

Air & Space Director Moderates Future of Air Power Panel at RAF Museum's Annual Conference

Description

On 5 September, [Dr Rick Newton](#), Irregular Warfare Initiative's Director of its [Air & Space Focus Area](#), recently moderated the "Future of Air Power" panel at the Royal Air Force Museum's annual conference. The purpose of this year's symposium was to consider new perspectives in military aviation research, challenge the accepted historical consensus, and review the powerful legacies of air power. The conference applied an interdisciplinary approach by including papers from history, international relations, and air power studies. Presenters during the program covered doctrine and theory, narratives and public perception, multi-national aspects of air forces, environmental warfare, and looking to the future.

Because aviation was the defining technology of the 20th century, presenters during the conference offered a wide range of papers that illustrated air power's evolution from the first Wright Military Flyer in 1909 to the jet age and into the Cold War. The panel that Rick moderated was the final one of the conference and served both as a culmination of the symposium and a challenge to continue looking forward—fully in line with the IWI Air & Space team's mission. The three panelists on the Future of Air Power panel considered existing research on the impact of technology on the evolution air power, but then looked forward to contemplate potential opportunities for contemporary emerging technologies such as robotics and artificial intelligence as catalysts to spur the next evolution of air power.

Since its inauguration in 1972, the RAF Museum has sponsored conferences and symposia, often in partnership with the RAF Historical Society, aimed at preserving the legacy of the world's first independent air force and using its collections of aircraft and documents to support research into the impact of air power on society. Of note, Rick was a presenter at the Museum's 2021 conference, where he discussed his ongoing research into the role of air power in irregular warfare, "Air Power at the End of a Long and Tenuous Thread." That research will soon be published by University Press of Kentucky, *Airmen and Aircraft Over Africa: Aviation's Roots in Irregular Warfare, 1914 - 1918*.

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