**Teacher notes: Jack Cunningham VC**

In this folder are fragments of the life story of John ‘Jack’ Cunningham VC and of the context to ‘his’ World War One.

Jack Cunningham was born in 1917 into a Traveller family. He volunteered for the Hull Pals in 1914. In 1916 he won the VC at the very end of the Battle of the Somme. He served to the end of the war and was permanently disabled as a result. He struggled to return to civilian life.

The various materials here present a complex, human story of World War One. They can be used as a short activity with students. They could be printed off, laminated and given to small groups of students:

* At the start of learning about World War One to stimulate student engagement and hypothesising. Students could piece together Jack’s story and then ask questions about the First World War and its impact. The teacher could then teach the topic, providing answers to students’ questions and referring back to the story to ask ‘how typical was Jack’s war?’
* While studying the Battle of the Somme to introduce a human story to the big narrative and to take away from the focus on the first day. The story can provide a bridge from 1916 to the later part of the war on the Western Front.
* Following a study of the course of World War One, Jack Cunningham’s story could form part of an enquiry into the impact of the war on the survivors. The problem of veterans settling back into civilian life and the consequences for people around them is still a current issue in the 21st century.
* As part of a battlefields tour when visiting the Serre Road, Beaumont-Hamel and Thiepval. Jack Cunningham won his VC for action just north of the village of Serre.