

Museum Honours Spitfire Legend.

3rd February - 31st March.

The Royal Air Force Museum is proud to announce the launch of its latest exhibition which honours the memory of Alex Henshaw, aviation entrepreneur and Spitfire Test Pilot.

Born in 1912, the son of a wealthy Lincolnshire businessman, Alex Henshaw took up flying at the age of 20, embarking on what was to become a twenty-eight year career in aviation. European touring and competing in air races in the United Kingdom with increasing success, provided the experience which led to his triumph in the 1938 King's Cup Race. In the following year he undertook a solo flight from London to Cape Town in a world record time which established Henshaw as an aviation legend and a household name by the start of the Second World War.

With the outbreak of hostilities, Henshaw's unique talents as a pilot together with his acknowledged organisational abilities secured him the job of Chief Production Test Pilot for the Vickers-Supermarine Company. Flying mainly at Castle Bromwich, he tested over 2,360 aircraft including every Mark of Spitfire as well as Lancasters, Sea Otters, Wellingtons and many other types. The war concluded, he pursued a brief career as a commercial pilot until 1948 when Alex Henshaw retired from flying to concentrate on running the family business.

It was Henshaw's publishers who, in 1979, first put Alex in touch with the artist Michael Turner, from whom they wished to commission the dust jacket for Henshaw's auto-biographical "Flight of the Mew Gull". This commission led to a lifelong friendship and a unique collection of paintings detailing Henshaw's aviation exploits from 1932 to 1948.

"Alex Henshaw – A Life In Art" displays this artwork vividly portraying Henshaw's exploits and providing dramatic insight into the bravery, stamina and ingenuity of a true "Trailblazer" - one of this country's greatest aviation pioneers of the Golden Age of Flight.

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Notes To Editors:

- Royal Air Force Museum, Grahame Park Way, London, NW9 5LL
- Open daily between 10am – 6pm (Last admission 5.30pm)
- Free admission and parking
- For further information and all media enquiries please contact Ajay Srivastava on 020 8358 4863 or ajay@rafmuseum.org