Support for Portsmouth's D-Day Museum in 70th



In the week that the eyes of the world are fixed on Normandy and Portsmouth as the 70th anniversary of D-Day is commemorated, it is announced today that Portsmouth City Council's D-Day Museum has received initial support from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a £4.1million bid to completely transform the museum to tell the D-Day story for museum visitors in the 21st century.

This means that the museum is a step closer to securing the funding to completely renew the museum and displays well ahead of D-Day 75, in 2019.

A development grant of £224,000 will be used to advance the proposals which include:

- Opening up internal spaces and creating dramatic new displays
- Extensively using the experiences and words of Normandy Veterans to bring the story to life for visitors
- Completely changing visitor circulation, so the D-Day story can be told more coherently
- Creating a new dedicated activity space
- Continuing work with young people and schools to ensure that the museum remains relevant to present and future generations.

Carole Souter, Chief Executive of HLF, said: "The D-Day landings were a monumental moment in European history, involving more than a 150 thousand men from the British and Allied forces. As we head towards the 75th anniversary, HLF's Trustees felt the plans set out for a refreshed, revamped D-Day Museum would help bring this story alive for a new generation."

Dr Jane Mee, Head of Museums and Visitor Services for Portsmouth City Council,explained: "2014 is also the 30th anniversary of the opening of the D-Day Museum and it is fitting that this project gets underway now while Normandy Veterans are still with us and able to help us re-shape the museum and its displays."

"Although focussed on the south coast, D-Day involved the whole country. Through this project, the Museum will also create resources and partnerships to help individuals and communities nationally discover their wider D-Day heritage and subsequently share it through a major new website, conference programme, online resources and activities."

Viscount Montgomery of Alamein (son of the Allied Ground Forces Commander on D-Day, General - later Field Marshal - Sir Bernard Montgomery) said: "I am very pleased to hear about Portsmouth City Council's plans to redevelop the D-Day Museum, and wish them every success with their work. The invasion of Normandy in June 1944 was the largest single military operation in the history of warfare. It represented a massive effort in planning, co-ordination, leadership, courage and dedication to duty. It is important that it should be remembered for many years to come."

George Batts, General Secretary of the Normandy Veterans Association (NVA), said: "The Normandy Landings were a turning point in the Second World War, and were only achieved through the service and sacrifices of hundreds of thousands of men and women from the Allied nations, whether in Normandy or in supporting roles in the UK and elsewhere. We Normandy veterans are very pleased to hear this news, particularly as it comes just before the 70th anniversary of D-Day. It is important that the contribution made by Normandy veterans and the story of D-Day are remembered for many years beyond the anniversary, and the D-Day Museum's project will achieve this."

Popular TV historian Dan Snow is an advocate of the museum; "The D-Day Museum in Portsmouth is the only museum in Britain that focuses solely on this vitally important chain of events.

"Its extraordinarily diverse collections bring together in one place the human stories behind D-Day and Operation Overlord. No other museum can provide such a uniquely dedicated insight into the roles of the millions of men and women that played a crucial part in the build-up to D-Day, as well the opportunity to be inspired by and reflect upon the sacrifice and heroism of those who took part," he says.

The announcement of the grant coincides with the establishment of the Portsmouth D-Day Museum Trust and registered charity, no. 1156976, which now needs to raise an additional £160,000 to realise the project's plans. Funds have been pledged from Portsmouth City Council (£350,000 towards the capital costs and a commitment to meet the additional running costs totalling £150,000 over the first five years) and from the Dulverton Trust, the founder of which commissioned the Overlord embroidery, the UK's modern-day equivalent of the Bayeux Tapestry and a centrepiece of the museum. The organisers of the Victorious Festival to be held on Southsea Common on 23/24 August 2014, have also very generously pledged to support the project."

Further information

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