



PRESS RELEASE

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EXHIBITION TO MARK 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF FIRST WORLD WAR

Gibraltar will mark the 100th anniversary of the end of World War One with an exhibition which will be opened by the Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia on Thursday 25 October.

The exhibition has been compiled by the National Archives, under the direction of Archivist Anthony Pitaluga. The material on show includes photographs, films and artefacts relating to Gibraltar's involvement in the 'War to End all Wars.' A number of exhibits have been donated by members of the public.

A special feature of the exhibition will be a replica Army Recruitment Office from the period.

The exhibits will be divided into several sections. The murder of Austrian Archduke Franz-Ferdinand and the Countess Sophie Chotek, which triggered the conflict, opens the exhibition. The second section is specifically about Gibraltar and will cover both military and the civilian life. This includes a Colonial Office list of Gibraltarians who served in HM Forces at various theatres of war. The last such list is dated 19 October 1916 and includes the names of 76 Gibraltarians, with three men marked as killed in action.

Gibraltar played an important role as a centre for the provision of medical care for the wounded, at what was then known as the British Military Hospital. Hundreds of wounded servicemen were ferried by sea to Gibraltar from theatres of War in Gallipoli and the Dardanelles to be looked after in the military hospital. They were transported on ambulance wagons from the harbour to the hospital and the men of the Gibraltar Volunteer Corps carried the wounded on stretchers. The exhibition also comprises a section precisely on the Volunteer Corps and another on the Post Office and the censor.

There will be World War One film footage on display. The four items include the exploits of a German submarine U35 which operated in the Mediterranean in 1917 and whose crew took footage of military action from the deck. In response to enemy u-boat activity, the allies organised their shipping into convoys in order to protect merchant vessels. Gibraltar became the most important port for the assembly of convoys in the World. This led to a huge presence of the navies of allied powers, with some 40 US Navy ships and 4000 personnel based in Gibraltar under the command of a Rear Admiral. There is a section of the exhibition devoted to the military presence of the United States.



Enlarged photographs will display the scenes of jubilation that greeted the end of the War and the more solemn moments that followed with the construction of a number of war memorials around Gibraltar.

The exhibition, to be held in the John Mackintosh Hall, will be open to the public until Armistice Day, 11 November.

In addition to the exhibition, the Government will mark the 100th anniversary with the projection of 'The Biggest Tommy in the World' on the North Face of the Rock and also with its support for a new book which focuses on the role that Gibraltar played during World War One.

'Not everyone knows that Gibraltarian lives were lost in the trenches of the Somme or that Gibraltar's harbour played such a key role in British and American naval operations,' said the Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia. 'I hope this exhibition will increase the community's awareness of this important part of the Rock's military history. The Government is very grateful to Anthony Pitaluga and his team for getting everything together and to the staff in my office who have provided the necessary support.'