

First World War 100 at The National Archives

Programme overview

The National Archives' collections represent one of the most important sources of primary evidence in the world, and our First World War records include a rich variety of sources that provide a complete picture of the war. The collection covers a large number of government departments and includes many notable documents, including the UK's official copy of the Treaty of Versailles.

With historical records at its heart, **First World War 100** at The National Archives aims to engage new audiences with our collections as well as offering historians and regular archive users fresh insights into this landmark conflict. Our programme will offer many ways to get involved - at our Kew site, online and through partnerships.

We will be exploring major anniversaries and key aspects of the war through our themes of diplomacy; technology; home front; air and sea; peace; bravery and courage; medicine and health and global perspectives. We will invite diverse groups and audiences to use our primary sources to engage in some of the key debates and issues around the war.

More online collections

Our collection of First World War records is unique and hugely important. In preparation for this anniversary we have already digitised millions of British armed forces records and government papers, available now through our own website and those of our commercial partners.

Through the centenary, we will release a major set of digitisation projects, which will put even more of our collection online for a global audience. This will open up First World War records as never before.

The first and largest of our digitisation projects are the unit war diaries. This collection is one of our most popular series, chronicling the day by day operations of regiments. Previously only available on site in Kew, these records are a rich source for the genealogist and the historian alike. We have digitised 1.5 million diary pages relating to France and Flanders in the largest single digitisation project undertaken by The National Archives.

The digitisation continues with the minutes and papers of the Central Military Service Tribunal and Middlesex Appeal Tribunal (including appeals made by conscientious objectors), service records of the Household Cavalry and many more. Sign up through our portal or follow us on social media to receive updates as these are released.

New and improved ways to search our collection

As well as digitising our collection, we're working to improve the ways in which our users can research the records. This includes better catalogue descriptions of key record series, including Merchant Navy crew lists and officers' service records, to improve searching and browsing in [Discovery, our catalogue](#).

We'll also be boosting the extensive research guidance we already provide with new resources and tools aimed at helping first-time and experienced users get the most out of our collection. The popular My Tommy's War blog series, which takes a personal approach to providing practical advice to family historians researching their First World War ancestors, will continue throughout the programme, along with a full range of other blogs, podcasts and video content.

Full range of talks and events

Our [events programme](#) will be boosted by a series of talks focusing on different aspects of the conflict, some of which will be conducted online for the benefit of those users who can't visit us in Kew.

We will also hold a number of conferences throughout the programme, the first of which – based around our first theme of diplomacy and the road to war – will take place in June 2014, with bookings opening in early 2014.

Exciting learning opportunities for teachers and schoolchildren

We're partnering with [Anglia Tours](#) to provide teachers and students with an unrivalled opportunity to investigate every aspect of the conflict using original sources and trips to First World War battlefields.

We'll also be running more of our hugely successful education sessions throughout the centenary period. This includes All Pals Together, a videoconference session which allows schoolchildren to pose questions to Henry Fairhurst, a First World War soldier recreated by an actor using our original sources.

Stay in touch

Visit the [First World War 100 portal](#) to sign up for email updates and to follow us on social media