Mary Hartford

Date/Place of Birth: 27 June 1881, St Marys, NSW
Date/Place of Death: 22 July 1964, Marrickville, NSW

Australian Army Nursing Service
Enlisted: 8 October 1915
Discharged: 21 June 1918

Biographical details
Mary Rosa Harford was born in 1881, at Penrith NSW, the daughter of Thomas and Eliza Harford.

The family ran a tanning and boot factory at St Marys which was taken over by Martin Brell in the 1890s after the death of Thomas Harford. Some of the family moved to Lithgow. After leaving school, Harford completed her nursing training at St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney. Afterwards she worked at Lithgow Hospital for a time before moving to Sydney to work.

Military Service with AANS
 On 8 October 1915, Mary enlisted in the Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS) and was assigned to the Quarterly General Reinforcements, No 2 Australian General Hospital as a Staff Nurse. She left Sydney aboard the *A 67 HMAT Orsova* on 19 October 1915. After arriving in Egypt on 9 December 1915, Mary was assigned to the Ghezireh Hospital for a brief period before being reassigned to the Western Front. Mary left Alexandria on 26 March 1916 arriving in Marseilles on 4 April 1916. On arrival at Etaples, Mary was assigned to the 23rd General Hospital and then No 2 Australian General Hospital at Wimereux. In January and August 1917, Mary went on leave to England for two weeks. On 24 August 1917, Mary was declared medically unfit for further service to the British Expeditionary Force and was transferred to England. From August 1917 until April 1918, Mary was assigned to No 2 Australian Auxiliary Hospital Southall and No 3 Australian Auxiliary Hospital Dartford. In April 1918, Matron Bessie Pocock recorded an incident in which Mary Harford refused to do night duty. She was reported to the Commanding Officer for this serious breach of

discipline. When the Commanding Officer ordered her to do night duty she again refused. Matron-in-Chief Evelyn Conyers and the Director of Medical Services (AIF) both interviewed the staff nurse about her refusal to undertake night duty shifts. Harford's response that she hated night duty resulted in Harford being placed under virtual arrest at Dartford. Harford was not allowed to leave the hospital for more than one hour as she awaited transport back to Australia. On 24 April 1918, Rosa returned to Australia aboard *A29 HMAT Suevic* as a passenger and was discharged from the AIF on 21 June 1918.

On her return Nurse Harford spent some months working in the Garrison Hospital, Sydney. In March 1919, Harford and another nurse, Catherine Adaway nursed in the Vancouver Military Hospital and later in military hospitals nursing returned soldiers in Seattle, Portland, Chicago, New York and San Francisco. By 1926, she was back in Sydney, living in Pine Street Marrickville. In 1933, Harford was running the Baby Health Centre at Broken Hill. The *Daily Telegraph* reported on her work there. She had commenced work there in 1932 and with a staff of five nurses, oversaw four centres. By the early 1940s, Harford was working in Sydney at Prince Henry Hospital. She died in Marrickville in 1964 and was buried at St Marys General Cemetery. In 2008, her World War One watch was sold on eBay.

Sources:

NAA: B2455, HARFORD M R

Barker, M (1989) *Nightingales in the Mud: The Digger Sisters of the Great War 1914-1918.* Allen & Unwin: North Sydney, p 166.