

Liberation Pavilion



Executive Summary:

Following a long journey through the war, visitors to The National World War II Museum will enter the Liberation Pavilion, housing three distinct levels spanning the closing months of the war and immediate postwar years, and concluding by illustrating direct links to our lives today. In the Liberation Gallery and Theater, visitors will learn about the costs of war and the price of victory. The meaning of liberation and freedom will be experienced through a series of profound and moving exhibitions, a major film production, and personal testimonies about the moment when victims had their freedom and liberty restored. This area will present a series of questions and statistics that will encourage visitors to consider the harsh realities of war, including the number of casualties of both Allied and Axis countries, civilian casualties, concentration camp victims, and refugees. The Victory Gallery will take visitors through the joy and celebrations at the end of the war, and through the country's transition from war to peace. The final level, Fruits

of Victory, will explore the meaning and connection between World War II and our lives – bringing into focus the meaning for future generations of “Why is World War II relevant today,” the vigilance needed to defend our liberties and freedoms, and the importance of tolerance.

Liberation

The first floor, Liberation, explores the emotion and chronology of freedom, as well as the cost of winning that freedom – its human toll and the devastation it left behind. The fundamental mission of this gallery is to herald the liberation of individuals and nations. It will also illustrate the scale of destruction and magnitude of what this achievement cost. A special section will introduce visitors to the origins of the Holocaust as experienced by a young teenager, Anne Frank – providing a compelling story showing visitors the persecution of children and families as well as the terrors of totalitarian regimes. This gallery is meant to strike a bittersweet note, showing that this was both a time for celebration at war’s end and a time for thoughtful reflection on lives and societies destroyed in the process. The hallway outside the gallery will feature photos of soldiers and will highlight those who served in each branch of military service during World War II.

Victory – Winning the Peace

The second level, Victory - Winning the Peace, will immerse visitors in the magnificent celebrations surrounding V-E and V-J Days. The mission of this gallery is to convey the elation of realizing that the Allied Nations had won, while beginning the transition from war to peace – capturing the emotion of a world greeting the long-awaited victory, while hinting at the challenges that followed.

Fruits of Victory

The third level, Fruits of Victory, draws connections between World War II and our world today. Its focus is to explore the many ways in which the world we live in, the values we hold dear, the technologies we rely upon, and the global and domestic issues we confront, were shaped and influenced by World War II. Advances in technology, medicine, civil rights, women’s rights, industrial expansion, global economy, and America’s cultural influence will be shown as legacies of the World War II era. The mission of this gallery is to answer the question, “What does World War II have to do with me?” An important goal is to make those links clear for generations to come.