

# DOWN IN FLAMES CAMPAIGN

## Battle of Britain Day – 15 September 1940

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**I**n August 1940 the Royal Air Force attacked targets in Germany, in retaliation for bombs that had fallen on London. The move enraged Hitler, who ordered a massive bombardment to be unleashed against London by way of reprisal. The new phase in the battle of Britain opened on 7 September, when several hundred bombers attacked the dock areas to the east of the city, causing severe damage and several large fires. In the week that followed there were three further daylight attacks on the capital. For the fifth action in the series, to take place on Sunday 15 September, the *Luftwaffe* planned to deliver two separate attacks on the city, both with a strong escort of fighters, with a further two attacks against targets on the south coast. The resultant action would mark the climax of the Battle of Britain.

In ascending order of importance, the raids play as follows:

### Mission 1. Factory Target

(Target-Bound 9 • Home-Bound 8)  
Supermarine aircraft works at Southampton

#### German:

Elements of *Erprobungsgruppe* 210  
• Bf109E, Bf110C, *Flak guns*  
(both elements carrying bombs)

#### British:

Elements of No. 607 Squadron  
• Hurricane I (HB phase only)

### Mission 2. Supply Depot Target

(Target-Bound 8 • Home-Bound 7)

#### German:

Elements of *Kampfgeschwader* 55  
• (4) He111's, *Deceptive course*

#### British:

Elements of No. 152 Squadron  
• Spitfire I (TB phase only)

### Mission 3. Railyard Target

(Target-Bound 8 • Home-Bound 7)  
Battersea railway network in London

#### German:

Elements of *Kampfgeschwader* 76 and *Lehrgeschwader* 2  
• (4) Do17's, *Tight Formations*  
• Bf109E (TB phase only)  
• Bf109E with bombs (Bomb phase only)

#### British:

Elements of No. 10, 11 and 12 Group squadrons.  
• Spitfire I, Hurricane I,  
*Ramming attacks* (TB phase only)  
• Hurricane I (HB phase only)  
*Late arrival* (HB phase only)

### Mission 4. Factory Target

(Target-Bound 8 • Home-Bound 7)  
Port of London dockyards

#### German:

Elements of *Kampfgeschwader* 53, 2, and 56  
• (4) He111's, (2) Do17s, *Vital target*  
• Bf109E (Galland) *Fighter sweep vs. Hurricane I element*  
• Bf109E (TB phase only)  
• Bf109E (HB phase only)

#### British:

Massed elements of No. 10, 11 and 12 Group squadrons.  
• Spitfire I (Bader), Hurricane I, Hurricane I (TB phase only)  
*Clouds over target*  
• Hurricane I, Hurricane I (HB phase only)

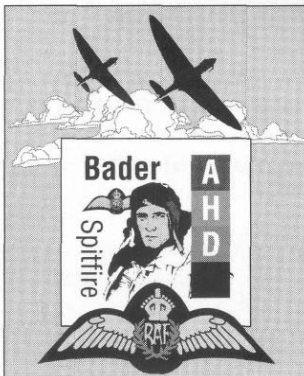
### Special Rules

1. Medium bombers can only bomb at medium level.
2. Fighter bombers can only bomb at low level, and thus may not strafe.
3. The *Ramming attack* option can only be used against a bomber.
4. Very High and Very Low levels are not in play.
5. No skilled pilots are available except for those designated.
6. Pilots may only discard cards from their hand when enemy planes are currently in play.

### Optional Rules

1. No fighter plane (except those

Air Group Performance		
German VP – British VP = Net VP		
Net VP	German	British
31 or More	Extraordinary	Dismal
11 to 30	Outstanding	Miserable
-10 to 10	Good	Poor
-11 to -25	Historical	Historical
-26 to -40	Miserable	Good
-41 to -55	Poor	Outstanding
-56 or Less	Dismal	Extraordinary



# The Rise of the Luftwaffe: Battle of Britain Day

carrying bombs ) may voluntarily begin a phase at low level.

2. When first deciding initiative, if one side has any fighter planes at a higher level than another, the higher side may opt to re-flip the initiative counter. If they elect to do so, they must then accept the subsequent decision.

## Aftermath

In the course of the hard-fought series of actions on 15 September 1940, the *Luftwaffe* lost a total of 56 fighters and bombers. RAF Fighter Command lost 29 aircraft. At the time the defenders claimed the destruction of 185 German planes, the largest of many huge overclaims that were made during the Battle of Britain. Because of this exaggeration, 15 September has come to be commemorated as *Battle of Britain Day*. In fact that date did mark the decisive point in the Battle, though for a different reason. The strength of Fighter Command's reaction during the two actions around London convinced Hitler that the *Luftwaffe* could not gain air superiority before the weather broke that autumn. On 17 September he ordered that *Operation Sealion*, the planned invasion of southern England, be postponed "indefinitely". The ships and barges assembled for the enterprise at ports along the Channel coast began to slip away to resume their normal tasks. With each week that passed the threat of invasion lessened, never to return. Although it was chosen for the wrong reason, the date commemorated by the British public for the deliverance of the nation was the correct one.

## Campaign Designer's Notes

It was the *Down in Flames* series of games that finally inspired me to apply my creative talents to scenario design. Before that time, though always an enthusiast of the WWII air theatre, I had never found a game that accurately recreated for me, in an enjoyable fashion, that hectic melee in the sky that was dog-fighting. Most board and table top games relied on a mind numbingly complex routine of mapping out maneuvers in advance, plotting them simultaneously and then working out opportunities for

firing and tailing at the end. Games could drag on for ages and were usually to the last man. This time consuming process seemed completely at odds with what I had read about the fast, furious, indeed often very brief and inconclusive nature of the air war. Moreover, many games found it extremely difficult to represent the three dimensional aspect of the combat. Often it required the laborious notation of specific height levels. Equally often one dimension was simply ignored, leading to the notorious "gliding ducks" analogy. The advent of GMT's **The Rise of the Luftwaffe** changed all that.

Here in a simple format was the solution. A card game that evoked the speed of decision required by fighter pilots, combined with an elementary but effective method of distinguishing height, whilst still representing the various capabilities of different aircraft. The design notes of the game explain perfectly the concepts I am trying to get across, so I shall not repeat them here. Suffice to say, here was a combat simulation I felt it would be a joy to contribute to in some way. I hope my campaign-*Battle of Britain Day* - does so. If it goes down well I may try turning my hand again to scenario design.

Most of the research revolved around one book - *Battle of Britain Day* by Alfred Price. In it he provides a fully detailed account of the days activities, and I recommend it as a valuable resource. Other books I used for reference were more general, and about the Battle of Britain as a whole. The specific missions, formations, pilots and planes all conform as closely as playability allows to the events of the day. The first two missions are relatively very quick, and are usually inconclusive. This is intended. They mainly serve to satisfy historical integrity, but do lead up nicely to the *meat* of the campaign during the attacks on London. Balancing the whole package was naturally the hardest part, and it is only after rigorous playtesting (many thanks to my friend and regular opponent, Aosaf Afzal, for helping with that) that I announce it

fair. I hope you find it so.

Let me explain the reasoning behind some of the special rules. Those restricting medium and fighter bombers to specific height levels were introduced for historical accuracy, as was a rule forcing ramming attacks only to take place against bombers. I also didn't think it appropriate for the *Very High* and *Very Low* levels to be in play at this stage of the war. However, the other rule change in this section I devised to remedy what I have often felt is a very unbalancing factor in most scenarios - the random skilled pilot draw. When Galland suddenly appears in a Bf109, Allied players always get a little paler. What before appeared as a well balanced dogfight, can turn into a probable whitewash, just through a bit of luck. Of course, whilst luck is always a factor in war, I feel for quality of play and fine tuning of victory conditions it should in this instance be negated.

As for the optional rules, I aimed these towards both improving realism, and combatting gamesmanship. All fighter pilots knew that altitude - starting higher than the enemy - was of prime importance in determining victory. Quite literally, he who possessed it possessed the initiative. I don't think this is adequately reflected in the game, hence my amendment whereby the player with the highest fighters at start can re-flip the initiative counter if they wish. Also I have banned the all too familiar practice of starting *Low* during a dog fight in order to frustrate a superior enemy with a two level altitude difference. Pilots simply didn't do that. Lastly, I have abolished the possible loophole that allowed planes to freely re-jig their hand of cards during a lax part of the game in order to get a better mix. Sorry folks! The scenario really speaks for itself, so all I'll say for now is: *Enjoy!*

