Imperial War Museums: First World War Film Collection

>> View collection IWM has an extensive collection relating to the First World War including diaries and letters, works of art, photographs, three dimensional objects, books, pamphlets and film. The Film Archive holds around 250 hours (projected at 18fps) of First World War material. The collection illustrates all aspects of the conflict, both at home and on the fighting fronts. It includes the renowned film The Battle of the Somme - now granted UNESCO Memory of the World status – which shows trench warfare as captured by official army cameramen. There are also films covering the war at sea and in the air, propaganda, women's war effort and the involvement of Commonwealth troops.

The idea for a national museum dedicated to the First World War was conceived in 1917. Film has been an integral part of our collection right from the start of IWM as an institution. The museum made its first preservation copies as early as 1921, making our Film Archive one of the oldest in the world. With the outbreak of war in 1939 the remit was extended to include the Second World War, and today IWM collects records relating to any military conflict involving British and Commonwealth troops from the First World War to the present day.

Throughout the last century, the film collection has be an invaluable source for academic study, film and television productions, and members of the general public. The First World War film collection has been fully catalogued and is available to search on the European Film Gateway as well as on the IWM website www.iwm.org.uk The digitised films will enhance this research facility and make the collection accessible to view for a much wider audience.