

WW1 MEMORIAL PLAQUES

Also known as Next of Kin Plaques / Dead Man's Penny / Widows Penny. The two plaques on display honour **REGINALD SYDNEY SMITH** who was wounded at Gallipoli and evacuated to Cairo, Egypt where he died June 19, 1915 and **HILTON JOHN CHESHAM** killed in action France May 14, 1918.

Plaque shows an image of Britannia holding a trident and standing with a lion. The designer's initials, E.C.P., appear above the front paw. In her left outstretched left hand Britannia holds an oak wreath above the rectangular tablet bearing the deceased's name cast in raised letters. The name does not include the rank since there was to be no distinction between sacrifices made by different individuals. Two dolphins swim around Britannia, symbolizing Britain's sea power, and at the bottom a second lion is tearing apart the German eagle.

Around the picture the legend reads (in capitals) "*He died for freedom and honour,*" or for the six hundred plaques issued to commemorate women, "*She died for freedom and honour*".



They were initially made at the Memorial Plaque Factory, 54/56 Church Road, Acton, W3, London from 1919. Early plaques did not have a number stamped on them but later ones have a number stamped behind the lion's back leg.

In December 1920 manufacture was shifted to the Royal Arsenal, Woolwich. Plaques manufactured here can be identified by a circle containing the initials 'WA' on the back and by a number stamped between the tail and leg (in place of the number stamped behind the lions back leg).

The design was altered slightly during manufacture at Woolwich by Carter Preston since there was insufficient space in the original design between the lion's back paw and the H in "*HE*" to allow an "S" to be inserted to read "*SHE*" for the female plaques. The modification was to make the H slightly narrower to allow the S to be inserted. After around 1500 female plaques had been manufactured the moulds were modified to produce the male version by removing the S.

The plaques were issued in a pack with a commemorative scroll from King George V; though sometimes the letter and scroll were sent first.

A common die was used to make a wax pattern. Each worker would manipulate their lettering tools to create the impression for the individual name. The positive image with the raised letters in the rectangular frame above the British lion's head was produced.