5 Nurses Trained at the
Rockhampton Children's Hospital

Margaret Halpin

Helen Lawson

Louisa Sarah Parnell

Elizabeth Parker

Greta Norman Towner

2 Nurses Trained at the
Rockhampton Women's Hospital

Ellen Barron

Sarah Kellaway

2 Nurses Trained at the
Gladstone Hospital

Florence Herbertson

Sadie Charlotte MacDonald

Version 1, 2014 Updated September 2016

**Margaret May HALPIN**

Margaret's Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad shows she was born in Maryborough Queensland on 11th February 1878.

In her book *"More Than Bombs and Bandages: Australian Army Nurses at Work in World War One"* Kirsty Harris reports Margaret completed her General Nurse training at the Rockhampton Children's Hospital.

**Service Details:**
Margaret was 39 years when she enlisted for service abroad on November 8th 1917 having joined AANS as a Staff Nurse on 7th July 1917.

Staff Nurse Halpin embarked on 16th November 1917 sailing from Sydney on HMAT SS "Canberra" serving in India before returning to Australia on 13th April 1919 aboard SS "Eastern." Margaret's appointment was terminated on 25th July 1919.

**Post War:**
Margaret worked at the Toowoomba Baby Clinic in 1923.
Her marriage to John McGuirk at Saint Stephen's Cathedral by Rev. Father Walsh on 17th June 1925 was reported in the Brisbane Courier Mail on Wednesday 15th July.

Mrs. McGuirk died in 1970.

Margaret May HALPIN

Rockhampton Children's Hospital

Built by the Benevolent Society in 1889 the first building was a 30 bed hospital for children. Situated on the corner of Agnes and Denham Streets opposite the Girls Grammar School it was administered by a joint committee of the Society and the Rockhampton Hospital.

Photograph courtesy of Rockhampton Country Hospital Museum

**Helen LAWSON**

Helen was born in Rockhampton in 1893 and attended The Girls Grammar School in Rockhampton.

In her book *"More Than Bombs and Bandages: Australian Army Nurses at Work in World War One"* Kirsty Harris recorded Helen completed her General Nurse training at the Rockhampton Children's Hospital.

A photograph taken at the Enoggera General Hospital Brisbane appears in Rupert Goodman's book "Queensland Nurses Boar War to Vietnam" and published in ACHHA Newsletter in April 2012, shows Staff Nurse Lawson seated 6th in the front row with a group of nursing colleagues prior to embarking for overseas service.

**Service Details:**
Helen was 34 years when she enlisted for service abroad on 16th September 1916 having joined AANS as a Staff Nurse 10 months before.

Staff Nurse Lawson embarked on 2nd September 1916 sailing from Sydney on R.M.S. "Kashgar." She went on to serve in Salonika and India. Helen returned to Australia on 6th February 1919 aboard SS "Lancashire." Her appointment was terminated on 12th May 1919.

**Post War:**
The Central Queensland Herald on Thursday 22nd May 1935, Page 20 reported Sister Lawson's attendance at a function held by the Citizen's ANZAC Day Dinner Committee for 600 returned nurses, sailors and soldiers at the Palais Royal in Rockhampton.
"*Mrs. Wheeler's speech was greeted with rounds of applause and the orchestra broke into the strains of ' Annie Laurie.' Sister Scully, matron of the Westwood Sanatorium, also responded and wished the Diggers good luck. Other war nurses present were: Sisters M. Maloney (Mrs. J. Houlihan), G. McLaughlin (Mrs. J. Conaghan), M. Hobler, R. Allen, and H. Lawson."*

The Central Queensland Herald on Thursday 19th November 1936 Page 66 reporting on the weekly Rotary Club luncheon held the previous day made mention that all World War One nurses in Rockhampton and district were invited to attend the luncheon as guests of the club and a special address was given by Rotarian Rev. R. H. Noack.

*"The war nurses present included Matron Allen, Matron Dowling, Sister Lawson, Mrs. J. Houlihan, Mrs. J. Conachan, Mrs. J. H. Reid, and Mrs. Clift (Yeppoon). Wives of Rotarians and other ladies were present at the luncheon, which was presided over by Rotarian F. W. Hicklin."*

Helen died in 1965.

**Louisa Sarah PARNELL**

Louisa was born in Port Douglas North Queensland in 1893. A period of her education was at the Girls Grammar School Rockhampton.

In her book *"More Than Bombs and Bandages: Australian Army Nurses at Work in World War One"* Kirsty Harris wrote Louisa completed her General Nurse training at the Rockhampton Children's Hospital.

**Service Details:**
Aged 34, Louisa enlisted for service abroad as an AANS Staff Nurse on 12th August 1915 and listed her Father as Next of Kin living in Rockhampton.

Staff Nurse Parnell sailed from Sydney on 21st August 1915 aboard RMS "Morea."
She served at No1 AGH Heliopolis, Mena House, Luna Park, No3 AGH Abbassia and Rouen in France. On December 1916 Louisa was posted to Netley Hospital England. Some 50,000 patients were treated at Netley Hospital during WW1.

During 1917-1918 Louisa was working at Southall Hospital, Harefield. The hospital was established in the First World War for the treatment of injured Australians and New Zealanders. Today, the hospital's state-of-the-art ANZAC Centre remembers the vital contribution made by those troops.

An article in The Rockhampton Morning Bulletin on Thursday 19th October 1916 Page 3 reporting on Central Queenslanders in England published a letter written by Mrs. H. G. Wheeler from London on the 9th of September to Miss M. S. Trotman:

*"Sister Flora Macdonald says they have the wounded light horse men in the Third Australian Hospital Cairo, and amongst them is Harold Fraser, who is not seriously wounded. Sister Parnell was on night duty with her."*

Staff Nurse Parnell was promoted to Sister and returned to Australia on 8th January 1919 aboard S.S. "Orsova."

**Post War:**
An article in the Brisbane Courier Mail on Friday 28th March 1919 Page 9 reported:
*"Sister Louisa Parnell was the first Rockhampton nurse to return following the signing of the Armistice and reported she was given a hearty welcome at the Soldiers Rest and Recreation Rooms by the Mayor of Greater Rockhampton Alderman T. Kingel"*

Following her return she married William Francis Joseph Koch in 1919.

Louisa died in Taringa, Brisbane on 11th December 1955.

SISTER L. S. PARNELL

**Elizabeth PARKER**

Elizabeth was born in Rockhampton.
In her book *"More Than Bombs and Bandages: Australian Army Nurses at Work in World War One"* Kirsty Harris wrote Elizabeth completed her General Nurse training at the Rockhampton Children's Hospital.

An article in the Rockhampton Morning Bulletin on Wednesday 28th July 1915 Page 8 informed the readers that:
*"Miss E. Parker, at one time head nurse at the Rockhampton Children's Hospital, has been accepted for service with the Australian army nursing service."*

**Service Details:**
Elizabeth enlisted for service abroad at the age of 30 as an AANS Staff Nurse on 31st July 1915 having first joined AANS in May 1915. She listed her Father as Next of Kin living in Rockhampton.
Staff Nurse Parker embarked on 2nd September 1915 sailing from Sydney aboard on R.M.S. "Orontes."

Rupert Goodman in his book "Queensland Nurses Boer War to Vietnam," Boolarong Publications wrote Elizabeth served in No3 AGH Lemnos and Solonika, France, Belgium and England.

Staff Nurse Parker was promoted to Sister on 1st September 1917 and returned to Australia as nursing staff on 2nd April 1919 aboard HMAT (A24) "Benalla." Her appointment was terminated on 27th July 1919.

**Post War:**
The Central Queensland Herald Rockhampton on Thursday 10 March 1932 Page 23 informed readers:
"*Miss Elizabeth Parker, who spent the past six months with her mother (Mrs. Parker, Caroline-street), left yesterday for Brisbane. From there she will sail by the Orsova for England."*

Rupert Goodman wrote:
"Sister Parker nursed privately in England and in 1938 attended the unveiling of Villiers-Bretonneux Memorial by His Majesty King George VI."

Elizabeth died in London in 1965.

Villers Bretonneux, France. 22 July 1938. The scene as the National Anthem was being played during the ceremony of the Unveiling of the Australian War Memorial at the Villers Bretonneux Cemetery. http://trove.nla.gov.au/version/1799360

**Greta Norman TOWNER**

Greta was born in Blackall Central Queensland on 6th June 1891.

Through the State Library of Queensland's History Pin project as part of the Q ANZAC 100 – Memories for a New Generation project, guest blogger Avril Fazel, Head of Department, Blackall State School along with students from the school have researched the life of Greta Norman Towner and writes:
*"She attended Blackall State School and continued her education in Rockhampton. Greta Towner trained as nurse at the Rockhampton Children's Hospital, registering as a Nurse in August 1914 and enlisting in July, 1915."*

**Service Details:**
Accounts of Greta's service vary, however research finds she was 24 years of age when she signed her Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad in March 1916 having first joined AANS as a Staff Nurse on 22nd July 1915.
In 1915 Staff Nurse Towner sailed aboard RMS "Orontes" to Heliopolis, Cairo in Egypt serving in the 1st AGH in Heliopolis before transferring to 2nd Australian Stationary Hospital in Mudros on the island of Lemnos from September 1915.

Staff Nurse Towner served on Lemnos during the Gallipoli Campaign and saw service on transport ships nursing wounded soldiers. This service included nursing aboard HMAT A64 "Demosthenes" as it returned wounded soldiers to Australia and the HMAT Kyarra A55 when it left Sydney on 17th November 1916.

Arriving in London in January 1917 she was assigned to No 2 Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Southall, England where she served at the Southall Hospital, a hospital specializing in caring for soldiers with amputated limbs.

Promoted to Sister she was lent to the French in March 1917 and saw service in the French Military Hospitals until the signing of the Armistice.

Sister Towner returned to Australia aboard SS City of "Exeter" and was officially discharged as medically unfit on 4th July 1919 four years after enlisting. Greta was awarded a **Mentioned in Dispatches** for her service. Major Edward Thomas Towner was Sister Towner's brother while fighting in France, he won the Military Cross and was twice Mentioned in Despatches before receiving the Victoria Cross.

**Post War:**
The University of Sydney in their publication "University of Sydney and The Great War Beyond 1914" documents Greta was a Pharmacy student in 1920 passing the practical examination only and was not enrolled in any other subjects. She then immigrated to the USA where she married twice and worked in several Veteran Hospitals. She died on 9th June 1961 and is buried in USA.

State Library of Queensland History Pin project.

**Ellen Maria BARRON**

Ellen, sometimes was known as "Nellie," was born in 1875 in Berkshire, England and migrated to Australia with her parents around 1884.

Kaye Cameron, Family Researcher in her Biography on Ellen Barron wrote:

*"Ellen trained as a General Nurse at the Brisbane General Hospital from1886 to 1889 and was Head Nurse there until 1901. She was then Head Nurse at Maryborough Hospital until commencing her Obstetric Nursing Training at Rockhampton Women's Hospital from 1904 to 1905.*

*She was appointed Matron at the Lady Musgrave Maternity Hospital in Maryborough from 1906 to 1908 and the Chillagoe Hospital in 1909. Travelling back to England in 1910 Ellen studied obtaining a Certificate of the Incorporated Society of Trained Masseuses from London and became a life member of the Chartered Society of Massage and Medical Gymnastics."*

**Service Details:**

Returning to Australia and aged 39 years she enlisted in AANS as a Staff Nurse on 26th April 1915. Staff Nurse Barron **e**mbarked from Sydney on 15th May 1915 aboard R.M.S "Mooltan." She nursed ANZAC casualties at Lemnos and served in England and France. She returned to Australia on 7th March 1917 aboard SS HMAT A61 No. 2 Australian Hospital Ship "Kanowna." Her appointment was terminated on 18th April 1917.

**Post War:**

The Australian National University in an article written by Glenda Law and published in the Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 7, (MUP) 1979 wrote of Ellen's post war activities in a shared document with Florence Chatfield.

This document shows she was working in Brisbane in 1918 under Miss Chatfield in the baby clinics. In 1922 she was sent to the Karitane training school in New Zealand working under Sir Frederic Truby King. Returning in 1923 she became superintendent of the Brisbane Baby Clinics and started a training course for clinic nursing staff. She retired as superintendent in 1939.

Miss Barron was a member of the Queensland Branch of the Australasian Trained Nurses' Association and served on the federal council of the association, the Australasian Nurses' Federation. She was a member of the Queensland Nurses and Masseurs Registration Board becoming an examiner for many years, from 1930 she also chaired a board providing lectures for student nurses. The Ellen Barron Child Health Centre in Brisbane is named after her.

Ellen Barron died on 7th July 1951 at the War Veteran's Home in Caboolture, Queensland.

Staff Nurse Ellen Barron stands beneath a solitary tree near a port on the Island of Lemnos. Photograph AWM

**Sarah KELLAWAY**

Sarah who was also known as "Sally" or 'Sallie,' was born in Emerald, Central Queensland.

Sarah completed her General Nurse training in Longreach and is reputed to have been the second nurse to be qualified from the Longreach Hospital. She then completed her Obstetrics training at the Rockhampton Women's Hospital in February 1916.

For a period Sarah worked at the Isisford Hospital before being appointed Matron at the Emerald Hospital.

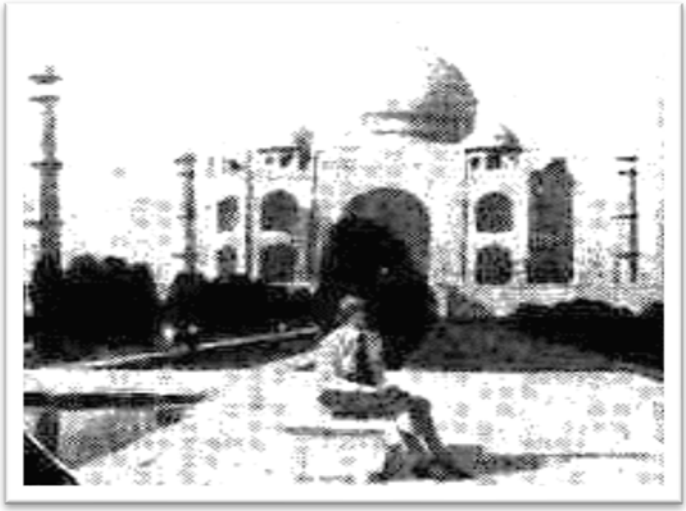
**Service Details:**
Aged 27 she left Emerald and on 16th November 1916 was accepted for service in AANS as a Staff Nurse.

Staff Nurse Kellaway signed her Attestation of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad on 19th May 1917 and embarked on 26th May sailing on SS "Khira."

Information on *nurses.ww1anzac.com/ka-ke.html (site now unavailable)* had shown Sister Kellaway served in India and Egypt returning to Australia 20th February 1920 on HMAT A30 "Borda." Her appointment was terminated on 12th March 1920.

**Post War:**
Following a year in England Sarah returned to Brisbane working at the Rosemount Repatriation Hospital. Travelling back to England in 1928 she went on to Spain where she worked for a short period before spending several years in Lady Minto's Nursing Association in India. During this time she worked at Simia for 18 months, Delhi for 8 months and 4 years in Assam.

It is unknown when Sarah returned home however she died in Queensland in 1974.



Sister Sarah Kellaway visiting the Taj Mahal in Agra.

"Lady Minto's Indian Nursing Association" began in 1906 and ceased in 1949.

Lady Minto's Indian Nursing Association Badge, believed to have been worn on a belt or band, silver, bearing markers marks for Gaunt of London. The London Medal Company Ltd.

**Florence HERBERTSON**

Florence was born at Clunes, Victoria. An entry in Rupert Goodman's book, "Queensland Nurses Boer War to Vietnam," Boolarong Publications, records Florence was educated at the Gladstone State School and Maryborough Girls Grammar School. Goodman also recorded her completing General Nurse training at Gladstone Hospital and later undertaking further training at the Brisbane Hospital and prior to joining AANS worked at Kingaroy Hospital, Longreach Hospital as Head Nurse in 1913, Clermont and Roma Hospitals.

The Rockhampton Morning Bulletin Thursday on 5th June 1913 reported on her appointment as Head Nurse at the Longreach Hospital.

**Service Details:**

Joining AANS as a Staff Nurse she worked at the Enoggera Military Hospital until enlisting for service abroad. Staff Nurse Herbertson embarked on 30th July 1915 aboard R.M.S. "Orontes" and sailed to Heliopolis, Egypt.
Staff Nurse Herbertson served in No1 AGH in Heliopolis, First Australian Stationary Hospital Ismalia and No1 Auxiliary Hospital Abbassia. In 1916 she was transferred to No 3 Auxiliary Hospital, Dartford in Kent, England.

"*The Military Hospitals in Great Britain 1914 to 1918 The Long Long Trail*" website describes the No 3 Auxiliary Hospital, Dartford as a military convalescent hospital. Under orders of London Command it opened on 24th May 1915. It had been an infectious diseases hospital taken over from the Metropolitan Asylum Board.

On 10th September 1917 Staff Nurse Herbertson boarded HMAT A38 "Ulysses" returning to Australia as a member of the nursing staff caring for wounded soldiers aboard. Her appointment was terminated on 2nd December 1917.

**Post War:**

Following her return she worked at Stanthorpe and Rosemount Hospitals.
The Brisbane Courier Thursday 20th June 1918 on Page 11 reported her attendance at a tea party held at the Military Hospital Kangaroo Point in honour of the nurses who returned from the war.
*"The guest speaker, Mrs. Stodart spoke of a 5000 pound fund being invested for the future provision of the nurses under control of the Australian Trained Nurses Association (ATNA)"*

The Brisbane Courier on Saturday 18th June 1921 on Page 6 reported on her marriage on 1st June 1921 to the eldest son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Field Flowers of Rockhampton.
Florence died on 7th July 1962 aged 76 years.

Group portrait of the matron and nursing staff of the 1st Australian Stationary Hospital.
Identified Sister Florence Herbertson standing first left in back row.
Australian War Memorial C02305.

**Sadie Charlotte MacDONALD**
Sadie was born in 1875, one of six daughters born to parents at Raglan, Central Queensland. All six were nurses, her sister Flora also served in AANS WW1.

Completing her General Nurse training at the Gladstone Hospital she later became Matron of that hospital. An article published in the Rockhampton Morning Bulletin on Tuesday 28th September 1909 and stored on TROVE announced her appointment as Matron at the Thursday Island Hospital.

**Service Details:**
At the age of 36 years and 7 months Sister MacDonald enlisted for service abroad in AANS and in August 1915 sailed aboard RMS "Morea" for Egypt.

Sister MacDonald served in No. 1 Australian General Hospital at Heliopolis before being posted in April to Rouen, France where she was attached to No. 1 Australian General Hospital until March, 1917. Later postings saw her in Northern France and Belgium before returning to Rouen again at No. 1 Australian General Hospital where she remained until December, 1918.

From there she was appointed to Sutton Veny, England for six months. The cemetery at Sutton Veny contains 168 First World War burials, 167 of them in a plot at the North West corner of the church where 143 are Australian.

The Rockhampton Capricornian Newspaper on Saturday 12th August 1916 reported she was was on leave travelling to America to give evidence in a contested will case involving a patient she had nursed in Thursday Island Hospital.

Sister MacDonald returned to Australia aboard SS "Bremen" arriving in Melbourne on 24th July. She had been in charge of the nursing staff of the ship. Her appointment was terminated on 27th September 1919.

Sister MacDonald was awarded The Royal Red Cross 2nd Class presented to her by the King at Buckingham Palace on the 3rd of April, 1918.

Sadie MacDonald was also awarded M.B.E.

**Post War:**
She was appointed Matron at the Corinda Ardoyne Hospital in Brisbane, a Red Cross Tubercular Home following her return to Queensland in 1919.
The Rockhampton Morning Bulletin on Monday 19th March 1951 recorded she was the President of the Queensland Returned Sister's Sub-Branch of the R.S.S.I.L.A reporting she may have been the first woman in Queensland to receive the Returned Servicemen's League Gold Life Membership Badge.

The Townsville Daily Bulletin on Monday18th May 1953 reported:
*"Matron MacDonald was the first Queenslander to receive The Florence Nightingale Medal"*

During WW2 was Matron Red Cross Home Chelmer and Methodist and Presbyterian Girl's Hostel in Brisbane.
Sadie Charlotte MacDonald died in Greenslopes Repatriation Hospital, Brisbane aged 95.