Lyttelton, Canterbury

Lyttelton is approximately 15 minutes drive from the Christchurch city centre via the tunnel. The Lyttelton Cenotaph was recently relocated from near the tunnel entrance to Akaroa Square on the corner of Canterbury and Lyttelton Streets. The square is a fine example of Lyttelton Township’s recovery from the earthquakes.

Nona Mildred Hildyard 22/125

Nona was born in Lyttelton in 1888. Her parents William and Betsy were originally from Tasmania. Nona trained at Christchurch Hospital, graduating in 1914. She worked as a private nurse with Dr Sandston, Nurse Turner’s private hospital in Woollston, and as charge nurse at Akaroa Hospital, Aylmers Valley Road.

The first nurse to enlist from Lyttelton, Nona was described by survivors as “plucky”, singing “Tipperary” and “Are we downhearted. No, No, No” to keep everyone’s spirits up, while struggling for survival in the Aegean Sea.

Wainui and Akaroa – Banks Peninsula, Canterbury

The three Christchurch Hospital trained nurses – Nona Hildyard, Margaret Rogers and Lorna Ratratty – were all known in Akaroa.

Akaroa is approximately 1.5 hours drive from Christchurch via State Highway 75. En route, visit the Wainui cemetery. Turn right just before Banya Bay, drive 4km and turn right onto Cemetery Road.

As you drive past French Farm, on the hill to your right is Bantry Lodge B&B, the former private school run by Thomas Southey Baker where Marquette survivor, Sir Hugh Acland, was educated prior to attending Christ’s College. Bantry Lodge was also the first home of Margaret Rogers’ sister May after she married Ernest Giddens.

Margaret Rogers 22/175

A Scottish farming family who settled in Gamaru, the Rogers moved to Wainui, Banks Peninsula, in 1907. After graduating from the University of Edinburgh, Margaret married Marquette survivor Sir Hugh Acland, and returned to New Zealand in January 1918. Then she was senior house surgeon at Christchurch Hospital.

Mary Helen Rae 22/161

Mary’s Scottish family settled at Raes Junction in Central Otago. Her mother Isabella took over the licence of Raes Junction Hotel in 1887, before moving to Christchurch in 1903 after the death of her husband. Mary returned to Dunedin Hospital, completing her nursing training in 1911. At the time of enlisting she was Operating Theatre Charge Nurse at Dunedin Hospital. Her mother died in 1912. At the time of Mary’s death her war gratuity was sent to her sister, Mary Rae, whom she had been supporting. Mary is remembered on the family grave at Linwood Cemetery and on the war memorial at Lawrence in Central Otago.

Lorna Alymer Ratratty 22/160

Lorna Ratratty was the sixth daughter of James Ratratty, founder of J. Ratratty and Son, and Catherine, daughter of the Rev William Alymer of Akaroa. She was educated at an Armagh Street school for girls and later, along with her sister, joined the staff. The school later became St Margaret’s College. In 1911, at the age of 35, Lorna began her nursing training at Christchurch Hospital and graduated in 1914. Seven months later she volunteered for active service. She is remembered in the permanent display, Otago Settlers Museum, 31 Queens Garden, Dunedin.

Linwood Cemetery, 31 Butterfield Avenue, Christchurch

This cemetery has connections to the Marquette and Christchurch Hospital. Enter via the main gates on Butterfield Avenue. At the end of the driveway there is a location map. In block 28, a short walk from the map, you will find the graves of Mary Rae’s family (plot 83). At the height of the influenza epidemic in November 1918, three staff from Christchurch Hospital died: Grace Beewick, Hilda Hooker and Dr Aubrey Short. At the Rae family grave facing back towards the gate and to your right is the grave of Grace Beewick (plot 64), sister of Mary Beswick a Marquette survivor. Grace died on 27 November 1918. Hilda Hooker (Block 35, plot 284) was 22 and a second year trainee nurse. Dr Aubrey Short, (Block 48 plot 105), was 28 years old. Dr Short had served as a Surgeon–Captain with the first contingent landing at Gallipoli. Serving in France he was promoted to Major and Deputy-Assistant Director of Medical Services. He was awarded the Military Cross and returned to New Zealand in January 1918. Then he was senior house surgeon at Christchurch Hospital.

Nurses’ Memorial Window

This was designed and constructed by Stephen Belanger (2nd issue of ANZAC stamps) and commemorates the nurses who served in the World Wars. Depicted are seven nurses who served in the World Wars. Depicted are seven nurses in uniforms of the era, nursing medals and two nurses in uniforms of the era, nursing medals and two nurses in uniforms of the era.

Nurses’ Memorial Window (2nd issue of ANZAC stamps)

This was designed and constructed by Stephen Belanger-Taylor to commemorate the contribution and sacrifice of nurses who served in the World Wars. Depicted are seven nursing medals and two nurses in uniforms of the era.

Below the WWI nurse is the Marquette in the Aegean Sea and below the WWII nurse are pyramids of Egypt.

Chinese Remembrance (Christmas 2015)

Chosen by NZ Post for the Powhutakawa flowers, this window on the west side was designed by Suzanne Johnson and constructed by Ben Hallley. The flowers in the rose window represent the nationalities of the soldiers fighting in France. The window was dedicated to Inez (Poppy) Blathwayt, the Home Sister during the 1950s and 1960s.

Nurses’ Memorials and Other Connections

Nurses’ Memorial Chapel and Garden, Christchurch Hospital, Riccarton Ave

This beautiful chapel, which opened in 1927, is nationally and internationally significant as New Zealand’s only chapel specifically to commemorate women who died in any war or the 1918 influenza epidemic.

Architecturally significant, the late Gothic Revival structure has an extensively timbered interior. It features carvings by Frederick Gunnsay and Jake Vivian, and important stained glass windows by English artist Veronica Whall (1887-1967). The chapel was damaged during the earthquakes, and is closed. After extensive restoration work, it is expected to re-open in 2017. Visitors can use the two hour car parks, located behind the Antigua Boat Sheds on Cambridge Terrace, or a “park and ride” service operating from the old brewery site in St Asaph St, to Christchurch Hospital.

Commemorating the centenary of the sinking of the Marquette on 23 October 1915

Nurses’ photographs courtesy of Auckland Museum Cenotaph, Friends of Chapel, CanterburyDH, SHuttleworth Collections, J Shuttleworth Collection; Grave stones photo courtesy Chris Bluson, Other photos D English, B Dodds and C Jenkins.
Marion Brown 22/104
With her parents John and Margaret, Marion and three siblings emigrated from Lanarkshire Scotland in 1884 and settled in Waimatuku, Southland. Ten more siblings were born in New Zealand and three brothers served during WWII. Trained at Riverton Hospital in 1908, Marion nursed on the staff of Palmerston North Hospital and was later in charge of Dr Barclay’s Private Hospital in Waimate and nursed at Waimate Hospital. Her photo, now in the Riverton Museum, was in the entrance to the Flod (Riverton) Hospital for a number of years. Marion Brown’s name appears on the WWII Riverton Memorial. She is also remembered on the family grave at Riverton Cemetery.

North Otago, Oamaru
Oamaru is home to New Zealand’s largest War Memorial, some 400 oak trees with commemorative plaques remembering the fallen. The North Otago Museum has produced a book The Home Front, North Otago 1914–18 and has a wealth of research data on local WWII history.

Isabel Clark 22/108
Born to Scottish parents, Hugh and Christina, Staff Nurse Isabel Clark followed her older sister Elise into the nursing profession. She trained at Oamaru Hospital, where a plaque in the corridor of the new hospital leading to maternity and inpatient wards remembers her sacrifice. She nursed privately at Waimate, Dunedin and Auckland where she resigned in order to volunteer for service abroad. Educated at Waikoki Girls High School, she is remembered on the WWII service memorial board and by a large oak framed portrait hanging in the school library. Nurse Clark’s memorial oak tree and plaque is located on the corner of Alamein Terrace and Tousey Street. She is also remembered on the family grave in the Oamaru Cemetery, located by entering from the top section on Perth Street. The grave is towards the far end before the exit onto Test Street.

Kumara and Greymouth, West Coast

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