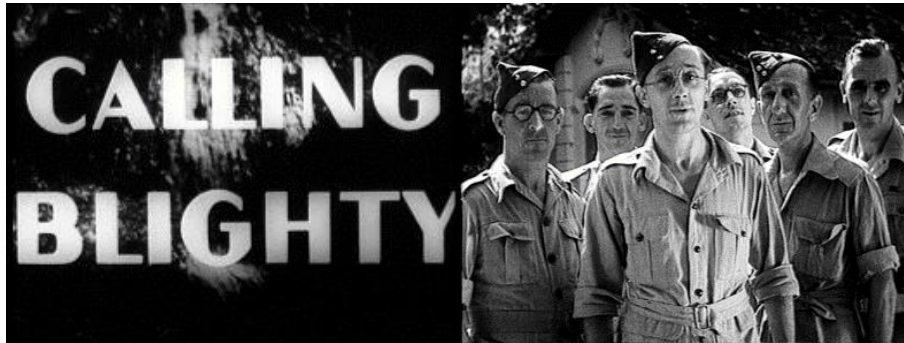


A MESSAGE HOME



Calling Blighty is a series of short films made in 1944-45 of individual servicemen and women in the Far East sending personal messages home to their family and friends. These poignant filmed messages were shown to invited audiences in local cinemas, bringing much laughter, and certainly a few tears. *A Message Home* is a project to try to find as many families and veterans as possible, to bring them together to show the films again, and to tell their stories.

Of nearly 400 issues made, only 48 are known to survive. Of these, 23 feature service personnel from the Greater Manchester and wider North West areas, and were found complete with the sheets of contact details showing the names and addresses of the family and friends who were invited to the screenings. We are preparing a searchable database of 600 names, with clips, to go online as soon as we can.

Alongside the attempt to trace people, a new artists' film is being made, combining some of the most interesting and appealing stories. They are partly stilted, occasionally emotional, but mostly stiff upper lip testimonies, filmed direct to camera often in one take. Sometimes funny, and always very moving. In a way, they predict video communications such as Skype, but also offer a window on the understated courage of servicemen who had endured the long separation from their home – in both time and space – often since the start of the war. This new film, and some of the original *Calling Blighty* issues, will be screened in the autumn at HOME – Manchester's new cross arts venue. We are also planning other screenings around Greater Manchester later in the year.

Can you help us?

If you know someone who was in one of the films, or who went to see the films, please let us know. Until we have finished preparing the online version (which will be available via www.nwfa.mmu.ac.uk), we can look up names for you. We'll be working up to screenings from September 2015, and we'd love to have some stories to help get the ball rolling and spread the word!

Contact Marion Hewitt at the NWFA by

Emailing blighty@mmu.ac.uk or by phoning 0161 247 3097

You can write to us at North West Film Archive, Manchester Central Library, PO Box 532, Albert Square, Manchester M60 2LA.

Or visit us in Archives+ at Manchester Central Library, St Peter's Square.

Tell us if you

... belong to one of the families?

... know of someone who does?

... know something about the films or the original screenings?

...want to come to a screening later in the year?

The project appreciates the support of:

Manchester School of Art

HOME

Imperial War Museum

Manchester & Lancashire Family History Society

Archives+

This project is supported by Film Hub North West Central, proud to be a member of the BFI Film Audience Network

Film Hub | NWC

