

The Story Of Fighter Planes



By Kinara Goyal

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Fighter Planes

Fighter planes first caught my interest when I read a book about fictional fighter pilots during the world wars. I will give you a synopsis of the book later

Fighter Planes History

Models & Use Throughout Wars

Planes have been an important part of our history ever since the first propeller powered plane, created by the Wright Brothers came into existence in 1903.

As many other scientific discoveries, the airplane too was quickly co-opted for warfare.

Fighter aircraft were first used, in the Italo-Turkish war, in Libya, on October 23rd 1911. The flight was a one-hour long, reconnaissance mission conducted by the Italians. This flight was over enemy posts in Libya. A reconnaissance mission is a mission for gathering information,

a spy mission if used to find out about one's enemy.

Ever since that time more and more advanced fighter planes have been tested all over the world.

One year after the Italo-Turkish war ended in 1913, World War 1 started. During World War 1 the Sopwith Camel F-1 had the most kills to it's name. It was a British plane. The most famous German plane at the time, was the single-seater Fokker Eindecker.

During World War 2, the most famous British plane was the Supermarines Spitfire. For Germany it was the Messerschmitt Bf 109 and 10. And for America it was the P-51 D-1s.

During the 2nd World War, there were various types of fighters, including the lightweight fighters, the heavy bombers, light bombers which had some bombing capability but were mainly fighters, and the medium bombers which were mainly bombers but had more fighting ability than the heavy bombers.

Junkers Ju 88 and the Blackburn Stukas are examples of such bombers.

Heavy bombers were slow and nearly defenseless, so when completing operations they were only sent with a fleet of fighters. These bombers were mainly used for large scale bombing, like the time when the Americans bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In spite of their mass production during the World Wars, nowadays the nuclear powered guided missiles that can be equipped on light-weight and speedy fighter jets, have mostly replaced them.

Air Operations

Battle Of Britain

The Battle of Britain was a Nazi bombing campaign against the United Kingdom. The RAF (Royal Air Force), the FAA (Fleet Air Arm) and the Royal Navy fought to prevent the Luftwaffe which is the German Air force, from gaining air superiority. Air

superiority implies an advantage over enemies when it comes to air missions.

The Luftwaffe was hoping that after they gained air superiority the United Kingdom would agree to a peace treaty favouring the Axis powers. During the battle, there were many ground, air, and naval operations, but we will focus on the air operations only.

During the *Battle Of Britain*, *The Blitz*, an operation conducted by the Germans, was their main attempt, to gain air supremacy over the English channel. Air supremacy is the highest degree of air superiority.

This attempt to gain air superiority failed and the *Luftwaffe* lost a lot of aircraft.

The Blitz mostly damaged London although the bombing was conducted in the whole of the country. It is not clear how long *The Blitz* lasted but most [sources](#) agree that it started on 7th September 1940.

The main reason the Germans wanted air supremacy was to conduct *Operation Sea Lion*. To gain air superiority the *Luftwaffe* held major training programs, made new specialized weapons and even modified transport ships.

On 16th July 1940, Adolf Hitler announced the conditions for *Operation Sea Lion*. They were:

The RAF should be ‘beaten down’ so badly that they cannot make an aggressive move.

British mines were to be swept away and German mines were to block both sides of the Strait of Dover.

The coastal zone between occupied France and England must be bombed by heavy artillery.

The British squadrons must be damaged or destroyed by torpedoes.

Even though Hitler announced the *Battle of Britain* after *Operation Sea Lion*, the operation is still considered a part of the battle, because the battle campaign started before the operation was conducted. However, since the Germans failed to

gain air superiority, the operation was postponed by Hitler indefinitely.

Operation Strangle

After Benito Mussolini died in April 1945, the Germans implemented Operation Axis to prevent the Allied forces from getting a foot hold on Italy after Mussolini's execution.

The Italian Campaign is a series of four strikes conducted by the Allies, to rid the German army from Italy.

Operation Strangle was the fourth airstrike conducted by the allied forces to rid the German army from Italy. The goal of the mission was to bomb and destroy or damage all essential resources en route for the German army, thus forcing them to withdraw from Italy and prevent a ground attack in the U.K.

At first, the Allied powers did not want to send troops into German territory and that was why they executed a pure air operation.

The Allies failed in the overrated objective of the campaign, but they crippled the Germans enough to send troops into the German territory.

The bombing lasted 8 weeks. Throughout that time, supplies for the Germans could not be sent by railways or airplanes and they had to be sent by trucks, further inconveniencing the Germans.

Fighter Planes Through The Ages

Over the past hundred years fighter planes have not only lost their propellers and replaced them with jet engines, but they also have caught the attention of movie producers and video game creators. I have watched the movie Top Gun many times and my dad bought me a video game in which the player flies a jet plane.