

## **Rachel Clouston**



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**Date/Place of Birth:** 1888, Penrith, NSW

**Date/Place of Death:** April 1965, Oahu, Hawaii

**Australian Army Nursing Service**

**Enlisted:** 14 July 1915

**Discharged:** 8 October 1918

**Memorial Details:** Honour Roll Penrith Superior Public School

### **Biographical details**

Rachel Clouston was born in 1888 in Penrith NSW, the daughter of the Reverend Thomas E and Rachel Clouston. At the time of Rachel's birth, her father was the Presbyterian minister at Penrith. Her mother died in December that year. After attending Presbyterian Ladies College at Croydon, Rachel underwent nursing training, at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (RPA). She left RPA to nurse her ailing father in 1913 and returned the following year.

At the outbreak of World War 1, Rachel volunteered to serve on the Hospital Ship *Grantala*, along with two other Penrith nurses: Stella Colless and Constance Neale. The *Grantala* served with the Australian Naval and Military Expedition Force in the former German possessions of New Guinea and Rabaul between September and December 1914 before the ship was paid off and returned to its owners. After returning from Rabaul, the nurses were discharged from their duties. The first two Australian General Hospitals had sailed for Egypt and the nurses were told that it was improbable that any more nurses would be sent as the war would soon be over.

### **Military Service with AANS**

Clouston enlisted on 14 Jul 1915 and was appointed Sister. Clouston was allocated to *No 1 Hospital Ship Karoola* and transferred for duty to the Choubra Infectious Hospital, in Egypt on 5 April 1916. In December 1916, Clouston was hospitalised for mumps at the Choubra Infectious Hospital, Cairo and was discharged to duty with the No 14 Australian General Hospital on 26 December 1916. In January 1917, Clouston was transferred to *H S Essoquito* bound for England. In February 1917, Clouston was temporarily detached for duty with No 2 Australian Auxiliary Hospital Southall and attached to the St Alban's Rest Home later that month. In April 1917, Clouston was transferred to No 1 Australian Auxiliary Hospital Harefield Park. Sister Clouston had suffered from asthma for long periods during the early part of 1917. In July 1917 Clouston was admitted to Southwell Sanders Hospital and on 12 July 1917, a medical board determined that Clouston should return to Australia. On 22 July 1917, Sister Clouston embarked for Australia aboard *A71 Nestor* as a member of the nursing staff. She arrived in Melbourne on 24 September 1917 and then transferred to the *Euripedes* for the trip to Sydney.

Sister Clouston reenlisted on 19 November 1917 and embarked aboard *A71 HMAT Nestor* on 21 November 1917. Clouston briefly disembarked at Suez on 15 December 1917. After arriving in Southampton on 18 January 1918, Clouston was attached to No 2 Australian Auxiliary Hospital before transferring to No 3 Australian Auxiliary Hospital. On 10 March 1918 Clouston returned to Australia embarking as a member of the nursing staff aboard the *Durham Castle*. Clouston left Capetown aboard the *RMS Orontes* and after arriving in Australia, she was discharged on 8 October 1918.

Her poor health may have influenced her decision to live in Hawaii. In 1921 she was nursing the mother of prominent Hawaiian lawyer Marguerite Ashford. Clouston and Ashford became lifelong friends. Clouston later married Dr John Farrell. He died in 1955. Clouston and Ashford became the first residents of Pohai Nani, a seaside retirement home, Oahu, Hawaii in 1964. She died there in April 1965.