

Westminster Abbey



A Service of
Thanksgiving and Rededication
to mark
the 75th anniversary of
the Battle of Britain



Sunday 20th September 2015
11.00 am

HISTORICAL NOTE

This year marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Battle of Britain, the first decisive battle in history fought entirely in the air. Battle of Britain Sunday commemorates a dramatic turning point in both the battle itself, and the history of the Second World War.

The German objective in the summer of 1940 was to eliminate the Royal Air Force, both in the air and on the ground, in order to obtain air superiority in preparation for a seaborne and airborne invasion. Operating principally from airfields in France and Belgium, the Luftwaffe began its first heavy onslaught early in July 1940, directed against British shipping and the Channel ports. The intent behind this first phase of the battle was not only to sink shipping, but also to draw the Royal Air Force into combat and wear down its strength. The second phase, from 8th–18th August, consisted of intensive day operations against coastal radar stations and fighter airfields. The third phase began after a five-day lull due to poor weather, with attacks on fighter airfields in the London area and increased night attacks on Britain's cities.

The first daylight assault on London was made on 7th September and marked the beginning of the fourth phase, lasting most of that month, during which the capital became the Luftwaffe's primary target. These attacks, although serious in themselves, brought vital relief to the fighter airfields, which until that time had been under considerable pressure. The battle reached a climax on 15th September, when the Luftwaffe flew more than 1,000 sorties over England during daylight hours. On that occasion, the Luftwaffe lost fifty-six aircraft. It was, in Sir Winston Churchill's words, 'one of the decisive battles of the war'. Churchill went on to say: 'The gratitude of every home in our Island, in our Empire, and indeed throughout the world...goes out to the British airmen who, undaunted by odds, unwearied in their constant challenge and mortal danger, are turning the tide of world war by their prowess and by their devotion. Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few'. It is therefore fitting that today we also mark the fiftieth anniversary of the dedication by Her Majesty The Queen of the memorial to Sir Winston Churchill at the west end of the Abbey Church.

Throughout October, the fifth and final phase of the Battle saw the decline of enemy daylight attacks on London and an increase in the night bombing of Britain's major ports and industrial centres. At the

beginning of the struggle, the Luftwaffe had approximately 2,700 aircraft to launch against England. Britain had fewer than sixty fighter squadrons—around 700 aircraft—and the ground crew had to work sometimes sixteen hours per day to keep aircraft in the air. Between 24th August and 6th September alone, Fighter Command lost 103 pilots, and 128 were seriously wounded; 466 fighters had been destroyed or badly damaged. Fighter Command lost over 1,000 fighter aircraft during the battle, and the Luftwaffe nearly 1,900. Through the efforts of fewer than 3,000 aircrew from Britain, the Commonwealth, and Allied and even some neutral nations, together with the men and women who supported them, the Nazi war machine suffered its first significant strategic defeat. In all, 544 aircrew from Fighter Command were killed during the Battle, and a further 791 died before the end of the War. The cost was grievous, but the stakes immeasurably high.

At the end of the battle, with the home base now secure, the Royal Air Force could turn to wider tasks, including the long fight for Malta, North Africa, and control of the Mediterranean; the mounting bomber offensive against Germany; the struggle for air supremacy over North-West Europe, without which the Normandy Invasion would have been impossible; and support of the invasion campaign itself. Without these essential contributions, victory in Europe would not have been possible. The Royal Air Force also played a vital role in the Far East, most memorably in the appalling conditions of the Burma campaign. Nor should we forget the unstinting efforts of our maritime airmen, who doggedly quartered the hostile seas around the globe for enemy U-boats, shipping, and surface raiders. In commemorating the airmen who fought in the Battle of Britain, we pay tribute also to those who, in later years of the war, served in all the Allied Forces at sea, on land, and in the air.

Today we record our continuing sense of gratitude for what was achieved in the darkest moments of war, and we rededicate ourselves to strive untiringly for peace, justice, and freedom in the world. We also remember the tireless efforts of RAF servicemen and women who have served in nearly every part of the globe as far eastwards as Hong Kong, Borneo, and Malaya; westwards to Belize; or southwards to the Falkland Islands and South Georgia. We also acknowledge and celebrate the achievements and sacrifices of the men and women of the Royal Air Force still serving in the troubled regions of the world, some of which would have been familiar to previous generations of their families who served in the early decades of the Service's existence.



Pilots of No 303 (Polish) Squadron with one of their Hawker Hurricanes, October 1940



610 Squadron flying Spitfire 1As on patrol over southern England, 24th July 1940



Fifty years ago, at the Battle of Britain service at Westminster Abbey in 1965, Her Majesty The Queen unveiled the memorial to Sir Winston Churchill KG OM CH

The service is conducted by The Very Reverend Dr John Hall, Dean of Westminster.

The service is sung by the Choir of Westminster Abbey, conducted by James O'Donnell, Organist and Master of the Choristers.

The organ is played by Daniel Cook, Sub-Organist.

The Fanfare Team from the Central Band of the Royal Air Force is directed by Wing Commander Duncan Stubbs RAF, Principal Director of Music, Royal Air Force.

The Standard of No 56 Squadron of the Royal Air Force is paraded at this service.

Before the service, a Lining Party is formed at the Great West Door, comprising members of The Queen's Colour Squadron, Royal Air Force, accompanied by the National Standards of the National Service (RAF) Association, the RAF Regiment Association, the Royal Observer Corps Association, and the Royal Air Forces Association, together with Standards from Royal Air Forces Association branches.

Before the service, the Central Band of the Royal Air Force, conducted by Wing Commander Duncan Stubbs RAF, plays:

Aubade *from* Illyrian Dances *Guy Woolfenden (b 1937)*

Lux aurumque *Eric Whitacre (b 1970)*

Romance *from* Symphony V *Ralph Vaughan Williams*
(1872–1958)
arranged by
Wing Commander Duncan Stubbs (b 1961)

Keep the Faith *Wing Commander Duncan Stubbs*

Greensleeves *traditional*
arranged by James Curnow (b 1943)

Nimrod *Edward Elgar (1857–1934)*
arranged by
Wing Commander (retired) Barrie Hingley (b 1938)

Elegy on the RAF March *Wing Commander (retired) Barrie Hingley*

The Chief Commoner of the City of London, also representing The Lord Mayor of London, is received and conducted to his place in Quire. All remain seated.

The Lord Mayor of Westminster Locum Tenens is received and conducted to her place in Quire. All stand, and then sit.

His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales is received at the West Gate.

A fanfare is sounded. All stand.

ORDER OF SERVICE

His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales is presented with a wreath by The Right Honourable Sir Nicholas Soames MP, grandson of Sir Winston Churchill. The Prince of Wales places the wreath on the Churchill memorial.

All remain standing as the Choir and Clergy, together with His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, move to places in Quire and the Sacrarium.

All remain standing to sing

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

GOD save our gracious Queen.
Long live our noble Queen.

God save The Queen.

Send her victorious,
happy and glorious,
long to reign over us:

God save The Queen.

Thy choicest gifts in store
on her be pleased to pour,
long may she reign.
May she defend our laws,
and ever give us cause
to sing with heart and voice:

God save The Queen!

*from Thesaurus musicus c 1743
arranged by Gordon Jacob (1895–1984)*

*anonymous and
W E Hickson (1803–70)*

All remain standing. The Very Reverend Dr John Hall, Dean of Westminster, gives

THE BIDDING

ONCE again we come together on Battle of Britain Sunday in this House of Kings and House of Prayer to give thanks for the dedication and heroism of members of the Royal Air Force and the allied air forces in that remarkable struggle for air supremacy over Britain in October 1940. Their courage marked a turning point in the war, for without their bravery it is hard to see how the Second World War could have been won.

As we reflect today on their gallantry and fortitude, we remember all who have served and still serve in the Royal Air Force. We honour all who fight in the service of freedom; we express penitence for the suffering and destruction caused by armed conflicts; and we renew our commitment to work for justice, freedom, and decency.

Today we pray especially for the Royal Air Force and all those who continue to work, often in immense danger, for justice and peace. We ask for God's guidance that we may hold courageously to the values we profess, that we may indeed do his will, as we say together the prayer that Jesus taught us:

OUR Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Standard of No 56 Squadron of the Royal Air Force is borne through the Church, presented, and laid upon the High Altar, as the Band plays:

Fanfare to the Royal Air Force

R E C Davies (1920–95)

Fanfare on the Royal Air Force Call

R F O'Donnell (1885–1961)

Standard Bearer:
Flight Lieutenant R Hands RAF

Escorts:
Flight Lieutenant P Janssen RAF Flight Lieutenant J Cox RAF

The Dean says:

Let us pray.

ALMMIGHTY God, who makest the clouds thy chariots and walkest upon the wings of the storm, look in mercy, we beseech thee, upon the Royal Air Force. Make us a tower of strength to our Queen and to our country. Help us to do our duty with prudence and with fearlessness, confident that in life or in death the eternal God is our refuge and strength. Grant this for Jesus Christ's sake. **Amen.**

All sing

THE HYMN



ALL my hope on God is founded;
he doth still my trust renew.
Me through change and chance he guideth,
only good and only true.
God unknown,
he alone
calls my heart to be his own.

God's great goodness aye endureth,
deep his wisdom, passing thought:
splendour, light, and life attend him,
beauty springeth out of naught.
Evermore
from his store
new-born worlds rise and adore.

Daily doth th'Almighty giver
bounteous gifts on us bestow;
his desire our soul delighteth,
pleasure leads us where we go.
Love doth stand
at his hand;
joy doth wait on his command.

Still from man to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ his Son.
Christ doth call
one and all:
ye who follow shall not fall.

Michael 333 NEH
Herbert Howells (1892–1983)

Robert Bridges (1844–1930)

All sit. Officer Cadet Dominic Howard-Williams RAF reads from the Nave Pulpit

EXODUS 3: 1–7, 10–14

MOSES was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, 'I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.' When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.' Then he said, 'Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' He said further, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. Then the Lord said, 'I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings. So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the

Israelites, out of Egypt.’ But Moses said to God, ‘Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?’ He said, ‘I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.’ But Moses said to God, ‘If I come to the Israelites and say to them, “The God of your ancestors has sent me to you”, and they ask me, “What is his name?” what shall I say to them?’ God said to Moses, ‘I am who I am.’ He said further, ‘Thus you shall say to the Israelites, “I am has sent me to you.”’

All remain seated. The Choir sings

PSALM 46

GOD is our hope and strength: a very present help in trouble.
Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be moved: and though
the hills be carried into the midst of the sea.
Though the waters thereof rage and swell: and though the mountains
shake at the tempest of the same.
The rivers of the flood thereof shall make glad the city of God: the holy
place of the tabernacle of the most Highest.
God is in the midst of her, therefore shall she not be removed: God shall
help her, and that right early.
The heathen make much ado, and the kingdoms are moved: but God
hath shewed his voice, and the earth shall melt away.
The Lord of hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our refuge.
O come hither, and behold the works of the Lord: what destruction he
hath brought upon the earth.
He maketh wars to cease in all the world: he breaketh the bow, and
knappeth the spear in sunder, and burneth the chariots in the fire.
Be still then, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the
heathen, and I will be exalted in the earth.
The Lord of hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our refuge.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost:
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end.
Amen.

after Martin Luther

All remain seated. Air Chief Marshal Sir Andrew Pulford KCB CBE ADC RAF, Chief of the Air Staff, reads from the Great Lectern

ST LUKE 14: 25–33

LARGE crowds were travelling with Jesus; and he turned and said to them, ‘Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, “This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.” Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.’

All stand for

THE ACT OF REMEMBRANCE

The Battle of Britain Roll of Honour is borne from the Grave of the Unknown Warrior to the Sacrarium, escorted by veterans of the Battle of Britain, sons of the veterans, and serving Royal Air Force pilots and aircrew, during which the Band plays:

March Theme
from The Battle of Britain

*William Walton (1902–83)
arranged by
Wing Commander (retired) Barrie Hingley*

Honorary Steward

Group Captain
J G Eaton MBE

Roll Bearer

Flight Lieutenant D Wild RAF

Escorts:

Wing Commander T Neil DFC* AFC AE	Mr P Neil
Wing Commander P Farnes DFM AE	Master Aircrew P Edwardes RAF
Squadron Leader G Wellum DFC	Mr N Wellum
Squadron Leader T Pickering AE	Mr M Pickering
Flight Lieutenant W Clark DFM AE	Mr R Clark
Wing Commander R Summers OBE OstJ AFM	Dr R Summers
Flying Officer K Wilkinson AE	Mr P Cooper
Flight Lieutenant W Easterbrook RAF	Flight Lieutenant J Chester RAF
Flight Lieutenant J Dale RAF	Flight Lieutenant S Iwanek RAF
Flight Lieutenant J Peterson RAF	Flight Lieutenant J Guertin RAF

All remain standing. The Dean says:

Let us pray.

ALMIGHTY God, into thy hands we commend the souls of those who laid down their lives for the cause of freedom; praying that thou wouldst grant them the joys of thy eternal kingdom, and, to all who mourn them, fortitude of spirit and constant faith in the power of thy love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

All remain standing to sing

THE HYMN



I HEARD the voice of Jesus say,
‘Come unto me and rest;
lay down, thou weary one, lay down
thy head upon my breast.’
I came to Jesus as I was,
weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in him a resting-place,
and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
‘Behold, I freely give
the living water, thirsty one;
stoop down, and drink, and live:’
I came to Jesus, and I drank
of that life-giving stream;
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
and now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
‘I am this dark world’s light;
look unto me, thy morn shall rise,
and all thy day be bright.’
I looked to Jesus, and I found
in him my star, my sun;
and in that light of life I’ll walk
till travelling days are done.

*Kingsfold 376 NEH
traditional melody*

Horatius Bonar (1808–89)

All sit for

THE ADDRESS

by

The Venerable (Air Vice-Marshal) Jonathan Chaffey QHC RAF
Chaplain-in-Chief, Royal Air Force

All remain seated. The Choir sings

THE ANTHEM

MANY waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it. Love is strong as death. Greater love hath no man than this: that a man lay down his life for his friends. Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness. Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus. Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies, a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

*John Ireland (1879–1962) Song of Solomon 8: 7, 6; St John 15: 13; 1 St Peter 2: 24;
1 Corinthians 6: 11; 1 St Peter 2: 9; Romans 12: 1*

*All kneel or sit. The Reverend Christopher Stoltz, Minor Canon and
Precentor of Westminster, leads*

THE PRAYERS

LET us thank God for his many gifts; for his creation; for the revelation of his self-giving love in Jesus Christ; and for each opportunity to serve him in serving the needs of our brothers and sisters.

Let us bless the Lord:
thanks be to God.

Mrs Joan Fanshawe WAAF says:

LET us thank God for the freedoms we enjoy, recalling with gratitude the courage of those who during the Battle of Britain served the cause of liberty in the Royal Air Force, the Royal Auxiliary Air Force, the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, and the Women's Auxiliary Air Force, and especially those who gave their lives so that we might have fullness of life.

Let us bless the Lord:
thanks be to God.

Squadron Leader Rhona Metcalfe RAF says:

LET us give thanks for the service rendered in peace and in conflict to the peoples of this and of other countries by the Royal Air Force and the Royal Auxiliary Air Force; for peace preserved, for peril averted.

Let us bless the Lord:
thanks be to God.

Wing Commander Anne-Marie Houghton RAF says:

LET us give thanks for the hope of peace for all people. We rejoice that in the power and grace of Christ, the Prince of Peace, swords may be beaten into ploughshares and old and bitter enemies might yield up their hatred and find enduring fellowship.

Let us bless the Lord:
thanks be to God.

Officer Cadet Jasmine Holmes RAF says:

LET us pray for all who suffer today from exploitation, greed, or cruelty; and for those who live where there is warfare, unrest, or the threat of violence. Let us pray for the leaders of the nations and for all who influence the course of world events: that they may act with wisdom, discernment, and integrity.

Lord, in thy mercy,
hear our prayer.

Officer Cadet Juliette Lewis RAF says:

LET us pray for all who still bear the wounds of war in body, mind, or spirit; for veterans and for all who assist them, especially the Royal Air Forces Association, the Royal Air Force Charitable Trust, the Royal Air Force Widows' Association, the War Widows' Association of Great Britain, and the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund; that all who have made sacrifices for the cause of peace may know that peace in their own lives.

Lord, in thy mercy,
hear our prayer.

The Venerable Andrew Tremlett, Canon in Residence, says:

LET us pray for those members of the Royal Air Force who, through their vigilance and determination, make it possible for planes to fly and defend these shores: for all mechanics and ground crew personnel; for radar operators and engineers; and for all engaged in logistics; that, inspired by the example of their forebears, they may continue to fulfil this vital service with skill and pride.

Lord, in thy mercy,
hear our prayer.

LET us pray for all who serve today in the Royal Air Force and the Forces of the Crown, particularly those currently serving in the Middle East, the Gulf, the South Atlantic, and other operational environments; we remember especially those whose duty places them in danger and pray that they may be granted spiritual fortitude, with physical and moral courage.

Lord, in thy mercy,
hear our prayer.

The Precentor concludes:

Let us pray.

ALMIGHTY God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto thee; and dost promise that when two or three are gathered together in thy Name thou wilt grant their requests: fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting.
Amen.

St John Chrysostom (c 345–407)

All stand to sing

THE HYMN

*during which a collection is taken
for the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund
and the Royal Air Forces Association*



O RULER of the earth and sky
be with our airmen when they fly;
and keep them in thy loving care
amid the perils of the air.
O let our cry come unto thee
for those who fly o'er land and sea.

Strong Son of Man, save those who fly
swift-winged across th'uncharted sky;
each anxious hour and lonely flight,
serene, unchallenged, day and night.
O'er land and ocean safely bear
all those in peril in the air.

O Holy Spirit, God's own power
give peace in sudden danger's hour:
bring calm of heart, and be thou near
to those who watch and those who fear.
To thee will rise the grateful prayer
of those who serve thee in the air.

O Trinity of love and grace,
true guide of all who fly through space,
in peace or war, mid friend or foe,
be with them whereso'er they go.
So shall our praise with heaven's blend
and joyful hearts to thee ascend.

*Melita 354 NEH
John Dykes (1823–76)
arranged by James O'Donnell (b 1961)*

The Airmen's Hymn
anonymous

All remain standing for

THE ACT OF REDEDICATION

The Dean says:

LET us rededicate ourselves to building a world in which there is justice and peace for all, and where women, men, and children live a life of full human dignity.

All say together:

LORD God our Father, we pledge ourselves to serve you and all people in the cause of justice and peace, and for the relief of want and suffering. Guide us by your Spirit; give us wisdom, courage, vision, and hope; and keep us faithful to our calling now and always, for the honour of your Name. Amen.

All remain standing. The Dean pronounces

THE BLESSING

GOD grant to the living grace; to the departed rest; to the Church, The Queen, the Commonwealth, and all mankind, peace and concord; and to us sinners life everlasting; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

All remain standing for

THE CALL OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE

THE LAST POST

REVEILLE

The Standard of No 56 Squadron of the Royal Air Force is returned to the Standard Party as the Band plays:

Fanfare for the Ensign of the Royal Air Force *Wing Commander
(retired) Barrie Hingley*

The Royal Air Force March Past *Walford Davies
(1869–1941)
and George Dyson (1883–1964)*

All remain standing. The Choir and Clergy, together with His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, move to the west end of the Church.

Music after the service:

The Band plays:

Spitfire Prelude *William Walton*

Battle of Britain Theme *Ron Goodwin (1925–2003)*

Members of the Congregation are kindly requested to remain in their seats until invited to move by the Stewards.

The bells of the Abbey Church are rung.

The Royal Air Force Memorial Chapel, at the far eastern end of the Church, will be open after the service until 1.00 pm for all who wish to visit.

The Royal Air Force Coastal Command Book of Remembrance 1939–1945 will be open in the Chapel during Battle of Britain week.

A parade and ceremonial display including a flypast from aircraft of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight will take place in Dean's Yard from 1.00 pm. Westminster Abbey guests will be allowed access with their ticket for the service.

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