

Discovering Greta – Nursing

First World War nurse, Sister Greta Norman Towner became a qualified nurse when the profession was in its infancy. These objects speak to Greta Towner and her family links with nursing.

Rockhampton Children's Hospital

Source: Ashley Reid, *Nurses From the local area: including Rockhampton, Gladstone, Calliope, Raglan, Mount Morgan, Yaamba, (images and information kindly shared via email)*

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. Administered by a joint committee of the Society and the Rockhampton Hospital.



Rockhampton Children's Hospital.

Extensions were added over the years to accommodate 62 children in 5 wards. In 1928, the children were relocated to a new ward at the General Hospital. The remaining buildings were relocated to the General Hospital and used as Nurses Quarters.

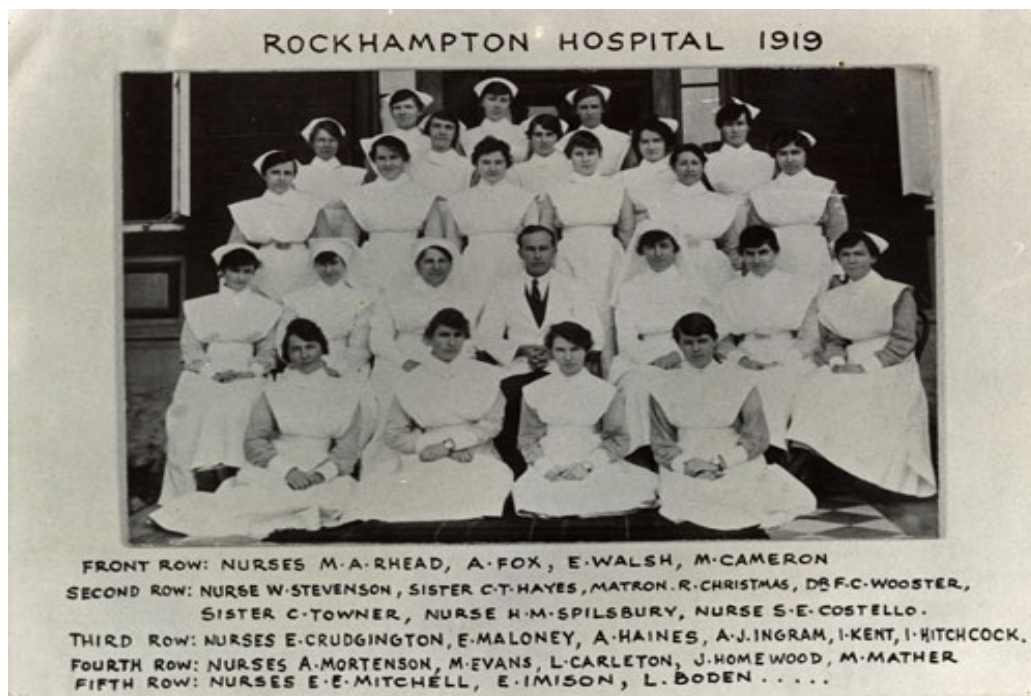
Greta Norman Towner completed her general nursing in August 1914 at the Rockhampton Children's Hospital. Was this photo taken on her completing her nursing before heading off to the First World War?



*Sister Greta Norman Towner –
date and location unknown.
(Image shared by, Pamela Francies
family member)*

Staff of the Rockhampton Hospital 1919

Source: Ashley Reid, *Nurses From the local area: including Rockhampton, Gladstone, Calliope, Raglan, Mount Morgan, Yaamba.*



Staff of the Rockhampton Hospital 1919. Photo courtesy of Ashely Reid.

Note the nurse third from the right in the second row is named as C Towner. Investigation of hospital archives by Ashley Reid identify her as Christianna Margaret Towner, one of Greta Norman Towner's younger sisters. Queensland State Archives also list Clara Towner as a registered nurse in Brisbane in 1922 and 1923.

A third sister, Carrie Towner in family history is remembered as a bush nurse and having seven daughters, five of whom became nurses with the tradition of nursing continuing down to her granddaughter and great granddaughter today.

Sister Greta Towner is nursing in 1919 after returning from the First World War though not in a children's hospital but with a Red Cross Convalescent Home, Abbotsford, Sydney, Australia. This the beginning of her long career of working with veterans.

1919 Greta is nursing at Red Cross Convalescent home, Abbotsford

'TALK OF THE TOWN.', *Sunday Times* (Sydney, NSW: 1895 - 1930), 26 October 1919, p. 15, viewed 22 August 2015, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article123233292>

Lieut. E. Towner, V.C., who recently returned from the front, has resumed work on his land in Queensland. His sister (Sister Greta Towner), who joined up just after the outbreak of war, is at present nursing at the Red Cross Convalescent Home, Abbotsford.

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Sunday Times, 26 October – Sister Towner in Sydney nursing veterans.

By Avril Fazel