



I Was There: Room of Voices

IWM London

21 September 2018 – 31 March 2019

Press View: 19 September 2018

Free exhibition

#MakingANewWorld

Response to Armistice revealed in new immersive sound installation

At 11 am on 11 November 1918 an Armistice was declared and the First World War came to an end. The ceasefire marked a pivotal moment for an entire generation, but people experienced and reacted to it in many different ways. In *I Was There: Room of Voices* – a new immersive sound installation opening at IWM London on 21 September – 32 people who fought and lived through the First World War share their own personal stories of the Armistice.

Using recordings from IWM's extensive Sound Archive that have never been exhibited before, *I Was There: Room of Voices* explores the moment that marks the boundary between war and peace and its immediate aftermath. It brings together personal testimonies from people who in 1918 were soldiers, civilians and children who all had different reactions to the end of the First World War.

By listening to these recordings, visitors will experience the mixed emotions that Armistice provoked – from the solemn to the celebratory – and discover how this moment was imprinted on the lives of an entire generation.

Voices include that of Dolly Shepherd, a 31 year-old driver mechanic with the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps in Calais, France when the Armistice was declared, whose story focuses on the silence that followed when the shooting stopped: *'... strangely enough, we wept, because the silence was so awful. You see we'd been used to the noise of guns, all day long, all day long, all day long... it was so strange, to have silence.'*

In contrast, Clara Thompson, a 13 year-old school girl at the time, remembered the celebrations that followed the ceasefire: *'... they brought out a piano into the street, and they set up tables all down the middle of the road... And everybody danced and sang and, oh it was amazing...'*

I Was There: Room of Voices is part of *Making a New World*, a season of innovative exhibitions, installations and immersive experiences taking place across IWM London and IWM North between 27 July 2018 and 31 March 2019. The free season will explore themes of remembrance and how the First World War has shaped the society we live in today.

Ends

For further press information please contact:

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Notes to Editors

Making a New World

Making a New World is a free season of exhibitions, installations and immersive experiences taking place at IWM London and IWM North in 2018. Through art, photography, film, live music, dance and conversations, the season will explore themes of remembrance and how the First World War has shaped today's society, bringing together five major exhibitions – *Lest We Forget?*, *Renewal: Life after the First World War in Photographs, I Was There: Room of Voices*, *African Solider* and *Moments of Silence*.

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; find out what life was like at home during the Second World War in [A Family in Wartime](#); delve into the world of espionage in [Secret War](#); 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.

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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 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**.

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

