

Alice Cecilia (Cecily) Scahill

Date/Place of Birth: 1892, Canterbury, NSW

Date of Death/Place of Burial: 29 Dec 1973, Woronora Lawn Cemetery, Sutherland

Australian Army Nursing Service

Enlisted: 10 May 1917

Discharged: 30 November 1918

Memorial Details: Honour Roll, Memory Park, Penrith

Biographical details

Alice Cecilia Scahill was born in 1892 at Canterbury, the daughter of Thomas and Theresa Scahill. The family lived in Castlereagh Street and North Streets Penrith. After leaving school, Alice followed her sister Rose into nursing. Alice undertook her nursing training at the Nepean Cottage Hospital Penrith. In 1913, the Nepean Times reported the results a second year examination in surgery. Students were asked a range of questions on subjects as diverse as disinfectants, bed sore prevention and treatment, after care of tracheotomy, preparing patients for general operations such as the removal of an appendix, identification of pressure points and arteries, and resuscitating a patient. Nurse Scahill was placed second in the second year nurses examination receiving 93 in the practical examination and 95 in the vapour examination. Around the time of Scahill's enlistment, her mother moved to Punchbowl to live. Prior to signing up for active service, Nurse Scahill left the Nepean Cottage Hospital at the same time as Matron Major-West and nurses Greentree, Bassetti and Baker for service overseas.

Military Service with AANS

Scahill enlisted on 16 May 1917 and was appointed a staff nurse. Scahill left Australia aboard the *RMS Mooltan* on 18 June 1917 and disembarked at Suez on 19 July 1917. On 12 August 1917, Scahill embarked on the *Osmanieh* bound for Salonika Greece and disembarked two days later. On arrival Scahill, served briefly with the 52nd General Hospital before transferring to the 50th General Hospital. On 19 April 1918, Scahill was admitted to the 50th General Hospital with enteric and was struck off the strength of the hospital on 4 May 1918. On 24 June 1918, a medical board declared Scahill to be unfit for general service and noted that she required convalescent treatment for the enteric caused by military service at Salonika. The board recommended that Scahill be evacuated to Australia. On 26 June 1918, Scahill was transferred to the Sisters' Convalescent Camp and on 13 July 1918, Scahill embarked for Egypt aboard the *Kashgar* and disembarked at Port Said three days later. On 17 July 1918, Scahill was admitted to No 14 Australian General Hospital with enteric. Scahill embarked for Australia aboard the *HT Kanowna* on 22 July 1918. On her return, Sister Scahill worked as a district nurse, then opened a private maternity hospital at Henry Street, Punchbowl. She later became Matron of Bankstown Hospital Outpatients Department, Appian Way, Bankstown. Scahill married Ernest John Paxton and lived at Killara. She died on 29 December 1973 and is buried at the Woronora Lawn Cemetery, Sutherland.

Newspaper article refers to Nurse Scahill

Nepean Times 15 November 1915, p5

Our Hospital [excerpt]: Following is a copy of the examinations, second year nurses in surgery have to go through, and the result of the first part of the examination gone through by nurses of the Nepean Cottage Hospital:- (1) Name ten antiseptic agents and the strength in which they are usually employed, (2) What treatment would you adopt for rigor (8 lines). (3) How would you prevent the formation of bed sores (12 lines)? (4) Describe the treatment of bed sores (10 lines). (5) Briefly state how you would prepare a patient for a general operation, eg appendicitis; including treatment of the skin, to take place at 10 am tomorrow? (6) What methods would you adopt to disinfect instruments (24 lines)? (7) Relate in detail the after treatment of tracheotomy (exclusive of feeding). (8) Question for prize – Give details of feeding of a tracheotomy – case, age 10 years.

To be done in Theatre – Select the instrument that you suppose might be required for an amputation of the leg just below the knee joint.

To be done in the Ward – (1) Put up a fracture of the left radius. (2) Demonstrate how to resuscitate a patient who has stopped breathing during the administration of an anaesthetic. (3) mark with a pencil the pressure points and recount the names of the arteries you reckon you place pressure upon.

Result 1, Nurse Baker, practical 92, vapour 99, total 191; 2 Nurse Scahill, 93, 95-188; 3, Nurse Greentree, 99, 88-187; 4, Nurse Bassetti, 90, 93-183.

Nurse Baker was the prizewinner. The marks obtained being very high all the nurses were congratulated by the committee. Dr Higgins, in speaking on the matter, attributed the success to having a highly intellectual matron.