

This is Terry Ford interviewing Terry Ford on the 6th of December, 2023 about his Auntie Kitty Ford.

So Kitty Ford, or to give a proper name, Catherine Ford was born in 1921 at 84 Egerton Road, South Shields. Kit started her nurse training on the 1st of April, 1940 at Sunderland General Hospital, and stayed there until the 30th of September, 1943. In Sunderland, in April, 1941 it had a large department store called Binns and this suffered a heavy bombing attack on that day and because it was largely a glass building, there was a huge amount of damage done to the building and the glass flew everywhere into the main street in Sunderland, so there was a lot of casualties. People were killed and a lot of people were injured by this flying glass. Kitty being a student nurse was called into action because a lot of the doctors had been called up for national service and had to be at the war, so she had to administer a lot more assistance, medical assistance than normally would've been the case.

So what she said happened is that the Air Raid Precautions wardens, the ARP guys used to bring in the wounded, and what they would do is if they'd given them morphine to mitigate against the pain, they would write an 'M' on the person's forehead, which indicated that they had being given morphine. One of her jobs was to pull out glass out of the injured people before they were being prepared for an operation, and she took part in some of the operations alongside the doctors.

After this, she then moved down to Carshalton in Surrey to complete her midwife training. This was in the middle of 1944. This was the period known as (Doodlebug Summer) when the Doodlebugs were coming, the flying bombs as they were sometimes called, these were launched against London at this point. Surrey, where she was based at St. Helier's Hospital, suffered a number of attacks and this was even painted, the hospital was painted grey to try and prevent it being spotted from above.

It was also she said to us that during the war she would do other duties as well as apart from being in training and she would have to go into the Underground at times with her gas mask and her tin hat on and to deliver babies with a tin hat and a gas mask on sometimes.

After the war, she ended up working in fever hospitals and then became a midwife and carried on her career as a nurse and midwife and then a health visitor until 1988 when she retired. Just before she retired in 1977, because of all the work she'd done, she was awarded the Queen Silver Jubilee Medal by some of her colleagues, recommended her to get the medal. She died in 2019 at the age of 98.