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Te Rōpu Hītori o te Hāhi Mihinare ki Aotearoa

The Formation of the New Zealand Army Nursing Service (1914)

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As soon as Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914, New Zealand men rushed to volunteer. New Zealand nurses began to volunteer too but the Government was unwilling to accept them into the New Zealand forces. By October 1914, some 400 nurses had volunteered but the only ones engaged in the war were those who had made their own way to England or who were already there when war was declared. They joined the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Army Nursing Service (QAIMNS), the French Flag Corps (a volunteer organization), and the Red Cross, or worked in British military hospitals or hospitals in France run by wealthy British women. In September 1914, seven nurses accompanied the New Zealand Expeditionary Force sent to occupy German Samoa. They went however not as military nurses but as civilians to replace German nursing staff in the hospital in Apia.

The nurses did not give up and in December 1914 the New Zealand Trained Nurses Association sent a deputation to James Allen, Minister of Defence. They argued that 'when New Zealand's sons were serving the empire in the field it was only right that her daughters should be allowed to do so too.' Allen was finally persuaded and on 25 January 1915 a cable from the London Army Council accepted the New Zealand offer of nurses, provided that they were willing to work anywhere, not just with New Zealand troops. The New Zealand Cabinet quickly approved the formation of the New Zealand Army Nursing Service (NZANS) and agreed to send 50 nurses to England. On 25 March, the Australian Government sent an

invitation for a dozen nurses to join an Australian nursing contingent leaving for Egypt. Twelve nurses were hastily chosen, and in spite of the short notice sailed with the Australians on 31 March. Finally, on 6 April 1915, 110 nurses were officially enlisted in the NZANS; the first 50 sailed from Wellington to England on 8 April aboard the steamer Rotorua. The ill-fated Dardenelles campaign began while they were en route and immediately on arrival the nurses were sent to Egypt to nurse men arriving from Gallipoli.

NZANS nurses were attested, that is sworn to serve for the duration of the war. They were issued with



a NZANS badge which had their regimental number engraved on the back. Their uniform was a long grey dress with a scarlet cape and a 'quaint' little bonnet. Estimated numbers vary but the NZANS records name 626 nurses and masseuses who served from 1914 to 1922. At least 40 others were with other military nursing services. Thus about 37% of the trained NZ nursing workforce served during the war, mostly overseas but also in New Zealand.

Nurses worked in casualty clearing stations (CCSs) near the front line, in base and stationary hospitals in tents, converted convents, hotels, schools and palaces, and on hospital ships, transport ships, trains and barges. Sometimes they treated enemy soldiers. Hospitals and convalescent homes for NZ soldiers were

established in England at Walton-on-Thames, Hornchurch, Brockenhurst, Balmer Lawn, Oatlands Park and Codford. In New Zealand there were military hospitals at Trentham, Featherson and Rotorua. Nurses cared for soldiers suffering with terrible gunshot and shell wounds, amputations, frostbite, trench feet, gangrene, mustard gas, typhoid fever, dysentery, typhus, influenza, and pneumonia. They often worked long hours under dreadful conditions and with great emotional strain. Some became ill; some died. Many exhibited great bravery: 76 New Zealand nurses received the Royal Red Cross, with 12 of these awarded First Class, and many others received other awards and were mentioned in dispatches.

Prior to the war, nursing in New Zealand was almost exclusively a Pakeha occupation. Nurses were generally from the middle or upper middle classes and were seldom accepted for training till at least 23 years old, on the grounds that nursing required a degree of maturity. It was regarded as noble and womanly work which offered independence without loss of femininity. Many nurses were motivated by deep religious and charitable concern, understanding dedicated service to others as the mark of true professionalism. Training was strict and often arduous, with great emphasis placed on obedience and service. Marriage after registration usually meant the end of a nurse's public hospital career though some continued to work privately. During the war some married women, whose husbands were in the forces, served in hospitals in New Zealand and overseas. The following account tells the stories of some of those nurses who belonged to the Anglican Church, then known as the Church of England. There were many others, but I hope that these stories give some understanding of the great contribution made by these women.

Ethel Mary Lewis



Born in Cornwall in 1880, Lewis was the daughter of an Anglican clergyman. She trained as a nurse at Bristol and following the death of her father in 1912 emigrated to New Zealand. She worked for the Native Nursing Service, a forerunner to the District Nurse organisation, in Otaki where she was known as 'The Little Nurse.' (She was only 4 feet 11 inches tall.)

In England when war was declared, Lewis immediately joined the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service (QAIMNS). She spent some weeks in Belgium where she nursed refugees, working in an ambulance or hospital ship. She wrote of terrible sights: 'One old man ... carrying in a parcel his arm severed by the Germans. On my last trip I had four little girls under five years old with their hands cut off.'

When the mass evacuation of civilians and armed forces took place in October 1914 Lewis had a harrowing journey from Antwerp to Ostend, during which she risked her life to save many civilians and soldiers. For this she was awarded

the French Legion of Honour and the Medaille Militaire, and the Belgian Croix de Guerre.

Early in 1915, Lewis went to Serbia with the No. 1 British Field Hospital attached to the 2nd Serbian Army. She wrote that with four surgeons, four dressers, and ten nurses it was hard work in difficult conditions but 'one feels only too thankful to be doing even a little to help.' In October the Serbian forces, weakened by a typhoid epidemic and seriously outnumbered, were attacked in a battle near the Bulgarian border. Ambulances moved up and down the line collecting the wounded and Lewis went into the trenches to assist. She was lightly wounded in the shoulder by shrapnel, and it is believed she was decorated in the field by King Peter with the Serbian Order of the White Eagle for saving the life of an officer.

The situation became desperate, and the unit had to withdraw at short notice. A group of 17 women and 11 men attached to the 1st British Field Hospital set out with a number of patients to cross the mountains to safety. They walked for nine days over snowy mountains and muddy roads, sleeping wherever they could find shelter, and with very little food. Thousands of others, soldiers and civilians, were in retreat and thousands died from hunger, disease, and hypothermia. None of the patients in Lewis' group survived, even though she carried one man on her back for two miles. Finally, the survivors reached Salonika and found transport back to England. Lewis wrote to a friend that she was 'safe and sound except for a frostbitten knee. It has been a truly awful time ... We were simply starving when we reached Salonika.'

Lewis returned to New Zealand in September 1916 and went back to work as the Native Health Nurse at Otaki. There she raised money for an ambulance for the No.2 NZ General Hospital at Walton-on-Thames and for two Union Jack flags which were presented to the Māori Pioneer Battalion and the Rifle Brigade.

In May 1917 Lewis joined the NZANS and after serving briefly at Rotorua Hospital and Te Waikato Sanatorium sailed for England in a troopship at the end of the year. She served there until July 1919. After the war she returned to Otaki but left in 1922 to look after her aged mother in England. She died there in 1966 and is buried at St Leonard's Church, Newland.

In addition to the awards already mentioned Lewis received the 1914 Star, Royal Red Cross, Order of St Sava Retreat Medal (Serbia), Victory Medal (New Zealand), and the British Legion of Honour (the only woman to be so honoured).

Theresa Butler



Butler, who was born in Upper Hutt in October 1884, completed her nursing training at Christchurch Hospital in 1910. She left her position as a Sister at Christchurch Hospital in 1912 to do, at her own expense, a midwifery course at the Women's Hospital in Melbourne.

On holiday in England when the war broke out, she joined the Belgian Red Cross and arrived in Brussels with a group of 20 nurses, 10 surgeons

and a number of dressers one week before it was taken by the Germans on 21 August.

Butler and Sister Jessie McLeod, another New Zealander, worked at an ambulance station in very crude conditions with their only assistants generally untrained women. As many wounded as possible were transported out before the arrival of the Germans. Transferred to another ambulance station in a convent, the nurses found they were virtually prisoners, unable to communicate with England and with no way of leaving. In dreadful conditions they cared first for Belgians and then for Germans, many with septic wounds.

After three weeks, three men and 10 nurses were able to leave, travelling with passports obtained from a friendly American consul. A journey which normally took eight hours lasted for over four days, including being detained as spies by Germans. They had no money but got passage on a private yacht lent to the Red Cross.

Butler returned to New Zealand in December 1914 as the authorities thought there were too many nurses wanting to join the QAIMNS. She was one of the first to join the NZANS and in April 1915 was among the first 50 nurses to leave for England, sailing from Wellington on the Rotorua. On arrival she was one of 25 nurses sent to Cairo and thereafter served in a number of positions until her final return to NZ in February 1919. She was appointed as assistant matron at Trentham Military Hospital until her discharge in February 1920.

After her military service Butler appears to have been somewhat unsettled. She was Matron of Apia Hospital in 1921 then after Plunket Nurse training for 4 months in Dunedin, she was Plunket Nurse Thames-Te Aroha in 1923. She was appointed as District Nurse, Niue Island, in June 1924 followed by a number of years in Pacific Island hospitals. In 1939 Butler was awarded the MBE.

Theresa Butler died 13 November 1968 in Auckland and is buried in the cemetery of St John's Church, Trentham.

Lily Lind



Born at Makarewa, Southland, in 1882, Lind trained at Wellington Hospital. In 1913 she and her friend Daisy (Margaret) Hitchcock went to Dublin to study midwifery. When war broke out, they were working in London as private nurses. Together they joined the newly-formed French Flag Nursing Corps, a voluntary organization created in England in response to desperate need in France. They were among the first group of nine FFNC nurses to leave England at the end of October 1914.

To begin with, they worked alongside French nuns at the Hotel Dieu in Rouen, nursing men with infected shrapnel wounds which often became gangrenous. After a spell at a large military hospital in Bordeaux, they were posted to the small town of Bergues near the Belgian border. From January to June 1915, they nursed victims of a typhoid epidemic at a former school converted to a hospital. The hospital was poorly equipped and right in the firing line. Twice they experienced episodes of intensive artillery bombardments during which the six nurses sheltered in cellars. In August Lind wrote, 'We have been shelled out of Bergues where we were so happy with our little hospital ... After a few weeks of a more or less exciting life in cellars ... we went out to Paris Plage, Boulogne, for two weeks.' During this period of rest Lind and Hitchcock were both invited to join the NZANS

but neither wanted to leave the FFNC; they were 'very content ... with the French.'

Lind and Hitchcock were both posted to one of the two hospital barges that ferried sick and wounded men to hospitals via the canals connecting Belgium to Dunkirk and Bourbourg in Flanders. Lind wrote that the barge was compact like a doll's house. It transported 52 men at a time, 16 in stationary beds and the rest in swing beds. Lack of water was a problem.

In October 1915, Lind and Hitchcock were moved to a contagious disease's hospital in Steenvoorde, near the Belgian border. Lind became ill, having contracted pulmonary TB from her patients, exacerbated by exposure and fatigue. Granted leave from the FFNC the two women moved to the warmer climate of the French Riviera where Daisy cared devotedly for her friend, administering nightly gargles and inhalations and applying linseed poultices.

In October 1916, having avoided a winter in NZ, Lind and Hitchcock resigned from the FFNC and sailed for home on the hospital ship Maheno. Lind died shortly after they left Columbo, on 21 November 1916, and was buried at sea. She was thirty-four.

Lind was awarded the Croix de Guerre.

Eva Clare Jordan (usually called Clare)

Jordan was born in Napier in December 1878. She qualified as a nurse at Auckland Hospital in 1903 and served as a staff sister till 1910 when she went into private nursing. She was nursing in Honolulu when war was declared and made her way immediately to England where her services were accepted by the Red Cross Society. With a friend she spent three months running a small military hospital with 24 beds. She then joined the QAIMNS and was sent to France to work with the French Flag Nursing Corps, under the authority of the French War Office. Jordan was posted to a Casualty Clearing Station (CCS) some 5 to 10 miles from the front. Seven nursing sisters

were billeted on townspeople, their mess room was under canvas, and it was bitterly cold. The hospital was very primitive, being mostly convent buildings, and nurses had to rely 'more on antiseptics than asepsis.' When a convoy of wounded came in, patients were treated and those who survived were evacuated to a base hospital and then if necessary to England.

Jordan wrote from Boulogne in July 1915 while enjoying 10 days leave: 'We are quiet just now ... There is a decided lull on the Western Front ... the next battle will be a terrific one ... One rather dreads the beginning of the ghastly business over again. It does not do to have time to stop and think in this kind of work.'

In January 1916 Jordan was mentioned in despatches by Sir John French 'for gallant and distinguished service in the field.' In 1917 she had a period of sick leave following very intense theatre work where 'eventually all broke down, surgeons and sisters, with bad fingers and throats, and in my case glands (aixilla).'

In September 1918, while still in England, Jordan joined the NZANS and had to drop in rank from sister to staff nurse 'but as the war is over this will not be of much consequence.'

Following her discharge in February 1919, Jordan spent three months in New Zealand and then returned to Honolulu, her passage being paid, after considerable negotiation, by the Army. The time and place of her death are not known.

Evelyn Gertrude Brooke (usually called Eva)

Brooke was born in New Plymouth on 13 September 1879. She trained at Wellington Hospital, graduating in December 1907, following which she nursed privately before joining.

Brooke was second-in-charge of the seven nurses sent to Samoa in September 1914 ... She returned to New Zealand in April 1915 and joined the NZANS. She was appointed matron on the



hospital ship Maheno and embarked for Turkey in July 1915 as it sailed on its first voyage, leaving Wellington on 11 July 1915. The Maheno, a steamer owned by the Union Co., was chartered, and fitted out as a hospital ship financed by a combination of government money and voluntary donations. It had 8 wards, 2 operating theatres, and a staff of 5 doctors, 61 orderlies, 13 nursing sisters and a chaplain, but on its first voyage carried an additional 64 nurses en route to Egypt. As matron, Brooke was responsible for all nursing arrangements, including the training of male orderlies who were often reluctant to accept her authority. Nurses were given the courtesy rank of officer, but many male officers refused to recognise this, and the women were subjected to a great deal of unpleasantness.

Seasickness devastated many of Brooke's staff, and the horrors of war could not be avoided: during August and September 1915, the Maheno

made five visits to Anzac Cove at Gallipoli. In extreme heat, while bullets raked the decks, the nurses worked with the 'poor, torn, mangled fellows' amid the horrible sickly odour of dysentery, disease and decay. Sometimes bullets raked the decks. On the return journey from Lemnos the nurses had to scrub everything clean and prepare bandages for the next lot of wounded.

With its somewhat larger sister ship, SS Marama, the Maheno was also used to bring wounded soldiers back to New Zealand. After returning soldiers to New Zealand in January 1916, Brooke served as Matron at Featherston Hospital, and then sailed in November on the first voyage of the 600 bed Marama. In May 1917, all nurses were disembarked from the hospital ships due to the increased danger from mines and torpedoes. Butler wrote 'We were all very sad yesterday morning when we were told and in fact nearly said that we would not leave but being military could not do so – we nearly all wept.'

Till the end of 1917 Brooke was matron of the Officers' Convalescent Home at Brighton and then transferred to No.1 NZ Stationary Hospital at Wisques, near the front line in France. Monthly admissions were often over 1,200 and air raids were frequent. In winter it was bitterly cold. The ground was very marshy, and the nurses suffered from chilblains and trench feet. Often their feet were as bad as, if not worse than, some of their patients and all their off-duty time was spent doctoring their feet and resting. Brooke was mentioned in dispatches by General Douglas Haig for 'special devotion and competency' and then was awarded the Red Cross 1st Class in September 1917, followed by the Royal Red Cross Bar in November 1918. She was the only NZ nurse to be awarded the Bar to the Royal Red Cross. She received these awards from King George V at an investiture at Buckingham Palace in June 1919.

After returning to New Zealand in April 1919 Brooke was Matron at Featherston Hospital from June to December and then spent a year at Narrow Neck Hospital until her demobilisation in 1920. She then served as the first matron of Rannersdale Home, a hospital for disabled veterans, resigning shortly before her marriage in June 1925 to William John Brown, a veteran and former patient. They had no children and after Brown's death Brooke nursed privately for some years. In 1955 she retired to the Lady Freyberg Servicewomen's Veterans' Home where she died on 11 February 1962. Her grave is in the Karori Soldiers' Cemetery in Wellington.

Blanche Marion Huddleston(e)

Huddleston was born in Christchurch in 1877 and trained at Wellington Hospital, qualifying in 1905. In August 1914 she left Wellington at three days' notice for Samoa. From there she wrote that, 'one is not overworked by any means.' Nurses worked an eight-hour shift with two orderlies on duty and only about 14 patients. With a domestic staff of houseboys, cooks, and laundry boys, the nurses did nothing in the house except make their beds.

Huddleston went on to serve at hospitals in England and then in France. While at Codford Hospital she did what many nurses did, writing to inform a family of the death of one of her patients. Rifleman Alexander Shaw died on 15 January 1917 from pneumonia and bronchitis. Huddleston wrote: 'He was such a nice patient and went so peacefully. We had every hope at first of his recovery and were so sorry to lose him. I always think that one cannot do enough for our brave soldier boys – they give up everything for their country ... I am ever so sorry to be the bearer of such bad news.'

In France Huddleston served at several Casualty Clearing Stations on the Somme. These stations were staffed by teams consisting of a surgeon, an anaesthetist, a nursing sister and an orderly.

Situated near the front line, they dealt with the wounded as quickly as possible before sending them on to base hospitals. Enemy planes came over on bombing raids every clear night. The sisters were provided with helmets and gas masks and were supposed to shelter in their dugouts or to lie flat on the ground.

In 1918 Huddleston spent three months training as an anaesthetist, one of six NZANS nurses to receive such training from the Americans. They served one year in France in this new role, after which they were no longer needed. None was appointed as an anaesthetist after their return to NZ.

Huddleston was awarded the Royal Red Cross 1st Class for distinguished services in connection with military hospitals in France and Flanders, and also the Belgian Medaille de la Reine Elizabeth.

Huddleston died in February 1963.

Winifred (Freddy) Merelina/Merlina Scott



Scott was born in Onehunga in 1884. Her father was a well-known surgeon who also had a general practice in Onehunga. Scott attended Auckland Girls' Grammar School and Auckland University College, although she did not

graduate. Scott trained as a nurse, qualifying in 1912, after which she studied massage in England at the London School of Massage. Formal training in massage, the forerunner of modern physiotherapy, began in New Zealand in about 1912. Like Scott some nurses trained overseas, just as they often did for midwifery. Scott was working at Auckland Hospital as the country's first massage sister when she was chosen to join the Australian contingent of nurses. A party of 12 (two sisters and ten staff nurses) was hurriedly sent to Melbourne in response to an invitation from the Australian Government. Paid by the Australian Defence Force they wore Australian uniforms.

Scott left Sydney for Egypt on 13 April 1915 and soon after was nursing casualties from Gallipoli at No.2 Australian General Hospital near Cairo. Later she worked at another General Hospital, also near Cairo. She also did tours of duty on ships transporting the wounded to England and Australia.

Scott was promoted to Sister after two years of service. The punishing workloads meant medical staff were at risk of exhaustion and illness, and Scott was no exception, being hospitalised once for influenza and once for a mild 'debility' in April 1917. After her return to work she experienced a hectic time as fighting in Gaza meant the operating theatre was in action from early morning till late at night, with two tables in constant use in one room.

In 1919 the Australian Government paid for Scott to attend a massage course in London and after her return to New Zealand she was Charge Sister in the massage department at the King George V Hospital in Rotorua and then Head Masseuse at the hospital and sanatorium in Hanmer Springs. She later spent more than a decade in Palmerston North where she was in private practice as a medical masseuse. After a long illness, Scott died in Onehunga in 1937, aged 53.

She is buried at Holy Trinity Church, Otahuhu.

Scott was awarded the Australian Royal Red Cross, 2nd Class.

Lorna Aylmer Rattray



STAFF NURSE L. A. RATTRAY
(Missing).

Born in Dunedin in January 1875, Rattray was a daughter of James Rattray, a well-known businessman. As a girl she led a busy social life, playing bridge and tennis and going to dances and balls. She attended St Matthew's Church and took St John's Ambulance classes. After four years training at Christchurch Hospital Rattray qualified in June 1914. She planned to go to England to join a nursing corps but instead joined the NZANS in July 1915. She sailed from Wellington on the SS Maheno where she met Edith (Poppy) Popplewell who became her close friend. They served at No.1 Stationary Hospital, Port Said, until October when they sailed on the Marquette, a transport ship carrying troops and munitions to Greece. Also, on board were 36 NZANS nursing staff who, with officers and men of the New Zealand Medical Corps, were going to set up a hospital at Lemnos to care for casualties being brought back from the Dardanelles.

On 23 October at about 9am the Marquette was hit by a German torpedo and within about 15

minutes had sunk. Ten nurses lost their lives in the evacuation as lifeboats tipped over as they were lowered into the sea, some boats falling on others, with some being left on the ship and going down with her. A survivor recalled that Rattray 'was very frightened and absolutely demented before she was five minutes in the water.' Popplewell and Rattray were together to begin with as Poppy wrote: 'We kept together ... and hung on to the same piece of wreckage but Lorna was not as strong as I am and simply couldn't do it. I held her on for a long time and then she died of utter exhaustion not long before we were picked up ... I was just able to hold up her face while she died and then so soon, I had to let her go ...'

Two years after her death, the Otago Nurses' Association created the New Zealand Nurses' Memorial Fund in memorial to Rattray and fellow Otago Marquette victim, Mary Rae.

Rattray is named on the Mikra Memorial at the Mikra War Cemetery in Greece and in the Nurses' Memorial Chapel at Christchurch Hospital. This chapel was built in the 1920s in memory of the three Christchurch nurses who died in the sinking of the Marquette and two who died during the 1918 flu epidemic. It then became a memorial to all those nurses who die on military service. Rattray is also remembered in the Five Sisters Window at York Minster in England. This window commemorates 1,400 women of the British Empire who lost their lives during World War 1. There is a commemorative plaque to Rattray in St Matthew's Church, Dunedin.

Hilda Vercoe Hooker

Born in 1881, Hooker was working as a theatre nurse at Napier Hospital when she enlisted in the NZANS. In April 1915 she sailed with the first fifty nurses from Wellington on the Rotorua. After a short period at the No.1 New Zealand Stationary Hospital in Port Said she sailed for Greece on the Marquette. She later recalled that 'the

atmosphere was free and easy, we had no thought of mines or submarines.'



As the Marquette was sinking, Hooker was tossed out of a lifeboat into the sea. She survived for about seven hours in the intensely cold water, hanging on to buoys, boards, and whatever she could find. She recalled that: 'By this time it was about 4pm and I remember saying I couldn't keep up any longer and was going under when a boy ... got hold of me, held me up, and managed to get me over to the boat where I was dragged in feet first.' A French destroyer picked up Hooker with some other survivors after dark and they finally arrived at Salonika about 2 am. Hooker was admitted to hospital in Alexandria with severe enteric fever and pleurisy. She never fully recovered her health.

After returning to New Zealand Hooker faced a Medical Board in Dunedin in January 1916 after which she received some treatment at Wellington Hospital. Her disability was recorded as 'Typhoid, pneumonia and pleurisy', the specific cause being 'exposure after the sinking of HMT No.13 (Marquette) 23/10/15.' She recovered sufficiently to be Acting Matron at Trentham Military Hospital for a short time but was again before a Medical Board in July 1917. The Board recommended that she receive a pension of two pounds per week and a paid visit to family in Australia. The Department of

Defence refused to pay for the visit on the grounds that it would establish a precedent. Hooker was posted to the retired list in September 1917. She remained bitter about the outcome of the war for nurses.

Hooker died in 1960. She is among those commemorated in the Nurses' Memorial Chapel, Christchurch.

Ethel Pritchard, nee Taylor



Born in Onehunga in 1881, Ethel claimed Nga Puhi descent through her mother, a granddaughter of Judge F. E. Maning and his Māori wife. Her father was a millhand named Watkins but after her mother's divorce and remarriage she took her stepfather's name and was known as Ethel Watkins Taylor.

Taylor began nursing with a course in midwifery, and then did nursing training at Hawera Hospital, finishing at Christchurch Hospital where she graduated with honours in 1910. She then nursed in private hospitals and at Cook Hospital in Gisborne. When war was declared she was quick to volunteer and was one of the first 50 nurses to serve overseas with the NZANS, leaving New Zealand on 8 April 1915 on the Rotorua.

Taylor was first stationed at No 15 General Hospital in Alexandria, Egypt. There she supervised nine orderlies, tending some 240 patients housed in tents. The arrival of big convoys of casualties from Gallipoli meant doing up to 190 dressings a day. Dysentery, diarrhoea and typhoid fever were common, and there were terrible gunshot wounds. But worst of all were the cases of frostbite: 'With a gunshot wound one felt that something could be done, but some of the frost bites were hopeless.' By the end of February 1916, she had tended 3,500 patients. In July that year she was promoted from Staff Nurse to Sister. Taylor also served on hospital ships and at Hornchurch and Brockenhurst army hospitals in England. While in London she joined the Legion of Frontiersmen, in which she maintained a lifelong interest.

Released from the army in 1919, Taylor took up district nursing at Te Karaka, near Gisborne, and is regarded as one of the pioneers in this field. She was known for her willingness to turn out at any time to attend to those in need, travelling to outlying areas on horseback, by horse and gig, and later by car. In 1921, Taylor married Albert Pritchard, a farm manager, and resigned from her position. She continued however to provide nursing services to Māori at two nearby settlements and to other residents when needed. Her son, born in 1924, died at six days old while an adopted son was killed in an accident in 1951.

In 1926, the local community held a social function to honour Pritchard, paying tribute to her self-sacrifice in attending accidents and illnesses at any time of day or night without accepting any payment. She was presented with a cabinet gramophone and records and two easy chairs.

After the Pritchards moved to Matawai in 1928. Ethel continued to serve the community for around twenty years. There were several sawmills operating in the area, and she was often

called to attend severe injuries. To cope with the country roads, she drove a six-cylinder Chevrolet with a door in the back for stretchers but when practical travelled by train, taking a journey of over three hours to transport patients to hospital in Gisborne.

Pritchard was active in a number of community organizations, including two years as president of the Matawai-Motu branch of the RSA. She was probably the first woman to act in this role. She also belonged to the Country Women's Institute, Women's Division Federated Farmers, St John Ambulance Brigade, Victoria League, and the local children's health camp organization. In 1949 Pritchard was appointed MBE for long service as a district nurse and honorary child welfare officer. She was also awarded a long-service medal by the Legion of Frontiersmen.

In 1950 Pritchard was elected to the Cook Hospital Board and served until retirement in 1956 when she received many tributes for her work. Pritchard died at Gisborne in July 1964, survived by her husband. She is buried in Taruheru Cemetery, Gisborne.

Mabel Maida Coates (nee Illingworth)

Coates was born in Adelaide in 1882. She did her nursing training at Auckland Hospital, qualifying in 1912. She joined the QAIMNS. Although there

are no details of her service it appears that she was a masseuse (now known as physiotherapist), one of a small group trained to help in the recovery and restoration of wounded men. In 1915 she married a New Zealand soldier, Staff Sergeant George Percy Coates of the Auckland Mounted Rifles and in August 1916 transferred to the NZANS. Coates worked at Codford General Hospital in England but was invalided to New Zealand on the Maheno in August 1917, having become dangerously ill with erysipelas infection. Her husband returned with her. She was discharged in October 1917 and in the same month George was also discharged as no longer physically fit for war service on account of wounds received in action.

The Coates began a family and took up farming in Hawkes Bay. There Mabel was 'a source of consolation and relief in the hour of sickness and distress', answering emergency calls in cases of accident and illness, showing 'an indefatigable Christian Spirit', often at great inconvenience to herself and her family.

Coates died on 11 September 1950, aged 68, and is buried with her husband, who survived until 1960, in the graveyard of All Saints' Church, Howick.

Coates was awarded the British War Medal.

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