



Thursday 30 July 2015

Telling the story of the Battle of Britain

The Battle of Britain Anniversary Air Show at IWM Duxford on Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 September

Advance Tickets Only.

Book before Monday 3 August to receive 50% off child tickets and 10% off adult tickets

This September, IWM Duxford's The Battle of Britain Anniversary Air Show will tell the story of this vital aerial battle in its 75th anniversary year.

The Battle of Britain Anniversary Air Show will be an immersive and poignant experience for everyone. Epic flying displays, including a massed flypast of twenty Spitfires, will be combined with wartime music and the voices of men and women who served. Living history groups will recreate the daily life of RAF Duxford as a Battle of Britain Fighter Station in 1940.

The flying display explores the development of the Battle of Britain and its significant role in the Allied victory of the Second World War. *The Coming of the Second World War* demonstrates how RAF Duxford prepared for active service, the arrival of the Supermarine Spitfire, and the importance of the radar stations that formed an integral part of the Air Defence of Great Britain.

This flying display shows the aircraft that were flown by the RAF at the outbreak of the Second World War, including the Hawker Nimrod Mark I, Hawker Nimrod II, Gloster Gladiator, Hawk 75, de Havilland Tiger Moth and Boeing Stearman. The development of radar defences are represented in a flying display by an autogyro, de Havilland Hornet Moth and a Kirby Kite.

The Outbreak of the Second World War looks at the events that followed Britain's declaration of war on Germany, when Britain stood alone against the German forces. We mark this with a display by the Bristol Blenheim, accompanied by two Hawker Hurricanes and a Hawker Sea Hurricane.

The beginning of the Battle of Britain is commemorated by a Spitfire scramble. Hispano HA-112 MIL (Buchon) aircraft fly in and as the scramble bells sounds, living history interpreters representing RAF fighter pilots race to the airfield and Supermarine Spitfires chase off the enemy aircraft.

Visitors will hear the audio memories of Battle of Britain pilots, recalling waiting to scramble and the exhilaration of the dogfight.

As the Battle of Britain developed, so did the tactics of the pilots of RAF Fighter Command. A flying display of North American Harvard and Yale aircraft demonstrate the varying formations and tactics employed by the RAF as the Battle of Britain continued.

The Duxford Big Wing came into operation for the first time in a patrol over North Weald. This key moment in Duxford's history is honoured with a massed flypast of twenty Spitfires taking off from this historic Second World War airfield.

The sacrifice made by Battle of Britain pilots and the feat of winning the Battle is commemorated with contemporary displays including the Red Arrows (Sunday only) and the Aerostars (Saturday only).

The Battle of Britain Anniversary Air Show takes place on Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 September and tickets are only available in advance.

– Ends –

For more information, images and interviews, please contact
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Notes to Editors

All flying is subject to weather, serviceability and operational commitments.

IWM Duxford - Battle of Britain exhibitions

It was at RAF Duxford that the first Spitfires came into service, with the pilots of No.19 Squadron. Visit our *Battle of Britain* exhibition, which is contained in the hangar that was home to those Spitfires. Discover how Britain defended its skies during the Battle of Britain and hear the memories of those young Spitfire pilots.

In February 1940, Douglas Bader was posted to No.19 Squadron. Bader was the most famous of the Fighter Command pilots who flew from RAF Duxford. You can see his dress uniform in our *Historic Duxford* exhibition, amongst the personal stories and mementoes of a number of Battle of Britain pilots who served at RAF Duxford.

Place yourself at the heart of Fighter Command operations as you step into the *1940 Operations Room* and discover how fighter aircraft were directed into battle. Hear the sound of a German air raid over Duxford and see the equipment, charts and plans which mapped the movements of the aircraft in the skies overhead.

RAF Duxford - Battle of Britain History

RAF Duxford forms a central part of the history of the Battle of Britain.

RAF Fighter Command was divided into groups. 11 Group operated from South East England. 12 Group covered the area further north, protecting the Midlands and London's northern flank. Duxford controlled the southernmost sector of 12 Group's area.

By the summer of 1938, Nos. 19 and 66 Squadrons at Duxford were selected to re-equip with the new Supermarine Spitfire. The first Spitfire was flown into Duxford in August 1938 by Jeffrey Quill, Supermarine's test pilot.

In February 1940, Flying Officer Douglas Bader was posted to No.19 Squadron. Bader is the most famous of a number of Fighter Command aces who flew from Duxford.

Bader found himself on familiar territory, as he left the RAF from Duxford in April 1933, retiring on medical grounds and entering civilian life – if he couldn't fly, he didn't want to remain in the RAF.

As Bader said, "The fact that I left the Royal Air Force at Duxford and I came back into it at Duxford, through the same bloody gate, is what comes to mind."

By June 1940, with Belgium, Holland and France having fallen to the German forces, and the conquest of Britain being their next objective, Duxford was placed in a high state of readiness. Duxford's first Hurricanes arrived in July 1940 with the formation of No.310 Squadron, made up of Czechoslovakian pilots who had escaped from France.

At the end of August 1940, Air Vice-Marshal Trafford Leigh-Mallory ordered the Hurricanes of 242 Squadron, now commanded by Douglas Bader, down from Coltishall, to join 19 and 310 Squadrons on daily standby at Duxford.

As the Battle progressed, 12 Group was instructed to protect 11 Group's airfields during attacks. Air Vice-Marshal Leigh-Mallory, Commander of 12 Group, was frustrated by this supporting role. He thought that the Duxford-based pilots could be more successful if they joined the Battle in 'Wings' of three or more squadrons.

Air Vice-Marshal Keith Park, Commander of 11 Group, had experimented with Wings. During the Battle, he found that grouping more than two squadrons together was slow and risky.

However, Leigh-Mallory was impressed with the performance of 19 and 310 Squadrons and authorised Bader to lead 242, 19 and 310 Squadrons, operating together as a Wing.

On 9 September 1940, the Duxford Squadrons successfully intercepted and turned back a large force of German bombers before they reached their target. On the strength of this, two more squadrons were added to the Wing. No 302 (Polish squadron) with Hurricanes, and the Spitfires of No.611 Auxiliary Squadron, which had been mobilised at Duxford a year before.

Every day, some 60 Spitfires and Hurricanes were dispersed around Duxford and Fowlmere. Bader's 'Big Wing', now known more formally as 12 Group Wing, was ready for action by 15 September 1940, which became known as 'Battle of Britain Day'. On this historic day, they twice took to the air to repulse Luftwaffe attacks aimed at London.

Sometimes they met with success, but sometimes they failed to support 11 Group in time, leaving its airfields open to attack. Even at the height of the Battle, this caused tension between Leigh-Mallory and Park, who was supported by Air Chief-Marshal Dowding, Commander-in-Chief of Fighter Command. This controversy continued after the Battle when Dowding was replaced and Leigh-Mallory stepped into Park's job.

Overall, RAF Fighter Command was successful, the threat of invasion passed and Duxford's squadrons had played a vital role in the victory.

Ticket prices for The Battle of Britain Anniversary Air Show

NEW for 2015: Tickets for The Battle of Britain Anniversary Air Show are only available in advance; you will not be able to buy tickets on the day of the air show.

Early booking discounts, including half-price child tickets, are available until Sunday 2 August. From Monday 3 August, standard prices apply. Booking will close on Sunday 13 September. For overseas postal delivery, we strongly recommend booking tickets no later than Friday 4 September.

General Tickets

Early Booking Offer (available until Sunday 2 August)

Adult (16 years and over)	£24.75
Adult Two Days	£36
Child (5-15 years)	£9
Child Two Days	£13.05
Child (4 years or under)	free
Disabled Visitor (proof of disability allowance required)	£16.30
Disabled Visitor Two Days (proof of disability allowance required)	£23.70
Carer (one carer per disabled visitor)	free

Standard Advance Booking (available from Monday 3 August to Sunday 13 September)

Adult (16 years and over)	£27.50
Adult Two Days	£40
Child (5-15 years)	£18.15
Child Two Days	£26.40
Child (4 years or under)	free
Disabled Visitor (proof of disability allowance required)	£18.15
Disabled Visitor Two Days (proof of disability allowance required)	£26.40
Carer (one carer per disabled visitor)	free

Group Tickets

Group Adult	£23.35
Group Child	£15.40
Group Disabled	£15.40
Registered Tour Guide (one per group)	free

Group rates apply to groups of 10 or more paying visitors. Group tickets can only be booked by telephone, by calling 01223 499 353.

Member Tickets

Friends of Duxford Adult	£22
Friends of Duxford Adult Two Days	£32
Friends of Duxford Senior	£17.60
Friends of Duxford Senior Two Days	£25.60
Friends of Duxford Junior Ticket	£14.50

Member tickets for The Battle of Britain Anniversary Air Show can only be purchased in advance. When booking tickets for Junior members during the Early Booking Offer booking period (until Sunday 2 August), we advise members to purchase the general admission child ticket. When booking during the Standard Advance Booking period (Monday 3 August to Sunday 13 September), Junior members pay £14.50, a saving of 20% on the standard 'on the day' child ticket.

Premium passes for The Battle of Britain Anniversary Air Show

Premium passes for The Battle of Britain Anniversary Air Show are now sold out.

The easiest way to buy tickets is online at iwm.org.uk/duxford. You can also call our Box Office on 01223 499 353. The Box Office is open from 8am to 4.15pm, Monday to Thursday and from 8am to 4pm on Friday, excluding Bank Holidays and other public holidays.

Group tickets and Gold Pass group tickets can only be purchased by calling our Box Office.

IWM Duxford

IWM Duxford is Britain's best-preserved Second World War airfield, with a fascinating history that dates back to the First World War. Its story reflects the landmark achievements made in aviation history. IWM Duxford is Europe's premier aviation museum, where historic buildings intersperse with state-of-the-art exhibition halls, including AirSpace and the American Air Museum. Historic aircraft can regularly be seen taking to the skies from Duxford's wartime airfield. Through the rich displays of aircraft and the powerful stories of the men and women involved, we tell the story of the impact of aviation on the nature of war, on people's lives and on the social and economic history of the region. With one of the finest collections of tanks, military vehicles and artillery in the UK, we also show the impact of technological development on war and conflict.

Open Daily:

Summer 2015: 15 March to 24 October 2015 10am to 6pm. Last entry at 5pm.

Winter 2015/16: 25 October 2015 to 11 March 2016 10am to 4pm. Last entry at 3pm.

IWM

IWM (Imperial War Museums) tells the story of people who have lived, fought and died in conflicts involving Britain and the Commonwealth since the First World War.

Our unique Collections, made up of the everyday and the exceptional, reveal stories of people, places, ideas and events. Using these, we tell vivid personal stories and create powerful physical experiences across our five museums that reflect the realities of war as both a destructive and creative force. We challenge people to look at conflict from different perspectives, enriching their understanding of the causes, course and consequences of war and its impact on people's lives.

IWM London

IWM London – IWM's flagship branch – tells the stories of those whose lives have been shaped by war through the depth, breadth and impact of our Galleries, displays and events. Visit our brand new First World War Galleries featuring over 1,300 objects from IWM's collections, explore what life was like at home during the Second World War in *A Family in Wartime*; delve into the world of espionage in *Secret War*; visit our award-winning *Holocaust Exhibition*; discover stories of bravery in *The Lord Ashcroft Gallery: Extraordinary Heroes*; see work by some of Britain's most significant 20th Century artists in our art galleries or take in our latest major temporary exhibitions. Our family learning sessions and events encourage debate and challenge people's perceptions of war.

Open daily from 10am – 6pm (except 24 - 26 December)

IWM London, Lambeth Road, London, SE1 6HZ.

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iwm.org.uk / [@I_W_M](https://twitter.com/I_W_M) / www.facebook.com/iwm.london

Our other branches are [IWM North](#), housed in an iconic award-winning building designed by Daniel Libeskind; [IWM Duxford](#), a world-renowned aviation museum and Britain's best preserved wartime airfield; [Churchill War Rooms](#), housed in Churchill's secret headquarters below Whitehall; and the Second World War cruiser [HMS Belfast](#).

First World War Centenary

2014 - 2018 marks the centenary of the First World War, a landmark anniversary for Britain and the world. IWM will mark the centenary by leading a vibrant, four year programme of cultural activities across the country, including the opening of brand new First World War Galleries at IWM London in 2014. For more information visit www.1914.org

