

November is a time of remembrance for many in the United Kingdom. The 11th day of November is the anniversary of Armistice Day, and has become a time to reflect upon both the past and present sacrifices being made by service personnel.

The North Herts museum service has an extensive collection of military objects, these include uniform, photographs and everyday items such as ration books. In order to commemorate the ending of the First World War we have selected photographs of a small number of items in storage to share with you here today.

Figure I is a photograph of Graham Sydney Gilbertson a second Lieutenant in the Bedfordshire Regiment, 4th Battalion and later the 7th Battalion. Unfortunately Mr Gilbertson died aged 19 on the 28th November 1917, he is commemorated on the Tyne Cot Memorial .



Fig I Graham S Gilbertson

Figure II shows the Death Plaque commemorating Graham S Gilbertson's life and death. The plaques were presented to the families of all who died during the First World War.



Fig II Death Plaque

Figure III is a ration book which is dated 6th July 1918 belonging to a local family of the name Waldock. Rationing was not introduced until February 1918 and was a response to an increase in German U-boat activity in the Atlantic. The Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) had been established in 1914 in order to ensure food shortages did not occur, in spite of initial panic buying in 1914 the population settled well into a routine until late in 1916. Britain relied upon food imports from Canada and America and until 1916 this was a relatively safe business, however in 1917 German U-boat activity increased and merchant ships were attacked. This resulted in DORA issuing a self-rationing policy which, unfortunately was not sufficiently effective and the continuing U-boat activity in the Atlantic meant that malnutrition was becoming a problem by 1918. In January 1918 sugar was rationed, and by the end of April butter, margarine, cheese and meat were added to the list. The decision to introduce rationing was shown to be the correct one as levels of malnutrition decreased.

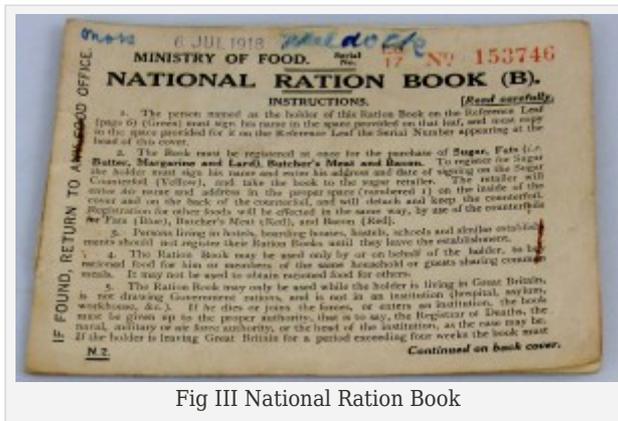


Fig III National Ration Book

We Will Remember Them



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