

# MATRON JESSIE McHARDY WHITE MBE RRC MMM OSS



The young Jessie McHardy Williamson, before her marriage and training as a nurse.

**Born Jessie McHardy Williamson in 1870 at Yarra Flats (near Healesville) to Scottish immigrant parents**

**Widowed at 26 when her husband Thomas White died in 1896**

**Trained as a nurse at the Alfred Hospital and the Women’s Hospital (1896-1901)**

**Joined the fledgling Australian Army Nursing Service Reserve about 1906**

**Nursed at Mena House Private Hospital, 29 Simpson Street, East Melbourne**

**Purchased 118 Gipps Street, East Melbourne in 1914; converted it from a boarding house into a private hospital named ‘Crathie’ (after her mother’s birthplace in Scotland)**

**Selected as one of the first army nurses from Victoria for ‘foreign service’ in 1914, aged 44**

**Remained the only member of her immediate family to join up**

**Served in Egypt in 1914 and 1915 with a British military hospital, a hospital ship and the 1st Australian General Hospital**

**Appointed Principal Matron of the AIF in England in 1916, in charge of the AANS there**



Salonika, with McHardy White’s hospital marked ‘X’. AWM H15764



Crathie House, 118 Gipps Street, East Melbourne, the hospital owned and operated by Jessie McHardy White. EML



Matron McHardy White with her nurses bound for Salonika. AWM H16005



Patients in hospital in Salonika. SLV



Matron McHardy White. AWM H15254

**Returned to Australia in late 1916 for ‘retirement at her own request’ (Service Record)**

**Re-appointed for active service in 1917, in charge of 360 Australian matrons and nurses staffing British hospitals in Salonika**

**Managed hospitals, nurses and patients in extreme conditions – blizzards and heat waves, air raids, food shortages, attacks on nurses by locals and severe illness among the nurses**

**Inspired many around her at Salonika with infectious energy and enthusiasm – celebrated when her nurses married, presented prizes at sports events, relished entertainments and tourist drives**

**Returned to Australia and was discharged in August 1919**

**Highly decorated: Mentioned in Despatches, Royal Red Cross (1st Class), Member of the British Empire, Medal for Military Merit (Greece), Order of St Sava (5th Class) (Serbia)**

**Actively involved in Returned Sisters organisations and affairs, and continued nursing for many years**

**Died Hawthorn on 26 October 1957.**



Matron McHardy White at Salonika. AWM H15764