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W W II

ALL THE KING'S MEN[™]

The British Empire's Finest Hour



By **BRIAN J. UNDERHILL**

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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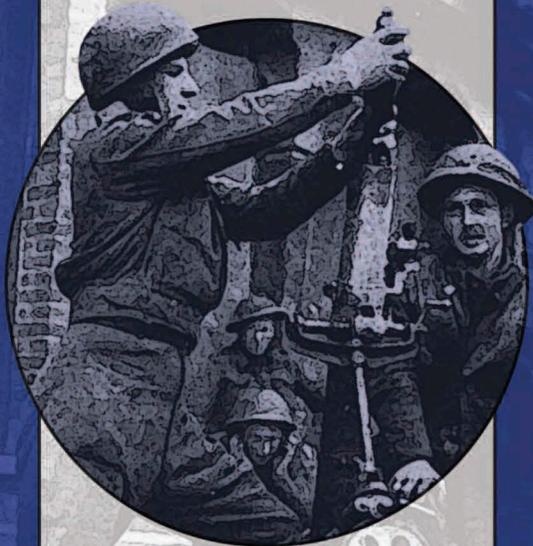
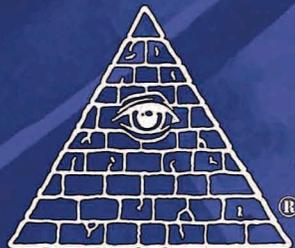
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WWII



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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION . . . 4

About GURPS 4

1. BRITAIN AT WAR 5

THE TERRIBLE TIMES 6

The Western Front 6

PICKING UP THE PIECES 7

A British Depression 7

A RELUCTANT REARMAMENT 8

The British Government 8

A FAMILIAR ROAD TO WAR 9

France 9

The Confetti War 9

Scandinavia 11

Occupation of the Channel Islands . . 11

The Altmark Incident 12

Battle of the Barents Sea 13

East Africa 14

Operation Gauntlet 14

The Mediterranean 15

Operation Ironclad 15

Southeast Asia and the Pacific 17

The Man Who Never Was 17

Force Viper 18

The Chindits 19

East Timor 19

THE NAVAL WAR 20

Convoy Operations 20

"Hurricats" 20

The English Channel 21

Article 16 21

The North Sea 22

Naval Battles in the Mediterranean . . 22

U-47 22

THE AIR WAR 23

The Battle of Britain 23

Radar 23

LIFE DURING WARTIME 25

Air Raid Precautions 26

The Lay of the Land 26

THE ROAD TO VICTORY 27

TIMELINE 27

VE Day 27

2. THE BRITISH ARMY 29

The United Kingdom 30

The Black Watch 31

Australia and New Zealand 32

Canada 32

India 33

South Africa 33

Foreign Soldiers 34

MILITARY ORGANIZATION 34

The Army 34

Military Academies 34

Regimental Designations 35

The BEF in WWII 37

The Royal Air Force 38

The Royal Navy 39

Special Units 40

Prisoners of War 40

MEDALS AND DECORATIONS 41

Military Intelligence 43

Codes and Ciphers 43

British Glossary 44

3. CHARACTERS . . 45

CREATING A CHARACTER 46

Daughters of Britain, Every One . . 46

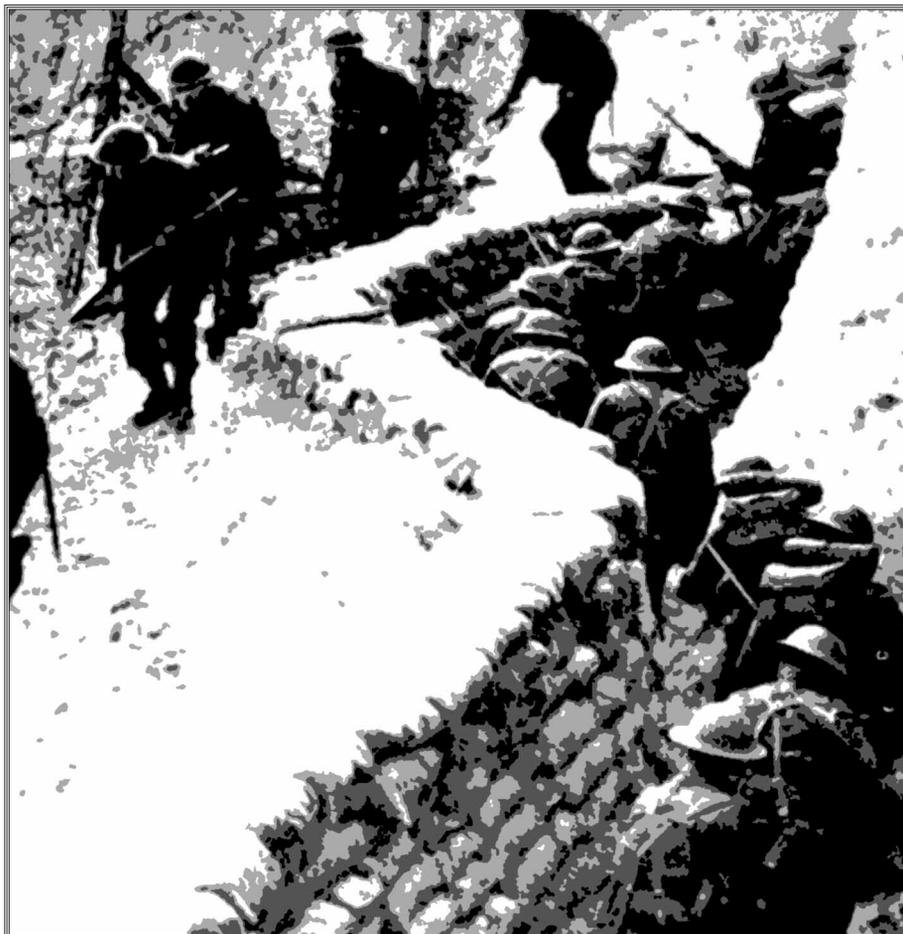
ADVANTAGES, DISADVANTAGES

AND SKILLS 46

Advantages 46

GURPS British Military Ranks 47





Operation Crusader	98
<i>Special Forces in the Desert</i>	98
ROMMEL'S SECOND CAMPAIGN	101
The Gazala Line	101
<i>Lili Marlene</i>	101
THE BATTLE OF EL ALAMEIN	103
<i>The Dreaded 76.2s</i>	103
OPERATION TORCH	105
Western Morocco	106
Oran	107
<i>Green U.S. Troops</i>	107
Algiers	108
Success	108
LAST STAND IN TUNISIA	108
Kasserine Pass	109
The Mareth Line	110
Tunis	110
Aftermath	111
THE MIDDLE EASTERN FRONT	112
PALESTINE	112
The Haganah	113
<i>The Peel Commission</i>	113
IRAQ	114
The Battle of Habbaniya	114
<i>Moshe Dayan</i>	114
<i>The Golden Square</i>	114
Iraqi Surrender	115
<i>Middle East Forces</i>	115
THE FRENCH LEVANT	116
Operation Exporter	116
IRAN	117
Operation Countenance	117

Disadvantages	47
CHARACTER TEMPLATES	48
Spiv	48
Intelligence Agent	49
Gurkha Soldier	50
Long Range Desert Group Trooper	51
<i>Refugee Characters</i>	51
Major Personalities	52
Other Figures	55

4. THE BRITISH ARMORY 58

PERSONAL GEAR	59
<i>Lend-Lease</i>	59
SMALL ARMS	60
British Small Arms Table	60
Weapon Descriptions	61
<i>Home Guard Weapons</i>	61
<i>Bren Gun Maintenance</i>	64
VEHICLE DESIGN	65
New Weapons	65
<i>Weapon Modules Table</i>	66
<i>Vehicular Weapons Table</i>	67
THE MOTOR POOL	68
Vehicles Key	68
25-Pounder Towed Artillery	69
Bedford Cargo Truck	70
Daimler Scout Car (Dingo)	70
Humber Armored Car	71
Bren (Universal) Carrier	72

Light Tank Mark VI	73
Infantry Tank Valentine	73
Cruiser Tank Crusader	74
Infantry Tank Matilda	75
Infantry Tank Churchill	76
Hawker Hurricane	77
Supermarine Spitfire	78
de Havilland Mosquito	79
Avro Lancaster	80
Handley Page Halifax	81
Short Sunderland	82
<i>HMS Hood</i>	83
<i>King George V-Class Battleship</i>	84
<i>Southampton-Class Cruiser</i>	85
G-Class Destroyer	86
Fairmile Motor Launch	87

5. THE AFRICAN CAMPAIGNS . . . 88

NORTH AFRICA	89
Desert Warfare	89
<i>Life in the Desert</i>	89
BATTLE FOR CYRENAICA	90
The Italian Invasion	91
Operation Compass	91
From Bardia to Benghazi	92
<i>Why Did They Lose?</i>	93
ROMMEL IN THE DESERT	95
The Battle of Tobruk	96
Wavell Strikes Back	97

6. CAMPAIGNS . . 118

CAMPAIGN STYLE	119
War is Hell!	119
Realistically Gritty	119
<i>British Understatement</i>	119
High Adventure	120
CAMPAIGN UNITS	120
His Majesty's Men	120
Special Units	120
<i>Cinematic Rules</i>	120
<i>Hill 71</i>	121
<i>Silencing the Guns</i>	121
CAMPAIGN THEATERS	122
France	122
Scandinavia	122
The Middle East	122
North Africa	123
<i>Beginning of the End</i>	123
TOBRUK: A DESERT CAMPAIGN	124
The Mediterranean	125
China-Burma-India	125
The Air War	125
The High Seas	125
The Home Front	125
<i>Wolf Hunters</i>	125

REFERENCES . . . 126

INDEX 127

INTRODUCTION

The English used to boast that the sun never sets on the British Empire. For the centuries leading up to WWII, that was a geographic reality that made Britain the envy of other would-be superpowers. In a crisis, the United Kingdom could draw upon far-flung colonies, protectorates, and commonwealths for men and material. The nation would never have to stand alone.

And yet, it did. In a sense, the British themselves started WWII, by finally saying “enough” to Hitler’s increasing aggression. Though much of the British Empire – including nations that long enjoyed enough independence to say no if they wanted to – and France joined this war against Nazi Germany within days, the United Kingdom held center stage in the early Allied war effort. Within a year, with the fall of France, it all but had the stage to itself. Its distant offspring could offer little more than moral support as the island nation faced a seemingly invincible German military machine.

The British did not blink. In the war’s darkest days, they alone kept the Allied torch burning, fully expecting to die as a free people rather than survive as a beaten one. In December 1941, the United States entered the war and Britain gained hope – but Japanese aggression also forced Britain to fight for its colonies. Just as the threat to Britain itself ebbed, the threat to the rest of the empire grew.

This led the British into a truly world war, ranging from Scandinavia to Burma, France to New Guinea. While these British forces consisted largely of true Brits, many of them

hailed from the far corners of the empire. Commonwealth troops included ANZACs from Australia and New Zealand, who forged reputations for rugged determination in the African sands. Canadians stormed the beaches at Normandy. Nepalese Gurkhas proved themselves fierce time and again. Though *All the King’s Men* focuses on Great Britain and its men, these Commonwealth troops also receive the attention that they deserve.

Though there were several embarrassing defeats for the British forces, in the end the nation stood triumphant at the cost of more than 300,000 fighting men and 60,000 civilians. Victory came as much from Churchill’s inspirational speeches and civilian endurance on the home front as from the efforts of the soldiers who gave all in some nightmarish, flea-infested colonial front. It’s hard to say what Hitler’s destiny would have been without the British as a constant thorn in his side, but certainly life around the world would not be the same if not for the “blood, sweat, and tears” of this island folk.

About the Author

Brian J. Underhill has been writing for Steve Jackson Games since 1989. He is well known as the author of *GURPS Cliffhangers* and *GURPS SWAT*, and has written or contributed to many other *GURPS* supplements, including several books in the *GURPS WWII* line. More information is available at www.brianunderhill.com.

ABOUT GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources include:

Pyramid (www.sjgames.com/pyramid/). Our online magazine includes new *GURPS* rules and articles. It also covers *Dungeons and Dragons*, *Traveller*, *World of Darkness*, *Call of Cthulhu*, and many more top games – and other Steve Jackson Games releases like *In Nomine*, *Illuminati*, *Car Wars*, *Toon*, *Ogre Miniatures*, and more. *Pyramid* subscribers also have access to playtest files online!

New supplements and adventures. *GURPS* continues to grow, and we’ll be happy to let you know what’s new. For a current catalog, send us a legal-sized or 9”x12” SASE – please use two stamps! – or visit www.warehouse23.com.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata sheets for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are available on our website – see below.

Gamer input. We value your comments, for new products as well as updated printings of existing titles!

Internet. Visit us on the World Wide Web at www.sjgames.com for errata, updates, Q&A, and much more. *GURPS* has its own Usenet group, too: rec.games.frp.gurps.

GURPSnet. This e-mail list hosts much of the online discussion of *GURPS*. To join, point your web browser to www.sjgames.com/mailman/listinfo/gurpsnet-l/.

The *GURPS WWII: All the King’s Men* web page is at www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/ww2/allthekingsmen/.

Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the *GURPS Basic Set* – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition*. Page references that begin with CI indicate *GURPS Compendium I*. Other references are CII to *Compendium*

II, W to *WWII*, W:D to *WWII: Dogfaces*, W:GL to *WWII: Grim Legions*, W:HS to *WWII: Hand of Steel*, W:IC to *WWII: Iron Cross*, and W:RH to *WWII: Return to Honor*. The abbreviation for *this* book is W:AKM. For a full list of abbreviations, see p. CI181 or the updated web list at www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html.

Tommies

British soldiers were often called “Tommies.” The tradition started in 1815, when the first pay book was introduced into the army, and the name Tommy Atkins was used in the sample, much like the American use of the name John Smith or John Q. Public. The name Tommy was soon applied to British soldiers everywhere.

BRITISH GLOSSARY

The following is a short glossary of terms used in *All the King's Men* and often heard in British military life.

ANZAC: Australian New Zealand army corps. Often used as a generic term for Australian and New Zealander ground forces in general (p. 32).

Andrew, the: The Royal Navy, as known to its sailors and Royal Marines.

ARP: Air raid precautions.

ATS: Auxiliary Territorial Service. The indirect descendant of the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps of WWI. The majority of ATS jobs involved cleaning, mess duties, and driving. ATS personnel sometimes acted as military police, radio-intercept operators, and anti-aircraft-gun crews. As such, ATS women sometimes saw service on the continent after D-Day. Queen Elizabeth – though a princess at the time – served as a truck driver with the ATS.

blighty: Home, or a wound serious enough to get a soldier shipped there.

char: Tea. Also called “having a wet” or “brew,” but as often one would brew up some char.

civvie street: Civilian life.

Commonwealth: The sum total of Great Britain, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa.

digger: An Australian slouch hat originally worn by ANZAC soldiers of WWI. Usually worn with one side turned up, and often pinned there by a regimental badge.

doggo, lie: To hide.

done over: Exhausted and/or wounded, generally out of the fight.

escarpment: A slope or cliff leading to a ridge or plateau.

Evacuation, the: Early in the war, much of the population in vulnerable areas likely to be bombed were moved to the countryside or to towns lacking strategic value. Evacuees included children, the elderly, and even pets. Families putting up evacuated children would be paid a small allowance by the government. For a time, it was illegal to turn away evacuees relocated by the state.

fag: A cigarette, of course.

FANY: First-aid nursing yeomanry.

foo: The British equivalent of the American “Kilroy was here” (see p. W:D40) was “FOO was here” or something similar. Perhaps derived from “fooe,” perhaps “forward observation officer,” likely from several sources.

fuzzy wuzzy: Racist slang applied to various dark-skinned troops or support personnel, such as baggage carriers.

GC: George Cross (p. 41).

Gurkha: A Nepalese soldier, usually attached to the British Indian Army (p. 33).

HMS: His majesty's ship.

kip: Sleep.

land girl: Members of the Women's Land Army – women sent to work as farmhands, freeing up men to join the armed forces.

LRDG: Long Range Desert Group (p. 40).

NAAFI: Navy, Army, and Air Force Institutes. The official trading organization of the British armed forces. Responsible for canteens, shops, and entertainment.

NCO: Non-commissioned officer (i.e., corporals, sergeants, and the like).

pound sterling: Primary unit of British currency, equivalent to \$4.85 during the war.

sapper: Combat engineer, from the term “sap” – to dig a trench or tunnel for explosives or to undermine.

RAAF: Royal Australian Air Force.

RAF: Royal Air Force.

RASC: Royal Army Service Corps.

regiment: In British service, this often was an administrative, rather than tactical, grouping of established military units (pp. 35-36).

respirator: Gas mask. Technically a Great War version of the technology, but still used to refer to the WWII equipment.

RM: Royal Marine(s).

RMA: The Royal Military Academy at Woolwich (p. 34).

RMC: The Royal Military College at Sandhurst (p. 34).

RN: Royal Navy.

Sandhurst: The Royal Military College (RMC) at Sandhurst (p. 34).

SAS: Special Air Service; a small group of elite commandos formed during WWII (p. 42).

shilling: 12 pence (or pennies); 20 shillings made a pound sterling.

VC: Victoria Cross (p. 41).

WAAF: Women's Auxiliary Air Force. The WAAF formed a vital backbone of the fighter-control system, staffing the radar posts, plotting aircraft in sector-control rooms, and serving as ground controllers for Allied aircraft.

wadi: A riverbed that only contains water during heavy rains, common in the deserts of North Africa.

Wavy Navy: Used by regular naval officers to refer to reserve personnel, based on their curving cuff insignias.

Woolwich: The Royal Military Academy (RMA) at Woolwich (p. 34).

WRNS: Women's Royal Naval Service, popularly known as “Wrens.” Took over many shore duties from the men, including radio interception, radio direction finding, electronics maintenance, and support jobs. Many thousands served overseas, though always in support roles and always in shore installations, never aboard warships.

WVS: Women's Voluntary Service. Originally the Women's Voluntary Service for ARP (see above), the WVS was formed from women unable to enlist in the armed forces. Its duties included organizing the evacuation of children, providing care for refugees, finding homes for those displaced by the Blitz, and organizing thrift drives. They played a critical role in supporting civil-defense efforts, as well.

GURPS British Military Ranks

<i>MR</i>	<i>Army (Royal Marines)</i>	<i>Royal Navy</i>	<i>Royal Air Force</i>	<i>Indian Army</i>
8	Field Marshal	First Sea Lord	Marshal of the RAF	Field Marshal
8	General	Admiral of the Fleet	Air Chief Marshal	General
8	Lt. General	Admiral	Air Marshal	Lt. General
7	Major General	Vice Admiral	Air Vice Marshal	Major General
7	Brigadier	Rear Admiral	Air Commodore	Brigadier
6	Colonel	Captain, Commodore	Group Captain	Colonel
5	Lt. Colonel	Commander	Wing Commander	Lt. Colonel
4	Major	Lt. Commander	Squadron Leader	Major
4	Captain	Lieutenant	Flight Lieutenant	Captain
3	Lieutenant	Sub-Lieutenant	Flying Officer	Lieutenant
3	Subaltern, 2nd Lieutenant	Midshipman	Pilot Officer	2nd Lieutenant
2	Staff (Colour) Sergeant	Chief Petty Officer	Flight Sergeant	Havildar-Major
2	Sergeant, Lance Sgt.	Petty Officer	Sergeant	Havildar
1	–	Leading Seaman	–	–
1	Corporal	Ordinary Seaman	Corporal	Naik
0	Lance Corporal	Able Seaman	Leading Aircraftman	Lance-Naik
0	Private (Marine)	Junior Seaman	Aircraftman	Sepahi (“Sepoy”)

Reputation see pp. W179, B17

The British generally take a man’s reputation seriously. (The GM might model this by adding an extra -1 reaction penalty for a negative Reputation among old-school British NPCs, while bestowing an extra +1 bonus for a positive Reputation.) Soldiers may begin the war with a Reputation, or develop one during its course. Sometimes simply belonging to a particular regiment brought a positive Reputation in general, but possibly a negative Reputation among rival regiments. (A GM who wants to steep his campaign in regimental colors will want to research the various rivalries elsewhere. British regimental history is too complex to condense here.)

See p. W63 and p. 41 for information on commendations and medals and the Reputation bonuses that they bestow.

DISADVANTAGES

The following adds a British flavor to some of the disadvantages often found among soldiers.

Code of Honor see p. W64

The British placed a great deal of emphasis on their sense of honor during WWII, so many Commonwealth troops will follow either the Enlisted Man’s or Officer’s Code of Honor. In general, the British sense of honor placed emphasis on sticking by one’s mates or fellow officers, even if their performance seemed subpar and could conceivably threaten the unit as a whole. It sometimes could require an outlandish display of incompetence to prompt a honorable British soldier to notify a superior of a problem with one of his contemporaries.

The hostile desert environment encountered in North Africa – which prompted Churchill to remark that if a man were to be interrogated about his deeds in the war, it would be enough to say that he had served with the 8th Army – created additional rules for those with either version of the standard

military Code of Honor. These included: Do not light fires after sunset; do not park your vehicle near another’s foxhole; do not borrow water or fuel; do not give directions you have not tested yourself; do not leave any mess that will breed flies; do not ask another to carry a message, your equipment, or yourself, unless it’s his job; drink lightly from another man’s canteen; make sure your friend has plenty of cigarettes before you borrow one; never run down another man’s commander; be hospitable and courteous to all.

These rules simply flesh out the military Codes for desert service, while adding nothing to their point cost.

Social Stigma see p. W180

Many British leaders – most notably Churchill himself – retained rather Victorian concepts about various peoples’ place in the world. This racism did not always manifest itself as hostility toward dark-skinned people, and almost never reached the viciousness that a German Nazi or U.S. Southerner might display. Often, it took the form of a patronizing attitude toward the “simple souls” in undeveloped countries, who could get very worked up about being viewed in this fashion while the British exploited their natural resources.

This stubborn Victorian strain in the British social outlook of the times requires that most dark-skinned Commonwealth subjects take a Social Stigma at -10 points for being a minority group. An Indian or other subject with a particularly pale complexion might be able to buy off -5 points of this disadvantage, while having a positive Reputation as a scholar or similarly learned professional might also allow buying off -5 points.

Additionally, a small but visible minority of British officers will display Intolerance toward their Indian or other dark-skinned troops. This might manifest as cruel treatment at all times, or more subtly as the officer sends his colonial units into the most dangerous fighting of every battle (then steals the credit should they cover themselves in glory).

SUPERMARINE SPITFIRE

Perhaps no other aircraft is linked more with Britain than the Spitfire. Debuting in service in 1938, the sleek, oval-winged fighter was derived from a championship racing seaplane. Built to the same general specifications as the less-famous Hurricane (p. 77), the Spitfire is widely considered, if perhaps somewhat incorrectly, the plane that saved England in the summer of 1940.

The Spitfire and Bf 109 were generally a balanced match before the Battle of Britain; the Spitfire was more agile and faster climbing while the Bf 109 was faster and better in a dive. Two factors broke this tie. First, the Bf 109 had only a limited amount of fuel for combat over England. Secondly, the Spitfire switched to higher octane fuel, which measurably improved performance.

The Spitfire was the only Allied fighter in continuous production throughout the war.

The Spitfire IA burned 34.6 gallons of fuel per hour at routine usage. A full load of fuel and ammo costs \$47.

Supermarine Spitfire Mk IA

Subassemblies: Medium Fighter chassis with good streamlining +3, high-agility Light Fighter wings +2, three retractable wheels +0.

Powertrain: 768-kW aerial HP engine with 768-kW prop and 85-gallon self-sealing fuel tanks [Wings and Body]; 2,000-kWs batteries.

Occ: 1 CS Body **Cargo:** 5.6 Body, 0.4 Wings

Armor	F	RL	B	T	U
All:	2/4	2/4	2/4	2/4	2/4
Cockpit:	0/+10	0/+10	0/+20	0/0	0/+10

Weaponry

8×Aircraft LMG/Browning Mk II [Wings:F] (350 each).*

* Linked to fire in pairs; additional link fires all eight at once.

Equipment

Body: Autopilot; IFF; navigation instruments; medium radio transmitter and receiver.

Statistics

Size: 30'×37'×11' **Payload:** 0.45 tons **Lwt.:** 2.9 tons
Volume: 200 **Maint.:** 47 hours **Price:** \$17,900

HT: 9. **HPs:** 120 Body, 90 each Wing, 12 each Wheel.

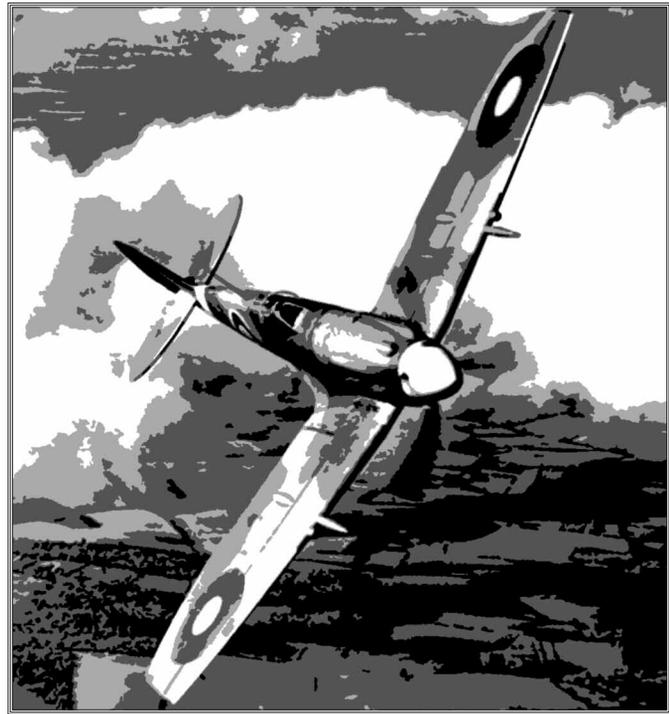
aSpeed: 355 **aAccel:** 13 **aDecel:** 26 **aMR:** 6.5 **aSR:** 2
 Stall speed 70.

gSpeed: 287 **gAccel:** 13 **gDecel:** 10 **gMR:** 0.25 **gSR:** 3
 Extremely High Ground Pressure. No Off-Road Speed.

Design Notes

The design aSpeed is 358 mph. The historical speed, as well as wing area (242 sf), have been substituted.

Early Spitfires sometimes had their carburetor flood when performing negative-G maneuvers (which could happen often in dogfights), causing the engine to cut out. GMs can inflict this on Spitfire pilots as the situation demands.



Variants

Some 24 variants of the Spitfire were built. Notable examples include the Spitfire IB (1940), which was a rare variant with two 20mm Hispano-Suiza Mk IIs (20mm Long Aircraft ACd) with 60 rounds per gun and four .303 Brownings with 350 rounds each in the wings, introduced during the Battle of Britain. The cannons were notoriously unreliable (Malf 16) and this model was disliked by pilots. Some 1,600 Spitfire Is of all subtypes were built.

The Spitfire II (1940) introduced a 877-kW engine, increasing top speed to 370 mph, and added self-sealing tanks and +10 DR to the cockpit rear; 921 were built.

In the Spitfire VB (1941), the engine was again upgraded (to 1,074-kW) with weight increasing to 3.4 tons. Top speed was 374 mph. It had the same armament as the Mk IB. A hard-point was provided for one 500-lb. bomb under the fuselage. Some 3,900 were constructed. The VC added a 250-lb. hard-point under each wing and a “universal” wing able to take various armaments. About 2,400 VCs were built.

Rushed into service to face the Fw 190 (see p.W:IC85), the Spitfire IX (1942) was generally similar to the V series, but with a strengthened airframe and the latest engine. Armament consisted of two 20mm Hispano-Suiza Mk Vs (20mm Long Aircraft ACs) with 120 rounds each and two .50-caliber Browning A.P. Mk IVs (Long Aircraft HMGs) with 500 rounds each. Top speed was 408 mph. Some 5,665 were built. A photo-reconnaissance version of the IX was built (numbering around 470), without armament or wing fuel tanks.

Plans to use the Spitfire as a carrier-based aircraft were initially scrapped. After the failure of alternative solutions, however, the Sea Spitfire (commonly abbreviated to Seafire) was adopted. The most common model – the Sea Spitfire III (1943) – was based on the Spitfire VC production line, but added manually folding wings and an arrestor hook for the body; 1,220 were built.

INDEX

.303 MG cartridge, 64.
 10-year rule, 7.
 25-pounder towed artillery, 36, 66, 69, 91.
 88mm guns, 103.
 ABDACOM, 17.
 Aberdeen, Operation, 102.
 Abyssinia, 14-15.
 Academies, military, 30, 34.
 Africa, *East*, 14-15, 19, 27-28, 34, 57;
 North, 6, 16, 22, 28, 30, 32, 34-35, 40,
 42, 49, 57, 59, 74-75, 77, 88-111, 123.
 Afrika Korps, 16, 28, 89, 93, 95-111, 124.
 Air-raid precautions, 26, 44.
 Airborne units, 37.
 Aircraft markings, 77.
 Alanbrooke, Field Marshal Viscount, 55.
 Alexander, Field Marshal Sir Harold, 16,
 55, 57, 103, 110-111.
 Alexandria, Egypt, 15, 22, 90-91, 97,
 103-104, 122.
 Algiers, 108.
 Antitank guns, 35-37, 66-67.
 ANZACs, *see Australia and its troops*,
 New Zealand and its troops.
 Anzio, 17, 28, 40.
 Appeasement, 7-8.
 Arab revolts, 112-113.
 Armored units, *see Tanks*.
 Army units, 34-37.
 Article 16, 21.
 Artillery units, 37.
 Auchinleck, Field Marshal Claude, 12-13,
 15, 55, 57, 98-100, 102-103, 124.
 Australia and its troops, 6, 8, 15-19, 28,
 30, 32, 39-40, 44, 55, 63, 91-97, 100,
 105, 116, 120, 123-124.
 Autocannons, 65-67.
 Bagnold, Major Ralph, 40, 51-52.
 Barents Sea, Battle of, 13, 28.
 Battle of Britain, 23-24, 26-27, 33, 38,
 55-57, 77-78, 125.
 Battleaxe, Operation, 98.
 Beda Fomm, 94.
 Bedford cargo truck, 70.
 BEF, 9-10, 23, 30, 32, 36-37, 54-57, 103,
 122; *in Great War*, 6.
 Bevin Boys, 30.
 "Big Three," 28.
 Bir Hakeim, 102.
 Black market, 25, 48.
 Black Watch, 31.
 Blackouts, 25-26.
 Blackstone, Operation, 106-107.
 Blamey, General Sir Thomas, 32, 40, 55.
 Bletchley Park, 21, 43.
 Blitz, the, 24, 26-27, 53, 125.
 Bomb shelters, 26.
 Bomber Command, 24, 36, 56, 80-81.

Bren (Universal) Carrier, 35-36, 72.
 Brevity, Operation, 28, 97-98.
 Britain, *geography*, 26; *government*, 8;
 political makeup, 7; *political parties*,
 7, 27.
 British Expeditionary Force, *see BEF*.
 Brushwood, Operation, 106-107.
 Buckshot, Operation, 101.
 Bulge, Battle of the, 28.
 Bully beef, 59.
 Burma, *see China-Burma-India (CBI)*
 Theater.
 Campaigns, 118-125.
 Canada and its troops, 8, 10, 17, 26,
 32-33, 106.
 Cape Matapan, Battle of, 22.
 Catapult, Operation, 10, 27.
 Chamberlain, Prime Minister Neville, 8,
 11, 27, 52.
 Channel Dash, 21.
 Channel Islands, 7, 11.
 Characters, 45-57; *Gurkha Soldier*
 template, 49; *Intelligence Agent*
 template, 49; *Long Range Desert*
 Group Trooper template, 50; *Royal*
 Marine notes, 48; *SAS notes*, 48; *Spiv*
 template, 48.
 China-Burma-India (CBI) Theater, 18-19,
 28, 40, 57, 121, 125.
 Chindits, 19, 31, 40, 54, 122, 125.
 Church of England, 30.
 Churchill infantry tank, 10, 76.
 Churchill, Winston, 6, 8, 10-11, 15-16, 20,
 24, 27-28, 31, 33, 47, 52-55, 95, 97-99,
 102-103, 105, 111, 114, 116-117,
 119-120; *quotes*, 6, 20, 23, 27, 30,
 46-47, 52, 58, 119; *Secret Army*, 31.
 Ciphers, 43.
 Coal mining under conscription, 30.
 Coast Road, 89.
 Coastal Command, 36, 81-82.
 Code of Honor disadvantage, 47.
 Codes, 43.
 Colossus Mk I, 43.
 Commandos, 10-11, 15, 17, 35-36, 57,
 61-62, 90, 98, 108, 113, 119-123;
 Royal Marine, 35, 40.
 Compass, Operation, 91-92.
 Confetti War, 9.
 Conscriptio, 30, 46; *Canadian*, 33.
 Convoys, 13, 20-21, 23-24, 89, 96-99,
 117, 125.
 Countenance, Operation, 117.
 Coventry, 24, 26.
 Crete, 15-16, 32, 97, 125.
 "Cromwell" invasion defenses, 24.
 Crusader cruiser tank, 74, 97, 102.
 Crusader, Operation, 38, 98-100.

Cunningham, Admiral A.B., 17, 22, 53, 92.
 Cunningham, General Sir Alan, 55, 98-100.
 Cyrenaica, 90-97, 100.
 Czechoslovakia, 8, 52.
 D-Day, 10-11, 17, 26-28, 39-40, 42-43,
 56-57, 63, 69, 121-123.
 Daimler scout car (Dingo), 70.
 Dam busters, 80.
 Dayan, Moshe, 113-114.
 Decorations, 41.
 Dempsey, General Miles, 55.
 Denmark, 12.
 Depression, Great, 7, 25-26.
 Desert Code of Honor disadvantage, 47.
 Desert conditions, 89.
 Desert Rats, 91, 94, 98, 11, 122-123.
 Dieppe, raid on, 10, 40, 57.
 Dingo scout car, 70.
 Dobbie, General Sir William, 55.
 Dowding, Air Chief Hugh, 23-24, 55-56.
 Dunkirk, 10, 23, 27, 40, 54-55, 57, 65, 70,
 96, 103, 105, 120, 122, 125.
 Dynamo, Operation, 10.
 East Africa, *see Africa*.
 East Timor, 19.
 Egypt, *see Africa, North*.
 Eire, 7, 31.
 El Alamein, 28, 32, 57, 69, 89, 103-106,
 120, 122.
 England, *see Britain*.
 Enigma, 21, 43.
 Equipment, 58-87.
 Eritrea, 14-15.
 Explosives, 61, 65.
 Exporter, Operation, 116.
 Fairmile Motor Launch, 87, 125.
 Female roles, 30, 44, 46.
 Fighter Command, 23-24, 36, 55-56.
 Finland, 11.
 Fish code, 43.
 Fleet Air Arm, 39.
 Flying Tigers, 18.
 Force H, 10, 15, 27, 39, 57.
 Force Viper, 18, 122, 124.
 Force Z, 28.
 Foreign soldiers in British service, 34.
 France and its troops, 6-13, 27-28, 34, 91,
 102, 105-108, 110-111, 113, 115-116,
 121-122; *Battle of*, 9-10.
 French Levant, 116.
 Gas precautions, 26.
 Gauntlet, Operation, 14, 122.
 Gazala Line, 101-103.
 George Cross, 16, 41, 44.
 George, Prime Minister Lloyd, 7.
 German navy, *see KMS for individual*
 ships.
 Gibraltar, 15, 22, 28, 39, 43, 56, 97, 122.
 Gideon's Force, 19, 54.
 Gliders, 37-38.
 Glossary, 44.
 Goalpost, Operation, 106-107.
 Golden Square, 114.
 Gort, Lord, 9, 37, 56.
 Grand Slam bomb, 80.
 Great Britain, *see Britain*.
 Great War, 6, 22, 31-32, 39, 61, 64, 69,
 89, 104, 112, 114.
 Greece, 16, 28, 32, 92, 95, 121, 125.
 Gurkhalis, 33, 50.
 Gurkhas, 19, 33, 46, 61, 120-121; *Army*
 ranks, 46-47; *character template*, 50;
 see also India and its troops.
 Haganah, 113.
 Hague Convention, 21.
 Halifax bomber, 81.
 Halifax, Lord, 8, 11, 56.
 Hand grenades, 61, 65.
 Harris, Air Chief Sir Arthur, 56.
 Highlanders, 31, 92, 104, 111, 120.
 HMS, *definition*, 44; *Acasta*, 13; *Achates*,
 13; *Anson*, 84; *Arbutus*, 22; *Ark Royal*,
 28, 57; *Bramble*, 13; *Broke*, 108;
 Camelia, 22; *Clyde*, 13; *Cossack*, 12;
 Devonshire, 15; *Duke of York*, 84;
 Formidable, 39; *Furious*, 12; *Glorious*,
 13; *Glowworm*, 12, 86; *Grenade*, 86;
 Hartland, 108; *Hood*, 28, 57, 83;
 Howe, 39, 84; *Illustrious*, 15, 39;
 Implacable, 39; *Indefatigable*, 39;
 Indomitable, 15, 39; *Jamaica*, 13; *King*
 George V, 39, 84; *Malcolm*, 108;
 Prince of Wales, 17, 84; *Ramillies*, 15;
 Renown, 12; *Repulse*, 17; *Resolution*,
 12; *Royal Oak*, 22; *Sheffield*, 13;
 Southampton, 85; *Truant*, 12;
 Vanguard, 39; *Victorious*, 39;
 Vindictive, 13; *Walney*, 108; *Warspite*,
 12, 92; *Wolverine*, 22.
 Hobart, Sir Percy, 53-54.
 Home Fleet, 39.
 Home front, 25-26, 89, 125.
 Home Guard, 24, 30-31, 54, 120, 125;
 weapons, 61, 63-65.
 Hong Kong, 17, 33, 39.
 Houses of Commons and Lords, 8.
 Humber armored car, 71.
 Hurricane fighter, 20, 23, 37-38, 55, 77,
 92; *Hurricats*, 20.
 India and its troops, 8, 15, 17-19, 30, 33,
 39-40, 46-47, 57, 91-92, 96, 98-99,
 101-102, 111, 114, 116-117, 119; *Army*
 ranks, 47; *see also Gurkhas*.
 Infantry section, 34.
 Insignia of aircraft, 77.
 Intelligence agent template, 47.
 Iran, 28, 57, 89, 112, 115, 117.
 Iraq, 19, 28, 38, 89, 97, 112, 114-116.
 Ireland, Northern, 31; *see also Britain*
 and Eire.
 Ironclad, Operation, 15.
 Isle of Man, 7.
 Italy and its troops, 14-17, 22, 27-28,
 89-111.
 Jewish homeland, *see Palestine*.
 Jubilee, Operation, 10.
 Kasserine Pass, 28, 109-110.
 Kilts, 31.
 King George VI, 16, 41, 53; *role in*
 parliamentary process, 8.
 Kits, 59.
 KMS, *Admiral Hipper*, 12-13, 21, 86;
 Altmark, 12; *Bismarck*, 20-21, 28,
 39-40, 83-84; *Blucher*, 14; *Friedrich*
 Eckholdt, 13; *Gneisenau*, 12-13, 21,
 39; *Graf Spee*, 12, 20, 40; *Lutzow*,
 13-14; *Prinz Eugen*, 21; *Scharnhorst*,
 12-13, 21, 39-40, 84; *Tirpitz*, 22.
 Knightsbridge, 102.
 Kriegsmarine, 12-13, 20-22, 38; *see also*
 KMS for individual ships.
 Kukri, 33, 50, 61, 121.
 Lancaster bomber, 38, 80.
 Languages, 33, 50-51.
 Leaflets, 9, 24.
 Lebanon, 28, 112-116.
 Leigh-Mallory, Air Chief Sir Trafford,
 56-57.
 Lend-Lease Act, 28, 53, 59, 61, 63, 75,
 99, 101, 104, 117.
 Lewes, Lieutenant Jock, 42, 56-57, 121.
 Libya, *see Africa, North*.
 Liddell-Hart, Capt. Basil, 56.
 Light antitank weapons, 61, 65.
 Lightfoot, Operation, 104-105.
 Lili Marlene, 101.
 London bombings, 24, 26-27, 53, 125.
 Long Range Desert Group, 40, 42, 44, 49,
 51-52, 64, 98, 119-122; *character*
 template, 51.
 Longcloth, Operation, 19.
 Lords, 8.
 LRDG, *see Long Range Desert Group*.
 Machine guns, 61, 64-67; *Bren Gun*
 maintenance, 64; *special ammunition*
 for, 64.
 Madagascar, 15, 19.
 Malaya, 17-18, 55.



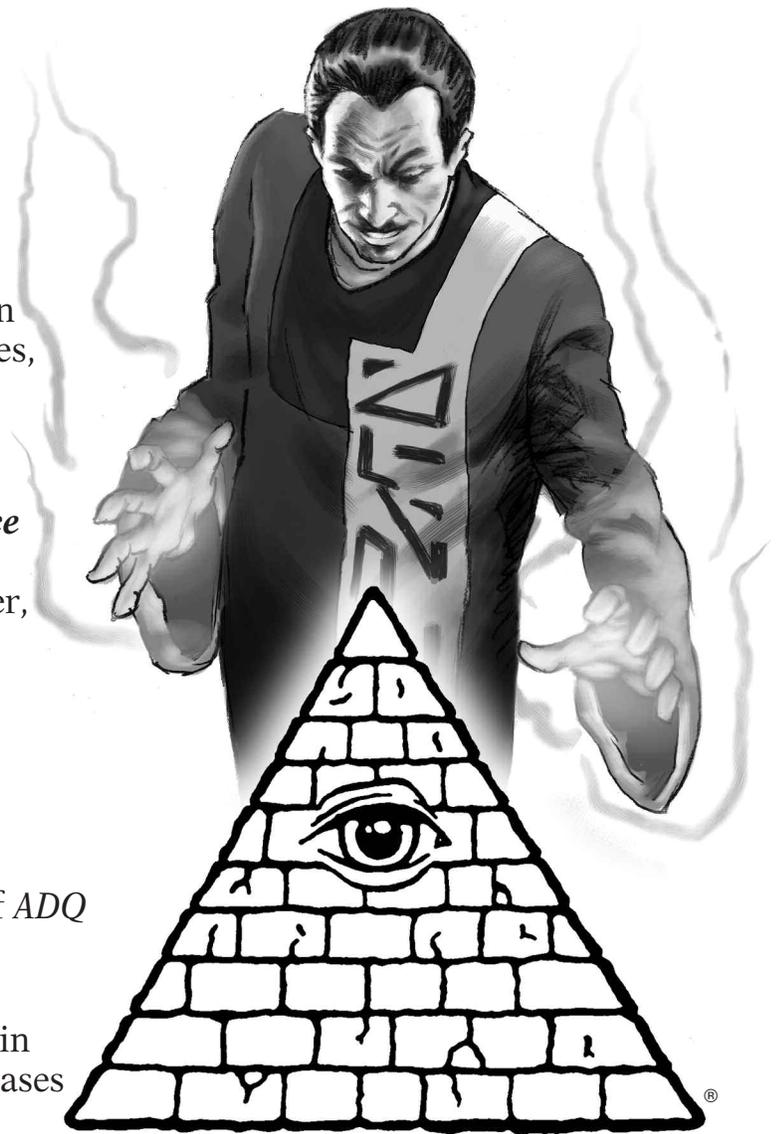
- Malta, 15-16, 39, 43, 55-56, 85.
 Man Who Never Was, 17.
 Maori soldiers, 30, 32, 111.
 Mareth Line, 110.
 Mark VI light tank, 73, 97.
 Market-Garden, Operation, 28.
 Matilda infantry tank, 75, 91-93, 97-99.
 McCreery, General Sir Richard, 57.
 Medals, 41.
 Mediterranean, 15-16, 22, 39, 85, 89,
 91-92, 97, 104, 110-111, 125.
 Melee weapons, 61.
 Mersa Matruh, 102.
 MI-5 and MI-6 departments, 43;
character template, 49.
 Middle East, 17, 32, 38-40, 54-55, 57, 89,
 97-98, 103, 112-117, 123; *forces*, 115.
 Midget submarines, 22.
 Military academies, 30, 34.
 Military Intelligence, 43.
 Mincemeat, Operation, 17.
 Mines, 61, 65.
 Mobilization, 30.
 Money, 44.
 Monte Cassino, 17.
 Montgomery, Field Marshal Bernard,
 16-17, 28, 31, 54-55, 103-105, 108-111.
 Mortars, 66-67.
 Mosquito, 38, 79.
 Motorized forces, 36.
 Mountbatten, Lord Lewis, 19, 57.
 MPs, 8.
 Murmansk run, 13, 22, 39.
 Narvik, Norway, 11-13.
 Naval guns, 66-67.
 Naval limitation conferences, 7, 39.
 Nepalese, 33; *see also Gurkhas*.
 New Zealand and its troops, 8, 15-17, 30,
 32, 39-40, 44, 51, 91-97, 100, 105,
 116, 120, 123-124.
 Normandy, *see D-Day*.
 North Africa, *see Africa*.
 North Atlantic, 20-21, 26, 39, 125.
 North Sea, Battle of, 22.
 Norway, 11-14, 22, 27, 40, 57, 122.
 O'Connor, General Richard, 30, 91-92,
 94-96.
 Official Secrets Act, 43.
 Operation, *Aberdeen*, 102; *Battleaxe*, 98;
Blackstone, 106-107; *Brevity*, 28,
 97-98; *Brushwood*, 106-107; *Buckshot*,
 101; *Catapult*, 10, 27; *Compass*, 91-92;
Countenance, 117; *Crusader*, 38,
 98-100; *Dynamo*, 10; *Exporter*, 116;
Gauntlet, 14, 122; *Goalpost*,
 106-107; *Ironclad*, 15; *Jubilee*, 10;
Lightfoot, 104-105; *Longcloth*, 19;
Market-Garden, 28; *Mincemeat*, 17;
Reservist, 108; *Sealion*, 23, 90;
Thursday, 19; *Torch*, 28, 59, 90,
 105-108, 122; *Vulcan*, 111;
Weserübung, 12.
 Oran, 10, 15, 27, 104-105, 107-108, 110.
 Oslo, Norway, 14.
 Overpaid, oversexed, and over here
 Americans, 25, 27.
 Pacific campaign, 17.
 Pacific Fleet, 39.
 Palestine, 43, 54-56, 112-114.
 Palmach, 113-114.
 Park, Air Chief Sir Keith, 56-57.
 Parliament, 8, 27.
 Pathfinders, 37.
 Peel Commission, 113.
 Peers, 8.
 Pegasus Bridge, 11.
 Percival, General Arthur, 57.
 Persia, *see Iran*.
 Personal gear, 59.
 Phony War, 9.
 Pistols, 60-62.
 Poland and its troops, 8-9, 12, 26, 27,
 34, 43, 63.
 Politics, 7-8.
 Pound sterling, 44.
 POWs, 9, 11, 21, 40, 93, 116-118, 121.
 Propaganda, 9, 24.
 Psychological warfare, 9.
Queen Elizabeth and *Queen Mary* ocean
 liners, 20.
 Radar, 23-24.
 Ramsay, Admiral Bertram, 10, 57.
 Rank advantage, 46-47, 50.
 Rationing, 25.
 Rations, 59.
 RDF (radar), 23.
 Red Berets, 121.
 Refugee characters, 51.
 Regiments, 35-36; *Canadian*, 33; *Irish*,
 31; *Scottish*, 31.
 Regular Army, 40.
 Reputation advantage and disadvantage,
 32, 47.
 Reserve, British sense of, 119.
 Reservist, Operation, 108.
 Reservists, 40.
 Resistance plans, British, 30-31.
 Revolvers, 60, 62.
 Rifles, 60, 63.
 Ritchie, General Neil, 57, 100-102.
 Rommel, General Erwin, 28, 38, 40, 42,
 54-57, 89, 93-106, 108-110, 120, 122-
 124.
 Royal Air Force, 7, 9-10, 23-24, 27-28,
 37-39, 44, 55-57, 77-82, 92-93, 99,
 101, 111, 113-114, 125.
 Royal Army Service Corps, 14, 37, 44, 92.
 Royal Marines, 18, 35, 40, 44, 62, 119,
 122, 125.
 Royal Navy, 6, 10-16, 20-22, 24, 27-28,
 37-39, 44, 46, 53, 57, 62-63, 83-87, 92,
 99, 107-108; *disarmament conferences*
and, 7; *Fleet Air Arm*, 39; *see also*
HMS for individual ships.
 St. Nazaire, 10, 57.
 Salerno, 17, 28, 40.
 Sandhurst, 34, 44, 52, 54.
 Sardinia, 17.
 SAS, *see Special Air Service*.
 Scandinavia, 9, 11-14, 122.
 Scapa Flow, 22, 39.
Scirocco, 89.
 Scotland, 31; *see also Britain*.
 Sealion, Operation, 23, 90.
 Second Front, 10-11.
 Section, infantry, 34.
 "Shop, the," 34.
 Short Sunderland, 82.
 Shotguns, 60, 62.
 Sicily, 16-17, 28, 57, 93, 110-111, 125.
 Singapore, 17-18, 39, 43.
 Slim, Field Marshal Lord William, 19,
 57, 117.
 Small arms, 60-65.
 Social Stigma disadvantage, 32-33, 47, 51.
 SOE, *see Special Operations Executive*.
 Somaliland, British and Italian, 14-15, 27.
 Somerville, Admiral James, 10, 57.
 Somme, Battle of the, 6.
 South Africa and its troops, 8, 15, 30,
 32-34, 39-40, 43, 100, 102.
 Southeast Asia campaign, 17-19, 57.
 Special Air Service, 42, 44, 56-57, 121.
 Special Night Squads, 19, 54, 113.
 Special Operations Executive, 26, 31, 42,
 46, 49, 61-62, 121-122.
 Special units, 40, 42.
 Spitfire fighter, 23, 38, 55, 78.
 "Spiv," 25; *template*, 48.
 Station X, 43.
 Status advantage, 30, 46.
 Stirling, David, 42, 57, 121.
 Submachine guns, 60, 63.
 Suez Canal, 14-15, 57, 90, 97.
 Sweden, 11.
 Syria, 28, 33, 57, 97, 112-116.
 Takrouna Hill, 32, 111.
 Tall Boy bomb, 80.
 Tank guns, 66-67.
 Tanks, 10, 35-37, 56, 73-76, 91-93, 97-99,
 102; *Canadian armor units*, 33; *debut*
in Great War, 6.
 Tedder, Air Chief Sir Arthur, 57.
 Territorial Army, 40.
 Thailand, 17-18.
 Thursday, Operation, 19.
 Timeline, 27-28.
 Timor, 19.
 Tobruk, 28, 32, 57, 90, 93, 96-97, 102,
 124.
 Tommies, 44.
 Torch, Operation, 28, 59, 90, 105-108,
 122.
 Training Command, 38.
 Transport Command, 36.
 Trench warfare, 6.
 Tripoli, 28, 94-95, 123.
 Trondheim, Norway, 12.
 Tunisia, 28, 108-111.
 U-boats, 13, 20-22, 25-26, 28, 38, 82, 125.
 Underground, the, 26.
 Understatement, British, 119.
 United Kingdom, *see Britain*.
 Universal Carrier, 35-36, 72.
 V-1 and V-2 rockets, 26.
 Valentine infantry tank, 73.
 VE Day, 27-28.
 Vehicles, 65-87; *25-pounder towed*
artillery, 36, 66, 69, 91; *Bedford cargo*
truck, 70; *Bren (Universal) Carrier*,
 35-36, 72; *Churchill infantry tank*, 10,
 76; *Crusader cruiser tank*, 74, 97, 102;
Daimler scout car (Dingo), 70; *desert*
maintenance increases, 89; *Dingo*
scout car, 70; *Fairmile Motor Launch*,
 87, 125; *Halifax bomber*, 81;
HMS Glowworm, 12, 86; *HMS Hood*,
 28, 57, 83; *HMS King George V*, 39,
 84; *HMS Southampton*, 85; *Humber*
armored car, 71; *Hurricane fighter*,
 20, 23, 37-38, 55, 77, 92; *key to*
statistics, 68; *Lancaster bomber*, 38,
 80; *Mark VI light tank*, 73, 97;
Matilda infantry tank, 75, 91-93,
 97-99; *Mosquito*, 38, 79; *Short*
Sunderland, 82; *Spitfire fighter*, 23, 38,
 55, 78; *Universal Carrier*, 35-36, 72;
Valentine infantry tank, 73;
weapons, 65-67.
 Versailles, 7.
 Vichy France, 10, 15, 28, 105-108,
 114-116.
 Victoria Cross, 31, 33, 41, 44, 108, 116.
 Victorian sensibilities, 6, 47.
 Vulcan, Operation, 111.
 Wales, 31; *see also Britain*.
 War debts, 7, 27.
 Water, 89.
 Wavell, General Archibald, 15, 17, 19, 30,
 52, 57, 91-92, 94-98, 112.
 Weapons, 34-37, 60-65; *shortages in*, 30,
 40; *tables*, 60-61, 67; *vehicular*, 65-67.
 Web gear, 59.
 Weserübung, Operation, 12.
 Western Desert Air Force, 38, 91.
 White Paper, 113.
 Wingate, Orde, 19, 54, 112-114, 122.
 Women, 30, 44, 46.
 Woolwich, 34, 44.
 WWI, *see Great War*.
 Y stations, 43.
 Yishuv, 112-111.



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