

[Letter written by Ann BANKART]

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Baroness Boothroyd.  
House of Lords,  
Houses of Parliament.  
London.

Dear Baroness Boothroyd,

I have been told that you are interested in hearing about women who have given service to the country in time of war. I am therefore writing to tell you about my two quite remarkable aunts, both nurses and both decorated with The Royal Red Cross Medal.

I quote from the obituary of the elder---  
Miss Marion Delves—b.28.03.1886 d.28.11.1972  
The death has occurred of Miss Marion Delves, Moorgate Cottage, Long Preston. North Yorkshire. Held in high regard, Miss Delves was well known in nursing circles, and she served in both World Wars. She trained as a nurse at Bradford Royal Infirmary, and joined the military nursing service. First stationed on Salisbury Plain she was engaged in nursing Maoris who were accommodated in huts, the conditions being so bad that she herself fell victim to pneumonia. When convalesced, she nursed at the Millbank Military Hospital in London, and from there went to Aldershot. Her first appointment abroad was at Delhi Military Hospital from where she moved on to nurse in Tehran. She was stationed also in China, Hong Kong and Shanghai and in Egypt. She had the rank of Principal Matron, and travelled around supervising all military hospitals and lecturing to orderlies. During the Second World War Miss Delves was mentioned in dispatches, and on June 29<sup>th</sup>, 1943, went to Buckingham Palace where she was invested with the R.R.C. by King George VI. She was also awarded medals for war service in Britain, France, Belgium and Africa. ----  
On retirement she returned to Long Preston where her chief interests were the Parish Church, where she used to arrange the altar flowers, the Ladies Section Royal British Legion, of which she was a past president, and the Mechanics Institute. She also never lost her interest in the Bradford League of Nurses.

Now the younger-

Miss Annie Margaret (Madge) Delves. b.12.06.1887 d.1.03.1981

Noted Army Nurse Dies—A former Long Preston nurse, who was awarded the Royal Red Cross has died in a Harrogate nursing home at the age of 93

She was Miss Annie Margaret Delves, who was born in Long Preston in 1887, and was the second daughter of Thomas and Annie Delves.

After spending her formative years in Long Preston she started training as a nurse in 1928/9 and joined the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps in 1937.

She served first at Millbank, London, and then from 1938-1939 at Aldershot Soldiers Hospital.

In April, 1939, she was posted to Malta where she served for four years, enduring the siege of Malta during the Second World War.

In February, 1943, she was posted to Egypt, serving there for nine months before returning by convoy to Britain in December 1943.

In 1944 Miss Delves, then aged 57, volunteered to go to Europe with the D-Day forces. She served first in Normandy, as Acting Matron, setting up hospitals under canvas, and then went to Belgium, working as Acting Principal Matron in charge of a 1,500 bed hospital.

Her final service in Europe was in Germany, in Hamburg and Wuppertal. In 1945 she was awarded The Royal Red Cross.

In 1947 she retired to Long Preston, living there with her eldest sister, Miss Marion Delves, who had also given devoted service to her country in the Queen Alexandra's Royal Nursing Service.

She used to tell stories of the terrible conditions of starvation that occurred during the siege of Malta and of the problems of rats in the field hospitals in Europe. I understood that she also went into Belsen but that was something she would not talk about.

I think you will agree that the pair if them, having lost the chance of marriage due to the casualties of the First World War, served their country with great dedication, they both retained to the very end a most indomitable spirit and were a cause for pride in me as I grew up.

Yours sincerely