Running Wires: Digital History in the Classroom and the Field

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Running Wires: Digital History in the Classroom and the Field

Abstract
The First World War Letters of H.J.C. Peirs is a digital history project that publishes the letters of a British World War I officer 100 years to the day they were written. By telling the story of one person, we have aimed to humanize a dehumanizing war and supported the effort to commemorate the centennial of the conflict. While the project was conceived with pedagogy in mind, it has grown beyond the letters and crossed boundaries: from the analog to the digital, from the classroom to the public, and from the archives to the field.

Keywords
digital humanities, digital history, world war i, archives, memory

Disciplines
Digital Humanities | European History | Military History

Comments
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RUNNING WIRES
Digital History in the Classroom and the Field

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Bucknell University Digital Scholarship Conference
October 6, 2018

#budsc18 #s1a // @jackpeirs // #teampeirs
#TeamPeirs

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Hugh John Chevallier “Jack” Peirs (1886-1943)
From the Analog to the Digital

The First World War Letters of H.J.C. Peirs

About

Welcome to the First World War Letters of H.J.C. Peirs, a digital history project at Gettysburg College.

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. 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.

Jack Peirs was a hard service and he was a prolific correspondent. He wrote home weekly to members of his family of his experiences at the front. On the hundredth anniversary of the day in which Peirs composed each letter home, we will release his words here for you to read.

Please feel free to engage with the site. Use these letters in your research (properly attributed) and in your classroom. Bookmark our page, share our posts on social media, and follow H.J.C. Peirs on Twitter and Instagram (@JackPeirs) and like our Facebook page.

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LE VERGUIER - 21-22 MARCH

Trenches: Bombardment of positions with regular and gas shells commenced at 4.30 AM. The Headquarters is moved again to a sunken road on the south-west corner of Le Verguier.

The dugout was on the buried cable route, but by 7 AM all telephone communications with the forward companies was lost.

At 10:50 AM Companies A and C were cut off from retreat by the enemy. A Company’s Lance Corporal John Sayer showed incredible resistance for which he later received the Victoria Cross.

At 3 PM Peirs arrived to take over command and attacks on the village begin. Throughout the night Peirs leads counterattacks.

On the morning of the 22, only Fort Grebe was and the Battalion Headquarters remain and Peirs ordered retreat, against his orders to hold the town.
From the Analog to the Digital
From the Analog to the Digital

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From the Archives to the Field

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From the Archives to the Field

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From the Archives to the Field

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>June/July 2016: 100th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme</th>
<th>March 2018: 100th anniversary of the German Spring Offensive and the defense of Le Verguier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● <strong>Field research</strong> – sites in France and Belgium where Peirs spent time in 1916 &amp; 1917</td>
<td>● <strong>Field research</strong> – sites in and around Le Verguier specific to the 8th Battalion’s movements in March 1918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● <strong>Archival research</strong> – National Archives in London, the Surrey History Centre in Woking</td>
<td>● <strong>3 Skype calls</strong> back to students in Gettysburg and 7 Facebook Live sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● <strong>Photographic survey of Peirs</strong>– related sites in London and Carshalton</td>
<td>● Making connections with local people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Funded by a <strong>Research and Professional Development Grant</strong> from the Office of the Provost</td>
<td>● Funded by <strong>crowdfunding campaign</strong> facilitated through the Department of Development, Alumni, and Parent Relations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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From the Archives to the Field
“So that’s that.”

my dear Father.

So that’s that. Our next difficulties will arise in keeping the men occupied before peace is declared a afterwards till demobilized, which I presume will be done gradually out there.

There is an educational scheme in the
love to all Jack.