

In Memory of  
**Edith Louisa Cavell**

Nurse, *L'Ecole Belge d'Infirmières Diplômées, Brussels*,  
Died 12 October 1915 age 49. Schaerbeek, Brussels



Remembered with honour:

Swardston Church

Norwich Cathedral

Peterborough Cathedral

The Royal London Hospital, Whitechapel, London

National Cemetery of Honour, Schaerbeek, Brussels, Belgium

The Women's National Memorial Screen at York Minster

The Diocese of Norwich & the Great War 1914-1918 Book of Remembrance

Commemorated in perpetuity by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

# The Story of Edith Cavell

Edith was born in 1865 in Swardeston to Reverend Frederick and Louisa Sophia Cavell. Edith was the eldest of four children: Florence (1867), Mary (1870) and John (1872).

Edith attended Norwich High School for Girls and boarding schools in Clevedon, Somerset and Peterborough. After leaving school she worked as a Governess in Brussels for five years before returning home to nurse her ill father. It was this experience that encouraged her to train to become a nurse and help those in need.

Under Matron Eva Lückes, a friend of Florence Nightingale, Edith began her training at The Royal London Hospital in Whitechapel, East London. In 1897 she was awarded the Maidstone Medal for her work during typhoid epidemic in Kent.



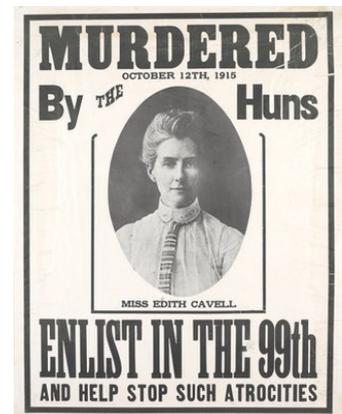
In 1907 she was asked to become a matron at the newly established *L'Ecole Belge d'Infirmières Diplômées* in Brussels by Doctor Depage, the Royal Surgeon, which she accepted. (Pictured left with nursing colleagues). In 1910 she became the Matron for the new secular hospital at St Gilles where nurses gained medical experience. Belgium at the time of Edith's appointment had no established nursing profession. Her pioneering work during this period led to her being considered the founder of modern nursing education in Belgium.

Edith was visiting her mother in Norfolk when the First World War broke out, she decided to return to Brussels to continue her role as matron of *L'Ecole Belge d'Infirmières Diplômées*.

Edith, along with her nurses, cared for soldiers from both sides of the war including civilians, telling her nurses 'each man is a father, husband or son.'

After the German occupation of Brussels in November 1914 Edith became involved in an underground group assisted by Philippe Baucq, a Belgian. Together the group helped British, French, and Belgian soldiers to reach safety in the Netherlands, a neutral country. By August 1915 they had helped at least 200 allied soldiers reach safety.

On 5 August Edith was arrested along with others, including Baucq, by the German Secret Police and after ten weeks in solitary confinement at St Gilles' Prison they were found guilty of treason and sentenced to death. She was shot along with Baucq on 12 October by 16 German Soldiers and hastily buried in an unmarked grave. Her death was used as propaganda (see poster right) worldwide with recruitment numbers increasing to around 12,000 a week.



Edith was reburied at Norwich Cathedral on 19 May 1919 and the six men who carried her coffin were all soldiers that she helped escape.