



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Imperial War Museums takes over UK public venues to mark 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, disrupting 21st century life with voices of the past

30 April – 15 August 2020
#Victory75

This year, Imperial War Museums (IWM) will bring busy daily life to a standstill in public venues nationwide to mark 75 years since the end of the Second World War, the most devastating conflict in modern global history.

On the 75th anniversaries of VE (Victory in Europe) Day, VJ (Victory over Japan) Day and the dropping of the atomic bombs, IWM will share Second World War voices from its unique sound archive on an unprecedented scale, broadcasting them in locations across the UK such as schools, universities, supermarkets, historic landmarks, and transport hubs. Alongside its five branches and partner locations, IWM is also calling on all public venues and organisations interested in broadcasting these voices to register their interest via the [IWM website](#).

Voices of War consists of three separate compilations of excerpts from audio interviews held in IWM's rich sound archive. This trilogy of unique testimonies reveals personal responses and first-hand memories, from Prime Minister Winston Churchill to prisoners of war and civilians, to the three major milestones that led to the end of the Second World War. From intense celebration to vast desolation, the 75th anniversaries of VE Day, VJ Day and the dropping of the atomic bombs will allow a 21st century audience to reflect on what victory really meant for people in factories and fields, and in hospitals and homes around the world in 1945.

Voices of War will be broadcast at 3pm on the anniversary VE Day (Friday 8 May), the exact time that Prime Minister Winston Churchill announced end of hostilities in Europe 75 years earlier, and at 11am on both Thursday 6 August, to mark the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, and on Saturday 15 August, the anniversary of VJ Day.

Voices of War leads IWM's Victory 75 programme which will retell the dramatic story of the end of the Second World War and its global aftermath from 30 April to 15 August 2020. The programme will respond to the question "what does victory mean?" and will encourage the public to consider the complexity and lasting global impact of the end of the Second World War

Diane Lees, Director General of IWM, said: "*Voices of War* takes inspiration from the huge crowds who stopped and listened together 75 years ago, in public spaces across the world, to the declaration of victory in Europe and then the Far East. We want to recreate that moment, using our fascinating sound archive to share the stories and memories of those who lived through the conflicting jubilation, hope, sadness and fear that was felt during the summer of 1945. I encourage organisations and venues interested in being part of such an important national moment alongside IWM to get in touch with us."

As part of IWM's Victory 75 programme, IWM London will also hold a series of live events on Friday 8 May, Saturday 8 August and Saturday 15 August. These performances will be a contemporary response to the end of the Second World War, a moment that forever changed the world we live in.



Further announcements relating to *Voices of War* and IWM's Victory 75 programme will be released in due course.

Ends

For further press information and interview requests please contact:

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Notes to Editors

Victory 75

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From 30 April – 15 August 2020, IWM's Victory 75 anniversary programme will retell the story of the end of the Second World War in a unique and unprecedented way for contemporary audiences. IWM will mark the 75th anniversaries of VE Day, the dropping of the atomic bombs and VJ Day, disrupting daily 21st century life in public spaces around the UK and hosting a series of live performances at IWM London. Victory 75 will reflect on a time of both celebration and trepidation in the summer of 1945, reinterpreting the end of the Second World War and questioning the meaning of victory both then and in today's world. Visitors to IWM London and to IWM North can visit these sites' extensive Second World War displays and learn about how the conflict was fought and won through IWM's collection of fascinating stories and objects.

www.iwm.org.uk/victory

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**.

Historical background to VE Day, VJ Day and the dropping of the atomic bombs

VE Day on 8 May 1945 remained in the memory of all those who witnessed it. It meant the beginning of the end to nearly six years of a war that had cost the lives of millions. Allied nations rejoiced, marking VE Day with street parties, dancing and singing. However, fighting continued on a global scale and the impact of conflict remained central to people's lives.



On 6 August 1945, Allied forces dropped an atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima, instantly killing thousands of people. Three days later, a second atomic bomb was dropped on the city of Nagasaki.

The detonation of these weapons, the first and only time they have been used in war, changed people's understanding of the potential consequences of conflict forever.

The war in the Pacific did not end until 15 August 1945, when Japan surrendered following the intensive bombing of its cities. The day was celebrated across the world as 'Victory over Japan' (VJ Day).

Nevertheless, the political, social and economic repercussions of the Second World War were felt long after it officially ended.