

## **Annie Eliza Major-West Royal Red Cross (2nd Class)**



**Date/Place of Birth:** 1881, Bathurst, NSW

**Date/Place of Death:** 7 June 1951, Concord Hospital, NSW

### **Australian Army Nursing Service**

**Enlisted:** 10 May 1917

**Discharged:** 24 October 1919

**Memorial Details:** Honour Roll, Memory Park, Penrith, St Stephen's Anglican Church, Penrith

### **Biographical details**

Annie West was born about 1881 at Bathurst NSW, the daughter of Edward Major and Annie West. Her mother died when she was 6 years old, and her father died in 1926. Annie had a number of siblings including Venerable Archdeacon Stanley West. It is not known where Annie West completed her nursing training but at the time of enlistment, she was the Matron of the Nepean Cottage Hospital. In November 1915, Dr Higgins attributed the success of the nurses in their exams to 'having a highly intellectual matron'. Matron West and nurses Scahill, Greentree, Bassetti and Baker all left Nepean Cottage Hospital at the same time

### **Military Service with AANS**

Annie West enlisted as a Staff Nurse on 10 May 1917. She left Australia aboard *RMS Mooltan* on 18 June 1917 and disembarked at Suez on 19 July 1917. On 25 July 1917, West embarked for Salonika Greece aboard the *HT Chagres*. After arrival on 31 July 1917, West joined the 52th General Hospital before serving briefly with the 50th General Hospital, 66th General Hospital and 50th General Hospital before being admitted to the 43rd General Hospital for treatment on her right hand. On 10 November 1917, West was

transferred to the Red Cross Convalescent House before returning to duty with the 50th General Hospital two weeks later. On 17 February 1918, West's name was changed on her service record to read Annie Elizabeth Major-West. On 27 June 1918, Major-West was sent to the Sisters' Convalescent Camp at Salonika suffering from debility and rejoined her unit on 12 August 1918. On 8 September 1918, Major-West was admitted to the 43rd General Hospital and was transferred to the Sisters' Convalescent Camp on 15 September 1918 suffering from influenza. On 20 September 1918, Major-West returned to duty with the 50th General Hospital.

Major-West was awarded the Royal Red Cross 2nd Class on 1 January 1919. The Royal Red Cross was awarded to trained nurses who had shown exceptional devotion and competency in the performance of nursing duties, over a continuous and long period, or had performed an exceptional act of bravery and devotion at her post of duty. On 2 February 1919, Major-West proceeded to England on leave arriving on 25 February at Southampton. On 19 March 1919, Major-West was attached to No 1 Australian General Hospital at Sutton Veny, England where she served until 18 July 1919 when she embarked on the *HT Orsova* for return to Australia. After disembarking at Sydney on 6 September 1919, Major-West's appointment was terminated on 24 October 1919.

After the war, Annie Major-West became Matron of Royal Hospital for Women at Paddington.

She died on 7 June 1951 at 70 years of age in Repatriation General Hospital, Concord.

### **Newspaper article refers to Nurse Major-West**

*Nepean Times*, 2 June 1917, p3 c6

Our Hospital – Correspondence [Excerpts]: Letter from Matron West, notifying her resignation of position in consequence of having been called up for service abroad.

From Nurse Bassetti, resigning her position for similar reasons. The Matron and Nurse Bassetti, sincerely desired to express their thanks to Doctors and Committee of the Hospital for past kindnesses while on the hospital staff.

In reference to resignations of Matron West and Nurse Bassetti, which were received with regret, it was moved by Ald Jones, and seconded by the Mayor, that advertisements be inserted in the Sydney morning dailies for applications from competent and qualified persons for the position of Matron and Sister.

On motion of Mr Mills and Mr H J Neale, it was decided to place on record the Committee's deep appreciation of the services rendered by Matron West and Nurse Bassetti to the hospital.

On motion of Messrs Mills and Price, it was decided that Executive had the power to appoint Sister Greentree as Matron, temporarily, pending the appointment of a permanent Matron. We understand Sister Greentree is empowered to act until a permanent appointment is made. As Sister Greentree has also been listed for nursing service at the seat of war, she is precluded,

we understand, from accepting the position of permanent Matron at the Nepean D.C. Hospital.