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Command and Leadership Series

**MRAF Hugh Montague Trenchard,
1st Viscount Trenchard**

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Marshal of the Royal Air Force Hugh Montague Trenchard
1st Viscount Trenchard (1873-1956)

Introduction

Lord Trenchard is known as the “Father of the Royal Air Force” or the “Supreme architect of British air power” due to his crucial role in the early days of military aviation in Britain. His meteoric rise from an obscure soldier to a champion of air power and founder of a new military service is remarkable. His organizational skills and forceful leadership flourished rapidly in the new environment of the Royal Flying Corps which he joined shortly after its inception in 1912. He was appointed General Officer Commanding of the RFC on the Western Front in 1915 and was the first Chief of Air Staff of the Royal Air Force upon its creation in 1918 although political issues prevented him from taking office until the following year.

Although often accused of being inarticulate and obstinate, Trenchard’s style of brusque leadership well suited a brand new service in its formative years. He had to fight many battles in Whitehall in the 1920s and 1930s against the Army and the Royal Navy in order to preserve the RAF’s independence and to build a firm foundation for the RAF to develop its role at home and overseas. He encouraged the policy of air control in the Middle East and the North West Frontier as a way of establishing the credentials of the RAF and, despite his original misgivings, he was a strong supporter of the strategic bombing force as the primary arm of the air weapon. He retired from the RAF in 1930 but left a legacy that remains to this day.

This bibliography has been designed to provide a guide as to where to find information on Lord Trenchard. Please note that the list of references below is a selection of the more relevant titles and information on the subject. The list is not intended to be exhaustive or definitive but is an introductory guide to some of the resources available.

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Audio Visual Material

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JANUS: Selected correspondence of Marshal of the RAF 1st Lord Trenchard
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RAF Reserves – Lord Trenchard Profile
http://www.rafreserves.com/Lord_Trenchard.htm

Any Queries

Contact library.jscsc@defenceacademy.mod.uk
Tel: 01793 788237
Fax: 01793 788281

Compiler: Chris Hobson
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