**Entry type:** Person
**Entry ID:** AWE0399

# Stevenson, Clare Grant

(1903 - 1988)

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| **Born** | 19030718, Wangaratta Victoria Australia |
| **Died** | 19881022 |
| **Occupation** | Bureaucrat, Community worker, Servicewoman |

## Summary

Clare Stevenson was appointed Director of the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force on 9 June 1941. Thus she became head of the first Women's Service formed in Australia for ground-staff duties with an armed force. After the war Stevenson returned to her executive position with Berlei Ltd. Also she became involved with community work. For forty years she was affiliated with the Services Canteens Trust Fund. Clare Stevenson, with a group of friends, helped initiate the Scholarship Trust Fund for Civilian Widows' Children. She also helped establish the Kings Cross Community Aid Centre as well as the Carer's Association of New South Wales. On 11 June 1960 Clare Stevenson was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire for social welfare services on behalf of ex-servicewomen. On Australia Day 1988 she received the Member of the Order of Australia award for service to the community and to the welfare of veterans.

## Details

Born at Wangaratta, Vic., Clare Stevenson was the second youngest of six children and moved with her family to Essendon when she was four years old. Her education commenced at Winstow Girls' Grammar School, Essendon and later Essendon High School. Passing her School Leaving Examination in February 1922, she was one of 116 young women out of a total of 501 who that year signed the matriculation roll at the University of Melbourne.

Clare Stevenson was admitted to the Faculty of Science and during her time at the university she was active in campus activities. A member of the Students' Representative Council and the Science Club, Clare Stevenson was a hockey blue and in 1925, president of the Committee of Melbourne University Women. During the final year of the degree she failed chemistry and enrolled for the Diploma of Education, which she obtained at the end of 1925. She commenced her working career with the Y.W.C.A. and in 1932 became a training and research officer at Berlei Ltd.

On 9 June 1941 Stevenson was selected as director of the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF) a position she held until she retired on 18 March 1946. At the end of World War II she returned to her position at Berlei Ltd and remained with the company until her retirement in 1960.

In her retirement, Clare Stevenson continued her involvement with community associations. Affiliated with the Services Canteens Trust Fund for 40 years, she and a group of friends helped establish the Scholarship Trust Fund for Civilian Widows' Children. Clare Stevenson helped establish the Kings Cross Community Aid Centre as well as the Carer's Association of NSW. In 1960 she was awarded the MBE for her services to the community.

Clare Stevenson never married and died in Sydney on 22 October 1988.

## Events

**1960 - 1960**
Appointed Member of the Order of the British Empire

**1988 - 1988**
Awarded Member of the Order of Australia (AM)

**1929 - 1931**
General Secretary of the Y.W.C.A, Rockhampton

**1932 - 1932**
Joined Berlei Ltd to take charge of staff training

**1926 - 1928**
Organiser of night classes and clubs for day workers Y.W.C.A. (Sydney)

**1942 - 1942**
Promoted to Group-Officer

**1941 - 1941**
Promoted to Wing-Officer

**1946 - 1946**
Retired from Women’s Auxiliary Australian Air Force

**1941 - 1941**
Selected as Director of the Women’s Auxiliary Australian Air Force with rank of Squadron-Officer

**1935 - 1939**
Senior Executive at Berlei Ltd, London

**1946 - 1960**
Senior Executive at Berlei Ltd

## Published resources

**Edited Book**
Who's Who in Australia 1950, Alexander, Joseph A, 1950

Double Time: Women in Victoria - 150 Years, Lake, Marilyn and Kelly, Farley, 1985

Unsung heroes & heroines of Australia /edited by Suzy Baldwin, Baldwin, Suzy, 1988

The W.A.A.A.F. book, Stevenson, Clare and Darling, Honor, c1984

**Resource Section**
STEVENSON, CLARE GRANT, Department of Veterans' Affairs,
http://www.ww2roll.gov.au/script/veteran.asp?ServiceID=R&VeteranID=1070264

**Book**
The WAAAF in Wartime Australia, Thomson, Joyce A, 1992

**Resource**
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

## Archival resources

**Australian War Memorial, Research Centre**
[Department of Information - Broadcasting Division:] Talks by Wing-Officer Clare Stevenson

Director of WAAAF, Clare Stevenson (middle), and Warrant Officer Gwen "Starkie" Stark (obscured) on inspection of No. 5 Operational Training Unit, RAAF.

Group portrait of a number of WAAAF officers who attended the first annual conference of WAAAF staff officers.

In the outdoors, the Director WAAAF, Group Officer Clare Stevenson, and a WAAAF Wing Officer conversing with WAAAF officers who conducted a four-day bivouac.

Stevenson, Clare Grant (Group Officer, Director WAAAF)

Group portrait of four "original" WAAAF officers with the Director WAAAF Group Officer Clare Stevenson after a WAAAF Staff Officers conference at Air Force Headquarters, Victoria Barracks.

**National Archives of Australia, National Office, Canberra**
Clare G Stevenson - Honour

STEVENSON CLARE GRANT : Service Number - 351001 : Date of birth - 18 Jul 1903 : Place of birth - Unknown : Place of enlistment - Unknown : Next of Kin - STEVENSON A

**State Library of New South Wales**
Clare Grant Stevenson - papers, 1941-1947, concerning the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force

Clare Grant Stevenson - further papers, 192--1988, mainly concerning the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force, with the papers of Joyce A Thomson concerning Clare Grant Stevenson, 1941- 1992

Clare Grant Stevenson papers, ca. 1917-1988, together with unidentified business records, 1848-1876; and the papers of Stella Florence James, 1919-1971; Marian Macleod Hamilton, nee Grant Stevenson, 1898-1979; and Ada Pollie Grant Stevenson, 1934-1938

**Author Details**
Anne Heywood

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Digital resources



**Title:** Wing Commander J. R. Gordon with members of the WAAAF.
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