

### Useful websites:

**The Imperial War Museum:** [www.iwm.org.uk](http://www.iwm.org.uk) – Coverage from WWI to present day conflicts. Includes pages to commemorate individual WWI soldiers: <https://livesofthefirstworldwar.org>

**The Great War Forum** – Post queries to experts willing to help for free at [www.greatwarforum.org](http://www.greatwarforum.org)

**The Western Front Association** – Dedicated to further interest in the First World War: [www.westernfrontassociation.com](http://www.westernfrontassociation.com)

Famous **battlegrounds:** [www.ww1battlefields.co.uk](http://www.ww1battlefields.co.uk)

Search for a **soldier's will:** [www.gov.uk/probate-search](http://www.gov.uk/probate-search)

**British Red Cross Volunteers:** <https://vad.redcross.org.uk/>

**Prisoners of the First World War:** <https://grandeguerre.icrc.org/>

Photographic guide to **military cemeteries:**

<https://www.ww1cemeteries.com/>

**For further help...**If you can't get to the library, we can do a limited amount of research for you. We charge £7 per 30 minutes if you live in Leeds, rising to £14 for customers outside Leeds. Copies of documents are charged at the usual rate. Write or email your request to the contact details below. (Prices correct at time of printing.)

### Opening times

Monday – 9.00am – 8.00pm

Tuesday – 9.00am – 8.00pm

Weds – 9.00am – 8.00pm

Thursday 9.00am – 8.00pm

Friday – 9.00 – 5.00pm

Saturday – 10.00am – 4.00pm

Sunday - Closed

### For more information:

#### Local and Family History

Leeds Central Library, Calverley Street,  
Leeds, LS1 3AB

**T: 0113 378 6982**

**E: [localandfamilyhistory@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:localandfamilyhistory@leeds.gov.uk)**

**W: [www.leeds.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/libraries)**

**Blog: [secretlibraryleeds.net](http://secretlibraryleeds.net)**

**Tickets:**

**[www.ticketsource.co.uk/leedslibraries](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/leedslibraries)**



WWI Family  
History

## WWI Family History Resources

This short leaflet details some of the resources, both printed and online that can help when researching ancestors during the First World War.



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Approximately 5 million men served in the British Army in the First World War. However, only around 40% of their records have survived. In 1940, there was a bombing raid on the War Office in London where the records were kept. During this raid a large portion of the records was destroyed by fire. The surviving records have become known as the 'Burnt Documents'. The following records can be found online on the [Ancestry.co.uk](http://Ancestry.co.uk) website which is free to use in all Leeds libraries.

#### **British Army WWI Service Records, 1914-1920**

This database contains the surviving service records of non-commissioned officers and other ranks who served in WWI and did not re-enlist in the Army prior to WW2.

#### **British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920**

These records are index cards created by the Army Medal office towards the end of the First World War. They record the medals men and women who served in the First World War were entitled to claim. It is important to note that most of the medal cards record entitlement rather than the awarding of medals. To check if a person received a medal (if this is not recorded on the card itself, which occasionally happened) you can consult the original medal cards, kept at the National Archives, which should be annotated with a pencil tick. For an excellent guide to the medal cards and information on the types of medals awarded, see:

<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/british-army-medal-index-cards-1914-1920/>

#### **British Army WWI Pension Records, 1914-1920**

This database contains service records of non-commissioned officers and other ranks who were discharged from the Army and claimed disability pensions for service in the First World War. These were also men who did not re-enlist in the Army prior to WW2. Approximately 5 million men served in the British Army and these records contain many of them, especially if they claimed a pension.

- Find these records using the **Card Catalog** link. Search for 'British Army' or 'military'.

#### **The Commonwealth War Graves Commission:** [www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org)

This is an intergovernmental organisation of six independent member states whose principal function is to record and maintain the graves and places of commemoration of Commonwealth of Nations military service members who died in the two World Wars. The website allows searches by name or cemetery/memorial.

#### **The Leeds Absent Voters List:**

<https://www.leeds.gov.uk/Pages/Absent-war-voters.aspx>

There was a General Election in 1918 and all those away from their place of residence, including all men in the armed forces, were listed on Absent Voters Lists. These usually recorded the man's regiment, number and rank at the time. Men had to be over 21 years of age to vote. Men were not given a unique regimental number until 1920 so it is possible to find two men of the same number but in different regiments. This database only lists those with a home address in the Leeds area. Online, the search is by name only but you can contact the library to find a soldier's address and who else lived at it.

#### **Searching war time newspapers:**

In newspapers from the time of the First World War you will often find local news stories, photos of soldiers, announcements of honours, medals, deaths, missing in action notices, small biographical notes about soldiers, wedding announcements and so on. The Yorkshire Post, Yorkshire Evening Post and Leeds Mercury are the best newspapers to start your search.

The British Newspaper Archive ([www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk)) is free to search but requires a subscription to view actual newspaper pages. You can use the search function to find a title, date and page reference, then visit Local & Family History to find the full article using our microfilmed local newspaper collections.

**The National Archives** hold many First World War records not yet available online, including Women's Army Auxiliary Corps service records, British Army nurses' service records, Royal Navy and Merchant Navy records. See their research guides for further details:

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/?research-category=first-world-war>