

Note from AFA President -- Battle of Britain, Nat. Aerospace Week

AFA members, Congressional Staff members, Civic leaders, DOCA members,

The 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the Battle of Britain just passed by on 10 July without a lot of fanfare. It was a watershed moment in the first century of Airpower's history, and left us with many enduring lessons.

Both the British and Germans made hardware decisions years before, directly impacted that crucial fight, and with it, the course of the entire war.

In the late 1930s, the British proceeded – over substantial civilian objection – with production of not only the Hurricane, but also the Spitfire. The usual clamor was heard. The Spitfire was "not required," too expensive, too complicated and too hard to build. A few short years later, with Britain's national survival at stake, the Spitfire gave the Royal Air Force the necessary depth of capability and capacity to win.

Similarly, the British decided in the late '30s to invest in radar and centralize air defense fighter direction. Through this awareness and command/control, the RAF met and defeated the Luftwaffe day after day of sustained fighting.

In contrast, the Germans canceled a 4-engine, long-range bomber program and focused on their current fight, which meant Army cooperation. The result was an inability to disrupt British bases that refitted the fighters and kept them in the fight.

There are countless lessons for a serious airpower student of this battle. Among the keys to take away is that program decisions made long before the start of the war were decisive.

For an article on this subject, see: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/world-war-2/battle-of-britain/7881879/Battle-of-Britain-our-finest-hour.html>

Secondly, the Air Force Association is partnering with the Aerospace Industries Association (AIA) to promote National Aerospace Week 12-18 September. This week coincides with the 63<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the US Air Force (17 Sep) as well as AFA's Air and Space Conference and Technology Exposition (13-15 Sep). I am constantly amazed at how much the Aerospace Industry contributes to the US economy, national security and technological superiority. Aerospace sales reached a record \$214 billion last year. The sector directly and indirectly contributes more than \$1.2 trillion – or 5.6 percent of gross domestic product – to the US economy. It supplies nearly 11 million jobs in all 50 states.

National Aerospace Week is an opportunity for our collective voice to reach out to co-workers, colleagues, employees, communities, and elected officials to reinforce the messages highlighting the importance of this industry to our national security. National Aerospace Week also presents an excellent opportunity to thank our armed forces for their contributions to our security and to encourage young people to consider a career in the industry. We have put more information on the week ... along with suggestions of activities ... on our website at: <http://www.afa.org/events/NatAeroWeek/default.asp>

For your consideration,

Mike

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