

ETHEL SARAH DAVIDSON

(1872-1939)



Ethel Sarah Davidson's courageous spirit and outstanding service and commitment to others transcended her expected commitment to her nursing career and developed into an exemplary record of the ANZAC Spirit.

Ethel Davidson's early life helped her to develop certain personality traits, these traits then helped Ethel Davidson throughout the rest of her life. Born in Adelaide on the 19th June 1872, Ethel was the daughter of a Scottish-born Master Mariner, and his second wife Elizabeth Jane n e Green. Tragically however aged 5 Miss Davidson was orphaned when her father's Brigantine, the 'Emily Smith' was wrecked on Kangaroo Island in May 1877. Ethel's two younger brothers and baby sister also died in the accident and was the only family member who was not on the boat at the time of the accident. She was left with three adult half-brothers and three half-sisters, all of whom were children from her father's first marriage, all of whom resided in Adelaide. This family tragedy would have impacted on Ethel in such a way that would make her fight for the lives of others and in true ANZAC style she strived to make people lives better no matter where they came from or who they were. The tragedy would have also made Ethel Davidson resilient, independent and courageous.

No details of Ethel Sarah Davidson's education are known however she trained as a nurse at the Adelaide Hospital and then became a district nurse in Prospect. She later worked in district and private nursing. For some time Ethel Davidson was on the Central Board of Health and in 1904 Ethel joined the Australian Army Nursing Service. On the 26th of September 1914 she enlisted in the A.A.N.S (Australian Army Nursing Service) as a sister. She then left Australia and in December along with the first contingent she reached Egypt, and was then appointed to the Convalescent Depot, in



Injured soldiers in Egypt

Mena; from August 1915 to January 1916 she was appointed as an acting Matron. Later after this, she was made temporary Matron of the 3rd Australian Auxiliary Hospital in Cairo, and for her distinguished service their she was mentioned in dispatches and was awarded the Royal Cross 2nd Class. The experience of Egypt's harsh conditions allowed Ethel Davidsons resilience be further developed which allowed the western front to be a time of focussing on helping patients instead of dwelling on what was happening around her. On the 24th of June she left the position of head sister and she then left

for London for a six month appointment in the medical section in the, in the A.I.F. Headquarters.

Ethel's prior experiences shaped her ability and influenced her actions on the Western Front. She briefly served at the 2nd A.A.H, in Southall before crossing to France on the 28th of February 1917 for duty at the 2nd Australian General Hospital, Wimereux. In March she was transferred, as acting Matron, to the 2nd Australian Casualty Clearing Station at the Trois Abres, near Steenwerch. In July, Sister Ethel Davidson was then sent to Italy as a temporary Matron of the 38th British Stationary

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Hospital, near Genoa. Her rank was confirmed in January 1918. In that same year Sister Davidson was mentioned in dispatches and awarded the Royal Red Cross, 1st class for her distinguished service and devotion to doing her duty. She then returned back to England in the January of 1919, while serving briefly as Matron of the 2nd A.A.H. at the Southall. Before embarking for Australia, Ethel was appointed C.B.E. in the King's Birthday honours of the 3rd of June.



Royal Red Cross 1st Class

On the 5th of December 1919, Matron Davidson was dismissed and in that same month appointed Matron of the Military Hospital in Keswick, Adelaide. From 1924 Ethel was the head matron of the 4th Military District. The hospital was taken over in 1921 by the Repatriation Commission, however Ethel remained Matron there until she reach the retiring age in the June of 1933. From 1922 to 1926 Ethel Davidson was president of the Returned Army Nurses' Association of South Australia and was mainly responsible for gaining the contract which made the association a smaller branch of the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League in 1924.

Unfortunately Ethel Davidson died on the 21st of April 1939 at the age of 66 at her home in Semaphore, South Australia. Her death was reported in the *Adelaide News* and the *Rising Sun*. The *Adelaide News* reported: 'Her death, almost on the eve of Anzac Day, has cast a gloom over Keswick Hospital. She will be mourned by large numbers of patients and hundreds of returned soldiers with whom she came in contact when on active service and in South Australia'. In the *Rising Sun* Ethel was described as 'a woman of outstanding character' and 'an exceptionally able leader and organiser'. Ethel Sarah Davidson was buried the A.I.F cemetery, West Terrace, Adelaide.



West Terrace Cemetery

The word ANZAC is an acronym for the *Australian and New Zealand Army Corps*. This word for the Australian and New Zealand soldiers came about at the time of the World War 1 Gallipoli campaign, which was seen as 'the first major battle undertaken by the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC), and is often considered to mark the birth of national consciousness in both these countries.' (*Gallipoli Campaign*, Wikipedia) It was at this battle that the idea of the ANZAC spirit really developed and became an inspiration to all Australians and New Zealanders alike. The *ANZAC Spirit* is an idea that suggests that the ANZACs shared certain characteristics and qualities that are seen to be shown in the battle fields of World War 1. These specific qualities include endurance, courage, ingenuity, good humour, larrikinism and mateship. Nowadays, when people talk about the *ANZAC Spirit* they talk about the men and women who fought to make their country a safer place and they usually say it with pride and admiration and salute the people that gave their lives for the protection of others.

Ethel Davidson's strength and determination to help and care for people made her a great role model to those she came into contact with, she always strived to help others and put them before herself. She was a great role model and she truly showed her ANZAC Spirit to the world. Her continued care for others through her nursing career meant that she was able to show the

endurance, courage, ingenuity and mateship of the ANZAC spirit throughout her experience as a nurse and throughout her own personal journey as a human being.

Ethel Sarah Davidson was truly an amazing, strong and compassionate woman who really showed the path of a true ANZAC.

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AANS

AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES.

Australian Imperial Force.

Attestation Paper of Persons enlisted for Service Abroad.

Wester
Sister
 Name Ethel Sarah Davison
 Unit 702 Australian General Hospital
 Joined on September 26th 1914

Questions to be put to the Person enlisting before attestation.

1. What is your name? Ethel Sarah Davison
2. In the Parish of Payneham in or near the Town of Adelaide in the County of South Australia
 3. Natural born Subject.
4. What is your age? 41
5. What is your trade or calling? Trained Nurse
6. Are you, or have you been, an Apprentice? Adelaide Hospital 3 years
7. Are you married? No
8. Who is your next-of-kin? (Address to be stated) Thomas Davison (Brother) South Terrace Semaphore, South Aust.
9. Have you ever been convicted by the Civil Power? No
10. Have you ever been discharged from any part of His Majesty's Forces, with Ignominy, or as Insubordinate and Worthless, or on account of Commission of Felony, or of a Sentence of Penal Servitude, or have you been dismissed with Disgrace from the Navy? No
11. Do you ever belong to, or have you ever served in, His Majesty's Army, the Marines, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, the Territorial Force, Rural Navy, or Colonial Forces? If so, state which, and if not now serving, state cause of discharge. Member of R.A.M.F. since its formation in South Australia
12. Have you stated the whole, if any, of your previous service? Yes
13. Have you ever been reported as unfit for His Majesty's Service? If so, on what grounds? No
14. (For married men, widowers with children, and soldiers who are the sole support of widowed mothers) Do you understand that no Repatriation Allowance will be issued to you after embarkation during your term of service?

Ethel Sarah Davison do solemnly declare that the above answers made 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 within or beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.

And I further agree to what not less than two-fifths of the pay payable to me from time to time during my service for the support of my dependants.

Date March 8th 1916 Ethel Davison
 Signature of Person enlisted.

* This clause should be struck out in the case of unmarried men or widowers without children under 16 years of age.
 † Two-fifths must be allotted to the wife, and if there are children three-fifths must be allotted.

CERTIFICATE OF ATTESTING OFFICER.

The foregoing questions were read to the person enlisted in my presence.

I have taken care that he understands each question, and that his answer to each question has been duly entered as replied to by him.

I have examined his naturalization papers and am of opinion that they are correct.

(This to be struck out except in the case of persons who are naturalized British subjects.)

Date _____

Signature of Attesting Officer.

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY PERSON BEING ENLISTED.*

I, Ethel Sarah Davidson swear that I will well and truly serve our Sovereign Lord the King in the Australian Imperial Force from September 26th 1914, until the end of the War, and a further period of four months thereafter unless sooner lawfully discharged, dismissed, or removed therefrom; and that I will resist His Majesty's enemies and cause His Majesty's peace to be kept and maintained; and that I will in all matters appertaining to my service, faithfully discharge my duty according to law.

SO HELP ME, GOD.

Ethel S. Davidson
Signature of Person enlisted.

Taken and subscribed at _____ in
the State of _____
this _____ day of _____ 19____
before me—

Signature of Attesting Officer.

* A person enlisting who objects to taking an oath may make an affirmation in accordance with the Third Schedule of the Act, and the above form must be amended accordingly. All amendments must be initialed by the Attesting Officer.

AND CHECKED JCP

Statement of Service of No.

Name E J Davidson

Unit in which served	Promotions, Reductions, Casualties, &c.	Period of service in each rank		Remarks
		From	To	
A.A.M.S.	To be temporary promotion to 2nd Lt. as per application dated 21-1-16. Awarded Royal Warrant 2-4-16. London Gazette No 5549 dated 3-6-16.	21-1-16	2-4-16	1st Lt. 1st Lt. 2867
	Special mention in despatches of General Sir J. Maxwell in connection with administration in Egypt 258 Orders list No 67 dated 14-4-16. London Gazette number 29682 dated 14-4-16.	20-6-16		1st Lt. 1st Lt. 2867
	Embarked on H.M.S. Indefatigable 8-7-16 for Egypt.	8-7-16		1st Lt. 1st Lt. 2867
	Admin. Hd. Qrs. Medical Section in Egypt	20-9-16		1st Lt. 1st Lt. 2867
	Returned to command of Royal Garrison	24-6-16		1st Lt. 1st Lt. 2867

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Description of _____ on Enlistment

Age	years	months	DISTINCTIVE MARKS
Height	feet	inches	
Weight	lbs.		
Chest Measurement	inches		
Complexion			
Eyes			
Hair			
Religious Denomination			

CERTIFICATE OF MEDICAL EXAMINATION.

I HAVE examined the above-named person, and find that he does not present any of the following conditions, viz. :—

Scrofula; phthisis; syphilis; impaired constitution; defective intelligence; defects of vision, voice, or hearing; hernia; hemorrhoids; varicose veins, beyond a limited extent; marked varicocele with unusually pendent testicle; inveterate cutaneous disease; chronic ulcers; traces of corporal punishment, or evidence of having been marked with the letters D. or B.C.; contracted or deformed chest; abnormal curvature of spine; or any other disease or physical defect calculated to unfit him for the duties of a soldier.

He can see the required distance with either eye; his heart and lungs are healthy; he has the free use of his joints and limbs; and he declares he is not subject to fits of any description.

I consider him fit for active service.

Date

Place

Signature of Examining Medical Officer.

CERTIFICATE OF COMMANDING OFFICER.

I CERTIFY that this Attestation of the above-named person is correct, and that the required forms have been complied with. I accordingly approve, and appoint him to

Date March 10th 1916
Place Helioptis

W. Chas. Lee, M.D.
Commanding 3rd Auxiliary Hospital