



## ***Restored, refreshed and reopening: HMS Belfast will welcome visitors back on board from 8 July 2021 with enhanced exhibition spaces and new experiences***

- ***HMS Belfast to welcome visitors back on board from 8 July 2021, sixteen months after it closed in March 2020***
- ***Boasting refreshed exhibition spaces, crew member stories and new multi-sensory and interactive experiences, HMS Belfast is the ultimate warship experience in the heart of London***
- ***Essential restoration and conservation works have also been carried out throughout the ship during this extended closure period***
- ***Newly designed quay-side visitor pavilion will feature The Bar @ HMS Belfast with panoramic views of the capital and signature rum cocktails***

A surviving witness to world conflict with a rich and varied life span of 83 years, [HMS Belfast](#) is a fascinating historic site boasting nine decks to explore, from the depths of the Boiler Room to the top of the Gun Direction Platform. This summer, visitors can enter the newly interpreted 2 Deck where they will find stories about key members of the ship's historic crew for the first time. These include Surgeon Lieutenant Robert Anthony Rowan, who saved many lives while serving on *Belfast* during the Korean War, and whose story will be the focal point of the Sick Bay. Also featured will be Lau Sau, a Leading Steward from Hong Kong and the only member of *Belfast's* crew ever to be killed onboard when he was fatally wounded by a North Korean shell. Visitors will also learn about the challenges faced by the crew as they made *Belfast* a home away from home by exploring the galley and seeing the industrial scale food production which fed nearly a thousand mouths whilst at sea. The Regulating Office will highlight some of the crews first impressions of coming aboard *Belfast* whilst the Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes (NAAFI) canteen uncovers how servicemen were still able to access home comforts including chocolate and tobacco.

The new narrative onboard HMS Belfast will offer a fascinating window into three main aspects of the ship's history: the Second World War, End of Empire and Cold War. Visitors can enter one of the 6-inch gun turrets for an audio immersion into the events which took place here during an intense naval bombardment on D-Day, or try one of the unmissable interactive moments, playing the role of ship's helmsman in the Lower Steering Position to navigate the dark, stormy seas of the Channel to reach Normandy. *Belfast* and its crew visited a number of international locations during the post-war era, including Singapore, Hong Kong and Shanghai, and visitors will learn about what life was like in the crowded mess decks from the heat and humidity of East Asia to the freezing cold of the Arctic which the crew encountered during the Second World War Convoys to Russia.

Diane Lees, Director-General of IWM, said "*HMS Belfast is so much more than a museum, it is a historic site, a witness to the world during the most challenging times of the twentieth century, and a veteran in its own right. Over the past year and a half we have gone to great lengths to ensure the necessary conservation and restoration works have taken place in order to preserve this veteran of war, as well as enhanced the onboard visitor experience and exhibition spaces to bring the history of this Royal Navy warship to life. This year also marks 50 years since the ship was rescued from becoming scrap metal and arrived in the Pool of London to become a treasured London landmark and we are thrilled to reopen this summer, allowing visitors back on board to discover and explore this magnificent survivor of the British navy.*"

Also new for 2021, HMS Belfast's quay-side pavilion has been redesigned to give visitors the best possible welcome onboard including the opening of The Bar @ HMS Belfast, a roof terrace which offers the ideal spot to admire the striking London skyline alongside a new signature cocktail menu featuring that Royal Navy staple, rum! Onboard, the newly refreshed Stokers' Café is the perfect stopping point for lunch or a coffee with

an alfresco area now available with new outdoor seating on the boat deck. Those looking for a unique, intimate introduction to the ship can also book a [private tour](#) for up to 6 guests, led by an HMS Belfast expert who will delve into the stories of the conflicts and crew. Further events and experiences will also be announced in due course.

IWM's Conservation team have used this extended closure period to carry out important preservation and restoration projects, in addition to the regular condition checks administered to any IWM collection item. With 10,500 tonnes of steel to maintain there is no shortage of jobs to undertake and works have included repairs to the ship's deck, painting the hull, protecting the ship from corrosion and carrying out maintenance work on the four-inch guns.

For guidance on what health and safety measures will be in place once HMS Belfast reopens please visit the branch web page for the latest information at [iwm.org.uk/visits/hms-belfast](http://iwm.org.uk/visits/hms-belfast)

**HMS Belfast will reopen on 8 July 2021. IWM members can book tickets from 20 May and general public from 27 May via IWM's website.**

**Ends**

**For further press information, images and interview requests please contact:**

Hannah Llewellyn-Jones, Communications Manager (Commercial) at 07869 406 425/

[HLlewellynjones@iwm.org.uk](mailto:HLlewellynjones@iwm.org.uk)

### **HMS Belfast**

HMS Belfast is the most significant surviving Second World War Royal Navy warship, with a history that extends to the Arctic Convoys, D-Day, the Cold War, Korea and beyond. Moored on the River Thames between London Bridge and Tower Bridge, HMS Belfast tells the story of life on board and explores how war affects and impacts on the morale, resilience and determination of a ship's company. We take visitors on a journey through the ship's nine decks and show them what life was like for the 950 strong crew, through the real-life stories of the men who served onboard.

### **HMS Belfast, The Queen's Walk, London, SE1 2JH**

T: +44 (0)20 7940 6300

E: [hmsbelfast@iwm.org.uk](mailto:hmsbelfast@iwm.org.uk)

[iwm.org.uk](http://iwm.org.uk) / [@iwm\\_uk](https://www.instagram.com/iwm_uk/) / [www.facebook.com/hmsbelfast](https://www.facebook.com/hmsbelfast)

Summer hours - 01 March to 31 October. 10:00 to 18:00. Last timeslot 16:30 - 17:00

Winter hours - 01 November to 28 February - 10:00 to 17:00. Last timeslot 15:30 - 16:00

Adult ticket price: £22.70 (£25.00 including Gift Aid donation)

Child ticket price: £11.35 (£12.50 including Gift Aid donation)

Concession ticket price: £20.40 (£22.50 including Gift Aid donation)

IWM Members get free admission to HMS Belfast and all IWM charging branches. IWM Membership starts from £5 per month, visit the website for more details: [iwm.org.uk/membership](http://iwm.org.uk/membership)