



SISTERS AND BROTHERS

Some East Melbourne nurses had brothers who served in the AIF. They worried about them, and about their cousins, brothers' friends and other 'boys' they knew.

The nurses' anxiety about family and friends grew as the casualties mounted and they witnessed shocking wounds.

Brothers and sisters sometimes met on leave, in England or Egypt or France. Every meeting was precious; there was always the risk that each meeting was the last.

Eleanor Kendall and her brothers

Eleanor Kendall:

Was the only daughter among seven adult children of William and Elizabeth Kendall

Had three brothers who were officers in the Australian Army Veterinary Corps and who all survived the war

Enlisted in 1914 while nursing at Crathie Hospital, 118 Gipps Street, East Melbourne, under Matron Jessie McHardie White, pioneer member of the the Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS).



Eleanor Kendall with her parents and siblings, (University of Melbourne Archives)

Lyla and Campbell 'Ginty' Stewart

Lyla Stewart:

Was the 10th of 12 children born to John and Elizabeth Stewart of Kalimbete East near Terang, Campbell (Ginty) was the 11th

Was one of four sisters to train as a nurse

Enlisted in mid 1915; Ginty enlisted the following year, aged 28

Heartbroken when Ginty and his friends from Terang were reported missing in action, then dead, in 1917; Lyla and Ginty wrote to each other daily

Wrote to her mother 'They say people get over these things, but I never shall'

Relieved weeks later to hear that Ginty and friends had been wounded and taken prisoner

Returned to Australia on separate ships, Ginty to a hero's welcome in Terang and Lyla to marry.



Lyla Stewart and her family, c1905, (family collection)



Lyla and Ginty Stewart (r), and friend, (family collection)

PRIVATE CAMPBELL STEWART.
LETTERS FROM NURSE
LYLA STEWART.

Staff-Nurse Lyla Stewart, writing to her mother in Terang from the 14th stationary hospital in France, on May 1, supports the statement in her cablegram of some weeks ago that her brother, Private Campbell Stewart, has died of wounds. She says:

"I wrote a few lines the other day, telling you I had not heard anything of our dearest Campbell for some time. Yesterday evening the worst came. We shall never see him again. I feared the worst when he did not write and knowing how severely the Division suffered, especially the Battalion. I hoped he was taken prisoner; but no such luck. I had a letter from his O.C., who said two of Cam's mates saw him badly wounded before the first line of German trenches was reached. They feared he would not live to be brought in.

Lyla Stewart's anxiety about Ginty's fate, (Terang Express, 3.7.1917)



Ginty Stewart (back centre) as a POW in Germany, (family collection)

Patricia and Martin Blundell

Patricia Blundell:

Was appointed matron of Royal Military College Duntroon in 1914, a position with poor pay and conditions

Enlisted in the AANS soon after her only brother joined the AIF but embarked for Egypt ten days before him in May 1915

Nursed casualties from the Gallipoli campaign where Martin fought without injury but was furiously critical of the conduct of the campaign

Met Martin several times during the war; they met when both were in London in March 1918

In April 1918 received news that Martin had been killed in action when shellfire completely demolished his dugout; received news her sister had died a week later

Returned to Australia soon after, and discharged as permanently unfit.



Patricia Blundell on hospital train in Egypt, 1915, (State Library of Victoria)

... miles to camp at Saqqara...
 up in tents at 8 pm.
 13th Fixed up our camp in the morning. After lunch went across in boat to No 3 General Hospital Lujair opposite and saw Pattie. She was very surprised needless to say. Looked thinner but in good nick. Came back 5 pm. Beautiful day. This place assumes all the delights of Arcadia to us. Plenty to eat and drink and one can indulge in a sea bath which is good, although cold.

Martin Blundell met his sister Patricia on Lemnos in late 1915, (State Library of Victoria)

COPY OF D. 16. 743798.
 1080. L/Col. BLUNDELL, M.P. 2nd Corps. L.H. Ret.
 Killed in action. 15.4.18.
 Reference your 4th 1708/2/33 concerning the above mentioned soldier, the following entry appears in our records. Killed in action near the summit of MONT KEMBLE 16.4.18. whilst acting as liaison between the Regiment and the Front. The dug-out in which he was in was demolished by shell-fire. The body was not recovered. No further information is available.
 (Sgd) ... Capt. 2nd Lt.
 For Lt. Col.
 Commanding 22nd Corps Mounted Troops.

Extract from Martin Blundell's Service Record, (National Archives of Australia)



Eleanor Kendall with her brothers who were all lieutenant colonels in the AIF (l-r, Edward, John and William), (AWM P04272.001)

