Queen and Country was created by Steve McQueen in response to his 2003 commission by the Imperial War Museum's Art Commissions Committee to create a work in response to the war in Iraq.

Inspired by the dedication and selflessness of the servicemen and women he met in Basra in 2003, McQueen devised the concept that each of the soldiers killed in the conflict be commemorated on official postage stamps.

Using images selected by the families of the deceased, full sheets of stamps, one per soldier with their name and date of death, are displayed in vertical sliding drawers contained in an oak cabinet.

Neither for nor against the war, Queen and Country, McQueen’s dignified and moving response to his commission as war artist, is a work of personal tribute and commemoration, in his own words:

‘An official set of Royal Mail stamps struck me as an intimate but distinguished way of highlighting the sacrifice of individuals in defence of our national ideals.'
The stamps would focus on individual experience without euphemism. It would form an intimate reflection of national loss that would involve the families of the dead and permeate the everyday - every household and every office.'

Commissioned by the British Council in association with The Art Fund, Imperial War Museum and Manchester International Festival.

This commemorative book featuring 160 service men and women has been published on the occasion of the display of the work at the National Portrait Gallery, London, 20 March – 18 July 2010.