

Close Air Support and the Battlefield

The British Commission for Military History

Friday 10 and Saturday 11 March 2023



Hosted at the Royal Air Force Museum and organised by the British Commission for Military History (BCMh) this two-day conference will explore topics from the introduction of the aircraft to the battlefield, through to close air support in contemporary conflicts. The Conference will feature a keynote address given by Seb Cox, head of the Air Historical Branch, on 'Enabling Close Air Support'.

The research presented at the Conference will explore how close air support became an essential role of air power and a critical feature of modern warfare. The research presented will examine the evolution of close air support doctrine, concepts and capabilities and discuss the effect of close air support on the modern battlefield. The history of close air support will be considered from its early inception, which rapidly followed the introduction of the aircraft to the battlefield, through to close air support in contemporary conflicts.

The conference will feature research which assesses the enduring importance of close air support in the Russia-Ukraine War and the two-way relationship of manned and unmanned aircraft towards multi-domain integration in future operations. Other papers will consider 'the Development of Ground Attack Aviation in the United States, 1919-1927'; 'Field Marshal Montgomery and Joint Air/Land Operational Art'; and 'RAF Tornado Close Air Support in Afghanistan: Lessons and Legacies'.

Along with separate panels on close air support in the First World War, the Second World War, and in contemporary conflict, the Conference will also include panels examining developments undertaken to facilitate, and the challenge of meeting demands to provide, close air support.

The Keynote address, on 'Enabling Close Air Support', will be given by Seb Cox, Head of the Air Historical Branch (RAF). Seb has written widely on the history of the RAF and air power and has lectured on air power and related topics to military and civilian audiences on four continents, including Military Colleges in the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, France, Germany, Norway and Kuwait.



Conference Registration and Details

The cost of attending the conference in-person for both days is £60 for BCMH members, and for RAF Museum members. The event is also open to those without membership for the price of £75.00. This cost covers registrations, refreshments and lunch for both days. Delegates are welcome to join the organisers at The Beaufort pub (2 Heritage Avenue) on the evening of 10 March. [You can register here](#)

The RAF Museum aims to stimulate a deeper understanding of the RAF's historiography, and to act as a focal point for the dissemination of new research. To meet these objectives the RAF Museum has kindly offered to meet the costs of speakers attending the event.

The nearest stations to the RAF Museum are Colindale Underground (Edgware Branch of the Northern Line) and Mill Hill Broadway (on the Luton/King's Cross/Thameslink line). Both stations are walking distance from the Museum. They are also both on 303 bus route, which stops outside the Museum. For full details of how to reach the Museum visit: <https://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/london/plan-your-day/map-and-directions/>
The Museum is committed to providing equal access to its Research Events. All the buildings and rooms used for the conference are wheelchair accessible. A number of wheel chair accessible seats are available in the lecture theatre. The Beaufort has disabled access and facilities but is at least 500 metres from the Museum. If there are additional arrangements that we can make for you, then please contact Dr Harry Raffal, harry.raffal@rafmuseum.org

Friday 10 March

10:00 AM	Registration, Tea & Coffee available on arrival
10:30 AM	Welcome and Introduction
10:40 AM	Close Air Support in (and beyond) the First World War Michael Terry — 'Everything was Sheer Chance': 46 Squadron's Experiences with Close Air Support on the Western Front, 1917-1918 Geoffrey Holt — Close Air Support to the Tank Corps in the First World War: A Developing Success Mike Meech — Calling for Close Air Support: The Counter Attack Patrol Aeroplane and the Central Information Bureau System, 1918 William Sheehan — The Politics of Close Air Support in Ireland 1919-21: The Evolution of Co-operation between the British Army and the Royal Air Force.
12:30 PM	Lunch
1.30 PM	Developing and Meeting the Demands of Close Air Support Stephen Moore — Fighter-Bomber Operations During the Battle of Britain Clive Richards — The Development and Employment of Aerial Rocket Artillery Helicopters by the US Army, 1963-1972 Jordan David — Developing and meeting the demands of CAS in the Korean War
2:55 PM	Tea & Coffee.
3:30 PM	Developing and Meeting the Demands of Close Air Support Paul Stoddart — Squaring the Triangle: Struggling to Meet the Opposing Demands of CAS, Interdiction and Air Superiority Gerald White — Close Air Support and the Battlefield Lukasik Sebastian — "New Vistas of Usefulness": William C. Sherman and the Development of Ground Attack Aviation in the United States, 1919-1927
5:00 PM	Drinks Reception
6:30 PM	Post-Day One Discussion at <i>The Beaufort</i>

Saturday 11 March

09:00 AM	Arrival and Late Registration (Tea & Coffee)
09:30 AM	Welcome
09:35 AM	<p>Close Air Support and the Second World War</p> <p>John Alexander — Air Power in the Land Battle: Bernard Law Montgomery and Joint Air/Land Operational Art</p> <p>Bill Pyke — Operations STRANGLE and DIADEM: Assessing the Impact of Tactical Airpower in support of the Allied ground forces. Central Italy, March-June 1944</p> <p>TBC</p>
11:00 AM	Tea & Coffee
11:30 AM	<p>Keynote Address</p> <p>Seb Cox — Enabling Close Air Support</p>
12:45 PM	Lunch.
1:45 PM	<p>Contemporary Close Air Support</p> <p>Raimondo Mark — The Indian Experience of Close Air Support Delivery and the Evolution of the Activity</p> <p>Samuel Oyewole — Close Air Support in Global-South Conflicts: The Nigerian Military Experience Since 1967</p> <p>Viktoriya Fedorchak — Close Air Support in the Russia-Ukraine War: The Symbiosis of Manned and Unmanned Aircraft Towards Multi-Domain Integration in Future Operations</p> <p>FERGUS MACDONALD — RAF Tornado Close Air Support in Afghanistan – Lessons and Legacies</p>
3:30 PM	Closing Remarks

