

THE

NATIONAL

ARCHIVES

A black and white photograph showing three soldiers in military uniforms operating a tank. One soldier is seated at the controls, another is leaning over the side, and a third is standing behind. The tank is moving through a field of tall grass or reeds.

SPOTLIGHT ON

War Office: Tanks

Key Stages 3-5 | Early 20th Century 1901 - 1918

Video resource

War Office: Tanks manual, 1918

We hope you enjoyed watching our Education Service video with collections expert Will Butler looking at our War Office series. This video focuses on a manual from August 1918 about the role of tanks in warfare. It helps explore the impact of this technology during the First World War.

Suitable for:

KS 3-5

Time period:

Early 20th Century

1901 - 1918

Watch the video then try and answer the following questions:

- What was the War Office?
- When was it created?
- What type of sources can be found in the War Office collection?
- What does this reveal about the range of material available?
- What is the date of the document examined in the video?
- What does the earlier correspondence in the file suggest about the document examined?
- From looking at the cover of the document, why do you think the document says it is for 'For Official use only'?
- Who issued the document?
- Can you explain the purpose of the document?
- Why does the document say on its cover that is 'To supersede....S.164...S.S..204...S.S.135'?
- What insight, according to the video, does the document reveal about military views on:
 - The use of tanks on the battlefield
 - How they should be used by the military in an offensive
 - The impact of tanks on the enemy?
- Find out about the use of tanks at: Battle of Flers-Courcelette (15th September 1916); Battle of Cambrai (1917), the first large scale use of tanks. For more information on the use of tanks in the First World War see the [Imperial War Museum](#)
- Use The National Archives [research guides](#) to find records on the First World War.

Employment of tanks, 1916-18

Catalogue Ref: WO 158/832

S.S. 214.]

W. O. 4779.

2 copies rec'd
23 AUG 1918

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TANKS AND THEIR EMPLOYMENT IN CO-OPERATION WITH OTHER ARMS.

(ISSUED BY THE GENERAL STAFF.)

To supersede S.S. 184, "Notes on the Use of Tanks," and S.S. 204, "Infantry and Tank Co-operation and Training" and Section XVI. of S.S. 135, "The Training and Employment of Divisions, 1918."

August, 1918.

Employment of tanks: Transcript

S.S. 214

40/W.O./6779

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Connections to Curriculum

Key stage 4

AQA GCSE History

- Conflict and tension: the First World War, 1894–1918: Military developments in 1918 and their contribution to Germany's defeat: the evolution of tactics and technology.

Key stage 5

Edexcel GCE History

- The British experience of warfare, c1790–1918: Western Front: the use of new fighting techniques and new technology.

OCR GCE History

- The Changing Nature of Warfare 1792–1945: The impact of technological change

Related resources



Medicine on the Western Front (part one)¹

How did trench warfare affect injuries and treatment?



Medicine on the Western Front (part two)²

How did trench warfare affect injuries and treatment?



Letters from the First World War, part one³

How did these men experience the conflict? (1915)

1 <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/medicine-on-the-western-front-part-one/>

2 <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/medicine-on-the-western-front-part-two/>

3 <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/letters-first-world-war-1915/>

Related resources



Letters from the First World War, part two¹

How did these men experience the conflict? (1916 - 18)



Great War soldier's record²

What can we find out?

1 <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/letters-first-world-war-1916-18/>

2 <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/great-war-soldiers-record/>



Why do our hyperlinks come with footnotes?

Our resources are designed to be printed and used in classrooms, which means hyperlinks aren't always accessible digitally. We include the full link at the bottom of the page so that you can type in the address without distracting from the main text of the lesson materials.

Did you know?

The National Archives Education Service also offers free workshops onsite in Kew and online in your classroom.

Our [Onsite Workshops](#) are available for free here at The National Archives and allow students to experience genuine original documents reflecting over 1000 years of history. From Elizabeth I's signature to the telegrams of the sinking Titanic, students love the wow-factor of being able to see real history on the desk in front of them.

Our [Online Workshops](#) allow our Education Officers to teach through your projector, leading discussions and guiding students through activities based around original documents. All you need is a computer with a projector, webcam and microphone. We'll arrange a test call before your session to check the tech is working.

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