

# **ACCESS STATEMENT**

## **MALTA AT WAR MUSEUM**

### **Introduction:**

The Malta at War Museum is located at the original historic entrance of Vittoriosa (Birgu), the eldest of the Three Cities. The museum houses an attractive exhibition of over 10,000 original artefacts located in nine galleries. The Exhibits document in chronological order the events for a period from just preceding the Second World War up until Malta gained its independence and highlights the ordeal which the people of Malta and their defenders endured during the dark days of the Blitz (1940-43). In addition visitors can tour at no additional cost the Birgu underground air raid shelter in which hundreds took refuge during the bombing raids.

Vittoriosa (Birgu) was the former home of the Royal Navy in Malta and one of the most bombed places in WW2.

The Museum has recently undergone a complete refurbishment that was co-funded by the European Union's European Regional Development Fund, the Government of Malta and Fondazzjoni Wirt Artna.

Due to the layout and location of the Birgu Underground Shelters it is not possible to provide Wheelchair Access to this area – With a flight of 24 steep steps to reach the first level although there is a handrail provided, there are additional stairs to negotiate to reach other areas. It may also be a difficult area for those visitors with limited mobility because of stairs and narrow passages (some of which are as narrow as 80cm). Visitors that suffer from a fear of narrow or enclosed spaces may also find the shelter area difficult.

Catering facilities are currently not available at the site, but there are plans to open an on-site Cafe during 2015 which will cater for visitors and provide Hot and Cold drinks and a range of Hot and Cold cooked food and light snacks. Visitors are requested to check on the Museum's Web Site for the date when this facility will be available.

The Malta at War Museum is open from Monday to Sunday between 10.00 till 17.00hrs.

There is a small retail display area within the front reception area which sells a variety of souvenirs, books and items with a focus on military history and its impact on Malta.

Staff Members are on hand should visitors require any assistance.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Malta at War Museum. If you have any queries or require any assistance please phone 21896617 or email [info@wirtartna.org](mailto:info@wirtartna.org).

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### Pre-arrival:

Prices are:

- €10 Adult
- €8 Senior/Student
- €5 Children Under 16 Years

A Heritage Pass for all four FWA attractions (Valid for one month) can be purchased

- €25 Adult
- €22 Senior/Student
- €12 Child Under 16 years
- €55 Family (2 Adults plus 3 Children Under 16 Years).

Current Prices can be checked from the following sources:

- Via the website <http://www.maltaatwarmuseum.com>
- In the brochure (which can be downloaded from the website)
- From the Reception Area situated at the entrance to the Museum.

For further details on how to reach us please refer to the map in the visitor information section of the website. This information is also contained in the site brochure.

Should you require refrigeration of Medication please speak to a member of the staff who will try and assist wherever possible.

The premises do not provide, or have any wheelchairs or mobility scooters to rent and visitors are requested to make their own arrangements in respect to these facilities.

Guide and assistance dogs will be allowed to accompany their owner and water can be provided on request. Otherwise, no pets are allowed inside the facility

Smoking is not permitted anywhere inside the Museum, the underground shelters and the public toilet. However, smoking is permitted in the courtyard area outside the Museum where bench seats are provided. Visitors should be aware that areas of the Museum and Shelters are monitored by CCTV cameras.

### Transport:

**By car:** - The Malta at War Museum is located on the eastern side of the Grand Harbour at Vittoriosa at the Couvre Porte Gate, the original walled entrance into the city. It can be reached via all major roads to Cottonera (Three Cities) onto Vittoriosa (a.k.a. Birgu) following directional signs.

### By Bus

The Malta at War Museum is well served by buses number 2 & 3 from the Valletta main bus terminus. There is a bus stop just outside Couvre Porte Gate, Vittoriosa and visitors to the Museum should alight there. Buses run every half hour from Mon to Sat and every hour on Sundays.

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**Taxi Service:** - Kalkara Garage      Mobile: 99898993

Tel:      21807719

### **Car Parking and Arrival:**

Although the site has no dedicated car park, there are 10 unrestricted parking spaces and one disabled parking space located in a lay by close to the museum entrance. There are also public spaces with 150 minutes limited parking available in Triq San Lawrenz. Therefore visitors arriving by car should have no difficulty in parking close to the attraction.

### **Main Entrance and Ticketing Kiosk:**

The main entrance can be reached from the Bus Stop or Roadside Parking via recently newly paved and level walkways which also incorporate dropped kerbs enabling wheelchair ramps. The entrance to the Museum can be found off to the right shortly after passing through the Couvre Porte Gate and before you reach the open courtyard area.

The entrance has a main double door with a width of 1.2Metres and a second inner glass door with a width of 940mm. There are two steps up the gallery floors immediately after the glass entrance door with rises of 14cm and 9 cm respectively. The step edges are highlighted with Yellow and Black Hazard Tape, Consequently this entrance is not suitable for wheelchair access.

### **Wheelchair Access:**

Wheelchair access is provided through a separate double door off the main Courtyard with a width of 1.57 Metres which leads directly into the main museum area. Disabled visitors or their carer's are requested to contact Patricia Urdu of the Museum staff prior to or on arrival so that wheelchair or limited mobility access can be achieved using this entrance.

Wheelchair users should note that some passages within and between the Museum Galleries are only 92cm wide.

### **Ticket Desk:**

The ticket desk located in the main entrance reception area issues all entrance Tickets which can be bought either by cash or card transaction. There is a concession for visitors of 60 years and Students.

The reception desk is 96cm high and there is no lowered level counter area to accommodate wheelchair users. However, staff members manning the desk will be able to assist wheelchair users. The reception area also has a limited range of Books, Gifts and Souvenirs.

Audio Guides with commentary in Arabic, English, Dutch, German, Maltese, Spanish, Russian, French, Danish, Chinese, Japanese and Italian are provided free of charge to visitors from the reception desk but visitors should note that they will be asked to leave some form of identity document to serve as a deposit against the return of the audio guide equipment.

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### **Museum Galleries:**

The museum consists of 9 Galleries linked by passages with wall mounted “Story Board” touch screen information stands and several TV screens displaying various newsreel footage of Events that occurred Prior to, During and after WW2.

The majority of exhibits are either displayed in glass cabinets with labelling, mounted on walls or are free standing within specific display areas. Wheelchairs users should be able to see the majority of exhibits whilst seated, although some labelling and exhibits may be above seated sight level.

### **Cinema Area:**

There is a 16 Seat Cinema area where visitors can view the film of an original wartime documentary – “Malta G.C.” made in 1942 which illustrates many facets of Maltese life during the war and provides visitors with a glimpse of the rigours of war the Maltese People and defenders of the Island suffered and the background behind King George the Sixth awarding the people of the Island the George Cross.

The cinema entrances are 92cm wide and there is an area in front of the seating that can accommodate wheelchairs.

### **Toilets:**

The public toilet is located outside of the Main Museum off of the outside courtyard. Entry is via a 90cm wide door with a token locking system – the tokens can be obtained from staff at the Museum reception desk. The toilet facilities consist of one single toilet cubicle which accommodates Male, Female and Disabled requirements. Care should be taken during wet weather as the floor in this area may be slippery on occasions.

### **Catering:**

None available at present

### **Gift Shop:**

As described in the introduction of this document there is a small retail display area contained within the front reception area selling a variety of souvenirs, books and items with a focus on military history and its impact on Malta. The display shelving is in the immediate area of the reception desk and glass entry doors and may become blocked during busy periods. The shelving is at different heights and Wheelchair users may require assistance from the museum staff to access some items. Future plans include the relocation of the Gift Shop in order to improve access to the Museum Entrance and allow visitors to move more easily and browse the range of Souvenirs and gift items.

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#### **Birgu Underground Shelters:**

Access to this underground area involves two flights of steep steps one of 19 steps with another short flight of 4 steps to reach the initial floor level. Although there is a handrail care should be exercised as these steps are steep and uneven. Unfortunately, wheelchair access in these areas is not possible and even limited mobility visitors may find the steps and narrow passages difficult to negotiate, with a width of less than 80cm in some areas. There are also additional flights of stairs that must be negotiated to visit other levels and areas within the Shelter complex.

Visitors are asked to wear a hygienic hairnet and don a Hard Hat during their visit to the shelters to prevent head injuries due to the rock and low headroom in some areas of the tunnels.

The lighting in the underground chambers and galleries is of a low level and can pose difficulties to visitors with sight problems.

#### **Additional Information:**

##### **Future Plans:**

A number of new projects are planned for the future but timescales are difficult to predict as these will depend on the necessary funding being available they include:

- Opening the Coffee Shop and catering area.
- Re-siting the Gift and Souvenir Shop

##### **Opening Times:**

Malta at War Museum is open Mon - Sun from 10.00 till 17.00hrs.

##### **Closed:**

New Year's Eve, New Years Day, Good Friday, Easter Day, Santa Marija 15 August, Christmas Eve and Christmas.Day.