

23rd February 2009

Last Post: Remembering the First World War

27th February – 26th May 2009

The Royal Air Force Museum Cosford is delighted to be the first UK venue to host the touring exhibition 'Last Post: Remembering the First World War', to be located in the Temporary Exhibition Gallery, in the Museum's Hangar 1.

The exhibition, curated by The British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA) and Churchill Museum & Cabinet War Rooms, explores the vital role played by the Post Office during the First World War. It tells the stories of postal workers at war and on the Home Front and examines the essential role played by postal communications.

Over 75,000 men left their jobs in the Post Office to fight in the First World War, with 12,000 joining the Post Office's own battalion – The Post Office Rifles. As the men left to fight, tens of thousands of women joined the Post office workforce temporarily. For the first time, women were allowed to perform duties from which they had previously been excluded such as sorting mail and delivering mail in urban areas. Postal communications (including telephones and telegraphs) was an important tool in connecting Headquarters with the front line, as well as keeping soldiers and people at home in touch.

Last Post demonstrates how letters were delivered to the frontline, how the Post Office dealt with dramatic increases in volumes of mail and the vital part that censorship played in the war effort.

The exhibition will include information and photograph panels and features items relating to Captain Home Peel DSO MC of the Post Office Rifles who was killed in action in 1918.

Clare Carr, Assistant Curator Says:

"It is great to be the first venue to host this touring exhibition because it extends the Museum's coverage of the First World War. It includes poignant artefacts relating to a Great War casualty and sheds light on a hitherto unexplored aspect of the conflict".

Tony Conder, Chief Executive at the BPMA commented:

"The role of the Post Office in the First World War is an exciting story of bravery, spies and resilience against all odds, told through this fascinating exhibition."

Entrance to the Museum and the exhibition is FREE. There is also FREE onsite parking.

The Museum is open daily from 10am – 6pm. Entry to the Museum and parking are FREE. For further information, please call the Royal Air Force Museum, Cosford on 01902 376 200 or visit the museum website, www.rafmuseum.org/cosford.

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Notes to Editors:

- Royal Air Force Museum Cosford, Shifnal, Shropshire TF11 8UP
- Photo's available on request and are subject to copyright
- Open 10am – 6pm (last admission 5pm) all year (except 24-26 Dec and 1 Jan).
- Free admissions and parking
- For further information and all media enquiries please contact Karen Crick 01902 376 208 or email: karen.crick@rafmuseum.org
- www.rafmuseum.org
- Jenny Karlsson, PR & Communications Officer The British Postal Museum & Archive, www.postalheritage.org.uk, email: Jenny.karlsson@postalheritage.org.uk, 020 7239 2574
- About the British Postal Museum & Archive: The British postal Museum & Archive (BPMA) is the leading resource for all aspects of British postal history. It is a combined museum and archive, bringing together The Royal Mail Archive and a Museum Store. With collections ranging from staff records to stamps, poster design to photography and from transport to telegrams, it cares for the visual, written and physical records from over 400 years of innovation and service, illuminating the fascinating story of British communications. Records in The Royal Mail Archive are designated as being of outstanding national importance. For more information see www.postalheritage.org.uk