



EVALUATION REPORT

World War Two: War Stories

ABSTRACT

An evaluation report on the qualitative feedback completed for the new Second World War Exhibition 'World War Two: War Stories' completed in April 2021.

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Introduction:

World War Two: War Stories opened in two phases between April 2020 and April 2021.

The new exhibition focuses on the experiences of British Royal Armoured Corps servicemen from 1939 to 1945. It covers some of the less well-known campaigns of World War Two, such as Arras, Greece, Dieppe, North Africa, the Great Swan, Burma, Walcheren, the Gothic Line, the Rhine crossings and the later fighting inside Germany.

Over 30 first hand veteran testimonies were gathered over the last decade to form the basis of the exhibition narrative. Seven of these individual stories are presented to visitors at the start of the exhibition and tracked through the battles and campaigns, ultimately to the end of the war, where six of the seven survived. The men featured are Bob Foote, Alf Longstaff, David Render, Paul Rollins, Peter Vaux, Jake Wardrop and Jock Watt.

The exhibition brings these accounts together with a range of new graphic panels, films, vehicles and show case displays containing artefacts, personal items and mementoes which have never been on public display before.

The aims of the exhibition are:

- Show the development of the Tank throughout the Second World War.
- Introduce visitors to stories of individuals who fought in the Second World War.
- Introduce visitors to battles and campaigns that the Royal Armoured Corps fought in, including some of the lesser known battles.
- Give visitors an understanding of the Second World War more generally.

Methodology:

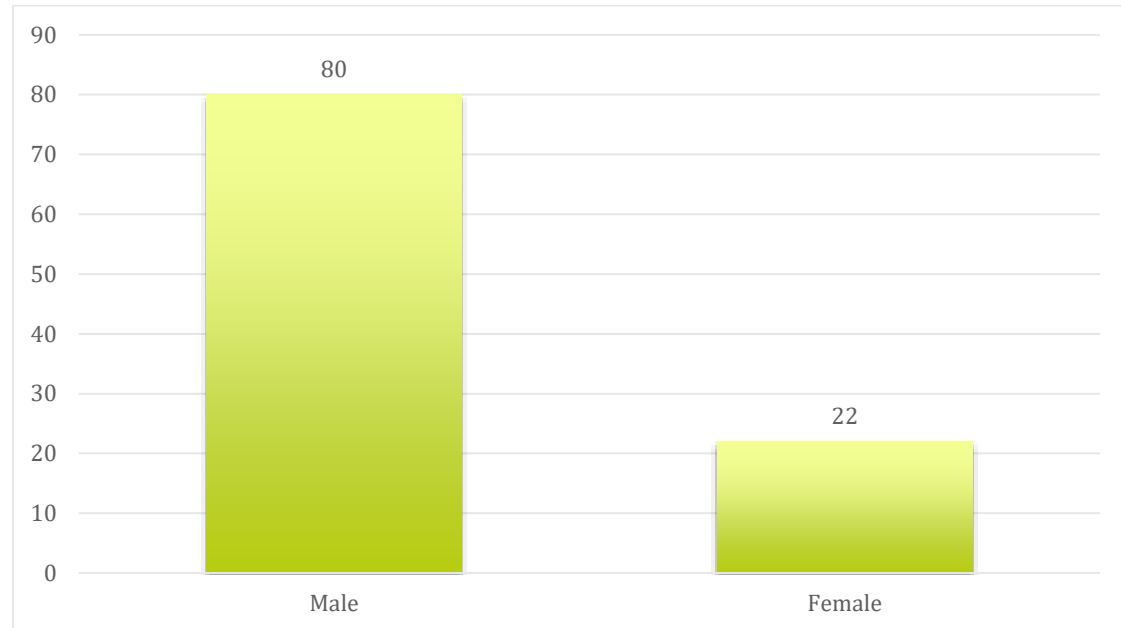
A quantitative consultation took place, asking visitors to complete a questionnaire on the exhibition. This took place in two parts after the completion and subsequent opening of phase 1 and phase 2. The phase 1 questionnaire (see appendix 5) featured 13 questions capturing both visitor data and questions relating to the exhibition. The phase 2 questionnaire took the same approach, but featured 15 questions (see appendix fig. 4). This report focuses on the results of the questionnaire for phase 1 and phase 2 as a complete exhibition.

It must be noted that much of the feedback was collected whilst there was an ongoing global pandemic. Some of the interactives at times were closed to the public, but every effort had been made to keep as much of the exhibition open as possible. Where the figures suggest there was some interruption, this has been noted in the report.

Visitor Data:

102 visitors took part in the phase two survey between April 2021 and October 2021. A majority of these surveys were completed during the Summer holidays and a number of those interviewed were part of a family.

Gender:



Gender	Number
Male	80
Female	22

Around 80% of those interviewed were male. This is in line with our current audience demographic and would explain why a higher proportion of those interviewed were male.

Age:

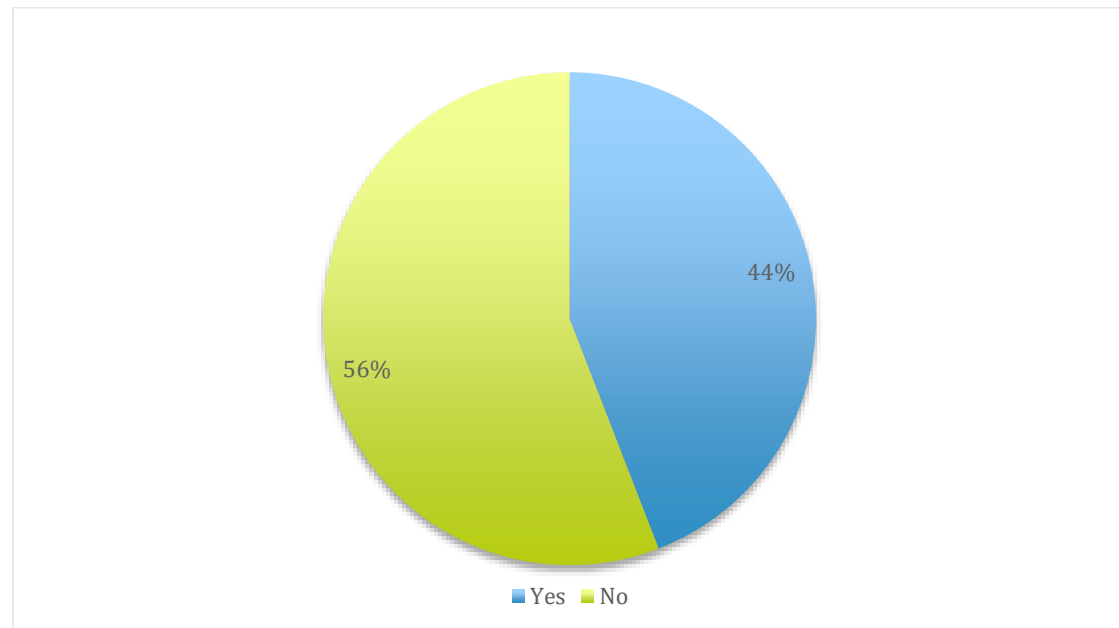
Age	Number
Under 12	2
12 - 18	10
19 - 30	14
31 - 45	26
46 - 60	35
60+	13
N/A	2

This table shows that visitors of all ages were asked to take part in the survey, 2 of the 102 surveyed did not complete this question. As it was during the school holidays we were able to ask a number of younger visitors. A majority of visitors interviewed were aged between 46-60, this is in line with our current audience figure for the whole museum. In order to further fulfil the criteria to interview younger visitors, we asked a group of 5 families to attend the Museum between phase 1 and phase 2. They offered feedback on phase 1 of the exhibition and helped shape future interactives for phase 2. Overall approval rating from the family focus group was very high.

Answers to the Questionnaire

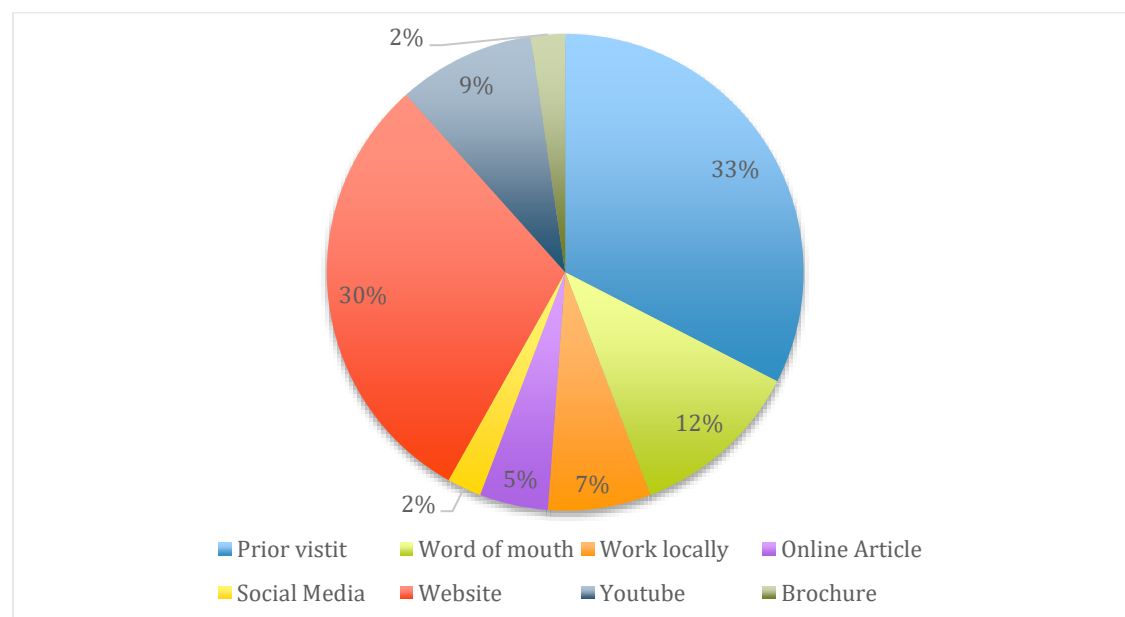
Marketing:

Were you aware of the new WW2: War Stories exhibition before you arrived for your visit?



Of the 102 visitors who took part in the survey, 45 visitors had heard about the exhibition before visiting the museum, which as shown above represents 44%. This is much higher than previous exhibitions. Those who had heard about the exhibition were asked how they found out and this offers some explanation as to why this was higher than previous exhibitions.

How did you find out about the exhibition prior to your visit?

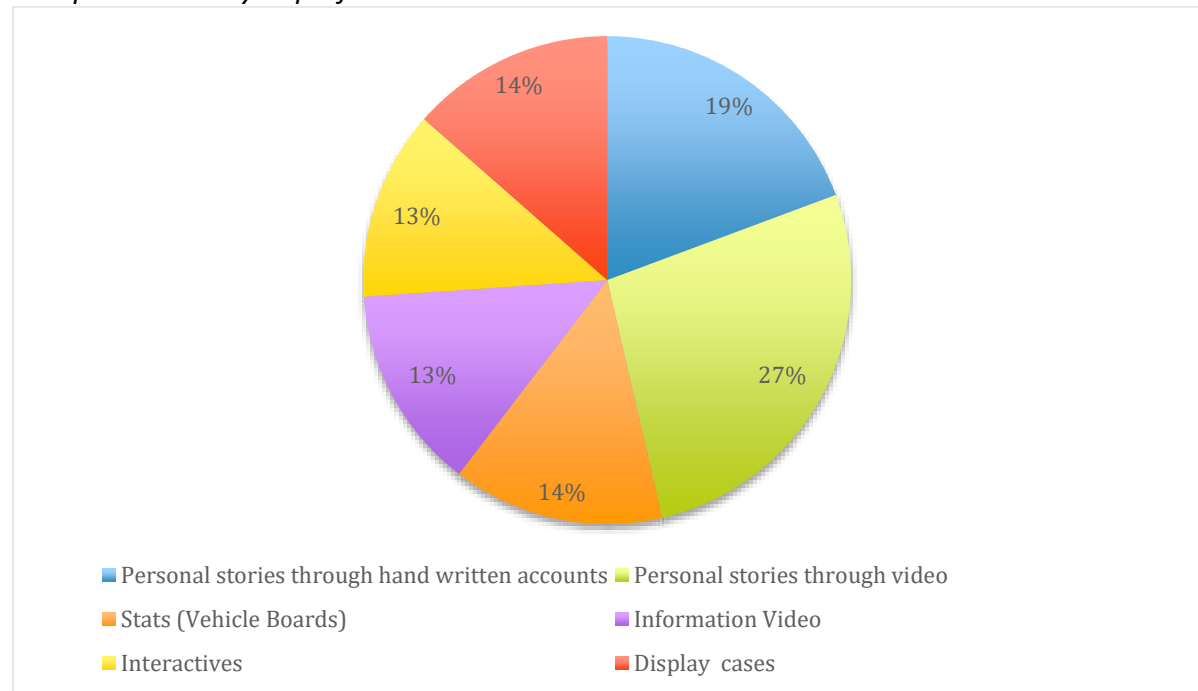


33% of those surveyed who had heard about the exhibition had been to the museum on a previous visit. 30% had heard about the exhibition through the website, which is unsurprising given a majority of those interviewed visited the museum at a time

when they were expected to pre-book via the website as a result of COVID-19 measures. 9% of the visitors had heard about the exhibition through YouTube. This was the first event to be livestreamed through the Museum's and World of Tanks YouTube channels. Traditional printed methods of advertising offer a very small proportion, just 2% of the overall figures.

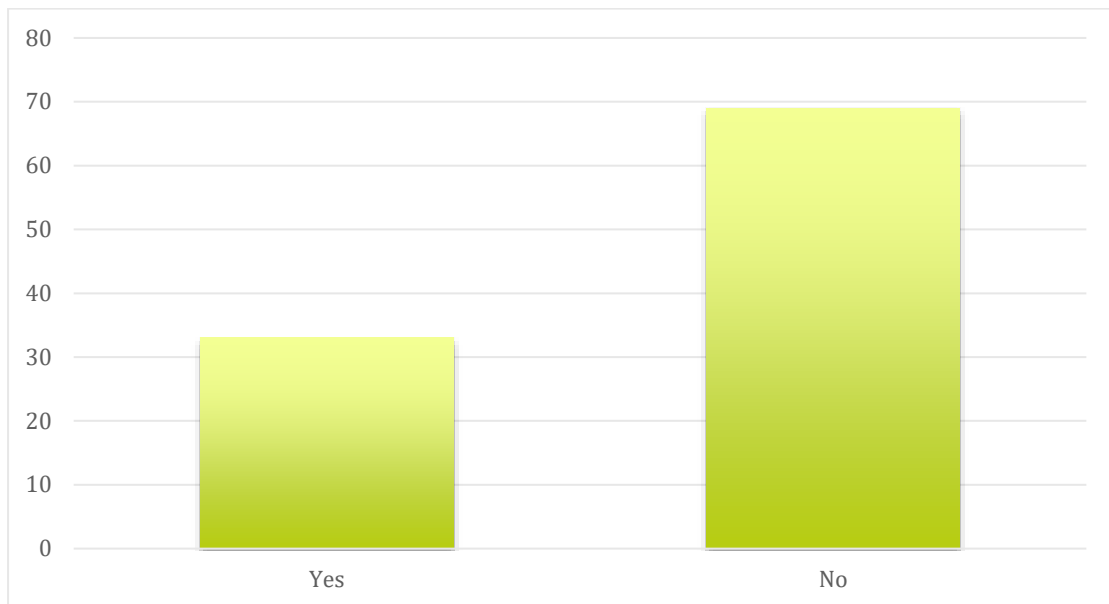
Interpretation and Learning:

The exhibition features many different styles of interpretation. Which type of interpretation do you prefer?



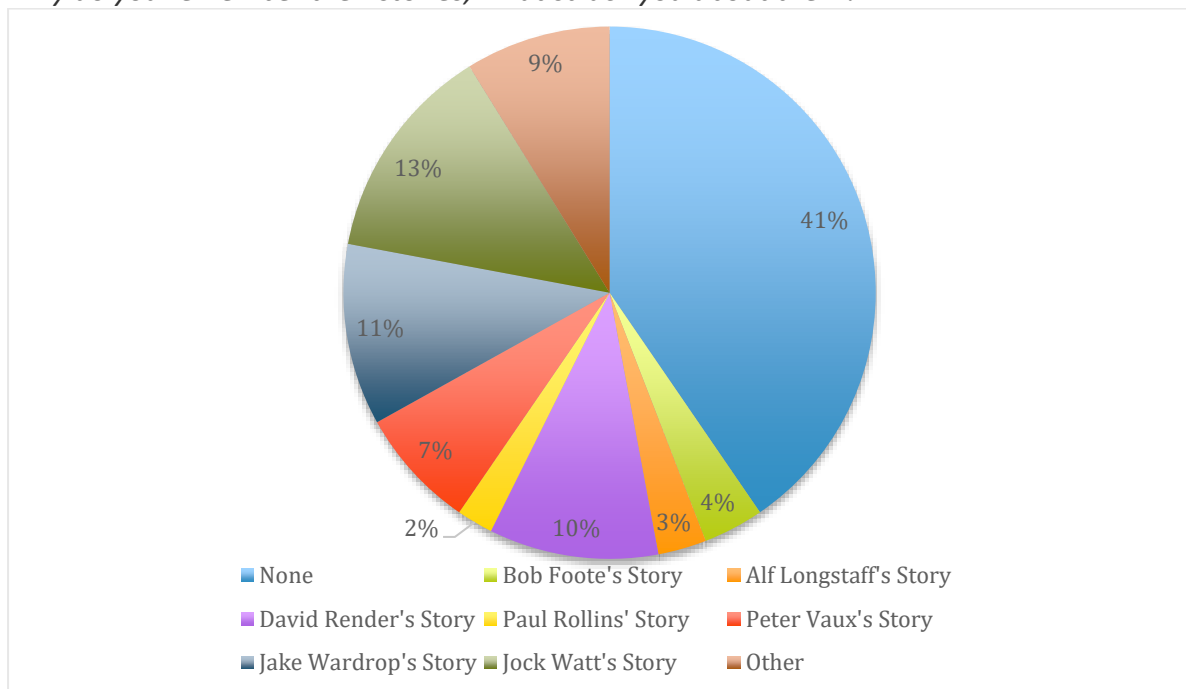
What is clear from the responses is that personal stories are the preference for visitors accounting for 46% of the overall figure. Interactives scored the lowest figure at 13%, this is likely due to the pandemic and that some interactives were closed completely for large parts of the survey time period.

This exhibition focuses on the personal accounts from veterans of the Second World War. We follow the stories of seven men in particular. Can you name any of the seven men?



This evidence suggests, that approximately two thirds of visitors could not name the seven men featured within the exhibition. This figure is roughly in line with the last major exhibition, Tank Men, where once again 60% were unable to name the men individually. It is also unsurprising given that many of the questionnaires were captured over the school holidays and visitors with small children commented that they were unable to take everything in, with individuals' names logically forgotten. However, many of those that couldn't remember the individual's names, could remember the stories they featured in, as can be seen by the next chart.

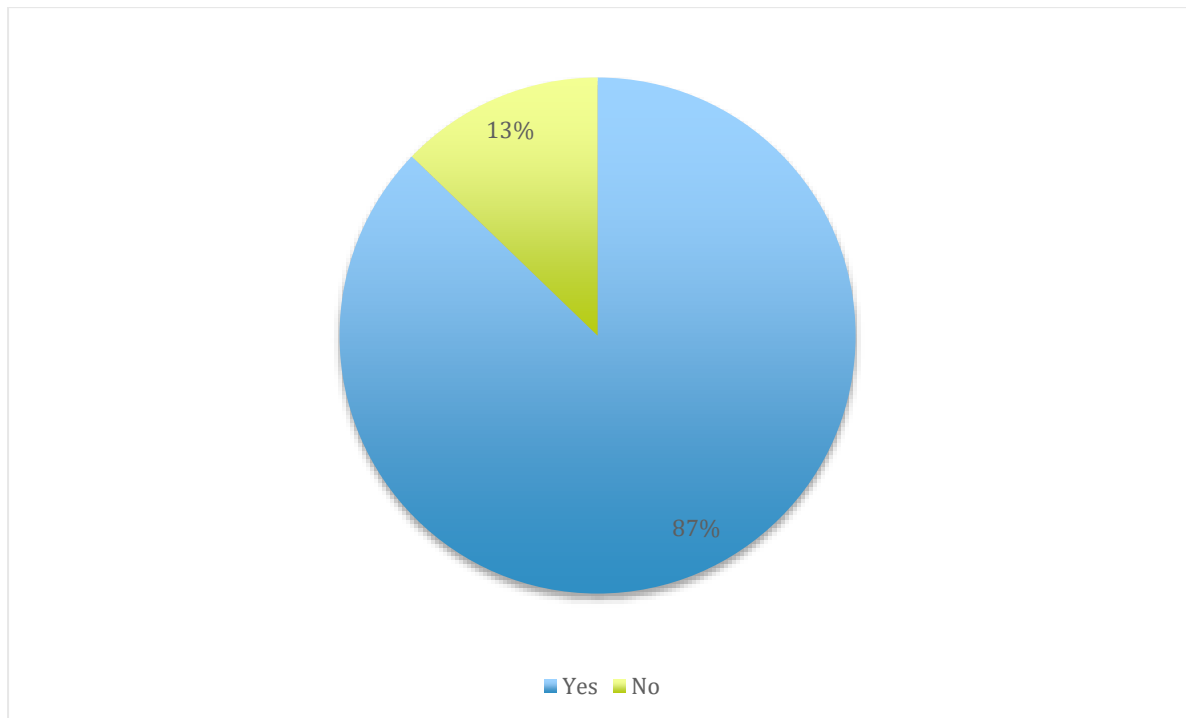
Why do you remember their stories, what struck you about them?



As you can see from the chart above, approximately 25% more individuals remembered the stories of the men, as opposed to their name. Just under 60% of all those surveyed remembered stories from individuals, including several stories from veterans who do not feature in the traditional 'stories to spot'. One of the key aims to engage visitors with the stories of veterans has been achieved for most visitors based on these figures. Jock Watt was the individual most remembered by visitors, given he appears most on the AVs this is unsurprising. Although Jake Wardrop isn't

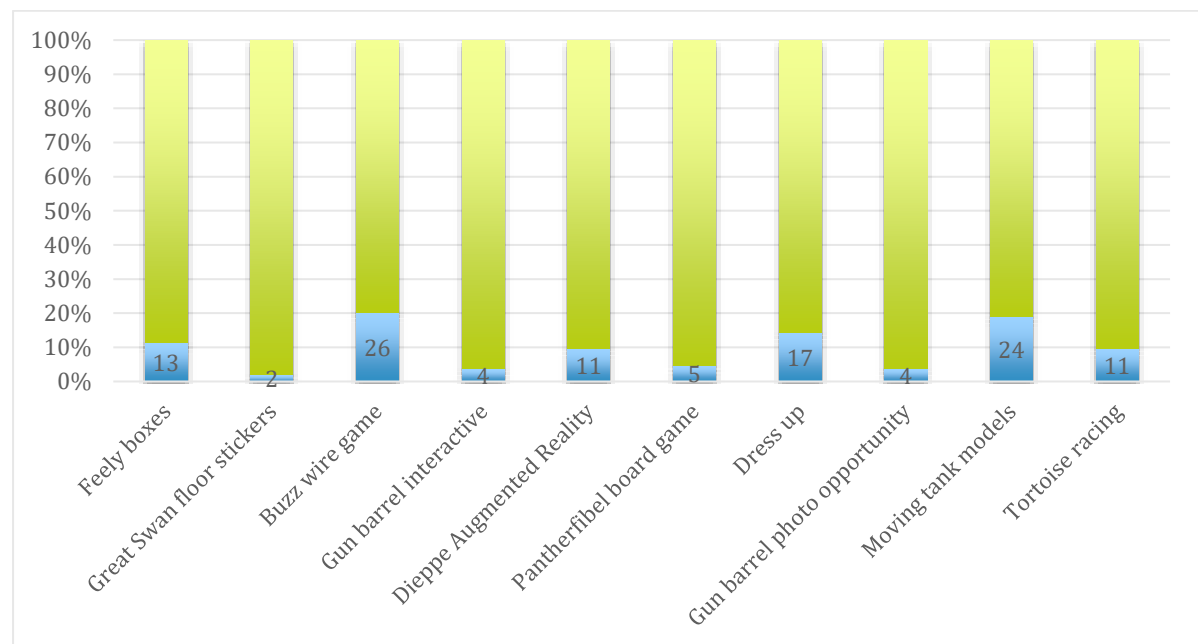
featured on any of the AV, he appears heavily on the graphic panels and the only one of our seven veterans not to survive the War. Visitors generally remember the stories with either comedy such as Jock Watt's tortoise racing or tragedy with David Render's friend Harry's death or Jake Wardrop's death.

Is there anything you have learned through the Exhibition?



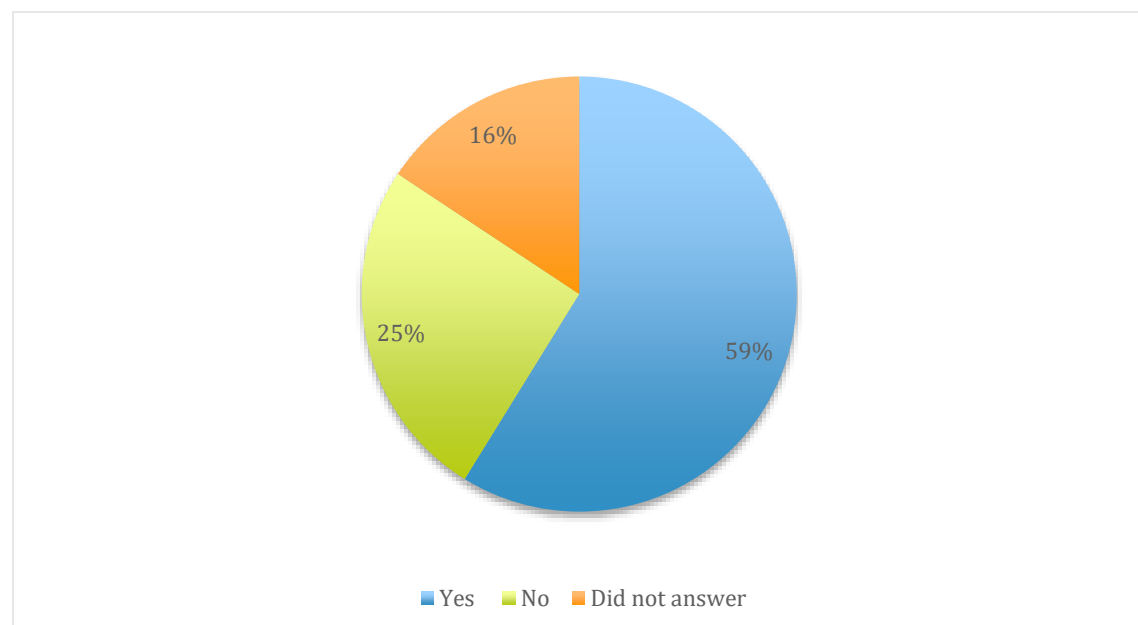
87% of visitors surveyed felt like they had learned something new from the exhibition. Generally what they had learned was subjective, from information about the tanks themselves, the conditions the men faced, or individual battles such as Walcheren, Nonetheless, this suggests that the exhibition has achieved its key aims, particularly introducing visitors to some of the lesser known battles of the Second World War and a much higher percentage than previous exhibitions. Some of the visitors who answered no suggested it was because they had visited the exhibition and Tank Museum before, therefore making use of their yearlong ticket access.

Did you participate in any of the following? (tick all that apply)



Of the 102 visitors who completed the questionnaire, only around quarter participated in any of the interactives within the Museum. Given that a majority of participants were aged between 31-60 and interactives are aimed at engaging the younger audience, this may seem unsurprising, however questionnaires were specifically captured over the summer period when families visited the Museum. Through observation, some of the lower level interactives, not listed, such as the hop scotch part of the home front diorama attract visitors of all generations and are hugely popular. Of the interactives that were used, the buzz wire game was the most popular, closely followed by the moving tank models. The Great Swan floor stickers were least used, indicating that floor based interactives are the least popular.

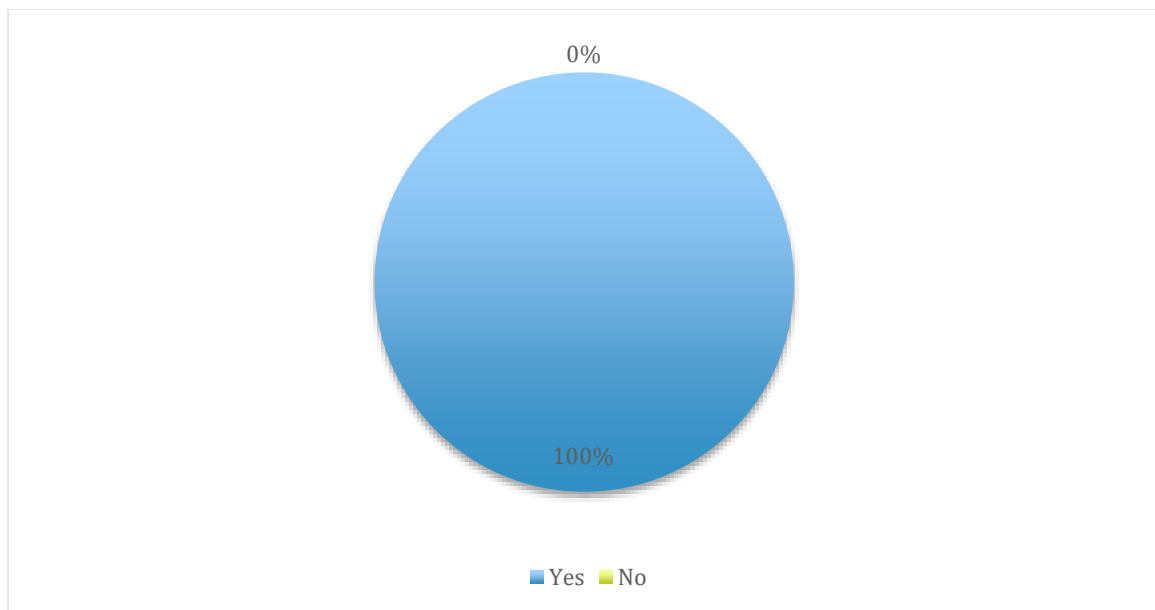
The Dieppe Augmented Reality is something new for the Museum, is this sort of technology something you would like to see more of in the galleries?



Those surveyed were overwhelmingly in favour of having augmented or virtual reality experiences in galleries. At points, this was blocked off due to COVID-19 but

visitors still wish to see more of this in the Museum. Given this was our first in-house venture into this type of technology, it should be considered for future exhibitions.

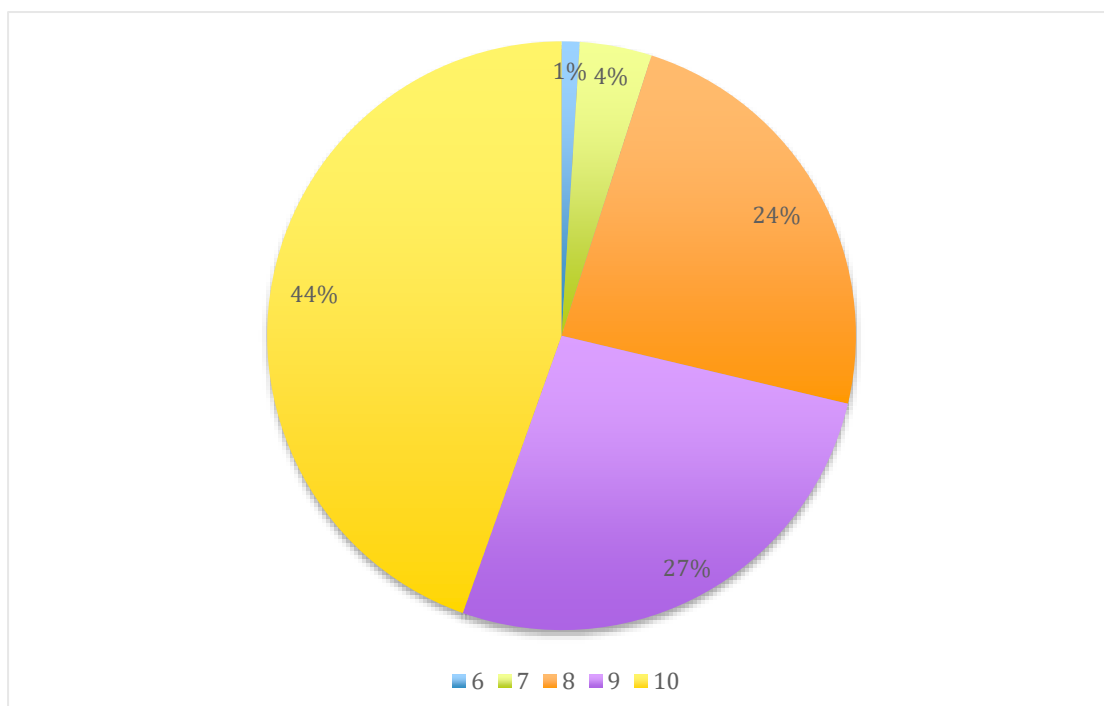
Do you think this exhibition is able to appeal to different age groups? If so, how?



Of those that completed this section of the survey, 100% agreed that the exhibition would appeal to multiple age groups. Most comments highlighted the use of interactives to engage the younger age groups, whilst comparing that to written text for adults. The display cases were also mentioned as a way to engage more with the adult audiences. What is clear, is that the multi-layered approach to interpretation has been hugely successful within this exhibition.

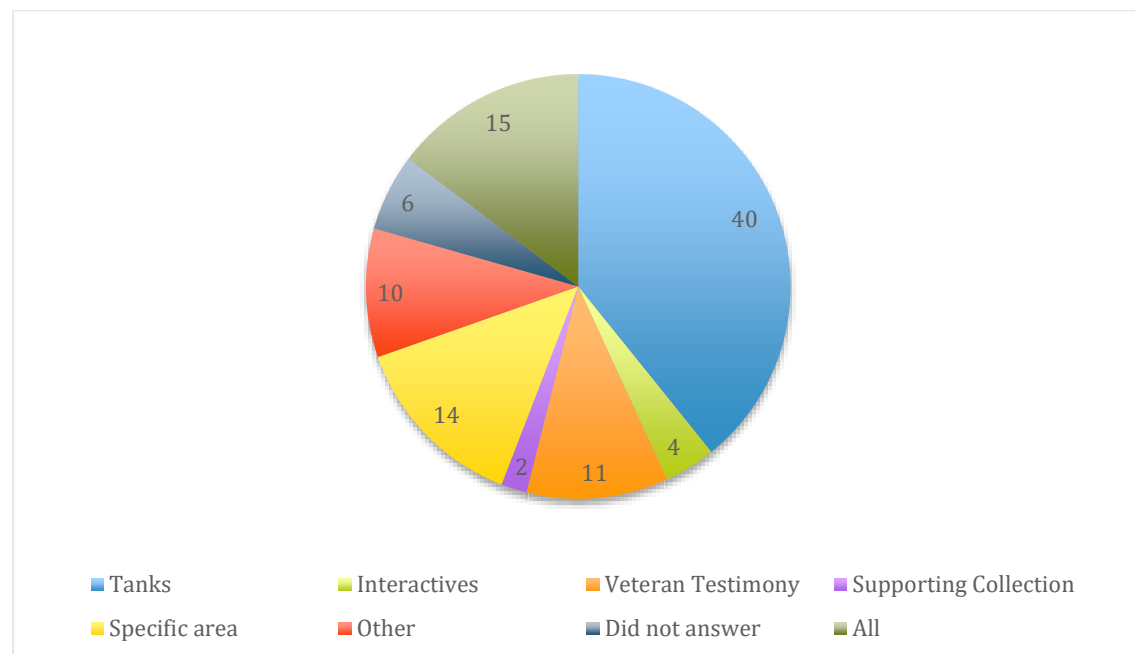
General Exhibition Feedback

On a scale of 1 -10, with 10 being highest, how would you rate the exhibition?



The average score for the exhibition total was 9.099 with 44% of the audience giving it a 10 out of 10 and the lowest score being a 6. This is the second highest approval rating of any exhibition evaluated at the Museum, just short of 9.13 for Tank Men. During this period, some of the exhibition was closed as a result of health and safety measures in place due to COVID-19. This may explain some slightly lower scores in place. Nonetheless this exhibition still has a high approval rating.

What was your favourite part of the Exhibition?



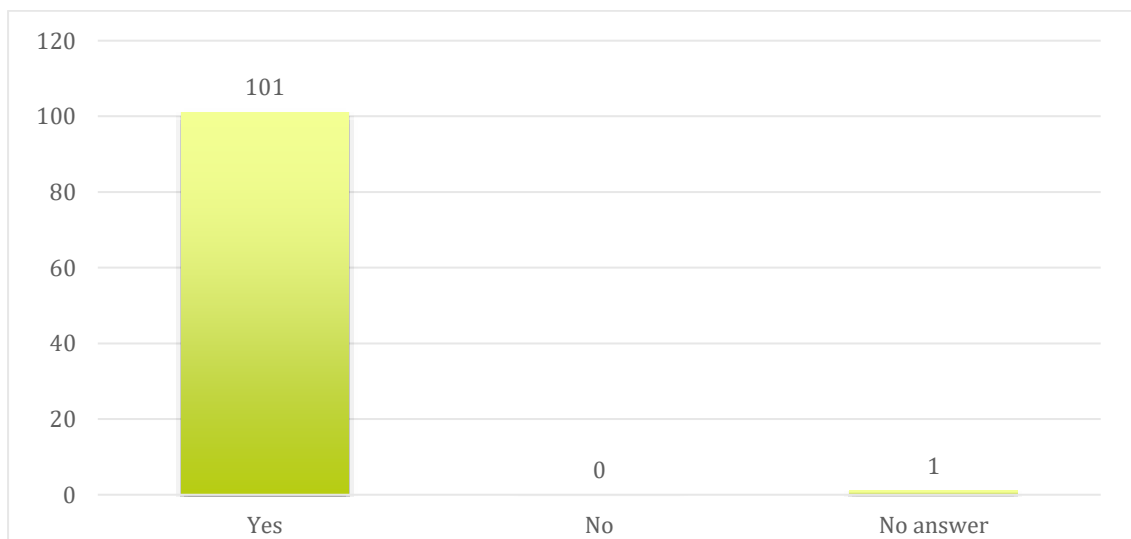
Visitors were asked what was their favourite part of the exhibition. These can be generally be split into six distinct categories, the Tanks, interactives, veteran testimony, supporting collection, other interpretation styles and specific area within the exhibition. Most individuals liked seeing the tanks themselves, specifically within that was the German armour. A number of visitors couldn't differentiate between their favourite part of the exhibition, enjoying it all. 14 visitors selected a certain area within their gallery as their favourite part, a majority of these were the areas in diorama such as Walcheren or Normandy. A large proportion also cited the veteran testimonies as their favourite part of the exhibition. Similar feedback was collected from the Long After the Battle exhibition and Tank Men exhibition. This feedback guided the new Second World War exhibition.

What could be improved?



There were a variety of answers given for improvements to the exhibition. Again generally the responses provided were subjective such as 'more Russian armour' and 'less Western Front'. However, there was some feedback that was repeated and can be seen as an opportunity to improve this exhibition or future exhibitions, such as more directional signage and more opportunity to get on or inside tanks. Many visitors believed there could be no improvement, generally correlating with the visitors that gave the higher scores overall for the exhibition.

Would you recommend the visit to family and friends?



For those that answered this question, 100% would recommend to family and friends. This is in line with the high score and positive feedback for the rest of the exhibition.

Any other comments on the exhibition?

*"Amazing place for young and old.
Loved it."*

"Keep up the good work"

*"Something for everyone, even
Mum!"*

"Liked the cases with the clothing"

"Brilliant"

"Didn't expect it on this scale"

"Keep up good work"

*"Info well put out, big – done well
catering for readers vs. visual"*

*"Stuff with people a good way of
appealing to everyone – not just
the tanks".*

*"Important part of education to
bring children"*

"Bigger than thought, well laid out"

*"Try to come every time down,
always something new"*

*"Fascinating, well laid out, clear.
Very good videos. Maybe more
seats".*

"Overwhelmed at number of tanks"

"Brilliant"

"Very pleased with experience"

"Superb"

"First time, very good"

"Impressive selection"

"Very good"

*"Route through WW2. Good
exhibit"*

"Really good exhibition"

"Whole things great"

*"Fantastic, wife will divorce if I
come again"*

"Brilliant"

*"Son's a tank nut and loved it, dad's
a tank novice and loved it. Blown
away"*

*"Huge improvement on previous
exhibition – more story"*

*"Great selection of UK v German
stuff"*

"Really lovely"

Many visitors neglected to add any other comments with the questionnaire and some visitors took the opportunity to comment on the Museum as a whole. These comments have been compiled in the appendix at the end of the report. (See fig.3 in the appendix). Nonetheless the comments on the exhibition itself are exceptionally positive, with only one comment on something that can be improved, more seating.

Conclusion

Feedback for the Second World War exhibition has been overwhelmingly positive. Given that this was a time when there was a global pandemic, it is particularly surprising as some of the exhibition areas and interactives were closed at times. 100% of visitors would recommend the visit to others, creating a sustainable platform for the future of the Museum.

The aims of the exhibition appear to have been met by the feedback, specifically the introduction of personal stories, as this appeared highly on both the favourite part of the exhibition and the preferred exhibition style. Whilst individuals names could not be remembered, most visitors could recount the stories they were featured in.

Interactives didn't score highly as a preferred form of interpretation, however all participants agreed that there was enough within the exhibition to appeal to all age groups. This is in part due to the demographic interviewed, with a majority being within an older adult. In order to capture additional feedback from families, a family specific focus group was set up. Feedback on the interactives in the new hall was positive.

There are certainly some improvements which can be taken into account as a result of the feedback, specifically wayfinding and more seating, but generally the exhibition has been really well received. The feedback can be used to shape future exhibitions specifically that a majority of people want to see more of the Augmented or Virtual reality experiences within the Museum.

Appendix

Fig. 1: Trip Advisor Comments

Trip Advisor comments can often provide an unbiased view of the exhibition as individuals are able to review in their own time, rather than with the pressure of a staff member asking questions.

Nonetheless, this is a selection of comments from Trip Advisor that specifically mention the new World War Two: War Stories exhibition. As you can see, all comments are largely positive. No negative comments about the exhibition could be found on Trip Advisor.

"The re-arrangement of the main halls was very nicely done, makes more of a display of the machines, as opposed to just a collection."

Reviewed September 2021

"The whole experience was excellent, but especially the WW2 battles which had much more information on the displays than would normally be expected. We spent nearly 6 hours in total at the museum & were totally absorbed."

Reviewed September 2021

"There was a really interesting film being projected showing different veterans talking about WW2 which was also really interesting."

Reviewed August 2021

"But I was also very moved to hear the personal stories of WW2 tank crew - what many endured in the service of their country was awful."

Reviewed August 2021

"So many tanks, I particularly was engrossed with the large and brilliant WW2 section"

Reviewed August 2021

"I particularly enjoy the WW2 display!"

Reviewed July 2021

*"Great day out, could definitely spend a couple of hours there
especially when Tanks in Action days are on, great new section in
World War 2"*

Reviewed June 2021

Fig 2: YouTube live stream event comments

Again, these are generally unbiased opinions on the exhibition. Most comments are positive and those that aren't are generally subjective.

"This exhibition looks phenomenal! I'm proud to be one of your patrons! :-)"

"This has been absolutely wonderful. Glorious to see the veterans and hear their stories and those recounted by family members. This is the best part for me, like you've aimed for, the human element"

"Looks great but a WW2 tank exhibition without the Eastern Front and only the T-34? No Stalingrad, Moscow or Kursk where actual WW2 tank battles happened day in day out for 4 years straight."

"What an inspiring display, we MUST keep these exhibits open to the public so that we can remember what our ancestors fought and died for... FREEDOM."

"TTM takes these cold lumps of rusty old steel, and recreates & preserves such intense human stories of life, loves, and tragedy, with them."

"A great tour indeed and quite moving stories. The set and design ... dare I say it? ... as good ... if not better than IWM Duxford!"

Fig. 3: Any other comments on the exhibition? – More generally about the Museum as a whole.

“Fantastic day out”

“Price really reasonable”

“Love coming here”

“Visited as a family, so unfortunately not much time spent at each attraction”.

“Are lectures starting again in the evening soon? National Army Museum do them on zoom”.

“Good visit”

“Need more on Chobham”

“I appreciate that fact that the displays are updated. An idea for a future display – what does the future hold for the RAC”

“Friendly staff”

Fig. 4 – Questionnaire

World War Two: War Stories
The Royal Armoured Corps, 1939 – 1945
Visitor Feedback Questionnaire

Visitor Data:

1) Age:

☐ Under 12 ☐ 12 – 18 ☐ 19 – 30 ☐ 31 – 45 ☐ 46 – 60 ☐ 60+

2) Gender

☐ Male ☐ Female

Marketing:

3) Were you aware of the new WW2: War Stories exhibition before you arrived for your visit?

☐ Yes ☐ No

4) If so, how did you find out about it?

Interpretation:

5) The exhibition features many different styles of interpretation. Which type of interpretation do you prefer?

☐ Personal stories through first-hand written accounts ☐ Information video

☐ Personal stories through video ☐ Interactives

☐ Statistics and figures ☐ Display cases

6) The Exhibition focuses on the personal accounts from veterans of the Second World War. We follow the stories of seven men in particular.

a. Can you name any of the seven men?

b. Why do you remember them, what struck you about their story?

7) Is there anything else you have learned through the exhibition?

8) Did you participate in any of the following? (tick all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feely boxes | <input type="checkbox"/> Great Swan Floor Sticker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Buzz wire game | <input type="checkbox"/> Gun Barrel Interactive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dieppe Augmented Reality experience | <input type="checkbox"/> Pantherfibel Board Game |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dress up | <input type="checkbox"/> Gun Barrel Photo Opportunity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moving tank models | |

9) The Dieppe Augmented Reality is something new for the Museum, is this sort of technology something you'd like to see more of in the galleries?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

10) Do you think the exhibition is able to appeal to different age groups? If so, how?

General:

11) On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the highest, how would you rate the exhibition?

- 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐

12) What was your favourite part of the new exhibition?

13) Is there anything that can be improved?

14) Would you recommend the visit to family and friends?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

15) Any other comments on the exhibition?

Fig. 5 – Phase 1 only Questionnaire

World War Two: War Stories
The Royal Armoured Corps, 1939 – 1945
Visitor Feedback Questionnaire

Visitor Data:

1) Age:

Under 12 12 – 18 19 – 30 31 – 45 46 – 60 60+

2) Gender

☐ Male ☐ Female

Marketing:

3) Were you aware of the new WW2: War Stories exhibition before you arrived for your visit?

☐ Yes ☐ No

4) If so, how did you find out about it?

Interpretation:

5) The exhibition features many different styles of interpretation. Which type of interpretation do you prefer?

☐ Personal stories through quotations

☐ Personal stories through video

☐ Statistics and figures

☐ Information video

☐ Interactives

☐ Display cases

6) Did you participate in any of the following? (tick all that apply)

☐ Feely boxes

☐ Buzz wire game

☐ Dieppe Augmented Reality experience

☐ Dress up

☐ Moving tank models

7) Was there anything you have learned from the Exhibition?

8) Do you think the exhibition is able to appeal to different age groups? If so, how?

General:

9) On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the highest, how would you rate the exhibition?

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10

10) What was your favourite part of the new exhibition?

11) Is there anything that can be improved?

12) Would you recommend the visit to family and friends?

☐ Yes ☐ No

13) Any other comments?
