Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE0437

Dowson, Dorothy (Joan)

(1918 - 2006)

Born	19180604, Cottesloe Western Australia Australia
Died	20061011
Occupation	Community worker, Servicewoman

Summary

Originally a ballerina in Perth, Western Australia, Joan Dowson served throughout World War II as a nurse. She continued her association with the Australian Red Cross throughout her life.

Details

Born Dorothy Richardson, but always known as Joan, this one-time ballerina joined the Australian Cross in 1937. As well as entertaining servicemen with concert parties, she completed a course in home nursing during her first year.

In 1941, Joan enlisted as a nursing VAD in the army and on 17 March 1943 joined the Australian Army Medical Women's Service. She served in Egypt, Syria, Rehoveth and Gaza with the 9th Division and later in New Guinea. In 1945 she transferred to serve on the aircraft carrier HMS *Formidable.* She was discharged on 19 March 1945.

After the war Joan Dowson continued working with the Australian Red Cross and Girl Guides. She joined the Western Australian Branch of the RSL and was a member of the State Executive for 20 years – she was the third woman to be elected to the executive. Joan Dowson also became a member of the Friends of Battye Library.

On 14 June 1980, Joan Dowson was appointed The Order of the British Empire – Member (Civil) (MBE) for services to the Red Cross and Ex-servicemen and women. In 1991 she received the RSL meritorious medal and was awarded life membership of the Red Cross in 1992.

Joan Dowson was awarded the Medal of Australia (OAM) on 11 June 1996, for service to the community, particularly the RSL and ex-servicewomen, Red Cross, Girl Guides and as a member of the cancer crusade of Western Australia for 30 years.

Published resources

Journal Article
Joan Dowson receives Order of Australia, Clinton, Barbara, 1996

[Receives Order of Australia award for community service], Clinton, Barbara, 1996

[Receives RSL meritorious medal], 1991

[Awarded Red Cross life membership], 1992

Resource Section
RICHARDSON, DOROTHY JOAN, Department of Veterans' Affairs, 2002, http://www.ww2roll.gov.au/script/veteran.asp?ServiceID=A&VeteranID=753722

RICHARDSON, DOROTHY JOAN, Department of Veterans' Affairs, 2002, http://www.ww2roll.gov.au/script/veteran.asp?ServiceID=A&VeteranID=753722

Book
Australian women at war, Adam-Smith, Patsy, 1984

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

National Library of Australia, Oral History and Folklore Collection
Dorothy Dowson interviewed by Victoria Hobbs for the Australia 1938 oral history project [sound recording]

Australian War Memorial, Research Centre
Miss Joan Bucknell and Miss Joan Richardson, two Australian Red Cross Society Representatives, returning home after being attached to HMS Formidable

Author Details
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Digital resources



Title: Miss Joan Bucknell and Miss Joan Richardson
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