

Collage of the people outlined in the story (From top left clockwise) Next of Kin Project / Raj Gedhu / National Portrait Gallery / Herts at War Project

National Lottery investment in UK heritage is having an incredibly positive impact on people across the UK – quite simply, it's changing lives. It also shines a light on many ordinary people whose inspiring lives in times of war had been forgotten.

Now, thanks to the National Lottery, their stories are being rediscovered and shared so that future generations will understand and, most importantly, remember them.

From a self-taught, self-financing nurse who travelled to Crimea to help the wounded, to the discovery of the untouched personal belongings of a young soldier killed during the First World War, here are just some of the stories of lives that have been uncovered:

Private Edward ‘Ted’ Ambrose

Private Edward ‘Ted’ Ambrose was a young soldier who was killed during the First World War. His personal possessions, including the shrapnel that killed him, were sent back to his mother Sarah who locked them in a suitcase and put it in an attic never to be opened again.

A snapshot of a young man's life, the belongings and Ted's forgotten story have been shared 90 years later through an exhibition as part of the National Lottery-funded Herts at War project.

Rajinder Singh Dhatt

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Rajinder Singh Dhatt is one of the very few surviving Sikh soldiers who saw action during the Second World War. He joined the Indian Army in February 1941 as a sepoy (private) and served as a Physical Training Instructor (1942-43) and Army Store Keeper (1943-49).

This included a period on the Kohima Front in Burma during 1944. He shared his experiences as part of the National Lottery-funded Empire, Faith and War project.

Florence Mellor

Florence Mellor was a young woman living in Kirkcaldy, Fife. She joined a Voluntary Aid Detachment of the Red Cross and served as a volunteer nurse caring for wounded servicemen. At Craiglockhart War Hospital near Edinburgh she cared for officers being treated for shell-shock.

In April 1918, at the height of the German offensive on the Western Front, Florence's family received news of her brother Hayden's death whilst serving as a soldier in the 8th/10th Battalion Gordon Highlanders. Florence's story of war service and of the family loss has been shared as part of the HLF-supported Next of Kin project.

Mary Seacole

Mary Seacole was a Jamaican businesswoman and self-taught nurse who travelled to the battlefields of the Crimean War to care for wounded soldiers. When the war broke out, Seacole applied to the British War Office to assist but was refused. Rather than be put off, she travelled independently and set up the British Hotel where she cared for sick and convalescent officers.

Whilst her nursing contemporary Florence Nightingale has become a highly revered figure in British history, Seacole's story was largely forgotten. Thanks to National Lottery funding her portrait and story are now on permanent display at the National Portrait Gallery.

#Remembrance2017



Archive material from the Herts at War project



Empire, Faith & War: The Sikhs & WWI