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The First World War Letters of H.J.C. Peirs: A Digital History

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Abstract
This poster provides a high-level overview of The First World War Letters of H.J.C. Peirs: A Digital History project, giving information on its creation, the collection of letters, how it has used digital mapping, and its use in the classroom.

Keywords
World War I, Digital Humanities, War and Memory Studies, Gettysburg College, Jack Peirs

Disciplines
European History | History | Military History

Comments
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This conference material is available at The Cupola: Scholarship at Gettysburg College: https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/histfac/91
The First World War Letters of H.J.C. Peirs
A Digital History
jackpeirs.org

From Archival to Digital

The Peirs papers, previously held in a private collection, include nearly 300 letters plus photographs, trench maps, telegrams, military documents, newspapers, three-dimensional artifacts, and ephemera. The First World War Letters of H.J.C. Peirs has transcribed, digitized, contextualized, and made available to the public letters written by Lieutenant Colonel H.J.C. “Jack” Peirs who served with the British Army on the Western Front from 1915-1919.

The First World War Letters of H.J.C. Peirs is grounded in a pedagogical theory that joining First World War primary sources with contextualization is valuable for multiple audiences, whether academic researchers, students, educators, or casual visitors to the site. At its core, the project is both public and educational. Only five months after the site went live, Gettysburg College students were accessing Peirs’ letters digitally for class assignments. Through the story of H.J.C. Peirs, students gain a more personal understanding of the way the First World War progressed, how conduct of the war evolved over time, and how soldiers adapted to their environment in the trenches.

Jack Peirs was a British officer in the 8th Battalion, The Queen’s (Royal West Surrey) Regiment. For three years, Peirs served on the western front, fighting in every major campaign waged by the British Army from 1915 to 1918. During the war, Peirs rose in rank from Lieutenant to Lieutenant-Colonel and he was decorated with Distinguished Service Order (two bars) and named a Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George at the King’s Birthday Honours in 1919.

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Special thanks to...