IWM First World War Centenary galleries win support

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This initial support means IWM can progress their plans further to secure a full HLF grant of £4.5million. The project will transform IWM London by creating new First World War galleries in time for the centenary of the First World War in 2014. The galleries will be complemented by a programme of participatory learning activities.

The new First World War galleries at IWM London are a key part of IWM's plans to mark the First World War Centenary in 2014-18 by leading a vibrant, four year programme of cultural activities across the country. The galleries will be 45% larger than the museum's existing First World War galleries enabling IWM to display much more of its world renowned First World War collection which includes art, film, sound recordings and photographs. Original objects such as personal items, letters and diaries will be exhibited in highly interactive, multimedia displays which explore the personal stories of those who lived, fought and died in the First World War.

The First World War was a turning point in world history. It claimed the lives of over 16 million people across the globe and affected the lives of millions more. The First World War Centenary also marks the opening chapter of IWM's history, as it was originally established in 1917 to collect and record everybody's experiences of the Great War, which was still being fought.

Diane Lees, Director-General IWM, said: "We're delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has given us this support. The First World War Centenary is a landmark anniversary for Britain and the world. Through our new galleries at IWM London and wider Centenary programme, IWM will reconnect people with the First World War and keep the history and personal recollections of the war alive for future generations."

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of HLF, said: "We are very pleased to be able to offer our initial support for the exciting and thought-provoking transformation of the First World War galleries at the Imperial War Museum. The museum will play an important part in the international commemoration of the centenaries of the First World War and we are looking forward to working in partnership with the IWM as the project develops."

IWM is currently fundraising to meet the full £35million project cost of the First World War galleries, as well as improvements to the Atrium and upgraded visitor facilities for 2014. Funds are being sought from a variety of sources including philanthropic donations, trusts and foundations, corporate partners, and the public. The Imperial War Museum Foundation, chaired by Lord Rothermere and with the Duke of Cambridge as Patron is also raising funds for the museum's ambitious plans. In addition to HLF's support, £13million has been secured to date.

Architectural and exhibition design for the First World War galleries is already underway and is subject to a period of consultation before the final designs are worked up and a planning application is submitted in February 2012.

Notes to editors

A first-round pass means the project meets HLF criteria for funding and HLF believes the project has potential to deliver

high-quality benefits and value for Lottery money. The application was in competition with other supportable projects, so a first-round pass is an endorsement of outline proposals. Having been awarded a first-round pass, the project now has up to two years to submit fully developed proposals to compete for a firm award.

Transforming IWM London

The new First World War galleries are the first in a series of redevelopment projects planned at IWM London. The museum's central atrium space will also be transformed for 2014, redisplaying and interpreting IWM's iconic large objects to make it easier for visitors to gain a deeper understanding of their historical significance and context. Longer term regeneration plans include a new ground-level entrance and landscaping at the front of the building, creating a community space which improves public access and provides a home for the iconic naval guns. This will be combined with new Second World War, art and temporary display galleries, as well as new conferencing and learning facilities.

IWM London

IWM London is IWM's flagship branch thanks to the breadth, depth and impact of our exhibits and displays. We share people's experiences of war through our First World War and Second World War galleries, the Holocaust Exhibition, the Lord Ashcroft Gallery, as well as many other displays and temporary exhibitions. Our family learning sessions and events encourage debate and challenge people's perceptions of war.

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.

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.

Further information

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