

Marjory's War

Introduction

Marjory Stephenson made her scientific reputation in the inter-war years in the University of Cambridge Department of Biochemistry which had been created, and was led for many years, by Sir Frederick Gowland Hopkins. Here Marjory pioneered the study of biochemistry in bacteria and her book *Bacterial Metabolism*, which ran to three editions between 1930 and 1949 (the last published posthumously), was a standard text in its day. From 1922 until she died Marjory's research was funded by the Medical Research Council and her scientific achievements were recognised when she became the first biological scientist to be elected to the Fellowship of the Royal Society, alongside the physicist Kathleen Lonsdale.

There is no doubt that Marjory found her professional, and perhaps spiritual, home in Hopkins' Department, where she made many lasting friendships as well as enjoying the intellectual environment. She also had a long and loyal association with Newnham College, leaving them a generous legacy in her Will. But the path that led her to success as a scientist was far from straight, and just as she had her feet on the lower rungs of the academic ladder, she put her career on hold to work overseas for the British Red Cross Society for the duration of the First World War.

Early Life 1885-1914

Marjory was born in 1885 and grew up on a farm in Cambridgeshire, the youngest of four children. Her father had a strong work ethic and although he started his career modestly as a tenant farmer he soon became a landowner with multiple business interests in addition to his farming. Robert Stephenson could thus afford to educate his children well and all four received primary education from a governess at home. In Marjory's case it was decided that she would benefit from being sent away to secondary school and she boarded for 6 years at Berkhamsted School for Girls in Hertfordshire. In 1903 Marjory went up to Newnham College where she read Natural Sciences, taking courses in zoology, chemistry and physiology. She obtained a class II result in the tripos exams in 1906 but, as a woman, was not allowed to take a degree at that time.

Marjory had wanted to go on to study medicine but it seems that her father's generosity ran out because in a memoir that she penned for the Royal Society much later, she records that funds were not available. She had to earn a living through teaching at Gloucester Technical College whilst also acquiring further training in domestic science. She moved to London in 1910 to take up a teaching post in domestic science at King's College for Women. It is doubtful that she saw this as advancement in itself, but it did bring her to a major academic city where she could attend lectures and make contacts. This paid off in 1911 when she was offered some university teaching and laboratory space by Dr RHA Plimmer at University College London (UCL). Grants from the Royal Society and Newnham College provided an initial base of support from which she was able to apply successfully for a Beit Memorial Fellowship, which she took up on 1 January 1914. Beit fellowships were prestigious and competitive, so at the age of 29, Marjory would have felt that now she was on her way with a new career as a research scientist. Yet, months after starting her fellowship, she set it aside, not knowing whether or when she might return to it.

Marjory's War Career (1914-1918)

Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914. In the same month Marjory Stephenson enrolled with the London 146 branch of the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD), offering her skills as a cook. It appears that she did not hesitate to come forward, even though her scientific career was just taking off. Her upbringing will have influenced her. Her father was a

committed public servant as well as a successful farmer and businessman and sought to instil a sense of duty in all his children. He had worked hard to give his family a comfortable life and the message was that they should expect to pay for such privilege through service to the community.

Marjory's achievements over the ensuing four years were every bit as pioneering as those of her later scientific career. She was in the first group of VAD members to be sent abroad officially – to Normandy in October 1914. In 1916 she again broke new ground as one of the first three VAD cooks who travelled unaccompanied to Salonika on a sometimes perilous three week journey. On both assignments she worked long hours to set up kitchens from scratch in inadequate facilities and to respond to demands which were sometimes chaotic. By the end of her war service she was a VAD Commandant in charge of teams of cooks, running a nurses' convalescent home, and was the recipient of multiple medals and honours.

Marjory's personal record cards in the British Red Cross Museum and Archives provide brief factual information about the roles she fulfilled, with dates, as well as a testimonial from the Red Cross Commissioner in Salonika. This information enables other sources to be linked to Marjory, though some do not mention her by name. No letters from Marjory herself have yet come to light. There are, however, first hand reports of the work in both Normandy and Salonika written by women with whom Marjory worked closely or who experienced the same conditions. Contemporaneous Red Cross reports also add to the picture. Coverage is uneven but nevertheless provides a glimpse of the contribution made by just one woman among many who served voluntarily in the War. Sources are listed more fully in the notes at the end.

Normandy

Marjory volunteered as a cook. For this she was well-qualified through her studies of both domestic science and physiology, the latter giving an understanding of nutrition. It is possible that she expected to be deployed to work in a military hospital somewhere in England. However, in joining one of the British Red Cross Society VAD units set up by Mrs (later Dame) Katharine Furse, she may have been aware of that woman's larger ambitions. Katharine Furse was ten years older than Marjory; she had been widowed after four years of marriage, and left to bring up two sons alone. Mrs Furse was a woman of much energy and administrative skill. She had joined the VAD soon after its inception in 1909, when its purpose was to train women in first aid, nursing and other practical skills that might be needed in the event of war. As war approached in 1914, Furse and her friend Rachel Crowdy were invited to set up two new branches of the VAD in Paddington – numbers 128 and 146. As Furse describes in her autobiography *Hearts and Pomegranates* (1940), not everyone believed in the value of what the women were doing. The distinguished surgeon Sir Frederick Treves said in mid-1914 that it would never be possible to employ the VADs and he wished they had never been set up as the members were so tiresome in clamouring to be used.

Fortunately Furse had an ally in Sir Arthur Stanley, the Conservative politician who was also a member of the Red Cross Council. As VAD members began to be deployed in England, Furse and Stanley were eager for some to go on active service abroad. Furse visited the Red Cross Commissioner in France, Sir Alfred Keogh, who encouraged her to consider setting up a number of 'rest stations' at railway stations along the lines of communication. These would provide food and medical supplies for wounded soldiers in transit from the front line to hospitals in safe areas. Furse went back to London to plan accordingly. The call came on 16 October to be ready to leave immediately for Boulogne via Paris with a team of 20 VAD members. It was a scramble to find enough who could leave at such short notice but Marjory Stephenson had no ties and was able to step forward. Most of the group are not mentioned by name although Furse does make reference to Stephenson and Lyne being in

charge of the kitchen van. Also on the team was Rachel Crowdy who held a certificate from the Apothecaries' Hall qualifying her as a dispenser.

Furse and her team found that little preparation had been made for their arrival in Boulogne, although they were provided with shared hotel rooms for living quarters which, whilst basic, were at least constructed of bricks and mortar. Colonel Wake, who had replaced Sir Alfred Keogh, instructed the women to find accommodation near to the station to set up their rest station. As they were the first VADs in France no-one really understood who they were or that they should be taken seriously. Mrs Furse had to use much charm to obtain the use of three trucks parked in a railway siding. The women set about converting them into a dispensary, kitchen, and staff room/stores, scrubbing them clean, adding a lick of paint and such touches as chairs made out of barrels. At first the kitchen had only three small primus stoves yet, on opening for business on 27 October, the women fed a thousand wounded men within the first 24 hours and this set the pattern for the weeks to come.

Fully-equipped ambulance trains did not come into service until later, so there was much improvisation. Some seriously wounded men were transported on straw in cattle trucks, while walking wounded would sometimes be carried on regular passenger services. Dry rations would be carried on the trains but there would be little if anything to drink, no hot food, and no facilities for dressing wounds or nurses to look after the men. The aim of the rest station was to provide these services at a critical point on the journey.

Sometimes the women would have warning of when a train was due, and sometimes not, so they needed to be ready for action at all times. They operated two daily shifts so each would be on duty for 12 hours in every 24 and, at busy times, could be on their feet for a whole shift. A particularly heavy day was Monday 2 November during which they fed 2,300 men - on three trains that had come down from Ypres - and applied over 200 dressings. Resources were stretched to the limit - it was difficult to boil enough water on the primus stoves for all the hot drinks and for wound cleaning and the cocoa ran out, so that local grocery stores had to be raided. A fire was improvised to burn soiled dressings. The capability, resilience and humour of the woman on this occasion did much to establish their reputation, with Colonel Wake and senior staff at the local hospitals starting to understand the value of the service they provided. As a result, Mrs Furse was able to obtain additional resources including two more trucks (later a further three), bigger stoves for the kitchen, more plentiful supplies and the services of some 'boy orderlies' from a Lancashire VAD unit. Local people also started to donate a variety of supplies from sacks of potatoes to coal.

Not only was rest station work physically exhausting, but the women witnessed some harrowing sights amongst the wounded. Many men were seriously injured physically and struggling to comprehend mentally what had happened to them, the worst affected being delirious. They might be mud-spattered and have had clothing torn from their backs by barbed wire with only the most basic of field dressing so far applied to their wounds. At the same time, the men were hugely appreciative of the efforts of the 'sisters' as they referred to the VADs, whether they were nurses or not.

Marjory Stephenson and Evelyn Lyne alternated shifts with two other cooks and would have spent much of their time on duty in and around the kitchen van rather than delivering food and drink to the men, so they may have witnessed little of either the men's hardship or their appreciation for the women's work. The food and drink supplied from the kitchen included soup, cocoa (served with condensed milk), bread and butter, ham, cheese, chocolate, apples and bananas. The scale of production would have been some way beyond Marjory's previous experience and she would have needed to adapt her methods to that, as well as the limitations due to the facilities and foods available. One member of the team, Eleonora Pemberton, wrote to her mother that Stephenson was an excellent cook, having gone in for it

professionally as a lecturer; also that she was especially interested in the bacteriological side of it – an early sign of what was to become her life's work.

Once more fully equipped ambulance trains became operational the work of the rest station calmed down, mainly comprising the provision of hot drinks for walking wounded. The workload was still quite uneven and at slack times the unit would distribute magazines to hospitals, make sandbags, bandages and padsplints for the military hospitals and give out crackers and inexpensive presents to the wounded at Christmas.

Furse was a stickler for discipline in her unit, believing that as a uniformed service, the VADs should establish a reputation for almost exaggerated seriousness. She banned smoking and association with men and sent one unfortunate woman home for having the temerity to get engaged to a local man, which some thought harsh.

Furse was recalled to London in January 1915 to become Chief Commandant of VADs and run the London office. Rachel Crowdy took charge of the rest station work in France, which expanded to a further three stations in 1915. Marjory's record shows that she was on rest station duty until May 1915. She may then have had a short period of leave before taking up the position of Head Cook at the No 3 British Red Cross Hospital (also known as the Friends Ambulance Hospital) in Abbeville on 2 June 1915. She moved on again on 18 August 1915 to the No 8 British Red Cross Hospital which was known as the Baltic and Corn Exchange Hospital. Following a relocation from Calais to Le Touquet Paris-Plage, the hospital re-opened in September 1915, so Marjory will have had the luxury of a couple of weeks or so to set up her new kitchen, obtain supplies and train staff before having to feed her patients. This was a much larger hospital than the one at Abbeville, having 300 beds at its busiest. Marjory worked at the Baltic and Corn Exchange until 18 April 1916, after which she returned to England for a period of leave and to prepare for her next assignment.

Journey to Salonika

British and French troops began to land at Salonika in October 1915, as Serbia and Bulgaria became involved in the war on the Allied and German sides respectively. Salonika (known today as Thessaloniki) was a port in Greek Macedonia, home to a cultural mix of Jews, Christians and Muslims, which today is known as Thessaloniki. By December 1915, much of Serbia was enemy-occupied and the allied troops had retreated to Salonika. The British Red Cross Society became involved, as an extension of their work in Malta and Egypt. Rest stations were set up with locally engaged staff, and a supply chain and warehouses were established for the importation of substantial quantities of medical and other supplies for the hospitals being set up by Britain, France and other allies. Colonel HL Fitzpatrick took up the post of Red Cross Commissioner for Salonika in April 1916 and remained in post until operations were wound down in 1919, after which he returned to his post in the Egyptian Ministry of Finance. He was not a military man but an honorary title enabled him to exercise the necessary authority.

The Director of Medical Services in Salonika had seen Invalid Kitchens in Malta and asked that one be set up in Salonika. A Red Cross report of the time states that in June 1916 three VAD women cooks were sent from England and opened a kitchen at No 29 General Hospital, which was so successful that the following month it was decided to open three further kitchens. This sounds straightforward enough until we read the memoir of one of those first three VAD cooks: *Sisters' Quarters: Salonika* by Marguerite Fedden, published in 1921. Fedden is coy about the identity of her two companions, referring to them only as "Miss A" and "Miss B". However Miss A can be identified unambiguously as Marjory Stephenson because the departure date tallies exactly with her Red Cross record and Fedden also refers to the fact that she went on to set up the Nurses' Convalescent Home in Salonika. Fedden presents us with a vivid account of the women's journey to Macedonia and

their setting up of the 'Test Kitchen'. Initially, the experience was to be even more challenging than Marjory's early work in Boulogne, not least because, on arrival, the women were to live and work under canvas.

They left Waterloo station in London on 31 May 1916 and their journey took them variously on trains and by sea via Southampton, Le Havre, Paris, Marseilles, Malta, Port Said, Alexandria and finally Salonika, arriving about three weeks later. It is not clear why such a tortuous route was necessary. When the English bacteriologist FW Twort had gone to Salonika in January 1916 to set up a dysentery laboratory, he was, according to his son's account, able to stay on the same ship for the whole of the journey from Southampton to Salonika.

Each woman had signed up for a minimum period of duty of 6 months. According to Fedden each took with her:

- a trunk – with clothes and personal items for all seasons as they could be staying at least a year.
- a suitcase – presumably for items needed on the journey.
- a kitbag issued by the Red Cross – containing such items as a portable camp bed and canvas wash basin.
- a holdall – perhaps used for carrying small everyday items.

Early stages of the journey went smoothly, with local Red Cross officials meeting them at each stopping point and providing accommodation. At least one night was spent at each port or rail terminus, so the women had time to sight-see and shop. Fedden was particularly intrepid, sometimes venturing out alone if her colleagues were tired or enervated by the heavy summer heat.

The voyage from Marseilles to Malta took two days on board the SS Malwa, a P&O passenger ship requisitioned as a troop carrier. The women shared a cabin (although when it was very hot they slept on deck) and there were amusements available such as desk quoits and card games; they also spent time on needlework, reading and writing. Spirits were dampened when news came of the death of Lord Kitchener, on board a ship sunk by a German mine off Orkney. This, and the fact their own ship was observed to take a zigzag course, reminded the passengers of their own vulnerability. In Malta there was much to gladden the heart: beautiful flowers, attractive churches, dishes of green figs and children joyfully playing in the sea. The women made the best of these delights before the Malwa steamed off in the direction of Port Said where they were to disembark, while the ship continued through the Suez Canal and on to India.

At Port Said, there was no-one to meet them and Fedden says they were dumped lone and forlorn on the quay. They were interviewed by an Egyptian official and told they had no right to land without special permission and that no women were supposed to have disembarked. Although Fedden maintains a light tone throughout, this must have been a worrying and indeed frightening experience for three women travelling alone in wartime. They travelled on civilian passports under the Geneva Convention of 1906 and, while the Red Cross badges on their armbands should have conferred protection, this was not universally respected. After wandering around for some time they found someone able to alert the local Red Cross man who had been distracted by his wife's illness. He quickly arranged a hotel for them and the next day they took a train to Alexandria, where they had a more hospitable Red Cross welcome and were taken to the YWCA. Here they stayed for a number of nights whilst waiting for a ship to take them on the final leg of their journey.

For this, their home was the SS Ismalia which was an armed military transport carrying timber along with 120 officers and a few servants. As such it was a legitimate target for an

enemy torpedo and everyone had to carry life-belts at all times. Fedden and her companions were the only women on board and the Commanding Officer was not amused by their presence. At night they slept on deck in their camp beds, the food was 'abominable' and the flies ubiquitous – something they would learn to live with in Salonika. Yet, as ever, Fedden wants to tell the good side of the story and also speaks of life being very pleasant, leavened by games of auction bridge and the occasional concert. On the way into Salonika Mount Olympus looked magnificent and there were sightings of whales, porpoises and dolphins.

Life in Salonika

No 29 General Hospital was a tented township which had been planted on the site of an old Balkan battlefield, a short distance from the town. Various sizes and shapes of tent fulfilled every necessary function, including hospital wards, operating theatres, dormitories for various staff ranks, stores, offices, post office, church. etc The three new arrivals shared a dormitory tent with five nurses, and it was up to the eight of them to personalise and give some privacy to their individual spaces as best they could. They could not be squeamish as they had spiders, rats, lizards and many types of insect as companions, though at least they had nets to protect them from mosquitoes.

Summer 1916 in Salonika was said to be the hottest for 20 years. Even the sea was too warm to provide respite. Sanitary conditions were primitive and water had to be boiled or chlorinated to make it safe to drink. Both troops and medical workers were ill-prepared and many died from heat-stroke, malaria or dysentery. According to Fedden, one third of the British Salonika Force was in hospital at this time due to illness rather than injury, bearing in mind the war was at a standoff. A lesser illness was 'sand fly fever', a transient parasitic disease, which few escaped as the mosquito nets that protected against malaria did not keep out the tiny sand flies. Swarms of ordinary flies were a constant nuisance and a threat to food hygiene, while the camp was also at times subject to a malodorous breeze from nearby mule stables. A further hazard was the 'Vardar Devil', a strong wind that blew down the valley of the River Vardar bringing huge gusts of dust and sand that could last for up to three days. If all that were not enough the camp was subject to occasional bombing raids. These were the conditions in which the women set up their 'Test Kitchen' for the preparation of invalid diets.

While the Red Cross had sent stoves and utensils for the kitchen, no-one had thought about constructing a sufficiently robust type of tent or hut to house them. The first tent they were allocated blew down no less than three times. Twice the women were working inside and once it came down at night with the wind overturning refrigerators, spilling their contents. Another tent was then supplied which, while full of holes, did at least stay up. During this early phase Marjory Stephenson emerged as the leader amongst the three women. On more than one occasion she negotiated with Col Fitzpatrick on their behalf and she also took responsibility for the paperwork.

Standard military rations would have been available for all staff and patients but many patients were too ill to take solid food. Nurses had been trying to cook liquid foods by the pint on small primus stoves. The VAD cooks set about production on an industrial scale. One of their products was albumen water, which comprised diluted egg whites flavoured with sugar and lemon juice and was a means of getting some protein into the patients. Each morning it would take one of them two hours to break and separate 400 eggs for this purpose. Lemon, milk and egg jellies were also in great demand, while another staple was 'Benger's food', a preparation designed by a Manchester company for infants and invalids with digestive problems. This mixture of wheat flour and an extract of pancreatic enzymes was mixed with milk and left to stand for a while. The enzymes digested the flour, making it easier for invalids to absorb the energy from the food. Those whose digestion was less affected received preparations made from arrowroot or cornflour which, when made up with milk and

sweetened, would have been something like custard. For patients who could take solid food, rations could be supplemented with chicken cream and cakes. Each day ward sisters would requisition needs for the following day and supplies would be generated from the Stores accordingly. The VAD cooks would be up early to start their preparation and it would be a long day: late in the afternoon a consignment of Sicilian lemons would arrive and they would spend the next two hours grating and peeling the three hundred of them to make juice. The need for a range of vitamins was not well understood at this time but at least the patients would get their ration of vitamin C.

Marguerite Fedden speaks as much about the social life around the camp and in the town, as she does about the heavy work they were doing. There must have been slack days when one or other of the women took time off and there were evening activities if they were not too tired. She doesn't say how much Miss A and Miss B indulged in such activities although she herself clearly enjoyed attending concert parties, haggling in the bazaars, wandering around the picturesque Turkish quarter and looking at old churches.

In late August the next group of VAD cooks arrived and the three pioneers were assigned to lead separate teams. Miss B stayed on at the No 29 hospital, Fedden went to set up a kitchen in one of the Scottish Hospitals and Marjory Stephenson was given the larger managerial role of setting up the Nurses' Convalescent Home. She found herself in the more congenial surroundings of a large house on the outskirts of town, which had been the residence of the Turkish Governor of Salonika. As befitted a Convalescent Home, it was large and airy with a garden and an atmosphere of restfulness. It is not clear exactly when Marjory was promoted to the rank of VAD Commandant. As early as September 1916, Katharine Furse refers to her as the VAD representative in Salonika and it is likely that her role as Superintendent of VAD cooks also dates from about this time.

Fedden became ill in December 1916 and went home, having completed her minimum tour of six months. In spite of her irrepressible good humour, she was one of many whose health broke down from the pressure of hard work in a difficult climate. Marjory Stephenson was to stay for a full two years without a break and while she is likely to have had her share of minor illness, there is no evidence that she was, at any stage, incapacitated.

A dispatch from Lt-Gen GF Milne, commander of British troops in Salonika, summarised events from late 1916 to September 1917. Although the time had been spent holding the line rather than engaging in offensive action, morale amongst troops had stayed high. There had been multiple skirmishes with the enemy amid heavy snow and rain throughout the winter. Come the summer of 1917, which he described as even hotter than the previous year, troops were kept away from low-lying areas where malaria and dysentery were especially prevalent. Most important for health, however, was the understanding amongst all ranks of the importance of 'field sanitation'. This term can be taken to encompass not only toilet hygiene and the availability of clean water but also the use of mosquito nets and sun protection, which had not been available in 1916.

From his position in the field Lt-Gen Milne was untouched by the Great Fire of Salonika which raged for a couple of days after starting in a domestic kitchen on 18 August 1917. For many it was life-changing, leaving the quayside and central part of the town gutted. Few died though many had their businesses destroyed and were made homeless, especially in the Jewish community. The Turkish Quarter where Marjory's Convalescent Home was located, was relatively unaffected, although other Red Cross buildings were destroyed, including one of the Stores and a wooden garage. The need to rebuild interrupted their work but also had the benefit that much of the activity could be consolidated in and around one building.

Marjory Stephenson completed her 2-year tour of duty at the end of May 1918. Lt-Gen Milne wrote to Col Fitzpatrick in connection with the departure of the Principal VAD Commandant,

speaking of the very high appreciation he had for her work as Superintendent of VAD cooks, her care of sisters in the convalescent home and for her very valuable help to the Hospital Economy Committee. Statistics published by the Red Cross Society show that during 1917, the number of kitchens in operation rose from five to seventeen, with 2.4 million meals being prepared during the 12-month period: the number of beds in the Convalescent Home rose from 20 to 40 with over 2,000 nurses benefitting from sanctuary during the period 1916-18. All of this activity appears to have been under Marjory's management. She was succeeded as VAD Commandant by Dorothy Cholmeley who stayed in post until the Armistice in November 1918.

Recognition

In her book Katherine Furse gives credit to the small unit of VAD pioneers who, in setting up the Boulogne rest station, paved the way for the more extensive deployment of VADs. All the unit were awarded the 1914 Star as well as The British War Medal and Allied Victory Medal. The 1914 Star was authorised by King George V in 1917 for those who had served in France and Belgium between 5 August and 22 November 1914. Both Katharine Furse and Rachel Crowdy were made Dames of the British Empire.

Marjory's role as VAD Commandant in Salonika was rewarded with a Mention in Despatches in 1917 and, after completion of service, with Membership of the British Empire (MBE) and Associate of the Royal Red Cross (ARRC). The Royal Red Cross Medal is not related to the British Red Cross Society – it had been instituted by Queen Victoria in 1883 for nurses, either military or civilian, who had shown exceptional devotion or bravery. It was awarded sparingly until the First World War when so many women contributed selflessly. A second class of medal, the 'Associate', was introduced at this stage and could be more widely awarded to women who were not trained nurses. Marjory Stephenson received her MBE and ARRC from the King at an investiture in December 1918.

Post-war Life

Marjory resumed her academic career early in 1919. Her erstwhile colleague Dr Plimmer moved to Aberdeen and, now that Marjory had her own funding in the form of her reactivated Beit fellowship, she could go back to Cambridge and work in Hopkins' Department. There followed two decades of especially productive research until her work was again interrupted by war. In 1945 she received the distinction of being one of the first two women to be elected Fellows of the Royal Society. In 1944 she had surgery for breast cancer and she died of her cancer in 1948.

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Sources and notes

General

A brief overview of Marjory Stephenson's life and work by the same author is available at <http://www.bioc.cam.ac.uk/about/history/marjory-stephenson>

For a more detailed account, see Soňa Štrbáňová: *Holding Hands with Bacteria: The Life and Work of Marjory Stephenson*. Springer 2016.

Marjory records some of her early life in a handwritten memoir prepared after her election as Fellow of the Royal Society in 1945, which is held in the Royal Society library.

I am grateful to Jane High of the British Red Cross Museum and Archives for scanning and sending me copies of Marjory's war record cards. Pinned to one of the cards is a personal testimonial from Colonel Fitzpatrick: "she 'organised our Red Cross Kitchen work in Salonika with great success, then our Sisters' Convalescent Home and finally was promoted to Chief Commandant of VADs. Rendered very valuable services. Very capable and hard working and very competent as Principal Commandant."

Reports by the Joint War Committee and the Joint War Finance Committee of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St John of Jerusalem in England, on voluntary aid rendered to the sick and wounded at home and abroad and to British prisoners of war 1914-1919. HMSO (1921). (A facsimile edition was also published by the Imperial War Museum in 2009).

The British Red Cross website has a lot of general information about their work in WW1 and the men and women who volunteered for service. <http://www.redcross.org.uk/About-us/Who-we-are/History-and-origin/First-World-War>. Record cards for individual VAD members are in the process of being digitized and made available online.

General information about the work of VADs is also contained in some of the following more specific sources.

Normandy

Katharine Furse: *Hearts and Pomegranates: the story of forty-five years 1875-1920*. London, Peter Davies. 1940.

Thekla Bowser: *The story of British VAD work in the Great War*. London. Andrew Melrose 1917. Bowser was on rest station duty with the Red Cross from June 1915 to February 1916 when she was invalided out due to an intestinal obstruction. She wrote her book whilst convalescing and subsequently died in 1919, aged 45 (Red Cross record available on their website and other information from www.findmypast.co.uk).

Copies of the letters of Eleonora B Pemberton are held in the Imperial War Museum. Two extracts (not including the reference to Stephenson) are contained in the anthology *Women in the War Zone* edited by Anne Powell, Sutton 2008.

All three of the above explicitly record the events of 2 November 1914 although in Bowser's case this would appear to be a second hand account as she was not deployed until 1915.

Salonika

Marguerite Fedden: *Sisters' Quarters: Salonika*, illustrated by FV Carpenter. London. Grant Richards 1921. Carpenter was a Lieutenant in the RAF who, like Fedden came from the Bristol area. After the war he moved to New York where he earned a living as a commercial artist. His line drawings of Salonika add atmosphere to Fedden's writing

Isabel Emslie Hutton: *With a Woman's Unit in Serbia, Salonika and Sebastopol*. Williams 1928. Isabel Emslie was a Scottish Doctor working in Scottish Hospitals in the Balkans. She later married an army man, Thomas Hutton, and in her subsequent career specialised in mental health and social work. She gives graphic accounts of the conditions prevailing in Salonika in the summer of 1916 and of the fire of 1917.

Lt-Gen GF Milne's dispatch dated 1 October 1917 was published in an appendix to the London Gazette of 14 November 1917 pp 11779-11783

Antony Twort: *In Focus, out of step, a biography of Frederick William Twort* FRS 1877-1950. A Sutton 1993.

An evocative fictional account of the life of a VAD nurse in Salonika can be found in Loretta Proctor's novel *The Long Shadow* Matador 2013.

Recognition

Marjory's Mention in Dispatches was published in the London Gazette 17/07/1917.

The ARRC was recorded in the London Gazette of 3 June 1918 and the MBE on 7 June 1918

Her medal card showing the three medals she received is in the National Archives at Kew and a digital copy can be viewed online ref WO 372/23/39465

The roster showing the initial membership of the Boulogne rest station unit who received the 1914 star is in the National Archives ref WO 329/2506 BRX/6. Rachel Crowdy is separately listed at BRX/23.

The Times for 13 December 1918 reports the investiture that took place the previous day at which Marjory Stephenson received her MBE and ARRC from the King.