

3rd October 2012

Museum commemorates 50th anniversary of Cuban Missile Crisis

15th October 2012

FREE entry

Monday 15th October will mark the 50th anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis – the period when the world teetered on the brink of nuclear Armageddon. This tense 13 day political standoff between the Soviet Union and the United States of America was the closest the world has ever come to Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). To mark this pivotal event of the Cold War period, which nearly led to the extinction of all life on our planet, the Royal Air Force Museum Cosford will be holding a day of free talks and workshops for visitors.

Professor Mike Haynes from the University of Wolverhampton will be giving a talk entitled "1962 One Minute to Midnight", so called after the Dooms Day clock. This free exciting and incisive talk will take place in the Museum's Conference Room at 11:30am and 2:30pm and will last approximately 30 minutes each.

Re-enactor Jed Jaggard will be running interactive workshops throughout the day in a range of displays including; an indoor tent re-creating a Civil Defence Post scenario with emergency supplies and communications equipment. Members of the public will be invited to join the Royal Observer Corps mobile team, plotting fall-out and casualties using actual equipment that would have been used during such a crisis. On show will also be a small display on the V-Force and Thor nuclear missiles with equipment from the period including British Army equipment. All interactive workshops will take place under the wings of the V-Force aircraft in the National Cold War Exhibition.

In addition to this, members of the public are invited to enter the unique Cuban Missile Crisis audio visual Hotspot which contains contemporary interviews from members of the public living through the crisis, as well as news reports of the day.

The Cuban Missile Crisis began, following a US discovery of a Soviet missile base on the Caribbean island of Cuba, created to launch nuclear missiles capable of killing millions of Americans. The US President of the day, John Fitzgerald Kennedy ordered a naval blockade against Soviet ships bringing military equipment to the island, with the threat of retaliation if the blockade was broken. The situation threatened to escalate into a full-scale conflict between the Superpowers as Soviet President; Khrushchev considered whether to accept the challenge thrown down by the Americans. Just six days after the US ships moved into the path of the Soviet vessels, Khrushchev ordered his convoy to turn back and agreed to dismantle the Cuban bases. The confrontation officially came to an end on October 28th 1962.

The talks and workshops taking place at the Museum on 15th October are free of charge and open to any visitors or school groups interested in or studying the topic. Entry to the Royal Air Force Museum Cosford is FREE of charge. The Museum is open daily from 10am to 6pm with last admission at 5.00pm. For further details about the Museum visit www.rafmuseum.org or call 01902 376200.

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Notes to Editors:

- Royal Air Force Museum Cosford, Shifnal, Shropshire, TF11 8UP
- Open daily from 10am
- Admission to the Royal Air Force Museum is free of charge.
- RAF Museum Cosford images & logo available at:
<http://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/media-vault.aspx>
- For further information and all media enquiries please contact Michelle Morgans on 01902 376 212 or email michelle.morgans@rafmuseum.org
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