Track the troop movements of your WW1 army ancestor with this interactive feature that maps his unit’s location - step by step.

You’ll also be able to read, and hear information about each location.

PLUS:
Army command structure during the Great War

FORCES-WAR-RECORDS.CO.UK
WW1 Troop Movements - using Order of Battle of Divisions (ORBATS); a new ‘moving’ interactive, audio-visual feature developed by Forces War Records.

This new feature on the Forces War Records website is an interactive, audio visual map that you can use to track the battalion your WW1 army ancestor would have been with.

Army records that have the battalion listed are very likely to have the WW1 Troop Movements map feature...

Alternatively you can view all battalion movements by visiting WWW.FORCES-WAR-RECORDS.CO.UK/MAPS/SEARCH

See how it works...
1. If you know your WW1 army ancestor’s unit, now you can see where he was based...
   Type either the battle or the unit name into the main search box then click the orange button.

2. A list of all the units appears
   You can choose a unit to click on to start your journey.

3. Discover his unit’s location
   The first thing you’ll see is the general location and the number of manoeuvres the map will show you, click on the icon.

4. Tracking his unit
   All locations will be shown by icons; the blue icons show one manoeuvre, the green icons indicate multiple manoeuvres, click on these to expand locations.

5. Seeing it mapped out, step by step, watch their journey evolve from place to place
   Click on any blue icon and you’ll see a ‘Next’ arrow and a ‘Previous’ arrow. These will walk you through the journey.

You’ll also be able to read and hear information about what happened at each location.
The expertise behind it...

Our specialist data team has been working for some time to transcribe the official Orders of Battle publications, published by His Majesty's Stationery Office, as well as numerous official histories of the Great War, to help create this in-depth record of military operations and engagements by the British Army. All of this information is now available to Forces War Records members in the form of this new interactive map, and we hope that it will provide an insight into the movements and actions of your ancestor.

“We were proud and privileged to be able to bring this project to our customers. As military historians we knew the story of the formation and deployment of the British Army during the First World War was complicated - however it was not until we began to study and research the Orders of Battle of each Division that we began to see exactly how complicated.

One part of the project was to show in which Division each and every unit of the British Army served during the War. This involved recording the composition of all 93 British Divisions between 1914 and 1918, a total of 19,103 Infantry, Artillery, Cavalry and Cyclist unit movements or reorganisations in and between these divisions.

Secondly we were given the task of recording geographical coordinates for any significant movement or action that these Divisions were involved in. From their place of formation, training, port of disembarkation and arrival, to their disbandment, demobilisation or post-armistice instructions.

Of the 93 Divisions, 23 only ever served at Home (including Ireland) with the other 70 Divisions all serving abroad in some capacity. We were thus able to record 322 locations on the Home Front and 1315 overseas that British soldiers served in.

Finally we were tasked with writing a brief précis of each Battle Honour awarded to each Division as listed in the Orders of Battle. This proved to be by far the most difficult part of the project. Given that people have written books on some of these actions, how were we to sum it up in a couple of paragraphs!

We tried our best and hope our customers enjoy what we have written. We think it is a good overview and we have given you enough information to be able to go on and search further details on any specific unit your ancestor may have served. At least we hope we might have taken some of the confusion out for you.” **Paul Connell**

VISIT WWW.FORCES-WAR-RECORDS.CO.UK/MAPS/SEARCH TO TRACK THE MOVEMENTS OF YOUR ANCESTOR’S TROOP
Army command structure during the Great War

**EXPLAINING THE FORMATIONS WITHIN THE BRITISH ARMY:**

The formation titles used by the British Army in the Great War can often be confusing, especially as there are so many of them. Here we have tried to explain the various names and sizes of the units.

Probably the best way to explain the structure of the army is as a collection of building blocks, called sub-units, which can be combined in different ways to form larger groups, known as units. These units can then in turn be put together in different combinations to form larger groups, known as formations.

**GENERAL HEADQUARTERS (GHQ)**

**OVERSEAS OPERATIONS IN A THEATRE OF WAR**

**SEVERAL ARMIES UNDER ONE GHQ,**

**TYPICALLY 2 CORPS PER ARMY,**

**TYPICALLY 3 DIVISIONS PER CORPS,**

**TYPICALLY 3 PER DIVISION,**

**AROUND 1,000 MEN PER BRIGADE, TYPICALLY 4 BATTALIONS PER BRIGADE**

**AROUND 50 MEN PER PLATOON**

**AROUND 12 MEN PER SECTION**

**TYPICALLY 4 COMPANIES PER BATTALION LETTERED A,B,C,D. AROUND 230 MEN PER COMPANY**

**AROUND 5,000 MEN PER BRIGADE, AROUND 18,000 MEN AND 76 ARTILLERY PIECES PER DIVISION**

**TYPICALLY 3 PER DIVISION, AROUND 5,000 MEN PER BRIGADE**

**TYPICALLY 2 CORPS PER ARMY, AROUND 45,000 MEN PER CORPS**

**SEVERAL ARMIES UNDER ONE GHQ, THERE WERE 5 ON THE WESTERN FRONT IN 1918**

**GENERAL HEADQUARTERS (GHQ)**
The Army Division during the Great War of 1914-18 was the main fighting formation on the battlefield. So much more than just men, guns and Artillery went into an army division to ensure that the army functioned effectively. Commanded by a Major General, with his staff of 15 officers and 67 men, they controlled three Brigades, each of four Battalions. In 1914, each British infantry division consisted of three infantry brigades, each of four battalions, with two machine guns per battalion, (24 in the division). They also had:

**ARTILLERY:** Three Royal Field Artillery Brigades with 18-pounder guns, a Howitzer Brigade with 4.5in (110mm) howitzers, a Heavy Battery of the Royal Garrison Artillery with 60-pounder guns and a Divisional Ammunition Column, which supplied the artillery brigades with their shells.

**CAVALRY:** The single cavalry division assigned to the BEF in 1914 consisted of 15 cavalry regiments in five brigades.

**ENGINEERS:** Two Royal Engineer Field Companies, one Royal Engineers Signals company.

**DIVISIONAL TRAIN:** the Division’s transport, comprising three Companies from the (A.S.C) Army Service Corps.

**MEDICAL:** Three Field Ambulances from the (R.A.M.C) Royal Army Medical Corps.

**VETERINARY:** Due to most transport being horse drawn, there were Veterinary Sections from the (A.V.C) Army Veterinary Corps.

As the Great War progressed there were many changes, arrangements and additions made at Divisional level, and its strength could fluctuate drastically if it had been heavily engaged. The changes meant that by 1918 a Division was now smaller in manpower, though it had more co-ordinated artillery support from field guns and machine guns than that of August 1914, as and there was an increased emphasis on providing the infantry divisions with fire support.
Army formation terminology explained

GHQ: Under command of the War Office

ARMY: A formation made up of several corps and commanded by a general. Corps were allocated to armies as required. It was customary to refer to armies in capital letters, e.g. FOURTH ARMY, and each army contained circa 100,000 individuals.

CORPS: A formation made up of several divisions and commanded by a lieutenant general. Divisions were allocated to and from corps as required. Potentially built up of 50,000 individuals or more, it was traditional to refer to corps with Roman numerals, e.g. X Corps.

DIVISION (DIV): A formation made up of three or four brigades of approximately 18,000 individuals, commanded by a major general. It was customary to refer to divisions with Arabic numerals, e.g. 11th (Northern) Division. These divisions had units of all ground forces (infantry, artillery, engineers, transport, signals, medical, training units).

BRIGADE (Bde): A regiment (not an actual body of men, but an organisation under which a number of battalions are formed and maintained) consisted of two or more battalions, while brigades consisted of four or more battalions from different regiments (the battalion was usually referred to as a ‘unit’). Each brigade was commanded by a brigadier general.

BATTALION (Bn): Approximately 1,007 soldiers made up a battalion of whom 30 were officers, which was commanded by a lieutenant colonel.

COMPANY (Coy): The sub unit of a battalion, commanded by a major. Four companies made up a battalion. (The cavalry equivalent was a squadron, the artillery equivalent a battery).

PLATOON: The sub unit of a company. Four platoons made up a company and these were commanded by a lieutenant or second lieutenant.

SECTION: A sub unit of a platoon, commanded by a corporal. Four sections made up a platoon.

CADRE: Later in the war some divisions and battalions were reduced to cadre strength, which was when most of the fighting strength of the unit was drafted to other units and a small cadre (number) of troops remained to reform the unit with new soldiers, or to disband completely towards the end of the war. This allowed new troops to receive training from veteran troops prior to reaching the Front. The cadre would normally be brought back to Great Britain to be either absorbed or reformed, and would usually occupy the HQ offices in the barracks where their regiment was billeted. Also, the cadre of the battalion would be used to train new units arriving in France, normally consisting of American troops.
Over 2 million records in our exclusive collections you’ll find only on our site, including:

- Military Hospital Admissions & Discharge Registers WWI
- WWII Daily reports (missing, dead, wounded & P.O.W’s)
- Home Guard Officer Lists 1939-1945
- Imperial prisoners of war in Japan
- Prudential Assurance Roll of Honour 1914-18
- UK Army List 1916
- Seedies Merchant Navy Awards

...and many many more