

26 May 2016

## New lecture will examine Britain's tactical air power during the Second World War

**Date:** 9 June 2016

**Time:** 6.30pm

**Cost:** FREE

**The development of tactical air power in Britain during the early years of the Second World War will be the focus of a lecture taking place at the University of Wolverhampton next month. The lecture entitled 'Tactical Air Power Development in Britain, 1940-1943' will be presented by Dr Matthew Powell, an independent scholar and military history author. The lecture is a continuation of the joint partnership between the University's Department of War Studies and the Royal Air Force Museum and takes place on Thursday 9 June 2016.**

The history of Britain's tactical air power development during the Second World War has largely neglected the work done by Army Co-operation Command. The Command was influential in developing the theoretical air support system used in the Western Desert, North Africa, and Europe and was responsible for trials conducted in the wake of the Battle of France, 1940. Working closely with the army's School of Artillery, they also developed the Air Observation Post Squadron, used to great effect in several different theatres.

In this lecture, Dr Matthew Powell will discuss how the RAF had neglected the development of tactical air power during the inter-war period and how this decision impacted on their ability to provide this support when war broke out. The army's experiences in the Battle of France and the subsequent investigations, which placed the blame firmly on the shoulders of the RAF, forced the hand of the RAF into taking tactical air power development more seriously. As a result, the RAF created the Army Co-operation Command, designed to be as toothless as possible while appearing to be what the Army wanted.

The lecture will explore the fast pace of tactical air power development during 1942, which led to discussions on a new formation: the Army Air Support Group (AASG) and the rise of Fighter Command in this field. Disputes between the Air and General Staffs over which command the AASG should be placed into ran for the entire summer and were eventually resolved by Winston Churchill, before the Army Co-operation Command was disbanded in 1943. Its replacement was however, an upgraded Army Co-operation Command with the responsibilities it had been denied during its existence.

**Dr Ross Mahoney, RAF Museum Aviation Historian said:**

*"The RAF Museum is once again delighted to be working in conjunction with our colleagues at the University of Wolverhampton to bring the Trenchard Lectures in Air Power Studies to a wide audience. This lecture highlights the challenges the RAF faced in the realm of the development tactical air power with particular reference to the history of Army Co-Operation Command, a subject much understudied by historians."*

The Trenchard Lectures in Air Power Studies form part of the RAF Museum's Research Programme for 2016. 'Tactical Air Power Development in Britain, 1940-1943' is the second of three joint lectures taking

place at the University of Wolverhampton this year, also in partnership with the Royal Aeronautical Society.

**Dr Peter Preston-Hough, from the University's Department of War Studies, said:**

*"We're delighted to be hosting this prestigious series of lectures, which promise to provide an interesting insight into this fascinating area of history. The University has a strong relationship with the RAF Museum and we look forward to continue to work closely with them on this prestigious lecture series."*

This FREE lecture will be held in the main lecture theatre (MC001) at the University of Wolverhampton at 6.30pm on Thursday 9 June. As spaces are limited, organisers advise visitors to book their tickets in advance via the museum's website to avoid disappointment.

For further information about the museums research programme or to book your FREE ticket to the lecture, please visit the museum website [www.rafmuseum.org/cosford](http://www.rafmuseum.org/cosford).

Ends...

**Notes to Editors:**

For more details about the RAF Museum's Research Programme, please email RAF Museum Aviation Historian, Dr Ross Mahoney at [ross.mahoney@rafmuseum.org](mailto:ross.mahoney@rafmuseum.org)

**About Dr Matthew Powell**

Matthew Powell is an independent scholar who has taught at the University of Birmingham, UK. He has published on Army Co-operation Command in *Canadian Military History*, *Air Power Review* and the *British Journal for Military History*. His first book, *The Development of British Tactical Air Power, 1940-1943: A History of Army Co-operation Command*, will be published by Palgrave in 2016.

**About the RAF Museum Cosford**

- Keep up to date with the latest news and event information by following us on:



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- 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 376212 or email [michelle.morgans@rafmuseum.org](mailto:michelle.morgans@rafmuseum.org)
- All images used should be credited: '©Trustees of the Royal Air Force Museum'

**About the University of Wolverhampton**

- For more information please contact the Media Relations Office on 01902 322003/322736.
- Based at campuses in Wolverhampton, Walsall and Telford and education centres in Stafford, Burton and Birmingham City Centre, the University has over 21,000 students and 2,400 staff. In addition, the University of Wolverhampton Science Park is home to tenant businesses and supports the development of innovative companies.
- It is investing £250 million over the next five years as part of the Our Vision, Your Opportunity programme. The ambitious plans to invest in education, training and economic growth include the £25 million Rosalind Franklin Science Building, the new £18 million Lord Swraj Paul business school building and the £65 million Springfield Campus, creating an international hub for construction excellence.

- Of the 13 subject areas entered in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in 2014, all had elements graded at the highest level as being world class. The University also entered more staff and more subject areas for assessment than previously.
- In 2015 the University of Wolverhampton was awarded the highest possible accolade in the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) higher education review. The report highlighted areas of good practice such as initiatives to raise aspirations and achievement for students and the University's commitment to enhancing their employment prospects.