"The Longest Journey (1940–1945)" tells the story of the Royal Family’s dramatic flight from Norway, their long years in involuntary exile and the jubilant welcome they received upon returning home five years later. In addition to focusing on the Royal Family’s geographic journey, the exhibition also follows King Haakon VII’s personal journey. Prior to World War II he was the only democratically elected monarch in Europe; after the war he returned as the symbol of a free Norway and the much beloved king of a united Norwegian people.

The exhibition incorporates historical objects, photographs and films. The gripping story of the journey is told in five main texts, corresponding to the five sections of the exhibition.
The following day the King meets with Hitler's representative in Norway, Curt Braüer, at Elverum. Braüer demands that the King dissolves the Government and appoints a new government headed by Vidkun Quisling. The King refuses to take the decision, stating that he cannot give a definitive reply before consulting with the Government on the matter. It is not he himself, but the Government that must decide. However, the King makes his views on a German occupation government abundantly clear:

"For my part I cannot accept the German demands. It would conflict with all that I have considered to be my duty as King of Norway, since I came to this country nearly 35 years ago." If the Government were to decide to comply with Germany's ultimatum, he says, "then I have no other choice but to abdicate." Crown Prince Olav supports his father; thus, King Haakon's threat of abdication applies to the entire Royal House of Norway. The Council of State unanimously endorses the King's decision, which later becomes known as "the King's refusal".

Elverum is in flames: the German forces are bombing the town in retaliation for the unequivocal refusal of the King and the Government. The King and Crown Prince are staying in the village of Nybergssund, but here, too, they encounter the wrath of the Germans. Bomb after bomb comes raining down, but miraculously everyone escapes to safety. With the German troops at their heels, the retinue continues its flight, making its way through Gudbrandsdalen Valley to the town of Molde, and finally by boat to Tromsø, where the King and Crown Prince settle at Trangen, some 80 kilometres from the city. The fight for a free and independent Norway will be fought in the northernmost counties, with Trangen as the Royal Seat and Tromsø as the provisional capital.

The Allied forces fight on Norway's side, but at the beginning of June the troops are evacuated from Norwegian soil. Soldiers and resources are needed for the escalating war on the continent. The King is bereft. The British encourage him to leave with them. Others advise him to stay. The King himself is worried about what the Norwegians will think of him if he flees from his people. It is proposed that the Crown Prince, who has a military background, remains in Norway to continue the fight. But the idea is contested: What if the Crown Prince falls into the hands of the Germans? Will he be forced to reign as a puppet monarch? And what would happen if the ageing king were to die abroad?

"It has been terribly difficult, but I hope it turns out to be the right decision," writes the King in his journal on 7 June, the day of departure. Under strong pressure from the Allied
forces, the King, the Crown Prince and the Government leave Norway on the warship Devonshire. The resistance effort must and shall go on. The King and Crown Prince can do more from outside Norway’s borders, where they are free. Several days later the Norwegian military capitulates. The Germans have won; Norway has lost. But the King and the Government of Norway have maintained their freedom.

The situation for Crown Princess Märtha in Sweden is one of uncertainty. She and her three children have been safe there after having left Norway at the beginning of April. For many weeks they do not know where the King and Crown Prince are – or whether they are still alive. Pro-German circles would like to see the Crown Princess return to Norway. Nearly every day Crown Princess Märtha receives visits from Norwegians who envision Prince Harald, who is second in line to the throne, as a child prince-regent, with his mother as guardian. The King and Crown Prince, however, will not consent to such a plan, as it would involve kowtowing to the Germans.

Instead, the Crown Princess and the children travel northward through Finland to Petsamo, where a ship awaits to carry them across the Atlantic Ocean to the United States, under the protection of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Two months after King Haakon and Crown Prince Olav have left Norwegian soil, Crown Princess Märtha and her children embark on their involuntary exile. Five years will pass before the Royal Family is reunited.

IN EXILE/THE USA
As early as February 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt had invited the children of the Crown Prince and Crown Princess to come live at his home in case the war in Europe spread. In July, he renews the invitation, extending it to include the Crown Princess as well. However, Crown Princess Märtha is reluctant to leave Scandinavia. In addition, it is still possible that she and the children will follow the King and Crown Prince to the United Kingdom. In the end it is decided that the USA is the safest destination for several reasons, not least to ensure the safety of the young heir apparent should something happen to the King or the Crown Prince.

The Crown Princess and her children arrive in New York on 28 August. A room full of toys is waiting for them at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. The family stays there for several days as the guests of President Roosevelt, but it soon becomes clear that they need their own home. The Norwegian state purchases an estate at Pooks Hill in Bethesda, Maryland, just outside Washington, D.C. Here the family starts their new life. The princesses attend a local school, and all three children soon speak fluent American English.

While in the USA, the Crown Princess’s main focus is on giving the children a secure upbringing. But she is also a key figure in the Norwegian resistance effort in the USA, providing inspiration, spreading information and lobbying. She is involved in a wide range of activities to promote Norwegian interests. She christens ships and planes, undertakes official openings of and visits hospitals, churches, schools and military bases. Charming and open, Crown Princess Märtha makes an impression on everyone she meets. Despite the fact that she prefers smaller social gatherings with people she knows, she soon becomes an invaluable ambassador for Norway.

IN EXILE/ENGLAND
King Haakon and Crown Prince Olav arrive in England on 10 June. They stay for a time with the British Royal Family at Buckingham Palace before moving to the country. Bowdon House, a one-and-a-half hour drive west from London, is their first home in exile. Later they move closer to the city, to the manor Foliejon Park, which will be their place of residence until the war comes to an end in 1945.

The King and Crown Prince travel to the centre of London three to four times a week. Air-raid warnings and bombings are part of their everyday lives. The King presides over the Council of State with the government in exile in the offices of the Norwegian Legation, where he also grants audiences to Norwegian and foreign envoys. When they do not have to go into the city, the King and Crown Prince lead the lives of upper-class Englishmen. But the war is never far away. They often travel around England to inspect Norwegian troops at training camps, on board warships and at weapon factories, hospitals and schools.
With his political and strategic skills, diplomatic manner and many important connections, King Haakon makes a tremendous contribution to the Norwegian Government’s resistance effort. His radio broadcasts from London provide a vital link between the King and the Norwegian people. The King reaches out when something extraordinary has happened and on important days such as April 9th and May 17th (Norwegian Constitution Day), Christmas and New Year’s. His speeches are short and simple – but his words resonate deeply with his people.

King Haakon’s firm belief in constitutional principles, so clearly evidenced during his escape from Norway, is critical in the five years he spends in exile. At the end of June 1940, he is asked to abdicate. In Norway, the Presidium of the Storting and the political parties have embarked on negotiations with the German occupation authorities and wish to establish a new government that can sign a peace treaty with Germany and govern the country in cooperation with the occupying power.

The Norwegians accept most of the Germans’ demands and the Presidium sends a letter to the King at the end of June requesting his abdication. In a radio broadcast on 8 July, which later becomes known as "the King’s second refusal", he states he will not step down. He cannot comply with a demand that is not "an expression of the free will of the Norwegian people, but the result of the dominion exercised by foreign military occupation". With this, King Haakon VII reinforces his position as the king of the free Norwegian people.

**HOMECOMING**

Germany capitulates on 8 May 1945. The Crown Princess and her children cross the Atlantic once again – this time by air – and land in Scotland, where they are reunited with the Crown Prince. He and a number of members of the Government depart for Norway several days later.

On 17 May 1945, King Haakon holds a radio broadcast from London, which he begins with a verse from Norway’s national anthem, "Yes, We Love this Land":

Norsemen whatsoe’er thy station,
Thank thy God whose power
willed and wrought the land’s salvation
In her darkest hour.
All our mothers sought with weeping
And our sires in fight,
God has fashioned in His keeping
Till we gained our right.

He continues by thanking the Norwegian people for their steadfastness. He thanks the merchant fleet for its loyal service. He thanks the UK for its decisive contribution in ending the war. He thanks the Norwegian forces for all that they have done. At last, Norwegians are able to listen to their country’s legitimate head of state without fear of punishment.

The King’s homecoming is planned to the last detail. The chosen date – 7 June – is symbolic. Exactly forty years before, on that same date, the union between Norway and Sweden was dissolved, and exactly five years before, the King and Crown Prince had left Norway, headed for London.

The Norfolk sets sail from the UK on 5 June. On the morning of Thursday, 7 June, the ship begins its approach to Oslo, carrying the King, the Crown Princess and her children. Crown Prince Olav comes on board in Moss – and the family is reunited at last. Out in the Oslo Fjord, private boats of all sizes begin to circle around the Norfolk. At 11:45 am the ship docks at the quay at Akershus Fortress, and the Royal Family is met by wildly cheering crowds. King Haakon VII is back on Norwegian soil.
FACTS ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

The exhibition “The Longest Journey (1940-1945)” is part of the “Royal Journeys” project, which is the Norwegian Government’s gift to King Harald and Queen Sonja in honour of their 75th birthdays in 2012. Organised by the National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design, the project consists of six different exhibitions which will be on display in a number of locations in Norway. All of the exhibitions are based on art and cultural artefacts from the Royal collections. “The Longest Journey (1940-1945)” is one of the National Museum’s touring exhibitions, and will tour Norway from 2012 to 2014.

The exhibition was made possible through close cooperation between the National Museum and the Royal Palace.

OBJECTIVES OF THE EXHIBITION:

- To provide insight into the life and official activities of the Royal Family during World War II.
- To increase knowledge about the key role played by King Haakon in the battle against the German occupying power.
- To provide new generations with new understanding of an important period of Norwegian history.

The exhibition will be officially opened at the Glomdal Museum, Elverum, on 21 September 2012. It will tour Norway through summer 2014 and will be displayed at the following venues:

2012: Ørland Cultural Centre, Brekstad.

2013: KUBE Art Museum, Ålesund; Norwegian Aviation Museum, Bødo; Tromsø University Museum; Alta Museum; Museum of Reconstruction for Finnmark and Northern Troms, Hammerfest; Sør-Troms Museum/Trøndenes Historical Centre, Harstad.

2014: Vest-Agder Museum/Nordberg Fort, Lista; Stord Cultural Centre; Defence Museum, Oslo.

The exhibition offers activities for children. Objects that are specifically targeted towards children are marked with a special symbol.

Please see the National Museum’s website for information for teachers (in Norwegian) and general contact information: www.nasjonalmuseet.no