

Award of MC, mention in despatches, death

Publication/Creation

1915-1917

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The War of 1914-1918.

Royal Army Medical Corps

T/Capt. D. J. S. Stephen, M.D.

was mentioned in a Despatch from

Field Marshal Sir John D. P. French, G.C.B., O.M., G.C.V.O., K.C.M.G.
dated 30th November 1915

for gallant and distinguished services in the Field.
I have it in command from the King to record His Majesty's
high appreciation of the services rendered.

Herbert Asquith

Secretary of State for War.

War Office
Whitehall, L.W.
1st March 1919.

DISTINGUISHED ABERDEENSHIRE SURGEON.

MILITARY CROSS FOR ABERDEEN GRADUATE.

Lieutenant David James Shirres Stephen, M.D., Royal Army Medical Corps, who brings such brilliant distinction to himself and to his Alma Mater by winning, as stated in yesterday's "Free Press," the Military Cross "for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in attending to the wounded under heavy shell fire," is a native of Fyvie. His father was the late Mr Alexander Stephen, Ashgrove, Fyvie—a very highly respected man in that district—and his mother resides at 25 Forest Avenue, Aberdeen. He graduated M.B. at Aberdeen University in 1910 and took his M.D. two years later. After graduation Dr Stephen officiated in a hospital at Oldham. Thence he went to Lincoln where, after holding the position of senior resident physician he went into private practice taking up a partnership with Dr Barlow, a well known Lincoln practitioner. After the outbreak of war, first his partner, and then he took up military service. For a time he was engaged in medical organisation work at Lincoln, but he subsequently became attached to a brigade of artillery and was sent to the front in the month of March, where he has since been strenuously engaged, as the record of his gallantry shows. Dr Stephen is only 27 years of age and so far he has achieved the highest distinction among Aberdeenshire men who have been doing duty in the firing line on the Continent.

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remove the work from the hands of those who have had now nearly twelve months' war experience, and transfer it to others who had not had the advantage of such previous experience. was unwise, unnecessary, and unfair to the beneficiaries.

It was urged that the new body would have more than sufficient work to do in connection with the pensions and disablement; and the deputation emphasised the distinction between permanent relief, such as pensions, and temporary assistance in the way of supplementing separation allowances.

It was also urged that the Association, both locally and at headquarters, should have statutory representation on the new committees to be set up.

Lord Crewe, in his reply, thanked the deputation for having laid their view before him, which he said would receive consideration.

KILDRUMMY FREE GIFT SALE.

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The inhabitants of Upper Donside are much interested at the present time in the forthcoming free gift sale on August 6. All are anxious to make it a perfect success, and that it will be so is evident from the number of contributions that still come pouring in upon the energetic secretary, Mr. Beattie. Buyers of all kinds will be catered for. As announced elsewhere, Mr. James Ogston, The Castle, will open the sale at 2 p.m., and thereafter an active party of ladies will conduct the sale until evening, when Mr. Walker, auctioneer will sell the remainder by auction. The cause for which the sale is held is a good one—our wounded soldiers and sailors—and no doubt the result will be most bounteous.

CONCERT AT NIGHT

CAPT. D. J. S. STEPHEN, M.C.

[News came to Lincoln, on Saturday last, that Captain D. J. S. Stephen, M.C., R.A.M.C., had died from gas poisoning in Flanders.]

"I would as lief lay my bones down here with the good men and true as in the House of Pyrie, bonnie though it be"; so wrote Captain Stephen (to the writer of this little tribute) ten days before the tragic news came that he had succumbed to gas poison, (g). He has had his wish. All that is mortal of David Stephen merges with the sacred dust of Flanders, and that nameless land means even more to us now that he lies there.

Capt. Stephen was a well-known and beloved figure in Lincoln, where he came to reside in 1914. He held appointments as House Surgeon at the Lincoln County Hospital, was Assistant at the Law Hospital with Dr. Russell, and thereafter became assistant to Dr. Harlow, with whom he was practising in the City at the outbreak of War.

One would very reverently place a stone on the Cairn we would erect to the memory of this brave man, who went West on Thursday, October the 24th, 1917.



THE LATE CAPT. D. J. S. STEPHEN, M.C.

It was not long after the outbreak of War when the call for Active Service came to him, and he readily responded. For the last three years he has had his full share of warfare in the blood-soaked fields. It did not surprise his friends to learn that when he had only been a few months at the Front, he was awarded the Military Cross, for conspicuous gallantry in bringing wounded men off the battlefield under fire. It surprised them not at all a few days ago to learn that he had received a bar to his Military Cross for similar gallant work. Well did they know that when ever help was most needed, where the battle raged the fiercest, there would our hero be. A hero serving in a truly heroic profession; it must be some comfort to the fathers and mothers of brave lads always facing disaster and death in the battle line to know that they have the ministrations of men, like Capt. Stephen, who are ready under all circumstances to give them succour, and risk their lives that others may live.

To many of us in Lincoln, the news of Capt. Stephen's passing hence will have come with tragic suddenness. It is only a few weeks since he was in our midst, cheery, buoyant, and full of hope, a manly inspiration to all who met him. Now that he has made the supreme sacrifice, many of us feel that much of the joy of life has gone from us. For to his friends, Capt. Stephen was not only an example, but was ever the most loyal and cheerful soul imaginable. No one could be in his company and remain dull. His sunny, genial presence carried sunshine everywhere; his strong, virile manhood, and his strength of character were a tower of strength to those in trouble. Anything mean or small was foreign to his nature, while his unflinching cheerfulness made him always a welcome guest. And his modesty and courage were a striking characteristic of one who was in everything true man.

It is one of the bitterest tragedies of this devastating War that we are losing just those who to us seem to be most needed here. Among them we reckon high our brave friend. He has gone from us at the early age of 32, with a brilliant career opening out before him, the prospect of a life of supreme usefulness and service for suffering humanity. The pity of it!

To the Scots' community in Lincoln his loss will be especially felt, for he was ever the life and soul of all movements connected with his dear Auld Scotland.

One does not speak of the sad hearts in the homeland at Aberdeen, but it may be some comfort to those who mourn to know that there are many in Lincoln who share their sorrow, who sympathise with them in their irreparable loss, and who testify before all the world that no braver or better man ever went forth this side than David Stephen.

R.A.O.

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JUSTICE TO THE JEW. Special Service in Lincoln.

THE HONOUR OF A MISINTERPRETED RACE.

For some time efforts have been made to organise special services in their own faith for the Jews in Lincoln and the neighbourhood, particularly those serving with the Colours. The project had an enthusiastic and influential leader in Mr. R. Lyons, of S. Catherine's, Lincoln, whose association with Lincoln dates back over 40 years. It is largely owing to his efforts that the scheme has at last been brought to fruition. Commencing on Nov. 18th, Judaistic services are to be held at Mr. Lyons' office in Grantham-street, each Sunday morning.

As an introductory, a special Jewish service was conducted in the Lecture Hall of the Clacketgate Wesleyan Chapel (by kind permission) last Wednesday evening. The service was conducted by the Rev. Barnett J. Cohen, B.A., of Sheffield, Chaplain to the Jewish troops in Derby, Nottingham, and Lincoln. It was a very representative gathering, including men from the R.F.C., R.A.M.C., the Lincolns, and patients from the 4th Northern General Hospital. Notable among the latter was a Russian Jew serving with the British Army. The occasion furnished the opportunity for several renewals of old friendships, interrupted by the exigencies and uncertainties of campaigning, but none the less strong and lasting. There were also two guests of honour, Lieut. and Quartermaster Dickinson (R.A.M.C.), of the Military Hospital, and Ald. H. A. Cottingham, J.P.

THE FRAGILE REPUTATION.

In opening the service, the Rev. Cohen said the Jews had had connections with Lincoln for many, many centuries. Their last recollections of Lincoln were not of the happiest. He would like at the very outset to express their keen appreciation of the kindness extended to them by their Wesleyan friends.

The service was taken from the special Prayer Book, compiled for Jewish soldiers and soldiers, the prayers being read by the whole assembly, while the Rabbi and Mr. Lyons acted as leaders.

In the course of a very appropriate address, the Rev. Cohen said, in one place, the Talmud described glass and pointed out that one of its peculiarities was that if a glass vessel were dropped on a stone, or a stone dropped on it, it was always the glass that was broken. It seemed to him, this glass which required so much care and attention had two significances for them as Jews, their Jewish reputation and their Jewish religion. They were two very delicate things, easily damaged, and both were in the keeping, not only of them all collectively, but of them each individually. The world as a whole (though there were honourable exceptions) did not treat the Jew fairly. If a Jew distinguished himself, and was entitled to honour, he was usually very fortunate if he got that recognition—though in this country he did get it. The honour a Jew obtained, even here, was never allowed to reflect honour on his fellow Jews. But let a Jew bring shame upon himself and the world took notice.

CONSPICUOUS GALLANTRY.

Military Cross for a Lincoln Doctor.

The numerous friends and acquaintances, and Lincoln generally, were delighted to hear of the honor which had been bestowed upon a local medical practitioner, Dr. David James Sharpe Stephens, M.D., who is now a Lieutenant in the Royal Army Medical Corps.

He has been awarded the Military Cross "for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in attending to the wounded while under heavy shell fire on several occasions, notably on the night of 23rd April, and on the 11th May. He has usually performed his gallant work single-handed, and by his cheerfulness and pluck has encouraged all around him."

The heroic young doctor was assistant to Dr. H. C. Barlow, of West Parade, Lincoln, when he joined the service in September last, and he has been at the front about six months, during which time he has done some strenuous and plucky work.

It was some three years ago that Dr. Stephens came to Lincoln, to take up the position of House Surgeon at the County Hospital. For about a year he filled that office, and then he went as assistant to Dr. Russell, at the Lazenby Asylum, where he remained for six months. While engaged in the duties there, he took his M.D. degree with honours. In September, 1913, he became assistant to Dr. Barlow, of West Parade, and it was perhaps in that capacity that he was best known to "the man in the street." He had been with Dr. Barlow a year when he was conscripted in the Royal Army Medical Corps, and it is understood that, all being well, he will take up his old position when the war is over.

Energetic and skilful, Dr. Stephens has made great strides in his profession, and his first-hand experience has stood him in good stead whilst on active service.

While in Lincoln, he was a prominent member of the Scottish Society, the members of which, as well as his numerous other Lincoln friends, heartily congratulate him on his stirring achievements, which have gained for him the Military Cross, and hope that he will come safely through the terrible conflict, which is being waged so near to our shores.

A Modest Hero.

Like all true heroes, Lieut. Stephens is very modest, and says little of the gallant acts which gained for him the coveted distinction. Interviewed in Lincoln during the fore part of the week he was leaving the city on Tuesday evening, to visit his home in Scotland, and returning to the front to-day (Saturday) the story of his own experiences had to be liberally dragged from him. Nobody realised, he said, what difficulty there was in dealing with such a large num-



Dr. D. J. S. Stephens.

ber of wounded, especially with inadequate means of getting them away. Referring to the spot which is mentioned in the official report of his bravery, he said that in the first place there was no cover, because the houses were all more or less destroyed. The town was burning and was being constantly shelled. Very often, by the time the ambulances came up there was a very large number on one's hands, with very little accommodation for them. In fact, it happened several times that the houses one had them in were struck by shells and one or two men were actually killed while lying there ready to be taken away. These difficult conditions under which the doctors were working made it very hard to apply all over that part. With regard to the happenings on April 23rd, Lieut. Stephens said the Germans gained the French Colonial troops badly, and the sufferings from asphyxiation were the first they had through their hands. On the following day the Canadians went up to the front and were cut up badly. "It was a case of everybody doing his best," said the doctor. "It was just a bad time, and that was all. There is no more to be said about it. Everybody had to do his best."

Asked about the deed which won for him the Military Cross, he answered: "There was no particular act. We had little ammunition, and we had to carry the wounded ourselves. It was not a case of telling people to bring a man here and take a man there—we had to do it ourselves. When one house was knocked down, we had to carry them into another with a few stretcher-bearers and any one you pick up. On that night there was a particularly heavy bombardment, and as far as I know there was, besides myself, one doctor there from a field ambulance. Occasionally you had driven out from their own dressing station, came down to find a place to put their wounded in."

Lieut. Stephens mentioned that one morning they had between 200 and 300 come to deal with. If they could walk at all they sent them on, so that they were all more or less serious cases.

Talking on the gas question, he said: "The last time they gassed us was on the 11th May. We got it pretty badly, and they gained some ground. But now the gas has no terrors for us, because everybody has got his smoke helmet and we are able to comb-

Guards to London on Saturday. As the and many popular sites. They had no guide. The picture shows the characters of the Park.

ARMOUR.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle Advocates Its Use.

As an advocate of the use of armour in modern warfare for the last quarter of a century Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, writing in today's "Times," says—

When Ned Kelly, the bushranger, walked unhurt before the pikes of the police clad in his own hand-made armour he was an object-lesson of the world. If the outlaw could do it, why not the soldier?

Such actions as that of St. May, whose armoured brigades last month had their numbers in endeavouring to rush over the 300 yards which separated us from the German trenches must make it clear that it is absolutely impossible for unprotected troops to play over a zone which is swept by machine guns.

Therefore you must either for ever abandon such attacks or you must find artificial protection for the man. It has always seemed to me extraordinary that in innumerable cases where a knife, a cigarette case, a watch, or some other chance article has saved a man's life, have not set us scheming so as to do systematically what has so often been the result of a happy chance.

Your correspondents have mentioned the objection that any protection may itself be broken, and that the splinters of it may aggravate the wound.

Vital Points.

One answer to that would be to arm only those points where the wound would in any case be mortal.

These points are really very few, and no great weight of metal would be needed to protect them. As a man faces a hostile rifle his forehead and his heart are the only points presented which are certainly vital. The former would be protected by such a helmet as the French have now evolved.

The second should be covered by a breast-plate of highly-tempered metal which need not be more than a foot in diameter. With this simple and light equipment the two centres of life are safe. The remaining dangers to life are the severance of a large artery or a wound of the abdomen.

The former is not common from a rifle bullet and cannot be guarded against without complete armour, which is out of the question. The latter is no longer a certain death wound, thanks to the advances of surgery, but a third curve of steel scraped across from the border of the ribs to the crest of the hip bones would afford protection.

With these three precautions the death rate should be greatly reduced from rifle and machine-gun fire, as also from shrapnel. Nothing, of course, will avail against a direct shell burst, but granting that the individual life would be saved, this does not bear upon the capture of a position, since so many would fall wounded that the weight of the attack would be spent before the stormers reached the trenches.

A Mental Picture.

For this armour which will give complete protection is needed, and since, as your correspondents have shown, the weight of this is more than a man can readily carry, it must be pushed in front upon wheels.

I picture a great number of plates, held together like the shields of a Roman legion, and pushed by the men who crouch behind them. When one is disabled he can be easily dropped and the gap closed. Others are fixed solidly upon their wheels and are used upon the flank of the advance to prevent an enfilading fire.

There is not one tortoise, which would attract a concentrated fire of artillery, but each company or platoon forms its own. These numerous armour-plated boxes rush with small loss over the space which has already been cleared as far as possible of obstacles, and so have some chance of reaching the enemy's line, not as an exhausted, fragment, but as a vigorous storming party with numbers intact.

Such apparatus would be a great addition to the impedimenta of an army. It would be a separate item, like the pontoon or the siege train, only to be brought upon special occasions to the point where it is needed for an assault.

The vital body-plates, however, should be used in the every-day equipment of a fighting soldier.

STATE CHERRIES.

Cherries seem wonderfully cheap at present, but this form of "war food" is probably still more abundant in Germany. There, when you order a compote with your meat, large, luscious red cherries are served, called "State cherries" (Landesherren), raised by a frugal Government which has gone into the business of fruit farming.



Dear Mrs. Stephen,

I am very sorry indeed to have to write and tell you about the death of your son - one of the best friends I ever had, in addition to being one of the best officers I have ever met. I really think he was one of the most popular officers in this Division and I have received a great number of notes of sympathy from people in the Division.

We had an attack on 23rd. October. Steve was looking after wounded and getting them out of the forward area. During the recent fighting I had kept him back at Headquarters because he was in charge of my transport and, incidentally one of the best transport officers in the Division, - and because I did not want to have my two best bearer officers up the line at the same time. We had a certain number of casualties and Steve came up to replace one of them on the afternoon of the 22nd. On the night of the 22/23rd. he was in a dugout with Capt. Morrison - another bearer officer with whom he was working. A gas shell burst close to the doorway and wounded Morrison badly. Both Steve and Morrison were gassed but Steve dressed his friend, sent for Capt. Phillips - who was in a dugout Mebus (large concrete pillbox) some 500 yards away. Phillips came. He sent Steve to his own Mebus and while he was getting Morrison away he was himself wounded. All this happened in the early morning of the 23rd. about 2 a.m. about 1000 yards South of POLECAPPELLE on the POLECAPPELLE ST. JULIEN Road.

Steve/

Steve lay and rested for a bit in the Mebus and was then taken down on a stretcher. I saw Morrison at about 6 a.m. and immediately went up to take Steve's place. We crossed each other on the way and I did not see him. The people of the Main Dressing Station said he was pretty bad - nearly unconscious. As we were fighting, I could not get down to the Hospital to see him although I was very anxious about him. I got my people out of action on the morning of the 25th. and I then heard that Steve had gone at 2 p.m. on 24th. Morrison and Phillips were also gone.

I took over a party of twenty men - including A.S.C. Drivers he had trained so well - and we buried him in the little Cemetery of 46 Casualty Clearing Station at PROVEN by the side of Capt. Phillips with his face to the Bosche on whom he had never turned his back. I know he would have had it thus.

His Kit was properly packed and sewn up in sacking and was sent down to the Base by the people at 46 C.C.S. Doubtless it will come to you in time through Cox & Co. or the Adjustineur Committee. I saw it sewn up. He destroyed a lot of letters and correspondence before he went up the line.

He was unconscious most of the time he was in Hospital.

I am collecting a bit, a headpiece and a martingale and having them sent home to you with some other Kit of his.

You perhaps can realise what a loss this has been to us. Personally I have felt it more almost than any other and I ought, perhaps, to be getting used to, and immune from, sorrow by this time.

I was very glad we managed to get him a Bar to his

Military Cross after the fight on the MENIN Road where he was splendid. His brother is somewhere in this neighbourhood, but nobody knows exactly where. I am afraid this is a very long letter, I must apologise for its length. If there is anything else I can do to help you in any way, please let me know.

I am,

* / Yours sincerely,

(Signed) G. Pritchard Taylor.

Lt. Col. R.A.M.C.

O.C.

54 Field Amb.

B.E.F.

28th. Oct., 1917.

Dave gased.

24 Oct 1917

Colonels Letter





Director of Graves Registration & Enquiries

Begs to forward as requested a Photograph of
the Grave of:—

Name *Stephen.*

Rank and Initials *Captain D.J.S.*

Regiment *R.A.M.C.*

Position of Grave *Mendingham.*

British Cemetery, Proven.

Nearest Railway Station *Poperinghe.*

All communications respecting this Photograph should quote
the number (22/136287) and be addressed to:—

Director of Graves Registration and Enquiries,
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R.
I.
P.

Capt. D.J.S. Stephen, m.c.

54th. *Field Ambulance* R.A.M.C.

Died of Wounds
Received in Action.

OCT. 24th.

1917.

