

MATRON LORNA HELENE SIMON – NURIOOTPA

First World War and Second World War

Lorna Helena Simon was born on the 16 January 1893 in Nuriootpa being the second of nine children of Ludwig Ernst Simon and Emma Matilde (Nee) Riedel from Bute, South Australia.

Lorna enlisted into the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.) on the 24 May 1917 at Keswick Barracks. At enlistment she was 24 years 4 months, described as 5 feet 6 ½ inches tall, 10 stone 2 pounds in weight, of dark complexion, brown eyes, brown hair, with her occupation given as a nurse, trained at the Royal Adelaide Hospital.

Lorna was allocated to the Australian Army Nursing Service (A.A.N.S.) where she received the rank of Staff Nurse. She embarked from Melbourne with the first contingent of 215 nurses on the transport 'Mooltan', bound for Alexandria, on the 14 June 1917, disembarking at Suez, Egypt on the 19 July 1917.

After recovering from the journey from Australia Lorna embarked from Alexandria on the troopship HT "Huntsgreen" on 8 August 1917 and disembarked at Salonika, Greece on the 13 August 1917. She was assigned for duty to No 60 British General Hospital at Hortiach, about twenty miles from Salonika.

During the next two years Lorna worked extremely hard alongside her fellow Australian, Canadian and British nurses providing critical care to soldiers and POWs. Conditions were appalling with mostly tented hospitals, toiling through hot, mosquito infested summers, and then enduring freezing winters, living in balaclavas, scarves, coats and anything they could get their hands on to keep themselves warm. Many soldiers suffered from malaria, dysentery, and black water fever. Nurses succumbed to the same illness as their patients, many being invalided home. Sadly, some died because of their service, Lorna was admitted to hospital on several occasions.

On the 31 January 1919 Lorna was detached to London for leave and duty at A.I.F. Headquarters, London, and being promoted to Sister on 12 July 1919, her time at Salonika had ended.

Lorna embarked on the troopship HT "Osterley" on 28 September 1919, where she provided nursing care to the sick and wounded on the return to Australia, disembarking in South Australia on the 5 November 1919. On her return, Lorna reported for duty to 7th Australian General Hospital (AGH) until her appointment in the A.I.F. was terminated. She was classified as medically unfit due to military service, at Keswick Barracks on 14 December 1919.

After her First World War service, Lorna resumed her nursing career.

During the Second World War, Lorna, enlisted once again into the A.I.F. and was allocated to the Australian Army Medical Corps, commissioned to the rank of Major and served as a Matron from 30 November 1942 until 4 January 1945 having served her country in two world wars.

After her retirement from nursing, Lorna resided at Gilberton and died on 11 September 1969 at Daw Park Hospital, aged 76 years.

Matron Lorna Helena Simon is buried at Centennial Park Cemetery, RSL Walls, Niche 128 – F003.

Lest We Forget.



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