



French Flag Nursing Corps

Nurse, Dorothy Sainsbury, 1878-1972

Trowbridge Nurse, Dorothy Sainsbury,



wearing the medal of the Croix de Guerre, presented to her 1919.

Dorothy Sainsbury was the daughter of Richard H. and his second wife, Flora C. B. Sainsbury, and was born in Trowbridge in October 1878.

The **1871 census** shows her widowed father, Henry Sainsbury,, aged 30, who was Superintendent of Gas Works, and born in Heytesbury, and her three older half siblings, Edith M, 5, Anne, 4, and William H, 3. Her father, Richard Henry Sainsbury, married Flora Clara B. Chapman and the marriage was registered Sep qr. in Frome district.

The **1881 Census** shows the family living at Gas Works Road, Trowbridge, Richard H., 40, now the Manager of the Gas works, Flora C. B., 35, and children Edith Mary, 15, Annie, 14, William H, 13, Winifred E, 7, Agnes May, 3, and Dorothy 2, together with a servant, Emily Turner, form Warminster.

In **1891 Census**, the family are still living in Gas Works Road, Richard H., 50, Flora C, 45, Winifred E., 17, Ernest A, 15, Agnes M, 13, Dorothy 12, and younger sister Flora G., aged 3, together with a governess, Albertine Mourant, 24, who was born in St. Helier, Jersey.

In the **1901 census**, Dorothy is listed in the parish of St Mary the Virgin, Redcliff, Bristol, 22, a hospital nurse.

Her mother Flora Sainsbury died aged 64 in 1910, and in 1911 Dorothy is at Trowbridge, aged 32. When war broke out Dorothy joined the French Flag Nursing Corps, and went to France to nurse the soldiers wounded in battle there. The French Flag Nursing Corps was established in 1914 and provided a band of trained British nurses for service in French Military hospitals. Prior to the war, nursing in France had been carried out by nuns, but when the French State became separated from the Roman Catholic Church, and many nuns left France, there were no French trained nurses to replace them. The French Flag Nursing Corps , which throughout the duration of the war, numbered about 300 fully trained nurses, had the task of helping to organize temporary hospitals and encourage ladies of the highest education and moral character to become skilled nurses and show that nursing was an honourable profession.

The nurses worked tirelessly and showed great courage, often under bombardment.

In 1919, Dorothy Sainsbury was awarded the Croix de Guerre, which was reported in the British Journal of Nursing. "It is with much pleasure we record that Miss Dorothy Sainsbury, of the French Flag Nursing Corps, has been awarded the Croix de Guerre.

The following is a translation of the extract from the Order conferring this honour:

Groupe D'Armes Fayolle, Inspection du service de sante.

Extract from the order, No 19. In virtue of the powers conferred on him by the Ministerial Instruction, No 5,765, K, dated May 23rd, 1915, the Mececin Inspecteur , General Lasnet, Inspector of the Service de Sante of the G.A. Fayolle, cites:

Miss Dorothy Sainsbury, Infirmiere of the society, F.F.N.C., Ambulance 12/14.

Infirmiere d'elite, at the front since 1915, has always shown an unlimited devotion towards the sick and wounded. In difficult and particularly perilous circumstances, under bombardments has given proof of courage and coolness, notably at the time of the bombardment of Fismes (March and April, 1917, Ambulance 12/2); of the withdrawal from Vauxboin (May 29th, 1918, Ambulance 12/14), of the bombardment of the station of Coulommiers (June, 1918, Ambulance 12/14); from the bombardment of Ferte sous Jouarre (August 17th, 1918, ambulance 12/14) Q.G., 22 July 1919.

Le Medecin Inspecteur, General Lasnet, Inspector of the service de Sante of the G. A. F. Approbation of the Marechal de France, Commandant in Chief of the French Armies of the East, under the No 14, 983, dated July 12th 1919."

British Journal of Nursing, 23 August 1919

Her service in the war, together with that of her colleagues, was again recognized in 1919:

“The following forty sisters who have served for three years, and upwards, as member of the French Flag Nursing Corps have been presented by the committee with gold wrist watches and bracelets, as a memento of their devoted work for the sick and wounded of the magnificent French Army, to which they were attached as Nursing Sisters during the great War, 1914-1919. This gift is made possible under the arrangement entered into with the Comite Britannique, Croix Rouge Francaise, when it generously undertook to finance the Corps and agreed to the suggestion of the Hon. Treasurer, Mrs Bedford Fenwick, that the surplus of the original fund should be placed on deposit until the end of the war, and expended on a gift for those who should have served, for not less than three years, until demobilised.”

... Miss Dorothy Sainsbury, ...

British Journal of Nursing, November 1919

After the war Dorothy married Francis H. Horton in 1933, the widow of her cousin Margaret Sainsbury, and the couple lived in Devon. After her husband's death in 1948, Dorothy moved to Bath where her sister, Agnes May Sainsbury, a retired teacher, lived.

Dorothy Horton died in the September Quarter of 1972, and her death is registered in the Bath Registration District, she was aged 93.

Dorothy Horton's name was added to the Trowbridge Roll of Honour in a ceremony in the Town's Museum, on 10 November 2010.