

Jessie Grace Perkins

Date/Place of Birth: 1880, Penrith

Date/Place of Death: 5 February 1965, Strathfield, NSW

Australian Army Nursing Service

Enlisted: 9 October 1915

Discharged: 14 January 1919

Memorial Details: Honour Roll: Memory Park, Penrith

Biographical details

Jessie Grace Perkins was born in 1880 at Penrith, the daughter of Linus and Sarah Madeline (nee Roussel) Perkins. It is believed that Jessie completed her schooling at Penrith Public school before undertaking her nurses training. Her family had lived at Mount Capicure, Rooty Hill since the 1860s. Her father was an active community member both at Penrith and Parramatta. She was appointed head nurse at Nepean Cottage Hospital in April 1914. On enlistment her home address was stated as being Rooty Hill.

Military Service with AANS:

Perkins enlisted with the Australian Army Nursing Service as a staff nurse on 9 October 1915 and was allocated to the quarterly general reinforcements of No 2 Australian General Hospital (AGH). Perkins embarked on *A67 HMAT Orsova* on 10 November 1915 and was taken on strength by No 2AGH on 9 December 1915 then stationed in Egypt. On 13 October 1916, Perkins was attached to the Choubra Military Infectious Hospital near Cairo. On 16 January 1917, Perkins left Alexandria aboard the *Essquibo* for England and was then sent to France to serve with No 13 Stationary Hospital Rouen before transferring to No 83 General Hospital at Boulogne, France.

On 18 July 1917, Perkins, along with sister Florrie, was transferred to the AIF Headquarters, London and returned to Australia aboard *A64 Demosthenes* and disembarked in Melbourne and completed the trip to Sydney aboard *A14 Euripedes*. On 13 October 1917, Perkins's appointment was terminated, and she was employed on home service and then placed on the AIF Reserve. Perkins was later attached to No 7 Sea Transport Section, which allowed transports to return casualties instead of having to carry them on hospital ships. Each section made several voyages, staying in England for a few days to a few weeks before making another voyage, usually from the same port but on a different ship. Each section consisted of a medical practitioner, a matron, two nursing sisters, four staff nurses, a masseuse, a quarter master sergeant, a pharmacist, a sergeant, a corporal, and three (later eight) orderlies (privates). Perkins reembarked aboard the *SS Ormonde* on 2 March 1918 and disembarked at Suez on 4 April 1918. On 24 May 1918, Perkins and another Penrith nurse Elizabeth Kearey boarded the *Indarra* for the trip to Marseilles and on 7 June 1918 arrived in London. After reporting to AIF Headquarters, Perkins was attached to No 2 Australian Auxiliary Hospital at Southall for duty. On 16 August 1918, Perkins returned to Australia on duty aboard the *Matatua*. Perkins reembarked aboard *A7 HMAT Medic* on 2 November 1918, however,

the ship was returned to Australia On 31 December and placed in quarantine owing to the influenza outbreak onboard.

Perkins was discharged in Sydney on 14 January 1919 and shortly afterward was hospitalised at No 3 Australian Auxiliary Hospital with tonsillitis.

In 1922 she married William Braithwaite at Ashfield. He was from the Braithwaite family of Exeter farm at Kemps Creek. They lived in Albert Road Strathfield. Braithwaite died in 1958 and Jessie in 1965.