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## Nurse Writers of the Great War

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Published by Manchester University Press

Hallett, Christine.

Nurse Writers of the Great War.

Manchester University Press, 2016.

Project MUSE., <https://muse.jhu.edu/>.



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## In France with the British Expeditionary Force

### **Introduction: the power of professional nursing**

In the second decade of the twentieth century, a British nursing reform movement, which had begun more than seventy years previously, was reaching its zenith. In the 1840s, small and isolated groups of British nurses, inspired by Continental examples and working under the patronage of the Church, had begun to demonstrate the value of a disciplined nursing workforce. Their achievements had been catapulted into the public consciousness by Florence Nightingale's highly publicised mission to the Crimea in the 1850s.<sup>1</sup> By raising the profile of the lady-nurse who acted as both compassionate carer and 'sanitary missionary', Nightingale had opened up nursing work as a field for women from the higher social echelons on both sides of the Atlantic. In the USA, the message that significant work could be performed in military settings by female nurses was further emphasised by the achievements of Civil War 'nurses' such as Clara Barton, Harriet Eaton, and Mary Chesnut.<sup>2</sup> The high-profile nursing achievements of elite women encouraged the development of professional nursing schools on both sides of the Atlantic.

By 1914, such schools, in both Britain and the USA, were well established, and had a clear sense of the distinctness of nursing care from medical practice. They produced nurses who were secure in their knowledge and confident in their skills. In the American context, Patricia D'Antonio has suggested that the development of

professional nursing was driven forward because some women's desire for medical knowledge coincided with physicians' needs for more educated and knowledgeable assistance in their increasingly technological work.<sup>3</sup> In elite schools, such as those of London, Edinburgh, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, nurses were given theoretical instruction by doctors, and were then assisted by nurse tutors and head nurses in developing the art of translating such knowledge into expert practice. This process resulted in an increasing sense of autonomy among nurses, who saw their role as something that went well beyond that of doctor's assistant.

Two highly trained nurses, one British, the other American, wrote significant memoirs of their war experiences. British nurse writer Kate Luard, a veteran of the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902) began the First World War as a sister with the QAIMNS Reserve and rose to the position of Head Sister to one of the most significant British advanced casualty clearing stations. American Alice Fitzgerald, a prominent member of the nursing profession in the USA, joined the QAIMNS Reserve as a sister in 1916, but left to take up a senior role with the American Red Cross following the USA's entry into the war.

### **The quintessential British nurse: Kate Luard**

Katherine Evelyn Luard (known to her colleagues as 'Kate') might be viewed as a typical member of the early-twentieth-century British nursing elite.<sup>4</sup> Born into the Victorian gentry, her upbringing imbued her with a sense of an inextricable link between privilege and service. Her father, the Revd Bixby Garnham Luard, was a member of the Anglican clergy, and in 1872, the year of Kate's birth, the family was living in Aveley Vicarage in Essex. Kate was the tenth of thirteen children and, while still young, she moved with her family to Birch Rectory, a large and comfortable living near Colchester.<sup>5</sup>

The Luard family was, perhaps, typical of the British gentry in the last decades of the nineteenth century. While there were ample means to provide a good standard of living for all, and an expensive public school education for the boys, the girls' education was not considered a high priority.<sup>6</sup> Girls were expected to marry and be supported by their husbands. In the Luard family, though, this expectation was



Figure 5 The Luard family at Birch Rectory, Essex. Kate is on the back row, right-hand side.

confounded: only one of the six Luard girls – Helen Lucy – ever did marry. All were educated at home by governesses, and some, Kate among them, also attended Croydon High School in their late teens.<sup>7</sup> Yet, in spite of its apparent limitations, the Luard sisters' education was clearly effective. Two of the girls, Clara Georgina and Rose Mary, went on to graduate from Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, while Kate herself enjoyed a successful career as a nurse, rising quickly through the ranks of the nascent profession to become matron of a sanatorium in the decade just prior to the First World War.

Luard's life could hardly be seen as one of impoverished gentility, and yet, her early adulthood was characterised by self-sufficiency and obligation. She worked as a governess for about a year in order to earn sufficient funds to pay her way through her probationary nursing years,<sup>8</sup> first at the East London Hospital for Children and Dispensary for Women, then at the prestigious King's College Hospital, London.<sup>9</sup> In the last four decades of the nineteenth century, a nurse probationer could choose whether to apprentice herself to the hospital, thus

gaining board and lodgings and free training, or to pay her own way by becoming a 'paying' or 'special' probationer.<sup>10</sup> At a time when identifying oneself as a 'lady' was seen as incompatible with any kind of paid work, the decision to become a special probationer was probably an automatic one for someone such as Luard.<sup>11</sup> This genteel identity was soon to become part of her persona as a professional military nurse: a member of an elite corps of female experts who combined a moral and sanitary mission with membership in a social elite.<sup>12</sup>

When Britain declared war on Germany in August 1914, Luard already had experience of military work. She had spent two years, from 9 June 1900 to 19 August 1902, as a member of the Army Nursing Service, caring for British casualties of the Second Anglo-Boer War in South Africa.<sup>13</sup> She had, subsequently, chosen to work as a civilian nurse, but she enlisted for service as part of the QAIMNS Reserve on 6 August 1914.<sup>14</sup> As a Reserve sister of the QAIMNS, Luard was in an enviable position. The 'war fever' of summer 1914 meant that a large proportion of the young female population of Britain were desperately anxious to join their brothers on 'active service' and play their part in Britain's war effort. Even fully trained nurses found it difficult to persuade the Army Medical Services to accept their offers of help. Yet Luard was one of the first nurses to travel overseas with the BEF.<sup>15</sup>

Several of Luard's brothers were already members of – or were soon to join – Britain's armed forces, and this may have had an important influence on her writing. One brother, Frederick, was a captain with a West Indian Regiment; another, Hugh, was an army surgeon; and Frank and Trant were Royal Marines. Alexander had died in an accident on board ship before the war; Frank was killed at Gallipoli in 1915.<sup>16</sup>

On first mobilisation on 9 September 1914, Luard was posted to No. 1 British General Hospital. She subsequently moved several times: her War Office file indicates that she spent time at various general hospitals, stationary hospitals, and casualty clearing stations (CCSs).<sup>17</sup> One posting does not appear in her file: the ambulance train that provides the subject-matter for her first – anonymously published – book, *Diary of a Nursing Sister on the Western Front*.<sup>18</sup> The absence of this posting in the official record is an indication of the chaos of the war's opening months. At this time the front was moving rapidly and unpredictably, and forces were experiencing bloody battles at the River Marne and at Mons, before the so-called 'race to the

sea. Eventually, a system of entrenchments stretching from the North Sea to the Swiss border, which came to be known as the 'Western Front', would form. In its earliest phase, no-one understood that what they were eventually to term the 'Great War' had no precedents. As historian Paul Fussell points out, terms such as 'the race to the sea' had 'the advantage of a familiar sportsmanlike Explorer Club over-tone, suggesting that what was happening was not too far distant from playing games, running races, and competing in a thoroughly decent way'.<sup>19</sup> This 'sportsmanlike' tone also pervades Luard's early writings. Women's historian Claire Tylee has commented on the susceptibility of British women to war propaganda.<sup>20</sup> It is difficult to see Luard – a woman with a strong and resolute character – as the victim of propaganda; and yet, like other members of her class, she was steeped in the values of her time – values that emphasised valour, self-sacrifice, and service to the British Empire.<sup>21</sup>

In 1915, when the First World War was still in its early stages, Luard published her first memoir. Her book was compiled from a series of 'journal' entries written for her family, and mailed home to Birch Rectory. Luard had been an avid letter-writer since first leaving home, addressing her frequent letters sometimes to individual siblings, sometimes to an 'inner circle' of close family members, and sometimes to a wider audience of family and friends. In 1915, her siblings persuaded her to have her 'journal' letters compiled into book form and submitted to a publisher. The result is one of the most authentic 'voices' of the First World War.<sup>22</sup> *Diary of a Nursing Sister on the Western Front*, published when the war was only a year old, won glowing reviews. It begins by recounting the thrill of travelling to France from Dublin on a troopship,<sup>23</sup> followed by the tedium of establishing a general hospital in a boggy hay-field. On Sunday 20 September, Luard wrote of how the latest fighting had produced an 'enormous' number of casualties. She had been posted to a railway station, where she offered urgent care to wounded men who were being transported from the front in cattle trucks. They were lying on straw and had only the first field dressings on their wounds. Most were malnourished and dehydrated. Luard, who, as we have seen, was a veteran of the Second Anglo-Boer War, declared that their infected wounds were 'more ghastly than anything I have ever seen or smelt'.<sup>24</sup>

Seven days later she was reporting that she had been appointed to a fully equipped ambulance train and described her feelings in her diary: 'It was worth waiting five weeks to get this; every man or woman stuck at the Base has dreams of getting to the Front, but only one in a hundred gets the dream fulfilled.'<sup>25</sup> But by 25 October, her mood was shifting. Her continuing enthusiasm for hospital train work was being moderated by the horror of what she saw, and she was describing the war as 'carnage'. On its most recent journey, the train had transported 368 wounded men, of whom 200 were dangerously ill. Medical officers were working under enormous pressure in regimental aid posts, and there were, as yet, very few CCSs. Some of the wounded had received treatment only from stretcher-bearers or their own comrades. Equipment was inadequate, and many of those with fractures had only makeshift splints created out of rifles and pick-handles. One had a tourniquet made from a piece of string and a bullet. Luard's *Diary* describes how:

They were bleeding faster than we could cope with it; and the agony of getting them off the stretchers on to the top bunks is a thing to forget ... All night and without a break till we got back to Boulogne at 4pm next day (yesterday) we grappled with them, and some were not dressed when we got into B—. The head cases were delirious, and trying to get out of the window, and we were giving strychnine and morphia all round. Two were put off dying at St Omer, but we kept the rest alive to Boulogne. The outstanding shining thing that hit you in the eye all through was the universal silent pluck of the men; they stuck it all without a whine or complaint or even a comment: it was 'Would you mind moving my leg when you get time', and 'Thank you very much', or 'That's absolutely glorious', as one boy said of having his bootlace cut, or 'That's grand', when you struck a lucky position for a wound in the back.<sup>26</sup>

In similar vein, she writes of 'one extraordinarily sporting boy' with a neck wound, who had to be fed through a rubber tube, and 'stuck it, smiling all the time',<sup>27</sup> or of a stretcher-bearer with severe leg wounds who nearly died of shock but was 'pulled round somehow', and who, when Luard asked him how he was feeling, replied: 'Quite well, delightfully warm, thank you!'<sup>28</sup>

Such narratives offer a clue as to the purpose of Luard's writing. Its tone is both resolutely positive and hauntingly poignant. Her motivation appears to be to convey to her readership a sense of the courage, tenacity, and fortitude of her patients. In doing so, she is, perhaps



Figure 6 View of a ward inside Hospital Train No. 18

unconsciously, promoting the myth of a ‘good war’, which later writers such as Vera Brittain and Mary Borden would, with hindsight, deplore.<sup>29</sup> Luard’s anxiety was, undoubtedly, to let people ‘at home’ know of what she saw as the heroism and sacrifice of their brothers and sons. Her writing places a remarkably positive gloss on the sufferings of those sent into battle – not because she wanted to hide the true horror of war, but because she wished her readers to admire the courage and fortitude of the wounded. All around her, as she was writing her *Diary*, were severely – and often irreparably – damaged human beings; yet she chose to interpret their damage as the life-affirming actions of those who were fighting for a better world. It may have been impossible for her to see the war in any other way; and, yet, towards the end of her *Diary*, there is a recognition of the danger of propaganda. In a field hospital close to the front lines in May 1915, she comments on how ‘awfully sick’ her patients got when they read the newspaper headlines: ‘“The Hill 60 Thrill”! “Thrill indeed! There’s nothing thrilling about ploughing over parapets into a machine gun, with high explosives bursting round you, – it’s merely beastly,” said

a boy this evening, who is all over shrapnel splinters.<sup>30</sup> And yet, this boy, like so many others, was valued by Luard for a quality that is so often mentioned by those who nursed the wounded of the First World War – the ability to ‘stick it’, to overcome fear and remain at their posts until carried away on a stretcher. In similar ways, too, they ‘stuck’ their treatments, often suffering the agonies of having complex dressing-changes, or minor surgery without anaesthetic.<sup>31</sup>

Luard’s later book, *Unknown Warriors*, was published in 1930, and hence might be expected to convey that sense of hindsight that is a feature of many memoirs of the late 1920s and early 1930s.<sup>32</sup> Surprisingly, although the book has more polish, and is clearly more thoroughly edited than Luard’s earlier work, and although, this time, she chooses to name herself as its author, *Unknown Warriors* has very much the same tone as *Diary of a Nursing Sister on the Western Front*, and contains similar content. Luard chooses, once again, to quote directly from her diary and letters, resulting in a text that has a compelling sense of immediacy. Perhaps the success of *Diary of a Nursing Sister* induced her to retain the same style for her later book, or perhaps it was a matter of conviction for her to relate her diary entries as they stood, with apparently very little alteration, in the belief that they contained a ‘truer’ account of events than any later reminiscences would be able to convey. Again, Luard’s intention seems to be to convey the heroism of the wounded. The title of the book itself provides a clue to her desire to bear witness to what she sees as the remarkable qualities of those who fought, were injured, and died in the Great War.

One of the most poignant features of *Unknown Warriors* is the way in which it allows the reader to follow the progress or deterioration of individual, named, patients. A sequence of entries that begins on 29 May 1915 follows the fortunes of a ‘rush of in-extremis cases’ to the CCS. Three die within hours of their arrival. Luard reports that ‘there seems to be an unusual number of charming boys, who have joined in tremendous keenness and are now filling the cemetery.’<sup>33</sup> This sentence is typical of her writing, which is both succinct and purposeful. The men who have died are both ‘charming’ and ‘keen’; actually, though, they are so youthful that they are not men at all – only boys. The phrase ‘filling the cemetery’ is a deliberate exaggeration. The ‘boys’ who arrived that morning did not literally ‘fill’ the cemetery – yet Luard’s words fed a post-war generation’s vision of the

iconic rows of white gravestones that formed the orderly and crowded war cemeteries created by the War Graves Commission in the 1920s. Luard's vision of slaughter and sacrifice merges with the perceptions of survivors, which, themselves, merge myth with reality.<sup>34</sup>

Having reported on the rush of cases received that morning, Luard's 'entry' for 29 May continues:

One called Reggie something, who talks like a gentleman, is slowly losing the fight with a lung wound. And another called Jack is paralysed from a fractured spine. He says wonderingly, 'What is it, Sister? I can't move my legs – will it be alright?'

My two gas gangrene boys side by side with continuous drips on their arm and leg stumps have never once lost their mental balance or fussed or cried or fretted. Their chief anxiety is to say 'thank you' and to smile and to say 'What should we do without you?'

Two days later, Luard's diary describes how she has been able to 'slip away' from the hospital for a walk to a nearby slag heap. From its summit, she is able to sit on the grass among ox-eye daisies and survey the British Front. Yet tonight she is back with her patient 'Jack'. Her writing conveys a vivid impression of immediacy – the work of a night nurse writing at a desk in the centre of a quiet surgical ward, full of severely wounded and acutely ill patients:

Jack is dying to-night, paralysed from a wound in the spine. He doesn't know what is the matter with him and can't feel anything, so he goes on smiling and making polite little jokes, and thanking and apologizing till we could all cry. Reggie is worse to-night. He holds out his small hand and says, 'Will you come and sit by me for a little while and hold my hand – it encourages me.' A boy who has lost one eye and can't see out of the other said this evening, 'I do feel bad, will you come and talk to me?' and you hardly ever can.<sup>35</sup>

Luard's fragments are more moving than any studied account of the men's injuries would have been. She opens a window onto a scene of suffering and endurance – but only momentarily – and she juxtaposes the scene where she is able to escape (to a slag heap) and see the ox-eye daisies, before returning the reader to the relentless reality of 'Jack's' slow death: 'Jack is alive still but very weak and wandering, asking us all day to take off his boots; we scabble about with his bare feet and he is happy for a moment, and then begins again.' In the same entry, the reader is offered a brief 'other-worldly' vision

of the garden at home in England, as Luard comments on the letters she has received from her sisters. Her commitment to the war effort is then revealed as she declares, tersely, 'we have got to take the top of this Vimy Ridge', before returning to descriptions of her wounded patients: '*Friday, June 2nd* ... Jack died at half-past ten last night, and three abdominals: this time they have been about the most appalling shell wounds I've ever seen – how they get here alive I don't know.'<sup>36</sup>

Other stories emerge, such as a narrative of 'Walter', who says, when Luard is washing him: 'Mother thinks the world o' me. I'm the eldest, I'm glad she can't see me now.' She adds: 'There's a worn-out Newcastle man with a wound in his liver who when he is uncomfortable wails, "I can't find a resting place. I shouldn't mind nothin' if I could find a resting place."<sup>37</sup> Luard's use of the men's voices to develop her narrative is probably a deliberate attempt to make these patients real for her readership – to bring home the realities of their suffering and to give them voice. The tendency to use colloquialisms and convey a variety of accents may be due to a desire to make these voices as authentic as possible. For Luard's 1930s audience, they may have made the men more real and their plight more pitiable. And yet the distinction between Luard's own commentary, offered in cultured 'King's English', and the accents of her patients conveys a sense of class distinction. It also suggests that Luard felt maternal towards her patients – her voice is a fully adult one, whilst theirs are often childlike. Indeed, one 'little Lancashire lad in the big ward ... calls out "Howd on Mother" when you are going to touch him. He calls us all Mother – "Give over, Mother" is his favourite way of saying he's had enough. His name is Joe.'<sup>38</sup>

On 6 June, Luard records that 'Reggie is going to be put on the train to-morrow. His mother will cry when she sees the little panting skeleton who was a marching soldier when she last saw him. But it's a wonder that she sees him at all: it didn't seem possible he could live with such holes in his lung.'<sup>39</sup> Luard's ability to juxtapose hope with horror is one of the most powerful elements of her writing. The way in which she traces 'Reggie's' progress from 'dangerously ill' patient who is 'slowly losing the fight with a lung wound', to 'panting skeleton' on his way home to his mother, offers her readers a glimpse of what she sees as the true rewards of her nursing work.

Kate Luard's war record was one of dedicated service, characterised by extraordinary courage and commitment. She clearly believed that

her own courage must match that of her patients, and was mentioned in dispatches on 1 January 1916 and 24 December 1917.<sup>40</sup> In January 1916 she was awarded the Royal Red Cross (First Class),<sup>41</sup> a decoration that had been created by Royal Warrant in 1883 to ensure that distinguished service by nurses would be recognised.<sup>42</sup> Her War Office file contains glowing references from matrons of various military hospitals on the Western Front. Sister Wrage, assistant matron of No. 16 General Hospital, reported that 'Miss Luard has an extremely good influence on every round her [*sic*], and is a most clever, capable sister.'<sup>43</sup> In similar style, G. A. Howe, the matron of No. 47 General Hospital, 'found her a most capable ward sister, and a good disciplinarian', adding that 'she exerted a very good influence on all her staff'.<sup>44</sup>

One of the most challenging periods for the medical and nursing services on the Western Front was the spring of 1918, following the German counter-attack. During this time, Luard was sister in charge of No. 41 CCS, close to a volatile and rapidly moving front line. The medical officer in charge of the CCS, Lieut. Col. S. B. Evans, reported that she had 'performed her duties in an eminently capable manner: showing at all times, tact, sound judgement, patience and marked administration powers'. He ends by commenting that 'no one could have shown more zeal and untiring energy'.<sup>45</sup>

After more than four years of service with the BEF, Kate Luard's military service came to a premature and rather sad end. On 23 November 1918, she wrote to her matron at No. 10 General Hospital requesting permission to terminate her service. Her father was very ill and was said to be 'constantly asking for her'. Her resignation was accepted in a letter dated 16 December.<sup>46</sup>

Kate Luard surfaces again in the historical record on 20 March 1919, in a letter written by her to Maud McCarthy, former matron-in-chief of the BEF in France. Luard comments that her age is preventing her from obtaining work (she was, by this time, in her late forties) and requests a testimonial. McCarthy's response is to write both a brief testimonial, stating that Luard was 'a splendid woman – capable of any amount of work and strong', and a more lengthy statement of support, mirroring the comments of Luard's wartime colleagues:

She is capable of doing a great deal of work. She has performed charge duties at the front almost continuously since May 1915 under the most trying and distressing conditions. She was constantly in areas where bombing

raids were taking place. Her health is excellent. She is a devoted nurse and has the gift of getting on well with all under whom she serves.<sup>47</sup>

Luard's last professional appointment was as 'Lady Matron' of Bradfield College, a private boys' school, where she was clearly very popular with both staff and pupils. An obituary in the alumni magazine, written by an 'old boy' of the school, alludes to her 'essential humanity underlying a determined character', commenting that: 'to be brought to her shocked after some accident was to know all the reassurance given by devotion, gentleness and efficiency'.<sup>48</sup>

The words of this 'old boy' leave the reader with a sense that Luard had never lost the staunch and sympathetic manner she had shown towards her earlier 'boys': those young men – many of them barely out of school – to whom she had devoted four years of her life during the Great War. For Kate Luard, the war was a simple matter. In her writings she rarely judged, rarely commented on the political or strategic decisions that brought patients in their thousands to the doors of her general hospitals and CCs. She appears to have accepted warfare as something inevitable. Perhaps this is understandable in a woman from a middle-class English family, several of whose brothers fought in the conflict. She comes across as a highly intelligent and articulate woman, yet also as one who never questioned the norms of her time, or the decisions of those in authority. This is unsurprising when one considers how steeped in the traditions of both clergy and army her background was. In this sense she was the perfect military nurse. Her character, whilst far from simple, was astonishingly pure and unsullied for someone who had clearly encountered some of the worst horrors of the First World War.

Kate Luard worked as 'Lady Matron' of Bradfield College for several years before being forced to retire by a back problem, the nature of which is unknown, though it is difficult to avoid speculation on its possible origins in her onerous and heavy nursing work. In old age, she lived with two sisters in Wickham Bishops, Essex. She became increasingly disabled and eventually found herself dependent on others, a situation that was 'trying to someone of such energetic and independent character'.<sup>49</sup> Katherine Evelyn Luard died on 18 August 1962 at the age of ninety.

In Talbot House, Poperinghe, east of Ypres in Belgium, there is a sepia photograph on display. It captures the moment when a nurse

bends over a patient lying on a wooden bed. Beside the photograph is a quotation from *Unknown Warriors*:

When I comforted the boy, he said: 'You're the best sister in the world – I know I'm a nuisance, but I can't help it – I've been out there and I am so young – will you give me a sleeping draft and a drop of champagne to make me strong?' He had both and slept like a lamb, but he died today.<sup>50</sup>

### **Alice Fitzgerald: entrapped nurse**

American nurse Alice Fitzgerald volunteered to work with the British QAIMNS in 1916. She nursed British and Dominion troops in France until the winter of 1917, when she moved to take up a senior position with the American Red Cross. She was 'gifted' to the British by a committee of Boston philanthropists, who funded her travel and living expenses and named her 'The Edith Cavell Nurse from Massachusetts'.<sup>51</sup> The offer of assistance to the allies was intended as a mark of respect and remembrance for the sacrifice of British nurse Edith Cavell, who had been executed by the Germans on 12 October 1915.<sup>52</sup>

Alice Fitzgerald wrote a memoir of her life as a wealthy society lady who entered formal nurse training, and then volunteered for war service. She added to this an edited version of her 'War Diary'. Her ladylike background and her enthusiasm and capacity for nurse leadership made Fitzgerald an obvious choice to be the Boston social elite's 'Edith Cavell Nurse'. Her 'Diary' begins on the day she left New York in February 1916. The last entry is dated 15 December 1917, and recounts her decision to leave the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) and join the American Red Cross.<sup>53</sup> Twenty years later, in 1936, Fitzgerald added twenty-two pages of 'memoirs' to a typescript of the diary. In this brief prologue she wrote of her childhood in various parts of Europe, her privileged upbringing, her determination to become a nurse, and her training. This introductory 'Memoir', which ends with her journey to London to join the BEF, is written as if she is sitting in a chair before a fire in her London lodgings, dreaming of her former life and of the adventure to come. It is impossible to tell whether the text was actually written on that night in London, or composed later and 'placed' in the London blackout for artistic reasons.<sup>54</sup>

Fitzgerald later went on to write a full memoir of her life, incorporating lengthy excerpts from her war diary into the chapters relating to her war service. Of her purpose in keeping a diary Fitzgerald writes very self-consciously, apparently intending her record of the war to be read by future generations. Although she made a number of attempts to find a publisher, the memoir remained unpublished and is now lodged in the Maryland Historical Society Archives in Baltimore, USA.<sup>55</sup> The only extant, published writings belonging to her consist of a set of letters to her Boston committee, published by committee members in 1917, as *The Edith Cavell Nurse from Massachusetts*, in an obvious attempt to gain support for the war effort.<sup>56</sup>

Fitzgerald lists the locations in which she wrote her diary: 'in London, at 13 General Hospital in Boulogne, at a hospital in St Pol near Bethune in the north, and at a casualty clearing station buried in mud along the Somme Front, where the Germans surrounded us on three sides, and the guns belched, and the shells whined and Death held a festival day and night.'<sup>57</sup> She adds an intriguing disclaimer:

My diary was not written with any idea of propaganda or even of publication. It was the day by day account of events in a war-mad world set down as they were actually happening, chiefly as an outlet for my pent-up feelings. It is far too long to quote in full and many of the entries, especially those made near the battle front, are but daily narrations of the same theme of suffering, death, destruction and human endurance beyond belief, of waste and futility and useless sacrifice which is war at close quarters.<sup>58</sup>

Alice Fitzgerald's time with the British military nursing services was an intensely stressful one, and her problems appear to have been compounded by her status as an 'outsider' from a neutral country. Her Boston committee's offer of her services to Britain was made 'in the hope that it may be this nurse's high fortune to serve not only the Allies' heroic wounded but their prisoners.'<sup>59</sup> Fitzgerald's work with the BEF was, from the first, affected by the ambivalence of her position. Although the humanitarian nature of her work, and the strong similarities between British and American nursing techniques and training, gave her much in common with her British colleagues, her political neutrality, combined with her age (forty-two at the time of her departure for France) and the fact that, as a guest, she was provided

with her own, rather than shared, accommodation, threatened to isolate her. Her powerful personality and diplomatic skill appear to have done much to ameliorate her situation.<sup>60</sup> Her diary resonates with anxiety and conveys a sense of an individual who is attempting to cover her unhappiness with a determinedly positive spirit.

Fitzgerald chose to train at one of the most prestigious nurse training schools of her day: the Johns Hopkins Hospital Training School in Baltimore, whose superintendent was the formidable Adelaide Nutting.<sup>61</sup> In 1908, she had her first experience of humanitarian work overseas, when she travelled to Messina, Italy, to assist the Red Cross relief effort following an earthquake.<sup>62</sup> In the first decades of the twentieth century, she held prestigious positions at the Johns Hopkins Hospital; the Bellevue Hospital, New York; the General Hospital, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania; the Robert W. Long Hospital, Indianapolis, Indiana; and Dana Hall School, Wellesley, Massachusetts.<sup>63</sup> Her service in France with the BEF returned her to the role of 'nursing sister' – one that she appears to have embraced.

Her early nursing career had been remarkable for the way in which it opened up opportunities to travel and seek out promotion in the vast and expanding field that was late-nineteenth-century America. Such mobility was not unusual for a successful nurse. In this sense, her training, initially, gave Fitzgerald freedom to travel, to seek both adventure and promotion, and to attain the highest level of clinical and managerial skill of which she was capable. It was only after she accepted the invitation of the Edith Cavell Memorial Committee and joined the BEF that her life became constrained and her freedom curtailed. At first this seemed a small price to pay, and one of Fitzgerald's early letters home refers to her feeling 'very deeply the strength of my mission'.<sup>64</sup> The book of her letters is an intriguing and clearly highly selective account of Fitzgerald's experiences, opinions, and feelings. Although the letters were probably published largely unabridged and unedited, they reveal a remarkable degree of self-censorship. Fitzgerald's sense of adventure, her belief in the importance of her work, and her assertive determination to experience life close to the front lines can be read through the letters. Yet, her relentless cheerfulness and insistently positive tone strike a false note – as when she comments that 'I am right in the thick of it now; and the shells whizz by our ears in great style. It is queer that, where

there is such real danger, one does not think of it.’<sup>65</sup> This enforced cheerfulness becomes more clearly false when one compares the letters against her manuscript diary, in which she reflects: ‘the more I see of these terrible cases the more I worry about every man caught in this awful war.’<sup>66</sup>

Alice Fitzgerald offers contrasting perspectives on her wartime experience. While it is difficult to know which is the most revealing of her true perspectives – the cheerful ‘letters home’, or the more reflective diary entries – it seems likely that the unpublished account is the ‘truer’ of the two: more revealing of her actual experiences and feelings. Her earliest letters resonate with a sense of adventure, which is heightened as she moves closer to the front lines, from No. 13 General Hospital in Boulogne, via No. 12 Stationary Hospital at St Pol, to the battered and muddy Second London CCS (given the ironic nickname ‘Grovetown’) at Meaulte, within sight and sound of shelling.<sup>67</sup> Following her first two months in Boulogne, she comments that ‘the English Tommies are the most wonderful men – never a grumble, never a loud word, and they stand pain like super-human beings. It is best not to stop and think too much; one could never do the work.’<sup>68</sup> In April 1916 she recounts her experience of nursing several horrific ‘cases’, among them Jones, with a ‘wound of buttocks and rectum’, who ‘was taken to the operating room where a large piece of shell was removed and wound packed; he suffered agonies and died two hours later’. Of another, similar case, she comments that she had ‘never seen a live man with so much dead flesh on him.’<sup>69</sup>

By the time Fitzgerald reached ‘Grovetown’ her mood had been further modified by her encounters with other horrific results of industrial warfare. Eventually, a tone of deep anxiety becomes unmistakable in her writing – one, however, that is still heavily and deliberately masked by the forced cheerfulness of her letters. She writes, for example, of a ‘beautiful air fight’ that took place over her camp.<sup>70</sup> Later, she comments that ‘if noises could kill, we should all be corpses. It is roar, roar, roar, day and night – guns nearer by with their louder reports, air craft fights, anti-air-craft guns, bombs exploding, German shells whizzing over our camp. And with it all, it is a blessing to be busy.’<sup>71</sup> But in the personal diary, she allows herself to reveal her fear, as she becomes fully aware of the damage that war could do – indeed, in many ways, is already doing – to her. She comments that ‘the

exploding of bombs and the pounding of heavy field artillery helped to fill in the pages in the dreadful story of War of which I had read only the outlines in Boulogne'. She becomes aware that 'lying down is the only safe position as the shells burst upward after striking and the fragments pass over you'.<sup>72</sup>

In the late summer and autumn of 1916, even Fitzgerald's cheerful letters home to her committee begin to take on a more serious tone: 'I have come to the conclusion that even in the very small part that I play, each day makes me a week older. I cannot quite explain it. It is not only the hard work, but the whole situation and atmosphere in which we live.'<sup>73</sup>

In late September 1916, as the numbers of casualties from the Battle of the Somme began to abate slightly, Fitzgerald did obtain some respite from her relentless work at 'Grovetown'. To her committee in Boston, she wrote: 'I suppose you have read about the "Tanks"? I went into one the other day – pure cheek! Every one laughs, and says, "Trust USA to get there!"'<sup>74</sup> In her memoir, she offers a much more detailed description of her excursion 'out of bounds', and of her discovery of three tanks, which are 'like some sort of gigantic beast ... I can readily understand how they could strike terror into anyone.'<sup>75</sup>

On 23 September Fitzgerald experienced a 'terrifying night':

I had already gone to sleep when I was awakened by unusually loud reports and I was just thinking how queer it was to bring back the big guns and place them near to us when suddenly the earth shook to the accompaniment of a terrific crash which I can only compare to the sudden collapse of a thousand buildings with the crumbling of stone and the shattering of glass and metal.<sup>76</sup>

A high-explosive bomb had been dropped from a German *Taube* just outside 'Grovetown'. Another such night came on 10 October, and in early November things become even worse, when an ammunition dump nearby was struck by German bombing. In her diary, Fitzgerald describes 'the concussion felt after an explosion ... the horrible sinking feeling that grips you as you wait for the next jolt which you know is bound to come.'<sup>77</sup> She began to take a sedative before going to bed each night, and on 10 November, recorded that her fear of facial injury had become so acute that she had borrowed a steel helmet from one of the sergeants; this she placed over her face every night as soon as the bombing began.<sup>78</sup>

In addition to constant fear, Fitzgerald and her British colleagues experienced real hardship. In some of the tents of the CCS there was no flooring, and nurses were obliged to 'slip and slop around in great style'. 'What is nursing here?', Fitzgerald writes in her diary, after a day in which she has knelt in mud between stretchers to care for, dress, and feed her patients, with insufficient time to provide for anything but their most basic and essential needs. She could 'more readily understand what terrible hardships the men are suffering in the trenches in this kind of weather with never a chance to dry out'.<sup>79</sup> In September she began to experience a series of minor ailments, which gradually worsened – first colitis (caused, she believed, by the dampness of her quarters); next exhaustion; and then chilblains, which, in November, began to spread across the whole of both feet. The situation was made worse by an autocratic commanding officer who refused to allow her (or any of the other nurses) to travel to Amiens for new shoes.<sup>80</sup>

As the winter weather became colder, Fitzgerald found that the only way of keeping warm was to sleep in woollen pyjamas, bed socks, and a dressing gown, inside a sleeping bag, covered by two rugs, a fur-lined coat, and a rubber sheet. In stormy weather, she was obliged to go out and re-peg her tent every few hours throughout the night, aware that, 'no matter how bad things might be, they would be much worse if my tent fell down on me'. On 14 December she wrote:

The last few days have been like a nightmare to look back upon. I have had a touch of influenza and my feet have grown worse and are agonizingly painful all the time day and night. At times in the ward, I could have screamed from the pain, yet I cannot get permission to go to Amiens to get shoes ... In addition to these two very personal troubles, the work has been simply overwhelming and I just could not give in.<sup>81</sup>

Yet her letters to her Boston committee are still pervaded by her attempts to retain her sense of humour. In a letter despatched towards the end of the year, she writes: 'I am in the thick of it, as this is the nearest Casualty Clearing Station to the Front. I assure you I am all but in the trenches!'. She adds that it is impossible to get leave, 'unless I am taken in a "box", which is perfectly possible'.<sup>82</sup> A glance at Fitzgerald's personal memoir reveals that she did manage to obtain 'leave' on 31 December. Upon her arrival in London, she consulted a doctor who promptly prescribed a sedative for 'shell shock'.<sup>83</sup>

In Fitzgerald's unpublished memoir, the reader comes face-to-face with the full reality of a war in which men endure extreme hardship and are irrecoverably maimed. On 25 September 1916, she writes:

The rush is on. I have never spent such a day. Two wards full with 120 patients and as fast as we could get them dressed they were taken to the evacuation tent and others took their places. I never worked harder nor more hopelessly in my life as we only had time for the barest of care for each ... At times I feel completely hopeless and do not know where to turn next so as not to leave anything important undone ... Blood is thick over the uniforms and flies settle on the bloody spots. It is ghastly ... The only consolation I can think of is that they might still be lying on the battle field.<sup>84</sup>

So many of her patients came to the CCS already suffering from gas gangrene infections that she felt she could not get away from 'the awful smell of it' – even in her own tent. In October 1917, Fitzgerald resigned her posting with the QAIMNS and accepted a senior position with the American Red Cross. Although onerous, this allowed her to take a more supervisory and less physically demanding role.

On Armistice Day, when 'the sorrow and anxiety of four hideous years were suddenly transformed into irrepressible joy', Fitzgerald had been on active service almost constantly for over two years. She continued to work for the Red Cross, arranging relief for former prisoners-of-war. During one trip through the aptly named 'devastated zone', she passed the site of the CCS in which she had spent the last four months of 1916. Her memoir records how 'a flood of memories of days with the B.E.F. overwhelmed me; memories of mud and blood and horrible nights; of thundering guns and dropping bombs; of super human courage and useless sacrifice'.<sup>85</sup>

### **Conclusion: professional nurses in military hospitals**

Not all nurses in Britain and the USA came from wealthy and elite social backgrounds. The majority were still drawn from the lower social classes. Some belonged to impoverished 'gentry' families, while others were working-class women seeking social advancement.<sup>86</sup> Yet women such as Kate Luard and Alice Fitzgerald may be viewed as part of a 'professional vanguard' that aimed to demonstrate to both medical practitioners and hospital governors that a disciplined nursing service was essential to good patient care. This lesson was

translated only with difficulty into military practice. The harsh challenges faced by Fitzgerald within the somewhat chauvinistic scenario of 'Grovetoyn' contrast with the ease and collegiality with which she had worked with senior surgeons such as William Osler and Harvey Cushing in Baltimore.

The position of elite professional nurses such as Luard and Fitzgerald was an inherently ambiguous one: their contribution to the care of sick and injured men was recognised, but their presence close to the front lines of battle was still regarded with suspicion. By the time they were nursing the wounded of the First World War, theirs had become a respectable 'profession' for women of high social status. Nevertheless, its lingering taint as work for women of poor reputation meant that Fitzgerald's parents had had serious reservations about its suitability for their daughter. And these reservations appear to have been shared by many within the military medical establishment. Such ambivalence does not appear to have had any great impact on the thinking of either Luard or Fitzgerald. Both wrote with confidence and, although at times they experienced great stress, the role ambiguities they faced do not seem to have detracted from their certainties about the value and significance of their work.

## Notes

- 1 Mark Bostridge, *Florence Nightingale: The Woman and Her Legend* (London: Viking, 2008).
- 2 Mary Boykin Chesnut, *Mary Chesnut's Diary*, with introduction by Catherine Clinton (New York: Penguin, 2011); Harriet Eaton, *This Birth Place of Souls: The Civil War Nursing Diary of Harriet Eaton*, ed. Jane E. Schultz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Jane E. Schultz, *Women at the Front: Hospital Workers in Civil War America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).
- 3 Patricia D'Antonio, *American Nursing: A History of Knowledge, Authority, and the Meaning of Work* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).
- 4 Midori Yamaguchi states that Luard's given names were Katherine Evelyn, in that order. Her pen-name, for her book *Unknown Warriors*, was 'Kate Luard'. Her family is said to have referred to her as 'Evelyn' or 'Evie'. Midori Yamaguchi, "'Unselfish" Desires: Daughters of the Anglican Clergy, 1830–1914' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Essex, 2001). I am indebted to Kate Luard's great nephew, Tim Luard, with whom I worked on an introduction for a new edition of *Unknown Warriors*; and to her great nieces: Caroline Stevens, who

- edited the new edition, and Catherine Fry, who provided valuable material and insights into her great aunt's life. See: Kate Luard, *Unknown Warriors: The Letters of Kate Luard, R.R.C. and Bar., Nursing Sister in France 1914–1918*, ed. John Stevens and Caroline Stevens (Stroud: History Press, 2014).
- 5 Yamaguchi, “‘Unselfish’ Desires’, **Chapter 8**, ‘Writing a Family of a Clergy Daughter’: 281–325 (284). See also: Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850*, rev. edn (London: Routledge, 2002 [1987]).
  - 6 John Lawson and Harold Silver, *A Social History of Education in England* (London: Methuen, 1973): 341–4.
  - 7 Kate attended for three years from 1887 until 1890: Yamaguchi, “‘Unselfish’ Desires’: 306–7.
  - 8 Yamaguchi, “‘Unselfish’ Desires’: 315–16.
  - 9 ‘Kate Evelyn Luard’ is entered into the Register for Nurses for 1923 as registrant no. 1495. It is stated that she trained at King’s College Hospital, London, between 1897 and 1900: Register for Nurses, 1923, General Part, Archive of the Nursing and Midwifery Council, London.
  - 10 Jane Brooks, ‘Structured by Class, Bound by Gender: Nursing and Special Probationer Schemes, 1860–1939’, *International History of Nursing Journal*, 6.2 (2001): 13–21.
  - 11 Many of the earliest ‘specials’ – famous nurses such as Eva Luckes and Isla Stewart – became matrons of prestigious institutions in their mid-twenties. See Susan McGann, *The Battle of the Nurses: A Study of Eight Women who Influenced the Development of Professional Nursing, 1880–1930* (London: Scutari Press, 1992): 9–34, 35–57; Winifred Hector, *The Work of Mrs Bedford Fenwick and the Rise of Professional Nursing* (London: Royal College of Nursing, 1973): 2.
  - 12 On the gentrification of nursing, see: Brian Abel-Smith, *A History of the Nursing Profession* (London: Heinemann, 1960): 17–35; Christopher Maggs, *The Origins of General Nursing* (London: Croom Helm, 1983): 63–87; Anne Simnett, ‘The Pursuit of Respectability: Women and the Nursing Profession’, in Rosemary White (ed.), *Political Issues in Nursing: Past, Present and Future*, 3 vols (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 1986–88), Vol. II; Robert Dingwall, Anne Marie Rafferty, and Charles Webster, *An Introduction to the Social History of Nursing* (London: Routledge, 1988): 69–70.
  - 13 Kate Luard War Office file, WO 399/5023, record of service in South Africa: register no. 4862/Reserve/3387, The National Archives, Kew, London, UK.
  - 14 The Reserve of the QAIMNS had been created as part of the Haldane reforms in 1908. Luard’s signing for service was registered by her brother, the Revd Edwin Percy Luard of Birch Rectory, Colchester: Kate Luard War Office file, WO 399/5023.
  - 15 On ‘war fever’ amongst nurses, see: Anon., ‘The Nursing Outlook: War Fever and War Spirit’, *The Nursing Mirror and Midwives Journal*, 19 (22 August 1914): 397. On the eagerness of young men to participate, see: Niall Ferguson,

- The Pity of War* (London: Allen Lane, 1998); Eric Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in World War One* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Modris Ecksteins, *Rites of Spring: The Great War and the Birth of the Modern Age* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1989).
- 16 Yamaguchi, "Unselfish" Desires.
  - 17 Luard's War Office file indicates that she was based at No. 16 General Hospital, No. 32 CCS, No. 12 Stationary Hospital, No. 10 Stationary Hospital, and No. 37 CCS. There is also a reference from the matron of No. 47 General Hospital: Kate Luard War Office file, WO 399/5023.
  - 18 Anon., *Diary of a Nursing Sister on the Western Front 1914–1915* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1915).
  - 19 Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000 [1975]): 9.
  - 20 Claire Tylee, *The Great War and Women's Consciousness: Images of Militarism and Womanhood in Women's Writings, 1914–64* (Houndmills and London: Macmillan, 1990): 19–46.
  - 21 Michael Paris, *Warrior Nation: Images of War in British Popular Culture, 1850–2000* (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), *passim*. On wartime propaganda, see: Peter Buitenhuis, *The Great War of Words: Literature as Propaganda, 1914–18 and After* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1989 [1987]).
  - 22 Many of Kate Luard's letters are available at the Essex Record Office, Colchester, UK, Luard family papers, files 55/13/1–4, D/Dlu 58. I am indebted to Tim Luard for providing me with transcripts of excerpts from many of these letters. See also: Christine Hallett and Tim Luard, introduction to Luard, *Unknown Warriors* (2014 edn): 9–20.
  - 23 Anon., *Diary of a Nursing Sister*: 3.
  - 24 Anon., *Diary of a Nursing Sister*: 40–1. For a brief account of Kate Luard's early experiences of the First World War, see: Christine E. Hallett, *Veiled Warriors: Allied Nurses of the First World War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014): [Chapter 1](#).
  - 25 Anon., *Diary of a Nursing Sister*: 52–3. On nursing work on hospital trains, see: Hallett, *Veiled Warriors*: [Chapter 1](#).
  - 26 Anon., *Diary of a Nursing Sister*: 88–90.
  - 27 Anon., *Diary of a Nursing Sister*: 206.
  - 28 Anon., *Diary of a Nursing Sister*: 212.
  - 29 Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth: An Autobiographical Study of the Years 1900–1925* (London: Virago Press, 2004 [1933]); Mary Borden, *The Forbidden Zone* (London: William Heinemann, 1929).
  - 30 Anon., *Diary of a Nursing Sister*: 289.
  - 31 Christine Hallett, *Containing Trauma: Nursing Work in the First World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009): 155–93.
  - 32 Kate Luard, *Unknown Warriors: Extracts from the Letters of K. E. Luard, R.R.C., Nursing Sister in France* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1930).

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- 33 Luard, *Unknown Warriors* (1930): 73.
- 34 On memorials and mourning, see: Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995): 78–116.
- 35 Luard, *Unknown Warriors* (1930): 73–4.
- 36 Luard, *Unknown Warriors* (1930): 74–5.
- 37 Luard, *Unknown Warriors* (1930): 77–8.
- 38 Luard, *Unknown Warriors* (1930): 80–1.
- 39 Luard, *Unknown Warriors* (1930): 78–81.
- 40 Kate Luard War Office file, WO 399/5203, supplement to the *London Gazette* (1 January 1916): 69.
- 41 Kate Luard War Office file, WO 399/5023.
- 42 Anne Summers, *Angels and Citizens: British Women as Military Nurses, 1854–1914* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1988).
- 43 Kate Luard War Office file, WO 399/5023, confidential report on work at No. 16 General Hospital (16 October 1915).
- 44 Kate Luard War Office file, WO 399/5023, confidential report from matron of No. 47 General Hospital (22 November 1918).
- 45 Kate Luard War Office file, WO 399/5023, confidential report from S. B. Evans, Lieut. Col. O.C., No. 41 CCS.
- 46 Kate Luard War Office file, WO 399/5023, letter of resignation; letter and memorandum signed by Maud McCarthy, matron.
- 47 Kate Luard War Office file, WO 399/5023, testimonials by Maud McCarthy (2 and 3 April 1919).
- 48 Anon., 'Miss K. E. Luard, R.R.C.', obituary, clipping from the Bradfield College Alumni Magazine (undated); from the private collection of Caroline Stevens.
- 49 Anon., 'Miss K. E. Luard, R.R.C.'.
- 50 The note beside the photograph and quotation is: 'Sister Kate Luard, Army Nursing Sister Reserve, No. 32 CCS (Brandhock) 7 August, 1917'. The quotation is from: Luard, *Unknown Warriors* (1930): 210. I am greatly indebted to Caroline Stevens for bringing my attention to this and other sources.
- 51 The 'Edith Cavell Committee' was composed of a number of influential Bostonians: William Roscoe Thayer, Philip Cabot, Rosalind Huidekoper Greene, Henry Copley Greene, and William Ernest Hocking. It announced its intention to offer the services of an American trained nurse to the BEF at a memorial service held in Steinert Hall, Boston on 11 December 1915: Anon. (ed.), *The Edith Cavell Nurse from Massachusetts: A Record of One Year's Personal Service with the British Expeditionary Force in France; Boulogne—the Somme, 1916–1917. With an Account of the Imprisonment, Trial and Death of Edith Cavell* (Boston, MA: W. A. Butterfield, 1917): i–vi.
- 52 Anon., *The Edith Cavell Nurse*. Edith Cavell had been executed for 'returning soldiers to the enemy'. See: Jonathan Evans, *Edith Cavell* (London: London Hospital Museum, 2008); Diana Souhami, *Edith Cavell* (London: Quercus, 2010).

- 53 There are four different versions of Fitzgerald's memoir/diary at the Maryland Historical Society Archives, Baltimore, Maryland. The two that were most closely consulted for this work were: Alice Fitzgerald, 'Memoirs', MS 987, Box 2; and Alice Fitzgerald, unpublished memoirs incorporating war diary, c. 1936, Alice Fitzgerald Papers, Md HR M2633, Md HR M2634, unpaginated. I am deeply indebted to Colleen Bowers and Dean Foreman for providing me with a complete scanned copy of this version.
- 54 Fitzgerald, 'Memoirs': 1–21.
- 55 Fitzgerald, 'Memoirs'.
- 56 Anon., *The Edith Cavell Nurse*.
- 57 Fitzgerald, 'Memoirs': 22.
- 58 Fitzgerald, 'Memoirs': 22.
- 59 Anon., *The Edith Cavell Nurse*: iv; these words are also quoted verbatim in the BJN's report of Fitzgerald's appointment: Anon., 'An Edith Cavell Memorial Nurse', *BJN* (4 March 4 1916): 214.
- 60 It has been said that Alice Fitzgerald was 'noted for her diplomacy': Alice Howell Friedman, 'Fitzgerald, Alice Louise Florence', in Martin Kaufman (ed.), *Dictionary of American Nursing Biography* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988): 122.
- 61 M. Adelaide Nutting and Lavinia L. Dock, *A History of Nursing: The Evolution of Nursing Systems from the Earliest Times to the Foundation of the First English and American Training Schools for Nurses*, 4 vols (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1907–12). See also: Minnie Goodnow, *Outlines of Nursing History* (W. B. Saunders: Philadelphia, 1923).
- 62 Anon., *The Edith Cavell Nurse*: v–vi; Friedman, 'Fitzgerald, Alice Louise Florence': 121; Anon., 'An Edith Cavell Memorial Nurse'.
- 63 Friedman, 'Fitzgerald, Alice Louise Florence': 121.
- 64 Anon., *The Edith Cavell Nurse*: 14.
- 65 Anon., *The Edith Cavell Nurse*: 26.
- 66 Fitzgerald, 'Memoirs': 35.
- 67 These details are taken from the unpublished memoir and diary: Fitzgerald, 'Memoirs'.
- 68 Anon., *The Edith Cavell Nurse*: 5.
- 69 Fitzgerald, 'Memoirs': 38–9.
- 70 Anon., *The Edith Cavell Nurse*: 15.
- 71 Anon., *The Edith Cavell Nurse*: 30.
- 72 Fitzgerald, 'Memoirs', **Chapter 4**, 'Along the Somme Front': 64–108.
- 73 Anon., *The Edith Cavell Nurse*: 24–5.
- 74 Anon., *The Edith Cavell Nurse*: 31–2.
- 75 Fitzgerald, 'Memoirs': 71. On the use of tanks on the Somme, see: Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*: 16.
- 76 Fitzgerald, 'Memoirs': 71–2. On this episode, see also: Hallett, *Veiled Warriors*: 181.

- 77 Fitzgerald, 'Memoirs': 89–90.  
78 Fitzgerald, 'Memoirs': 91.  
79 Fitzgerald, 'Memoirs': 75. See also: Hallett, *Veiled Warriors*: 181–2.  
80 Fitzgerald, 'Memoirs': 98–9.  
81 Fitzgerald, 'Memoirs': 101.  
82 Anon., *The Edith Cavell Nurse*: 31–2.  
83 Fitzgerald, 'Memoirs': 110–11.  
84 Fitzgerald, unpublished memoirs.  
85 Fitzgerald 'Memoirs': 181.  
86 Maggs, *The Origins of General Nursing*; Simnett, 'The Pursuit of Respectability'; Sue Hawkins, *Nursing and Women's Labour in the Nineteenth Century: The Quest for Independence* (London: Routledge, 2010).