**WINSTON CHURCHILL: Their Finest Hours 1940-1941**

Moral of the Work

IN WAR : RESOLUTION

IN DEFEAT : DEFIANCE

IN VICTORY: MAGNANIMITY

IN PEACE : GOOD WILL

Winston Churchill about his book The Second World War, Theme of the work, How the British People held the fort ALONE till those who hitherto had been half blind were half ready

**IN THE BEGINNING**

* Winston Churchill (1874-1965) was born on November 30 1874 at his family's ancestral home, [Blenheim Palace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blenheim_Palace) in Oxfordshire
* His father, [Lord Randolph Churchill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_Randolph_Churchill) (1849-1895), representing the [Conservative Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conservative_Party_%28UK%29), had been elected [Member of Parliament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Member_of_Parliament_%28United_Kingdom%29) for [Woodstock](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woodstock_%28UK_Parliament_constituency%29) in 1874. Ambition to be Prime Minister, he would die of syphilis age 45
* His mother, [Jennie](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lady_Randolph_Churchill) (1854-1921), was a daughter of wealthy American businessman.
* His father wanted him to prepare for a military career, after two unsuccessful attempts he won admittance to the [Royal Military College, Sandhurst](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Military_College%2C_Sandhurst).

**YOUNG MAN IN A HURRY**

* Ambitious to be PM WC will hold numerous Ministry positions in both Conservative and liberal parts,: [President of the Board of Trade](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/President_of_the_Board_of_Trade) 1908-10 (age 33 youngest), Home Secretary 1910-11, First Lord of the Admiralty 1911-15, Minister of Munitions 1917-19, Secretary of State for War and Air 1919-21, Secretary of State for the Colonies 1921-22, Chancellor of the Exchequer 1924-29, often ending in controversy

**THE WILDERNESS YEARS**

* WC retained his seat in the [1929 general election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1929_United_Kingdom_general_election) for [Epping](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epping_%28UK_Parliament_constituency%29), but was out of office and would remain so until the beginning of WWII in September 1939. This period of his life he called the "wilderness years”, he was the main opponent of [appeasement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Appeasement) to German, Italian and Japanese militarism.

**FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY, September 1939-May 1940**

* On September 3, 1939, Britain declared war on Germany, PM Neville Chamberlain (1869-1940) reappointed WC as First Lord of the Admiralty WC had high profiles during the so-called "Phony" War due to naval operations in Atlantic (Graf Spee) & Norway.

**PRIME MINISTER May 1940 AGE 65**

* May 10, 1940, German forces invaded Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands as a prelude to their [assault on France](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_France) thru Ardennes Forest around Maginot Line
* Chamberlain resigns The only two candidates were unpopular WC and [Lord Halifax](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_Halifax), the Foreign Secretary who was the popular choice Halifax refuses the position but argues for negotiated peace with Hitler, something WC opposes

**THE BATTLE OF FRANCE.**

* First Speech as PM May 13, 1940: “*I would say to the House... that I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat…You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word: it is victory, victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory, there is no survival”*
* May16 WC goes to France, told by French leader Paul Reynard (1878-1966) *‘we have been defeated*” British Army now trapped in France

**DUNKIRK Operation Dynamo**

* Genius behind operation Dynamo is Vice Adminral Bertram Ramsey (1883-1945) Working from the tunnels beneath [Dover Castle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dover_Castle), he and his staff worked for nine days straight to rescue troops trapped in France
* On 27 May, the first full day of the evacuation, one [cruiser](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cruiser), eight [destroyers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Destroyer), and 26 other craft were active. Admiralty officers combed nearby boatyards for small craft that could ferry personnel from the beaches out to larger craft in the harbor, as well as larger vessels that could load from the docks. An emergency call was put out for additional help, and by 31 May nearly four hundred small craft were voluntarily and enthusiastically taking part in the effort.
* The [Dunkirk evacuation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dunkirk_evacuation) of 338,226 Allied servicemen, ended on 4 June when the French rearguard surrendered. The total was far in excess of expectations, and it gave rise to a popular view that Dunkirk had been a miracle, and even a victory.
* WC referred to "a miracle of deliverance" but he reminded everyone that: *"We must be very careful not to assign to this deliverance the attributes of a victory. Wars are not won by evacuations*" And the army left “*without its luggage*” (Tanks, artillery etc.)
* WC speech*:” We shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be. We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills. We shall never surrender”*
* WC speech June 18: “*Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this island or lose the war. Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duty and so bear ourselves that if the British Commonwealth and Empire lasts for a thousand years, men will still say: "This was their finest hour".*

**BATTLE OF BRITAIN AND THE BLITZ**

* The British recognize the battle's duration as being from July 10 until October 31,1940, with large-scale night attacks known as [the Blitz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Blitz), that lasted from September 7,1940 to May 11,1941
* It was the first major military campaign fought entirely by air forces, Britain lost 1542 killed, 1744 planes – Germany lost 2585 killed, 925 captured, 1977 planes
* August 20 speech*:” The gratitude of every home in our Island, in our Empire, and indeed throughout the world, except in the abodes of the guilty, goes out to the British airmen …. Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few*”.

**LEND LEASE WITH AMERICANS**

* In September 1940, the British and American governments concluded the [destroyers-for-bases deal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Destroyers-for-bases_deal), by which 50 old US [destroyers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Destroyer) were transferred to the Royal Navy in exchange for free US base rights in [Bermuda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bermuda), Personal relationship FDR WC is key

**OPERATION BARBAROSA JUNE 1941**

* Hitler launched his Invasion of Soviet Union June 22, 1941 – WC a fiercely anti communist said: *"If Hitler invaded Hell, I would at least make a favourable reference to the Devil".*

**ATLANTIC CHARTER**

* In August 1941, WC made his first transatlantic crossing of the war on board [HMS *Prince of Wales*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS_Prince_of_Wales_%2853%29) and met FDR in [Placentia Bay](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Placentia_Bay), Newfoundland. On August 14, they issued the joint statement that has become known as the [Atlantic Charter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atlantic_Charter), the basis of the United Nations which was founded.

**PEARL HARBOR December 7, 1941**

* WC called FDR, that night he “*went to bed and slept the sleep of the saved*”

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