

Josephine Nolan (1883 – 1969)

Josephine Nolan's overseas postings included hospitals in Bombay and Britain treating convalescent soldiers with nervous conditions. Josephine was also an accomplished singer.

Josephine Nolan was born at Gaffney's Creek, south of Mansfield, the youngest of ten children surviving to adulthood. Her Irish-born father's highly successful gold prospecting enabled him, and his family, to retire to a stately, Italianate Victorian house in Hawthorn when Josephine was 20 years old.

Josephine was musically very talented and worked as a music teacher before she commenced her nursing training.

Following the completion of her nursing studies, Josephine worked at the Base Hospital in St Kilda Road.

Her first overseas posting was at the Victoria War Hospital in Bombay in 1917.

At the end of hostilities, Josephine was promoted to Sister and transferred to assist the war effort in Britain. She worked in the No. 3 Australian Auxiliary Hospital in Dartford, at the No. 2 Command Depot, also known as the Convalescent Depot, on the coast at Weymouth, and in the No. 1 Australian General Hospital in Sutton Veny in Wiltshire.

Awaiting transport back to Australia, Josephine had the opportunity to pursue further study at the Royal Academy of Music in London. The AIF Education Scheme provided bursaries to members of the AIF, including nurses, for training leading to employment opportunities when they returned to the civilian workforce in Australia.

After the war, Josephine spent time travelling and studying overseas. In 1929 she was living in a flat in Paris enjoying the company of expatriate musicians from Melbourne.

Back in Melbourne in the 1930s, Josephine contributed to local community and cultural life singing at the Returned Army Nurses Club at Anzac House and donating to the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and to the Royal Victorian Trained Nurses Association.



Service summary: 5 AGH (Melbourne, Australia); Victoria War Hospital (Bombay, India); Colaba War Hospital (Bombay, India); 3 AAH (Dartford, England); 2 Command Depot (Weymouth, England); 1 AGH (Sutton Veny, England).

Graduated St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne: 1915

Enlisted: 1916

Final rank: Sister

Medals: British War Medal

Image source: Family collection, copied with permission of Barbara Clements.

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