Royal Air Force and Royal Marines heritage to



Orderly room staff at RAF Andover celebrate victory in Europe, May 1945. Credit: RAF Museum Collection.

On the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day, we're celebrating two grants that will transform how these nationally important military history collections are shared with future generations.

Our grant of £9.3m will allow RAF Museum Midlands to deliver a wide-ranging public engagement programme, as well as new exhibitions and visitor facilities. On the south coast, we're supporting the National Museum of the Royal Navy with £4.4m to create a new home for Royal Marines heritage.



Public celebrations of VE Day in Trafalgar Square, May 1945. Credit: RAF Museum Collection.

Today (8 May 2025), events are taking place across the UK to commemorate those who served in the Second World War. Our investment will help both museums engage audiences of all ages and backgrounds to make sure this history is never forgotten – from the RAF Museum Midlands's oldest Spitfire in the world to the National Museum of the Royal Navy's LCT 7074, the last surviving landing craft tank from D-Day.

How our funding will help

RAF Museum Midlands, Cosford will work with visitors, Access and Youth Advisory Panels, community groups, staff and volunteers to transform its spaces and visitor experience. The museum cares for a collection that spans over a century of history, but its current facilities only allow for 1% of it to be seen by the public. A purpose-built collections hub, new learning facilities and programmes, will unlock this hidden history.

Find out more about the project at RAF Museum Midlands.



A group of schoolchildren mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day during a visit to RAF Museum Midlands. Credit: Chris Gorman.

Royal Marines Experience, Portsmouth will create a new visitor attraction in the refurbished Boathouse 6 at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard. The move will reunite its collection for the first time since 2017, allowing it to tell the story of four centuries of Royal Marines history, from the creation of its forerunner in 1664 to today.

Find out more about the Royal Marines Experience.



An artist's impression of a collection gallery at the planned Royal Marines Experience. Credit: Museum of the Royal Navy.

Preserving our shared history

Our CEO Eilish McGuinness said: “As people across the UK mark the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day, it is evident that the legacy of the Second World War and our armed forces are a key part of our historical narrative.

“Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, these projects will help new audiences to discover, draw inspiration from and forge connections with the stories of the RAF and Royal Marines, helping to ensure the heritage is valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future.”

Our funding is open to everyone. Learn more about the kind of projects we support.



Royal Marine Veteran Peter Othen in the Remembrance Room inside the Royal Marines Experience. Credit: Jas Lehal/Press Association.



Young visitors mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day during a visit to RAF Museum Midlands. Photo: Chris Gorman.

Ready for take off: the future of the Royal Air Force Museum