

Chapter 1 : List of Royal Air Force commands - Wikipedia

RAF Fighter Command was one of the commands of the Royal Air Force. It was formed in to allow more specialised control of fighter operations during the Second World War.

You can help by adding to it. **October** Main article: Battle of Britain Propaganda shot of the fighter pilots of the Polish squadron , Running low on pilots during the battle of Britain , Fighter Command accepted foreign pilots into its ranks. Over the next few years, the Command expanded greatly and replaced its obsolete biplane squadrons generally outfitted with Bristol Bulldog , Gloster Gauntlet and Hawker Fury biplane fighters leading up to, and through the period of its founding with two of the most famous aircraft ever to fly with the RAF, the Hawker Hurricane and the Supermarine Spitfire. The supreme test of Fighter Command came during the summer of when the German Luftwaffe launched an offensive aimed at attaining air superiority over the Channel and the UK as a prerequisite to the launch of a seaborne invasion force codenamed Operation Sea Lion. Fighter Command was divided into a number of Groups, each controlling a different part of the UK. In the end, the Germans failed to attain air superiority, although the RAF had been eating into its reserves during the battle, as had the Luftwaffe. By May , the Squadrons based at all the main fighter airfields were now to operate together as integral Fighter Wings, under the tactical control of the newly created post of wing Leader , invariably an experienced veteran of wing commander rank. Various types of short-penetration fighter operations were tried out in a bid to draw the Luftwaffe into a war of attrition, and keep inordinate numbers of fighters tied down in France, particularly after the German attack on the Soviet Union in June . Large numbers of Spitfires were sent out with small groups of medium bombers in often vain attempts to lure the German fighters into combat. Most of the factors that had allowed Fighter Command to win the Battle of Britain were now reversed. For example, British pilots who were shot down in and survived would be patched up and sent back to their units as quickly as possible. In , over France, a shot down pilot would, as likely as not, end up a prisoner of war. The year saw RAF Fighter Command claim some Luftwaffe fighters shot down although only were lost from all causes, in combat for losses of approximately RAF fighters lost. Parallel to the day offensive in was the ongoing night bomber attacks against the United Kingdom in January to May. By this time, until May , the Luftwaffe effort was aimed against both civilian and industrial targets. The Bristol Beaufighter became the prime nightfighter , equipped with airborne radar , it proved ever more effective against the bombers, with the ground-based organisation that proved so efficient in now guiding the night fighters to their targets. An increasing number of anti-aircraft guns and searchlights were also radar-controlled, improving accuracy. With the impending invasion of Russia requiring the movement of air power to the East, the Blitz ended in May with Fighter Command in complete control of the night sky over the UK. The difficult task of slowly grinding down the Germans continued into and Fighter Command deployed their new Hawker Typhoon units at this time. The most notable offensive battle took place over Dieppe, France when an ill-fated commando-style raid was mounted there in August Dieppe Raid. Although the RAF succeeded in preventing the Luftwaffe from interfering with the shipping, which was its primary aim, its perceived success was misleading. Despite claims at the time that more German aircraft than British had been shot down kills were claimed by the RAF postwar analysis showed Allied aircraft losses amounted to , including 88 RAF fighters and 18 bombers. Of the fighter losses 29 were from flak, one ran out of fuel, two collided, and one was a victim of friendly fire. Included in that total were 28 bombers, half of them Dornier Do s from KG 2. One of the two Jagdgeschwader fighter wings, JG 2 , lost 14 Fw s and eight pilots killed. JG 26 lost six Fw s with their pilots. In , the most notable event was a very important administrative one. As the name of the former suggests, its primary aim was defence of the UK from attack, with the latter concentrating on supporting ground forces after the eventual invasion of Europe. Operation Overlord , the invasion of France was launched on 6 June RAF fighters swarmed over the battle area and, along with their American counterparts, suppressed the meagre German opposition. They also directly supported ground forces by strafing enemy positions and transport. Later in the year, the final major test of Fighter Command renamed back in October [10] in the war occurred against the V-1 flying bomb during Operation Crossbow. RAF fighters also supported the strategic

bombing of Operation Crossbow, such as with long-range intruder operations that attacked German airfields and aircraft e. The corps would continue as a civilian organisation but wearing a Royal Air Force uniform and administered by Fighter Command. The ROC was a defence warning organisation operating in the United Kingdom between and 31 December when it was stood down. Initially established for an aircraft recognition and reporting role that lasted through both world wars, the organisation switched to a Cold War nuclear reporting role during the s. The 10, ROC volunteers were trained and administered by a small cadre of sixty nine uniformed full-time professional officers under the command of a serving RAF Air Commodore. However, its target changed from Germany to the Soviet Union. A Canadian fighter wing, No. A long succession of fighter aircraft saw service with Fighter Command during the s and s. The Lightning was the only purely British supersonic aircraft to enter service. That was due to a disastrous defence review in During the mids, the performance of the new surface to air missiles was improving at an enormous rate. Duncan Sandys , the Minister of Defence at the time needed to find cuts in the British defence budget, since the UK was in serious danger of being bankrupted by its defence spending. The rate of improvement of surface to air missiles seemed to indicate that they would soon be able to shoot any manned aircraft out of the sky. Consequently, in an infamous statement in the Defence White Paper the Sandys review declared that manned aircraft were obsolescent and would soon become obsolete. All programmes for manned aircraft that were not too far along were cancelled. The Lightning was the only one of a number of new supersonic aircraft that was too far along to cancel. That decision, combined with the increasing costs of developing aircraft crippled the British aircraft industry and made Fighter Command and the RAF reliant on foreign or jointly developed aircraft. It was now becoming clear that the RAF was simply becoming too small to justify their continued existence as separate entities. Consequently, in , Fighter Command and Bomber Command were joined together to form Strike Command , both becoming groups within the new command.

Chapter 2 : RAF Fighter Command | Revolv

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Until advances in radar technology in the late s, this statement was effectively true. Attacking bombers could not be detected early enough to assemble fighters fast enough to prevent them reaching their targets. Some damage might be done to the bombers by AA guns, and by fighters as the bombers returned to base, but that was not as effective as a proper defence. Consequently, the early conception of Bomber Command was in some ways akin to its later role as a nuclear deterrent force. It was seen as an entity that threatened the enemy with utter destruction, and thus prevented war. However, in addition to being made obsolete by technology, even if the bomber did always get through, its potential for damage to cities was massively overrated. The problem was that the British Government was basing its data on a casualty rate of 50 deaths per ton of bombs dropped. The basis for this assumption was a few raids on London in the later stages of World War I , by Zeppelins and Gotha bombers. Both the government and the general public viewed the bomber as a far more terrible weapon than it really was. The early years of the Second World War Main article: The first was lack of size; Bomber Command was not large enough to effectively attack the enemy as a pure, stand-alone strategic force. The second was rules of engagement; at the start of the war, the targets allocated to Bomber Command were not wide enough in scope. When the war began on 1 September , Franklin D. Roosevelt , President of the then-neutral United States, issued an appeal to the major belligerents to confine their air raids to military targets. While acknowledging that bombing Germany would cause civilian casualties, the British government renounced deliberate bombing of civilian property outside combat zones as a military tactic. Scale comparison diagram of the trio of British twin-engined medium bombers at the outbreak of the Second World War; the Whitley, the Vickers Wellington and the Handley Page Hampden The British government did not want to violate its agreement by attacking civilian targets outside combat zones, and the French were even more concerned lest Bomber Command operations provoke a German bombing attack on France. The final problem was lack of good enough aircraft. Bomber Command became even smaller after the declaration of war. This action had two aims: The Sitzkrieg or Phony War mainly affected the army. However, to an extent, Bomber Command too saw little combat during the first few months of hostilities. Bomber Command flew many operational missions, and lost aircraft, but it did virtually no damage to the enemy. Most of the missions either failed to find their targets, or were leaflet-dropping missions the first flights by RAF bombers over the German homeland were only to drop propaganda leaflets at night. The Fairey Battles of the Advanced Air Striking Force were partially disabled by German strikes on their airfields at the opening of the invasion of France. However, far from all of the force was caught on the ground. The Faireys proved to be horrendously vulnerable to enemy fire. Many times, Battles would set out to attack, and be almost wiped out in the process. Due to French paranoia about being attacked by German aircraft during the "Phony War", the Battle force had actually trained over German airspace at night. Following the German Rotterdam Blitz of 14 May , RAF Bomber Command was authorized to attack German targets east of the Rhine on May 15, ; the Air Ministry authorized Air Marshal Charles Portal to attack targets in the Ruhr, including oil plants and other civilian industrial targets which aided the German war effort, such as blast furnaces which at night were self-illuminating. Of these, only 24 claimed to have found their targets. With the rapid collapse of France, invasion of England seemed a clear and present danger. As its part in Battle of Britain , Bomber Command was assigned to pound the invasion barges and fleets assembling in the Channel ports. This was much less high profile than the battles of the Spitfires and Hurricanes of RAF Fighter Command , but still vital and dangerous work. From July to the end of the year, Bomber Command lost nearly aircraft and over 1, aircrew killed, missing or captured. Bomber Command was also indirectly responsible, in part at least, for the switch of Luftwaffe attention away from Fighter Command to bombing civilian targets. A German bomber on a raid got lost due to poor navigation and bombed London. Churchill consequently ordered a retaliatory raid on the

German capital of Berlin. The damage caused was minor, but the raid sent Hitler into a rage. He ordered the Luftwaffe to level British cities, thus precipitating the Blitz. However, when well-organised German defence cut several British raids to pieces in late , a switch to night attack tactics was forced upon the Command. The problems of enemy defences were then replaced with the problems of simply finding the target. It was common in the early years of the war for bombers relying on dead reckoning navigation to miss entire cities. Surveys of bombing photographs and other sources published during August indicated that less than one bomb in ten fell within 5 miles 8. One of the most urgent problems of the Command was thus to develop technical navigational aids to allow the bombers to find, at least, the right part of the country. Organisation Edit Bomber Command comprised a number of Groups. It began the war with Nos. It was, however, returned to Bomber Command control after the evacuation of France, and reconstituted. Bomber Command also gained two new groups during the war: Many squadrons and personnel from Commonwealth and other European countries were distributed throughout Bomber Command. At its peak strength, 6 Group consisted of 14 operational RCAF bomber squadrons, [14] and 15 different squadrons served with the group. It was a critical part of solving the navigational and aiming problems experienced. Bomber Command solved its navigational problems using two methods. One was the use of a range of increasingly sophisticated electronic aids to navigation and the other was the use of specialist Pathfinders. The technical aids to navigation took two forms. One was external radio navigation aids, as exemplified by Gee and the later highly accurate Oboe systems. The other was the centimetric navigation equipment H2S radar carried in the bombers themselves. The Pathfinders were a group of elite, specially trained and experienced crews who flew ahead and with the main bombing forces, and marked the targets with flares and special marker-bombs. Strategic bombing Main article: Strategic bombing during World War II After the officially-commissioned Butt Report revealed shocking inaccuracies in targeting Churchill recognised "this is a very serious paper and seems to require urgent attention" , [16] The Area Bombing Directive of 14 February ordered Bomber Command to target German industrial areas and the "morale of The directive also reversed the order of the previous year to conserve its forces - this resulted in a large campaign of area bombardment against the Ruhr area. The aerial bombing of cities such as the Operation Millennium raid on Cologne continued throughout the rest of the Second World War, culminating in the bombing of Dresden in Diagram comparing the Stirling yellow with its contemporaries; the Avro Lancaster blue and the Handley Page Halifax pink. The Halifax and Lancaster made up the backbone of the Command - they had a longer range, higher speed and much greater bomb load than the earlier aircraft. The Stirling and Wellington bombers were not taken out of service but used on less demanding tasks such as mine-laying. The classic aircraft of the Pathfinders, the de Havilland Mosquito , also made its appearance. By 25 July , the Bomber Command headquarters was "a substantial set of red brick buildings, hidden in the middle of a forest on top of a hill in the English county of Buckinghamshire. By April , Harris was forced to reduce his strategic offensive as the bomber force was directed to much to his annoyance to tactical and transport communications targets in France in support of the imminent invasion of Normandy. The transport offensive proved highly effective. By late , bombing such as Operation Hurricane to demonstrate the capabilities of the combined British and US bomber forces , competed against the German defences and Bomber Command was capable of putting 1, aircraft over a target without extraordinary efforts. Within 24 hours of Operation Hurricane, the RAF dropped about 10, tonnes of bombs in total on Duisburg and Brunswick , the greatest bomb load dropped in a day during the Second World War. The last raid on Berlin took place on the night of 21â€”22 April, when 76 Mosquitos made six attacks just before Soviet forces entered the city centre. Most of the rest of the RAF bombing raids provided tactical support. Made up of about 30 British Commonwealth heavy bomber squadrons [note 2] to be based on Okinawa, and there was a re-organisation of groups within Bomber Command for the proposed invasion of Japan. The Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki occurred before any part of the force had been transferred to the Pacific. Until navigational technology did not allow for any more precise targeting than at best a district of a town or city by night bombing. All large German cities contained important industrial districts and so were considered legitimate targets by the Allies. New methods were introduced to create "firestorms". The most destructive raids in terms of casualties were those on Hamburg 45, dead in and Dresden 25,â€”35, dead [21] [22] in Each

caused a firestorm and left tens of thousands dead. Other large raids on German cities which resulted in high civil casualties were Darmstadt 12, dead , Pforzheim 17, dead [23] and Kassel 10, dead. Regarding the legality of the campaign, an article in the International Review of the Red Cross stated: In examining these events [aerial area bombardment] in the light of international humanitarian law, it should be borne in mind that during the Second World War there was no agreement, treaty, convention or any other instrument governing the protection of the civilian population or civilian property, as the conventions then in force dealt only with the protection of the wounded and the sick on the battlefield and in naval warfare, hospital ships, the laws and customs of war and the protection of prisoners of war. This covered all Bomber Command operations including tactical support for ground operations and mining of sea lanes. They were able to influence operations by identifying successful defensive tactics and equipment, though some of their more controversial advice such as removing ineffectual turrets from bombers to increase speed was ignored. Statistically there was little prospect of surviving a tour of 30 operations and by the odds against survival were pretty grim with only one in six expected to survive their first tour, while a slim one in forty would survive their second tour. The ostensible aim of the offensive, breaking the morale of the German working class, must be considered a failure. The scale and intensity of the offensive was an appalling trial to the German people and the Hamburg attacks, particularly, profoundly shook the Nazi leadership. However, on balance, the indiscriminate nature of the bombing and the heavy civilian casualties and damage stiffened German resistance to fight to the end. In any case as Sir Arthur Harris put it, the Germans living under a savage tyranny were "not allowed the luxury of morale". Sir Arthur Harris himself believed that there was a relationship between tonnage dropped, city areas destroyed, and lost production. However it should be pointed out that the RAF also made a great contribution to the oil offensive as its abilities to attack precision targets had greatly improved since the arrival of new navigation and target-finding instruments; by mid it was also mounting huge bombing raids in daylight. The real importance of the air war consisted in the fact that it opened a second front long before the invasion in Europe. Defence against air attacks required the production of thousands of anti-aircraft guns, the stockpiling of tremendous quantities of ammunition all over the country, and holding in readiness hundreds of thousands of soldiers, who in addition had to stay in position by their guns, often totally inactive, for months at a time. No one has yet seen that this was the greatest lost battle on the German side. However they did find decreases of These losses resulted from the devastating series of raids the Command launched on the Ruhr Valley at these times. A contrasting view was offered by Adam Tooze [38] that by referring to contemporary sources rather than post-war accounts "there can be no doubt that the Battle of the Ruhr marked a turning point in the history of the German war economy German aircraft output did not increase between July and March The German industrial economy was so strong, its industrial bases so widely spread, that it was a hopeless task to try and crush it by area bombing.

Chapter 3 : RAF Bomber Command - Infogalactic: the planetary knowledge core

RAF Fighter Command By Norman Franks See more like this. British Royal Air Force RAF Fighter Command Reference Book. Pre-Owned. \$

Until advances in radar technology in the late s, this statement was effectively true. Attacking bombers could not be detected early enough to assemble fighters fast enough to prevent them reaching their targets. Some damage might be done to the bombers by AA guns, and by fighters as the bombers returned to base, but that was not as effective as a proper defence. Consequently, the early conception of Bomber Command was as an entity that threatened the enemy with utter destruction, and thus prevented war. Planners used estimates of up to 72 British deaths per tonne of bombs dropped, though this figure was grossly exaggerated. As well, the planners did not know that German bombing aircraft of the day not quite Junkers Ju 52 medium bombers did not have the range to reach the UK with a load of bombs and return to the mainland. British air officers did nothing to correct these perceptions because they could see the usefulness of having a strong bombing arm. The first was lack of size; Bomber Command was not large enough effectively to operate as an independent strategic force. The second was rules of engagement; at the start of the war, the targets allocated to Bomber Command were not wide enough in scope. When the war began on 1 September , Franklin D. Roosevelt , President of the neutral United States, issued an appeal to the major belligerents to confine their air raids to military targets. While acknowledging that bombing Germany would cause civilian casualties, the British government renounced deliberate bombing of civilian property outside combat zones as a military tactic. Scale comparison diagram of the trio of British twin-engined medium bombers at the outbreak of the Second World War; the Whitley pink , the Vickers Wellington blue and the Handley Page Hampden yellow The British government did not want to violate its agreement by attacking civilian targets outside combat zones and the French were even more concerned lest Bomber Command operations provoke a German bombing attack on France. The final problem was lack of adequate aircraft. Bomber Command became even smaller after the declaration of war. This action had two aims: The Phoney War mainly affected the army; to an extent, Bomber Command too saw little combat during the first few months of hostilities. Bomber Command flew many operational missions and lost aircraft but it did virtually no damage to the Germans. Most sorties either failed to find their targets, or were leaflet-dropping missions the first flights by RAF bombers over the German homeland were only to drop propaganda leaflets at night. The remainder of the Battles proved to be horrendously vulnerable to enemy fire. Many times, Battles would set out to attack and be almost wiped out in the process. Due to French paranoia about being attacked by German aircraft during the Phoney War, the Battle force had actually trained over German airspace at night. Following the Rotterdam Blitz of 14 May, RAF Bomber Command was authorized to attack German targets east of the Rhine on 15 May; the Air Ministry authorized Air Marshal Charles Portal to attack targets in the Ruhr , including oil plants and other civilian industrial targets which aided the German war effort, such as blast furnaces which were visible at night. Of these, only 24 claimed to have found their targets. From July to the end of the year, Bomber Command lost nearly aircraft and over 1, aircrew killed, missing or captured. Bomber Command was also indirectly responsible, in part at least, for the switch of Luftwaffe attention away from Fighter Command to bombing civilian targets. A German bomber on a raid got lost due to poor navigation and bombed London. Prime Minister Winston Churchill consequently ordered a retaliatory raid on the German capital of Berlin. The damage caused was minor but the raid sent Hitler into a rage. He ordered the Luftwaffe to level British cities, thus precipitating the Blitz. When the German defences inflicted costly defeats on British raids late , a switch to night bombing was forced upon the Command. The problems of enemy defences were then replaced with the problems of night navigation and target-finding. It was common in the early years of the war for bombers relying on dead reckoning navigation to miss entire cities. Surveys of bombing photographs and other sources published during August , indicated that fewer than one bomb in ten fell within 5 miles 8. One of the most urgent problems of the Command was thus to develop navigational aids. Organisation[edit] Bomber Command comprised a number of Groups. It began the war with Nos. Bomber Command also gained two new

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Churchill noted that "this is a very serious paper and seems to require urgent attention". The directive also reversed the order of the previous year to conserve its forces – this resulted in a large campaign of area bombardment against the Ruhr area. The aerial bombing of cities such as the Operation Millennium raid on Cologne continued throughout the rest of the war, culminating in the controversial bombing of Dresden in 1945. In 1944, the main workhorse aircraft of the later part of the war came into service. The Halifax and Lancaster made up the backbone of the Command – they had a longer range, higher speed and much greater bomb load than the earlier aircraft. The Stirling and Wellington bombers were not taken out of service but used on less demanding tasks such as mine-laying. The classic aircraft of the Pathfinders, the de Havilland Mosquito, also made its appearance. By 25 July 1944, the Bomber Command headquarters was "a substantial set of red brick buildings, hidden in the middle of a forest on top of a hill in the English county of Buckinghamshire. By April 1945, Harris was forced to reduce his strategic offensive as the bomber force was directed much to his annoyance to tactical and transport communications targets in France in support of the invasion of Normandy. The transport offensive proved highly effective. By late 1944, bombing such as Operation Hurricane to demonstrate the capabilities of the combined British and US bomber forces, competed against the German defences and Bomber Command was capable of putting 1,000 aircraft over a target without extraordinary efforts. The peak of Bomber Command operations occurred in the raids of March 1945, when its squadrons dropped the greatest weight of bombs [quantify] for any month in the war. Wesel in the Rhineland, bombed on 16, 17, 18 and 19 February, was bombed again on 23 March, leaving the city "97 percent destroyed". Most of the rest of the RAF bombing raids provided tactical support. Made up of about 30 British Commonwealth heavy bomber squadrons, a reduction of the original plan of about 1,000 aircraft, to be based on Okinawa. Bomber Command groups were re-organised for Operation Downfall but the Soviet invasion of Manchuria and the Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki occurred before the force had been transferred to the Pacific. Until navigational technology did not allow for any more precise targeting than at best a district of a town or city by night bombing. All large German cities contained important industrial districts and so were considered legitimate targets by the Allies. New methods were introduced to create "firestorms". The most destructive raids in terms of casualties were those on Hamburg 45, dead in and Dresden 25, – 35, dead [22] [23] in 1945. Each caused a firestorm and left tens of thousands dead. Other large raids on German cities which resulted in high civil casualties were Darmstadt 12, dead, Pforzheim 17, dead [24] and Kassel 10, dead. Regarding the legality of the campaign, in an article in the International Review of the Red Cross it was held that, In examining these events [aerial area bombardment] in the light of international humanitarian law, it should be borne in mind that during the Second World War there was no agreement, treaty, convention or any other instrument governing the protection of the civilian population or civilian property, as the conventions then in force dealt only with the protection of the wounded and the sick on the battlefield and in naval warfare, hospital ships, the laws and customs of war and the protection of prisoners of war. This covered all Bomber Command operations including tactical support for ground operations and mining of sea lanes. They were able to influence operations by identifying successful defensive tactics and equipment, though some of their more controversial advice such as removing ineffectual turrets from bombers to increase speed was ignored. Statistically there was little prospect of surviving a tour of 30 operations and by 1945, one in six expected to survive their first tour and one in forty would survive their second tour. The ostensible aim of the offensive, breaking the morale of the German working class, must be considered a failure. The scale and intensity of the

offensive was an appalling trial to the German people and the Hamburg attacks, particularly, profoundly shook the Nazi leadership. However, on balance, the indiscriminate nature of the bombing and the heavy civilian casualties and damage stiffened German resistance to fight to the end. In any case as Sir Arthur Harris put it, the Germans living under a savage tyranny were "not allowed the luxury of morale". Sir Arthur Harris himself believed that there was a relationship between tonnage dropped, city areas destroyed, and lost production. However it should be pointed out that the RAF also made a great contribution to the oil offensive as its abilities to attack precision targets had greatly improved since the arrival of new navigation and target-finding instruments; by mid it was also mounting huge bombing raids in daylight. Defence against air attacks required the production of thousands of anti-aircraft guns, the stockpiling of tremendous quantities of ammunition all over the country, and holding in readiness hundreds of thousands of soldiers, who in addition had to stay in position by their guns, often totally inactive, for months at a time No one has yet seen that this was the greatest lost battle on the German side. Relying on US gathered statistics, the British survey found that actual arms production decreases were a mere 3 percent for , and 1 percent for However they did find decreases of These losses resulted from the devastating series of raids the Command launched on the Ruhr Valley. A contrasting view was offered by Adam Tooze that by referring to contemporary sources rather than post-war accounts there can be no doubt that the Battle of the Ruhr marked a turning point in the history of the German war economy German aircraft output did not increase between July and March The German industrial economy was so strong, its industrial bases so widely spread, that it was a hopeless task to try and crush it by area bombing. Further, up until it is undoubtedly the case that Germany was not fully mobilised for war, Speer remarked that single shift factory working was commonplace, and so there was plenty of slack in the system. It has been argued that the RAF campaign placed a limit on German arms production. This may be true but it is also the case that the German forces did not run out of arms and ammunition and that it was manpower that was a key limiting factor, as well as the destruction of transport facilities and the fuel to move. Some positive points should be made. The greatest contribution to winning the war made by Bomber Command was in the huge diversion of German resources into defending the homeland; this was very considerable indeed. Though the 88mm gun was an effective AA weapon, it was also a deadly destroyer of tanks, and lethal against advancing infantry. These weapons would have done much to augment German anti-tank defences on the Russian front. To man these weapons the flak regiments in Germany required some 90, fit personnel, and a further 1 million were deployed in clearing up and repairing the vast bomb-damage caused by the RAF attacks. This diversion to defensive purposes of German arms and manpower was an enormous contribution made by RAF Bomber Command to winning the war. From the British perspective it should be noted that the RAF offensive made a great contribution in sustaining morale during the dark days of the war, especially during the bleak winter of " It was the only means that Britain possessed of taking the war directly to the enemy at that time. The first jet bomber, the English Electric Canberra light bomber, became operational in

Chapter 4 : fighter command game | eBay

RAF Fighter Command was one of three functional commands of the Royal Air Force. It was formed in 1936 to allow more specialised control of fighter operations throughout the Second World War.

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This is a comprehensive reference to the structure, operation, aircraft and men of Fighter Command from its formation in to when it became part of Strike Command. It includes descriptions of many notable defensive and offensive campaigns, the many types of aircraft used, weapons and airfields.

Until advances in radar technology in the late s, this statement was effectively true. Attacking bombers could not be detected early enough to assemble fighters fast enough to prevent them reaching their targets. Some damage might be done to the bombers by AA guns, and by fighters as the bombers returned to base, but that was not as effective as a proper defence. Consequently, the early conception of Bomber Command was in some ways akin to its later role as a nuclear deterrent force. It was seen as an entity that threatened the enemy with utter destruction, and thus prevented war. However, in addition to being made obsolete by technology, even if the bomber did always get through, its ability to inflict damage upon cities was greatly overestimated. The problem was that the British Government was basing its data on a casualty rate of 50 deaths per ton of bombs dropped. The basis for this assumption was a few raids on London in the later stages of World War I, by Zeppelins and Gotha bombers. Both the government and the general public viewed the bomber as a far more terrible weapon than it really was. The early years of the Second World War Main article: The first was lack of size; Bomber Command was not large enough effectively to operate as an independent strategic force. The second was rules of engagement; at the start of the war, the targets allocated to Bomber Command were not wide enough in scope. When the war began on 1 September , Franklin D. Roosevelt , President of the neutral United States, issued an appeal to the major belligerents to confine their air raids to military targets. While acknowledging that bombing Germany would cause civilian casualties, the British government renounced deliberate bombing of civilian property outside combat zones as a military tactic. Scale comparison diagram of the trio of British twin-engined medium bombers at the outbreak of the Second World War; the Whitley pink , the Vickers Wellington blue and the Handley Page Hampden yellow The British government did not want to violate its agreement by attacking civilian targets outside combat zones and the French were even more concerned lest Bomber Command operations provoke a German bombing attack on France. The final problem was lack of good enough aircraft. Bomber Command became even smaller after the declaration of war. This action had two aims: The Sitzkrieg or Phony War mainly affected the army; to an extent, Bomber Command too saw little combat during the first few months of hostilities. Bomber Command flew many operational missions and lost aircraft but it did virtually no damage to the Germans. Most sorties either failed to find their targets, or were leaflet-dropping missions the first flights by RAF bombers over the German homeland were only to drop propaganda leaflets at night. The remainder of the Battles proved to be horrendously vulnerable to enemy fire. Many times, Battles would set out to attack and be almost wiped out in the process. Due to French paranoia about being attacked by German aircraft during the "Phony War", the Battle force had actually trained over German airspace at night. Of these, only 24 claimed to have found their targets. From July to the end of the year, Bomber Command lost nearly aircraft and over 1, aircrew killed, missing or captured. Bomber Command was also indirectly responsible, in part at least, for the switch of Luftwaffe attention away from Fighter Command to bombing civilian targets. A German bomber on a raid got lost due to poor navigation and bombed London. Churchill consequently ordered a retaliatory raid on the German capital of Berlin. The damage caused was minor but the raid sent Hitler into a rage. He ordered the Luftwaffe to level British cities, thus precipitating the Blitz. When the German defences inflicted costly defeats on British raids late , a switch to night bombing was forced upon the Command. The problems of enemy defences were then replaced with the problems of night navigation and target-finding. It was common in the early years of the war for bombers relying on dead reckoning navigation to miss entire cities. Surveys of bombing photographs and other sources published during August , indicated that fewer than one bomb in ten fell within 5 miles 8. One of the most urgent problems of the Command was thus to develop navigational aids. Organisation Bomber Command comprised a number of Groups. It began the war with Nos. Bomber Command also gained two new groups during the war: Many squadrons and personnel from Commonwealth

and other European countries flew in Bomber Command. At its peak strength, 6 Group consisted of 14 operational RCAF bomber squadrons and 15 squadrons served with the group. It was a critical part of solving the navigational and aiming problems experienced. Bomber Command solved its navigational problems using two methods. One was the use of a range of increasingly sophisticated electronic aids to navigation and the other was the use of specialist Pathfinders. The technical aids to navigation took two forms. One was external radio navigation aids, as exemplified by Gee and the later highly accurate Oboe systems. The other was the centimetric navigation equipment H2S radar carried in the bombers. The Pathfinders were a group of elite, specially trained and experienced crews who flew ahead and with the main bombing forces and marked the targets with flares and special marker-bombs. Strategic bombing during World War II Diagram comparing the Stirling yellow with its contemporaries; the Avro Lancaster blue and the Handley Page Halifax pink In , the Butt Report revealed the extent of bombing inaccuracy Churchill recognised "this is a very serious paper and seems to require urgent attention". The directive also reversed the order of the previous year to conserve its forces " this resulted in a large campaign of area bombardment against the Ruhr area. The aerial bombing of cities such as the Operation Millennium raid on Cologne continued throughout the rest of the war, culminating in the bombing of Dresden in In , the main workhorse aircraft of the later part of the war came into service. The Halifax and Lancaster made up the backbone of the Command " they had a longer range, higher speed and much greater bomb load than the earlier aircraft. The Stirling and Wellington bombers were not taken out of service but used on less demanding tasks such as mine-laying. The classic aircraft of the Pathfinders, the de Havilland Mosquito , also made its appearance. By 25 July , the Bomber Command headquarters was "a substantial set of red brick buildings, hidden in the middle of a forest on top of a hill in the English county of Buckinghamshire. By April , Harris was forced to reduce his strategic offensive as the bomber force was directed much to his annoyance to tactical and transport communications targets in France in support of the invasion of Normandy. The transport offensive proved highly effective. By late , bombing such as Operation Hurricane to demonstrate the capabilities of the combined British and US bomber forces , competed against the German defences and Bomber Command was capable of putting 1, aircraft over a target without extraordinary efforts. The peak of Bomber Command operations occurred in the raids of March , when its squadrons dropped the greatest weight of bombs[quantify] for any month in the war. Wesel in the Rhineland, bombed on 16, 17, 18 and 19 February, was bombed again on 23 March, leaving the city "97 percent destroyed". Most of the rest of the RAF bombing raids provided tactical support. Made up of about 30 British Commonwealth heavy bomber squadrons, a reduction of the original plan of about 1, aircraft, to be based on Okinawa. Bomber Command groups were re-organised for Operation Downfall but the Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki occurred before the force had been transferred to the Pacific. Until navigational technology did not allow for any more precise targeting than at best a district of a town or city by night bombing. All large German cities contained important industrial districts and so were considered legitimate targets by the Allies. New methods were introduced to create "firestorms". The most destructive raids in terms of casualties were those on Hamburg 45, dead in and Dresden 25, "35, dead [19] [20] in Each caused a firestorm and left tens of thousands dead. Other large raids on German cities which resulted in high civil casualties were Darmstadt 12, dead , Pforzheim 17, dead [21] and Kassel 10, dead. Regarding the legality of the campaign, in an article in the International Review of the Red Cross it was held that, In examining these events [aerial area bombardment] in the light of international humanitarian law , it should be borne in mind that during the Second World War there was no agreement, treaty, convention or any other instrument governing the protection of the civilian population or civilian property, as the conventions then in force dealt only with the protection of the wounded and the sick on the battlefield and in naval warfare, hospital ships , the laws and customs of war and the protection of prisoners of war. This covered all Bomber Command operations including tactical support for ground operations and mining of sea lanes. They were able to influence operations by identifying successful defensive tactics and equipment, though some of their more controversial advice such as removing ineffectual turrets from bombers to increase speed was ignored. Statistically there was little prospect of surviving a tour of 30 operations and by , one in six expected to survive their first tour and one in forty would survive their second tour. The ostensible aim of the offensive, breaking the morale of

the German working class, must be considered a failure. The scale and intensity of the offensive was an appalling trial to the German people and the Hamburg attacks, particularly, profoundly shook the Nazi leadership. However, on balance, the indiscriminate nature of the bombing and the heavy civilian casualties and damage stiffened German resistance to fight to the end. In any case as Sir Arthur Harris put it, the Germans living under a savage tyranny were "not allowed the luxury of morale". Sir Arthur Harris himself believed that there was a relationship between tonnage dropped, city areas destroyed, and lost production. However it should be pointed out that the RAF also made a great contribution to the oil offensive as its abilities to attack precision targets had greatly improved since the arrival of new navigation and target-finding instruments; by mid it was also mounting huge bombing raids in daylight. Defence against air attacks required the production of thousands of anti-aircraft guns, the stockpiling of tremendous quantities of ammunition all over the country, and holding in readiness hundreds of thousands of soldiers, who in addition had to stay in position by their guns, often totally inactive, for months at a time No one has yet seen that this was the greatest lost battle on the German side. Relying on US gathered statistics, the British survey found that actual arms production decreases were a mere 3 percent for , and 1 percent for However they did find decreases of These losses resulted from the devastating series of raids the Command launched on the Ruhr Valley. A contrasting view was offered by Adam Tooze that by referring to contemporary sources rather than post-war accounts there can be no doubt that the Battle of the Ruhr marked a turning point in the history of the German war economy German aircraft output did not increase between July and March The German industrial economy was so strong, its industrial bases so widely spread, that it was a hopeless task to try and crush it by area bombing. Further, up until it is undoubtedly the case that Germany was not fully mobilised for war, Speer remarked that single shift factory working was commonplace, and so there was plenty of slack in the system. It has been argued that the RAF campaign placed a limit on German arms production. This may be true but it is also the case that the German forces did not run out of arms and ammunition and that it was manpower that was a key limiting factor, as well as the destruction of transport facilities and the fuel to move. Some positive points should be made. The greatest contribution to winning the war made by Bomber Command was in the huge diversion of German resources into defending the homeland; this was very considerable indeed. Though the 88mm gun was an effective AA weapon, it was also a deadly destroyer of tanks, and lethal against advancing infantry. These weapons would have done much to augment German anti-tank defences on the Russian front. To man these weapons the flak regiments in Germany required some 90, fit personnel, and a further 1 million were deployed in clearing up and repairing the vast bomb-damage caused by the RAF attacks. This diversion to defensive purposes of German arms and manpower was an enormous contribution made by RAF Bomber Command to winning the war. From the British perspective it should be noted that the RAF offensive made a great contribution in sustaining morale during the dark days of the war, especially during the bleak winter of 1945

Chapter 6 : Fighter Command An Operational & Historical Record - Ken Delve - Google Books

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Battle of Britain Propaganda shot of the fighter pilots of the Polish squadron , Running low on pilots during the battle of Britain , Fighter Command accepted foreign pilots into its ranks. Over the next few years, the Command expanded greatly and replaced its obsolete biplane squadrons with two of the most famous aircraft ever to fly with the RAF, the Hawker Hurricane and the Supermarine Spitfire. The supreme test of Fighter Command came during the summer of when the German Luftwaffe launched an offensive aimed at attaining air superiority over the Channel and the UK as a prerequisite to the launch of a seaborne invasion force codenamed Operation Sea Lion. Fighter Command was divided into a number of Groups, each controlling a different part of the UK. In the end, the Germans failed to attain air superiority, although the RAF had been eating into its reserves during the battle, as had the Luftwaffe. Various types of short-penetration fighter operations were tried out in a bid to draw the Luftwaffe into a war of attrition, and keep inordinate numbers of fighters tied down in France, particularly after the German attack on the Soviet Union in June Large numbers of Spitfires were sent out with small groups of medium bombers in often vain attempts to lure the German fighters into combat. Most of the factors that had allowed Fighter Command to win the Battle of Britain were now reversed. For example, British pilots who were shot down in and survived would be patched up and sent back to their units as quickly as possible. In , over France, a shot down pilot would, as likely as not, end up a prisoner of war. The year saw RAF Fighter Command claim some Luftwaffe fighters shot down although only were lost from all causes, in combat for losses of approximately RAF fighters lost. Parallel to the day offensive in was the ongoing night bomber attacks against the United Kingdom in January to May. By this time, until May , the Luftwaffe effort was aimed against both civilian and industrial targets. The Bristol Beaufighter became the prime nightfighter , equipped with airborne radar , it proved ever more effective against the bombers, with the ground-based organisation that proved so efficient in now guiding the night fighters to their targets. An increasing number of anti-aircraft guns and searchlights were also radar-controlled, improving accuracy. With the impending invasion of Russia requiring the movement of air power to the East, the Blitz ended in May with Fighter Command in complete control of the night sky over the UK. The difficult task of slowly grinding down the Germans continued into and Fighter Command deployed their new Hawker Typhoon units at this time. The most notable offensive battle took place over Dieppe, France when an ill-fated commando-style raid was mounted there in August Dieppe Raid. Although the RAF succeeded in preventing the Luftwaffe from interfering with the shipping, which was its primary aim, its perceived success was misleading. Despite claims at the time that more German aircraft than British had been shot down kills were claimed by the RAF postwar analysis showed Allied aircraft losses amounted to , including 88 RAF fighters and 18 bombers. Of the fighter losses 29 were from flak, one ran out of fuel, two collided, and one was a victim of friendly fire. Included in that total were 28 bombers, half of them Dornier Do s from KG 2. JG 26 lost six Fw s with their pilots. In , the most notable event was a very important administrative one. As the name of the former suggests, its primary aim was defence of the UK from attack, with the latter concentrating on supporting ground forces after the eventual invasion of Europe. Operation Overlord , the invasion of France was launched on 6 June RAF fighters swarmed over the battle area and, along with their American counterparts, suppressed the meagre German opposition. They also directly supported ground forces by strafing enemy positions and transport. Later in the year, the final major test of Fighter Command renamed back in October in the war occurred against the V-1 flying bomb during Operation Crossbow. RAF fighters also supported the strategic bombing of Operation Crossbow, such as with long-range intruder operations that attacked German airfields and aircraft e. The corps would continue as a civilian organisation but wearing a Royal Air Force uniform and administered by Fighter Command. The ROC was a defence warning organisation operating in the United Kingdom between and 31 December when it was stood down. Initially established for an aircraft recognition and reporting role that lasted through both world wars, the organisation

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Chapter 7 : About: RAF Fighter Command

This is a list of Royal Air Force commands, both past and present. Although the concept of a command dates back to the foundation of the Royal Air Force, the term command (as the name of a formation) was first used in purely RAF-context in when Bomber Command, Fighter Command, Coastal Command and Training Command were formed.

It was formed in to allow more specialised control of fighter aircraft. It served throughout the Second World War. It earned great fame during the Battle of Britain in , when the Few held off the Luftwaffe attack on Britain. The Command continued until 17 November , when it was disbanded and the RAF fighter force was split into two categories; defence and attack. On 23 February , No. Running low on pilots during the battle of Britain , Fighter Command accepted foreign pilots into its ranks. Over the next few years, the Command expanded greatly and replaced its obsolete biplane squadrons with generally outfitted with Bristol Bulldog , Gloster Gauntlet and Hawker Fury biplane fighters leading up to, and through the period of its founding with two of the most famous aircraft ever to fly with the RAF, the Hawker Hurricane and the Supermarine Spitfire. The supreme test of Fighter Command came during the summer of when the German Luftwaffe launched an offensive aimed at attaining air superiority over the Channel and the UK as a prerequisite to the launch of a seaborne invasion force codenamed Operation Sea Lion. Fighter Command was divided into a number of Groups, each controlling a different part of the UK. In the end, the Germans failed to attain air superiority, although the RAF had been eating into its reserves during the battle, as had the Luftwaffe. By May , the Squadrons based at all the main fighter airfields were now to operate together as integral Fighter Wings, under the tactical control of the newly created post of wing Leader, invariably an experienced veteran of wing commander rank. Various types of short-penetration fighter operations were tried out in a bid to draw the Luftwaffe into a war of attrition, and keep inordinate numbers of fighters tied down in France, particularly after the German attack on the Soviet Union in June Large numbers of Spitfires were sent out with small groups of medium bombers in often vain attempts to lure the German fighters into combat. Most of the factors that had allowed Fighter Command to win the Battle of Britain were now reversed. For example, British pilots who were shot down in and survived would be patched up and sent back to their units as quickly as possible. In , over France, a shot down pilot would, as likely as not, end up a prisoner of war. The year saw RAF Fighter Command claim some Luftwaffe fighters shot down although only were lost from all causes, in combat for losses of approximately RAF fighters lost. Parallel to the day offensive in was the ongoing night bomber attacks against the United Kingdom in January to May. By this time, until May , the Luftwaffe effort was aimed against both civilian and industrial targets. The Bristol Beaufighter became the prime nightfighter , equipped with airborne radar , it proved ever more effective against the bombers, with the ground-based organisation that proved so efficient in now guiding the night fighters to their targets. An increasing number of anti-aircraft guns and searchlights were also radar-controlled, improving accuracy. With the impending invasion of Russia requiring the movement of air power to the East, the Blitz ended in May with Fighter Command in complete control of the night sky over the UK. The difficult task of slowly grinding down the Germans continued into and Fighter Command deployed their new Hawker Typhoon units at this time. The most notable offensive battle took place over Dieppe, France when an ill-fated commando-style raid was mounted there in August Dieppe Raid. Although the RAF succeeded in preventing the Luftwaffe from interfering with the shipping, which was its primary aim, its perceived success was misleading. Despite claims at the time that more German aircraft than British had been shot down kills were claimed by the RAF postwar analysis showed Allied aircraft losses amounted to , including 88 RAF fighters and 18 bombers. Of the fighter losses 29 were from flak, one ran out of fuel, two collided, and one was a victim of friendly fire. Included in that total were 28 bombers, half of them Dornier Do s from KG 2. One of the two Jagdgeschwader fighter wings, JG 2 , lost 14 Fw s and eight pilots killed. JG 26 lost six Fw s with their pilots. In , the most notable event was a very important administrative one. As the name of the former suggests, its primary aim was defence of the UK from attack, with the latter concentrating on supporting ground forces after the eventual invasion of Europe. Operation Overlord , the invasion of France was launched on 6 June RAF fighters

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Chapter 8 : RAF Bentley Priory " HQ Fighter Command " Aviation Classics

RAF Fighter Command, by Franks, Norman. Hardback. Very Good.

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nine uniformed full time professional officers under the command of a serving RAF Air Commodore. However, its target changed from Germany to the Soviet Union. A Canadian fighter wing, No. 49, was the only purely British supersonic aircraft to enter service. A long succession of fighter aircraft saw service with Fighter Command during the 1950s and 1960s. The Lightning was the only purely British supersonic aircraft to enter service. That was due to a disastrous defence review in 1964. During the 1960s, the performance of the new surface to air missiles was improving at an enormous rate. Duncan Sandys, the Minister of Defence at the time needed to find cuts in the British defence budget, since the UK was in serious danger of being bankrupted by its defence spending. The rate of improvement of surface to air missiles seemed to indicate that they would soon be able to shoot any manned aircraft out of the sky. All programmes for manned aircraft that were not too far along were cancelled. The Lightning was the only one of a number of new supersonic aircraft that was too far along to cancel. That decision, combined with the increasing costs of developing aircraft crippled the British aircraft industry and made Fighter Command and the RAF reliant on foreign or jointly developed aircraft. It was now becoming clear that the RAF was simply becoming too small to justify their continued existence as separate entities. Consequently, in 1968, Fighter Command and Bomber Command were joined together to form Strike Command, each becoming groups within the new command. Its record was glorious, and many[who? Air Officer Commanders-in-Chief -

Chapter 9 : RAF Fighter Command - Wikipedia

RAF Bomber Command controlled the RAF's bomber forces from 1936 to 1968. Along with the United States Army Air Forces, it played the central role in the strategic bombing of Germany in World War II.