Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE5397

Gallagher, Janet Isobel

(1880 - 1957)

Born	18800115, Browns Flat New South Wales Australia
Died	19571230, North Sydney New South Wales Australia
Occupation	Army Nurse, Nurse

Summary

Janet Isobel Gallagher was one of three female members of the Gallagher family who served overseas with the Australian Army Nursing Service during World War I. She was a niece of Flora Gallagher and Evelyn Gallagher and like them was born at Browns Flat, a farming settlement near Burbong between Queanbeyan and Bungendore in New South Wales, now within the eastern border of the Australian Capital Territory. She enlisted in 1916 and spent most of the War nursing in India with service also in Egypt and England.

Details

Janet Isobel Gallagher (also known as Jennette) was born on 15 January 1880 to Eliza Jane Gallagher, the eldest daughter of John and Mary Ann Gallagher of Browns Flat in what is now Kowen Forest near the eastern border of the ACT. Janet was raised from birth as their child by her grandparents, John and Mary Ann Gallagher and when she enlisted in the Australian Army Nursing Service, she gave their names as her next of kin.

Janet trained at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital Sydney and was registered as a nurse on 14 July 1915. She nursed for about three months at the military hospital, 4 Australian General Hospital (AGH) at Randwick, before joining the Australian Army Nursing Service when enlistment opened to those who were nursing in Australian military hospitals to volunteer for service in India. When she enlisted on 13 June 1916 she was 35 and her religion was Catholic. She and her aunt Evelyn Gallagher enlisted on the same day and they spent much of the war in the same hospitals.

She was among several hundred Australian nurses sent to India at the request of the British Government to nurse in military hospitals in India. As a result many were staffed mainly by Australian nurses who cared initially for sick and wounded evacuated from Mesopotamia, until facilities could be established near the fighting, and for British troops of the Indian Garrison. The Australians were assured that because of the severe Indian climate they would serve there only for six months and then be sent to nurse Australian troops in France or Mesopotamia which is what they wanted to do but this did not eventuate. Many of their patients in India were victims of tropical diseases. Two Australian nurses died of cholera in India.

Janet Gallagher sailed on the RMS Kashgar and arrived in India on 27 September 1916. Her first posting was to the Gerard Freeman Thomas Hospital in Bombay. In May 1917 she was sent to Deccan War Hospital, a 1500-bed hospital in Poona where she remained for about 18 months. She was promoted to Sister although her promotion does not seem to have been noted officially until late in 1918 after she had left India. In October 1918 she left Bombay for Egypt where she nursed at 31st British General Hospital (BGH) at Abbassia until she left for England at the end of the year. In England she was attached to 2nd Australian Auxiliary Hospital (AAH) at Southall and very briefly to 1st Australian General Hospital before being admitted to hospital sick. She was not fit to resume nursing for nearly three months when she joined 3 AAH at Dartford.

Janet Gallagher returned to Australia on duty on HMAT Orsova arriving in Sydney on 6 September 1919. She was discharged in Sydney on 23 October 1919 with the rank of Sister. After the war she was told after corresponding with the government that she was entitled only to the British War Medal as her long service in India was not regarded as being in a war zone. She is commemorated on the ACT Memorial and the City of Queanbeyan Roll of Remembrance.

After the war Janet Gallagher continued nursing in Sydney including as a midwife at South Sydney Women’s Hospital and later in the northern suburbs of Sydney. She died unmarried at North Sydney on 30 December 1957.

Published resources

Site Exhibition
Canberra Women in World War I: Community at Home, Nurses Abroad, Clarke, Patricia and Francis, Niki, 2015, http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/cww1

Resource Section
Gallagher, Janet Isabel, 2013,
http://nurses.ww1anzac.com/ga.html

Book
The Long Travail, Gallagher, N. J., 1987

With Horse and Morse in Mesopotamia: The story of the Anzacs in Asia -The Australian Nurses in India, Burke, Keast (ed.), 1927

Book Section
Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services 1914-18. Vol. III: Problems and Services, Butler, A.G., 1943

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

National Archives of Australia, National Office, Canberra
Gallagher James Fitzpatrick : SERN 4809 : POB Glen Innes NSW : POE Casula NSW : NOK W Gallagher Janet

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Digital resources



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