New First World War programme opens in the North East

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Today, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is launching First World War: then and now, a £6m small grants programme to help communities mark the Centenary of the First World War.

HLF is making at least £1m available per year for six years until 2019. It will provide 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.

Community groups including those from County Durham, Stockton-on-Tees and Tyne and Wear are helping to launch the scheme across the UK, by exploring what the legacy of the First World War means to them and sharing their stories and projects with others hoping to mark the Centenaries.

From the repercussions felt by families back home in Tynemouth following the terrible losses on the battle grounds to touching glimpses of people trying to go about their daily lives in Durham and Stockton-on-Tees while separated from their loved ones, there are so many stories to be told, the legacy of which continue to impact and shape the lives of our communities today.

Ivor Crowther, Head of HLF North East, said: “The impact of the First World War was far reaching, touching and shaping every corner of the UK and beyond. The Heritage Lottery Fund’s new programme will enable communities in the North East to explore the continuing legacy of this war and help young people in particular to broaden their understanding of how it has shaped our modern world.”

Sebastian Faulks CBE, broadcaster, novelist, author of Birdsong and member of the Government’s First World War Centenary advisory group, said: “HLF’s First World War small grants programme is an opportunity for every street, town or village to make sure they remember the cataclysmic events of a hundred years ago. It is a chance to learn and to commemorate in whatever way they choose."

Welcoming the launch of First World War: then and now Culture Secretary of State, Maria Miller, said: “It is completely right that we mark the centenary of the First World War with a national programme capturing our national spirit and saying something about who we are as a people. But what we do also needs to help create an enduring cultural and educational legacy for communities. The HLF grant programme announced today will play a big part in this, and builds on the substantial investment they have already made towards the Centenary.”

Successful projects will include:

- researching, identifying and recording local heritage; creating a community archive or collection;
- developing new interpretation of heritage through exhibitions, trails, smartphone apps etc;
- researching, writing and performing creative material based on heritage sources; and
- The new programme can also provide funding for the conservation of war memorials.

If a grant of more than £10,000 is needed for a First World War project, applicants can apply to HLF through its open programmes. HLF has already invested £12m in projects – large and small – that will mark the Centenary of First World War.

Notes to editors

If you have a project idea to mark the Centenary, an online application pack is available on the programme page or contact the HLF North East Team at northeastcontact@hlf.org.uk or 0191 255 7570.

Examples of HLF funded First World War projects in the North East:

Tynemouth World War One Commemoration Project
Over 1700 Tynemouth residents died in military service during World War One. Their lives are now being remembered by the Tynemouth World War One Commemoration Project, which has been awarded £48,873 by the Heritage Lottery Fund to research and record the impact on this small North Tyneside community of such a significant loss of life.

Volunteers leading the project have developed a dedicated database, which will have images, scanned documents and over 2000 biographies available to download when it goes online next spring. They will receive oral history training in order to collect material and memorabilia relating to the fallen. This will be used for a travelling exhibition, which will tour the borough, and a play about William Hunter, one of the 1700 who was executed by the British Army, will be performed for a variety of audiences.

Time Slides (An Exhibition and Exploration of Great War Photos)
A hundred year-old photographic collection was the focus of this project. The Heritage Lottery Fund awarded The Wartime Memories Project £15,000 to explore the impact of the First World War on everyday lives through the photographs, which are glass slides dating from 1898 to 1920. They were previously owned by Bishop Auckland photographer William Dixon Dent, and range from family portraits to aerial reconnaissance photographs from the First World War.

Volunteers drawn from the Durham and Stockton-on-Tees area researched, digitised and preserved the photographs, and developed an exhibition and short film around them. Experts from Durham Record Office, the RAF Museum at Hendon and the National Archives gave advice on how to interpret some of their items relating to the training undergone before soldiers went to the front.

UK Government Centenary plans
In October 2012, the Prime Minister set out the Government's plans to mark the centenaries of the First World War commencing in 2014. These plans include a £35m refurbishment of the First World War galleries at the Imperial War Museum (IWM); The Government's principal partners in the commemorations will be the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the IWM, but will encompass support for a multitude of other initiatives, large and small, as they come together in the months and years to come.

Speaking at the Imperial War Museum in October, Prime Minister David Cameron, said: "A truly national commemoration cannot just be about national initiatives and government action. It needs to be local too...Let's get out there and make this centenary a truly national moment in every community in our land."

Further information

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