Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE5412

Macartney, Alexandrina Vans (Nina)

(1884 - 1965)

Born	18841020, Ballarat Victoria Australia
Died	19650327, BalmainBalmain New South Wales Australia
Occupation	Volunteer, War Worker

Summary

Based in Canberra from 1911 to 1916 while her husband was an instructor at the Royal Military College, Duntroon, Nina Macartney was a committee member of the Federal Territory War Fund from August 1914.

Details

Born on 20 Oct 1884, Alexandrina Vans ‘Nina’ Macartney (nee Zichy-Woinarski), was the first of seven children (5 girls and 2 boys) born to Flora Dundas ‘Teeyah’ Robertson (1860-1939) and Dr Stanislaus Emill Antony Zichy-Woinarski (1857-1920), medical practitioner, of Ballarat, Victoria. She married Captain Henry Dundas Keith Macartney (1880-1932) at St Peter’s Anglican Church, Mornington, Victoria, on 18 December 1912; they had no children (‘Mainly About People’, 1912, p. 3; ‘Personal News’, 1912, p. 5; ‘Family Notices’, 1912, p. 8).

Nina’s husband was attached to the instructional staff of the newly founded Royal Military College, Duntroon, from 1911 until 1916, when he embarked for overseas service, and again from 1919. There is no record of where Nina lived during her husband’s service overseas.

In August 1914, soon after Britain declared war against Germany in August 1914, Nina attended a meeting of women residents of Canberra and the Federal Territory convened by the Jane Miller, wife of the Federal Territory Administrator and Secretary of the Department of Home Affairs. Jane Miller told the assembly she wished to initiate a movement ‘for the purpose of helping our soldiers and sailors who are at the present moment on active service upholding the British Empire in the great war now… and for relieving distress amongst the relations of soldiers and sailors or the poor.’ She proposed a division of districts each with a representative who would appeal for funds and distribute collecting boxes. All contributions were to be strictly voluntary. She suggested money collected be sent to swell the War Food Fund that had been established by the Sydney Chamber of Commerce.

The War Food Fund served two purposes: to help soldiers, and to benefit Australian workers on the home front by purchasing Australian produced foodstuffs and products thus providing employment at a time when work might become very scarce. The Queanbeyan Age reported that the women present enthusiastically approved Jane Miller’s scheme and appointed a committee that included Nina Macartney: ‘Mesdames Miller, Broinowski, Piggin, and Brown, of Canberra; Mesdames Macartney and Barnard of the Royal Military College; Mrs. E. G. Crace, of Gininderra, and Mrs. Sheaffe, of Tharwa.’ (‘Patriotic Fund Canberra’, 1914, p. 2).

Nina’s and Jessie Barnard’s work appears to have been behind the scenes. In illustration of the hierarchy of military life, it is Ida Parnell, who is mentioned at Duntroon’s fundraising social events.

Nina died in Balmain, New South Wales, Australia on 27 March 1965.

Published resources

Book
Duntroon, the Royal Military College of Australia, 1911-1986., Coulthard-Clark, C. D., 1986

The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918: Australia during the war, Scott, Ernest, 1938

Newspaper Article
Patriotic Fund, 1914,
http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article31402795

Mainly About People, 1913,
http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article79937923

Personal News, 1912,
http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article53283741

Family Notices. Weddings, 1912,
http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article146180048

Resource Section
Macartney, Henry Dundas (1880-19320, Johnson, Donald H., 2006,
http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/macartney-henry-dundas-7291/text12645

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
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

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