CONFLICT RECORDS UNIT

SIR MICHAEL HOWARD CENTRE FOR THE HISTORY OF WAR

DOCUMENTING WAR CONFERENCE
King's College London, May / June 2022

Call for Papers

War has been a central feature of the human experience. It requires study from many different vantage points, from military, intellectual, and diplomatic history to histories of science and technology. The "lessons of history" are a much-discussed feature of this. Meanwhile, the challenges associated with documenting war – of identifying, accessing, collecting, preserving, and making use of war records – have often been taken for granted.

The contemporary policy relevance of primary sources – and of the historical methods and expertise needed to make sense of them – is increasingly reflected across the social sciences, in law and in other disciplines. Similarly, there is a broader interest in "battlefield evidence", "battlefield information", and "conflict archives" that currently animates policymakers, political scientists, civil society actors, and international organizations.

The Sir Michael Howard Centre for the History of War seeks to foreground this applied dimension of the historian's craft through its Conflict Records Unit. The conference will provide a forum for scholars to examine and reflect on conflict records, broadly conceived, and in historical and contemporary terms.

The Documenting War conference is tentatively planned as a two-day event to be held in May/June 2022. The first day of the event will consist of paper presentations and discussions. The second day will consist of a case-centric program of doctoral-level discussion and training.

An illustrative and by no means exhaustive list of potential paper topics includes:

- The ethics of war documents & documentation efforts
- The changing meaning over time of "captured", "enemy", "documents"
- Histories of wartime & post-war document capture, seizure, discovery, or destruction
- Histories of post-war & post-genocide documentation centres
- The role of media, communications, & artificial intelligence
- Civil society involvement in documenting war & its consequences
- International fact-finding missions, investigative "mechanisms", & the collection of battlefield evidence
- The judicial role of war-related historical expertise, sources, & methods

We invite original contributions from early-career and established scholars working in any field of study, but especially those exploring the intersection between points noted above and issues of foreign policy, defence, intelligence, grand strategy, irregular warfare, core international crimes, public health, new technology developments, security and development, and histories of state and empire.

Proposed case studies are especially welcome, as are paper proposals from current PhD candidates. The proceedings of the Documenting War Conference will help shape the research agenda on war documents, conflict records, and battlefield information. Toward that end, the organizers are planning an edited book and aim to include a selection of papers from the conference.

Submission instructions: Interested applicants should email a 500-word abstract and a one-page CV no later than 15 November 2021 to the Conflict Records Unit at cru@kcl.ac.uk, and include "Documenting War Conference" in the email subject line. Doctoral candidates or others interested in participating in the second day of the conference should specify this in their submissions. Selected participants will be notified by mid-December 2021 and will be asked to submit a full draft by 1 March 2022.

Contacts: For queries about the Conflict Records Unit, contact Dr. Michael Innes at michael.innes@kcl.ac.uk. For queries about the Sir Michael Howard Centre for the History of War, contact Professor Joe Maiolo at joe.maiolo@kcl.ac.uk.