

Dr Elsie Inglis commemorated

It is one hundred years ago today since the funeral of Dr Elsie Inglis was held in Edinburgh.



Acting Pilot Officer Lily Chubb, Sergeant Catherine Pounder and Petty Officer Naval Nurse Sean Carruthers, wreath bearers at today's service, with HRH The Princess Royal and Reverend Calum MacLeod

Earlier The Princess Royal and The First Minister the Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon attended a thanksgiving service at St Giles Cathedral to mark the centenary at exactly the same time as the funeral. HRH laid a commemorative wreath and gave a reading. They were joined by Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs Fiona Hyslop and Lord Lieutenant of the City of Edinburgh the Rt Hon Frank Ross.

Dr Inglis set up the Scottish Women's Hospitals during WW1

Officials from some of the nations where Elsie set up hospitals were at the service including France, Serbia and Romania, along with a number of Elsie's descendants and Members of the Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland



The Military Band of The Royal Regiment of Scotland marched down from the Castle Esplanade to perform in West Parliament Square, outside St Giles Cathedral, before the arrival of HRH The Princess Royal.

Army nurse Sergeant Catherine Pounder handed the wreath to HRH to lay at the Dr Elsie Inglis plaque within the Cathedral before the service conducted by Reverend Calum MacLeod.

Readings were given by BBC News Health Editor Hugh Pym, Chief Medical Officer for Scotland Dr Catherine Calderwood, Dr Lesley Orr from Edinburgh University's School of Divinity and descendants of Dr Elsie Inglis, Hugh Maddox (great nephew) and Patricia Purdom (great, great, great niece).



HRH The Princess Royal speaks with Geraldine Inglis, great great niece of Dr Elsie Inglis and the last family member to bear the Inglis surname

During her life, Elsie made a remarkable contribution to both the allied WW1 effort and the women's suffrage movement.

She regarded Britain's entry into the war as an opportunity for women to play their part but was unable to serve Britain on the front line herself due to restrictions on where women doctors could serve.

Instead she offered her services to Britain's allies leading to the formation of the Scottish Women's Hospitals. In total, seventeen Scottish Women's Hospitals and a number of satellite hospitals and dressing stations were set up across Europe, to treat soldiers and sometimes civilians. Of the near 1,500 personnel, only around 20 were men.

The Scottish Women's Hospitals served the war effort from 1914 to 1919 and were not formally disbanded until 1925. A vigorous campaigner for votes for women, by this cause she also knew she would demonstrate the capabilities of women while doing her bit for the war effort.



Acting Pilot Officer Lily Chubb, Sergeant

Catherine Pounder and Petty Officer Naval Nurse Sean Carruthers, wreath bearers at today's service

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, commented: "Elsie Inglis was a remarkable woman and it is right 100 years on that we reflect on her remarkable achievements. A powerful role model for women today she was undeterred by the restraints of society and social norms and she ploughed ahead with her vision to provide medical services during World War One.

"She used her skills to demonstrate what women are capable of, helping women win the vote while looking after men on the frontline. And she helped look after both the prosperous and the poor in Edinburgh.

"As we work to fix social injustices and ensure equality today, we should reflect on what has been achieved in the 100 years since Elsie's death. And we should celebrate the role that she, and the women who served with her in the Scottish Women's Hospitals, achieved for us today."

Descendant Patricia Purdom, said: "I am tremendously proud of Elsie Inglis and her achievements, and I am delighted that her memory is being recognised through these services. I would have loved to have met her and heard her stories first-hand. I remembered my father recalling her remarkable achievements when we would look through the family album and I'm very privileged to still have these photos today."

For further information please visit ww100scotland.com.

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