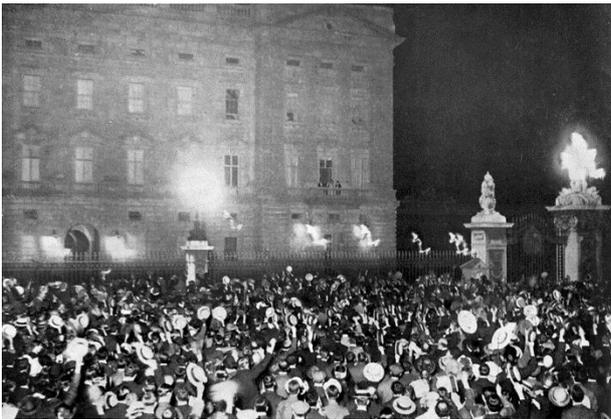


Life in the Trenches and Legacy of War

Welcome to IWM North

Use this activity sheet as you walk around the Main Exhibition Space to help you find out more about life in the trenches and the legacy of the First World War.

1. Outbreak of War



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Find this photograph at the start of the 1914-1918 section of the Timeline. What two reasons are given to explain why Britain declared war?

Look closely at the photograph. How did people react?

Why would somebody feel like this at the outbreak of war?

Back at school you could discuss further the different reactions of people to the outbreak of the First World War. Look for evidence as you go round the museum today.

Notes: _____

2. Trench Warfare



The Western Front consisted of lines of trenches from the Belgian coast to Switzerland. Trenches were dug to protect soldiers from exploding shells and rifle fire.

Go to Cabinet *The Western Front 1914-1917* at the start of the Timeline. Look at the uniform on display.

Identify four things in the cabinet that interest you.

Explain why you have picked these items.

Food was monotonous and conditions harsh. Find object 8 in the cabinet. What does the message say?

Explain what the message tells us about how this soldier's attitude to war has changed as a result of his experience in the trenches.



Did you know?

Trench systems included different features, like support trenches and communications trenches, as well as the front line trenches themselves.



Find item number 6 in the cabinet. Look at the letter. *Second Lieutenant Collier, 16th Battalion, The Royal Warwickshire Regiment, writing to his niece Dorothy in 1916:*

There are various kinds of shells (there are some which....wrap round the white and yolk of an egg to keep them from spilling, this kind is quite.....) one of these favourites we call the 'whizz bang' because it goes over your head (if you're lucky) 'whizz' then a second later 'bang'

Soldiers would often use humour as a way to ease the tension of fighting in a war where they lived under the constant threat of being killed or wounded.



Watch the video showing archive film of trench warfare on the Western Front in the First World War.

Write down three things that you observe in the film that particularly surprised you. How do YOU think soldiers would have felt fighting in the trenches?

In the film there are some soldiers loading shells to be fired by artillery. Look for the weapons that the soldiers are using in the exhibition spaces around you.



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3. Mud

Find this artwork. It is called *Mud* and was painted by Gilbert Rogers.

What was his job in the war?

Write down two words to sum up the mood of the soldier.

Why do you think this? Give reasons for your answer.

Gilbert Rogers was a medical officer during the First World War. He painted *Mud* in 1919 after the war had ended and used a model for the figure of the soldier.

A question for you to consider back at school

How reliable (truthful) is the painting *Mud* about conditions in France during the First World War?



Next follow the Timeline around to find the cabinet *Beyond the Western Front*. Find this item...



What has it been made out of? Why has this material been used?

Name two other places the war was fought aside from the Western Front.

Back at school you may want to find out how fighting was different in these places compared to fighting on the Western Front.

4. Flora Sandes



Go to *Silo 2: Women and War* and find the nine boxes containing objects belonging to different women.

Find the revolver that belonged to Flora Sandes.

What was unusual about Flora's life?





Did you know?

Women carried out a variety of roles in the First World War with over 600,000 women working as munitions workers making weapons in factories.



Flora Sandes talks about her experiences fighting in the First World War:

Scorching days followed by freezing nights, when we lay on the bare mountainside in clothes soaked with perspiration and shivered, with no covering but our overcoats. Incessant fighting, weariness indescribable.

From your research back at school, in which theatre of war did Flora Sandes fight?



Many women also worked on the front line in other roles during the First World War.

Find the uniform, diary and crucifix in the large display cabinet to read about what happened to Elsie Knocker and Mairi Chisholm as they worked at **Pervyse in Belgium**.



A diary is a useful type of historical evidence from the First World War. As you go round the museum today make a list of the types of evidence we can use to find out about how people have been affected by war.

Back at school you could discuss which types of evidence are the most reliable.

5. Legacy of War



Go to Silo 6: Legacy of War and find this photograph of Ernest Nicolson.

He was a policeman from Stockport, and was killed in action on 12 September 1917. Ernest left behind a son Clifford and his wife, Emma.

During the First World War over 9 million people are estimated to have been killed.

What has been collected from the site of his grave?

What evidence shows how his family would have remembered Ernest?

Do you think it is important to remember soldiers who fought in wars in the past? Why?



In *Silo 6: Legacy of War*, listen on the sound point to Gunner William Towers speaking about the impact of his injuries, and how he had an artificial limb fitted.



Gunner William Towers talks about the trauma he suffered:

And I put this leg on, and I'm not lying I didn't tighten it up enough and it was trailing. I was on crutches and I had a kit bag and a quarter of a mile to go to a tram. And nobody helped me.



Explore the rest of the cabinet *Coming Home*. Choose a First World War object on display that interests you. What is it and what does it tell us about the legacy of war?



Did you know?

Over 41,000 soldiers had limb amputations having been injured in the First World War.



Look around you and write down some different ways that those who have been killed in war have been remembered?

A question for you to consider back at school

The evidence that you have looked at today helps us to understand what the experience of war was like for a number of different people. How far do you agree that these experiences were typical First World War experiences?