

Sunderland in the First World War



LOCAL STUDIES CENTRE FACT SHEET NUMBER 26



George Allen Maling VC

George Maling – the early years

The only Victoria Cross to be awarded to a member of the Royal Army Medical Corps on the Western Front in 1915 was won by Lieutenant George Maling.

George Allen Maling was born in Bishopwearmouth, Sunderland on 6 October 1888, the son of Edwin Allan Maling JP, MRCS, and Maria Jane Maling (nee Hartley), part of the Maling Pottery family and a maternal cousin of Sir Henry Havelock.

He was educated at Uppingham School and Exeter College, Oxford, gaining an honours degree in

Natural Sciences. He continued his studies at St Thomas's Hospital qualifying M.B, B.Ch 1914.

Maling was commissioned into the Royal Artillery Medical Corp. on 18 January 1915 and joined the 12th Rifle Brigade as medical officer, landing in France on 22 July 1915.

On 5 May 1917 he married Daisy Mabel Wollmer of Winnipeg, at Sutton, Surrey and had one son.

Bravery of George Maling

In September 1915, the Battle of Loos offensive began. During the battle the British forces suffered 50,000 casualties. It was against this backdrop of carnage that Lieutenant George Maling won his Victoria Cross for showing courage beyond expectation.

On 25 September 1915 a group of British soldiers were trapped in an area of "no man's land", near Fauquissart, France surrounded by intense shelling. Maling shouldered his medical pack and along with his orderly worked for over 24 hours collecting and treating, under heavy shell fire, more than 300 men.



1914 - 1918



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The citation for his VC, published in the London Gazette of 18 November 1915, gave the details as follows:

“For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty during the heavy fighting near Fauquissart on 25 September 1915, Lieut. Maling worked incessantly with untiring energy from 6.25am until 8am on 26 September collecting and treating in the open, under heavy shell fire, more than 300 men. At about 11am on the 25th he was flung down and temporarily stunned by the bursting of a large high explosive shell which wounded his only assistant and killed several of his patients. A second shell soon covered him and his assistants with debris, but his high courage and zeal never failed him, and he continued his gallant work single-handed.”

He received his VC from King George V at Buckingham Palace on 15 January 1916.

Maling – the later years

After leaving the Army, Maling was appointed Resident Medical Officer at Victoria Hospital for Children, Chelsea and later surgeon for outpatients at St John's Hospital, Lewisham. Some time later he went into medical partnership, the practice based at Micheldever Road, Lee, South London, where he practiced until his death, aged only 40 years old, on 9 July 1929. Maling was buried in Chislehurst Cemetery, Beaverwood Road, on 12 July 1929; a boulder forms part of the memorial.

Maling is commemorated on the Maling family grave in Bishopwearmouth Cemetery (Ward 1, Section 6, Grave number 5).

Sunderland Remembers

Sunderland City Council have erected a Blue Plaque at Carlton House, Maling's former home in Sunderland. Carlton House is now part of Sunderland High School, and is located in Mowbray Road, Sunderland SR2 8HU.

A specially commissioned commemorative paving stone will also be laid at the cenotaph in Burdon Road, Sunderland to provide a lasting legacy to remember the bravery of its own hero, George Maling who was awarded the Victoria Cross.

Find out more about the George Maling VC

For more information visit the Local Studies library at Sunderland City Library and Arts Centre.

More information and images can be found on the following websites:

- www.sunderlandfirstworldwar.co.uk/history-notables
- www.ramc-ww1.com