Elizabeth Kearey

Date/Place of Birth: 1882, North Sydney, NSW
Date/Place of Burial: 1968, Macquarie Park Cemetery, North Ryde

Australian Army Nursing Service
Enlisted: 21 October 1914
Discharged: 14 January 1919

Memorial Details: Honour Roll, Memory Park, Penrith; Ranking: Lieutenant-Colonel

Biographical Details
Elizabeth Kearey was born on 25 August 1882, the daughter of James and Ellen (nee Doherty) Kearey. After her father's death in 1901, her mother met and married Penrith railway engine driver Frederick Elliott. They lived in Henry Street Penrith. Elizabeth completed her nursing training at St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney.

Military Service with the AANS
Elizabeth Kearey enlisted with the AIF and left Australia aboard HMAT Kyarra with No 2 Australian General Hospital on 28 November 1914. Her brother Leo also enlisted in 1914, followed by brother John in 1915. Kearey served with No 2 Australian General Hospital (AGH) in Egypt. In December 1915 she was promoted to Sister. On 26 March 1916, Kearey embarked,on the Braemar Castle bound for the Western Front, arriving on 4 April 1916, at Marseilles, and then served with No 2 AGH at Wimereux, France. In December 1916, Kearey went on leave to England for a fortnight and in January was transferred to duty in England. On 10 February 1917, Kearey commenced duty with No 3 Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Dartford. On 27 September 1917, Kearey returned to Australia on nursing duties with No 7 Sea Transport Service aboard the A29 Service. Kearey served briefly with No 2 Australian Auxiliary Hospital in Egypt. On 24 May 1918, Kearey and another Penrith nurse Jessie

Perkins embarked on the Indarra bound for Marseilles and finally disembarked at Southampton on 6 June 1918. Kearey returned to Australia aboard the Matatua as part of the nursing staff arriving in Sydney on 15 August 1918. Kearey reembarked aboard A7 HMAT Medic on 2 November 1918. However, the ship was returned to Australia in December and placed in quarantine owing to the influenza outbreak onboard.

After World War 1, Elizabeth Kearey was appointed Principal Matron of No 2 Military District. In February 1937, she was chosen as New South Wales nurse for the contingent that travelled to England for the coronation of King George VI in May. The Australian nurses marched with the troops in London on the day of the coronation, received their coronation medals at Buckingham Palace and toured the battlefields of the Western Front. Each was outfitted with a uniform costing 11 guineas and they were given first treatment from the time they left Melbourne aboard the Orontes 16 March 1937 until they returned 5 months later. Kearey enlisted in the Second World War on 16 October 1939 and served in the Australian Army Nursing Service until 6 January 1944 reaching the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. In order to serve during WW2, Kearey listed her date of birth as 1885 rather 1882 – she was actually 57 years of age when she began serving in World War 2. On retiring at 61, she lived with her sister Mary Angela in North Sydney. Elizabeth Kearey died 17 January 1968 at the age of 85 and is buried in the Catholic section of the Macquarie Park Cemetery, North Ryde.

Sources:
Australian War Memorial World War 1 Nominal Roll
NAA: B2455, KEAREY E SISTER