



Anna Coleman Ladd, an American sculptor, felt compelled to help facially disfigured military men who were wounded in WWI.

Sponsored by the American Red Cross, Anna traveled to Paris where she worked in an artist's studio. This image, from the Red Cross Archives, depicts Ladd working on the mask of an unnamed soldier.

We learn more about these facial masks, and when they were first used, from the Red Cross' archives:

*Pioneered by English sculptor Captain Derwent Wood, and improved upon by American sculptor Anna Coleman Ladd, portrait masks were modeled from photographs taken before the injury and were painted in oils to resemble the former features of the patient.* (See Amanda Browe's article "[From the Archives: Restorative Face Masks for WWI Soldiers.](#)")

One of the first steps, in creating a new mask, was to take a cast of the patient's face. Anna also studied photos so she could create a facial covering which looked-like the injured man:

*Ladd set up a large studio in the artists' quarter of Paris, and there she received soldiers desperate to look like they once had.*

Taking a cast of the soldier's face was the first step in the mask-making process. This mold, along with photographs of the patient prior to the injury, was then used to create a mold that resembled the patient's previous image. ("[From the Archives.](#)")

When she had the mask nearly ready, Anna would place it on the wounded soldier so she could match the color of the mask with the color of the soldier's skin tone:

*Ladd would paint the mask while it was on the soldier so that she could achieve a flesh color as close as possible to the real skin tone. If the disfigurement included the entire mouth, she would model the lips with space to accommodate a cigarette holder. For those who desired, a moustache could be added.*

Anna Coleman Ladd took great care to produce masks that would allow men who gave so much for their country to return home as physically whole as possible. ("[From the Archives.](#)")

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