



What did WW1 sound like?

Video transcript – Introduction

When World War One broke out, the British Army was faced with the challenge of turning millions of civilians into an army.

The men were taken to places like this firing range on the outskirts of Glasgow in order to be taught how to shoot rapidly and accurately.

This space would have reverberated with the crackle of rifle fire and perhaps the screams and shouts of a fierce instructor.

As a historian I'm always looking for source material to understand what things were really like. I look at archive documents, I visit the locations where troops trained and fought and watch archive footage recorded at the front.

In my mind's eye I can see the shells detonating, the machine guns firing and underground explosions so powerful that the earth literally collapses in front of our eyes.

But these filmmakers were not equipped with microphones. We do not know what the soldiers heard. So many years on, how can we possibly begin to imagine the noise that assaulted the ears of these men?