

## PRESS RELEASE

*Embargoed until 10:00 on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> April*

### **BATTLE OF BRITAIN FLY-IN TO BOOST SIR KEITH PARK STATUE CAMPAIGN**

- **4<sup>th</sup> Plinth Statue Campaign reaches new heights**
- **Two aircraft used in the Battle of Britain will fly in to Biggin Hill Airport**
- **Replica Messerschmitt 109 will also be flown into Biggin Hill Airport**
- **Battle of Britain veteran pilots reunited with aircraft from the Battle**
- **Images of the aircraft over London and with veterans will be available**

A Spitfire and a Hurricane, which both saw action in the Battle of Britain, are to make a dramatic fly-in to London today in support of the campaign to see a statue of Sir Keith Park erected on the Fourth Plinth of Trafalgar Square.

The aircraft, a privately owned Hurricane which fought in a squadron under Sir Keith Park's command during the Battle of Britain and a Spitfire of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, will land at Biggin Hill Airport, famous for its Battle of Britain role as one of the commanding bases for the defence of London and South East England. The planes will be met by Battle of Britain veterans including Wing Commander Tom Neil, who flew from the fighter base at Biggin Hill during the Battle and is credited with 18 enemy aircraft shot down. He will be joined by more veterans, Campaign leader Terry Smith, Sir Keith Park's great-great niece Leigh Park and many other supporters.

This exciting event is the latest boost to a campaign which is continuing to grow and gain momentum. Since launching in March, the Sir Keith Park Memorial Campaign has brought together an impressive coalition of supporters, including senior serving and retired RAF commanders, politicians such as Tony Benn, Lord Tebbit, Boris Johnson and Brian Paddick; Battle of Britain veterans; members of Sir Keith Park's family and a huge variety of other supporters including Sir Patrick Moore, Edward Fox and Dan Snow.

Terry Smith said:

*"The incredible sight of two iconic Battle of Britain fighters landing at one of their old bases is a fitting reminder of the huge sacrifices made by the RAF in defence of our freedom during the Battle of Britain.*

*It was the inspirational leadership and tactical prowess of Sir Keith Park which ensured their victory, yet the only tribute to Sir Keith in the UK is a road named after him near Biggin Hill Airport, and one at Uxbridge where he was based during the Battle of Britain. This is woefully inadequate for a man who was central to the UK's survival in 1940. Today's events will spur on the Campaign as we seek a fitting tribute at the heart of the capital he defended. I urge those who share our passion to visit [www.sirkeithpark.com](http://www.sirkeithpark.com) and get involved, by telling their friends and colleagues about this campaign, and supporting our petition."*

The Campaign is going from strength to strength, with people from all over the world visiting the Campaign website and signing an online petition at [www.sirkeithpark.com](http://www.sirkeithpark.com). Over 47 MPs from all parties have so far signed a Parliamentary motion, and many people are also signing a No. 10 Downing Street e-petition. Only last week a maquette – a scale model – of the final statue was unveiled at the RAF Club in London.

**ENDS**

– THE –  
**SIR KEITH PARK**  
– MEMORIAL CAMPAIGN –

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**Notes to Editors**

1. Journalists, photographers and camera crews are welcome to attend the fly-in at London Biggin Hill Airport, Biggin Hill, Kent, TN16 3BN, Tel 01959 578500. **BUT PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU INTEND TO ATTEND – YOU WILL NEED A PASS FOR SECURITY AT THE AIRPORT.**

The schedule for the day is as follows:

1030	Cliff Spink flies in a replica Messerschmitt 109
1050 – 1055	Spitfire and Hurricane aircraft cross Thames and Dartford Bridge (footage and images will be made available)
1100	touch down after flypast at Biggin Hill Airport
1115	Battle of Britain veterans, Leigh Park & supporters gather air side with planes
1130	photo opportunity (Air side on the 'live' Apron)
1200-1205	Terry Smith and Leigh Park at Keith Park Crescent (photo opportunity)
1200	Event Ends (informal lunch at White Hart, Brasted)

2. Leigh Park, great-great niece of Sir Keith Park, will be attending the fly-in and will be available for interviews, as will Terry Smith.
3. Battle of Britain veterans: Flight Lieutenant Walker, Wing Commander Neil, Wing Commander Foster, Flight Lieutenant Burns, will be attending and will be available for interviews.
4. Biographical details of the pilots and histories of their aircraft are attached to this press release.
5. The Campaign was launched on 7<sup>th</sup> 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.
6. **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.

– THE –  
**SIR KEITH PARK**  
– MEMORIAL CAMPAIGN –

7. 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.
8. 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 fly-in at Biggin Hill airport and will be available for interviews.
9. Roderick Burgess is a New Zealand-based sculptor who has been engaged by Terry Smith to produce the maquette of the statue of Sir Keith Park.
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, Dr. Stephen Bungay, Sir Patrick Moore, Edward Fox and Dan Snow.
11. No 10 Downing Street e-petition can be seen at: <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/SirKeithPark/>.
12. For more information, please visit our website at [www.sirkeithpark.com](http://www.sirkeithpark.com).