

Learning about WWI

December 1914

I'm Carrie Cruickshank and I'm 19 years old. I live with my Mother, Father & sisters in Ross Avenue, Inverness. I was a pupil at Inverness Royal Academy, but have now left. I was planning to go off to study and become a teacher like my Mother, but war has broken out and everything feels different. I feel I want to help in any way I can, for my country. I'm not good at nursing, or farming or knitting, but I can sing and perform. So that is what I shall do. I'm going to keep people smiling and entertained during the war. I can keep people's spirits up and hearts warmed. Some of the boys I was in school with have already left to go and fight. Before they left, I got them to write in my album. I take my album with me everywhere and ask people to leave me a drawing, a poem or something silly. It's my way of collecting memories.

'Coming Home'

Carrie M Cruickshank



Going to
Sing to Wounded
Soldiers
Ah'em

Mumley
1914

Images: figure 1: Carrie Cruickshank (drawn by a friend); figure 2: Photo of the US Navy departing courtesy of Chrissie Bremner's son and Maureen Kenyon; figure 3: pages from Carrie Cruickshank's album (IMAG); figure 4: officer courting local girl; Edited by all hands (1920) The Northern Barrage and other Mining Activities, Annapolis: The US Naval Institute. Figure 5: Caroline Margaret Cruickshank as 'Mimosa' in the Geisha © Andrew Paterson Collection/SHPA.

Please Turn over



March 1918

The US Navy are now based in Inverness, down by the Muirtown basin, next to Merkinch Primary. It's a cause for much excitement for the school children, for the shop-keepers in Inverness, who are cashing in; and especially for us ladies! The men have lovely accents and smart uniforms, they seem so exotic. They are teaching us how to play baseball. The whole town is buzzing with their arrival! I was asked to sing one evening in their YMCA, down at the Northern Meeting Park, and now they want me there every week! Perhaps I will be a singer and perform on stage for the rest of my life?

Many of my chums are courting the US Navy officers. Every Sunday they stroll down the islands, hand in hand. They ask me to tag along sometimes. Some of my friends were already courting local boys who are now fighting overseas. I suspect there will be trouble when they come home!

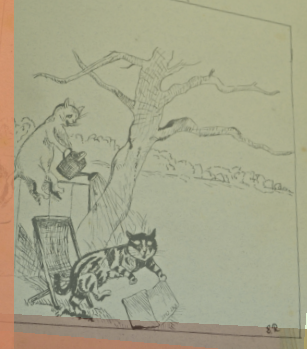


November 1927

I've just got off the stage at Central Hall, Picture House. I was performing as 'Mimosa' in 'The Geisha'. We received a standing ovation. What a thrill! I am a teacher now, but I still find time to perform. It's a part of my life.

I received a letter from my dear Millie. She and James are married and living in America. I do miss my dear friend, but she is enjoying her life abroad. She said she doesn't miss Inverness one bit! How can she say that?

Yes this is Carrie's album
But learn ere you look
That all are expected
To add to her book
You are willing to look in it
The penalty is:-
You add her some verses
For others to "quizz"



Heaven keep you clear of start and strife
Till you are gone fourscore
And if I keep my Health and Life
I'll never gaze by your door!
D. S. Campbell

April 1919

I was right! Last night there was a riot in the town. The surviving soldiers who returned home, well, they grew sick of the sight of the well-paid US Navy; stealing their women; in their town! There was a lot of arguing and then the local men chased the Naval officers, all the way through the town, back to their barracks in Merkinch.

The rumour is, they're not allowed out until they leave Inverness. Oh deary me, my friend Millie is so upset. She came around to my house, howling she was! She wants me to come up to the barracks with her tomorrow, so she can hold her James' hand through the fence. That's the closest she'll get to him from now on. Holding hands; every Sunday; through the fence.



Fictional account based on real events

Things to think about:

How do you keep your memories of good times and the people important to you?

Exercise

Start an album like Carrie's, get a notebook and ask everyone you meet to leave you something; it could be a drawing, a joke, a poem or anything they want to share with you. Write a poem or a message at the beginning to inspire people, like Carrie did. Take it into class at the end of the week and talk about the experience.