



How To Build Your School's Local First World War Roll Of Honour Spreadsheet Teaching Resource

1. Visit the local War Memorial & note down the names of soldiers killed (many more for WWI than WWII).

Some War Memorials are more detailed than others - some just give names, others ranks, regiments and even dates of death.

Photograph the memorial so students can cross-reference with it without you having to do all the paperwork just for a trip round the corner to see it!

If you can't find your local war memorial visit the Channel 4 lost generation website www.channel4.com/lostgeneration & search for the local memorial there - this gives the location and lists the names on it, but nothing else (Be warned this site is unfortunately littered with errors so it's best to see the memorial for yourself)

Visit the local church - some memorials are tucked away in churches so can be easily missed. Churches may contain memorial plaques to individual soldiers or their own rolls of honour.

2. Check the local library to see if there have been any books already published on your location & the Great War.

For example I started with 'Attleborough in War Time' by Major JH Kennedy (1919) which listed all Attleborough soldiers who served in the First World War, including information on:

| SURNAME | 1ST NAME | RANK | REGIMENT | DATE ENLISTED | DATE DIED / DETAILS |
|---------|----------|------|----------|---------------|---------------------|
|---------|----------|------|----------|---------------|---------------------|

Concentrate on soldiers killed - there is more information readily available to tie up on these soldiers, although there may be more information still available in the local community from those who survived. Your completed roll of honour spreadsheet eerily reads just like a school register!

The town's history also gave me other extras, including a report on the funeral of one of the earliest casualties which I have linked up to the spreadsheet.

3. Tie up the information with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission website www.cwgc

This enables you to add extra columns to your roll of honour spreadsheet on Age & Site of memorial/grave as well as a possible local address and family details.

The information for these columns is, however, less complete.

It's always best to start with soldiers with the more unusual names - it's surprising how many soldiers with the same names died!

4. Consult the *Soldiers Died in the Great War* CD Rom. This lists information on 703,000 officers and men killed in service of the British Army - it is a compilation of information from 80 volumes published in 1919 which can also be used but are less easy to search. The CD is fully searchable by name, regiment, rank, date of death, theatre of war, how killed, place of enlistment, place of birth, place of residence, all of which can be used to cross reference information already gained or add columns to the roll of honour spreadsheet. At £285 it is an expensive resource to buy, but it is usually available to use at main libraries, e.g. the Millennium Library in Norwich and the Yarmouth Local Studies Library.

5. The www.roll-of-honour.com/ site is worth visiting to see if your local War

Memorial has been researched already. If so it will just need transforming into a spreadsheet to allow students to make sense of the data.

6. Search the Picture Norfolk website www.library.norfolk.gov.uk which has many pictures of local soldiers. These can be linked to the roll of honour spreadsheet to bring it to life.

7. Some of your soldiers may be buried locally so visit the town's cemetery to pay your respects & add photos of the graves to link to the roll of honour spreadsheet - it's surprising how many white commonwealth headstones there are in English churchyards!

A similar activity could provide the focus for battlefield visits to France & Belgium to track down the graves of soldiers the students feel they already know something about - it certainly added meaning to my own visit to Ypres in the summer. Again graves could be photographed and linked to the roll of honour spreadsheet.

8. Put out an appeal in the school newsletter & local newspaper to see what extra information can be gained to link to the spreadsheet roll of honour. Ask students if they know of relatives having fought in the *Great War*. Whilst this may not return immediate results as far as adding to the roll of honour spreadsheet, it may brought in other unrelated medals & memorabilia which can be photographed to add to your range of teaching resources. You can also help students research their own not so local relatives through the same process - stimulating interest in the First (or even Second) World War and the process and skills of history and the historian.

9. The Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum in Norwich is an excellent local source of information, especially on Norfolk regiment soldiers. The Castle Museum also has a searchable database of Norwich soldiers in the Great War. Use the www.noah.norfolk.gov.uk/ search facility.

10. Finding the stories behind these soldiers will prove more difficult. Searching the Internet by typing the name of the soldier, their regiment and date of death requires lots of time & patience but occasionally turns up results - other people may well have done the research first.

The London Gazette may give extra information about medal winners for MCs & VCs so select what seems to be the most interesting and unusual lead.

If you have details of navy personnel including the name of the ship served on this may be easier to track down to link to the roll of honour spreadsheet. We had several soldiers drowned on the Royal Edward so it was possible to research extra information on this story to link to the roll of honour spreadsheet.

View the local newspaper e.g. the EDP on microfilm for the war years to see what else that generates - a bit of a mammoth task to say the least though! Again this may be worth dipping into for a selected case or two where the leads already exist.

11. Use the 1901 census to fill in some more of the statistical gaps, e.g. age or family. www.1901censusonline.com gives you a basic free search for names / ages / place of residence but charges to view complete households. Free BDM site www.freebdm allows you to find dates of birth and marriages.

Visit the Public Records Office at Kew to track down an individual soldier's service record.

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ gives access to a free search of the 5.5million army

service medal index but not the complete service record, 60% of which were destroyed in WW2 bombing.

Australian full service records are searchable and may be available online at www.naa.gov.au/the_collection/recordsearch.html - an excellent rich source of material.

Likewise Canadian attestation papers are searchable at www.collectionscanada.ca/02/020106_e.html

It is surprising just how many emigrants there were who served with overseas units.

12. NB Obviously all of this can be very time consuming. It could be set up as a Gifted & Talented History research club project done by the students themselves.

What impact does the spreadsheet have on teaching and learning?

Students feel they have a local link to the topic. They like the local stories the information this generates - I was able to use information gleaned in this way to enhance my teaching of the Battle of the Somme - we have a first day victim on our memorial. Students have a chance to deal with real life information relevant to their place & to ask & answer historical questions drawn out from the uncertainties associated with this sort of statistical data.

I take students into the ICT rooms for between 1-2 lessons on the spreadsheet, but the spreadsheet could be used in paper form back in the classroom, although the advantage of the computer is that it sorts the info for you.

Using the spreadsheet in itself is heavily differentiated and could be used right across the KS3-5.

Outcomes could be in the form of a poster task to present findings, or in the

form of a completed question sheet which leads into whole class discussion & reflection.

The spreadsheet could be used as a starter or way in to engage with WWI or as a plenary to sum up findings and test hypotheses drawn out of the teaching of WWI.

I would be glad of any comments & suggestions to develop this work further and would be glad to offer any assistance & advice you may need if you are undertaking or have undertaken a similar project.

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