



BATTLE OF BRITAIN

A Necessary Victory? The Context and Consequences of the Battle of Britain

**A Conference to be held at the Royal Air Force Museum in conjunction with the
University of Exeter and the British Commission for Military History**

Saturday 26 September 2015



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Twenty-five marks the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain. Through iconic images such as Guy Hamilton's 1969 film *The Battle of Britain*, the Battle maintains a specific place in British collective memory. Furthermore, the Battle of Britain is one of the most celebrated events in the history of the Royal Air Force due to the role of Fighter Command in defending the nation against the threat of invasion in 1940. Recently, however, historians have begun to question some of the myths that surround this important event in British history.

This conference aims to reassess these myths and the Battle of Britain's contribution to victory in the Second World War. Areas to be considered include: new approaches to understanding the history of the Battle of Britain; how historians' understandings of the Battle of Britain have changed; the role of the other services in preparing for invasion; how Germany viewed the Battle of Britain and the importance of Operation *Seelowe*; the legacy and consequence of the Battle of Britain.

Conference Organisers

Dr Ross Mahoney (Aviation Historian, RAF Museum and the British Commission for Military History)

Professor Richard Overy (University of Exeter)

conference@rafmuseum.org



Conference Programme

Morning

09:00-09:20 **Conference Registration**

09:20-09:25 **Welcome** – Maggie Appleton (Chief Executive Officer, Royal Air Force Museum)

09:25-09:30 **Introduction** – Dr Ross Mahoney (Royal Air Force Museum)

09:30-10:00 **Morning Keynote – Dr Helen Doe (University of Exeter) – ‘Memoirs, Myths and Make-believe? The Challenge and Opportunities for Biographers of Battle of Britain Personnel’**

10:00-11:30 **Panel 1 – The Air versus the Sea in the Battle of Britain**

Dr Anthony Cumming (Independent Scholar) – ‘Why Historians Must Focus on the Battle *for* Britain’

Dr Phillips O’Brien (University of Glasgow) – ‘A Victory of the Many over the Few: Understanding the Battle of Britain within the Context of Second World War Air-Sea Warfare’

Group Captain John Alexander (Royal Air Force) – ‘A Necessary Battle?: The Battle of Britain as a Consequence of the British Way in Warfare’

11:30-11:45 **Coffee**

11:45-13:15 **Panel 2 – Royal Air Force Operations in Context**

Stephen Moore (Newcastle University) – “Going Downhill”: The Consequences of the Stabilisation Scheme on Fighter Command during the Battle of Britain and into 1941’

Adam Sutch (Independent Scholar) – ‘Bombing the Blackpool Front – RAF Bomber Command’s Contribution to the Failure of Hitler’s 1940 Plans to Invade the United Kingdom’

Dr Matthew Powell (University of Birmingham) – ‘The Battle of Britain, the British Army and Tactical Air Power: The Creation of Army Co-Operation Command’



Conference Programme

Afternoon

13:15-14:00 **Lunch (Art Gallery) and Battle of Britain Archive Viewing (Boardroom)**

14:00-15:30 **Panel 3 – Axis Operations in Context**

Dr James Corum (University of Salford) – ‘The VIIIth *Fliegerkorps* in the Battle of Britain’

Dr Luigi Petrella (Newcastle University) – ‘Italians in the Battle of Britain: A Case Study in Fascist Propaganda’

Dr Marcus Faulkner (King’s College London) – ‘Invasion or Blockade? The *Kreigsmarine* and German Plans for the Defeat of Britain during 1940’

15:30-15:45 **Tea**

15:45-17:15 **Panel 4 – Operational Consequences of the Battle of Britain**

Victor Bissonnette (Université du Québec à Montréal) – The Nascence of Operational Research: From a Promising Birth in Fighter Command during the Battle of Britain to a Difficult Infancy in Bomber Command’

Dr Peter Preston-Hough (University of Wolverhampton) – ‘Extending Early Warning into the Empire’

Dr Graham Cross (Manchester Metropolitan University) – ‘The Deadly Legacy: The Battle of Britain and the Americanisation of USAAF Strategic Fighter Doctrine in Europe during the Second World War’

17:15-17:45 **Afternoon Keynote – Dr Garry Campion (University of Northampton)** – ‘The Air Ministry and ‘The Battle of the Barges’: The Cultural and Historiographical Eclipsing of the RAF’s Bomber Attack and Operation Sea Lion preparations during the Battle of Britain, 1941-1953’

17:45-18:00 **Concluding Remarks – Professor Richard Overy (University of Exeter)**



Directions to the RAF Museum London

By Road

By Road Only 30 minutes from Central London. Follow the brown and white tourist signs from M25, M1 (Junction 4 Southbound), A41, A5 and North Circular (A406) roads.

SatNav Users

Currently several SatNav systems have incorrectly indexed our postcode which means that people are being told that they have arrived at their destination whilst they are still on the M1. As a result we recommend that rather than typing our postcode into your SatNav system that you input our road name 'Grahame Park Way'. If this does not work we suggest putting in the postcode NW9 5QW which will direct you to the small industrial estate that is located next to the Museum.

By Bus

Route 303 passes the entrance to the Museum. Look at the entire route on the TFL website (<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/>) The 303 stops outside the exit of Colindale Underground station and the Museum.

By Underground

The Museum is situated close to Colindale Underground on the Edgware branch of the Northern Line. Please alight at Colindale, not Hendon Central. Colindale is in Zone 4.

By Rail

Mill Hill Broadway is the nearest rail station and is a 20 minute walk away. You can also get the 303 bus from the station to the Museum. The station is on the Luton/Kings Cross/Thameslink line.

By Air

Nearest airports are:

Heathrow - 26 km

City - 28 km

Luton - 39 km

Gatwick - 57km



Booking Form

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Saturday 26 September 2015

Name
Organisation
Address
Telephone Email

Conference Fees (includes lunch and refreshments)

Please enter the number of places required in the appropriate boxes below.

Student Delegate Fee: £25 ☐ Full Delegate Fee: £50 ☐

Special Dietary Requirements:

Payment

I enclose a cheque (in Sterling, drawn on a British bank account, made payable to the Royal Air Force Museum Enterprises) for £.....

Credit Card Payment

Card Type:..... Card Number:.....

Security Code:..... Start Date (Solo cards):.....

Issue Number (Switch only):..... Expiry Date:.....

To pay by bank transfers please contact us for further details.

Signature Date

Please complete this form **enclosing payment** and send by Monday 21 September 2015 to:

Dr Ross Mahoney, Aviation Historian, Royal Air Force Museum, Grahame Park Way, London, NW9 5LL

Tel: 020 8358 4908

Email. ross.mahoney@rafmuseum.org

