



Maidenhead, United Kingdom

MEDIA RELEASE:

Lest We Forget: A nationwide campaign to preserve Scottish memories of WW1

- **Members of the public brought in their WW1 artefacts to The National Library of Scotland, to be digitalised to create an online archive, as part of a national campaign**
- **Lest we Forget: Keep Their Stories Alive is an ambitious project to create a digital archive of First World War artefacts stored in homes across the UK**

The Commonwealth War Graves Foundation, in partnership with Oxford University, hosted a Digital Roadshow event in Edinburgh on Wednesday 3rd October, as part of its *Lest We Forget: Keeping Their Stories Alive* campaign.

Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the campaign aims to preserve the country's memories of the Great War and create a lasting national digital archive as the centenary of the end of WW1 approaches.

People across Scotland rummaged through their attics, cupboards and garages and brought along their WW1 heirlooms to the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh – stunning experts with items as varied as army service buttons, handwritten letters and medals.

The Edinburgh Digital Roadshow event is the first of four roadshows the project will stage across the country, where members of the public will bring in their WW1 mementoes to be digitised. The events across the UK are managed by a team of volunteers, who help stage the events and ensure each item is accurately recorded in the archive.

The Roadshow aims to preserve Scottish memories of the Great War. Over 125,000 Scots were killed in the war, with some estimates putting that figure at over 145,000. Approximately 86,000 servicemen and women from Scottish units are commemorated by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Once the items are digitised, the stories will be made available to the public through a large, free-to-use online database, which will be launched in November 2018 to complement

projects and events nationwide commemorating the centenary of the end of the war. The database and its contents will be freely accessible, opening these stories and experiences to the public. Members of the public can also upload their personal First World War to the online archive through the Oxford University website: <http://lwf.it.ox.ac.uk/>

Carol Sloman of Barnton, Edinburgh, brought in her Grandfather's photo album in to be digitised. The sepia photographs were taken by in 1915 at a number of locations including the trenches of the Somme and Ypres. They include scenes of officers away from the field of battle, relaxing, cooking food, washing and enjoying games together.

Carol said: "The family knew they were interesting, but we didn't think they were so unusual, they do show a side to the war that we don't often think about."

The CWGC's Archive Assistant, Michael Greet said: "Archives provide a vital link with the past and today's event has revealed some extraordinary items that people hold in their private collections. Thanks to the funding of the National Lottery Heritage Fund *Lest We Forget: Keep Their Stories Alive* allows us to preserve our WW1 heritage for current and future generations"

Lest We Forget's project director, Dr Stuart Lee said "We were thrilled to host our first Roadshow Event at the National Library of Scotland. As we are now approaching 100 years since the Armistice, the stories and objects of the First World War are in real danger of being lost. The incredible items collected today have now been saved for the future. These stories can tell us amazing new things, not only about the experiences of soldiers and nurses on the battlefield, but also about the daily lives of those at home, including factory workers, younger siblings, mothers, wives, and children."

Notes to Editors:

For more information and images of the event please contact emily.mcghie@cwgc.org or on 07464544847

1. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (www.cwgc.org)

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) commemorates the 1.7 million Commonwealth servicemen and women who died during the two world wars. It also holds and updates an extensive and accessible records archive. The Commission operates in more than 23,000 locations in more than 150 countries and territories.

2. Oxford University

The University of Oxford is the world's highest ranking University for the past two years (Times Higher). It is committed to teaching, learning, research and widening participation in Higher Education. It is a centre of excellence for digital humanities projects and has been working on digital projects related to the First World War since 1991.

3. The Heritage Lottery Fund and support for First World War heritage

Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about - from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife. www.hlf.org.uk. Follow us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram and use #NationalLottery and #HLFsupported. ☑ To date, almost £100million in HLF grants has been awarded to projects across the UK so they can mark the Centenary and explore all aspects of First World War heritage that matters to them. Through its First World War: then and now programme, HLF is making at least £1million available per year for six years until 2019. It is providing grants between £3,000 and £10,000 enabling communities and groups right across the UK to explore, conserve and share their First World War heritage and deepen their understanding of the impact of the conflict. To find out how to apply for funding visit www.hlf.org.uk/thenandnow If a group needs a grant of more than £10,000 for a First World War project, it can apply to HLF through its open programmes www.hlf.org.uk/firstworldwar ☑ To join the conversation on social media please use #understandingww1

4. The National Library of Scotland:

The National Library of Scotland is a major European research library and one of the world's leading centres for the study of Scotland and the Scots – an information treasure trove for Scotland's knowledge, history and culture.

The Library's collections are of world-class importance. Key areas include digital material, rare books, manuscripts, maps, music, moving images, official publications, business information, science and technology, and modern and foreign collections.

The Library holds more than 26 million physical items dating back over 1,000 years in addition to a growing library of e-books, e-journals and other digital material. The collection includes more than four million books, eight million manuscripts, two million maps and more than 45,000 films and videos. Every week the Library collects around 3,000 new items. Most of these are received free of charge in terms of Legal Deposit legislation.