

## “Meeting in No Man's Land”: A First World War Educational Resource

### Learning Resources 1 – 4 for schools

Each of the 4 Learning Resources below contains the archive material that relates to each of the numbered resources - this includes interviews with British and German descendants as well as the family history they share from the War in the documentary “Meeting in No Man’s Land”. This source material inspired the students’ creative response and interpretation of the histories, as seen in the app.

### Using the Resources - Notes For Schools

The aim in producing this resource pack is to provide material to inspire students and teachers to use these stories to explore the power of family histories in relation the the1914 – 1918 war.

By viewing the LayAR presentations you can see how students in four London Schools created music, literature, art and drama inspired by these memories. These films are now being used by the Institute of Education on their Battlefield Tours programme as well as providing a general resource for schools and WW1 history programmes.

Students can be encouraged to work with any aspect of the stories below to explore the themes of legacy of the war within families, the impact of the war at the time on individuals and how archive material can be used in creative outcomes or in debate and discussion.

**Across the curriculum:** Students who participated in the Meeting in No Man’s Land Project created many outcomes:

- **History:** students explored the stories below within the context of the wider political, social and military history to produce pamphlets, letters and investigative writing..
- **English and Literature:** a) students wrote letters reflecting on conditions either in the battlefield or life at home. b) students wrote poems and poetry. c) Students wrote recruitment material or propaganda
- **Music:** a) students wrote new songs inspired by the stories below b) research into contemporary music either popular song or classical
- **Drama:** a) students wrote and performed dramatic dialogues and short scenes based on the stories they engaged with. b) Students wrote and performed monologues taken from the people involved in the stories they watched and read..

## **LEARNING RESOURCE 1**

### **Archive Resource 1**

**Taken from Ruth Gayfer's individual interview  
Christmas letter (Written by Ruth's Father to Ruth's Mother)**

***Letter from Lieutenant Edwin Gayfer, 19th of December 1917***

*My Darling,*

*I am just going to bed, tired out after a very hard day. But before doing so must get a few lines off to you, to let you know I am still in the land of the living.*

*It is now four days since I received your postcard - but I have been so disappointed not to have received a letter from you for a week now. Let's hope we shall all be home soon and then there will be no more partings. We have had our first real fall of snow on Sunday last, and it hasn't cleared away yet. It snowed all Monday and has been freezing ever since. Today has been bitterly cold and after completing our usual day's work on the roads we were marching home when we received orders to go and unload a stone train. You can tell how cold it was when I tell you the stones had all frozen together in the trucks and that we had to dig them out with picks. My sponge was frozen to the wash box this morning and the water in my bucket had ice half an inch thick on it. The water in our bottles was frozen in one lump and that is not exaggerating one bit. Some country this! I got unlucky last Sunday and instead of going to meet Groves as I had arranged, I had to go out with a working party. I could have sworn but of course did not do so.*

*I am sorry to say I haven't been able to get any cards or anything. I'll just have to wish you as merry Christmas as possible, and I do so hope it'll be a happy New Year for us both darling. What a difference this Christmas to last. Comparisons are odious, particularly so at the moment. But there are brighter days in store. I shall not forget last New Year's Eve. How nice everything was to set out on a new year with you at my side. Would that we could have remained so. Goodnight darling, excuse this short letter as I am so tired.*

*Give my kind regards to your ma & accept my best love & extra kiss for Christmas*

*Eddie"*

### **Archive Resource 2**

**Martin Spafford (Nancy Garnett's Grandson) on Sgt. Strickland.  
Taken from full documentary of "Meeting in No Man's Land"; 01:17:02 - 01:18:52**

*While she was a nurse Nancy Garnett met Sergeant Strickland, who is good looking, strong face, smiling, lying in bed with a very typical moustache (from that period). He was from the 74<sup>th</sup> field artillery. He drew pictures for her in her scrapbook they were of animals and insects then he has written about these in detail underneath – what their names are in Greek and English. And I think there was obviously something between him and my grandmother. He also wrote poems.*

*Before they said goodbye he also gave her this crucifix but it only has the body of Christ – there are no arms. The cross has been blown apart and the arms have*

*been blown off, and she gave it to me. This is a letter written by him accompanying the crucifix. It says:*

*“This crucifix came from a house in Orsier, Somme, France in the British retirement of March 1918. My division, the 24<sup>th</sup>, were then holding the line at Shon after retreating from the Cambria St. Quentin sector on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March. We were fighting on the retreat right through in action all the time. After crossing the Somme river we came through Macelepotte, Chaul nes where we held them up for a while but with heavy losses. On the night of the evacuation of Shon the remainder of the civilians were leaving Orsier. As we passed through Orsier the Germans were bombarding the town heavily. A shell went through a house and wrecked the back portion of the building. I and a friend went into the house to see if anybody was there. Upstairs where the shell entered everything was in ruins and on one side a portion of the wall was still standing. On this part of the wall hung the crucifix just chipped as you see it now. I have seen this sort of things so many times – buildings and churches wrecked but crucifixes and figures of Christ untouched. We regard it as an omen but I brought it along with me as a souvenir. Its value lies in all that it stands for and not in its actual worth.”*

*Sergeant W H C Strickland 74<sup>th</sup> field artillery.*

### **Archive Resource 3**

**Dieter Filsinger (Grandson of Second Lieutenant Filsinger) on War and responsibility.**

**Taken from full documentary “Meeting in No Man’s Land”; 01:06:04 - 01:07:53**

*My name is Dieter Filsinger. I was born in Bad Reichenall, in the Southeast of Bavaria, in the mountains and grew up mostly in Munich. I am talking about my grandfather.*

*My father told a story about his (Grandfather’s) injury. In 1916 he took part in the great battle of Verdun and got injured there. A bullet went through his lungs, grazed his heart and left his body through his arm, and he lay in a trench for several days, about 2 or 3 days because the artillery was shooting there. They couldn’t reach him, and he was near death when, after three days, they finally could get him out of the trench. After that he was at hospital for 6 months. And then he went back to the front. He only had half a lung, so he was always a bit sickly.*

*He immediately went into politics after the First World War.*

*And he was a strong democrat in the Democratic Party in the Weimar Republic and he was strongly against Hitler. And after World War II he was a member of the Liberal Democratic Party. He was very into politics. At first, from 1933, he was against Hitler, but after Hitler defeated France in 1940 he found himself on the defensive because everyone around him praised Hitler.*

## Archive Resource 4

**Gerlinde Hartmann (Daughter of Private Hans Biehl) sharing two memories her father passed to her.**

**Taken from full documentary "Meeting in No Man's Land";**

**The Soup Canister 00:15:00 - 00:19:05 and Cellar 01:02:10 - 01:03:33**

*My name is Gerlinde Hartmann. I was born in Ludwigsburg. Near Stuttgart. My father was Hans Biehl and was born 1897 in Stuttgart. At that time he had finished secondary school, it was called "Real School" and he finished it with an exam. At that time it was called the Annual, because this enabled young men, in the Landsturm (militia) become soldiers with only one year of training. At that time this was very important, in order to be able to handle weapons. And this was what my father did. But before he had done an apprenticeship as a tradesman. And ...then he went to the war ... At this time he was only 19 years old. My father was of short stature. He was only 1.62 meters tall.*

*He really wanted to become a bookbinder. And he could not become that, because at that time the bookbinder presses were heavy machines and he was so small and delicate, and people told him:*

*My father was assigned to bring the meal to the comrades that were in the trenches. And the bread was brought in the backpack. But there was also something to drink. Water to drink was very important for the people at the front. Or soup. This was filled up in a canister. And he had buckled the canister like a backpack. And then he had to run across an open field. There was no cover. And he was fired at. His small stature was an advantage. He was no big target. And he was very quick. He could run very well. And he had to start running as fast as possible. But they shot at him. And it occurred that a splinter, shrapnel, hit the canister. Then it had a hole. And then all the soup, the water or the coffee leaked, and often, just before he reached the trench, he had to return in order to get a new tank filled up and start running again. That was what he told us, to me and my sister, that this was horrible. The feeling: "Only a few more meters, then I'll reach the goal, then they will have their meal, and I can return again and will have my rest for the day.*

*And then ...the disaster: and run back again." And then I thought: Why didn't they run at night? But the field was full of craters from the impacts. You could not run at night. You could not see where you stepped in. And suddenly there was a pit, and so ...this had to be done in daylight. He really had to run for his life. Day in, day out. Every day. And repeatedly.*

*But we still were very young when he told us this story. And I also had always imagined how this must have been. In my imagination I myself have run or went through a narrow path and thought how terrible it must have been this seems to be absurd.*

## Archive Resource 5

**Franziska Raum, 'Anti-war' letter home.**

**Taken from full documentary "Meeting in No Man's Land"; 00:05:27 - 00:07:00**

*My name is Franziska Ramm. I was born in a small village in the Bavarian Forest. And I grew up there in the Bavarian Forest with six siblings on a farm. Today I'm going to talk about the grandparents of my husband. I didn't know them personally, but their story was*

*told to me by my mother-in-law, my husband's mother. We had a good relationship. We all lived together in one house. And we cooked together, or rather we took turns cooking. We lived in one house, we took walks, we took little trips. I have always been interested in this and she told me a lot about those times.*

*She told me that she...she was the fifth child in the family. She was born in 1918. Her mother was very seriously ill and had to take care of an inn in those four years, a butcher shop, and the four small children. She was very popular with the other people because she was a good, generous woman. She also butchered. She was such a small person and four small children and butchering. In the evenings, people came to drink beer. Her husband was in France twice and was injured twice, or wounded. And then was in the military hospital in Munich. But he was gone the whole war. Grandfather was a butcher and had leased the inn in Endorf. Then he was, he was born in 1877. Because he was a butcher, he was assigned to provisions. So mostly not at the very front. Of course, I only know this from these letters, that he wrote. I think, he wrote 14 letters home.*

*From 17th May 1918.*

*"Dearest Love and children!*

*Have to tell you about some things again, as the days are becoming increasingly boring. (He was in Munich then)... and the beautiful Whitsun celebrations are near, which pains me greatly now, that I can't come home. I would like to see my dear children again and especially the dear little one, Mathilde (that was my mother-in-law.) "Now that you're writing that she is so adorable already. You just have to love her, the little one. Dearest Love, will you already be in the garden on Whitsun?" (They also had a beer garden) And I do hope that your health is improving steadily, is it? (This means, she was already ill then. She had a stroke and she also had a thyroidectomy. So she was ill. She died half a year later.) Best wishes to Elise and Christel. (They were sisters of this woman, his wife Fanny Franz)*

*Later he married this Elise in May 1919. He was alone with five children. And he married his wife's sister. They were very much in love and treated each other very respectfully; they were nice to each other. And they wrote each other very lovingly. For example: the letters begin, "My dearest, most faithful wife!" or "Dearest Love and children!"*

*He wrote this in 1916.*

*"Where will this terrible war lead us all? I think the war will last a long time yet. My dear wife, the horrors that we endured last night. I can't even begin to describe to you. We were all ready to go over the top." (This means, they were all ready to be sent into no man's land) " 20 minutes away a village was shelled. We always think, any moment now, we'll be next. Dear wife, I have worked hard this week. I have to work nights as well in a dugout 12 metres deep. There is clay everywhere, it's just terrible, and unseen so far at the outposts. They are marching so close that they are marching right past us. Also, today I have to describe our lunch to you. Fine noodles cooked in water with dried fruits. Mixed in, all this cooked together. You can't tell at all anymore what it is, Meat stew, vegetables or what. It's truly pig food. The war will make our marriage even stronger." And that was true.*

## **LEARNING RESOURCE 2**

### **Archive Resource 1**

**Rosemary Lever (Granddaughter of Robert Law)**  
**Taken from full documentary “Meeting in No Man’s Land”;**  
**Wounded 00:21:21 - 00:22:54 and Bobby’s Letter 01:11:24 - 01:12:12**

#### **Interview with Rosemary Lever about Robert Law**

Rosemary Lever joined us at Wimbledon Theatre to tell the story of her grandfather Robert Lever. His story was remarkable as evidence of the ability to survive injury and close calls with death and live on to have a long and happy life after the war.

Robert was an Accountant and born in Scotland. He was a member of the Argyll Territorials before the war. He was one of seven children and moved to London and found work as an accountant for Bryant and May. He was living in Hyams Park East London when he joined London Scottish Territorial Regiment in 1912. On 15 September 1914 the London Scottish were the first territorial regiment to be sent to France. They travelled on 34 London buses. On 31 October 1914, as Rosemary pointed out Halloween, they were involved in the Battle of Messines, becoming the first territorial infantry unit involved in combat. The Scots had lost 394 of their 700 officers and men in their short time on the ridge. It appears Robert was wounded several times and returned at active service. He was certainly wounded again at the Battle of Loos in March 1916 where the London Scottish suffered heavy losses at a place called Lone Tree. By March 1916 we know that Robert was recovering in a Channel Islands Hospital as his wife Constance had to apply for a passport to visit him. He appeared to be then sent on Officer Training and was sent to the notorious Royal Flying Corps where apparently life expectancy at the time was about 3 weeks. He was an observer and photographer. Although he appears not to have been shot down he was in a crash caused by Engine failure in April 1917 and crashed again in June 1917 while still working at a photographer. By August 1917 he was deemed only to be fit for ground staff and by the end of the year he was clearly invalided out and back living in Hyams Park, East London. During that time he had got married in November 1915. He died in 1969.

He spoke little of his experiences but Rosemary remembered a family holiday when they travelled through Le Havre where he had arrived en route to Ypres in 1914, where she felt that he was rather moved. He was a typical Scot with a love of good whiskey and poetry. Perhaps given his war experiences he always travelled light with a battered brown suitcase which contained, in family memory, a shirt, a pair of trousers and a bottle of whiskey. He remained a member of the London Scottish Regiment after the war and participated in some of the clubs and activities there until his death.

***Rosemary brought in the following letters and poems from her grandfather’s collection***

**Letter from father (Rosemary's Great Grandfather (John Law) to son (Robert Law)  
13th August 1914**

**My dear son Robert,**

**It was certainly with somewhat mixed feelings that I perused your letter of 12th. I felt quite proud that a son of mine had responded to the call of our dear country in her hour of peril. On the other hand I could not but feel anxious lest you should come to any serious harm. This of course lies with the future, but I pray that God may shield you from harm and permit you once more to return to civilian life.**

**Do your duty faithfully and put your trust in your heavenly father and the best wishes an earthly father has to bestow. And I am sure such wishes will not fall on unheeding ears. I expect the whole Regiment has volunteered but you do not say. I also expect that you will be destined for Garrison duty abroad so as to relieve Regular troops for the front. If my surmise should turn out to be accurate then the Duty would not be so perilous as if you were sent into action. Be this as it may my blessing and my prayers go with you where thou goest. Be valiant just like a son of Scotland and have the result in the hands of your Maker.**

**The cause is a righteous one and the object is praiseworthy being nothing less than the freeing of the peoples of Europe from a Military tyranny which was fast becoming intolerable. If I mistake not this Mad Mullah of Prussia will get a scourging from which he will never recover and this for his impiety in invoking God on his side to murder quiet and indefensive peoples because they stood between him and an ambition for more power and territory - if the Kaiser suffers a few reverses and I hope he does - you will find that the German Federation will burst up as the smaller states will realise that they are just useful pawns in the hands of the Military of Prussia and will refuse to continue spending blood and substance to bolster up the autocratic rule of the man and the system he represents.**

**We are all well just now and will all be anxious to have a word from you however short as you will understand your present circumstances gives us acute anxiety.**

**We had a nice sensible letter from a Miss Pike who I judge from what you say is your best girl if you regard her very much and do not object persuade her to keep up a correspondence with Bessie.**

**May the Blessing of God rest upon you and keep you safe.**

**Your loving father,**

**John Law**

***Letter from younger brother William to Robert Law then at the Front  
13th August 1914***

Dear Robert,

I would have written you ere this only did not know where to send a letter. Your letter to father shows you are still in London. Knowing the 'Scottish' would at once volunteer for Foreign Service I wondered if the Regiment was fighting in the neighbourhood of Liege. I believe the Territorials will be sent East to relieve the Regulars, so will not be surprised to hear of your departure for India, Malta or Egypt. The Great War has now come and no one can say what the result will be.

To all appearance the Germans have bit off more than they can chew. I feel quite convinced British troops are holding the Germans in check in Belgium - if so, it must have been a shock to the Germans to find themselves ranged against the finest soldiers in the world.

Great war services are experienced here, and every time I see a company of soldiers on the march I find myself walk at the attention as it is more than hard luck not to be physically fit - if I had been on the orders to mobilize I would have come straight to London and rejoined the Scottish. Today, Matthew and Bessie saw Jock Brand march along with a company of soldiers looking as proud as punch with a rifle at the slope. As you know everything is being kept absolutely secret so that we have no idea what will happen and despite our superior navy by a fluke the Germans may be in a position to harness our shores. In that event I will be of service with a rifle and plenty of ammunition. I would at least put as good a score on as possible.

The German Bands are all off the Clyde steamers. The morning after war was declared a friend of mine made the Band take off their coats and play "God Save the King". They played it three times and did not take a collection.

You are well off to be in a Regiment which is well Officered, the local boys are badly off in this respect.

The country has a real live War Secretary which is a good thing for the Army.

Business in the town is going on as usual. We are very busy working on supplies for a firm with a large Army contract.

Many thanks for your very thoughtful gift of cigars which are appreciated.

Write and let me know how all is going.

Now, Robert you are going into the unknown with what result no one can tell. I always remember what Jock Brand told me once in London that during the Boer War many a man got tired keeping his nose in the ground with the result he lifted his head and got shot. Moral - when you get orders to lie flat it pays not to show a vulgar curiosity.

I have the feeling that even though you are in the fighting line you will turn up all right. If by any chance you should get disabled please do not worry about your future but remember you have brothers who will willingly see that you never want for the necessities of life and a few comforts over and above.



**This is all at present. Remember me to my friends in the Scottish - write soon and give full postal directions for letters. I am addressing this to you at the Scottish headquarters - what Company are you in now and regimental number?**

**Do you require any money? If you are sent abroad, before leaving find out postal directions.**

**Au revoir and good luck.**

**From your loving brother,**

**William**

**Tonight's news reports another German reverse.**

***Letter from Robert Law's future wife (Rosemary's Grandmother) to him as he leaves for France***

**August 19th, 1914**

**My dear Bobby,**

**I was so very glad to get your letter this morning. I am answering as soon as possible as I can see you want cheering up. First of all, I must tell you that I have written to your sister. I thought it would be a good opening to a correspondence to tell her I had seen you off on Sunday, and that you were quite well and in good spirits. Then I told her that you had so often talked of her that I felt I almost knew her.**

**I am sorry that things are not very comfortable where you are. I had been hoping that you would have got with some nice people in a private house and have got a bed to sleep in. Fancy putting you in a hay-loft. I suppose the officers don't do that, do they? Never mind, Bobby, when you are back again and are happy and more all these miseries and discomforts will be forgotten and we are going to be happy my dear even happier than if these things had never been. Trouble teaches us so many things and is really better for us in the end if we could only realise it. But it is very very hard to do so. When I think (and I have thought of them so often these last few days) of all the cross, disagreeable things I have said, I really hate myself, but I am going to try and be much better.**

**I am so pleased that I was able to see you on Sunday after all. When I heard that you had gone some time before from Hyde Park you can just imagine my feelings. It was an awful rush to catch you up but it was worth it.**

**I believe I have got something to do now in the way of work that will only take up two days a week and I shall earn about 4 or 5 shillings; that with my usual will enable me to buy lots of things for us. Have been doing a heap of needlework since you have been gone and it is a real pleasure to do it as everything is for you as well isn't it? You will have a lot of things to see when you come back.**

**I am very glad you think of me so much Bobby dear and I also am always thinking of you. I know that the very uncertainty of your return makes it much harder to bear, but we should thank God that we love each other so very much even when absent**

and can be so faithful to each other. You know Bobby there are many people who would like to be as sure of the faithfulness of ones they love as you and I are. We have a lot to be grateful for. Just think of the happiness we have had together my dear dear Bobby, and keep hoping that we will have again and you will never despair. I have prayed for you, and will do so, every night. I pray for your safety and also that you will have no bad temptations. But I am quite sure Bobby that you will keep very good in every way. You know how very much I love and respect you and always will do.

So cheer up and hope for the best. When you come back you are going to be happy in every sense of the word.

You will be glad to hear that Norah caught her train quite easily as we caught a very quick bus. Mabel has come back again. The tour was not a successful one as seaside towns were practically empty of visitors. So she and Jim are together again. Do you know Bobby, I haven't got the pluck to see them together and when I hear them coming up the road I just go where I can't hear them talking and laughing. I can't bear to see their happiness and compare it with our circumstances. So you see what an awful coward and how selfish your girl is but don't censure me for it. I simply can't help it. I went to Highams Park Pictures last night alone. It's the first time I've been out since eight o'clock Sunday evening as have got rather a bad attack of neuralgia which will end in having more teeth out. But that's nothing.

The special picture was called the "Memories that Haunt" which didn't make me feel any livelier as it was very sad.

By the way Mum has given you and I a picture of the "Mona Lisa" a reproduction of the one stolen from Paris. I am going to hang it in your bedroom.

What do you think of me coming to see you on Sunday? Would you like me to? Anyway you let me know how you are situated as possibly you mustn't have visitors. I would like to come very much indeed.

Well, I am afraid I must close now Bobby.

Try and keep cheery and hopeful in your heart and pray sometimes, won't you?

With very much love from

Dolly

*Letter from brother James (signed himself off as Jacque as Robert off to France) to Robert Law*  
18th October, 1914

Dear Robert,

I have just read a letter received by our father from you and was pleased to learn from it that you were well.

I am now writing you, trusting that you will get this letter in due course and that it will cheer you to know that your brothers are not forgetting you.

Like most people I have been following the course of events with great interest, especially any little news we get of the London Scottish which regiment I am sure will keep up its reputation faces presently doing very useful work in France.

I imagine you will have a strenuous time before you, hard work, and oftentimes anxious work but on the other hand you will have opportunities of seeing life and acquiring knowledge that come to few in a lifetime.

When the war is over, and you return home, you will be able to thoroughly enjoy civilian life and will have some great stories to tell.

The winter is now drawing near and you will require to be very careful of your health, to keep yourself free from colds, maintain your physical fitness, this is a very important thing during a campaign, in previous wars sometimes plagues carried off more men than bullets did.

We have just had good news today, through the press bureau. Four German torpedo boats sunk by our fleet, this is what we expect and I am sure if the enemy's fleet would just come out into the open they would not long remain in fleet, our navy is doing excellent work.

Some of the news we get through the papers is, I suppose, not very reliable but taking everything into account our cause is progressing favourably and our army is showing itself second to none.

Is there anything you require that may be sent to you - body belts, cigarettes, pipes, etc. If so, let me know and I will see that some is forwarded to you and if there is anything else I can do for you only ask.

Trusting you will keep fit, do your duty well, and come back to us safe and sound - I remain.

Your affectionate brother,

Jacques

**Poetry by Robert Law for 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1915 (Engagement Day) and 4<sup>th</sup> of February 1915 (Back at the Front)**

***1st February 1915 (Engagement)***

How many and many a time  
do thought and time combine  
each to each and all to all  
fond past memories to recall  
Fondest of all past days  
marks the meeting of two ways  
two ways of life I mean to say

that met upon a certain day  
The day is cherished o'er and o'er  
and each year will see it cherished more  
for thoughts of past happiness  
always keeps us truly blessed  
of all the days that make the year  
now doth the happy-est appear  
for on this day my love did say  
come dear heart to me always  
I came to that heart so full of love  
and thought I'd reached heaven above  
and still I think that thought is right  
for love to love is this world's might  
As gentle as the dove my Girl  
will this heart for ever thrill  
and ever pray for me no harm  
and God to keep my heart in charm  
Oh Love! of God it is a gift  
to give unhappy souls a lift  
to higher things and joyfulness  
especially when the soul's hard pressed  
Then, oh Dolly! how can I say  
all the happiness you gave that day  
the day when first I clasped your breast  
and held it tight against my chest  
I can but thank and love you well  
and always shall I love to tell  
how good and noble and so true  
a love I have; and also you

Keep, oh keep this heart of mine  
closely folded next to thine  
Keep it where all pleasure grows  
fill it till it overflows  
I love you more than I can say  
and hate to be so far away  
but some fair day for which I long  
I'll be with you and sing a song  
You will not find my song in book  
but in my heart for it must look  
and there you'll find what I sing  
flows from Love's lovely spring  
So once again I hail the return  
of the day on which your heart was won  
for double doth the pleasure grow  
and love for ever – it will glow  
Further love I would you knew  
how happy is a love that's true  
and more; it's stronger than a tree  
fairer than the flowers we see  
Oh when this day doth next appear  
and adds to time another year  
may our hearts remain aglow  
with the love that was a year ago  
and as the years go past at length  
and take away our body's strength  
may we snuggle closely to each other  
and defy old time our love to smother.

**4<sup>th</sup> February 1915**

Oh for a smile dear Love from thee

'twould banish all my sorrow

and make my sleep unwakeful be

dreaming until the morrow

Oh for one kiss (that's what I miss)

'twould make me dwell in joy

and make it more and more my wish

to always be your boy.

Oh for one fond embrace

to cheer this drooping heart

oh that my chest your breast did grace

and never more to part

Oh for a life lived with thee

my fond dear sweetheart

I should then always happy be

and **never** from you part

And happier thoughts I send to thee

who art my sweetheart ever

it is a wish that we should be

in future parted never

Oh for two lives to combine

never more to part

and love to triumph over time

resting heart to heart

**1915 by Pte Robert Law**

The night has overwhelmed the day  
the worker from the field  
should his broad ploughshare stay  
from raising the grassy field  
Now with no strong high lifting tread  
the farmer regains his cot  
for o'er his place is covered red  
of loved ones picked and shot  
He gripped his ploughshare tight  
dark glared his eye of blue  
he saw the advance of German might  
and wondered what to do  
"To do!" yes that's it loud he cried  
as his loved fields they trampled o'er  
and from the plough a bayonet raised  
to defend his own beloved door  
But Germany has many war hounds  
who tear at the peaceful throat  
so brave Belgium is outside his bounds  
but still he keeps his tot  
This year our brave worker again will turn  
his ploughshare over the soil  
and he the German hosts will spurn  
having taken away their spoil  
So roll on 1915 dearest year  
and with the earliest ray  
of morning cast one fair tear  
of peace on earth away.

### ***Battle of Messines by Robert Law***

*(Private Robert Law of the 14th Battalion City of London (London Scottish) was wounded at the Battle of Messines)*

I sing of the battle of the flood  
where our brave lads lay in the mud  
and o'er beyond lay the German guns  
worked by stalwart boys called Huns  
The night wore on and to sleep they tried  
but just as their eyes became less wide  
The order rang out through the air  
"To Arms, the Germans they are there"  
Now then Scottish give them the bayonet  
o'er there's the trench and you must gain it  
scarce were the words spoken loud  
the Scots are at them like a cloud  
o'er yards and yards the rush was wild  
and on to Germans deeply filed  
went London's Corps of Scots so grand  
and bent the Germans to the ground  
Wild raged the fight on every side  
but keener eyes ne'er steel did guide  
than those who wear the Hodden Grey  
so soon our Scottish had its way  
Again, again come German hosts  
in which Bavarians number most  
again again they're beaten back  
for never force can beat our Mack  
The fight is desperate "Strike Sure"  
dear London Scots the day is yours  
fight, yes fight with all your might



for London, Love and all that's right  
Well they fight and with strong will  
yet the German hosts are before them still  
more loudly grows the battle's clatter  
until at last the Germans scatter  
Now above the Battle's lessened din  
comes the shrieking of the wind  
bearing awful cries at night  
cries of men in desperate plight  
Then horrible the morning broke  
and showed what fell before their strike  
Ah no! I'll say little of the blood  
that lay upon the plains of mud  
It is remembered to this day  
how our manly lads in grey  
with swinging kilts and hearts aglow  
rushed at Britain's greatest foe  
How well each man bore the fight  
and severed the proud German's might  
All honour to the Hodden Grey  
"Strike Sure" Scottish, yes that's the way  
Dear Scottish were you on England's shore  
with well earned peace for evermore  
How each Londoner's heart to you would go  
for that great and good and mealy blow  
Oh Scottish let us hear once more  
the gallant cry we've heard before  
we too will sing with you that day  
"Way! Way! for the Hodden Grey.

## Archive Resource 2

Images of the actual letters – see layAR resource

## Archive Resource 3

**Dieter Filsinger (Grandson of Second Lieutenant Filsinger) on his Grandfathers' War and wound**

**Take from full documentary "Meeting in No Man's Land"; 00:37:35 - 00:38:45**

*My name is Dieter Filsinger. I was born in Bad Reichenall, in the Southeast of Bavaria, in the mountains and grew up mostly in Munich. I am talking about my grandfather.*

*My father told a story about his injury. In 1916 he took part in the great battle of Verdun and got injured there. A bullet went through his lungs, grazed his heart and left his body through his arm, and he lay in a trench for several days, about 2 or 3 days because the artillery was shooting there. They couldn't reach him, and he was near death when, after three days, they finally could get him out of the trench. After that he was at hospital for 6 months. And then he went back to the front. He only had half a lung, so he was always a bit sickly.*

*He immediately went into politics after the First World War.*

*And he was a strong democrat in the Democratic Party in the Weimar Republic and he was strongly against Hitler. And after World War II he was a member of the Liberal Democratic Party. He was very into politics. At first, from 1933, he was against Hitler, but after Hitler defeated France in 1940 he found himself on the defensive because everyone around him praised Hitler.*

### **LEARNING RESOURCE 3**

#### **From Interview with Angelika Mayer (Granddaughter of Officer Max Wagner)**

My grandfather was Max Wagner. Interestingly, he was a teacher like me, but for English and French.

He was also always very interested in new technology. He was one of the first assembling radios. My mother said the whole room was full of wires because he was tinkering with everything and assembling it himself. He took a lot of photos and resized them and developed them. This was my passion, too.

He was a signals technician, so he was with the signals corps. They often had to lay the lines ahead of the troops, but often they were also behind them. I think it was well-suited to his technical knowledge and his curiosity. There are also drawings of him building stations and so on.

What surprised me about my granddad, he was a Francophile, so he had been in France and also knew people there. And then he had to fight against them. He was in Russia, he was in Riga, he was in Lorraine, he was in France, in Flanders, so he went to a number of places. I think he very much saw it as his duty. He fought through the whole war except for that illness. He was at the Battle of Lorraine, Battle of Nancy-Épinal, at Manonviller, Lunéville, south of Dieuze. Skirmishes at Douai, and so on, Arras, Artois. Flanders, French Flanders, Carency, Roclincourt. That went on until 19th February 1915. Then he first was in Russia and Galicia and so on. Then at the end he came back to Lorraine. It's just crazy. He survived all that. Survived so many battles.

He also took photos of destroyed places. We also have many postcards from his trip when he was in France the first time as a tourist, pictures of churches and so on. This is quite macabre. He collected them as a tourist and later he photographed them as a soldier, when they were destroyed. So he had these sad pictures of these places before and after the war.

#### **Archive Resource 1**

**Photographs of young men – see layAR Resource**

#### **Archive Resource 2**

#### **Hilary Payne on her Grandmother and Great Grandmother**

**Taken from full documentary “Meeting in No Man’s Land”; 01:21:21 - 01:23:23**

*Hilary’s grandmother, Ina, was born in October 1913. Ina’s father, George Ralph, went to war - presumably at the beginning of the war - and sadly died in 1916 when she was just two and a half years old. There was another sister born after her in 1915 and this is the story that was passed down amongst the family. When Hilary’s great-grandmother got the news of George’s death she was seven months pregnant with the third of their three little girls and went blind with the shock of the news. Without any support the girls – including an older girl from a previous marriage who was about nine or ten at that time - all went into care of the workhouse for some years because the mother could not look after them. Later they were taken out, by Hilary’s great-grandmother. By then they had to look after her because she was blind and they became her carers. George was forty when he died. He*

*died of polio, anterior poliomyelitis, in April 1916. He was a driver in the cavalry. Ina kept a postcard from her father sent from the front, which was sent when she was only two and it says on it "Best love to my daughter, Ina Ralph, from her soldier daddy. God bless my little daughter." So she kept that all her life and now it is with Hilary's father, Ina's oldest son.*

### **Archive Resource 3**

**Chris Cooper (Grandson of Lance Corporal John Henry Cooper) on his Grandfather's heroism and building the bridge for men to cross under fire**  
**Taken from full documentary "Meeting in No Man's Land"; 00:57:27 - 00:58:17**

*John Henry Cooper joined up in 1914 when he was 19 and he served at the Battle of the Somme for the Manchester Pals. He had been a gas company Clerk when he joined up. He was affected by poisonous gas and because of that he got a small pension at the end of the war. He talked about two soldiers who deserted from the British lines and who made it to the French coast. They were both apprehended because one could speak French and the other one couldn't. He talked about the soldiers drawing lots to see who would be in the firing party to see them off – terrible really.*

*He won the military medal (we have the original citation for it see below) and the family was very proud of him and he was obviously proud of what he'd done. It was an attack over a small river near a place near Cambrai. He'd been a scout and they'd had these temporary bridges to get the men over the river. They'd gone in the river to hold these things up while the men ran over whilst being fired at.*

*The citation read:*

*52<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade Headquarters. 12<sup>th</sup> Manchester's. "Lance Corporal John Henry Cooper – 12<sup>th</sup> battalion Manchester Regiment has been awarded the military medal for the following act: On the 10<sup>th</sup> October 1918 near Nuvee, Lance Corporal Cooper with Privates Buckley, Perry and Thompson were acting as scouts from the leading companies and cut gaps in the wire for the troops to pass through. On reaching the river they jumped in and upheld the incomplete bridges for the troops to cross over. Themselves stepping into the river whilst so doing. These men then carried on as scouts and the outpost line did extremely valuable work. Nothing could be finer than the sense of duty they displayed and their great determination whilst the example they set did much towards making the attack the success it was. All men speak most highly of these four men whose conduct was beyond praise."*

### **Archive Resource 4**

**View an excerpt of the paired interview between Marianne Miebach and Les Mills, on the theme of 'Anti-war'**  
**Taken from full documentary "Meeting in No Man's Land"; 01:25:10 - 01:26:28**  
**(No text transcript available)**

## Archive Resource 5

### Taken from Chris Cooper's (Grandson of John Henry Cooper) individual interview On drawing lots to execute deserters

*John Henry Cooper joined up in 1914 when he was 19 and he served at the Battle of the Somme for the Manchester Pals. He had been a gas company Clerk when he joined up. He was affected by poisonous gas and because of that he got a small pension at the end of the war. He talked about two soldiers who deserted from the British lines and who made it to the French coast. They were both apprehended because one could speak French and the other one couldn't. He talked about the soldiers drawing lots to see who would be in the firing party to see them off – terrible really.*

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## LEARNING RESOURCE 4

### Archive Resource 1

**Marianne Miebach showing her Father's Postcards from the War**  
Taken from full documentary of "Meeting in No Man's Land"; 00:26:36 - 00:28:57  
(No text transcript available)

### Archive Resource 2

**Taken from Ruth Gayfer's (Daughter of Lieutenant Edwin Gayfer) individual interview**  
**Christmas letter (Written by Ruth's Father to Ruth's Mother)**

**19th of December 1917**

*My Darling,*

*I am just going to bed, tired out after a very hard day. But before doing so must get a few lines off to you, to let you know I am still in the land of the living.*

*It is now four days since I received your postcard - but I have been so disappointed not to have received a letter from you for a week now. Let's hope we shall all be home soon and then there will be no more partings. We have had our first real fall of snow on Sunday last, and it hasn't cleared away yet. It snowed all Monday and has been freezing ever since. Today has been bitterly cold and after completing our usual day's work on the roads we were marching home when we received orders to go and unload a stone train. You can tell how cold it was when I tell you the stones had all frozen together in the trucks and that we had to dig them out with picks. My sponge was frozen to the wash box this morning and the water in my bucket had ice half an inch thick on it. The water in our bottles was frozen in one lump and that is not exaggerating one bit. Some country this! I got unlucky last Sunday and instead of going to meet Groves as I had arranged, I had to go out with a working party. I could have sworn but of course did not do so.*

*I am sorry to say I haven't been able to get any cards or anything. I'll just have to wish you as merry Christmas as possible, and I do so hope it'll be a happy New Year for us both darling. What a difference this Christmas to last. Comparisons are odious, particularly so at the moment. But there are brighter days in store. I shall not forget last New Year's Eve. How nice everything was to set out on a new year with you at my side. Would that we could have remained so. Goodnight darling, excuse this short letter as I am so tired.*

*Give my kind regards to your ma & accept my best love & extra kiss for Christmas*

*Eddie"*

**Photographs of Ruth's Mother and Father – see layAR Resource**