



## ***IWM reveals plans for ground-breaking new Second World War and Holocaust Galleries to mark 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War***

To coincide with the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War, IWM today (3 September 2019) reveals designs, narrative and collections' highlights for its ground-breaking new Second World War and The Holocaust Galleries, opening at IWM London in 2021.

The £30.5 million project will see IWM London become the first museum in the world to physically and intellectually present the Holocaust narrative within the context of the Second World War. Spanning two floors and occupying over 3000m<sup>2</sup>, the new galleries will tell the story of the Second World War and the Holocaust for a 21<sup>st</sup> century audience, highlighting how the Second World War remains the most devastating conflict in human history.

A 783kg V-1 flying bomb will be suspended between the two new galleries, presenting a striking symbol of how the Holocaust and the Second World War are interconnected. Over 10,000 of these 'Doodlebugs' were launched at London and other British cities, killing over 6,000 people. Widely remembered as part of Britain's war, the V-1 is also an important part of the Holocaust story. Many thousands of concentration camp prisoners, labouring in the most appalling conditions, died making these weapons in Nazi Germany. The V-1 is currently on display in IWM London's iconic Atrium and will be moved to its new location in 2020.

The Second World War Galleries will be formed of six individual spaces which will tell the story of the conflict chronologically, exploring its global scale and impact upon people and communities. The new galleries will reveal how whole societies were drawn into the war through mobilisation, direct attack and occupation. The galleries will begin by exploring how during the 1930s the signs that war was coming grew ever more apparent. They will then continue into Britain and its empire's early experience of the war, before showing how the Second World War became a truly global conflict in 1941. The galleries will highlight what led to the Allied victory in 1945 and explore the aftermath of what was the most devastating war in human history.

Personal stories will be at the heart of the new The Holocaust Galleries, along with a breadth of objects and original material that will help audiences consider the cause, course and consequences of this seminal period in world history. The new galleries will explore three core themes of persecution, looking at the global situation at the end of the First World War; escalation, identifying how violence towards Jewish people and communities developed through the 1930s; and annihilation, examining how Nazi policy crosses the threshold into wide-scale state-sponsored murder in the heart of twentieth century Europe. By robustly interrogating the identity of the perpetrators, the galleries will explain who was responsible for these crimes, what motivated them and how ordinary they often were in every other way. They will also examine how the course of the Second World War as well as ideology and individual decision making were all critical factors in the execution of The Holocaust.

**Diane Lees, IWM Director-General, said:** "At the centre of the brutal and barbaric conflict was the state sponsored mass murder of 6 million Jewish men, women and children. This is why we are placing IWM's new Holocaust Galleries at the central chronological fulcrum of our iconic London museum and linking them, architecturally and conceptually, to our new Second World War Galleries. Our new galleries will be unique in presenting the complex narrative of the Holocaust and within the context of the Second World War. In doing so, we will create an accessible, engaging narrative populated by the stories of real people from these diverse communities."

Incorporating well known, familiar objects, documents and photography alongside material displayed by IWM for the first time and using the full range of modern display techniques, the new galleries will engage a new generation of museum visitors with this complex and formative period of human history. Alongside the new galleries a digitally-enabled learning suite will be developed, as well as a brand new public engagement programme which will deepen audience engagement with IWM's collections both in the galleries and beyond the museum.

The new Second World War and the Holocaust Galleries and digitally-enabled learning suite will open at IWM London in 2021.

### Ends

#### **For further press information and interview requests please contact:**

Rhodri Cole, Communications Officer (Corporate) [rcole@iwm.org.uk](mailto:rcole@iwm.org.uk) / 020 7416 5420

Anna Wigley, Communications Manager (Corporate) [awigely@iwm.org.uk](mailto:awigely@iwm.org.uk) / 020 7091 3074

#### **Notes to editors**

##### **IWM London**

IWM London tells the stories of those whose lives have been shaped by war through the depth, breadth and impact of our Galleries, displays and events. Explore the [First World War Galleries](#) and iconic Atrium; visit our [Holocaust Exhibition](#); discover stories of bravery in [The Lord Ashcroft Gallery: Extraordinary Heroes](#) or take in our latest major temporary exhibitions.

Open Daily: 10am – 6pm. Last entry 30 minutes before closing. (Closed 24 - 26 December). Free Admission

IWM London, Lambeth Road, London, SE1 6HZ

T: 020 7416 5000

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##### **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 2.5 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**.