

RAF REPRINTS TREASURES

The Royal Air Force Museum and the RAF's Air Historical Branch are opening their treasured archives to a commercial reproduction service in order to make them more accessible to the public. The service will be formally launched at the Museum on Wednesday 11th March 2009.

The RAF Museum and the Air Historical Branch, part of the RAF's Centre for Air Power Studies, have teamed up with specialist printer Military Library Research Service, to provide an on-demand printing service of rarely-seen archive material held in the Museum and RAF collections.

The Museum's collections consist of documents and reports, many of a strategic and intelligence nature, such as estimates of German strength in 1940; analyses of key operations and technical manuals.

Each document is painstakingly scanned, checked and, only where necessary, retouched for legibility by MLRS experts. They are printed using the latest in publishing technology.

These unique documents were formerly available only to research visitors on site at the Museum in Hendon, North London. They are used by students, archivists, enthusiasts and researchers from backgrounds as diverse as military academies and family historians. Not only is it a burden on the researcher with opening hours limited to the office day, but many of the popular documents are becoming increasingly fragile through frequent request.

The documents are chosen between MLRS Books and the Museum curator to identify the most popular and interesting titles. A proportion of the revenue from the publishing of Museum holdings is returned to the Museum to help fund vital conservation and cataloguing work.

For over sixty years, the RAF's Air Historical Branch has been producing detailed analytical studies of RAF operations and policy. Many of these studies were originally classified and those relating to the Second World War have been widely used by both official and academic historians to underpin their own work.

Under the aegis of the RAF Centre for Air Power Studies [RAF CAPS] and in partnership with MLRS, these studies will now be made available to scholars and the wider public for the very first time. Eventually they will cover nearly every campaign that the RAF undertook in the course of the Second World War. Specialist monographs on weaponry, radar and specialist areas such as maintenance and

logistics will also be covered. The campaign 'narratives' as they are known will also have new introductions written by the Head of the Air Historical Branch and Co-Director of RAF CAPS, Sebastian Cox, who said, *"By making these high quality studies available we believe we are fulfilling the Centre for Air Power Studies remit to foster a deeper understanding of air power."*

Managing Director of MLRS Books, David Westwood, is delighted to have forged the links with the Royal Air Force archives. He said, *"Many important documents will be available to the general public for the first time in a coherent collection. Anyone can now order a book to read at their leisure and to use as a basis for further research."*

The collection currently consists of an inaugural 60 documents but more are being selected and scanned at a rate of up to 30 per quarter.

Selected editions will be available from the Museum shops and website www.rafmuseumshop.com.

The full collection can be viewed and ordered from www.mlrsbooks.co.uk

Ends

Notes to editors

- Selected pages as shown are available for reproduction and are attached at 300dpi
- Royal Air Force Museum, Grahame Park Way, London, NW9 5LL
- Open daily between 10am – 6pm (Last admission 5.30pm)
- Free admission and parking
- Research and reading room visitors by prior appointment only.
- For further information and all media enquiries please contact Ajay Srivastava on 020 8358 4863 or ajay@rafmuseum.org