

Press release

Winners of The National Archives' First World War Short Film Competition Announced

EMBARGOED until 09:00 GMT Monday 16 February 2015: The winner and runners-up of the First World War '[Files on film](#)' competition by The National Archives are announced today.

Abdul Qualam Aziz, age 40 from West Norwood, South London, wins first prize of £500 with his short film '[I Stood With The Dead](#)' which uses [Siegfried Sassoon's record \(WO 339/51440\)](#) for inspiration and features his son, Qualam Junior age 6, reading parts of Sassoon's famous war poem of the same name. Judging panel member, **Alastair Bruce OBE, Royal, Religious and National Events Commentator for Sky News and historical advisor for several feature films and ITV's *Downton Abbey***, commented on the winning entry:

"The mix of the mesmeric delivery of the young narrator, the sense of loss in the playground, the haunting and yet polished clean helmet all juxtaposed to compare today, youth and innocence with the Great War. The children of the late 19th century were evoked for me in this piece and the documents were thereby brought both to life but also to compelling reality."

Abdul Qualam Aziz said:

"I'm delighted to have won The National Archives competition. It was a brilliant learning process for both myself and my son about a different aspect of the First World War. Although he's too young to understand everything surrounding the film at the moment, I'm looking forward to telling him we won and using it as an opportunity to continue his education."

Second prize of £200 went to John Ryder, age 47 from Leytonstone, East London, for his short film '[July 1917](#)' which uses Siegfried Sassoon's protest letter as inspiration. The judges felt this was a very atmospheric piece of work with a haunting and resonating combination of imagery and voice. Also on the judging panel, **Chris Croucher, award-winning filmmaker and producer of season five of ITV's *Downton Abbey***, said: "The voice over working against the text on the screen was impressive. The constant rolling of names with Sassoon's words ending in the Tower of London's poppy display was very powerful."

Third prize of £100 went to Matylda Wierietielny, age 25 from Manchester, for her film '[Shellshock](#)', which interprets medical records of servicewomen in the First World War (MH 106/2208) through music and contemporary dance with flashes of real images of barbed wire and ruined buildings. **Chris Croucher, award-winning filmmaker and producer of season five of *Downton Abbey***, said: "For me, I am always a fan of taking a story and looking at interesting ways of interpretation. The modern dance and voice over of Shellshock really hooked me in. Simple BUT very effective."

[All 5 shortlisted entries](#) can be seen on The National Archives YouTube channel.

Jeff James, Chief Executive and Keeper of The National Archives and Chair of the Files on Film judging panel, said: "We are delighted with all the entries received for the First World War Files on Film competition. Using imagination, creativity and filming technique, they explore the diverse collection of records held at The National Archives allowing people to engage with the First World War as never before."

The [Files on Film](#) competition, supported by the [Friends of The National Archives](#), aims to encourage filmmakers to use the diverse collection of documents and pictures housed at The National Archives in Kew as the inspiration for an original feature.

For further information, please contact Rebecca Simpson, Press Officer at The National Archives on: 020 8392 5277 or e-mail: press@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Notes to Editor:

Social Media: Follow The National Archives [@UKNatArchives](https://twitter.com/UKNatArchives). The competition will be using the hashtags: #filesonfilm #FWW100

Images for publication use: <https://www.flickr.com/gp/59260229@N06/98su5v/>

More about the Files on Film competition:

Ten First World War documents were selected from the archives and put online for this competition. Entrants had to use one or more of these documents as the starting point for their three-minute short film. It could be a character, a line, or the whole document. Documents include songs from the Women's Land Army booklet, Siegfried Sassoon's famous war protest letter and Mata Hari's security service file. The competition closed on Wednesday 7 January 2015. The winners were chosen by the Files on Film panel of judges comprising:

Chris Croucher is an award winning filmmaker with nearly ten years of on set experience within the film and TV business. He is currently producing season five of 'Downton Abbey' for Carnival Films & TV. His most recent short 'Friend Request Pending' (writer/producer) toured the globe. The film premiered at the 2012 BFI London Film Festival and stars Judi Dench, Penny Ryder and Tom Hiddleston.

Alistair Bruce OBE is the Royal, Constitutional and Religious Commentator for Sky News, the UK's premier 24hr satellite news channel. Alastair contributes to FOX News, ABC and the BBC giving an insight to modern events with a historical perspective. Alastair was involved with the multiple Oscar-winning hit movie *The King's Speech*, the award-winning film *Young Victoria*, and the Masterpiece Classic TV series *Downton Abbey*.

Jeff James is Chief Executive and Keeper of The National Archives. Jeff has overall responsibility for The National Archives' future direction as well as current performance, and is accountable to ministers for both. His role is to lead in all The National Archives' many different activities, in our work with government and in providing services to the public. Jeff is Keeper of Public Records and Historic Manuscripts Commissioner.

Ian Hay-Campbell is Chairman of The Friends of the National Archives. Originally from New Zealand, he has a keen interest in 19th and 20th century British and Commonwealth history. Before he retired in 2005, Ian was a broadcaster with the BBC World Service and then joined the Foreign & Commonwealth Office as a career diplomat. Since his retirement he has researched his family's history, using the resources at The National Archives.

Krishna Kaur is Equality and Diversity Coordinator at The National Archives. She has over twenty years' experience of working strategically at a European, national, regional and local level to facilitate organisational cultural change, working predominantly across the Criminal Justice Service.

About The National Archives:

For the record, for good...The National Archives is a government department and an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). As the official archive of the UK government and England and Wales, we look after and make available to the public a collection of historical records dating back over 1,000 years, including records as diverse as Domesday Book and MI5 files.

Follow the press office on Twitter [@TNAPressOfficer](https://twitter.com/TNAPressOfficer) and for general news [@UkNatArchives](https://twitter.com/UkNatArchives).

About Friends of The National Archives:

The Friends of The National Archives, established in 1988, is a voluntary organisation, dedicated to supporting The National Archives' role in preserving and providing access to the nation's records. They provide vital help to The National Archives in many projects, enabling records of all kinds and classes to be conserved, preserved, catalogued, made accessible and studied. Support for projects is provided through grants and volunteers.

