Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE5404

Whitlock, Marie Florence

(1890 - 1964)

Born	18900101, Nymagee New South Wales Australia
Died	19641231, AdelaideAdelaide South Australia New South Wales
Occupation	Nurse

Summary

Marie Florence Whitlock enlisted in 1917 for service overseas in the Australian Army Nursing Service in World War I. She spent the next two years nursing casualties in Egypt. In 1916 she had spent a short time nursing at Duntroon Military College, Canberra.

Details

Marie Whitlock was born at Nymagee, about 80 km south of Cobar in western New South Wales in 1890. She was the second eldest of five daughters and one son of George and Louisa Whitlock. Her father had moved from Rutherglen in Victoria as a young man to run a business in Nymagee, the site of a prosperous gold and copper mine. By the time she enlisted in 1917, the Whitlocks were living on the family's pastoral property, Baledmund, near Nymagee.

All five girls in the Whitlock family trained as nurses; Marie graduated at St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne in 1914. From 13 January to 16 February 1916 she was employed as a nurse at Duntroon Military College, ACT. On 11 May 1917 when she enlisted in Sydney she was aged 27, her religion was Catholic and she lodged her will with her sister Eva Whitlock who was nursing at the Mater Hospital, North Sydney.

Classified as Staff Nurse in the Australian Army Nursing Service, Marie Whitlock embarked on RMS Mooltan on 9 June 1917. Although she travelled with the group of Australian nurses sent on to Salonika, Marie Whitlock stayed in Egypt until after the war ended. This may have been because nurses were expected to be in great demand to nurse Australian light horse battle casualties following the British offensive culminating in the battles of Beersheba, Gaza and Jerusalem later in 1917.

After landing at Suez on 25 July 1917, Marie Whitlock was taken on the strength of the 14th Australian General Hospital (AGH) at Abbassia, Egypt where she nursed for nearly two years, apart from two spells in hospital as a patient. In October/November 1918 she was sick for a month with furunculosis (recurrent boils) and in February 1919 she was in hospital for about two weeks with septic tooth abscess. She travelled back to Australia on duty on the Orari from Kantara, an Egyptian port near Suez, and was discharged in Sydney on 3 August 1919. She was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal and is commemorated on the ACT Memorial.

Major Alan Koeppen Wendt, AIF, a farmer born at Glenelg, South Australia in 1892, was travelling on the same ship. He had arrived at Gallipoli late in 1915, a Lieutenant in the 3rd Light Horse and served throughout the war as quartermaster in Egypt with the 3rd Light Horse Regiment. He was mentioned in dispatches and promoted to Captain then to temporary Major. Less than three months later, on 27 October 1919, Marie Whitlock and Alan Wendt were married in Adelaide. At the time of her father's death at Nymagee on 10 June 1927, Marie was living in Adelaide and her three younger sisters were still nursing, Eva at Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick, Edith at Tumut District Hospital and Ally at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney. Marie died in Adelaide in 1964 survived by her husband, two daughters and a son.

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

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

Book
More than Bombs and Bandages: Australian Army Nurses at work in World War I, Harris, Kirsty, 2011

History of the RMC Hospital, 5 Camp Hospital and 21 Dental Unit, Howarth, Ross, 2007

A Profession's Pathway: Nursing at St Vincent's since 1893, Sheehan, Mary, 2005

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Archival resources

National Archives of Australia, National Office, Canberra
WHITLOCK Marie Florence : Service Number - Staff Nurse : Place of Birth - Nymagee NSW : Place of Enlistment - Sydney NSW : Next of Kin - (Father) WHITLOCK George

WENDT Alan Koeppen : Service Number - Major : Place of Birth - Glenelg SA : Place of Enlistment - N/A : Next of Kin - (Father) WENDT H Koeppen

Author Details
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