

The Bader Big Wing Controversy: Duxford 1940

The Bader Big Wing Controversy was a heated debate that took place in the Royal Air Force (RAF) during the early days of World War II. The controversy centered on the question of whether or not to adopt a "big wing" strategy, which involved flying large formations of bombers in daylight raids.

The proponents of the big wing strategy argued that it would be more effective than the current strategy of flying small formations of bombers at night. They believed that the increased firepower of a large formation would overwhelm the defenses of the Luftwaffe, the German air force.



Bader's Big Wing Controversy: Duxford 1940 by Dilip Sarkar

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

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The opponents of the big wing strategy argued that it would be too risky. They pointed out that the Luftwaffe had a much larger number of fighters than the RAF, and that these fighters would be able to inflict heavy losses on the bombers.

The debate reached its peak in the summer of 1940, when the RAF was suffering heavy losses in the Battle of Britain. In August, the RAF launched a series of large-scale daylight raids on targets in Germany. These raids were initially successful, but the Luftwaffe soon adapted its tactics and began to inflict heavy losses on the bombers.

As a result of the heavy losses, the RAF abandoned the big wing strategy in the fall of 1940. Instead, it adopted a strategy of flying smaller formations of bombers at night. This strategy proved to be more successful, and the RAF was able to turn the tide of the Battle of Britain.

The Proponents of the Big Wing Strategy

The most vocal proponent of the big wing strategy was Air Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding, the commander-in-chief of Fighter Command. Dowding believed that the big wing strategy was the best way to defeat the Luftwaffe. He argued that the increased firepower of a large formation would overwhelm the defenses of the Luftwaffe, and that the bombers would be able to inflict heavy damage on German targets.

Dowding also argued that the big wing strategy would be more effective than the current strategy of flying small formations of bombers at night. He pointed out that the Luftwaffe had a much larger number of fighters than the RAF, and that these fighters would be able to inflict heavy losses on the bombers at night.

Other proponents of the big wing strategy included Air Vice-Marshal Keith Park, the commander of No. 11 Group, and Air Vice-Marshal Trafford Leigh-Mallory, the commander of No. 12 Group. Park and Leigh-Mallory both

believed that the big wing strategy was the best way to defeat the Luftwaffe.

The Opponents of the Big Wing Strategy

The most vocal opponents of the big wing strategy were Air Vice-Marshal Arthur Harris, the commander of No. 5 Group, and Air Vice-Marshal Richard Peirse, the commander of No. 10 Group. Harris and Peirse both believed that the big wing strategy was too risky. They pointed out that the Luftwaffe had a much larger number of fighters than the RAF, and that these fighters would be able to inflict heavy losses on the bombers.

Harris also argued that the big wing strategy would be ineffective. He pointed out that the Luftwaffe had developed new tactics to defend against large formations of bombers. These tactics included the use of fighter sweeps and night fighters.

Other opponents of the big wing strategy included Air Chief Marshal Sir Charles Portal, the Chief of the Air Staff, and Air Marshal Sir John Slessor, the Deputy Chief of the Air Staff. Portal and Slessor both believed that the big wing strategy was too risky.

The Battle of Britain

The Battle of Britain was a major air battle that took place between the RAF and the Luftwaffe in the summer of 1940. The battle began on July 10, 1940, and lasted until October 31, 1940.

The Luftwaffe launched a series of large-scale daylight raids on targets in Britain. These raids were initially successful, but the RAF soon adapted its tactics and began to inflict heavy losses on the bombers.

As a result of the heavy losses, the Luftwaffe abandoned the big wing strategy in the fall of 1940. Instead, it adopted a strategy of flying smaller formations of bombers at night. This strategy proved to be more successful, and the Luftwaffe was able to continue to inflict heavy damage on British targets.

The Aftermath of the Battle of Britain

The Battle of Britain was a turning point in World War II. The RAF's victory in the battle prevented the Luftwaffe from gaining air superiority over Britain. This victory was due in part to the RAF's adoption of a strategy of flying smaller formations of bombers at night.

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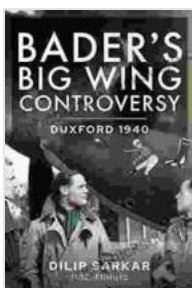
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The Battle of Britain was a major victory for the RAF. It prevented the Luftwaffe from gaining air superiority over Britain, and it marked a turning point in World War II. The RAF's victory was due in part to the adoption of a strategy of flying smaller formations of bombers at night.

The Bader Big Wing Controversy is a reminder of the challenges that the RAF faced during the early days of World War II. It is also a reminder of the crucial role that the RAF played in the Allied victory.



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