Designs for the new First World War exhibition by Casson Mann IWM

The initial support for this grant, whereby HLF publically endorsed the outline proposals for the project and funding application, was first announced in November 2011.

The new Galleries, almost twice the size of the current ones, will enable the museum to display much more from its world-renowned collections. Original artefacts from soldiers' personal items, letters and diaries through to weapons, tanks and artworks will be exhibited in state-of-the-art, interactive displays exploring the stories of those who lived, fought and died in the Great War.

Alongside the development of the Galleries, IWM have launched a programme of education initiatives such as a Youth Panel and Young Reporters, in order to reach out to young people across the city inviting them to engage with this landmark anniversary and get involved with IWM's work.

IWM is leading the First World War Centenary Partnership, a network of over 450 national and international members. Together, we will present a four year vibrant global programme of events, activities and digital platforms which will enable millions of people across the world to discover more about life in the First World War.

Diane Lees, Director-General, IWM, says: "We're delighted to announce that we have secured this grant from Heritage Lottery Fund. Claiming the lives of over 16million people and affecting even more, the First World War was a turning point in world history. The Centenary is a landmark anniversary for Britain and the world and also marks the opening chapter of IWM's history. IWM was originally established in 1917 to collect and record everybody's experiences of the

Great War, which was still being fought. A hundred years 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: "These inspiring plans are entirely fitting to mark the planned First World War commemorations and we are proud to be playing a role as a funder. The 'Great War' was an extraordinary turning point in our history and these galleries will help remind us all – young and old - of the sacrifices that were made and the importance of continuing to learn from its lessons."

In addition to HLF's support to date IWM has secured £15.3million of the total £35million First World War Centenary redevelopment project cost, which includes new First World War Galleries, a reconfigured Central Hall and improved visitor facilities. The remaining £15.2million is being sought from a variety of sources including donations from major philanthropists, Trusts and Foundations, corporate partners, IWM Friends and the public.

The IWM Foundation, an independent charitable trust set up under the chairmanship of Viscount Rothermere and with the Duke of Cambridge as Patron is also supporting the fundraising for IWM's ambitious plans.

Further information

Bryony Phillips, Senior Press Officer, IWM, on 020 7416 5316, email: bphillips@iwm.org.uk.

Laura Bates, HLF on 020 7591 6027 Email: lbates@hlf.org.uk.