

Running Head: History of 20th Century Europe

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[name of the writer]

[name of the institution ]

[name of the Professor]

[Course]

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Compare the fall of France with the Battle of Britain. In what ways did both surprise the world?

The battle of France or the “fall of France” started on 10th May 1940. The war had two main German strategies, the first known as case yellow where German armored units pushed through the Ardennes, to cut off and surround the Allied units that had advanced into Belgium. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of June, the second strategy “Fall Rot” (Case Red) was unleashed after the success of Fall Gelb (Case Yellow), it consisted of two sub-ordinate attacks, the preliminary attack was carried out in the west over the river Somme, then the main offense started on 9th June in the centre over the river Aisne. It broke the French border and allowed German armor to cut off the armies in the Maginot Line on 17 June. That same day France asked for a truce, officially capitulating on 25th June.

In comparison, the Battle of Britain started in the summer of the 1940's; England had started to prepare for an invasion since the early 1920's due to the threat of invasion from France. The war strategy of the British was primarily a defensive one, which consisted of anti-aircraft missiles, nearly 1000 observer posts and the radar to guide from where the enemy attacks would be coming from. The British also solely relied upon the Royal navy, and the RAF for attacks, which certainly gave them an edge over Germany as the Royal Navy was the largest in the world.

The first battle that the RAF was supposed to have fought was one which it was not prepared for, the battle of France. As the British were mainly expecting a naval attack, as a result only the poorest aircrafts of the RAF had been sent, among the 27 of which only 6 of them were Hurricanes. Overtime, when the French planes were shot down and the RAF did not fulfill the request of sending more Hurricanes, France fell. The entire duration of the war was six weeks, which was quite an astonishing event for the world as Denmark, Norway and other Low Countries were also invaded with France. The Battle of Britain swore more as a decisive event, rather than a shocking one, as Britain had been more prepared for their defense than the Germans for their offence. Germany also made use of tanks in their strategy for the war, which worked all across Europe but could not work for Britain as the English Channel meant that the war would be fought without Germany's superior tanks.