

## Description

Before the Fall, 1940

The victorious Luftwaffe stood on the English Channel, fresh, rested, and above all supremely confident. In the past year it had destroyed the Air Forces of Poland, Holland, Denmark, Norway and the combined forces of England and France over the Continent. It was true that the Kampfflieger had suffered serious losses at the hands of defending French & British Fighters, but these bomber units had been quickly re-equipped. The Jagdwaffe had proved itself superior in every way: better equipped, better trained and better tactics honed in the skies over Spain in the famed Kondor Legion, just prior to the war.

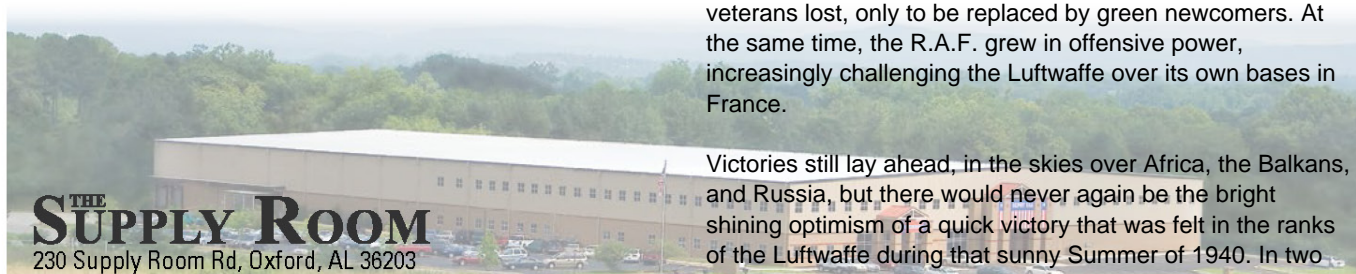
After the aerial battles over the British evacuation at Dunkirk, the German fighter pilots had a chance to rest while their squadrons refitted and made the necessary move to airfields near the French coast. As the end of Summer approached, the Luftwaffe stood ready to bring England to her knees with their supposed overwhelming airpower.

First, the Royal Air Force must be brought up to fight and be destroyed. The first phase air attack on English Channel shipping was designed to do just that, but this proved inconclusive when the British did not commit to this stratum. The Luftwaffe next tried to destroy the British on and above their airfields defending southern England. Aided by Radar, the R.A.F. fought back brilliantly, and German losses in men and equipment rose alarmingly, as did with their British opponents.

With success almost at hand, Hitler's decision to concentrate on London gave the R.A.F. much needed respite, while stretching the capacity of the German Fighters to the breaking point. The Messerschmitt Bf-109's limited endurance allowed for a very short combat time over London, while making ditching in the Channel on the way home after every sortie a very real possibility. Meanwhile, thanks to careful husbanding of its men, material, and equipment, the R.A.F.'s strength seemed to grow every day.

By the approach of Fall, and with worsening weather approaching, the Battle of Britain began to wind down, and the Luftwaffe turned to night bombing large cities, and hit and run raids on coastal towns. The Jagdwaffe had at last tasted defeat with squadrons being decimated and old veterans lost, only to be replaced by green newcomers. At the same time, the R.A.F. grew in offensive power, increasingly challenging the Luftwaffe over its own bases in France.

Victories still lay ahead, in the skies over Africa, the Balkans, and Russia, but there would never again be the bright shining optimism of a quick victory that was felt in the ranks of the Luftwaffe during that sunny Summer of 1940. In two



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years the Luftwaffe would be on the defensive everywhere, in three years in decline, and in four years this once all-too-proud force would lay shattered.

Image Size: 13" x 26.25"  
Overall Size: 19.5" x 32.25"  
Limited Edition  
Public Edition

Size	
13 in x 26.25 in	