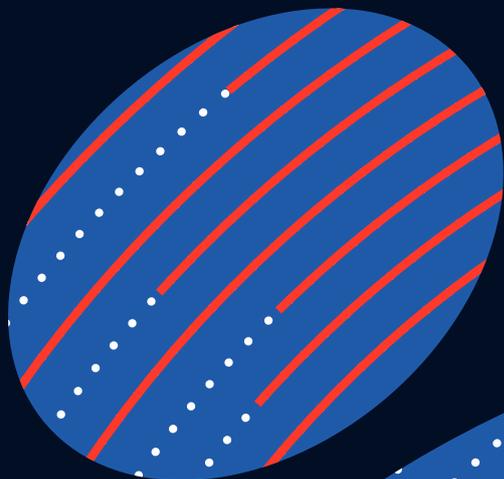
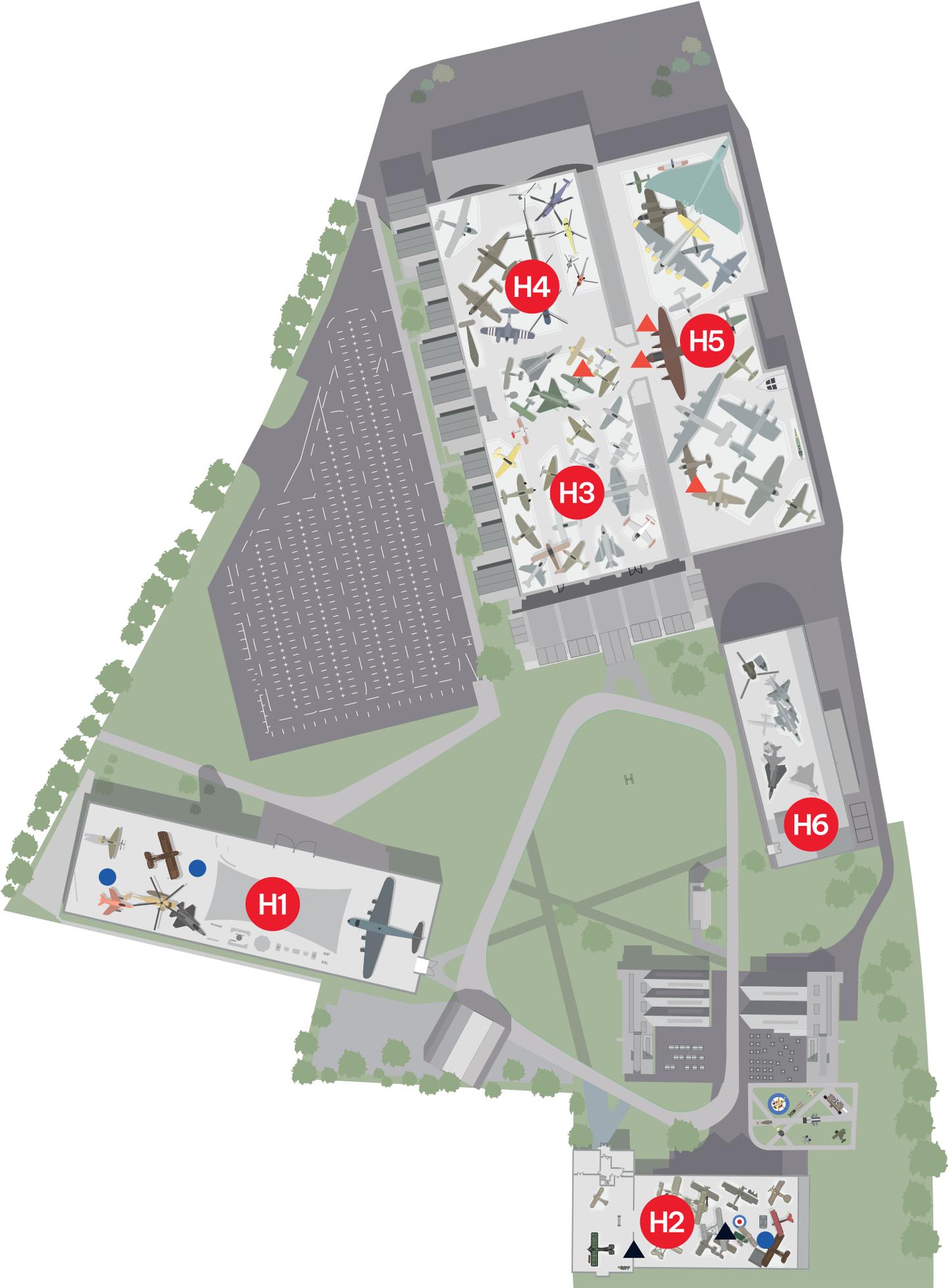


RAF Black and Asian History Trail



Map



During the First and Second World Wars, many men and women from the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia joined the Royal Air Force (RAF) to help Britain and the Allies.

These people had important skills. For example, pilots like William Robinson (Robbie) Clarke from Jamaica and Indra Lal Roy from India flew missions which helped win battles and save lives.

However, they faced challenges because of their backgrounds. Many experienced racism and discrimination, both in the military and from society. Some were not allowed to become officers or were given jobs that did not match their skills. Despite these problems, they worked hard and showed their worth through their dedication and skill.

This teamwork was crucial during the wars and helped break down racial barriers. The RAF was one of the first military branches to include people from different races, setting an example for others.

Today, the contributions of African, Caribbean and Asian RAF personnel are still important. They bring different perspectives and experiences, making the RAF more effective and innovative.

Overall, the skills and dedication of these individuals have made a lasting impact on the RAF and the world.



Wassoudewa Goriah

Wireless Operator

Wassoudewa Goriah, from Mauritius, was a Royal Air Force (RAF) member during The Second World War. He worked as a wireless operator and air gunner, flying in Sunderland flying boats. After the war, he became a dentist in Pembroke Dock, UK.

Silhouette | Entrance of H1 | near Sunderland



Shoba Earl

Warrant Officer

Warrant Officer Shobha Earl, born in the UK, became the RAF's first female Warrant Officer of Asian background in 2001. She served for 25 years, organizing important events and managing personnel. Shobha also escorted the Sovereign's Colour of the Royal Auxiliary Air Force five times.

Silhouette | far end of Hangar 1 | facing the screen



Vishwaananda Kisten

Royal Air Force Chef

Vishwaananda's role in the RAF is important because chefs prepare nutritious meals that keep airmen and women healthy and strong. Good food boosts morale, helping everyone stay focused and energized for their missions. Chefs ensure the team is ready to perform their best.

Silhouette | entrance to Hangar 1 | near the Wall of Hats



Corporal Sonia Campbell

Aerospace Systems Operator

Corporal Sonia ‘Sony’ Campbell is an Aerospace Systems Operator. Born in Derby and of Jamaican heritage, A dedicated member of the Royal Air Force, Sonia joined the RAF in 1999 and works as an Aerospace Systems Operator, also known as a “Scopie.” Sonia’s job is to watch the skies and ensure they are safe. She has served in many places around the world, including Afghanistan and the Falkland Islands. Sonia loves sports and has represented the RAF in volleyball and athletics, parachuting, skiing, and running marathons. Sonia is proud of her work and the exciting life the RAF has given her.

Silhouette | under the Spitfire



Taila-leigh Grose

Air Cadet

Taila-leigh Grose joined the Air Training Corps (ATC) in 2016. As an Air Cadet, she learns about flying, teamwork, and leadership. Taila-leigh participates in exciting activities like gliding, camping, and helping at community events. She dreams of becoming a pilot in the Royal Air Force one day. Taila-leigh’s dedication and enthusiasm inspire other young cadets

Silhouette | far end of Hangar 1 | opposite the Gnat



Philip Louis Ulric Cross

Squadron Leader

Squadron Leader Philip Louis Ulric Cross was an RAF navigator from Trinidad. During The Second World War, he flew on 80 missions, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross and Distinguished Service Order for his exceptional skills. After the war, he became a judge and diplomat, inspiring many with his dedication and courage. Ulric was the most decorated (medals awarded) Caribbean Airman of the Second World War.

Silhouette | beneath De Haviland DH9A



Hardit Singh Malik

Flight Lieutenant

Hardit Singh Malik was the first Indian pilot in the Royal Flying Corps during The First World War. Known as the “Flying Sikh,” he flew Sopwith Camels in France and Italy during 1917 and 1918. He undertook many missions and was wounded in action. After the war, he became a diplomat, serving as India’s High Commissioner to Canada and Ambassador to France.

Silhouette | beneath the Sopwith Camel



Indra Lal Roy

Flight Lieutenant

18 year old Indra Lal Roy joined the Royal Flying Corps in April 1917. He was killed in an aerial battle just over a year later and was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his actions.

In 1918, he was described in the London Gazette as:-
'A very gallant and determined officer, who in thirteen days accounted for nine enemy machines. In these several engagements, he has displayed remarkable skill and daring, on more than one occasion accounting for two machines in one patrol'

Electronic screen | image in 'Contact in the Air' cabinet



Harry Fusao O'Hara

Air Mechanic

Harry Fusao O'Hara, born in Japan, was the first Japanese pilot in the Royal Flying Corps during The First World War. Harry began flying training with the Royal Flying Corps in 1917 having previously served with the Indian Army. He qualified right here in Colindale at the London and Provincial Flying School. He flew many missions and on 6 January 1917, he was awarded the Military Medal. After the war, he became a journalist and lived in London.

There is a photo of Harry Fusao O'Hara on the wall of First World War RAF personnel.

Picture on the wall opposite Cauldron G3



Trevor Edwards

Flight Lieutenant

Trevor considered himself to be ‘a very ordinary London kid who was trained by the RAF to do very extraordinary things.’ After joining the Royal Air Force in 1985, he was initially in the RAF Regiment and was later selected to fly Jaguar jets, like the one in this hangar. You can hear him talking about his experiences at rafstories.org

[Silhouette](#) | [beneath the Jaguar](#)

H3

H4

H5



Arjan Singh

Air Chief Marshal of the Indian Air Force

Air Marshal Arjan Singh led pilots in the Burmese front in the Second World War and later led the Indo-Pak and Indo-China air assaults. After joining No. 1 Squadron Indian Air Force, Arjan eventually became its Chief of Air Staff and was the only officer appointed to the rank of Marshal of the Air Force.

[Group photo](#) | [behind Supermarine Southampton in H3](#)



Lilian Bader

Acting Corporal

Lilian Bader was born Lilian Bailey in Liverpool in 1918. Her father was from Barbados and her mother was British. During the Second World War, Lilian joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) in 1941. She worked as an Aircraftwoman repairing instruments on Airspeed Oxfords and became a corporal. After the war, she went to university and became a teacher.

Group photo | behind Supermarine Southampton



Akin Shenbanjo

Wireless Operator

Akin Shenbanjo, from Nigeria, joined the Royal Air Force in 1941. He trained as a wireless operator and air gunner, flying many missions during The Second World War. Akin was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his bravery. After the war, he continued his RAF career, rising to the rank of Flight Lieutenant.

Silhouette | by the Halifax in Hangar 5



Noor Inayat Khan

Assistant Section Officer

Noor Inayat Khan, born in 1914, was a member of the Royal Air Force during The Second World War. She worked as a wireless operator in the Special Operations Executive (SOE), helping the French Resistance. Noor was captured by the Nazis and executed in 1944, but her courage earned her the George Cross, a high honour for bravery.

Silhouette | near the Lysander



William (Billy) Strachan

Flight Lieutenant

William Arthur Watkin Strachan was born in Kingston Jamaica. In March 1940 he travelled to England to train as a Wireless Operator. He retrained as a pilot and became a Flying Officer before being promoted to Flight Lieutenant. After the war, Billy served as a liaison officer in the RAF, charged with sorting out racial disturbances, before studying law and becoming a legal administrator in London. He was a political activator and member of the communist party until 1967.

Picture on the wall | H5 | Left of the Lysander



Harrydewa Goriah

Flight Lieutenant

Flight Sergeant Harrydewa Goriah, originally from Mauritius, joined the RAF in 1942. He served as a bomb aimer and front gunner on Lancasters in No. 619 Squadron during the Second World War. Harrydewa flew several missions, including one against Hitler's retreat at Berchtesgaden.

Silhouette | H5 | near Supermarine Spitfire

If you wish to explore the diverse nature of those who served in the RAF, visit rafmuseum.org.uk or rafstories.org