

AAHN BULLETIN

Spring 2023

American Association for the History of Nursing

No. 120

In this issue:

- President's message
- 2023 AAHN national conference
- Member interview
- AAHN Elections
- Nurse Hero

President's message



Welcome! I hope that 2023 is getting off to a good start for everyone. In this issue of the AAHN Bulletin you'll see our preliminary plans for our annual conference. The officers of AAHN are already looking forward to it. I hope you are, too.

Don't forget that we welcome member input and contributions to the Bulletin. On page five, you will find contact information for any items you'd like to submit.

Sincerely,

Annemarie McAllister

President, AAHN

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2023 National Meeting Announced

The American Association for the History of Nursing 40th Annual Nursing & Health Care History Conference will be held September 28—30, 2023 in Pittsburgh, PA. The location is the Wyndham Grand Pittsburgh Downtown. Attendees can make a reservation by going to <https://book.passkey.com/event/50493007/owner/2945954/home> or calling 1-888-317-0197 and mentioning the AAHN conference. The group rate for AAHN is \$174 per night plus tax.

The deadline for abstract submission is March 3, 2023. Abstracts are invited for individual or panel presentations, posters, and thematic presentations on related topics. For details, see <https://www.aahn.org/call-for-abstracts-2023>



Member Spotlight: Dr. Madonna Grehan

By Liz Rogan

This month, the member spotlight shines on **Dr. Madonna Grehan** whom I met electronically due to a misspelling in my interview in the last newsletter. Madonna hails from Down Under and describes a wealth of history related to the nurses from Australia who have served and died in service.

How did you come to join AAHN?

During my PhD candidature, Professor Sioban Nelson was my primary academic supervisor at the University of Melbourne. Sioban introduced me to an array of international networks and scholarship, including AAHN and *Nursing History Review*.

What kind of work have you done relative to the history of nursing?

I'm interested broadly in the history of care provision by midwives and nurses. That means I study the history of women, workforce, education, regulation, war and even transport. One focus is maternity care in 19th and early 20th century Australia, to understand who was providing care, under what circumstances, what care consisted of, and why care undertaken by women was problematized. This research contributed to an exhibition I curated for the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, titled *Unmasked*². It's also helped me to advise Australian television productions like *Who do think you are?* and *Every family has a secret*.

Another area of interest is how we memorialize nurses who died during war and other service. It all intersects with the profession's history in Australia. On 14 May 1943, the 2/3 Australian Hospital Ship (AHS) *Centaur* was travelling to New Guinea to retrieve injured soldiers and resupply the war zone with Field Ambulance Officers. Despite Geneva Conventions, *Centaur* was torpedoed by enemy fire just off the coast of Queensland and sank rapidly with the loss of 268 lives. Of those killed, 11 were nurses of the Australian Army Nursing Service. An American vessel, USS *Mugford* (DD-389) retrieved the 64 survivors.

My research on the nurses and subsequent memorialising contributed to an exhibition held in between the COVID-19 lockdowns of 2020-2021. *Imagining Centaur* was staged at Victoria's war memorial, the *Shrine of Remembrance*. I curated the historical elements and a team of us devised an *animation explaining the Centaur's sinking*. This year is the 80th anniversary of *Centaur's* sinking. It's also the 75th anniversary of the founding of the *Centaur Memorial Fund for Nurses* (CMFN) in the state of Queensland, one of several "living" memorials established in the post war years. Designed to be an enduring memorial, the CMFN was a physical centre for the profession

years. Designed to be an enduring memorial, the CMFN was a physical centre for the profession with educational, recreational and accommodation facilities. It was made possible through the financial support of a grateful public. Today it supports nursing research and education. On 14 May each year, the CMFN holds a commemorative service which recognizes all nurses who've served the state of Queensland.

Which nurses are most memorable to you from that work?

I take my hat off to all who've gone before. Women nursed without adequate light, clean running water, and comfortable clothing, things we can't do without today. Some of the war nurses looked after my father who was a WWII soldier, evacuated from the New Guinea's war zone with injuries. I think of home-front serving nurses, unable to have a holiday during the entirety of WWII because there was no-one to take their place. Communities have always valued nurses and midwives. COVID-19 shows they do still.

If there was one thing you would like nurses to know about the history of nursing, what would it be?

No matter who we are talking about, we're each a product of our history. Learning about that history is valuable. It can help to explain why things are the way they are and why some things don't seem to change. It can show what didn't work when it comes to perennial problems in health care, like the worldwide workforce shortages.

And one last thing, taken from Dr. Grehan's Alumni Bio page from the University of Melbourne:

What motivates you now?

"The contribution of nurses and midwives to Australian history is an untold story: war, professionalising, unionism, education, workforce, technology, and practice history. The politics of healthcare is an immensely interesting arena too. It is easy to be motivated about, because I love archival research and material culture - the forms of evidence that make it possible to pursue historical questions."

¹Photo retrieved from University of Melbourne, 02-01-2023; <https://mdhs.unimelb.edu.au/engage/alumni/alumni/alumni-profiles/health-sciences/nursing/nursing-dr-madonna-grehan>

²<https://herplacemuseum.com/unmasked-digital/>

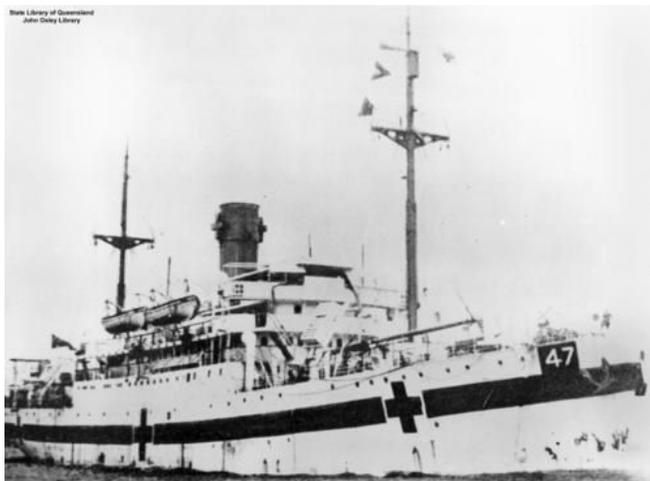
³Madonna Grehan SLQ Blog Series Centaur Memorial Fund for Nurses

⁴<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MT3FXq7HuDU>





A poster encouraging Australians to avenge the sinking of the Centaur by highlighting that nurses were among those who perished.



A photo of the Australian Hospital Ship (AHS) Centaur. Eleven of twelve nurses on the ship were among the 268 who perished when the ship was torpedoed off the coast of Australia in 1943.

INFORMATION ABOUT

AAHN's Upcoming Election

- Interested in professional service?
- Do you have ideas for AAHN in the 21st century?
- The 2023-2025 AAHN slate of open Board/Committee positions is for you!
- Keep an eye on your email for soon-to-be emailed information
- If you have questions about the positions that are open, check out the Bylaws
- Article VI- Board of Directors and/or Article VII- Standing Committees

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Featured Nurse Hero

Estelle Massey Osborne
1901 - 1981



Born in Texas, Estelle studied nursing in St. Louis and had a passion for bedside care. In 1931, she graduated from Columbia University and was the first Black nurse to receive a Master's degree.



As the president of the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses, she increased membership from 175-947. She was the first Black nurse on the ANA board, a major accomplishment during a time when some states did not allow Black nurses to even join the ANA.



While a consultant for the National Nursing Council for War Services in 1943, Estelle helped persuade the U.S. Navy and Army to lift their color ban. She also helped increase the number of nursing schools that accepted Black students.



Estelle joined the faculty of NYU's Department of Nursing Education in 1945, the first Black instructor in the program. The department named her "Nurse of the Year" in 1959. In 1984, she was inducted into the ANA Hall of Fame.



For more information, check out the following sites:
<https://nursing.nyu.edu/news/celebrating-estelle-massey-osborne-nurse-trailblazer>
<https://www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/workforce/racism-in-nursing/RacialReckoningStatement/#:~:text=President%20Osborne%20was%20the%20first,the%20ANA%20board%20in%201948.>
<https://blackdoctor.org/7-black-nurses-who-changed-history-forever/>

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