Transcriptions Reveal Life in the Trenches

As part of our World War I commemoration, we recently invited you to help transcribe “Tales from the Trenches”: written accounts of World War I soldiers and their first experiences in battles. This series contains remarkable and moving accounts of war through unit histories, station lists, operations reports, messages, and more.

Brumbelow, James L. Pvt. 132nd M.G. Bn. Co. C 36th Division 1918, 236.33.61.

National Archives Identifier 77416662

You answered the call! Of the 2,409 records in the series, 6,652 pages were transcribed by
our citizen volunteers. We were especially moved by the descriptions of the battlefield by the soldiers who experienced the war first hand, and wanted to find a way to capture their experiences.

Now that the transcriptions are nearly complete, we are excited to share how your work transcribing has unlocked the stories within these records, and ensured these soldier’s voices are heard.

By performing a “search within” these records in the Catalog, we can now search for events, battlefield conditions, or even emotions that soldiers wrote about within their accounts. For example:

The word “artillery” can be found in 523 records in this series:

“About 4 PM we moved forward to canal under heavy artillery and machine gun fire. Were relieved next morning.”

National Archives Identifier 77424758. Transcribed by Citizen Archivist Ndlund

The word “afraid” can be found in 23 records in this series:
“I was afraid that we would never reach our objective with one man alive but we only had 4 killed and two wounded all it takes is nerve”

Ready to give it a try? Here’s how to search within a series:

From the Details section of the series description in the Catalog, click on the blue box: “Search within this series”
In the top left search box, remove the wildcard symbols *.* and replace it with the word you would like to search:
Click on the magnifying glass or press “enter” on your keyboard to start your search. See your results!

Give it a try, and let us know what you find within these records! You could try searching for “trench,” or “Verdun,” or even “pigeon.” Have you discovered something interesting or unexpected? How else could you use this feature in your research?

There are a few more records in this series that can still be transcribed! Help us finish up these last few records to make these stirring accounts fully accessible.
New in the Catalog

*Notes from Japan Regarding the Treaty of Yedo, 1860 - 1862*

This series consists of original Japanese notes received from the Japanese Shogunate, foreign ministers, and the first Japanese Embassy in the United States regarding the Treaty of Yedo, courtesies extended to the Japanese Mission, and Minister to Japan Townsend Harris. Included are letters to President James Buchanan from the Tycoon of Japan, and an album of autographs of members of the mission. English and Dutch translations of some documents are filed with the notes; other translations are filed as enclosures to despatches from Townsend Harris. Many documents are in Chinese.

*Letter from Shogun Takugawa Iyemochi, 8/15/1860. National Archives Identifier 6883722*

*Letter from Wakizaka, Mizuno Idzumi-no-kami and Itakura to the Secretary of State. National Archives Identifier 6883710*
Virtual Genealogy Fair!

Participate in our biggest genealogy event of the year - free and online!

WHAT: The National Archives will host a live, virtual Genealogy Fair via webcast on our YouTube channel. Participate in our biggest genealogy event of the year, with “how-to” family research guidance for all skill levels! Topics include: Federal records on slaves and slave owners; Civil War widows’ pension files; Civilian Conservation Corps photographs; Tennessee Valley Authority personnel files; military nurse histories; recruitment and guidance for Citizen Archivists; and a tutorial on the National Archives’ Online Catalog. For full schedule, videos, handouts, and participation instructions, visit the Virtual Genealogy Fair web page.

WHEN: October 24, starting at 10 a.m. EST

WHO: Archivist of the United States David S. Ferriero, Executive for Research Services Ann Cummings, and records experts from National Archives’ research facilities nationwide

WHERE: Anywhere! Participate during the Fair while it is live streamed on the US National Archives’ YouTube channel. Watch individual sessions and download the materials at your convenience -- live or after the event.
Captioning: Live captioning will be available online. If you require an alternative or additional accommodations for the event, please email KYR@nara.gov or call 202-357-5260 in advance.

Background: The National Archives holds the permanently valuable records of the Federal government. These include records of interest to genealogists, such as pension files, ship passenger lists, census, and Freedmen’s Bureau materials. Learn more at “Resources for Genealogists and Family Historians.”

Follow the National Archives on Twitter @USNatArchives and join the Genealogy Fair conversation using #genfair2018.

Questions or comments? Email us at catalog@nara.gov.