

# What Did You Do In The War, Grand Ma?



Australian women doing their bit at home and abroad 1899 - 1945

Australian nurses took part in the Boer War, the First World War, the Second World War and the Vietnam War. Women have also filled the places of the men who have gone to war and had to leave their jobs in Australia.

Women are now enlisting in the armed forces as ordinary recruits so it can be expected that their contributions in future wars will only increase. However, along with this increased participation, there will also be an increase in female casualties in the form of injuries and fatalities

<https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/adf-women-already-combat/>



Lieutenant General Angus Campbell, the first Special Forces officer to command the Australian Army, wants more women in his combat units in order to make those units smarter.

Many ask the question whether or not women should be in the front line and taking part in actual fire fights. Opinions welcome at end of presentation.



# They shall not grow old as we who are left grow old

Australian nurses have served in the Boer War, World War One, World War Two and Vietnam. Nearly 100 of them have died during or as a result of war service.

## Army Boer War 1

Sister Fanny Hynes

## World War One 21

Sister Louisa Bicknell

Sister Emily Clare

Sister Ruby Dickenson

Sister May Hennessy

Sister Hilda Knox

Sister Edith Morehouse

Sister Letetia Moreton

Sister Norma Mowbray

Sister Gertrude Munro

Sister Amy O'Grady

Sister Rosa O'Kane

Sister Katherine Lawrence

Sister Kathleen Power

Sister Doris Ridgeway

Sister Elizabeth Rothery

Sister Mary Stafford

Sister Ada Thompson

Sister Fanny Tyson

Matron Jean walker

Sister Beatrice Watson

Sister Blodwyn Williams

## World War Two 76

Captain Margret Adams

Sister Marguerite Atkinson

Sister Elaine Balfour-

Ogilvy

Sister Louvinia Bates

Sister Alma Beard

Sister Alda Bridge

Sister Ellenor Calnan

Sister Florence Casson

Sister Mary Clarke

Sister Joan Connell

Captain Florence Adelaide

Sister Marie Craig

Sister Mary Cuthbertson

Captain Winnie Davis

Sister Margaret DeMestre

Lt. Doris Doidge

Capt. Ellen Donohue

Sister Hilda Dorsch

Matron Irene Drummond

Sister Dorothy Elmes

Sister Caroline Ennis

Sister Marion Watt

Sister Lorna fairweather

Staff nurse Nancy Finch

Lieutenant Francesca Foulkes

Sister Rubina Freeman

Sister Dora Gardam

Staff nurse Joan Gay

Sister Clarice Halligan

Sister Nancy Harris

Sister Helen Haultain

Captain Pauline Hempsted

Sister Minnie Hodgson

Lieutenant Gladys Hughes

Sister Margaret Jackson

Matron Sarah Jewel

Sister Janet Kerr  
Sister Evelyn King  
Sister Kathleen Kinsella  
Sister Sheila Long  
Captain Pearl Mittelheuser  
Staff Nurse Edith Morton  
Captain Mytle Moston  
Sister Gladys Myrtle  
Sister Mary McDonald  
Sister Mary McFarlane  
Sister Mary McGlade  
Lieutenant Bernadine McMahan  
Sister Lilian McPhail  
Sister Kathleen Neuss  
Sister Alice O'Donnell  
Matron Olive Paschke  
Lieutenant Nita Prideaux  
Lieutenant Wilhelmina Raymont  
Sister Gwendoline Robertson  
Captain Eileen Rutherford  
Sister Lavinia Russell  
Sister Florence Salmon

Sister Marjorie Schuman  
Sister Edna Shaw  
Sister Verdun Sheah  
Lieutenant Irene Singleton  
Lieutenant Lillian Smith  
Sister Esther Stewart  
Lieutenant Lillian Smith  
Sister Esther Stewart  
Lieutenant Frances Stevenson  
Sister Mona Tait  
Sister Cynthia Thiedeke

Matron Gladys Thomas  
Sister Annie Trenerry  
Sister Wendy walker  
Sister Rosetta Wright  
Sister Bessie Wilmott  
Sister Mona Wilton  
Sister Doris Wyllie

**Vietnam 1**

Captain Barbara Black



**Boer War 1**  
**1<sup>st</sup> WW 21**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> WW 76**  
**Vietnam 1**

List compiled by Royal College of Australian Nursing. Printed in Weekend Australian Century of Nursing  
"The Fallen" April 24-25 1999

## Australian Nurses in the Boer War 1899 - 1902

Around 15,000 Australian men and women, most of whom were born between 1870 and 1880, served in eight contingents raised in individual Australian colonies through the duration of the Second Boer War in South Africa between October 1899 and May 1902. This was the first time Australian women had served overseas.

<https://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/colonialforces/boer>



Six nurses on their way to South Africa

In the Boer War , the New South Wales Army Medical Corp won more decorations and honors than any other other unit serving in South Africa.



“It’s the soldiers of the Queen may lads,  
Who’ve been my lads, who’ve seen, my lads’  
In the fight for England’s glory lads,  
Of its world-wide glory let us sing.”

“And when we say we’ve always won,  
And when they ask us how it’s done,  
We’ll proudly point to every one  
Of England’s soldiers of the Queen!”

The above words were sung by English soldiers as they headed off to South Africa to fight the Boer. However for the first time the faint but growing stronger words of women could also be heard.

“The women’s cause is man’s,  
They rise or sink together,  
Dwarfed or Godlike,  
Bond or free.”

“Australian Women at War” Patsy Adam-Smith Penguin Books Australia Ltd. 1996

# One Nurse's Experiences

When Sydney nurses Nellie Gould, Penelope Frater and Julia Bligh Johnston disembarked in South Africa in February 1900 and encountered a dreadful state of affairs:

- Contaminated water
- Widespread disease
- Inadequate supplies
- Makeshift, dirty hospitals.

Sometimes they were not made to feel very welcome by the British nurses in the hospitals where they were stationed, and the male orderlies did not always like taking directions from women.



Ellen Julia “Nellie” Gould was born in Wales in 1860, and began her working life as a teacher in England. After moving to Australia when she was 24, she settled in Sydney and began her nursing training. She worked in a number of hospitals, and also used her teaching skills to train other nurses. In 1899, with 14 years of nursing experience behind her, Nellie was invited to be the first Lady Superintendent of the New South Wales Army Nursing Service Reserve (NSWANSR). She personally chose 13 of its members to travel with her to South Africa during the Boer War.

Matron Nellie Gould, Penelope Frater and Julia Bligh Johnson.

## One Nurse's Experience in South Africa

Upon arrival in South Africa in February 1900, nurses were confronted with rampant disease, inadequate clean water and supplies and unsanitary conditions in makeshift hospitals. In addition, they received a rather cold reception from the local nurses in the British hospitals where they were stationed.

Miss Gould and her Australian Boer war Nurses worked alongside the 1,300-1,400 strong contingent of female British nurses attached to British hospitals.

It appears that during the early stages of the Boer War Nellie Gould was serving at a Stationary Hospital (SH) in Sterkstroom near Stromberg where in three months they buried 60 Australian soldiers. In another post, disease was rife and in a matter of a few weeks over 1000 men had died from disease alone. The Australian Boer war Nurses were said to be seen scrubbing and cleaning sick tents and using their own clothing as blankets for the sick, a testament to their great commitment!

Nellie Gould serving tea to a recovering Officer at Cobham Hall





## Problem faced by the Australian and British nurses in South Africa

- Dead horses and human sewage infected the water.
- The tents for the sick were crowded with unwashed and despairing men lying on the floor in dirty uniforms
- Fearsome odors from sewage pervaded the makeshift hospitals
- Nurses often came under fire from the enemy.
- Scavenging for food for patients and themselves.
- Often under fire ; sometimes having to evacuate the sick when under fire.
- Short supply of blankets and sheets.
- Transport was difficult with few roads and long distances between towns.
- Short of rations and sometimes having to live on a few biscuits a day.
- The strain of having to look after unhappy, unfed and very sick men.
- Having also to take care of sick and scared Boer women and children who were also dying at a rapid rate as enteric fever swept through the Australian, the Boers and their children. These people had been removed from their farms and put into the world's first concentration camps.

Patsy Adam-Smith "Australian Women at War" 1996. Penguin Books Australia

“In the end the New South Wales Army Medical Corps, representing the efforts of other hospitals from Australia, won more honors and decorations than any other unit serving in South Africa. The Australian nurses played a very important roll in achieving these results.”

Front Line Dispatches. Australians at War 1845 – 1972 General Editor: Nic Van Oudtshoorn  
Bay Books Sydney and London



# Australian Women in the First World War

In World War One , up to 3000 Australian nurses served abroad in Egypt, Palestine, the Persian Gulf, England, France, Italy, Burma, India, Vladivostok, Abyssinia and on hospital ships and transports. The first group of AANS (Australian Army Nursing Service) to see overseas service in World War One left Melbourne on 20<sup>th</sup> October with the troop-ships.



By 1916, around 222,000 Australians were serving abroad. This Loss of manpower had a profound effect on the home front . Often every worker on a farm or in a factory would be taken by the AIF thus leaving large gaps in the labour force. This resulted in almost every woman taking up some sort of job.

## Snippets from Australian World War One Nurses

- 3000 Australian nurses served abroad
- They served in Egypt, Palestine, the Persian Gulf, England, France, Italy, Burma, India, Vladivostok, Abyssinia, hospital ships and transports
- The first group left Australia only three months after the outbreak of war.
- At Gallipoli nurses were always overwhelmed at night when the wounded came in. It was too dangerous to bring them in during the day.
- Nurses had to deal with over 300 casualties a day.

“The wounded from the landing commenced to come on board at 9 am and poured into the ship’s wards from barges and boats. The majority still had on their field dressing and a number of these were soaked through. Two orderlies cut off the patient’s clothes and I started immediately with dressings. There were 76 patients in my ward and I did not finish until 2 am.” [Ella Tucker, in Barker, *Nightingales in the Mud*, p.30]

“I shall never forget the awful feeling of hopelessness on night duty. It was dreadful. I had two wards downstairs, each over 100 patients and then I had small wards upstairs — altogether about 250 patients to look after, and one orderly and one Indian sweeper. Shall not describe their wounds, they were too awful. One loses sight of all the honour and the glory in the work we are doing.” [Lydia King, in Goodman, *Our War Nurses*, p.39]

Most nurses served with the Australian Army Nursing Service and with organizations such as the Red Cross and Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service. They were on the first convoys that sailed to Egypt in November 1914.

Those on hospital ships cared for wounded throughout the Gallipoli campaign in 1915 and also the wounded in hospital camps at Alexandria, Malta and later and Lemnos Island.

Conditions on hospital ships ranged from very difficult to impossible due to a lack of staff and medical provisions. Medical facilities became overwhelmed by the wounded and dying.

Lemnos was inadequately equipped and under-staffed. Nurses were housed in flimsy tents in freezing conditions and were forced to contend with a lack of food and sickness.

The Western front also presented difficult conditions. Casualty clearing stations in France and Belgium were exposed to gas and bomb attacks. Nurses worked in hospitals behind the lines, in England, India, Mesopotamia and Salonika. These postings meant isolation, nursing people of other nationalities and no safe outings when on leave.

After the war many nurses and women volunteers never recovered from the physical and emotional stresses of wartime service. However, the experience gave them confidence in their abilities and skills. Some received opportunities to perform roles previously reserved only for men, such as surgery and administering anaesthetics.

**Ray, Francis "Women's Mobilisation for War (Australia)", International Encyclopedia of the First World War.**

## Lesley Smith “Four Years Out Of Life”

### May Tilton “The Grey Battalion”

- “For three days the operating tables were never empty.”
- “Time became merely an illusion.”
- “I never knew whether an operation had lasted 10 minutes or 2 hours.”
- “All the men had several injuries to content with.”
- “They were badly burned wherever their clothes had clung to them.”
- “We hated and dreaded the days that followed this incessant thundering, when the torn, bleeding, pitifully broken human beings were brought in, their eyes filled with horror and pain; those who could walk staggering dumbly, pitifully in the wrong direction.
- “No matter where I go or what I do, the best part of me will always remain in this Passchendaele area where lie many of my friends I loved best.”
- (These included her fiance killed in September 1917.)

“Wartime” Official Magazine of the Australian War Memorial 7 (Spring 1999)



From an early age, Clare Deacon spoke of her ambition to become a nurse. She became a trainee nurse at the Royal Hobart Hospital and when World War One was declared, Clare was one of the first nurses to offer her services. She embarked for Egypt on the Kyarra with the first contingent. Clare nursed many of the wounded from Gallipoli through the hot summer in scorching temperatures. She was awarded the Military Medal for her services in the war.

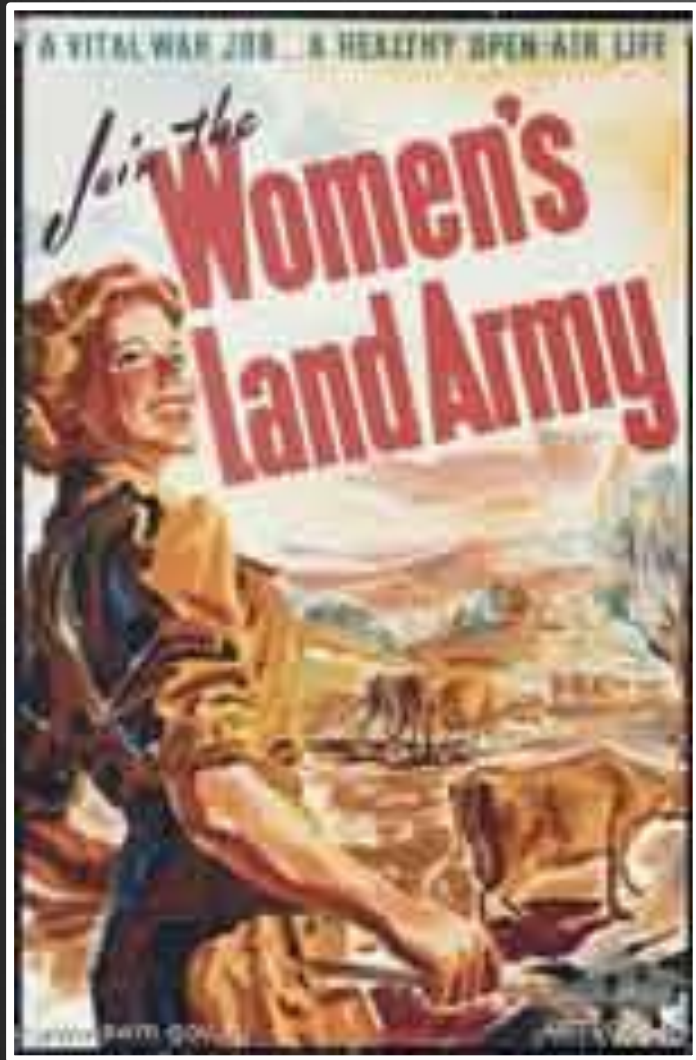
## Yearning for Australia

Keep the home fires burning  
Tho' your hearts are yearning  
Tho' the lads are far away  
They dream of home.  
There's a silver lining  
Though the dark clouds shining,  
Turn the dark clouds inside out  
Till the boys come home!



## The Home Front

On the home front, women dealt with the consequences of war—managing children and family responsibilities alone, shortages of resources, as well as their fears for the future, and the grief and trauma of losing loved ones.



By 1916, 222,000 Australians were serving abroad. This had a profound effect on the home front. Often nearly every worker on a farm or in a factory would be taken by the AIF thus leaving large gaps in the work force leading to a dramatic change in the role of women and nearly every women ended up with a job on the home front.

In addition to working working in factories, taking part in sewing circles, working in offices and shops in jobs previously done by men. They also provided moral Support for men off to war and those returning. One example is the Cheer-up Society in Adelaide which organized cheer groups for men leaving for and returning from the war. They also took a leading role in the establishment in temperance movements leading to all hotels having to close at 6p.m. for the duration of the war.



## Matron Mary McKenzie Finlay

Mary McKenzie Finlay came from a sheep station at Kilmore in Victoria. She sailed to war on 20 October 1914. After nursing in Egypt she continued her nursing in Rouen, France. In 1918 she she left for England and became matron for number 2 Australian Auxiliary hospital in Southhall where limbless soldiers were treated.

There were no antibiotics, common pain killers, surgical aids or procedures. She returned to Australia in 1919 exhausted after five years away. She passed away in five years after returning home being mentally and physically exhausted by her experiences in the war.



## Sister Rachel Pratt (left)

Sister Rachel Pratt was hit in the neck by a piece of Shrapnel and Sister Eileen King with a shell fragment in her leg. She was awarded the Military Medal which is usually given only to men for bravery under fire.

## Matron Grace Wilson

Matron Grace Wilson was five times mentioned in Despatches and was awarded the RRC and the Florence Nightingale Medal. Many others were also decorated for their dedication.



## Women in Australia spinning wool for soldiers on the front.



The war brought about profound changes in the lives of women. During the war they had done men's work and not all of them were happy to give it up and return to domestic chores when the boys came home. In addition some never had the chance to marry due to the shortage men caused by the great number of casualties.

**“Front Line Dispatches. Australians at War 1845-1972” Bay Books, Kensington, NSW.**

## Nurses in the Second World War



Naval Nurses onboard HM Hospital Ship

<https://www.pinterest.com.au/pin/505599495652667084/>

# Nurses in the Second World War

“When the Second World War broke out, nurses again volunteered, motivated by a sense of duty and a desire to “do their bit”. Eventually, some 5,000 Australian nurses served in a variety of locations, including the Middle East, the Mediterranean, Britain, Asia, the Pacific, and Australia. Seventy-eight died, some through accident or illness, but most as a result of enemy action or while prisoners of war.”

“At first, the AANS was the only women’s service. The Royal Australian Air Force Nursing Service (RAAFNS) was formed in 1940, and the Royal Australian Navy Nursing Service (RANNS) in 1942. But the AANS remained by far the largest, and also made up the bulk of those who served overseas.”

<https://www.awm.gov.au/visit/exhibitions/nurses/ww2>



## Nurses in the Second World War

Australian and New Zealand nurses arrive in Crete, April 1941

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Sister Sybil Fletcher shortly after arrival in the Middle East in 1940

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<https://www.awm.gov.au/visit/exhibitions/nurses/ww2>



## Australian prisoners of war: Second World War - Prisoners of the Japanese, Sumatra

The main prisoner-of-war camp on Sumatra was at Palembang. In 1942 about 60 Australians were imprisoned there, but by the end of the war there were 243.

“On 12 February 1942 just before the capitulation at Singapore 65 Australian nurses embarked on the **Vyner Brooke**. On 14 February the Vyner Brooke was sunk just off Banka Island; 22 nurses made it to land but were shot by Japanese soldiers. The only nurse to survive was Sister Vivian Bullwinkel; after ten days of freedom she was captured and imprisoned at Muntok. The nurses were moved from Muntok to Palembang, then to Muntok again and finally Lubuk Linggau. At the end of the war, only 24 nurses returned to Australia, the rest having died in captivity.”



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

PO3960.001



**A total of 76 Australian nurses died  
during World War Two**

<https://www.awm.gov.au/research/guide/pow-ww2-sumatra>

# The Sinking of the “Centaur” Wednesday 14 May, 1943

**Launched 1924**

Installed in 1939:

1 × 4-inch (100 mm) Mark IX naval gun, 2 ×  
.303 Vickers machine guns, 2 × paravanes,  
degaussing equipment

Australia

Name: Centaur

Operator: 2nd Australian Imperial  
Force

**Acquired:** 4 January 1943

Reclassified: Hospital ship

Homeport: Sydney, New South Wales

Identification: Red Cross Ship 47

Fate: Torpedoed 14 May 1943  
Japanese submarine I-177

**General characteristics as hospital ship**

Capacity: 252 bed-patients

Crew: 75 crew, 65 permanent Army  
medical staff

Armament: All weapons removed, degaussing  
equipment remained



# The Ultimate Crime. The Sinking of the Hospital Ship “Centaur”

## Wednesday 14 May, 1943

“The Centaur was at 4.am. on Friday May 14, a short distance off the Queensland coast . Weather was fine and visibility good.”

“On board the Centaur 363 persons, consisting solely of the ship’s crew and medical personnel, including 12 nurses. There were no wounded on board. There were only 64 survivors , including one nurse. The remaining 299 persons , including members of the ship’s crew, nurses and other medical personnel, lost their lives.”



**Sister Nell Savage**

“Captain Hajime Nakagawa of the Japanese Imperial Navy Submarine 1-177, which torpedoed and sank the Centaur, refused to speak of the event after the war. His daughter, being asked about the event replied “the winners of a war can talk about anything they wish. ...I think a winner is a winner and a loser is a loser.” After the war Nagano was arrested as a war criminal and spent 4 years in Sugamo prison for his part when firing on survivors of torpedoed ships in the Indian Ocean.”

Of the 12 nurses onboard only one, Sister Nell Savage, survived.

“Australian Women at War” Patsy Adam-Smith Penguin Books Australia Ltd. 1996

## Australian Nurses in the Second World War

“When the Second World War broke out, nurses again volunteered, motivated by a sense of duty and a desire to “do their bit”. Eventually, some 5,000 Australian nurses served in a variety of locations, including the Middle East, the Mediterranean, Britain, Asia, the Pacific, and Australia. Seventy-eight died, some through accident or illness, but most as a result of enemy action or while prisoners of war.”

“By the end of the war, nursing sisters had been commissioned as officers, although many were loath to give up their traditional titles of “sister” and “matron”. They were yet to be given the same status and pay as male officers.”

At first, the AANS was the only women’s service.

The Royal Australian Air Force Nursing Service (RAAFNS) was formed in 1940.

The Royal Australian Navy Nursing Service (RANNS) in 1942.

The AANS remained by far the largest and made up the bulk of those who served overseas.

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After the First World War, some nurses married and left the workforce; others took over the care of family members incapacitated by the war. Some retrained in jobs away from nursing, but many continued to work in hospitals, often in senior positions.



When the Second World War broke out, nurses again volunteered, motivated by a sense of duty and a desire to “do their bit”. Eventually, some 5,000 Australian nurses served in a variety of locations, including the Middle East, the Mediterranean, Britain, Asia, the Pacific, and Australia. Seventy-eight died, some through accident or illness, but most as a result of enemy action or while prisoners of war.

Army nurses embark for the Middle East in February 1940, aboard the Empress of Japan.

<https://www.awm.gov.au/visit/exhibitions/nurses/ww2>

# The Middle East

“On duty 6.30 pm to find the place v. busy & as night went on it got worse. 23rd Batt. Mach-gunned & patients poured in, theatre going all night. By morning all v. tired.”  
Sister Nell Bryant

“The first army nurses arrived with the Second AIF in Egypt and Palestine in 1940. Over the next two years, several hundred women served in the Middle East and Mediterranean in different hospitals and medical facilities. For many of these young nurses, it would have been the first time they had to treat the horrific wounds caused by gunshot or artillery fire. Nor was their work without danger. During 1941 Alexandria, in Egypt, was regularly bombed by enemy aircraft, while the nurses in Tobruk were evacuated, along with 300 of their patients, only days before the famous siege began.”



Army nurses going through their paces aboard the troop transport carrying the 6th Division to the Middle East, January 1940. 000858/08

<https://www.awm.gov.au/visit/exhibitions/nurses/ww2>

## The Middle East



**Australian and New Zealand nurses arrive in Crete, April 1941.**

In early April 1941, the nurses and physiotherapists of 2/5th and 2/6th Australian General Hospitals (AGH), were transported to Greece with the men of the 6th Division. They were moved around frequently, often at short notice, as the Germans advanced down the Greek peninsula. Hospital supplies and food were in short supply, and many of the incoming wounded were suffering from frostbite.

“Such a tired, haggard looking crew. It made me feel like weeping. Most of them were able to walk, and we gave them hot baths – where possible – a hot meal - and got them into bed.”

By early 1942, most Australian nurses had left the Middle East, along with the men of the 6th and 7th Divisions of the AIF, which were withdrawn to defend Australia from what was feared to be imminent Japanese attack.



Group of Australian nurses on Bougainville 1945



**ONE IN-ALL IN**

JOIN THE **A.I.F** TODAY

**JOIN US**



*in a* **VICTORY JOB**

APPLY AT YOUR NEAREST NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICE

“Wish me luck as you wave me goodbye  
Cheerio, here I go on my way  
Give me a smile I can keep all the way  
In my heart while I’m away  
Till we meet once again you and I  
Wish me luck as you wave me goodbye”



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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With the men joining up and sailing away the women had to step up at home and take their place in the work force at home. This was to have many unforeseen repercussions as the workforce would never again return to a completely male-dominated



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

ARTV01114



# Just what group do you belong to?

“Since the first rumour of war in 1938, groups of women had been trained with considerable difficulty and expense in order to be ready at a time of national crisis. Signallers, nursing aids, motor drivers and mechanics were being trained to a high level of efficiency.”

## Abbreviations

AANS	Australian Army Nursing Service
AAMWS	Australian Army Medical Women's Service
AWAS	Australian Women's Army Service
VAD	Voluntary Aid Detachment
WAAF	Women's Australian Auxiliary Service
WRANS	Women's Royal Australian Naval Service

## Medical

AGH	Australian General Hospital
CCS	Casualty Clearing Station
RAP	Regimental Aid Post
MI	Medical Inspection
PT	Physical Inspection

“Australian Women at War” Patsy Adam-Smith Penguin Books Australia Ltd. 1996



## Nursesey

Nursesey! Come over here and hold my hand.  
Oh I feel so blue  
Nursesey when I look at you my heart goes ooh ooh ohh  
Nursesey! Nursesey! I'm getting worsey  
What am I going to do?



## The VAD's "If"

If you can make orange drinks and egg flips' About the diets knowing all there is to tell'  
And get the MO's morning tea and heat a poultice'  
And maybe sponge a man or two as well.

If you can take a ticking off from Matron,  
And relise she doesn't mean it much,  
If you can see your rec. leave vanish,  
When you thought you had it safely in your cluth,  
If you can take the trials and tribiulations,  
The good times and the bad in your stride,  
If you can do all this and keep good tempered,  
Then you're not a VAD, but a saint who hasn't died!



**"Australian Women at War" Patsy Adam-Smith Penguin Books Australia Ltd. 1996"**





By June 1943 , enlistment in the women's services had grown to 16, 243 WAAAF, 18,210 AWAS, WRANS and 8846 involved in nursing services. The women's land army had 2205 women in the field. "Every member of the army is happy to have you coming to help. You have earned the right to serve, and the greatest thing any person can do is serve his country. There will be many more activities for the women's army". General Sir Thomas Blamey

**"Australian Women at War" Patsy Adam-Smith Penguin Books Australia Ltd. 1996**

# Sailer- Girls

“For it is on the Navy whereon, under the good providence of God, the wealth, safety, and strength of the nation chiefly depend.”

Articles of War and Naval Discipline Act



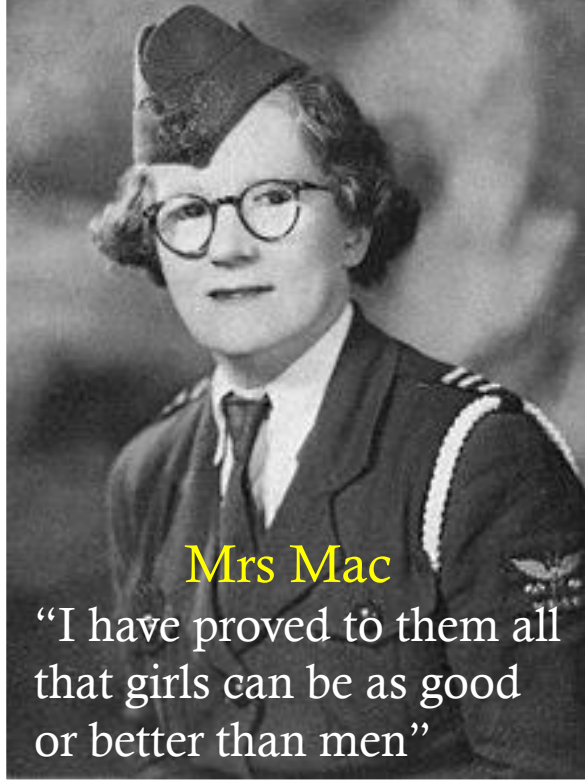
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“Australian Women at War” Patsy Adam-Smith Penguin Books Australia Ltd. 1996

Florence Violet Granville



Mrs Mac

“I have proved to them all that girls can be as good or better than men”

- Founder Women's Emergency Signaling Corps. **WESC**
- Australia's first female electrical engineer.
- Founder Women's Emergency Signaling Corps (WESC) and Lifelong promoter for technical education for women.
- Campaigned successfully to have female trainees accepted into the all-male Navy.
- Organised the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS).
- 12,000 servicemen passed through her signal instruction school, acquiring Morse code and visual signaling skills(flag semaphore and International Code of Signals).
- Set up electrical contracting business in 1918 and apprenticed herself to it to meet the requirements of the Diploma in Electrical Engineering at Sydney Technical College.
- Was the first Australian woman to take out an amateur radio operator's license.
- Founded The Wireless Weekly in 1922.
- Established the Electrical Association for Women in 1934 and wrote the first "all-electric cookbook" in 1936. She also corresponded with Albert Einstein postwar.
- Her greatest triumph was getting her girls into the navy.

Florence Violet Granville “Mrs Mac”  
28 September 28,1890, 23 May 1982  
Other names Wallace  
Alma mater Sydney Technical  
College  
Occupation Electrical engineer

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florence\\_Violet\\_McKenzie](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florence_Violet_McKenzie)

## Margaret Curtis-Otter



Journalist Margaret Curtis-Otter enlisted in the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS) in January 1943 and became second in charge of this service. She was one of the first 16 officers and was an adviser to the Naval Board after the war, as well as Acting Director WRANS. She worked with Naval Control, assisting with the assembling of convoys and arranging for the departure of merchant ships. Later became one of the founders of the Naval Information Service, when she joined the Naval Office.

### HMAS Herman.

World War II commenced before the station was completed. The station was commissioned into the RAN as the stone frigate HMAS Harman on 1 July 1943. Harman provided radio coverage of the Pacific Ocean during the war. It provided communications intercepts for the FRUMEL signals intelligence unit. Women of the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS), formed in 1941, operated the equipment.[4]

“Australian Women at War” Patsy Adam-Smith Penguin Books Australia Ltd. 1996

## WRAN Bases World War Two

HMAS Herman (After Pearl Harbor worked with stations around the world)  
HMAS Coonawarra, (Darwin)  
HMAS Magnetic (Townsville)  
HMAS Kuranda (Cairns)  
HMAS Rushcutter (Sydney)  
HMAS Mindari (Sydney)  
HMAS Western (NSW)  
HMAS Penguin  
HMAS Kuttabul (Sydney)  
HMAS Cerberus (Vic)  
HMAS Leeuwin (WA)  
HMAS Torrens (SA)  
HMAS Leeuwin (WA)



If in the future small children should demand to know “What did you do in the Second World War Grandma?”, there are worse replies than the simple statement “I was a WRAN.”

“Australian Women at War” Patsy Adam-Smith Penguin Books Australia Ltd. 1996”

# “Keep Them Flying”

## Women’s Auxiliary Australian Air Force



## Clare G. Stevenson, Director of the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force



“Of all of us, it was Clare Stevenson who did the most prominent pioneering work.”

**Colonel Sybil Irving, Controller of the Australian Women's Army service.**

“I fought for 5 years and eight months. WAAF Policy differed from that of the AWAS. The army policy was to keep the girls in their own home state where possible. The WAAAF enlisted to go to war and that meant to go to wherever you were sent, where ever you were most needed. The moral was high. The girls knew what a good job they were doing. They were mustered on parade with the men, the RAAF.”

Clare Stevenson had a Diploma in Education from early training in the Berlei Company and was sent to the UK as a saleswoman-executive. She returned when war broke out and was appointed to become Director of the WAAF later reaching the rank of Group Officer. She was referred to D/WAAAF.

“Australian Women at War” Patsy Adam-Smith Penguin Books Australia Ltd. 1996”



## Any job – we can do it.

The Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF) was formed in March 1941 after considerable lobbying by women keen to serve and by the Chief of the Air Staff who wanted to release male personnel serving in Australia for service overseas. The WAAAF was the largest of the Second World War women's services.

“The honeymoon is over”

Five days after the Japanese attacked in the Pacific, the War Cabinet approved on the December 1941, the recommendations of the three Chief's of Staff of the fighting services that maximum use be made of women power.

“Australian Women at War” Patsy Adam-Smith  
Penguin Books Australia Ltd. 1996”

Two WAAAF flight mechanics checking aircraft engine components at RAAF Station Tocumwal, 1944. C291700

<https://www.awm.gov.au/learn/understanding-military-structure/raaf/waaaf>





- By the end of December 1941, 1583 women had been enrolled in the WAAAF.
- This would reach 18,038 by 1944.
- By 1942 the WAAAF were serving in almost 200 stations around Australia.
- However, the Minister for Air refused to permit the girls to be sent to “advanced areas” even where the RAAF was having difficulty finding men to relieve male signals staff.

General MacArthur wanted the WAAAF serving with Central Bureau (intelligence) in Australia to move with him to the Philippines but this was refused by the Minister for Air. All Australian women on MacArthur’s staff were left behind and American WACs were sent instead. The American Officer in command of the American women who did go said “It was a disgraceful thing for a government to do to its own brave girls. I made sure that my girls knew they were replacing girls who had been equally anxious as they to do whatever necessary to save their country.” It took two years before these regulations were changed. Clare Stevenson then insisted on her girls all being entitled to deferred pay and all the benefits to which RAAF was entitled. The Townsville base had already become the largest women’s operational center in Australia.

One job which the women excelled in was that of radio location operators. Women staffed Radio Direction Finding Stations to guide aircraft home operate radio-telephone equipment, drive aircraft refuelling trucks and drive senior officers around.

**“Australian Women at War” Patsy Adam-Smith Penguin Books Australia Ltd. 1996**

## Hit The Silk!



“Realizing that a man’s life depended on their efficiency, the WAAAF fabric workers folding parachutes worked under enormous pressure - even though self-imposed. Each parachute had to be aired and given a complete overhaul every two months. It took another two months to qualify them to prepare a parachute alone in 30 minutes”.

“All the WAAAF fabric workers had to be able to repair and maintain rubber dinghies, treat self-sealing petrol tanks, spray and dope aircraft fabric, use a spray gun and repair drogues-towing targets - after practice. The girls also folded parachutes for paratroopers.”

“Oh! They wiped me off the tarmac like a pound of strawberry jam  
They wiped me off the tarmac like a pound of strawberry jam  
They wiped me off the tarmac like a pound of strawberry jam  
And I ain’t gonna jump no more.”

“Glory, glory what a helluva way to go  
Glory, glory what a helluva way to go  
Glory, glory what a helluva way to go  
And he ain’t gonna jump no more.”

“Australian Women at War” Patsy Adam-Smith Penguin Books Australia Ltd. 1996”

# Sigs



In May 1942, 1000 young women were called up to be signallers. This number increased to 36000 by the end of the war. Many of these women did their training at Ivanhoe Grammar School in Melbourne. On Arrival they had to clean out the huts, fill their palliasses with straw and assemble their own beds. Their duties included sounder, wireless, line telegraphy, cipher, keyboard, signals and Morse code at a speed of 20 words a minute. In addition to signals subjects they had to study military law, Administration, organization, map reading and practical field work.

Many of the male trainers hated the job as they all wanted to be on active service.



“Australian Women at War” Patsy Adam-Smith Penguin Books Australia Ltd. 1996”

# Australian Female Soldiers in Afghanistan



Recently it is becoming common practice for women to serve on the front line where they maybe under fire from enemy forces and also may have to return this fire when necessary. This has been the case in Afghanistan for a number of years.

In June 2012, the government approved a five-year implementation plan for females into combat related roles, and on the 27 September 2012 the Defence Minister announced that all gender restrictions would be removed. Consequently, upon graduation female Staff Cadets now are able to elect combat duty postings, including: Infantry Officer; Artillery Officer; Armoured Corps Officer; and Combat Engineer Officer.

**What is your opinion  
on this?**



<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-02-06/female-soldiers-in-afghanistan/9402766>

<http://aph.org.au/sending-our-women-to-war-the-role-of-women-in-the-australian-army-from-2000-to-today/>

# What Did You Do In The War, Grand Ma?



“We Served”