A colourful VE Day street party took place in the historic heart of the Imperial War Museum (IWM) at Duxford, Cambridgeshire (CB22 4QR) in the east of England over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend of 23 / 24 May. Patriotic bunting fluttered in the breeze as visitors, many in 1940’s dress, enjoyed the live entertainment on the Second World War stage, which was accompanied by colour film footage from VE Day, 8 May 1944.

Vocalists Pete Wayre and Nina Rae mingled with the audience and encouraged visitors to sing along with their renditions of classic wartime songs. ‘George Formby’ performed his greatest wartime hits.

Living history groups added to the Second World War atmosphere with displays showing wartime weddings, the Home Guard, the Women’s Auxiliary Air Force, the United States Army Air Forces, and wartime rationing, complete with a wartime kitchen.

Ranger re-enactments represented a United States Army Air Force bomber crew with a display around B-17 Flying Fortress Sally B.

Families learnt about equipment used by the Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force in Second World War operations and children tried on mini-RAF uniforms.

The VE Day Anniversary Air Show flying display which ran over two days told the story of the how the war was won in the air and was accompanied by music, wartime speeches and recordings of veterans’ memories.

The flying display started in rip-roaring style with the Eurofighter Typhoon FGR4 from 29(R) Squadron at RAF Coningsby.

Highlights included a display by First World War aircraft – a Bristol F2B Fighter (operated by The Shuttleworth Collection), a Nieuport 17 replica (operated by Rob Gauld-Galliers) and a Royal Aircraft Factory BE2e (operated by WW1 Aviation Heritage Trust).

Flight of the inter-war years was represented by the Spartan Executive 7W duo (operated by Nigel Pickard), the Travel Air Type R Mystery Ship (operated by Richard Seeley, the Gloster Gladiator (operated by The Shuttleworth Collection) and the Hawker Fury Mark I (operated by the Historic Aircraft
Collection) which flew for the first time in an air show display following a lengthy restoration.

Also performing its first air show display, after a twelve year restoration, was the Bristol Blenheim Mark I (operated by the Aircraft Restoration Company) which was accompanied by two Mark I Spitfires for a poignant display in commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain.

Celebrating peace and remembering sacrifice was commemorated by contemporary aircraft displays including spirited aerobatics from the Sbach Red Bull Duo and the RV8tors.

The flying display (illustrated here and reproduced by kind permission of the Imperial War Museum ©) culminated in a VE Day salute led by B-17 Flying Fortress Sally B, which also celebrates its 70th anniversary this year. Silence fell over the crowd as Sally B majestically flew by, accompanied by three P-51 Mustangs (operated by the Old Flying Machine Company, The Fighter Collection and Norwegian Spitfire Foundation) and a Curtiss P-40 Warhawk (operated by The Fighter Collection). She was followed by a Douglas C-47A Skytrain (operated by Aces High), Consolidated PBY-5A Catalina (operated by Plane Sailing) and Beechcraft Beech 18 (operated by Phil and Allie Dinnington).

IWM Duxford is a charity and is home to the American Air Museum currently closed for a year for a redevelopment and to reopen in the Spring of 2016. Currently some of its aircraft can be seen in new locations across IWM Duxford.

Forthcoming events include: Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 July – Flying Legends Air Show and Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 September – The Battle of Britain Anniversary Air Show.

**Photo captions**

**DUXFORD 1**

*As part of the 70th anniversary of Victory in Europe commemoration at Duxford, Cambridgeshire on 23 May the Bristol Blenheim Mark I flies with two Mark I Supermarine Spitfires.*

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DUXFORD 2

Over Duxford on 23 May the B-17 Flying Fortress Sally B accompanied by two P-51D Mustangs, a TF-51D Mustang and a Curtiss P-40F Warhawk.

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