How do we remember World War One?

Stories of an unfamiliar war

Narrated by Michael Portillo

How many of us would recognise this image as being on the frontline in France?

Chapattis, being made by an Indian soldier, one of almost a million who saw service during the First World War.

The war was much wider than the Western Front, and involved many countries across a vast geographical area, from northern Europe, to east Asia, and southern Africa.

Less than half of British men of military age joined the armed forces, but even for those who did, experiences of service could be very varied.

Some never left the UK, where they were employed moving supplies, running the army's administration, or guarding against an invasion that never came.

With the British Army running an efficient postal service, which delivered 12 million letters every week, soldiers were not as cut off from the home front as we might imagine.

Life at home might be equally surprising.

Rising prices and absent loved ones made wartime life hard for some. But the demand for war workers meant that others became better off than in 1914.

Although here, Glasgow rent strikers use the language of war to argue for better conditions.

When war finally ended, Britons tried to work out what it had all meant.
Many who had survived wanted to celebrate the camaraderie and shared purpose of the conflict.

Others found themselves out of work in the post-war slump, and felt that their war time sacrifices had been for nothing.

Whatever they felt about the war, people who had lived through it saw it as a momentous event that needed to be remembered.

The four years of this centenary commemoration allow us all to explore unfamiliar stories of the war that changed Britain and the world forever.