



Centre for Air Power Studies

## 12<sup>th</sup> 'Jumbo' Majumdar Conference



# The Increasing Salience of Air Power

09 February 2021

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 immediately 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 **Manmohan 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 **Manmohan 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 CEnf 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 **Manmohan Bahadur** VM (Retd)  
Additional Director General, CAPS



## Centre for Air Power Studies

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