



## PRESS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### ***Imperial War Museums' new galleries to display Pearl Harbor wreckage of USS Arizona outside the US for the first time***

Imperial War Museums (IWM) will display the first piece of the wreckage of the USS *Arizona* to leave the United States in new Second World War Galleries, opening in 2021 at IWM London. The Second World War battleship exploded after suffering direct hits during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, 78 years ago on 7 December 1941.

The piece of wreckage will bring to life the tragic story of the USS *Arizona*, whose destruction accounted for almost half the lives lost during the entire attack on Pearl Harbor. It will also engage visitors to IWM London's new Second World War Galleries with what was a critical turning point in the global conflict, resulting in the US declaring war against Japan.

On the morning of 7 December 1941, aircraft of the Imperial Japanese Navy attacked the United States Naval base at Pearl Harbor on the island of Oahu, Hawaii. Their intention was to destroy and damage as much of the US Pacific Fleet as possible, before it could respond to Japanese operations taking place on the same day against British, Dutch and US territories in southeast Asia. In the first five minutes of the attack, four battleships were hit, including the USS *Arizona*. Minutes later, the USS *Arizona*'s ammunition stores exploded after bombs penetrated its armoured deck, ripping the battleship apart. 1,177 of the ship's crew were killed and fierce fires burned for days. The ship eventually sank to the bottom of the ocean.

Although many of the ships damaged at Pearl Harbor were salvaged and returned to active service, given the extent of her damage, the USS *Arizona* was never recovered from the sea. The site of the wreckage is now home to a memorial to all those killed in the attacks on Pearl Harbor, visited by thousands each year. The piece of wreckage that IWM is receiving was salvaged from the wreckage when the memorial was built in 1961.

Vikki Hawkins, curator for IWM's new Second World War Galleries, said: "Telling the story of the USS *Arizona* through this exciting new acquisition will help us convey to our visitors the huge impact and significance of the surprise attack at Pearl Harbor and the immediate devastation it caused. It will set the scene for visitors to explore the hugely important role that the US would go on to play in the Second World War, particularly in Asia and the Pacific.

"We are deeply honoured that we will be the first museum outside of the US to be able to display a piece of the wreckage of the USS *Arizona* and are grateful to the US Navy and to the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association, who have kindly given their permission for this donation."

Jim Neuman, Historian for Commander Navy Region Hawaii, said: "The USS *Arizona* Relics program was established to provide portions of the salvaged wreckage for display in over 100 locations around the country, giving people who have never been to Hawaii, or perhaps will never make it to Hawaii, a chance to see an actual piece of the USS *Arizona*. And now we were thrilled to be able to provide a piece to

Imperial War Museums. The relic pieces are a visible reminder of the global nature of World War II, the story of the USS *Arizona* and the United States' entry into the war. They will provide an even wider context for discussion of the significance of World War II to visitors of Imperial War Museums."

IWM London's new Second World War and The Holocaust Galleries and digitally-enabled learning suite will put Britain's experience of the Second World War in a global context and explore the truly international nature of the conflict. Personal stories from both sides of the Atlantic will highlight the strong Anglo-American alliance that contributed significantly to allied victory in the war.

The new galleries will also 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.

## Ends

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### 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

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[iwm.org.uk](http://iwm.org.uk) / @I\_W\_M / [www.facebook.com/iwm.london](https://www.facebook.com/iwm.london)

#### 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**.