



## Press Release

### Project Launch: "Erster Weltkrieg in Alltagsdokumenten" – The First World War in everyday documents

Embargoed until  
24/03/2011, 11 h

### Pictures, letters and memorabilia wanted

Berlin, 24 March 2011: "The First World War in everyday documents" is launched today with a call to the public in Germany to participate in building a digital European archive by contributing private memorabilia from the First World War. We are looking for photographs, letters, diaries, short films, audio recordings, objects and their stories. Following the launch of the project, four roadshows take place in Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Munich and Stuttgart. The project is a partnership between Europeana, the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek and Oxford University.

#### Call for participation

We ask everybody to bring World War 1 memorabilia to the roadshows. They will be digitised professionally and added to the online archive, along with corresponding descriptions. Independently of the roadshows, everyone can contribute their digitised images and information to the website - [www.europeana1914-1918.eu](http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu)

Until 2014, the year of the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of World War One, we will collect memorabilia in digital form from many of the countries involved in the War. The project aims to save people's family memories of this tragedy that convulsed Europe and make them accessible to the world.

The historian Prof Dr Gerhard Hirschfeld of Universität Stuttgart/Bibliothek für Zeitgeschichte, highlights the significance of the project: *"It is vital that we hold onto private letters and documents to reconstruct the everyday life of wartime and the mindsets of those involved. We need to give a voice to those people who otherwise remain silent. Their experiences as well as their fears, hopes and fantasies are normally inaccessible to historians."*



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Memorabilia and stories are kept by families for a while, but after a century their significance is starting to fade. This First World War digital archive makes it possible to renew and share their significance.

*“By inviting people to actively contribute to its content, Europeana opens up to users on a new level. To bring together family lore and the memories of those involved in World War One from different countries, who have experienced this time as allies or opponents, is a fascinating undertaking. World War One resonates in the collective memory, and this project will spark renewed popular interest and also scholarly research,”* said Dr Elisabeth Niggemann, Chair of the Europeana Foundation and Director General of the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek, outlining Europeana’s aims for the project.

### **A new approach: crowdsourcing**

One innovative aspect of the project is the application of crowdsourcing - collecting input from people at large and assembling a wide variety of family memorabilia which will be made accessible to the public and to researchers. In 2008, Oxford University produced a remarkable collection of 1914-18 papers, pictures, souvenirs and memorable stories, digitised by people across the UK and the Commonwealth in the Great War Archive - [www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/gwa/](http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/gwa/)

### **The film**

One of the stories collected by the British project is connected to Germany. A contribution to the Great War Archive records the friendship of RAF man Bernard Darley and German prisoner of war Otto Arndt. A short film about this unlikely friendship illustrates the project’s intention vividly. Luise Arndt, Otto’s great-grandchild, finds out more about her grandfather on the website and even gets in touch with Bernard’s family.

### **Public digitisation roadshows**

|   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| Deutsche Nationalbibliothek,<br>Frankfurt am Main                               | 31 March 2011, 10-20 hours |
| Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin - PK   | 2 April 2011, 10-17 hours  |
| Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, München  | 6 April 2011, 10-20 hours  |
| Württembergische Landesbibliothek /<br>Bibliothek für Zeitgeschichte, Stuttgart | 12 April 2011, 10-20 hours |

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### **Notes:**

**Europeana** ([www.europeana.eu](http://www.europeana.eu)) is a partnership of European cultural heritage associations that have joined forces to bring together the digitised content of Europe’s galleries, libraries, museums, archives and audiovisual collections. Currently Europeana gives integrated access to 15 million books, films, paintings, museum objects and archival documents from some 1500 content providers. The content is drawn from every European member state and the interface is in 27 European languages. Europeana receives its main funding from the European Commission.



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