Wg Cdr Karun Krishna Majumdar gave the fledgling Indian Air Force its first war hero in World War II. A born leader, Wg Cdr Majumdar, popularly called ‘Jumbo’, started his flying career after training at RAF Cranwell. On commissioning he joined No.1 Squadron as a Flying Officer in the mid-1930s. Promoted to Squadron Leader, he took over command of No.1 Squadron in June 1941 when it was based at Miranshah, NWFP. At the onset of hostilities in Malaya, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, Jumbo Majumdar and his command were immedi-
ately put to test. No.1 IAF Squadron was moved to Burma.

The Squadron reached Toungoo airfield on 01 Feb 1942 and the very next day the Japanese Air Force attacked Toungoo destroying allied airfield installations and aircraft but No.1 Squadron aircraft were left unscathed. Majumdar immediately planned a retaliatory raid on the Japanese airfield at Mae-Haungsan from where the attackers had taken off. The next day, 02 Feb 1942, Majumdar took off by himself in a Lysander aircraft armed with two 250 lbs bombs and escorted by two Buffalo fighters of No.67 RAF Squadron. Flying at low level he dropped the bombs with unerring accuracy on an aircraft hangar at the airfield, destroying it as well as the aircraft in the hangar. Again on 03 Feb 1942, he led the whole squadron on a bombing mission on the airfield, destroying several buildings, wireless installations and aircraft on the ground. It is to commemorate this great deed of the brave leader that Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS) conducts a seminar on 03 February, or as close as possible to that date of every year, on various topics related to aerospace power and national security.

‘Jumbo’ was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) during the Burma Campaign, thus becoming the first Indian officer to be decorated during World War II. After spending two years in various staff and flying assignments, Majumdar returned to the front. Now a Wing Commander, he volunteered, even accepting the lower rank of Squadron Leader, for a posting to No.268 RAF Squadron flying Spitfire aircraft during the allied invasion of Europe. His role in reconnoitring the Falise-Gap sector and other areas earned him further laurels.

Wg Cdr Majumdar was awarded a Bar to his DFC in January 1945, becoming the first and the only Indian to be so decorated. He then participated in the Indian Air Force Display Flight and toured the country conducting aerobatic shows and displays to attract and bring to public notice the Indian Air Force’s capabilities. On 17 February 1945, in an aerobatic practice sortie in a Hawker Hurricane, Wg Cdr Majumdar met with a fatal crash. He died as he wanted to live, carefree, daring and at the controls doing what he wanted to, fly to his heart's content.
Programme

0930-1015 hrs  Inaugural Session

Welcome Address
Air Vice Marshal Mannohan Bahadur VM (Retd)
Additional Director General, CAPS

Inaugural Address
Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria PVSM AVSM VM ADC
Chief of the Air Staff, Indian Air Force

1015-1145 hrs  Session I: Indian Air Power in Nation Building

Chairperson: Air Marshal Dhiraj Kukreja PVSM AVSM VSM (Retd)
Former AOC-in-C, TC, IAF

Five Ideas from the IAF's History to Remember and Build On
AVM (Dr) Arjun Subramaniam AVSM (Retd)
President’s Chair of Excellence, National Defence College

Combat Enablers OR Non-Kinetic (?) Combatants of Air Power?
Air Vice Marshal Mannohan Bahadur VM (Retd)
Additional Director General, CAPS

Q&A

1145-1200 hrs  Break

1200-1330 hrs  Session II: Mach 3 and Beyond!

Chairperson: Professor Sanu Kainikara PhD
Professor, University of New South Wales

Flying the MiG-25 Foxbat - Mach 3 peculiarities
Air Marshal Sumit Mukherjee PVSM SC VSM
Former AOC-in-C, SAC, IAF

The Foxbat in Kargil
Wg Cdr P J Thakur (Retd)

Q&A

1330-1430 hrs  Lunch Break

1430-1600 hrs  Session III: The March of Technology

Chairperson: Air Marshal Anil Chopra PVSM AVSM VM VSM (Retd)
Former Air Officer in-charge Personnel, IAF

Disruptive Technologies and the Revolution in the Aerospace Industry
Prof. Julia Sutcliffe BSc PhD CEng FRAeS
Chief Technologist, BAE Systems

The Digital, More-Electric & Sustainable Future of Military Power
Mr Conrad Banks
Chief Engineer Defence Future Programs, Rolls Royce

Q&A

1600-1615 hrs  Closing Remarks: Air Vice Marshal Mannohan Bahadur VM (Retd)
Additional Director General, CAPS