

British museum launches online archive of WWI stories

LONDON, UK: Museum curators made a global appeal for photos and stories about the millions who fought for the British empire in World War I as they launched an ambitious new digital memorial.



The Imperial War Museum is setting up a free digital archive of the lives of soldiers who fought in the First World War. Image: Wikipedia

The Imperial War Museum in London has put the records of 4.5m men and more than 40,000 women who served with the British army overseas on a new website, "Lives of the First World War".

But many of the records are just names and the museum wants members of the public to add their own pictures and memories to provide a comprehensive picture of what life was like during the 1914-18 war.

Over the next four years, during the course of the centenary of WWI, the museum hopes to put details of about eight million people online.

The records of almost 17,000 conscientious objectors will be included, as will those of people who contributed to the war effort in their home countries.

"Everybody can contribute to Lives of the First World War, whether they choose to simply remember someone online, upload a picture from their family album, share a story passed down through generations, or connect official records to build a full and factual picture of what happened to that person throughout the war," said Luke Smith, who is leading the project at the museum.

Richard Grayson, Chairman of the museum's Digital Projects Academic Advisory Group, said the website was "an exceptional opportunity for the public and academics to work together in writing new histories of the war".

"The public will bring expertise and energy to the study of the war, and have much to contribute to uncovering lost histories, especially of local communities," he said.

The Imperial War Museum was set up in 1917 as a way of helping future generations understand the work and sacrifice of those involved in the ongoing conflict.

It intends to preserve the digital archive, accessible at [Lives of the First World War](#) as a free research tool.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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