



EMILY BLACK & BESSIE JOHNSON

devoted sister 'retired army sister'



Emily Black, probably in Salonika, c1917, (family collection)



Emily Black wore anti-mosquito protection in Salonika, (AWM H15761)



Emily Black's brother Allan DCM c1918, (family collection)



Emily Black (back, fourth from left) and Ella Black (back, third from right) with staff members at St Anne's Grammar School, Sale in 1947, (Gippsland Grammar School)

Emily Black

Born near Maffra in 1884 to Scottish immigrant William Black and his wife Mary Anne (nee Bennison)

Trained as a nurse in the Homeopathic Hospital, Hobart like her sister Ella

Had a younger brother Allan who enlisted soon after war broke out

Enlisted in 1917 after Allan was seriously wounded and permanently disfigured by a gun shot to his neck in France; he was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal

Reported her address on enlistment as Winfield, 340 Albert Street, East Melbourne, a Trained Nurses Home

Served in British hospitals in Salonika (Greece) after service in Egypt; endured appalling conditions including extremes in weather, marauders and mosquitoes

Hospitalised on several occasions; invalided back to Australia with malaria in 1918

Nursed in Melbourne before retiring to Sale where she assisted her sister Ella run the boarding house at St Anne's Grammar School in the 1940s

Died in Perth in 1976, aged 92.

Bessie Johnson

Born in 1886 to Victorian Webb Sheircliffe Johnson and his wife Kate (nee Ryan); Webb was chief operator of the Sandhurst (Bendigo) Railway Station

Left fatherless aged four with two young siblings; probably raised in close connection with comfortably-off relatives, the Halfords in Castlemaine

Trained at the Children's Hospital in Melbourne in the steps of her cousin Bertha Halford who had married a 'witty young medico'

Nursed at St Ives Hospital in Vale Street, East Melbourne which was owned by Elizabeth Glover, a pioneer of civilian and military nursing

Enlisted in 1915, the only member of her immediate family to do so

Served in England, Egypt and Greece, and on hospital transports

Became ill like many nurses serving in Salonika (Greece); sent back to Australia as medically unfit in October 1918

Nursed at 11 Australian General Hospital, Caulfield after the war

Died 1969, in Heidelberg, Victoria, aged 83, her occupation given on probate documents 'Retired Army Sister'.



Ward of 14 AGH, where Bessie Johnson nursed, Cairo, c1916, (AWM P00228.062)



Morning tea at 14 AGH, Bessie Johnson second right, c1917, (AWM P00812.022)



Bessie Johnson dressed up in Flying Corps uniform, probably for a troop concert, Egypt, 1917, (AWM P05566.030)