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The National Lottery**

and awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund



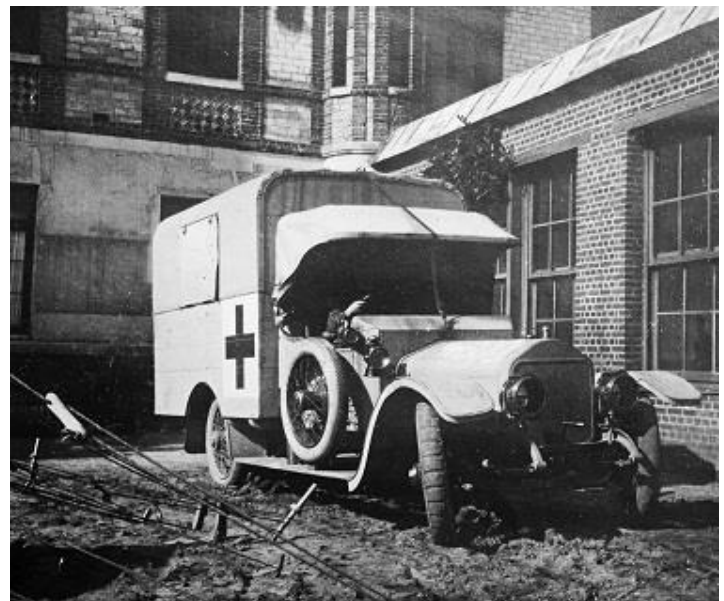
BEHIND THE LINES FILM COMMISSIONED - SEPTEMBER 2017

In May 1920 Sister Kate Maxey, a shopkeeper's daughter from Spennymoor, who served in casualty clearing stations and hospitals behind the Western Front for three and a half years before being wounded in a German air raid, was honoured as one of the first recipients of the International Red Cross's Florence Nightingale Medal.

To celebrate Sister Maxey's service, the Society, with the support of a £10,000 National Lottery Grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), have commissioned Lonely Tower Film and Media to make a film, entitled *Behind the Lines*, about the importance of medical services in the First World War and how a diverse range of Spennymoor people contributed to these. The Society is deeply indebted to Kate Maxey's descendants who have made photographs and other records available. We are also getting help from the *Durham at War* Project and the DLI Collection both run by Durham County Council and has established links with other archives and experts, including Professor Christine Hallett of the UK Association for the History of Nursing, author of the recently published book – *The nurses of Passchendaele*.



The project will focus on a part of Spennymoor's heritage that is not well known; namely the contribution made by some of its residents to medical services during the Great War. As part of this, we will particularly look at the role of women as qualified medical professionals. Sister Kate Maxey was a highly qualified nurse before the war and volunteered her services before the conflict began; we will further investigate her story and use reports and diaries to reconstruct the 'typical' role of professional nurses during the war. Spennymoor's contribution to the war effort is also reflected in men who served in the Royal Army Medical Corps and as stretcher bearers, ambulance drivers and so forth. We will also feature two coalminers, both of whom won the Military Medal serving in the RAMC, and a Maths teacher who joined the Friends Ambulance Unit instead of being a combatant.



We aim to use individual stories to explain the complex infrastructure created to make the whole medical system work. This was significantly influenced by Sister Maxey's colleague at Leeds General Infirmary, Sir Berkeley Moynihan, a leading surgeon who revolutionised wartime surgery. We plan to highlight the 'then and now' aspect of the project by comparing how medical services and the various roles highlighted have changed in the last 100 years. Through this we will look at changes to the following:

- Getting the wounded from the battlefield
- The type of injuries/challenges that medical professionals face
- The process from initial first aid to casualty clearing station, hospital and repatriation

As a conclusion to the project we aim to stimulate wider research to explain what happened 'behind the lines', an aspect of the Great War that still receives far less attention than research into battles and campaigns.

The Society will look at the following heritage collections in making *Behind the Lines* :

- the archive of material – photographs, letters and artefacts – collected by Sister Kate Maxey and preserved by her family. A small part of this collection was on display in the Durham and the Somme Exhibition held at Palace Green Library, Durham University in 2016 and some photographs in the collection have been interpreted for the *Durham at War* Website. However, there is still a significant amount of research to be done on the available material, particularly to link it to the National Archives' War Office records of Sister Maxey's service
- research undertaken by amateur historians in Spennymoor into local people in the Great War. This includes material collected by John Grainger and Harry Fairish for the late Bob Abley's Spennymoor's Great War Exhibition in 2014, together with Bob Hall's WW1 Chronicles of Spennymoor & neighbourhood [privately published in 2014]. This research relies particularly on National Archive and Newspaper records and we will concentrate on information relating to the Royal Army Medical Corps. Through publicity for the project we will also seek to identify family records which have not so far come to light. Public interest in the Spennymoor's Great War Exhibition in 2014 led to the identification of such family records relevant to this project
- published first-hand accounts of nursing on the Western Front. This includes *A Nurse at the Front: The diaries of Edith Appleton*. Other sources will be identified through the Society's collaboration with the UK Association for the History of Nursing
- material on WW1 nurses held in the Royal College of Nursing's archives in Edinburgh
- material on the use of ambulance trains in the Great War held at the National Railway Museum at York
- material on the Friends Ambulance Unit held at the Library of the Religious Society of Friends and partly published on their website, [Religious Society of Friends](#);
- material on Durham County Record Office's interactive website – *Durham at War* – and other County archives including material in the Durham Light Infantry Collections held at County Hall and at Seven Hills, Spennymoor.

The Society has commissioned Lonely Tower Film & Media to make *Behind the lines*.

The Society will assist in constructing the film narrative by sharing research and by making introductions to possible interviewees. Lonely Tower Film & Media would be responsible for :

- Arranging, conducting, filming and editing of all required interviews
- Filming all appropriate locations associated with narrative and themes
- Organising, recruiting and filming all appropriate re-enactment sequences
- Writing the narration script and consulting the Society on it
- Recording the agreed narration script
- Licensing of all associated production music
- All editing up to and including completion of the film

After *Behind the Lines* has been produced

We will arrange community events to show the film using contacts within both the local community of Spennymoor and the wider heritage community of County Durham (through the County Durham History & Heritage Forum). Commonly these will take the form of a member of TSLHS showing the film to a local history group's regular meeting;

We will be using the *creative commons licence* to make the film available through digital media such as YouTube and link this to the Society's website. DVDs will also be made available for individuals to buy. Other research material will be published on the Society's website and the *Durham at War* website;

We will relate the film to a small exhibition by preparing display boards and making these available in public buildings – the local library, Town Hall etc;

- The exhibition/display will be accompanied by a leaflet;
- We will work with the DLI Collection to develop a schools pack relating the film to the Edexcel History GCSE (9-1) curriculum - 'Medicine through Time'
- We will work with the DLI Collection to use the film in schools and amongst community groups, highlighting connections to 'Medicine through Time'.

Comments

John Banham, who is coordinating the project for the Society, said: *We are very pleased to be working with experienced heritage filmmakers Mark and Marie and very grateful to the National Lottery for supporting what we hope will be an important insight into an often-overlooked part of the War. The nation had to mobilise tremendous resources to help wounded soldiers on the Western Front and the historical material available relating to Kate Maxey and other Spennymoor people will, I believe, allow the film to show this. Research by Spennymoor residents and the cooperation of Kate Maxey's family in making her personal archive material available will be supplemented by expert testimony about First World War medical services.*

Ivor Crowther, Head of HLF North East, said: *Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, we're pleased to support this project which will share the story of Sister Kate Maxey and explore the legacy of the First World War from the perspective of those who served in medical support services during the First World War.*

Mark Thorburn from Lonely Tower Film and Media said: *The research and hard work that the Tudhoe & Spennymoor Local History Society have done, and indeed will be doing, through the course of this project will highlight an essential and rapidly evolving aspect of the First World War as medical services adapted to cope with conflict on a mechanised scale. By telling the stories of local people in extreme circumstances, we hope to bring their lives out of the shadows and onto the big screen for all to see and engage with, creating a lasting and fitting tribute.*

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