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### Operation Sea Lion

Operation Sea Lion was a plan for the invasion of Great Britain. The plan was originally commissioned by Adolf Hitler after the swift downfall of France. The operation was to be carried out by both the Luftwaffe, the German air forces, and the Kriegsmarine, the Nazi German navy. Originally, they were to invade Kent with London as their primary objective (Cruikshank). Operation Sea Lion was postponed several times before being postponed indefinitely on September 17, 1940. The idea was great, however, poor execution meant the plan was an utter failure, crippling German forces. The effects were catastrophic and eventually contributed to the downfall of Nazi Germany.

The attack began with the RAF being engaged heavily by the Luftwaffe (Operation Sealion - The German). The Luftwaffe initially attacked radio towers, airfields, and other locations key to the functioning of the RAF (Operation Sealion- The German). These strikes were critical to the success of the mission. Erich Raeder, the Grand Admiral for Germany, knew the German navy was no match for the Royal Navy (Cruikshank). In his mind, the RAF needed to be completely eliminated in order for the Luftwaffe to help with the invasion (Operation Sealion). The Luftwaffe were to give aerial support and bomb the Royal Navy out of the English Channel, making room for transport ships full of the German ground forces. The plan almost worked, but right before the RAF were ready to surrender, the Germans switched their bombing

targets (Operation Sealion - The German). The Luftwaffe engaged the civilians of Britain. The bombs started falling on factories and apartments instead of radio towers (Operation Sealion - The German). This chance to regroup saved the RAF and ensured that Operation Sealion would be unsuccessful (Operation Sealion).

The British were always worried about the German landing and saw it was imminent. They began to commission a program known as the Home Guard (Operation Sealion). These were volunteer citizens who helped prepare for the Nazi invasion (Cruickshank). Sir Edmund Ironside helped organize the forces and saw that the defenses were set up in a way that would slow the Nazi's advance (Cruickshank). These static defenses included trenches, rivers, mounted guns, and barbed wire (Cruickshank). Although ineffective on their own, they would have slowed the Germans down to a point where the British armed forces would be able to set up proper defenses. (Operation Sealion). However, these defenses would never actually be needed as Hitler turned his attention to the Soviet Union. The only casualties inflicted by the Home Guard on the night of the planned invasion were against themselves, when a few members were blown up driving over their freshly laid mines (Operation Sealion). The defenses would remain in place until 1956 when it became clear the Soviets would not be launching an invasion against the British coast (Cruickshank).

The effects of this failed invasion would change the course of history. With Hitler's failed invasion of Britain and the failure to invade Russia soon after, Nazi Germany would be weak. The fall would come soon after and was a giant relief to the rest of Europe. The reign of terror was ending and the strong hold the Nazis had over Europe was dwindling. For the first time, their progress had been halted. This was a huge morale boost especially after the swift fall

of France. The British and Americans quickly advanced against the Nazi forces and were able to swiftly round up the Germans all around Europe, eventually taking Berlin by May of 1945. With Nazi Germany out of the way, Russia remained the biggest threat to Western Europe and this failed invasion proved enough to persuade others from trying something similar.

## Works Cited

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