

News Letter No.2

Women in War Group



Autumn 2011

Editors Celia Lee and Paul Edward Strong

We are pleased to present the second issue of our Women in War group News Letter.

In addition to events and book review, further issues will hopefully include short articles on and previews of forthcoming publications.

The upcoming volume on Women in War has been edited and submitted to the publisher and we'll update you with the release date as soon as Pen and Sword confirm their release schedule. Thank you once again for everyone's superb efforts in submitting excellent chapters for this volume and we are sure that you will thoroughly enjoy the final product.

Diary of forthcoming Live and Web events 2011

We missed the Women and War conference in Washington DC in November last year but many of the presentations are available on the Net at <http://www.usip.org/events/woman-and-war> and at <http://www.usip.org/events/women-war-book-launch-and-symposium>.

It is also worth checking the website run by the Women's History Network for events - <http://www.womenshistorynetwork.org/confevent.html> although few of the conferences directly concern women and warfare they do showcase the areas currently being addressed by researchers in the field.

The Imperial War Museum London is running an exhibition on Women War Artists from 9th April 2011 to 27th November 2011.

Focusing on work by women war artists from the First World War to the Kosovo conflict, the display highlights the Museum's outstanding art collection as it explores artists' response to conflict – as eyewitnesses, participants, commentators and as officially commissioned recorders.

The Women War Artists exhibition illuminates both the constraints and possibilities offered to female artists in wartime and offers a unique opportunity to revisit key moments in the last century of Britain's history of war and conflict, through a largely unexplored perspective. Featured artists will include Anna Airy, one of the first women officially commissioned during the First World War, Dame Laura Knight RA, Linda Kitson and Frauke Eigen. (See below for details on the book accompanying the exhibition)

Winter Events

If you know of any forthcoming events that you think that the group might find interesting please do not hesitate to contact us.

Recent Activities

Celia Lee gave the inaugural lecture, White Roses and Lilac Orchids - A Celebration of the Life of Jennie, Lady Randolph Churchill, at the recently formed Chartwell Branch of the Churchill Centre at Westerham Hall, Kent. Celia was introduced by Randolph L. S. Churchill the great grandson of Sir Winston and Baroness Clementine Spencer-Churchill. The talk was a celebration of the life of the mother of Winston and Jack Churchill, Jennie, Lady Randolph Churchill on the 90th anniversary of her death, 29th June 2011.

Celia focused on Jennie's voluntary and war work: her first experience of public work was campaigning for her husband Lord Randolph, newly appointed as Secretary of State for India in 1885. Jennie and Randolph's sister Georgiana campaigned in Randolph's Woodstock, Oxfordshire constituency for his re-election as a newly-appointed minister. The two women rode around in an open, horse-drawn carriage, sporting Randolph's racing colours, pink and chocolate brown.

Jennie then became active in raising funds for the *National Association for Supplying Female Medical Aid to the Women of India*, which was run by the Vicereine, Harriot, Lady Dufferin. This worthy association, which was supported by Queen Victoria, recruited and trained women doctors, midwives, and nurses to improve the situation for Indian women in illness, and in childbearing. In acknowledgement of her fundraising work, Queen Victoria awarded Jennie the insignia of the Imperial Order of the Crown of India medal.

The Boer War broke out in 1899, and hospital ships were required to go out to South Africa to care for the wounded. Jennie became Chairman of the *United States Hospital Ship Fund*. She worked enthusiastically during October and November, organising and raising funds for the trip. On the day of a prestigious fund raising event she organised at Claridges, Jennie received word that Winston had been taken prisoner by the Boers, and that there was a price on his head WANTED DEAD OR ALIVE!

An American millionaire, Bernard Nadel Baker, gave the British Government the use of one of his transport ships, the *Maine*. When it was refitted as a hospital ship, Jennie, in charge of the administration of the ship and a team of doctors, nurses, and orderlies, set sail for Cape Town on Saturday 23rd December 1899. Winston had by then turned up safe and sound, and Jennie's younger son, Jack would follow to fight in the war. The brothers would join the South African Light Horse and serve side by side.

The *Maine* ran into a fierce storm and there was seasickness on board of which Jennie was a victim. Things were tossed about so a large clean up operation had to take place. They finally arrive at Cape Town on 23rd January 1900. Jennie, Winston, and Jack had a brief get together there for two days, then the boys set off to join Colonel Julian Byng's regiment.

When on February 5th the first ambulance train arrived near the dock, Jennie and Miss Mary Eugenie Hibbard the professional Superintendent of Nurses and the nursing staff, were ready to take charge of them. There were 67 wounded soldiers, of whom 12 were carried on stretchers, and the others were walking wounded. The ship was equipped with a theatre, and surgeons removed bullets using ether as an anaesthetic. In the weeks ahead, over 300 injured British and Boer wounded were treated. Jennie helped the soldiers write letters home to their parents and sweethearts.

By March the *Maine* was filled with soldiers being invalided out of the war, and the ship set sail for England. Jennie was a superb pianist and she organised concerts to keep up the morale of the wounded men. They arrived back at Portsmouth in April.

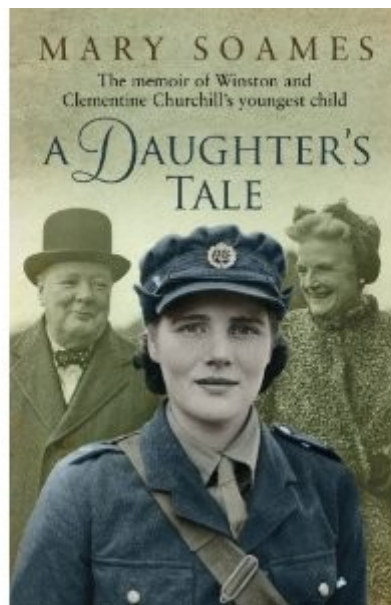
King Edward VII awarded Jennie the Royal Red Cross medal, and made her a "Lady of Grace of St. John of Jerusalem", and awarded her the Cross of Malta medal. On his coronation day 9th August 1902, Jennie now married to her second husband, Lieutenant George Cornwallis-West, sat in the King's box at his invitation, and she received the silver cameo coronation medal.



Jennie, Lady Randolph Spencer-Churchill, wearing in a ball gown the insignia of the Imperial Order of the Crown of India medal, presented to her by Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle, December 1885.

The full text of Celia's lecture at the Churchill Centre, on Jennie, Lady Randolph Churchill, is available at <https://www.winstonchurchill.org/support/the-churchill-centre/publications/chartwell-bulletin/2011/37-jul/1205-90th-anniversary-talk-on-jennie-lady-randolph-churchill>.

RECENT and FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS



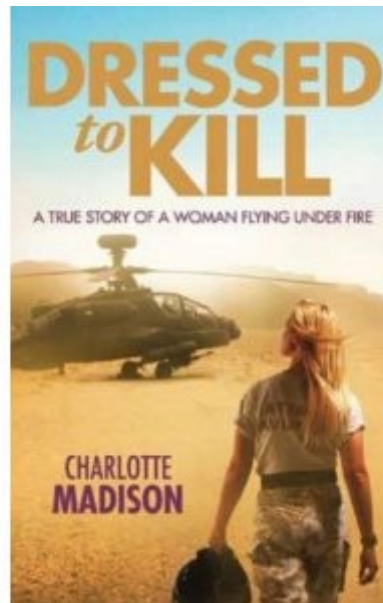
A Daughter's Tale: The Memoir of Winston and Clementine Churchill's youngest child by Mary Soames, Hardcover, 416 pages, Doubleday. Published Sep 2011, ISBN: 978-0385604482

Now in her eighty-ninth year, Mary Soames is the only surviving child of Winston and Clementine Churchill. Younger than her siblings by several years, she went to day school and enjoyed an idyllic childhood played out in her very own 'Garden of Eden' – Chartwell. Here she roamed house and grounds, tended diligently to her collection of pets, and had her first glimpses of the glittering social world in which her parents moved. Then, in 1939, Chamberlain's declaration of war dramatically ended this world as she and her family had known it.

Hereafter we follow Mary's life through her fascinating personal diary, published here for the first time. Through the immediacy of her private observations we are drawn into a world where the ordinary minutiae of a packed family, social and romantic life proceed against a background of cataclysmic events. Joining the ATS and serving in mixed anti-aircraft batteries, Mary takes on her own set of professional demands

while sharing the many anxieties and stresses brought to bear upon her family through her father's position.

The mutual love and affection between Mary and her parents is evident on every page, from her earliest years at Chartwell to Winston's defeat at the 1945 general election, when Mary recounts her own pain and devastation on her father's behalf. At this point she meets her future husband, Christopher Soames. We are left in no doubt at the end of this charming and revealing memoir that, at twenty-four, Mary has lived a full life and is well prepared for her future as young wife and mother.



Dressed to Kill by Charlotte Madison, Paperback, 352 pages, Headline Review, published July 2010, ISBN: 978-0755319626

"My fingers close around the trigger. I pause for a split second to think about the bullets I am about to spray across the ground. After today, I'll no longer be the new girl"

Captain Charlotte Madison is a typical 26 year old woman. She looks forward to her weekly instalment of gossip magazines, worries she is developing bingo wings and is planning her fairytale wedding. She also flies Apache gunships for a living.

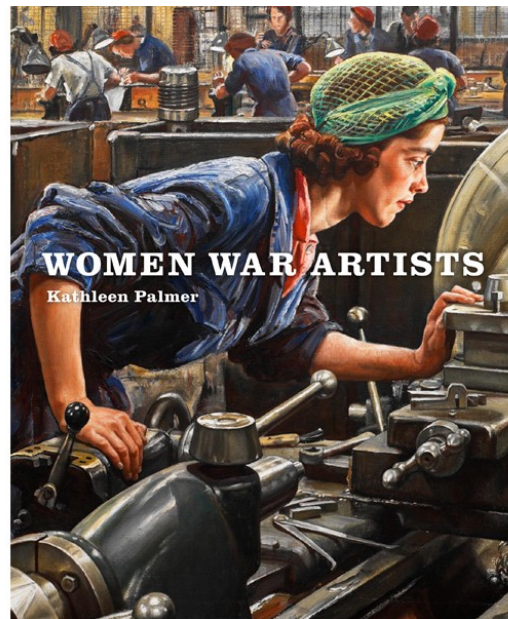
Britain's first ever female Apache pilot, Charlotte knows exactly what it's like to fight on the frontline in the Army's deadliest machine. During the daring Jugroom Fort rescue, Charlotte became the first British pilot since WWII to use all her ammunition in one mission. She has not only mastered the skills required to fly an Apache and shoot from the air, but also earned the respect and admiration of her male colleagues, proving that whatever they could do, she could do just as well.

From her intensive training to her tours of duty in Afghanistan, Charlotte shares all the dramatic details: The exhaustion of being confined in an airless cockpit for up to

eleven hours. The adrenalin rush of lethal, full-scale mid-air assault. What it is like to kill in the name of duty. Her female perspective on what being at war is really like.

DRESSED TO KILL is the extraordinary, gritty and exhilarating story of a young woman at war in a dangerous, mostly male, world.

(Paul) Those who are familiar with my presentation on women on the Eastern Front will recognise Charlotte as one of the new generation of young female pilots who are the heirs of the formidable Night Witches of WWII (I can confirm, from personal experience, that the loos in Afghanistan are as awful as she describes!).

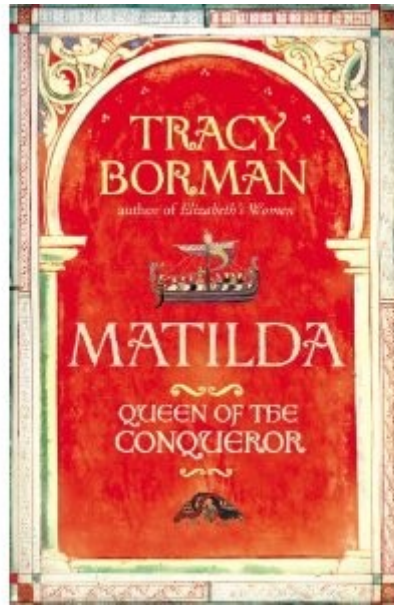


Women War Artists by Kathleen Palmer, Paperback, 96 pages, ISBN: 9781854379894, Tate Publishing, Published 1 Apr 2011

'Women War Artists' celebrates the remarkable experiences and achievements of women war artists from the First World War through to the present day. It considers the importance of female artists as eyewitnesses, participants, commentators and officially commissioned recorders of war, and looks at their experiences both in the war zone and at home.

Key works by artists including Dame Laura Knight, Anna Airy, Evelyn Dunbar, Fiona Banner and Jannane Al-Ani are seen through the prism of the artists' own reflections and life stories, revealing the unique opportunities and constraints they have encountered, and demonstrating the enormous diversity of their responses.

This volume accompanies the exhibition at the Imperial War Museum.



Matilda: Queen of the Conqueror by Tracy Borman, Hardcover, 320 pages, ISBN: 978-0224090551, Jonathan Cape, Published 1 Sep 2011

Matilda, wife of William the Conqueror, was the first woman to be crowned Queen of England and formally recognised as such by her subjects. Beyond this, though, little is known of her life. No contemporary images of her remain, and in a period where all evidence is fragmentary and questionable, the chroniclers of the age left us only the faintest clues as to her life. So who was this spectral queen?

In this first major biography, Tracy Borman elegantly sifts through the shards of evidence to uncover an extraordinary story. In a dangerous, brutal world of conquest and rebellion, fragile alliances and bitter familial rivalries, Matilda possessed all the attributes required for a woman to thrive. She was born of impeccable lineage, and possessed of a loving and pious nature, she was a paragon of fidelity and motherhood. But strength, intelligence and ambition were also prerequisites to survive in such an environment. This side of her character, coupled with a fiercely independent nature, made Matilda essential to William's rule, giving her unparalleled influence over the king. While this would provide an inspiring template for future indomitable queens, it led eventually to treachery, revolt and the fracturing of a dynasty.

(Paul) I'm hoping that this volume will explore the significant role of women in the warrior society created by the Normans and resist the urge to perpetuate Victorian myths about the conquest (Adela, Matilda's daughter was just as formidable and Mabel of Bellême was arguably the real Lady Macbeth of her era - if your source is Orderic Vitalis!).



Millions Like Us: Women's Lives in the Second World War by Virginia Nicholson, Viking, 336 pages, ISBN: 978-0670917785, Published 5 May 2011-08-13

We tend to see the Second World War as a man's war, featuring Spitfire crews and brave deeds on the Normandy beaches. But in conditions of "Total War" millions of women - in the Services and on the Home Front - demonstrated that they were cleverer, more broad-minded and altogether more complex than anyone had ever guessed.

In Millions Like Us Virginia Nicholson tells the story of the women's war, through a host of individual women's experiences. She tells how they loved, suffered, laughed, grieved and dared; how they re-made their world in peacetime. And how they would never be the same again ...

Radio 4 Book of the Week, from Monday 2nd May



Women in the Second World War by Collette Drifte, Pen & Sword, Paperback 224 pages, ISBN: 9781844680962, Published: 7 February 2011

Women in the Second World War explores the experiences of women who served in the armed forces, or complimentary services. Using interviews, anecdotes, memoirs and/or accounts from the women (or, where appropriate, their children), the book tells the women's personal accounts of what their lives were like and what particular experiences they had while serving.

They were all ordinary British women, and tell here in their own words their experiences on active service.

Their accounts cover the whole spectrum, from famous battles, such as Monte Cassino, to being shipwrecked by a tornado, to simple acts of kindness, which in themselves seem nothing, but at the same time meant something very special to those young women, and were fondly remembered, even sixty years afterwards.

The huge variety of services and experiences featured in the book reflect how widely spread the women's contribution to the war effort was, from tilling the soil below, to servicing the engines of aircraft about to take off to the sky above, and everything in between.



The WAAF at War by John Frayn Turner
Pen & Sword, Hardback 224 pages, ISBN: 9781848845398, Published: 3 August 2011

Members of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force played a vital role in supporting the operations of the Royal Air Force during the Battle of Britain and thereafter but their story has not received the attention it deserves.

In *The WAAF at War*, highly experienced author John Frayn Turner has addressed this serious oversight by capturing the indomitable spirit of the thousands of young women who made up the WAAF. He vividly describes the diverse roles played by members of this highly respected organization, both on the ground at air stations and in control bunkers, reading radar monitors or plotting the course of air operations.

In addition WAAF pilots were released to the Air Transport Auxiliary to deliver aircraft to front line units and flew all types of aircraft, often with minimal training, regardless of weather. Their adventures make for excellent reading.

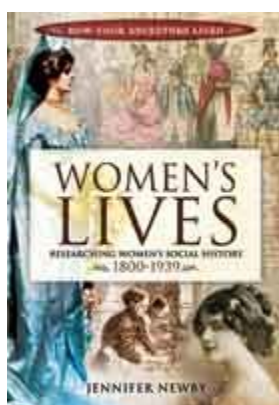
Most poignant are the hazardous exploits of those WAAF who volunteered for SOE. Perhaps the best known of these incredibly gallant girls is Noor Inayat-Khan GC who was executed at Dachau in 1944 but there were many others whose stories are told here.

A long overdue tribute to the courage and war-winning contribution of all its members, *The WAAF at War* will appeal particularly to air historians and those who were members of or are proud to be descended from members of the WAAF.



Women Wartime Spies (pre-order), by Ann Kramer (auth of *Land Girls and their Impact*), Pen & Sword, Hardback 224 pages, ISBN: 9781844680580, Published: 30 October 2011

From Mata Hari through to Noor Inyat Khan, women spies have rarely received the recognition they deserve. They have often been trivialised and, in cinema and popular fiction, stereotyped as vamps or dupes. The reality is very different. As spies, women have played a critical role during wartime, receiving and passing on vital information, frequently at considerable risk. Often able to blend into their background more easily than their male counterparts, women have worked as couriers, transmitters and with resistance fighters, their achievements often unknown. Many have died. Ann Kramer describes the role of women spies during wartime, with particular reference to the two world wars. She looks at why some women chose to become spies, their motives and backgrounds. She looks at the experience of women spies during wartime, what training they received, and what skills they needed. She examines the reality of life for a woman spy, operating behind enemy lines, and explores and explodes the myths about women spies that continue until the present day. The focus is mainly on Britain but will also take an international view as appropriate.



Women's Lives: Researching Women's Social History 1800-1939 by Jennifer Newby, Pen & Sword, Paperback 224 pages, ISBN: 9781848843684, Published: 30 October 2011

Women's lives have traditionally gone unrecorded in history. But housewives, factory girls and servants all had their own distinctive voices, and, if you know where to look, there are plenty of sources to explore.

Jennifer Newby's guide to women's social history between 1800 and 1939 includes essential starting points for research. A useful handbook for family historians, as well as an engaging read for social history lovers, each chapter focuses on a different group, with suggestions for further reading and a helpful timeline.

Compare the lives of factory workers, middle-class women, domestic servants, criminals, aristocrats and agricultural labourers. Hear the voices of obscure women alongside those of celebrities – from rebellious servant Hannah Cullwick to daring aristocrat, Lady Colin Campbell, prostitute Ellen Reece, and bored middle-class daughter, Katherine Chorley.

PREVIOUSLY NOTED FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS

BEHIND ENEMY LINES Gender, Passing and the Special Operations Executive in the Second World War - by Dr Juliette Pattinson, published by Manchester University Press

ARTILLERY IN THE GREAT WAR by Paul Strong & Sanders Marble published by Pen and Sword.

GIRL IN A GREEN GOWN by Carola Hicks (submitted by Tatiana Roshupkina). Cambridge art historian Carola Hicks decodes the mystery of the enigmatic Arnolfini Portrait, one of the world's most recognised paintings - a complex double portraiture of a wealthy Bruges merchant and his wife. Equally intriguing is her story of its survival over 600 years, and its role as a mirror reflecting the culture and history of the time – from jewel of the Hapsburg Empire to Napoleonic war trophy. A posthumous publication by Chatto & Windus published in September 2011.

THE CHURCHILLS – A FAMILY PORTRAIT by Celia Lee and John Lee, Palgrave Macmillan, New York and London (hard back and paperback).