'TATTENHALL REMEMBERS'

The Great War 1914-18

ARTEFACTS CATALOGUE

In the interests of security, those individuals who have so willingly contributed to this Exhibition remain nameless. The items on display are hugely collectable and increasingly rare. That said, our sincere thanks to you all – personal artefacts such as these provide levels of curiosity and interest in all those that view them.

1. Entrenching Tool (a combination pick and shovel)

Entrenching tools were essential items of equipment during trench warfare – they are short handled spades or shovels. Soldiers required this piece of equipment for creating and maintaining their defensive fighting positions, digging latrines, digging graves, and (sometimes) as a weapon in close combat.

2. Brodie Steel Helmets recovered from Thiepval

Helmets worn by British soldiers were known as 'Brodie Helmets', designed by JL Brodie. Our lads referred to them as 'shrapnel helmets', 'Tommy helmets' and the 'Tin Hat'. The German Army referred to the Brodie Helmet as the 'salad bowl' (Salatschüssel). Head wounds were numerous in trench warfare and the steel helmets were modified so as to minimise injuries from shell splinters and shrapnel. It is estimated that some 7.5m Brodie Helmets were produced during the conflict.

3. Various Nose Fuses/Caps from WWI shells

These nose fuses/caps of different calibre (diameter) were recovered from the Western Front. The pointed and curved 'ogive-shaped' nose gave the shell improved aerodynamic performance. By 1918, the British Army had fired 170m shells.

4. German Boots

German Boots with fitted hobnails, found in collapsed dugout in the Somme.

5. German Butcher Bayonet (dated 1915)

The German 'butcher' bayonet was standard issue to German infantryman. The blade increased in width towards the point (not unlike a butcher's knife).

6. German Crown Button

A single German Crown Button (possibly from tunic/uniform).

7. German Cross of Honour of the World War 1914-1918

This 'Cross of Honour' was belatedly introduced in 1934 (in the Nazi period) as a means of recognising the sacrifices made by German servicemen 1914-1918. The medal, issued to combatants, comprised a cross, a laurel wreath, the dates 1914-1918 and featured a pair of crossed swords. These medals were not issued

automatically – application had to be made by ex-servicemen or their surviving next-of-kin. The medal was suspended from a ribbon in black, red and white.

8. German Belt Buckle

In both WWI and WWI, German Soldiers had 'Gott mit uns' (God with us) inscribed on their belt buckles.

9. German Style Helmet & WWI Era German Army Bugle (self explanatory)

In 1914, the Imperial German Army wore the traditional 'Pickelhaube' (spiked combat helmet). These were later replaced by the 'Stahlhelm' (steel helmet). The shape was distinctive and was instantly recognisable. Like the British Brodie Helmets, the Stahlhelm was used to protect the head from shrapnel during warfare. German Army Bugle Calls were many e.g. directing troops to assemble/march/mount/dismount/boot and saddle/parade/call to prayer/call after prayer/move off etc. etc.

10. Mills Bomb Grenade

Designed in Britain by William Mills in 1915, the Mills Bomb Grenade was standard issue for the British Army. The exterior was serrated so that when detonated it broke into many fragments (i.e. a fragmentation bomb).

11. Egg Grenades

So-called because of their distinctive shape. The smooth body proved difficult to hold with wet and muddy hands so the design was quickly modified to include the raised centre band thus providing a better grip.

12. Screw Picket (Corkscrew Picket)

During trench warfare, groups of soldiers known as 'wiring parties' were sent out at night into no-man's-land to place these Screw Pickets in the ground. Ultimately, barbed wire would then be threaded through the loops. This technique provided a defensive wire obstacle and offered protection to the trench line. To avoid attracting enemy attention, the design allowed soldiers to silently screw the pickets into the ground (probably using their entrenching tool handle as leverage in the lower loop).

13. Barbed Wire recovered from Guillemont

Barbed wire was placed in the path of advancing troops. It was intended to trap and maim the opponent and was a serious threat to all men 'going over the top'. Maintaining and repairing damaged barbed wire defences was constant because shrapnel frequently cut the wire and because the enemy often sabotaged the wire.

14. Bayonets

Bayonets were designed to attach over or under the muzzle of the Lee Enfield Rifle. This turned the rifle into a 'spear' and would have been used as a last resort in close combat. Before setting off for the trenches, British infantryman were trained in Bayonet fighting techniques. The importance of the Bayonet as an offensive weapon was undermined during the war because of the increasing use of machine guns.

15. Grenade and fragment

Further example of a grenade of the fragmentation type.

16. Grooved Metal Strap

Probably from a machine gun.

17, 18 and 19. SRD Pottery Bottles – (formerly used for rum)

There is debate as to what 'SRD' represents but it is recognised that 'Service Rum Diluted' or 'Supply Reserve Depot' is acceptable. All of these examples were brought back from Flanders. The 2 similar examples in our Exhibition were produced by Pearson and Co., Near Chesterfield and the 3rd (the less common example impressed with the letters 'SRD') was produced by George Skey & Co., Tamworth.

20 and 21. Shrapnel Shell and Empty Shell Case

Shrapnel Shells contained large numbers of individual bullets which when ejected continued along the shell's trajectory but which then struck the target individually, so maximising the damage. They relied on the shell's velocity for their lethality. Shrapnel was named after Major-General Henry Shrapnel, an English artillery officer, who worked on the design and development of a new type of artillery shell.

22. Private collection relating to Sapper George Elson

George Elson was born in 1892 and enlisted for training on 15 December 1916. He joined the Royal Engineers, Railway COY. A Platelayer before enlistment, his training lasted for 6 weeks and he served for the period 31 January 1917 until 21 October 1919 - just short of 3 years. Sapper George Elson's Royal Engineer lapel badge, his British War Medal, his Allied Victory Medal (together with their original box) and a photograph of George Elson on a railway track are a feature of this Exhibition.

23. Private collection relating to Frank Lloyd Faulkner

Frank Lloyd Faulkner was born in 1896 and was killed on 31 July 1917 by a sniper's bullet. He was 20 years of age. He originally enlisted into the Cavalry (9th Lancers) with the East Surrey Regiment. This unique collection includes a variety of very personal items – his silver epaulettes, his 9th Lancers lapel pin, a pearl embossed pendant containing a photograph of Frank, his British War and Allied Victory Medals, a private notebook with pressed flowers, photographs of Frank, his 1915 Whistle and several letters, including a letter to his Mother dated 30 July in which he writes *'… if I ever get home…'*. A letter from his Commanding Officer dated 31 July 1917 (i.e. the following day) informs the family of Frank's death.

24. Private collection relating to Sgt Herbert William Smith

Before enlistment, Herbert William Smith was a Corn Merchant. He enlisted with the 11th Battalion Royal West Kent's and rose to the rank of Sgt. This collection, provides

a fascinating picture of an individual who was awarded the DCM (Distinguished Conduct Medal) for gallantry and devotion to duty during the attack on Hollebeke (SE of Ypres) on 31 July 1917. The citation states that Sgt Smith's work was a *'… fine example of coolness and bravery by bayoneting 4 Germans one after the other…'*. Within this collection are also photographs of Sgt Herbert William Smith, his full set of medals, his Citation for gallantry and devotion, a map of Hollebeke, his diary recollections of 31 July 1917, his diagnosis papers relating to Trench Foot (dated 4 August 1917), his ship's label as he was transported back to 'Blighty' (dated 9 August 1917) and various papers relating to his pension including a reference to an *'… extra 6d per day additional pension from 23 February 1919 on account of your distinguished conduct…'*.

25. Shell Case dated 1915

Rumour has it that this shell case (full of tobacco) was carried from Hill 60 by a member of the Machine Gun Corps. The Battle for Hill 60 in Flanders, which was an artificial hill created from the spoil of a nearby railway cutting, took place between 17 April – 7 May 1915. Germans occupied Hill 60 as a vantage point, overlooking Ypres. Hill 60 was captured and recaptured several times during the conflict, the final capture being by the British in September 1918.

26. 'Dead Man's Penny' Memorial Plaques

Plaques such as those shown in this Exhibition Case were issued to the next-of-kin after The Great War, were cast in bronze gunmetal and were known as the 'Dead Man's Penny' or 'Widow's Penny'. Over 1.3m Plaques were issued, using a total of 450 tonnes of bronze. The Plaque includes Britannia, classically robed and helmeted, supporting a trident by her right side and her right arm. In Britannia's left outstretched hand is a laurel wreath crown above a rectangular tablet on which appears the name of the deceased. No rank is shown since there was to be no distinction in death. The words 'HE DIED FOR FREEDOM AND HONOUR' appear around the edge of the Plaque. In the foreground a male lion stands facing right, originally described as 'striding forward in a menacing attitude'. Two dolphins encircle Britannia, representative of British sea-power. In symbolic confrontation, a further lion pounces on an eagle; a reference to the desired destruction of Germany. The designer was 'E Carter Preston' and his initials were also embossed on the Plaque.

The Dead Man's Penny featured in this section of the Exhibition is in the name of Gregory Albert Drake and is complete with its presentation case, together with an envelope and letter from King George V – the text reads as follows:.

(Address Buckingham Palace)
I join with my grateful people in sending you this memorial of a brave life given for others in the Great War.

27. Arthur Dell Brodbelt's Medals and Memorial Plaque

This framed collection shows the British War Medal 1914-1918, the Allied Victory Medal and the 'Dead Man's Penny' Memorial Plaque awarded to the family of Arthur Dell Brodbelt who died in April 1918, aged 32. The story of the 'Brodbelt Boys' is featured on the Tattenhall Local History Website (www.tattenhallhistory.co.uk) - they were the three sons of a prosperous family who lived in Brook Hall, Tattenhall. All 3 brothers fought in the conflict but only one returned. Arthur Dell Brodbelt and his brother Guy Brodbelt (who died in 1916 aged 28) are not listed on the Tattenhall War Memorial but their names are engraved on the plinth of the family grave. The Brodbelt family, in commemoration of the centenary of The Great War, has recently commissioned the restoration of the family grave in St. Alban's Churchyard.

28. Framed Medals

British War Medal and Allied Victory Medal - Bruce Heckford Sellon

29. Princess Mary Tins

In November 1914, Princess Mary (the 17 year old daughter of King George V and Queen Mary), invited monetary contributions to a 'Sailors & Soldiers Christmas Fund' so as to provide everyone wearing the King's uniform and serving overseas on Christmas Day 1914 with a 'gift from the nation'.

The response was overwhelming, and it was decided to spend the money on an embossed brass box, containing items such as tobacco, confectionary, spices, pencils, a greetings card and a picture of Princess Mary.

The embossed lids on each tin depicted the head of a female (Princess Mary), surrounded by a laurel wreath and flanked on either side by the 'M' monogram. Decorative cartouches contained the words 'Imperium Britannicum' with a sword and scabbard either side (top edge) and the words 'Christmas 1914', flanked by the bows of battleships forging through a heavy sea (lower edge). In the corners, small roundels housed the names of the Allies.

Of the 3 examples in our Exhibition, that displayed in the wooden presentation case is inscribed on the rear as follows *'…Major Robert Barbour, Cheshire Yeomanry…'.*

30. Medal Collection relating to Robert Barbour, Bolesworth Estate

Housed in the wooden presentation case are medals relating to Robert Barbour of Bolesworth Estate. (From left to right) - The first medal relates to his service in the Boer War with imagery of Queen Victoria positioned in the centre. The second and third medals are British War and Allied Victory Medals. The Territorial War Medal for Voluntary Service Overseas 1914-19 is the next medal in the collection and the final medal bears the initials G.v.R.   There is no inscription on the wooden box. A photograph of Robert Barbour appears with this medal collection – apparently, Robert Barbour wore the uniform in which he had served in the Boer War, in the 1914-18 conflict too.

31. Selection of Silk Embroidered Postcards

Silk embroidered postcards would have been sent home to mothers, wives and sweethearts. French and Belgian women embroidered different designs onto strips of silk mesh, the mesh then being sent to factories for cutting and mounting onto postcards. There were two types of design – that described above and another which formed a pocket, within which there was a message.

32. 'Comrades of the Great War' Lapel Badge

'Comrades of The Great War' was a non-political organisation which was established in 1917 to represent the rights of ex-servicemen and women who had served or been discharged from service during The Great War 1914-18.

33. Selection of Commemorative Peace Mugs

The Versailles Treaty was signed in 1919, after which many mugs were produced to celebrate the peace. A selection of these mugs has been loaned to the Exhibition.

34, 35 and 36. Selection of Daily Mail Official War Photograph Postcards

34) British Machine Gunners wearing Gas Helmets – chlorine gas was first used by the Germans in offensives in 1915. War was no longer shell for shell and shot for shot. Deadly gas clouds added to the risks of the masked gunner.

35) Church Service Before Battle – the postcard shows a Church of England service on the Battlefield for troops going into the trenches, the Chaplain officiating from a small field altar

36) Highlanders pipe themselves back from the Trenches – the caption reads 'our gallant Highlanders, who love to charge the enemy to the skirl of the pipes are fond of playing their national music in lighter moods as seen in the picture'. The postmark on the postcard is dated 11 March 1918.

37. Postcard 'USA Troops Don Gas Masks on the Aisne'.

Postcards were issued by the YMCA to provide comforts, shelter and recreation for soldiers. The full series comprised 312 postcards. This postcard illustrates the primitive nature of early gas masks.

38. WWI Sam Browne Leather Belt

WWI British Army Officer 'Sam Browne Belt' with diagonal Shoulder Strap. The belt is of thick good quality leather. This example has 1 brass attachment loop positioned on the belt. There are also various 'D shaped rings' for attaching accessories. The belt is named after Sam Browne VC who was a British Army Officer serving in India in the 19th Century. In those days, officers always carried a sword into battle. It hung from small metal clips on the leather waist belt and was called a 'sword frog' – this is to be seen on our Exhibition example.

39. Puttee

Example of a puttee. This was used for a covering to the lower part of the leg from the ankle to the knee. It consisted of a long narrow piece of cloth/felt and was wound tightly and spirally around the leg, serving to provide support and protection.

40. War Office Field Dressing Kit

An example of a basic 'first aid kit' carried by soldiers on the front line. It comprises a sealed waterproof package with 2 identical gauze dressings. The two identical parts were used to dress the entrance wound and the exit wound of a rifle shot.

41 and 42. Imperial German cartridge/shell cases from Patronenfabrik (cartridge factory) Karlsruhe

The markings on each shell case reveal the following:

(a) The tall shell case has the 'M Crowned' which represents the Kaiserliche Marine (Imperial Navy) arsenal's acceptance stamp. It is dated 'V 1914' and has an inspection quality control stamp of 290

(b) The shorter shell case is also from Patronenfabrik Karlsruhe and is dated 'Dez 1917' and has a quality control of SP255 which is the control/inspection mark for Patronenfabrik, Karlsruhe

43 and 44. Ornate Memorial Frames

These ornate memorial frames (one of which includes 'The Dead Man's Penny') were popular at the turn of the century and a way in which family members were remembered. Those featured in this Exhibition relate to Gunner Bernard Roffey and Private B Rees.

45. Facsimile Copies Daily Mirror – Thursday April 12, and September 6, 1917

These facsimile copies of the Daily Mirror 1917, serve to illustrate not the nature of trench warfare and the quagmire that was Flanders in the month of September 1917.