



Friday 27 January 2017

February Half Term Activities at IWM Duxford Saturday 11 – Sunday 19 February 2017

Explore the world of aviation at IWM Duxford and discover what life was like for people who experienced conflict first hand in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

This February half term at IWM Duxford, the spotlight will be on the legendary Avro Lancaster, one of Britain's most iconic Second World War bombers. The Lancaster Experience will give visitors the rare opportunity to peer inside the rear section of the aeroplane and hear a selection of amazing stories about the men who flew and fought in this type of aircraft.

The Lancaster Experience

Saturday 11 – Sunday 19 February 2017; Daily; 11.30am – 3.30pm

Interpretative talk; Daily; 11am (approx. 30 minutes duration)

***AirSpace* exhibition**

Throughout February half term, IWM Duxford will open the rear section of the Lancaster Bomber to give visitors the rare opportunity to peer inside this legendary Second World War aircraft.

Each day at 11 am, a historic interpreter will lead an engaging talk discussing the development of this legendary bomber, the different role each crew member played in Bomber Command and the history behind IWM Duxford's Avro Lancaster.

Drawing from the personal experiences of members of Bomber Command, the talk will also offer an insight into the dangerous and challenging conditions endured during wartime missions, including the famous Dambusters Raid, and the development of the bouncing bomb.

One story featured is that of Flight Lieutenant John 'Hoppy' Hopgood, DFC and Bar. At the age of 21 years old, Hoppy helped lead the first wave of attacks on the Mohne Dam during the Dambusters Raid. His remarkable actions during this dangerous mission, whilst unsuccessful in destroying the dam, ensured the survival of two of his crew members following intense enemy fire. Moments after releasing its mine, Hopgood's Lancaster received the full impact of a 20mm cannon blast, which caused the starboard wing to catch fire. There was only one option left for Hopgood's crew: to abandon the aircraft. Hopgood knew they needed to reach enough altitude to make a safe jump but he struggled to navigate the severely damaged aircraft. At a mere five hundred feet above ground, three of his crew members succeeded in exiting the aircraft. However, only two survived the perilous parachute drop, making it two of the lowest successful bailouts during the war. Unfortunately Hopgood and the remaining crew did not survive. On recounting the mission, Wing Commander Guy Gibson, VC DSO & Bar DFC & Bar, described Hoppy as 'probably the best pilot on the Squadron.'

Many of the exhibitions at IWM Duxford are housed within original First World War and 1930s buildings. Exploring Duxford, visitors will follow in the footsteps of the men and women who lived and worked at this historic airfield, defending Britain's skies.

Find out how Britain overcame one of the most significant air campaigns of the Second World War in the *Battle of Britain* exhibition. Explore the *American Air Museum* and witness the best collection of American aircraft on display outside North America.

Visitors may even get the opportunity to see contemporary and historic aircraft fly as they take off and land from IWM Duxford's historic airfield.

– Ends –

For further press information, please contact:

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Notes to Editors

February Half Term Activities

- Due to the Lancaster's compact interior, a maximum of six people can enter the aircraft at one time.
- To avoid lengthy waiting time, each group will have a maximum of four minutes inside the aircraft. Due to its popularity, visitors may have to queue for the experience.
- February half term activities are included in general admission to IWM Duxford.
- Please check the IWM website (iwm.org.uk/duxford) for up-to-date information regarding February half term activities. IWM Duxford reserves the right to change or cancel activities where necessary.
- IWM Duxford winter opening hours: **10am - 4pm. Last admission at 3pm**

IWM Duxford

IWM Duxford is Britain's best-preserved Second World War airfield, with a fascinating history that dates back to the First World War. Its story reflects the landmark achievements made in aviation history. IWM Duxford is Europe's premier aviation museum, where historic buildings intersperse with state-of-the-art exhibition halls, including AirSpace and the American Air Museum. Historic aircraft can regularly be seen taking to the skies from Duxford's wartime airfield. Through the rich displays of aircraft and the powerful stories of the men and women involved, we tell the story of the impact of aviation on the nature of war, on people's lives and on the social and economic history of the region. With one of the finest collections of tanks, military vehicles and artillery in the UK, we also show the impact of technological development on war and conflict.

Open Daily: Last entry an hour before closing. (Closed 24 – 26 December).

Winter Hours: 10am – 4pm. (23 October 2016 to mid-March 2017)

Summer Hours: 10am – 6pm (Mid-March 2017 to mid-October 2017).

Admission*: £18.00 Adults; £14.40 Concessions (Senior, Student, Disabled Adult); £9 Child (5- 16); Free Child (under 5); Family tickets available; Special rates for groups of ten plus.

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* Please note entry prices include a voluntary donation, making a valuable contribution to the care and conservation of this historic site

IWM

IWM (Imperial War Museums) **tells the story of people who have lived, fought and died in conflicts involving Britain and the Commonwealth since the First World War.**

Our unique Collections, made up of the everyday and the exceptional, reveal stories of people, places, ideas and events. Using these, we tell vivid personal stories and create powerful physical experiences across our five museums that reflect the realities of war as both a destructive and creative force. We challenge people to look at conflict from different perspectives, enriching their understanding of the causes, course and consequences of war and its impact on people's lives.

IWM's five branches which attract over 2 million visitors each year are **IWM London**, IWM's flagship branch that recently transformed with new, permanent and free First World War Galleries alongside new displays across the iconic Atrium to mark the Centenary of the First World War; **IWM North**, housed in an iconic award-winning building designed by Daniel Libeskind; **IWM Duxford**, a world renowned aviation museum and Britain's best preserved wartime airfield; **Churchill War Rooms**, housed in Churchill's secret headquarters below Whitehall; and the Second World War cruiser **HMS Belfast**.

IWM Centenary

2017 marks Imperial War Museums (IWM) centenary. IWM was established while the First World War was still being fought. Since its establishment people have entrusted IWM with their stories of war from 1917 to the present day, in the knowledge it will continue to share these stories with future generations. IWM will commemorate its 100 years through a centenary of stories from its rich collections across its five branches (IWM London, IWM North, IWM Duxford, Churchill War Rooms and HMS *Belfast*).

First World War Centenary

2014 - 2018 marks the centenary of the First World War, a landmark anniversary for Britain and the world. IWM is marking the centenary by leading a vibrant, four year programme of cultural activities across the world. For more information visit www.1914.org

