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Winifred's War: France 1915-1917

WINIFRED HUMPHREYS (NEE CAMPBELL)

Lorraine Wilson

'The First World War inspired an outpouring of writing – both from Europe and across the Western World... For much of this time the tradition of war writing was seen as belonging to men: but for many women also the war was a catalyst for creating a unique perspective and for developing a public voice."

mong the voices of New Zealand women was that of Winifred Campbell whose service in France lasted from 1915 -1917. Winifred, (1864 -1952) was the daughter (and only surviving child beyond young adulthood) of Sir John Logan and Emma Campbell of Auckland. The family travelled extensively and, from the age of eleven, Winifred wrote to her parents and friends. The John Logan Campbell and family archives, held at the Auckland Museum Library, include letters both written and received by Winifred. She was married twice, the first time in 1889 to Major Herbert Murray. The marriage ended in divorce in February 1900.

In 1913 she married George Humphreys of Christchurch. This marriage also ended and, by May 1915, she had left New Zealand for England where she joined the British Red Cross. From childhood she often visited France and, as a fluent French speaker with independent means, she was employed by the British Committee of the French Red Cross to become the director of a canteen in Puys near Dieppe. Although her archive does not include copies of letters written by her while working in the canteen, she wrote an anonymous account of her work there, which was published in the Otago newspaper the Evening Star on 29th January 1916. Her archive also includes letters and postcards written to her during the war