

Colourising the First World War

Warfare Magazine



The Lost Tommies in Colour, Tom Marshall (2016)

For a few years, Tom Marshall has been colourising black and white photographs. As his techniques and methods continue to improve, he's been fortunate enough to turn this amazing hobby into a job with home-grown, PhotograFix.

"I have worked with some of the world's greatest photo archives and museum collections, with publishers and historians, and with private family photos that each have their own unique stories to tell."

Using mainly Adobe Photoshop, Tom essentially colour washes the entire image, effectively making an individual painting. It may take several hours to complete, but Tom insists that it allows people, especially younger generations, to connect with the people they see.

"It's a sad truth that black and white images are often ignored or go unnoticed."

Spending most of his time researching the correct colours for uniforms, buildings, animals, and the like, Tom claims that sometimes it boils down to an "educated guess or using a degree of artistic license to choose a colour that looks 'right.'" Luckily for Tom, subjects like the First World War are heavily documented and can be researched in libraries' reference books or on internet forums.

His next project has been influenced by Australian journalist Ross Coulthart's discovery of World War One photographs. In 2011, a team of researchers, led by Coulthart, made a remarkable discovery when they uncovered a collection of hundreds of photograph from the First World War. The images are now forever immortalised and featured in a book by Coulthart, entitled *The Lost Tommies*.

"It was Doug Banks, moderator of the WWI Colourised Photos page on Facebook, who introduced me to the project and my next challenge.

"When the BBC's One Show began a public plea to try and identify the lost Tommies from the photos, contributors to Doug's page rose to the challenge and started colourising the fascinating images to bring the subject's to life and try and identify them.

"Of the hundred images, I chose the particular pictures for the sharpness of the facial details, as they stood out as having real feeling behind their eyes; like they'd seen things most of us couldn't imagine."

Tom Marshall would like to thank Ross Coulthart, head of the research team that uncovered these fantastic images and author of *The Lost Tommies*, for his permission to share these colourised versions.

If you should recognise any of the men featured in this article, please get in touch!



Original Image courtesy of Ross Coulthart, author of 'The Lost Tommies' & The Kerry Stokes Collection - Louis & Antoinette Thullier Images



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