



EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01 MONDAY 11 OCTOBER 2021

Unseen objects, untold stories and unheard voices: Imperial War Museums' ground-breaking new Second World War and The Holocaust Galleries open

Next week on 20 October, Imperial War Museums (IWM) London opens the doors to its new Second World War and The Holocaust Galleries. As the Second World War and the Holocaust passes out of living memory, IWM will bring unseen objects, untold stories and unheard voices together to help visitors to understand the most devastating conflict and genocide in modern history.

Spanning two floors and occupying over 3000m², this £30.7 million project sees IWM London become the first museum in the world to house dedicated Second World War Galleries and The Holocaust Galleries under the same roof, examining the Holocaust not as an isolated event but as fundamental to the course and consequences of the Second World War. With more than 3,500 items and personal stories from over 80 countries on display, IWM will bring to the fore the truly global narrative of this devastating conflict, while also exploring the British experience.

Diane Lees, Director General of Imperial War Museums comments: *'The Second World War and the Holocaust will soon pass out of living memory, leaving us without the first-hand testimony of veterans, eyewitnesses and survivors. IWM's new galleries, which have been nearly six years in the making, will preserve their stories and ensure that the world never forgets what they experienced. With a recent YouGov poll demonstrating that 93% believe the Second World War and the Holocaust are relevant to learn about today and 78% think that genocide is currently happening in the world, the opening of these galleries has never been more significant.'*

The new galleries bring together significant new acquisitions and loans, alongside items from IWM's collections, including:

- The first piece of wreckage of the USS *Arizona*, sunk at Pearl Harbor in 1941, ever to be displayed outside of the United States
- Objects showing the role of Einsatzgruppen – mobile execution units – in the Holocaust, including 'forbidden' photographs of mass shootings and the medal awarded to Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski for his time spent overseeing the execution of Jews in Riga and Minsk
- Extraordinary historical documents such as the rare birth certificate of living Holocaust Survivor Eva Clarke, one of very few people to be born in a concentration camp who survived past liberation
- The personal collection of 18-year old RAF air gunner Billy Strachan, who sold his bicycle and saxophone to pay for a voyage from Jamaica to Britain and attained the rank of Flight Lieutenant following 30 completed missions
- The headphones worn during the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg by Hans Frank, the German

politician and lawyer who served as head of the German Government in Nazi-occupied Poland during the Second World War

- A deconstructed life-size 1940s house that brings to life the devastating impact of the Blitz on ordinary British lives
- A section of concentration camp barrack that is likely to be the last remaining part of Velten, a sub-camp of Ravensbrück and Sachsenhausen, on public display for first time in UK history

Although the Second World War was a global conflict on an unprecedented scale, a recent YouGov poll of British adults carried out for IWM found that knowledge of the global nature of the Second World War story is underappreciated across all age groups, particularly younger generations, with less than half of 16-44 year-olds knowing that India was part of the allied war effort during the Second World War, and only 58% of 16-24 year olds knowing that Japan was Britain's enemy. Taking a more global approach to the Second World War and exploring conflict zones across the world, IWM's Second World War Galleries will highlight how the Second World War affected people from all over the world – from London, Russia and New Zealand to the Philippines and China – telling the vast extraordinary stories of ordinary people.

The Holocaust Galleries tell the individual stories of some of the six million Jewish people murdered in the Holocaust through over 2,000 photos, books, artworks, letters and personal objects – from jewellery and clothing to toys and keepsakes. With the You Gov poll revealing that 78% of the British public think that genocide is happening today, these galleries are pivotal in improving public understanding of how a modern state led a Europe-wide genocide in the twentieth century, and show that understanding our history is an essential step to combating prejudices still present in today's society, such as antisemitism.

IWM London's Second World War and The Holocaust Galleries open on 20 October. Entry is free, but pre-booking general museum visit tickets via IWM's website is highly advised. When you arrive at IWM, you will be able to collect a timed entry ticket for the new Galleries from the Welcome Desk on Level 0. Advanced Timed tickets are bookable for school groups and members.

Ends

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Notes to editors

You Gov survey

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2130 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 20th - 21st July 2021. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 16+).

IWM

www.iwm.org.uk

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 has recently transformed with new, permanent and free Second World War and The Holocaust Galleries; **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**.

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.

IWM London's extensive new Second World War and The Holocaust Galleries open on 20 October 2021.

Open Wednesday to Sunday: 10am – 6pm except during school holidays and half term, when we are open seven days a week. Also open bank holidays. Closed 24 - 26 December. Free admission.

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IWM is very grateful to all those organisations and individuals whose donations have made possible the development of the new Second World War and The Holocaust Galleries, learning centres and associated programmes.