

Camden Women Go To War

First World War 1914-1918

A number of women, who were either born in the Camden district or nursed in Camden, joined the Australian Army Nursing Service and went off to war in Europe 'to do their bit'. They included **Ethel Graham Lloyd**, **Mary Therese McAnene** and her sibling **Rose Morton Macanene**, **Ada Alice Morehead** and her sibling **Clara Emily Morehead**, **Hester Louise Morton**, **Annie Bertha Parry**, **Minnie West**, **Clarissa Muriel Whiteman**, and **Rebecca Stafford Williams**. The nurses showed compassion and courage, often working in difficult and dangerous conditions, very different from the small hospital at Camden.

Second World War 1939-1945

The **Camden Voluntary Aid Detachment**, which had been started in 1919, was re-formed in 1939 with 21 young women. The VAs attended lectures on nursing, trained at Camden District Hospital, and sat for examinations. They volunteered at Camden Hospital; at *Waley* the Red Cross Convalescent Home at Mowbray Park, Picton; and at the RAAF Station Sick Quarters at Camden Aerodrome.

In 1942 a new women's service known as the Australian Army Medical Women's Service started. In July 1942 three members of the Camden VAD, **Jacqueline Crookston**, **Lila McKnight** and **Rona Diedrick**, were called up for duty with AAMWS and worked in military hospitals at home and overseas. Jacqueline Crookston served at an Australian Field Hospital in New Guinea in 1943. **Ruth Roberts** served at the Lady Wakehurst Convalescent home in Waverley. **Clarice Hore** went to the Glen Mervyn Home in Bondi. **Joyce Glover** worked at a convalescent home in Sydney. Camden-born **Iris Patricia Rofe** also served in AAMWS.

Camden was a small town and the patriotic local newspaper reported the war time activities in detail, so the Camden Red Cross felt very involved in supporting the soldiers and nurses of the district.



Rebecca Williams, First World War Nurse