

PRESS RELEASE

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Model of Battle of Britain hero's statue unveiled – fourth plinth campaign builds momentum

- **Sir Keith Park maquette unveiled at RAF Club, Piccadilly**
- **Representation of full size bronze statue for the Fourth Plinth**
- **Veterans, relatives, RAF and supporters present at event**
- **High Commissioner of Malta joins campaign and lends support**
- **Images of the model statue (and CGi images) are available**

The campaign for a statue of Battle of Britain hero Sir Keith Park to be sited on the fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square takes a significant step forward today, with the unveiling of a maquette – a scale model - of the future sculpture.

Battle of Britain veterans, relatives of Sir Keith Park, Terry Smith, serving members of the RAF and other supporters will be attending the ceremony, taking place at 2.30pm at the RAF Club in Piccadilly, London.

New Zealander Sir Keith Park was Air Vice Marshal in 1940, commanding the RAF squadrons which defended London and the South East during the Battle of Britain. His inspirational leadership and tactical skills led Lord Tedder, GCB, Marshal of the RAF in 1947 to say of Park: "If any one man won the Battle of Britain, he did."

The maquette was made by leading New Zealand sculptor, Roderick Burgess, who has been engaged by City businessman and Campaign instigator, Terry Smith, to produce this representation of the final full-size bronze statue.

Since the launch of the Campaign on 7th of March, more than 2000 people have signed an online petition at www.sirkeithpark.com. Politicians from across the political spectrum are supporting the Campaign, including London Mayoral candidates Boris Johnson and Brian Paddick, Tony Benn, Lord Tebbit and Westminster MP Mark Field. A cross-party Parliamentary motion has so far been signed by 36 MPs.

Reg. Lewis, DFC, personal staff officer to Sir Keith Park in South East Asia commented:

"I worked closely with Sir Keith Park, he was a very inspirational man. His calm efficiency instilled confidence in all those around him. I think the maquette captures his spirit perfectly and shows what a tremendously upright man he was, standing up for our country against the enemy."

Sir Keith was in charge of the defence of Malta after the Battle of Britain and the High Commissioner of Malta in London, Dr. Michael Refalo, commenting on the unveiling of the maquette said:

"Malta was the most bombed area of land in the Second World War, with 3,343 air raids over the island. But all that changed when Sir Keith Park took charge of the air defence. Within a month, daylight bombing had all but stopped and an offensive had begun.

A suitable memorial statue to commemorate Sir Keith Park is long overdue, and I am sure that the campaign begun by Terry Smith will be successful. I have faith that an appropriate site for the statue will be achieved. It will be a fitting commemoration of Sir Keith Park's role in these important campaigns and a tribute to all those who serve in the RAF."

Terry Smith said:

"Today's ceremony is a significant milestone for our Campaign, as the maquette is tangible evidence that the final statue will be a suitably magnificent tribute to this great man."

I urge all those who share our aims to join our campaign at www.sirkeithpark.com and get involved."

ENDS

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Notes to Editors

1. Journalists, photographers and camera crews are welcome to attend the unveiling ceremony at 2.30pm at the RAF Club, 128 Piccadilly, London W1J 7PY.
2. Images of the maquette are attached and are available in high resolution at the event, or from Karl McCartney or Pascale Davies.
3. Leigh Park, great-great niece of Sir Keith Park, will be attending the unveiling ceremony and will be available for interviews.
4. The Campaign was launched on 7th March when Battle of Britain pilots, senior serving RAF officers, a great-great niece of Sir Keith Park, politicians and many other supporters assembled in Trafalgar Square beside a full-size replica Spitfire.
5. **Air Chief Marshal Sir Keith Rodney Park, GCB, KBE, MC and Bar, DFC, RAF** was the RAF Air Vice-Marshal commanding 11 Group Fighter Command, responsible for the

- aerial defence of London and South East England during the Battle of Britain. His inspirational leadership and tactical brilliance was central to Britain winning the battle, which in turn helped determine the outcome of the entire Second World War. Sir Keith went on to lead the air defence of Malta in 1942, subsequently reaching the rank of Air Chief Marshal in South East Asia at the end of the war. During the First World War, Sir Keith served at Gallipoli and then the Somme before becoming a pilot and shooting down 20 enemy aircraft.
6. On the 29th April, the Campaign is arranging for two ex-Battle of Britain aircraft, a Hurricane and a Spitfire, to fly in to one of the Battle of Britain's airbases, Biggin Hill, near London. The aircraft and pilots will be met there by veterans and supporters. Also, Campaign leader Terry Smith is to fly to New Zealand to meet Sir Keith Park's family and supporters of the Campaign, including New Zealand Defence Minister, Phil Goff, who recently wrote to Defence Secretary Des Browne expressing support for the Campaign.
 7. Terry Smith is the Chief Executive of Tullett Prebon plc and Chairman of Collins Stewart plc. He has a keen interest in military history. He will be attending the unveiling ceremony and will be available for interviews.
 8. Battle of Britain veterans Flight Lieutenant Walker, Wing Commander Neil, Wing Commander Foster, Flight Lieutenant Burns, Squadron Leader Geoffrey Wellum, DFC and Warrant Officer John ('Bugs') Keatings will be attending and will be available for interviews.
 9. Roderick Burgess is a New Zealand-based sculptor who has been engaged by Terry Smith to produce this maquette of the statue of Sir Keith Park. Initially self-taught, he studied sculpture in 1969 and then worked with Ron Ranby, New Zealand's most experienced sculptor at the time. In 1975 he was invited to study in England. He has completed numerous commissions in New Zealand for government and local bodies. Roderick Burgess is renowned as a sculptor in the classical style and his favoured material is bronze.
 10. Other supporters of the campaign include: Algy Cluff; Dr John Hood, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford; Air Chief Marshal Sir Brian Burridge; Air Marshal Clifford Spink; Lord Lee of Trafford; Lord Selkirk; Rt Hon Lord Trefgarne; Mark Field MP; Richard Benyon MP and the Hon Nicholas Soames MP.
 11. For more information, please visit our website at www.sirkeithpark.com.