



19th January 2010

ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM DIRECTOR GENERAL DR MICHAEL FOPP TO RETIRE

- **Future role in Museum's visionary Battle of Britain Project**
- **Air Chief Marshal Sir John Day, Chairman of the Museum's Trustees, pays tribute to Dr Fopp's "commitment and energy".**

Dr Michael Fopp, Director General of the Royal Air Force Museum for the last 22 years, will retire in June 2010, but will be retained by the Museum to assist a fund-raising campaign for a new visionary project to commemorate and celebrate the enduring legacy of the Battle of Britain.

"Michael Fopp has led the Museum for many years with a commitment and energy which is unsurpassed", said Air Chief Marshal Sir John Day. "The Trustees and the Royal Air Force owe him a great debt of gratitude for making the RAF Museum the success it has become."

"I am delighted that he has agreed to maintain his involvement in the Museum in his retirement in order to help with our next major visionary project".

"I have worked for the RAF Museum for more than half my life and I am delighted that, even in retirement, I will still have a role to play in its success and development", said Dr Fopp, who is also looking forward to his year as Master of the Guild of Air Pilots and Air Navigators during 2010/11.

Dr Fopp's career has been marked by an energetic approach to all aspects of curatorship and development with, for example, the Museum's collection management systems making millions of objects held by the Museum available to the public via the internet.

In recent years, major projects at Hendon have included the "Milestones of Flight" and Grahame White factory buildings and at Cosford the opening in 2007 of the immensely successful National Cold War Exhibition, which recently welcomed its one-millionth visitor.

Although remaining in the employment of the Museum until June 2010, Dr Fopp will hand over his post at the end of January 2010. His duties will be undertaken by Peter Dye, currently Deputy Director General, who will be appointed Acting Director General from 1 February 2010. The process of appointing a permanent successor to Dr Fopp will start immediately.

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Notes To Editors:

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- **Dr Michael A Fopp MA FMA FRAeS**
Director General, Royal Air Force Museum
dob: 28 October 1947 (age 62)

Michael Fopp is the son of an Australian Battle of Britain fighter pilot. He grew up surrounded by aeroplanes, but left school to follow a childhood dream of riding horses professionally. He was a member of the elite Mounted Branch of London's Metropolitan Police for over 10 years. Those years were spent leading major ceremonial celebrations,

quelling riots and other public disorder and patrolling the streets of Britain's capital city. All this ended when he was seriously injured by rioters in 1979. During his Police career he had lectured and written about aviation history and, almost immediately after his hospitalisation, joined the Royal Air Force Museum as Keeper of the Battle of Britain Museum. In 1984 he was awarded a Masters Degree by the City University, London for whom he was a visiting lecturer in Management Studies for 9 years. In 1985 he was appointed Director of the London Transport Museum. He returned to the Royal Air Force Museum as Director in 1988 and finished his thesis "Museum & Gallery Management" gaining his PhD in 1989. He was the Director General of the RAF Museum's three sites for 22 years, all of which expanded significantly during his tenure. He retires in 2010 to devote his time to the Guild of Air Pilots & Air Navigators during his year as Master, and to take on consultancy work within the museum sector. Michael is an aviation historian (RAF History 1936 - 1955), not-for-profit management specialist and information technologist. He is a Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society and the Museums Association, and holds both Commercial and Instrument ratings for single engined aircraft. He spends his spare time flying his Lancair aircraft which he built over a period of 8 years. Apart from his demanding professional commitments and active leisure time he maintains an enthusiasm and deep interest in computers, computer programming and the future technologies associated with these interests – he is also a keen chef and races model sailing yachts. He writes articles on a variety of subjects and his book "*Managing Museums & Galleries*", published by Routledge, was the first book to provide the reader with museum/gallery specific solutions to management problems. He is currently working on an academic study of the history of the home-built aircraft movement. He is an active member of The Air Squadron, The Light Aircraft Association and The Experimental Aircraft Association. He is married to Rosemary who is also a Private Pilot and has one son who is a serving officer in the Royal Air Force. Detailed biography available on request.

- The Royal Air Force Museum is Britain's only national Museum dedicated wholly to aviation. It exists to educate and inform present and future generations about the history and traditions of the RAF; Air Power and defence; aviation links with the RAF and to promote the RAF. The Museum occupies two public sites; in London and Cosford in Shropshire. Both sites are geared towards the visitor experience with free admission, on site parking and easy access. Its third site in Stafford holds extensive Reserve Collections and is only available by appointment.

With a world-class collection and display of aircraft, integrated with special exhibitions, films, interactives, works of art, engines, missiles, photographs, uniforms, medals and research and education facilities, the Museum takes an innovative approach while keeping with tradition.

Officially opened by Her Majesty the Queen in 1972, the Museum has gone from strength to strength to become an increasingly popular visitor attraction, which draws well over half a million visitors every year. In the last decade alone the Museum has seen a number of successful expansions and conservation projects and has broken new ground with its exhibition halls. The Milestones of Flight exhibition hall (2003) in the London site and the National Cold War Exhibition (2007) at Cosford have both won industry and public awards for design, display methods and popularity. The Grahame White Watch Office will be added to the London site in 2010.