

# Sister Olive Haynes



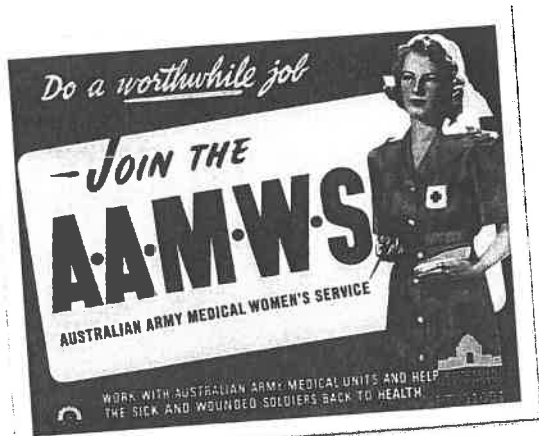
**Sister Olive Haynes pre- 1914**

**The story of a truly inspirational South Australian, who risked it all to save  
the lives of others during World War One.**

Every year, on the 25th of April many Australians and New Zealanders stop to remember the many men who went to war between 1914 and 1918. During this unforgettable war many men were killed and many more were injured or became ill. These soldiers required the help of what were for a long time the forgotten Anzacs or the Nurses. Nursing during the war was not an easy job and the women were faced with some challenging and gruesome situations. Among these brave women was a 26 year old nurse from Adelaide named Olive Haynes.



Olive was the eldest daughter of Reverend James Croft Haynes and his wife Emma. Olive was educated at Tormore where becoming "a lady" was more important than becoming a scholar. Olive had a strong passion for cultural subjects and enjoyed reading, music, dancing, attending parties and painting. When Olive told her parents that she wanted to become a nurse they were not overly enthusiastic but they didn't stop her from following her dream. In October 1909 Olive started her training at the Adelaide Hospital. To become a nurse before WW1 you had to be at least 21 years of age and must have received a good education. You were then required to sign on for three years. Nurse's hours were long; they were up at 5am and worked hard until at least 8pm with a two hour break during the day, if you were lucky and occasionally an afternoon off. A full day off was only a once monthly occurrence. For all this hard work nurses were paid very poorly. Once Olive had finished her training she continued to work at the Adelaide Hospital until December 1913 after which she went on to do some private nursing and holidaying until she enlisted in 1914.



# Sister Olive Haynes

2011

On the 14th of November 1914, 26 year old Olive said goodbye to her loving family and the life she knew in Adelaide. Her first stop was Melbourne, where she and many other brave South Australian nurses joined up with nurses from the Eastern states and Tasmania to make the long journey to Egypt aboard the S.S Kyara. The S.S Kyara was built in Scotland as a high standard passenger carrier, but was requested in 1914 by the British government for use as a hospital ship. Olive's trip to Egypt was made even harder by the overcrowding and inadequate sanitary and hygiene arrangements. Sleeping aboard the boat was also an issue due to the heat and occasional heavy downpour.

**AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES.**  
**Australian Imperial Force.**

Attestation Paper of Persons enlisted for Service Abroad.

No. \_\_\_\_\_ Name Haynes Olive Lilian Brewster  
Unit A. I. U.S. A. I. F.  
Joined on August 1914.

Questions to be put to the Person enlisting before attestation.

1. What is your name?	1. <u>Olive Lilian Brewster Haynes</u>
2. In what Parish or Town were you born?	2. In the Parish of <u>St. Peter's</u> in the Town of <u>Adelaide</u> in the County of <u>St. Michael's</u>
3. Are you a natural born British Subject or a Naturalized British Subject? (If No.—If the latter, papers to be shown.)	3. <u>Natural born British Subject</u>
4. What is your age?	4. <u>26 on enlistment</u>
5. What is your trade or calling?	5. <u>Nurse</u>
6. Are you or have you been, an Apprentice? If so, where, to whom, and for what period?	6. <u>No.</u>
7. Are you married?	7. <u>No.</u>
8. Who is your next-of-kin? (Address to be given.)	8. <u>Father: Rev. J. C. Haynes, St. Peter's Adelaide</u>
9. Have you ever been imprisoned by the Civil Power?	9. <u>No.</u>
10. Have you ever been discharged from the service of His Majesty's Fleet, with honours, or as Unfit for Service, or on account of Conviction of Felony, or of a Warrant of Imprisonment, or have you been dishonoured with Disgrace from the Army?	10. <u>No.</u>
11. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, His Majesty's Army, the Marine, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, the Imperial Force, Royal Navy or Colonial Forces? If so, state which, and if not, state cause of discharge.	11. <u>No.</u>
12. Have you stated the whole of any of your previous service?	12. <u>Yes</u>
13. Have you ever been sentenced to death for His Majesty's Service? If so, on what grounds?	13. <u>No.</u>
14. (For married men, widowers with children, and widows who are the sole support of children under 16.) Do you understand that no Supplement Allowance will be issued to you after mobilization during your term of service?	14. _____

I, Olive Haynes do hereby declare that the above answers given by me to the above questions are true, and I am willing and hereby voluntarily agree to serve in the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia while it remains the basis of the Contract which I have entered into.

And I further agree to that, and that, in the event of my being called to see duty, I will, if necessary, be liable to be sent to any place, and to any service, which may be required of me, and I will, if necessary, be liable to be sent to any place, and to any service, which may be required of me, and I will, if necessary, be liable to be sent to any place, and to any service, which may be required of me.

Date 5. 2. 14. Signature O Haynes

Signature of Person enlisted.

\* This form should be struck out in the case of non-combatants or non-combatants without children under 16 years of age. \* This form should be struck out in the case of non-combatants or non-combatants without children under 16 years of age.

Upon arrival in Egypt on the 14th of January 1915, Olive and the others had to wait aboard the ship as no accommodation had been arranged for them. They were not allowed shore leave and weren't given much of a say in what they did. On one occasion an Australian newspaper mentioned the safe arrival of the nurses in the same sentence as the wellbeing of the horses. Once they started work many of the nurses began suffering from strain and were being overworked. This exhaustion was due to the lack of nurses and the increase in patients after the Gallipoli landing. At one stage there were only 92 sisters to care for 1427 critically injured patients. During their long tedious shifts the nurses saw some horrific injuries and chronic illness.

Finances were also an issue for the nurses as the Army was not very reliable with their payments (fifteen shillings and four pence a week). On top of this a nurse was expected to provide her own linen, utensils, food (18pts to eat in the mess hall which was more than their pay) as well as uniforms and laundry on top of that. An Army nurses uniform consisted of both a ward dress and an outdoor uniform. The ward dress was a long heavy weight grey dress with starched white cuffs and collar, over this was a white apron and red cape.

A nurse's outdoor uniform was made up of a long grey dress covered by a thick grey cape with a small grey bonnet and a chocolate brown bow. These thick uniforms were designed for the cool English climate and were really not suitable for the warmth of the Egyptian environment, this discomfort adding to the already stressful situation.

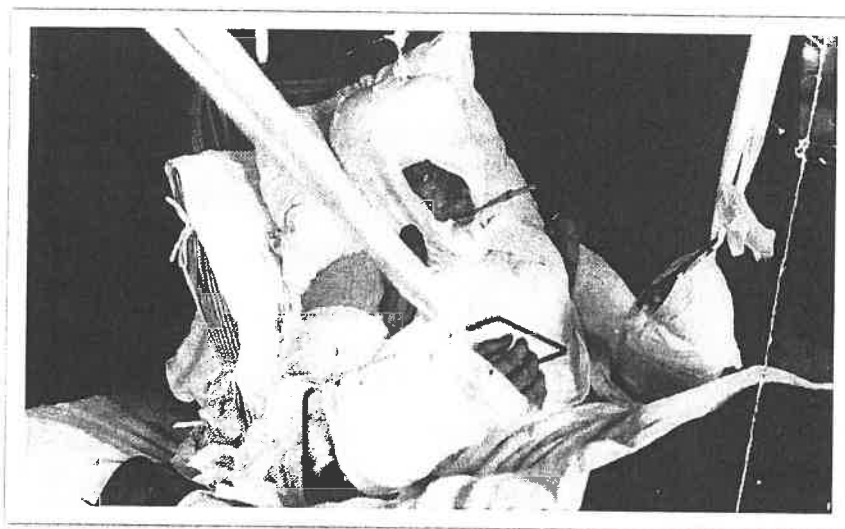


Olive spent her time serving at many hospitals including Mena house, Heliopolis and Alexandria whilst in Egypt. After her time in Egypt, Olive moved on to Lemnos, a small area that was famous for its medicinal earth. Lemnos was also the location of the Army base and training camp as it wasn't very far away from the Dardanelles, "I can hear guns from the Dardanelles, something must be going on."<sup>1</sup> After a short four months in Lemnos, Olive moved on to France where she lived on bread and tinned bullied beef and had her beloved camera taken from her. Receiving letters was not a common occurrence and hospital staff were no longer allowed to mention the hospitals or what was happening. "All interesting things that happen are barred".<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Letter from Olive to her mother 29.9.1915' We Are Here Too' pg 80.

<sup>2</sup> Letter from Olive to her mother. 'We Are Here Too' pg. 138

In her diary Olive writes of other problems like the lack of water "*water very scarce again today. Couldn't even get a drink for a man.*"<sup>3</sup> and the poor attitude of the English nurses towards the ANZACS. She also writes of multiple occasions where the nurses were being fired at, "*Some bullets fell just beside one of my patients....*"<sup>4</sup> During this hard time Olive met a man named Pat Dooly, a short time later Olive wrote a letter to her mother to tell her about her engagement. Olive and Pat married during the war in St Peters Lee Bailey, Oxford on the 11th of December 1917.



Olive sailed home in February 1918 aboard the RMS Llandstephan Castle. Aboard the ship, Olive worked caring for ill patients but was not paid for her work.

A nurse's duty was far from easy and although the girls made it sound like a walk in the park by only mentioning the happy times like fun outings and having tea. '*We walked into Steenwerck and went to the pictures and music, etc.*'<sup>5</sup> They ultimately dealt with all the deaths and the injuries of that deadly war and at the time were not completely recognised for their efforts '*the female nurse — as a substitute for the fully trained male nursing orderly — did little toward the actual saving of life in war ... although she might promote a more rapid and complete recovery*'. General Howse.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Diary entry 25th September 1915, 'We Are Here' Too pg 78.

<sup>4</sup> Letter from Olive to her Mother 25.8.1916, 'We Are Here Too pg.159

<sup>5</sup> Letter from Olive to her Mother 9.12.1916, we are here too pg.172

<sup>6</sup> Comment made by general Howse [www.anzacday.org.au](http://www.anzacday.org.au)

The ANZAC's were known for their all or nothing attitude, their ability to see the best in all and to even in the worst situation see the humour. The ANZAC spirit shone through in all of these brave women, including sister Olive Haynes. Even during this hard time she managed to stay positive, to look on the bright side and have some fun and a laugh every now and again. In her diaries Olive mentioned of times when they had fun telling soldiers from other countries about our "kangaroo`s feathers ". Her courage is something to admire, and her strength to do what needed to be done, was excellent. She was a great example to the world of a true Australian. Her kind nature and fun personality meant she was good with patients, always making them feel better and worthy of her time. Her sheer determination to stay confident showed that she cared. Olive was one incredibly strong Australian woman who saw a need and stood up to fix it, held together by her strong will and determination not to crumble under pressure. She is one South Australian we should all be proud of and show our undeniable gratitude towards.

Pat and Olive always thought of others' needs before their own and together they had seven children, one of which had Down Syndrome. During the Second World War, Olive worked repairing books and rolling bandages and then went helping in the children's hospital canteen. She also acting as a VAD (voluntary aid detachment) for the women's hospital. Olive`s five sons served in the Second World War along with Pat. Olive`s daughter trained as a nurse towards the end of the war.



Throughout her life Olive helped to establish a school for children with mental disabilities and later the Ivan Hoe and Diamond Valley Centre for Intellectually Disabled Adults. Olive worked in the centre voluntarily until her death in 1978 aged 90.

World War One must have been horrible, and almost a century later we still can't even start to imagine what it would feel like to be there amongst it. Yes, the soldiers did fight on the front line but it was the nurses that were there when it all went wrong. They were standing by to pick up the pieces and make sure the boys could get back to the front line as soon as possible. Without courageous, determined and caring nurses like Olive our heroes from the front line may not have made it through this dreadful war. Next ANZAC Day think not just of the men on the battle field but also of the women in the many hospitals, because after all **they were there too.**

*"They are always so keen on 'our boys'- no one ever hears of 'our girls', and it would be a good chance to mention we are here"* Unknown soldier

# Sister Olive Haynes | Bibliography

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