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Guy Barnett, Minister for Veterans' Affairs

Battle of Britain

People across the Commonwealth will this weekend commemorate the 78th anniversary of the famous Battle of Britain, a great wartime victory which involved a number of Tasmanian pilots.

The battle, fought between the airforces of the Commonwealth and the much stronger German Luftwaffe in the 1940's, saved Britain from imminent invasion and defeat.

Stuart Walsh was a 23 year old Tasmanian-born Flight Commander when he was shot down off the coast of England on August 11, 1940.

Walsh served with 238 squadron. His entire flight was lost that day in what the world now remembers as the Battle of Britain. His body was never found. He is the only Tasmanian to appear on the Battle of Britain Honour Roll in Westminster Abbey, London.

Of the 2,365 pilots from Commonwealth and allied countries who fought the battle, 446 lost their lives. Australia contributed 21 pilots and lost 14.

The battle lasted almost three months as the Germans carried out relentless bombing of British cities and airfields.