Entry type: Person
Entry ID: IMP0156

Armfield, Lillian May

(1884 - 1971)

Born	18841203, Mittagong New South Wales Australia
Died	19710826, Leichhardt New South Wales Australia
Occupation	Nurse, Policewoman

Summary

Lillian Armfield was one of the first female plain-clothes detectives in Australia. She joined the New South Wales Police Force as a special constable in 1915 and retired 34 years later in 1943 as a special sergeant 1st class. During that time she helped runaway girls return home and dealt with female suspects or victims. Armfield was awarded the King's Police and Fire Service Medal for outstanding service in 1947. Four years later, after her retirement, she was awarded the Imperial Service Medal.

Details

The daughter of labourer George Armfield and his wife Elizabeth (née Wright), Lillian Armfield was educated locally and became a nurse at the Callan Park Hospital for the Insane, New South Wales.

In 1915 Armfield applied for a newly created position in the New South Wales Police Force. Recruited as a special constable, she was not supplied with a uniform or paid for overtime or expenses during her probationary year. A year later Armfield was enrolled as a special constable after she signed an agreement. The agreement denied her the right to compensation if she were injured while performing her duties or any right to superannuation upon her retirement. For Armfield, promotion was slow in her chosen career. Eight years after entering the police force she became a special sergeant, 3rd class and rose to 1st class in 1943, six years before her retirement. The basis of her work was with women and girls, often providing advice and dealing with crimes committed by or against women. In 1949, she retired from the police force, aged 65, and lived on an old-age pension until the New South Wales Government granted her a special weekly allowance in 1965.

Lillian Armfield died on 26 August 1971, aged 86 years.

Events

2001 - 2001
Inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women

Published resources

Book
Rugged Angel: The Amazing Career of Policewoman Lillian Armfield, Kelly, Vince, 1961

Women Make Australian History : Women in Wartime 1914-1918, 1939-1945, Dugan, Michael and Gunter, Anne, 1996

Resource Section
Armfield, Lillian May (1884-1971), King, Hazel, 2006,
http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A070095b.htm

Edited Book
Monash Biographical Dictionary of 20th Century Australia, Arnold, John and Morris, Deirdre, 1994

Site Exhibition
Faith, Hope and Charity Australian Women and Imperial Honours: 1901-1989, Australian Women's Archives Project, 2003,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/honours/honours.html

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

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