



## **DID CRAIGLOCKHART REVOLUTIONISE MENTAL HEALTHCARE?**

### **Video transcript – Introduction**

Edinburgh's Craiglockhart was originally a Hydropathic hotel – the Victorians came for water treatments but between 1916 and 1919 its patients were Army officers psychologically brutalised by the death and destruction of World War One.

Thousands of soldiers developed symptoms which baffled doctors, losing their sight or hearing, becoming paralysed or being plagued by horrific nightmares.

The soldiers themselves coined the term 'shell shock'.

The idea was that a shell exploding near to a soldier could cause nerve damage. But really this was misleading. Even the first doctor to use the term thought that the real cause was "emotional disturbance" or "mental strain."

Psychological trauma was not unique to this war. Soldiers in the Napoleonic Wars developed symptoms similar to those described in World War One.

And the issue still affects the military today. Many veterans of recent conflicts, such as Iraq and Afghanistan, have been diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. They can suffer from insomnia, anxiety, or re-live their experiences of war.

Support for soldiers has improved, but in World War One, the Royal Army Medical Corps was caught unprepared by the psychological impact of an industrial scale conflict.

With so many men being left unable to fight the generals needed something to be done. Doctors with interests in fields like psychiatry and neurology went to work at specialist military hospitals like Craiglockhart.