The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE0424

Whitworth, Joyce Ethel

(1911 - 1998)

Born	19110530, Sydney New South Wales Australia
Died	19980919
Occupation	Servicewoman

Summary

Major Joyce Whitworth was Assistant Commander, Eastern Command New South Wales (NSW), Australian Women's Army Service. She was discharged from the Army Service on 27 June 1946. From 1959 until 1972 she was President of the Australian Women's Army Service Association (NSW). On the 21st Anniversary of the Australian Women's Army Service, Joyce Whitworth planted an Australian Gum (Lemon Eucalyptus) in Hyde Park on the western side of the War Memorial, in the presence of Lt-General Sir John Northcott. For services to the community, Joyce Whitworth was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire on 8 June 1968. In 1989 Joyce Whitworth became Patron of the Council of Ex-Servicewomen's Associations (NSW), a position she held until her death on 19 September 1998.

Details

In July 1989 Joyce E Whitworth wrote the following:

I was born in May 1911 and educated at the Sydney Church of England Grammar School (SCEGGS). Upon leaving school I completed two years nursing training at the Children's Hospital in Sydney. After leaving the Hospital I did a business course and when war broke out was a private secretary in a large industrial firm.

In June 1940 I joined the Women's Australian National Service (WANS) – a voluntary organisation formed to train women in their 'spare' time in the event of their services being needed to replace "A" class men for combat duty. I was trained in this organisation to become an officer and was eventually promoted to Commandant of a Defence Unit.

When the Australian Women's Army Service (AWAS) was formed in October 1941, I was selected as one of six from New South Wales to attend, with the others selected from other States, the first officers' training school held in November at the Guide House at Yarra Junction in Victoria. After completion of this course I was promoted to the rank of Captain and returned to Victoria Barracks, Sydney, to assist the Assistant Controller – Major Eleanor Manning OBE, and her staff officer, Captain Stella Swinney – to interview and process the first applicants to the Service.

In January 1942 I was appointed Chief Instructor of the First Recruit Training School at Killara. In May 1942 in view of the urgent need for signallers, one thousand women were called up as Signallers. Two training battalions were formed in June 1942. Signallers from Queensland and New South Wales were trained at Ingleburn Camp, New South Wales. This Unit was called the Signals Training Battalion and I was posted to this Unit with four AWAS NCO's. I was to be the Administrative Officer in charge of recruit training; Lt. Col. Farrow the Commanding Officer and his male staff were responsible for technical training. A similar Unit was formed in Victoria. These Units were later moved to Bonegilla, Victoria.

In view of the increasing demand by the Army for more members in the AWAS it was necessary to form a larger Unit to train recruits. I was appointed to be the Commanding Officer of the newly formed Unit and was promoted to Major in the 2nd Australian AWAS Training Battalion in April 1942 at Ingleburn.

I was transferred to the Training Battalion at Darley in Victoria for three months in 1943 in exchange with Major Parry (MacIntyre). I then returned to again command the Training Battalion at Ingleburn.

In October 1943 the Australian Army Medical Women's Service Training Company was amalgamated with the AWAS Training Battalion. Captain Wendy Roupell, AAMWS, replaced my 2-IC Captain M Hornsby. The OC Captain B Donkin and staff were transferred to the establishment of the Battalion and became the 5th Company of this Unit.

In April 1944 I was transferred to Victoria as Assistant Controller AWAS Victorian Lines of Communication area.

Following demobilization in June 1946 I joined with Barbara Donkin and her mother and brother and purchased a 35 1/2-acre property at Dural and we commenced mixed farming there in October 1946.

In 1959 I became President of the AWAS Association (NSW) and was appointed a Life Member in 1966. When I resigned in 1971 I was appointed Vice-Patron.

My other interests from 1959 included being a member of the Council of Tara Anglican Girls' School for 18 years and a member of the Girl Guides State Council, in addition to being a member of the Parish Council at St Judes Anglican Church at Dural and Chairman of the Women's Fellowship. In 1960 the first Outward Bound Girls' School was formed and I became Principal and later Chairman of the Girls' School Management Committee in addition to being a member of the Federal Executive.

In 1968 I was awarded the MBE for my services during the war and later to the Outward Bound Foundation.

In 1981 Barbara Donkin and I moved into single units in the Anglican Retirement Village at Castle Hill. Since then we have been engaged in assisting the Village Chaplains in welfare work in addition to being members of the Village Council.

In February of this year, 1989, I became Patron of the Council of Ex-Servicewomen's Association (NSW).

Published resources

Resource Section
WHITWORTH, JOYCE ETHEL, Department of Veterans' Affairs, 2002,
http://www.ww2roll.gov.au/script/veteran.asp?ServiceID=A&VeteranID=350695

Edited Book
Who's Who in Australia 1944, Alexander, Joseph A, 1944

Resource
Where are the Women in Australian science?, Australian Science and Technology Heritage Centre, 2003,
http://www.austehc.unimelb.edu.au/wisa/wisa.html

Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

Australian War Memorial, Research Centre
Joyce Ethel Whitworth as a major, Assistant Commander, Eastern Command NSW, Australian Women's Army Service, interviewed by Judy Wing for The Keith Murdoch Sound Archive of Australia in the War of 1939-45

Author Details
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Digital resources

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