



December 2012

Battle of Britain Spitfire set to leave IWM London before museum temporarily closes for six months from 2 January – July 2013

IWM's (Imperial War Museums) Mark I Spitfire, one of the iconic suspended objects greeting visitors at IWM London for over 20 years, was lowered last night by a team of expert conservators as part of the museum's preparations to temporarily close for six months from 2 January 2013 to enable major construction works to transform IWM London.

Mark 1 Spitfires entered service in 1938 with No.19 Squadron at RAF Duxford, now one of IWM's five museums, and once the conservation team has taken its wings off, the aircraft will be transported to IWM Duxford later this week where it will be conserved in our public hangar *Conservation in Action*.

The Spitfire will return to IWM London and take pride of place in our transformed Atrium from summer 2014, and will be revealed alongside brand new First World War Galleries.

The preparations to temporarily close IWM London has involved our expert team transporting over 60 large objects from rockets through to tanks to IWM Duxford for conservation, and the Spitfire is one of the very last. To find out more, and see exclusive time-lapse footage of the most spectacular moves visit our [Transforming IWM London Blog](http://iwm.org.uk) (iwm.org.uk)

Quick Statistics

The Spitfire's speed and maneuverability made it more than a match for the Luftwaffe's fighters during the Battle of Britain and it is known as being one of the most outstanding fighter aircraft in history.

- Model: British Supermarine Spitfire Mark IA (R6915) preserved in its original wartime livery
- Service History: Used by No.609 (West Riding) Squadron who were stationed at Middle Wallop in Hampshire in July 1940. It was flown by 13 different pilots on 57 operations during the Battle of Britain, accounting for 2 German aircraft, shared in the destruction of 2 more and damaged a further 4. Its most frequent and successful pilot was Pilot Officer Noel Agazarian.
- Crew: 1
- Maximum Speed: 362mph
- Armament: eight .303inch machine guns
- Dimensions: wing span 11.2m, 9.1m long, 3.5m high
- Weight: 2624kg

Ends

For further information contact:

Bryony Phillips, Senior Press Officer - 020 7416 5316 / bphillips@iwm.org.uk

Images: Available from Getty Images or [IWM's Press Extranet](#)

About the temporary closure of IWM London

From 2 January 2013 IWM London will be temporarily closed for six months until July 2013. This is to enable us to safely and securely deliver the most disruptive construction works for our ambitious project to transform IWM London.

During the period of temporary closure our research facilities will be relocated to our All Saints building (on Austral Street a five minute walk from IWM London) and you can visit IWM's four other branches – Churchill War Rooms and HMS *Belfast* in London, IWM Duxford and IWM North.

In July 2013 IWM London will be partially re-opening with a new major family exhibition *Horrible Histories®: Spies*, an autumn programme of new art and photography displays including works that have never been on display before, as well as our permanent art galleries, *The Lord Ashcroft Gallery: Extraordinary Heroes*, *The Holocaust Exhibition*, *Secret War*, *A Family in Wartime* and our Explore History Centre.

In summer 2014, after a year of continued transformation and development, which includes bringing in our iconic large objects home, the museum will fully re-open as we launch our brand new First World War Galleries to mark the 100 year anniversary of the start of the First World War. We will also unveil a new Atrium, new shops and a park-side café.

To follow our transformation visit iwm.org.uk

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 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 award-winning [Holocaust Exhibition](#); discover stories of bravery in [The Lord Ashcroft Gallery: Extraordinary Heroes](#); see work by some of Britain's most significant 20th Century artists in our [art galleries](#) or take in our latest major temporary exhibitions. Our family learning sessions and events encourage debate and challenge people's perceptions of war.

IWM London is temporarily closed 2 January – 1 July 2013 as we [Transform IWM London](#). The museum will partially re-open with the new major family exhibition *Horrible Histories®: Spies* and fully re-opens in summer 2014 when we launch our brand new First World War Galleries to mark the 100 year anniversary of the start of the First World War and unveil a new Atrium, new shops and a park-side café.

Open Daily: 10am – 6pm. Last Admission 5.45pm. (Closed 2 Jan – 1 July, 24 - 26 December 2013).

IWM London, Lambeth Road, London, SE1 6HZ

T: 020 7416 5000

E: mail@iwm.org.uk

iwm.org.uk / @I_W_M / 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 attract over 2 million visitors each year. [IWM London](#), our flagship branch, is transforming with new First World War Galleries and a new Atrium with large object displays which will open in summer 2014 to mark the Centenary of the First World War (Please note IWM London is closed until July 2013 when it will partially re-open, and in June 2014 the museum will fully reopen). Our other branches are [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 will mark the centenary by leading a vibrant, four year programme of cultural activities across the country, including the opening of brand new First World War Galleries at IWM London in 2014. For more information visit www.1914.org

