



THE

NATIONAL

ARCHIVES

# Great War soldier's record

What can we find out?

Key Stage 3-4 | Early 20th Century 1901-1918

Lesson pack

# Introduction

On the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Britain sent many soldiers to fight in France and Belgium, known as the 'Western Front'. Men came from all classes of society. Some were already in the army when war started and many others volunteered to fight as soon as war broke out. However, as the war dragged on, conscription was introduced in 1916 and men had to join the army. Coming from various backgrounds and experiences, soldiers reacted differently to the horrors of war and life as a soldier. Their behaviour and conduct as soldiers was written down in their individual service papers.

This lesson focuses on Donald Campbell, a young Scottish man who joined the army on 10th August 1903. He was 18 years and 4 months old. Here you can examine his service papers. As Private Campbell joined the army years before the outbreak of war, it is important to work out what he did and where he went. Where did he come from? What was he like? Was he a good soldier? Use this lesson based on military records to find the answers to these questions.

## Suitable for:

KS 3 - 4

## Time period:

Early 20th Century  
1901-1918

## Connections to the Curriculum:

Key stage 3:

The First World  
War and the Peace  
Settlement

Key stage 4:

AQA GCSE History:  
Conflict and tension:  
the First World War,  
1894-1918

Edexcel GCSE History:  
c1900-present:  
Warfare and British  
society in the modern  
era

OCR GCSE History:  
War and British  
Society c.790 to  
c.2010; attitudes and  
responses to war

# Contents

Introduction	Page 2
Contents	Page 3
Teacher's notes	Page 4
Background	Page 5
External links	Page 6
Tasks	Page 7
Source 1	Page 9
Source 2	Page 12
Source 3	Page 14
Source 4	Page 17
Source 5	Page 19
Source 6	Page 21

## Teacher's notes

This lesson has a video starter activity based on one of our documents to 'hook' students into the lesson tasks that follow.

The lesson focuses on a Scottish First World War soldier, Donald Campbell. The main enquiry requires students to decide whether he was a 'good soldier'. This lesson does not give a broad history of the First World War, it is hoped to provide a sense of the conflict through a case study of a single soldier. By studying the issue in this way, students are able to reflect and develop their knowledge and understanding of the war from a different perspective. Campbell was a professional soldier, not a new recruit in 1914. At the start of the lesson, students record which qualities constitute a 'good soldier'. Then, in order to test their assumptions, they study extracts from Campbell's army records, his service details and draw their own conclusions about his abilities.

Campbell's records form a part of the 2 million 'Burnt Records' which survived bomb damage in the Second World War. At the National Archives they are called WO (War Office) 363 records. These records reveal details about a soldier's attestation (signed agreement to serve in the army), service, discharge, demobilization after the war and death in the period 1914-1920.

## Sources

Image: Photograph entitled 'Reservists call-up notice' from the Illustrated London News, 1916, Catalogue ref: ZPER 34/148

Sources 1-6: WO 363/C – First World War record of Donald Campbell.

## Background

### 8493 / Private Donald Campbell

Each member of the British army has service papers that record their army career. Upon joining the army, the first of these papers, called the Attestation Form, is filled in. This is a form that records detailed information about the soldier including name, age, address, height, hair and eye colour, previous jobs, and whether or not they have been in prison for committing crimes. When completed and signed, the soldier is given their unique Regimental number.

Donald Campbell joined on 10 August 1903 and became a member of the 1st Battalion of the Royal Scots Lothian Regiment, who gave him the number '8493'. He was five feet five inches tall, weighed 137lb, came from Inverness, and worked as a cellarman in the pub trade before joining the army. Many young men such as Campbell joined the army for adventure and to see the world. Other records show that he spent time in the Army serving in Britain, India, Pakistan, France and Belgium.

### Ypres

On 23 May 1915, Donald Campbell died of wounds he suffered the previous day. He had been wounded in action on 22 May during the second battle of Ypres. Now a large town in Belgium, during the First World War Ypres was the site of three huge battles. On 22 April 1915 the Germans attacked the Allied trenches, beginning the second battle. The Allies were pushed back several miles, although quickly dug new trenches to prevent the Germans breaking through. The next 40 days saw frequent attacks and counter-attacks from both sides. By the time this second battle of Ypres ended on 31 May the Germans had only gained a small amount of land and both sides suffered appalling casualties, including the loss of Private Donald Campbell after 11 years, 287 days service.

## External links

[IWM Collections](https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections)<sup>1</sup>

Find out more from Imperial War museum collections.

These blogs tell the story of other First World Soldiers and show how to research them:

[My Tommy's War: thinking of you](https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/tommys-war-thinking/)<sup>2</sup>

[My Tommy's War: bravery in the ranks](https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/tommys-war-bravery-ranks/)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections>

<sup>2</sup> <https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/tommys-war-thinking/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://blog.nationalarchives.gov.uk/tommys-war-bravery-ranks/>

# Tasks

## History Hook – Starter Activity

[Watch History Hook: Great War Soldier's Record](#)<sup>1</sup>

### 1. You need to decide what makes a good soldier.

- Think about your personal responses to the questions posed below:
  - Does a good soldier always obey his orders?
  - How would a good soldier act?
  - What would a good soldier be prepared to do?
  - Would a good soldier ever get drunk?
  - Why is it difficult to decide what makes a good soldier?
- Write a paragraph, expressing your own opinions, under the title 'My requirements to be a good soldier'

### 2. Look at Source 1. This source shows part of a disciplinary record.

- Why is this important to see this record?
- Look at the titles carefully – what is the fourth column for?
- What does this suggest about expectations? (Think – would you expect this title to be part of an official form?)

### 3. Read Source 2, 3 and 4. These records show Donald Campbell's charges.

- How old was Private Campbell by 1913?
- What was Private Campbell found guilty of in Glencorse on 15 January 1913?
- Using information from all three extracts, what offences was Campbell found guilty of throughout his military career?
- In your opinion, how serious were these offences?

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJKLu6Nli-k>



## Tasks

4. Look at Source 5. This is Donald Campbell's employment sheet:

- What do you think the initials in the 'military character' column stand for?
- How is Campbell described in December 1913?
- How is he described six months later?
- What evidence is there in this source to show that his behaviour changed between 1913 and 1914?

5. Look at Source 6. This is Donald Campbell's casualty record:

- Why is this source useful to us?
- When and where was Private Campbell wounded in action?
- What happened a day later?

6. Using all the source evidence you have examined, look back at your 'requirements to be a good soldier'.

- Would it be possible for a historian to suggest that Campbell was not a good soldier?
- What evidence could a historian use to suggest that Campbell was a good soldier?
- In 200 words explain your own opinion of Private Donald Campbell – was he a good soldier? Back your ideas up with clearly explained source evidence. Make sure you examine both viewpoints before reaching your final conclusions.



Catalogue Ref: WO 363/C

Date of Offence	Rank	Cases of Drunkenness	By whom reported and Names of Witnesses	PUNISHMENT awarded	Date of award, or of order dispensing with trial	By whom	Date of Commencement	Date of Expiration	REMARKS
Aug 93.	Sgt.	27	Campbell	10 d.	8-11-93	Joined			

## Transcript: Source 1

REGIMENTAL DEFAULTER SHEET

First Regiment of Foot

Signature of C.O or Adjust \_\_\_\_\_

Regimental Number and Name 8493 Donald Campbell

Attested 10 8 1903 Joined 11 8

Transcript (cont.): Source 1

Place	Date of Offence	Rank	Cases of Drunken -ness	By whom reported and names of witnesses	OFFENCE	PUNISH -MENT awarded	Date of award or of order dispensing with trial	By whom	Date of Commence-ment	Date of Expiration	REMARKS

## Source 2: Donald Campbells employment record

Catalogue Ref: WO 363/C

Place	Date of Offence	Rank	Cases of Drunkenness	OFFENCE	By whom reported, and Names of Witnesses	PUNISHMENT awarded	Date of award, or of order dispensing with trial	By whom	Date of Commencement	Date of Expiration	REMARKS
Glencore	15/1/13	Plt		I Obtaining extension of leave under false pretences	Documentary C. Watson H. Watson	Admonished	5.2.13	Major Dixon	—	—	—
Glencore	4.2.13	"	1	Drunk on joining station							
Glencore	22.5.13	"	2	Drunk in barracks about 8.30pm	G. Richardson H. Bauckhoppe	Fined 2/6	23.5.13	Cpl James	—	—	—
Greenhill	4/13	"	3	Drunk in barracks about 8.45 p.m.	C. S. Watling Dgt. Watson	Fined 4/6	6/13	Capt. Price	✓	—	—

## Transcript: Source 2

Place	Glencorse		Glencorse	Crownhill
Date of Offence	15.1.13	4.2.13	22.5.13	4 11/13
Rank	P/c	"	"	"
Cases of Drunkenness		1	2	3
Offence	I. obtaining extension of leave Under false pretences	II. Drunk on joining the Station	Drunk in barracks about 8.30pm	Drunk in Barracks about 8.45pm
By whom reported and Names of Witnesses	Documentary C.S.Watson	L/C Salmon	Sg Richardson L/C Bauchope	C.S. Watering Sgt Watson
PUNISHMENT awarded	Admonished		Fined 2/6	Fined 4/6
Date of award, or of order dispensing with trail	5.2.13		23.5.13	6 11/13
By whom	Major Dyson		Capt James	Capt Price
Date of Commencement	--		--	--
Date of Expiration	--		--	--
Remarks				



**Source 3: Donald Campbells Squadron, Troop, Battery and Company Conduct Sheet page 1. Catalogue Ref: WO 363/C**

[illegible]

## Transcript: Source 3

Squadron, Troop, Battery and Company Conduct Sheet.

(Printed in 1907)

HWV 800,000 2-7 [No.7] 8 86 92	Forum B.191 34	The Royal Scots	Regiment -----	Signature of O.C. Company -----
--------------------------------------	----------------------	-----------------	-------------------	---------------------------------------

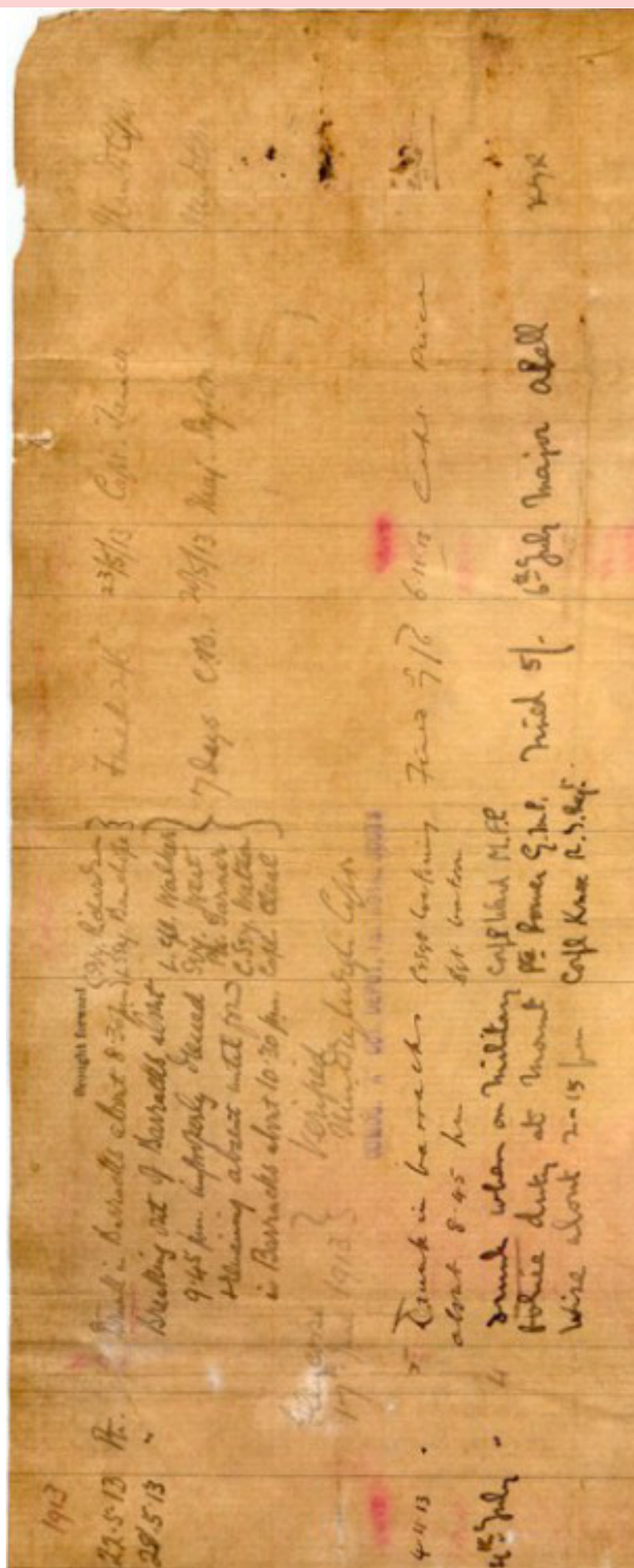
Regimental Number and Name	Enlistment	Trade	Good Conduct Pay, Service Pay (Monetary payments, many of which are illegible)
No 8493 Donald Campbell	Age on 10.8.03 18 years 4 months	Cellar man	
Joined Depot Date 10.8.03	Period of	Religion	
Joined 1st Batt Date 15.10.03	with Colours 12 1 years	Presby	
Joined Depot Date 16.10.04	with Reserve 1 years		
Joined 1st Batt Date 18/9.05			
2nd Batt 19.10.05			



## Transcript (cont.): Source 3

Place			
Date of Offence		15.1.13	
Rank		Pte	4.2.13
Cases of Drunkenness			
Offence	The top area of the form has been used for various officers notes	I. obtaining extension of leave under false pretences To be carried over	II. Drunk on joining the station
Names of Witnesses			
PUNISHMENT awarded		Admonished	
Date of award, or of order dispensing with trial		5.2.13	
By whom		Major Dyson	
REMARKS			

Source 4: Donald Campbells Squadron, Troop, Battery and Company  
Conduct Sheet page 2. Catalogue Ref: WO 363/C



## Transcript: Source 4

1913		Brought forward				
22.5.13	Pte	Drunk in Barracks about 8.30 pm	Serj Richardson L Serj Bauchope	Fined 2/6	23/5/13	Capt. Tanner
28.5.13	"	Breaking out of Barracks about 9.45pm improperly dressed & remaining absent until found in Barracks about 10.30pm	L.Cpl. Walker Serj West Pts Garner C.Serj Watson Corpl Cleal	7 days C(onfined to) B(arracks)	25/5/13	Maj. Dyson
4.11.13	"	Glencorse 17th June 1913 } Verified } (Signature) COMDG 'A' COY DEPOT THE ROYAL SCOTS Drunk in barrack about 8.45pm	Cr. Sgt Watering Sgt Watson	Fined 7/6	6.11.13	Capt. Price
4th July	"	drunk when on military duty at Mount Wise about 2.15pm	Corpl Ward MFP Pte Power GMP Corpl Knox R S Regt	Fined 5/-	6th July	Major Abell

Source 5: Donald Cambell's Employment Sheet.  
Catalogue Ref: WO 363/C

Rank at date of assessment	Medical character	Cases of drunkenness on duty.	Ordinary cases of drunkenness	Nature of employment since last assessment	Character from civil employment point of view during period	Date
Private	V.G.	-	3	Duty	An intelligent and hard-working man. He has a telegraphy certificate	16.12.13.
Pte	V.G.	-	-	Duty	Intelligent, reliable & hard-working	26/6/14.

\* The following abbreviations will be used in this column : Very Good, V.G.; Good, G.; Fair, F.; Indifferent, D.; Bad, B.

## Transcript: Source 5

Rank at date of assessment	*Military character	Cases if drunkenness on duty	Ordinary cases of drunkenness	Nature of employment since last assessment	Character from civil employment point of view during period	
Private	V.G.	--	3	Duty	An intelligent and hard working man. He has a telegraphy certificate	16.12.13 COMDG
Pte	V.G.	--	--	Duty	Intelligent, reliable, hard-working	26/6/14



Catalogue Ref: WO 363/C

(1001)—Wt. W2528-1272-502, 600-11-14.-K. & K. Forms B. 103/1. Army Form B. 103.

Casualty Form—Active Service.

Regiment or Corps *3<sup>rd</sup> Bn. The Royal Scots*

Rank *Q<sup>1</sup>* Name *Campbell, D.*

Regimental No. *8443* Service reckons from (a) *10/8/08*

Enlisted (a) *10/8/08* Terms of Service (a) *7-5*

Date of promotion to present rank } Date of appointment to lance rank }

Extended Re-engaged Qualification (b) *Good*

Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, etc., during active service, as reported on Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.

Report		Place	Date	Remarks taken from Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or other official documents.
Date	From whom received			
<i>06.23 3/4</i>	<i>Appd. 22. 11/11/08</i>			<i>RG</i>
<i>06.24 4/4</i>	<i>Depd. Lance Soldier</i>			<i>RG</i>
<i>06.25 5/5</i>	<i>Wounded in Action</i>	<i>Spence</i>	<i>22. 5. 15</i>	<i>W.H.</i>
<i>06.26 6/6</i>	<i>Died of Wounds</i>	<i>Spence</i>	<i>22. 5. 15</i>	<i>W.H.</i>

(a) In the case of a man who has re-engaged for, or enlisted into Section D, Army Reserve, particulars of such re-engagement or enlistment will be entered, e.g., Signaller, Shoelace Smith, etc., also special qualifications in technical Corps duties.

## Transcript: Source 6

### Casualty Form – Active Service Regiment or Corps 3rd B" The Royal Scots

Regimental No 8493	Rank Pte	Name Campbell D.
Enlisted (a) 10/8/03	Terms of Service (a) 7 & 5	Service reckons from (a) 10/8/03
Dare of promotion to present rank }_____	Date of appointment to lance rank }_____	Numerical position on roll of N.C.Os} _____
Extended _____	Re-engaged _____	Qualification (b) Corp

Date	From whom received	Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties etc., during active service, as reported on Army Form B, 214, Army Form A.36 or in other official documents. The athority to be quoted in each case.	Place	Date	Remarks taken from Army form B.213, Army form A 36 or other official documents.
	ob 23 3/15	App(li)ed Hosp(ital) (without pay)	On Service	17.3.15	Memo
	ob 22 4/15	Dep(loye)d Lance Stripe	— —	14.4.15	B2069
	ob 22 5/15	Wounded in Action	Ypres	22.5.15	Memo
	ob 22 6/15	Died of W(oun)ds	On service for officer – 3rd	23.5.15 Echelou G H	Memo ____ Record





## Why do our hyperlinks come with footnotes?

Our resources are designed to be printed and used in classrooms, which means hyperlinks aren't always accessible digitally. We include the full link at the bottom of the page so that you can type in the address without distracting from the main text of the lesson materials.

## Did you know?

The National Archives Education Service also offers free workshops onsite in Kew and online in your classroom.

Our [Onsite Workshops](#) are available for free here at The National Archives and allow students to experience genuine original documents reflecting over 1000 years of history. From Elizabeth I's signature to the telegrams of the sinking Titanic, students love the wow-factor of being able to see real history on the desk in front of them.

Our [Online Workshops](#) allow our Education Officers to teach through your projector, leading discussions and guiding students through activities based around original documents. All you need is a computer with a projector, webcam and microphone. We'll arrange a test call before your session to check the tech is working.

---

## Find out more:

 [nationalarchives.gov.uk/education](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/education)

 [education@nationalarchives.gov.uk](mailto:education@nationalarchives.gov.uk)

[facebook.com/TheNationalArchivesEducationService](https://facebook.com/TheNationalArchivesEducationService)

[twitter.com/UKNatArcEdu](https://twitter.com/UKNatArcEdu)