



AGNES WOTHERSPOON KING

'a soldier's nurse'



"Atelier"
No 2 Australian Auxiliary Hospital
Heliopolis
137.15

Agnes King's patients in 2AAH located in the Atelier building, Heliopolis, Cairo, (family collection)

Born in England in 1884 to Scottish-born parents, Robert King and Fanny (nee Craig); Robert, a tenant farmer, fought in the American Civil War

Immigrated with her parents and five siblings in 1889 to Mansfield, Victoria where Fanny's uncle had purchased a farm for the family

Endured various hardships growing up in the 1890s: loss of the farm amid economic depression, flood and the death of a brother

Followed her mother's interest assisting people in sickness and trouble; trained as a nurse at Mansfield Hospital and registered in 1907

Nursed in Melbourne; appointed matron of hospitals in Mansfield, Wangaratta and Omeo

Enlisted in 1915 aged 30, before two of her brothers joined up; gave East Melbourne as her address on embarkation

Served in Egypt nursing Gallipoli casualties, then sick and wounded on the Western Front during the terrible winter of 1916-17



Agnes King with brother Nathaniel, 1 AGH, Heliopolis, Christmas 1915, (family collection)



'Self on House Boat Aboukir Bay, August 1915', (family collection)



'Sisters Bonnar, Harper and self doing up our diet sheets Atelier', (family collection)



'Self and Serg. Henderson (Joe) of Maryborough on balcony of Heliopolis Hotel. August 1915' (family collection)



'Sister Mawson and self on "Donks" at Alexandria. August 1915', (family collection)



Agnes King with patients at 1 AAH at Harefield Park near London, (family collection)

Following several major illnesses, served in London in Australian Auxiliary Hospitals that specialised in the treatment of amputations, shell shock and facial disfigurements

Promoted to Sister in 1917

Returned to Australia in 1919

Spent more than 20 years working in repatriation hospitals, first as nursing sister at 11 Australian General Hospital in Caulfield from 1919 to 1927

Held the position of matron of the Repatriation Sanatorium in Perth (1927-33), Keswick Repatriation Hospital in Adelaide (1933-36), and Rosemount Repatriation Hospital in Brisbane (1936-38); hailed as 'a soldier's nurse'

Returned to Caulfield Repatriation Hospital as matron in 1938; was matron there at the time of her unexpected death in 1942

Was an enthusiastic motorist and adventurer; drove from Adelaide to her new position in Brisbane in 1936 and toured North Queensland in her car

Died aged 58 on 3 April 1942 and was buried in Mansfield Cemetery.



Agnes King with Prince Henry, Duke of Gloucester, Rosemount Repatriation Hospital, Brisbane 1934, (family collection)



Agnes King with her car at Edward Millen Repatriation Hospital, Perth, (family collection)



Gone to War as Sister
August 2015