- Speech by Winston Churchill given to Parliament, 20th August 1940



Following the Nazi's defeat, Hitler began a bombing campaign on Britain that would last for 8 months... The Blitz...