

Large numbers of Burnley people have seen the official film of the Somme battle, and been deeply stirred by a portion of the picture which depicted a soldier bringing in the wounded under fire. This particular photo has been reproduced in the majority of the principal newspapers of the country, but the central figure was in every case described as an "unknown hero" and the letterpress under the photo stated "This British soldier carried no fewer than twenty wounded to safety in this manner"

The official film also announced that "the man the soldier was carrying at the time the picture was taken died shortly after being brought in. " One of the illustrated papers was eventually seen by the " unknown hero " and he at once communicated with his mother, sending the copy of the paper in which he figured. The soldier it now transpired is a native of Burnley, and one of the three soldier sons of Mrs Spencer, who lived at 48, Grimshaw Street, but who a short time ago went to reside at Haigh Houses, Foulridge. The soldier whose heroic deed has been seen pictorially by hundreds of thousands of his countrymen and woman is Driver Tom Spencer, of the Royal Garrison Artillery, and now with a Trench Mortar Battery. Tom, who is 28 years of age, had served 10 years in the Navy, and had not been home when war broke out. He thereupon entered the Army, and has been in France for a long time.

Mrs Spencer had received the following letter from her son a short time before "Just a few lines to let you know that I am quite well after this big battle, which by now you will have heard of. I might tell you that I have taken a great part in it, and I am pleased to say that I was recommended twice in the one day, so with a bit of luck there will be more honours in the family. Look out for the papers and most probably you will see my photo in papers carrying a wounded man across the battlefield, and also at the picture houses. Enough about myself for the time being. I have seen a lot Burnley and Earby boys just lately that you know very well...

*Burnley Express* - Saturday 30 September 1916 (British Newspaper Archives - <http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/> )