

## THE ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM'S POLICY FOR ENTRY OF ARTEFACTS TO THE MUSEUM

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### INTRODUCTION

1. This document sets out the Royal Air Force Museum's overall policy concerning the entry to the Museum of artefacts of all kinds. It describes the circumstances when entry will be permitted and when it will not, and sets out how different categories of entry will be treated. Authority requirements and arrangements, special conditions applying and insurance/indemnity responsibilities are specified. The final section describes the policy on documenting entry transactions. All artefacts will be subject to full entry documentation as described at paragraph 18.

### CIRCUMSTANCES WHEN ARTEFACTS WILL/WILL NOT BE PERMITTED ENTRY

2. An artefact will be accepted into the Museum if:-
- a) it is returned from loan;
  - b) it has been acquired by gift, loan or purchase;
  - c) it is on approval for gift, exchange or purchase;
  - d) a depositor requires an artefact to be examined and identified and has made prior arrangements with a curator of the relevant sub-collection;
  - e) it is to be held for copying, exhibition or study;
  - f) it is a Royal Air Force Museum artefact being returned from contractors; it has been sent anonymously and is to be held pending action under the acquisition and disposals policy.
3. An artefact will *not* be accepted if:-
- a) it is evidently in a hazardous condition. For example, it contains explosives;
  - b) the depositor simply requires a valuation of the artefact;
  - c) it is brought to the Museum for identification without prior arrangement.
4. An artefact *may* be accepted subject to special handling procedures if:-
- a) it contains asbestos;
  - b) it contains a radioactive source (eg luminous paint).
5. Any incoming artefact showing signs of insect infestation, dampness or mould will be isolated from other collection items wherever possible (see paragraph 5 Entry Procedure (RAFM/DCM/2/6/4/2)).

## TREATMENT OF ARTEFACTS ON ENTERING THE MUSEUM

6. Artefacts accepted for entry will fall into one of four categories. These four, and the treatments appropriate to each, are as follows:

### Temporary Deposits

7. The following paragraphs define circumstances when deposits will be regarded as *temporary*:

- a) Artefacts deposited for copying (for example log books or photographs). *The maximum deposit period is two months;*
- b) Artefacts deposited for research, *where the deposit period is not expected to exceed two months;*
- c) Books borrowed through the Inter-Library loan scheme;
- d) Artefacts deposited for approval of gift or purchase;
- e) Artefacts deposited for identification and report to the depositor.

Any artefact considered to have a value in excess of £1000 will only be accepted as a temporary deposit providing the prior approval of the Director - Collections Division, on the behalf of the Director General, has been obtained.

### Loans-In

8. For artefacts deposited with the Museum on loan, which are not covered by the temporary deposit category, refer to the Loans In policy (RAFM/DCM/2/6/7/1).

### Acquisitions

9. For artefacts deposited with a view to the Museum acquiring them, which are not covered by the definitions above, refer to the Acquisition and Disposal policy (RAFM/DCM/2/6/3/1).

### Artefacts Being Returned from Contractors

10. For artefacts processed by contractors, refer to the appropriate entry procedure.

## AUTHORISATION FOR ENTRY

11. The Entry form must be completed and signed by (in order of preference):

- a) a member of the relevant curatorial department, authorised by the Keeper concerned;
- b) a member of another curatorial department authorised by his/her Keeper;
- c) the Museum Registrar;

- d) the Museum Duty Officer.
12. If none of those listed in Section 11 is available, entry must not be permitted.
13. Firearms and/or ammunition will be permitted entry only if approval for a specific artefact (or artefacts) has been given by the Keeper concerned.

### **RETURN OF DEPOSITS**

14. Where an artefact entered the Museum at the Museum's instigation, for whatever reason, the responsibility and cost of return will be borne by the Museum.
15. Where the artefact entered the Museum other than at the Museum's instigation it will be considered to be unsolicited. Unsolicited artefacts will only be accepted provided the Depositor agrees to bear the cost of return in the event that any artefact is not required by the Museum.
16. Unsolicited deposits should be collected within a specified time period according to the reason for the deposit, as described below:
- a) An unsolicited deposit brought in for *identification* should be collected by the Depositor within six weeks of the entry date;
  - b) If the Museum declines to acquire an unsolicited deposit offered for *acquisition* it will notify the Depositor, by recorded delivery, within six weeks of the entry date. This notification shall stipulate that the Depositor then has six weeks from the date of the notification to collect the artefact/s.

In both cases, in the event of artefact/s not being collected by the specified date, the Museum reserves the right to either pass the artefacts to a suitable museum, along with all related documentation or, where appropriate, to destroy them.

17. Un-accessioned anonymous donations will be submitted to the Director for permission to dispose after six weeks has elapsed from arrival into the Museum. Disposal method will be in accordance with paragraphs 37 to 41 of the Acquisitions and Disposals Policy (RAFM/DCM/2/6/3/1).

### **INSURANCE/INDEMNITY**

18. The Museum is currently unable to carry responsibility for indemnity for temporary deposits, as defined at paragraph 7. The Depositor is responsible for any insurance and this will be made clear to the Depositor, in writing, at the time of deposit. For insurance/indemnity of loans-in see Loans-In policy. (RAFM/DCM/2/6/7/1).

*NB This section is to be revised once the policy on Indemnity is developed.*

### **DOCUMENTATION**

19. Except for certain exclusions agreed in advance through the Museum Registrar, the Museum will maintain an entry record, on a prescribed entry form, of

every artefact entering any of the Museum's premises under this policy, for whatever length of time and for whatever purpose (*including* loans-in and the return of loans-out). The entry documentation must be completed and authorised as set out above under Authorisation For Entry.

20. Full details of the Deposit will be recorded including:

- a) name/address/contact of the Depositor ;
- b) the date of the deposit;
- c) which member of Museum staff completed the form;
- d) the quantity and description of the artefacts concerned;
- e) the condition of the item/s
- f) the purpose of the deposit (copying, studying, etc);
- g) valuation (if known);
- h) a declaration of ownership by the Depositor;
- i) the Depositor's signature signifying their agreement to the Museum's conditions of acceptance.

21. Except for certain exclusions agreed in advance through the Museum Registrar, all persons depositing artefacts with the Museum will be issued with a receipt setting out terms and conditions, in the form of a copy of the completed entry documentation.

22. Except for certain exclusions agreed in advance through the Museum Registrar, when artefacts are sent by post the Depositor will be sent an entry form to be signed and returned, thus acknowledging the Museum's conditions of receipt/acceptance. If the signed entry form is not returned within 8 weeks the Museum will return the artefact/s to the Depositor. If the Depositor has not provided an address and it is not possible to return the artefact/s by any other means the Museum will seek to establish whether it is legally able to acquire or dispose of the artefact/s. All such cases will be referred to the Acquisitions and Disposals Committee for a decision.

23. When artefacts arrive anonymously an entry form will be completed by the curator of the relevant sub-collection including as many details as possible and noting that it is an anonymous deposit.

24. Entry forms will be numbered uniquely, in the manner set out in the entry procedure.

25. A permanent record will be kept of all artefacts entering the Museum, in bound volumes of the original entry form. These will be kept in the files of the curatorial department(s) concerned.

26. Copies of any correspondence concerning entry of an artefact will be filed with the relevant entry documentation *and* on departmental correspondence files.

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