INTRODUCTION

‘We owe to those who have borne the brunt of the battle more than one nation can ever adequately repay’
William Morris Hughes - Bendigo 27 Mar 1917

When working with Volunteers at State Records of NSW indexing records for Soldier Settlement my attention was drawn to a file that provided the names of two women – members of the Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS) who served overseas and applied for land when they returned to Australia. Subsequently, two more application files were located for women who served with the Queen Alexandra’s Imperial Military Nursing Service (QAIMNS). As well in time, it became apparent that there were soldier settlement files for other women who were not fully trained nurses but who had also served overseas during World War One in a medical capacity. Included were women from the Voluntary Aid Detachments (VADs), the Scottish Hospitals for Home and Foreign Service (SHHFS) and the Almeric Paget Military Massage Corps (APMMC).

This thesis seeks to examine the experiences of a sample of these nurses from New South Wales and Victoria who, along with the many thousands of returned men who served overseas during World War One, were eligible to apply for land under the soldier settlement scheme. Apart from three women in NSW who owned land prior to the war, the other nurse soldier settlers in this thesis fall into three groups. Some were single and applied for land themselves as an entitlement due to them for war service. In other cases when both husband and wife were returned soldiers, they each applied for land under their own name. Several returned nurses did not apply for land themselves but were married to a returned soldier who did. By examining the experiences of this last group, a broader understanding will be reached about the rural, family life and repatriation of a
greater number of returned nurses who settled on the land after the war. This thesis will explore the experiences of these groups of women settlers and explain how their circumstances differed.

As many nurse soldier settlers and their husbands were discharged medically unfit or suffered declining health after the war, consideration will be given to how this impacted on their time on the land and how their varying levels of health and fitness affected their day to day work and their ability to run their property. The poor mental health and physical fitness of a large number of nurses in this study during the war and after it ended, is one of the major themes that emerged when carrying out research for this thesis. In line with what happened to the men of the AIF, many nurses were permanently affected by their war service. Generally, there appears to have been little care and consideration for their health and well being by the Department of Repatriation. Additionally when on the land, the worry and pressure of maintaining a living in the face of growing debt, drought, floods, loss of crops, the death of stock and insect plagues, was to be an added burden. These impacted heavily on the health of soldier settlers and their wives, notwithstanding those who were fit when they took up their land. The economic survival on a soldier settlement block was dependent on the good health of both husband and wife to farm profitably.

In the course of this thesis, various land holdings in the possession of returned nurses were investigated although genealogical research revealed that not all of these blocks were obtained under the soldier settlement scheme, even though several of these nurses applied for and were given the £625 Advance which was available to most soldier settlers. The experiences of these nurses have been included in this thesis as their stories
reveal clearly that the repatriation of nurses was haphazard and ad hoc and that many chose to take up land after the war instead of working as nurses.

Nurses have generally not received the same interest as their digger brothers in World War One historiography. This omission appears to apply to their war service and repatriation and also as soldier settlers. This thesis will also examine if the policy of including nurses in repatriation and returned soldiers’ legislation under the broad term of ‘soldier’ aligning them with the men of the AIF, contributed to them being over-looked or not considered to any degree. This thesis will examine how nurses - ‘the roses of no-man’s land’ - were able to adjust to life on their return to Australia after the war - supposedly as equal recipients for farms and general repatriation benefits, with the men of the AIF.¹

The soldier settlement scheme was a continuation of the Closer Settlement program that was instigated in late nineteenth century Australia where large blocks of land were broken up into smaller holdings. From 1915, when land settlement was first envisaged for returned soldiers to restore them to civilian life, it was used not only as a reward for loyal service, but also as a means of repatriation and rehabilitation. When my research began in 2005, there was no completed report or study of soldier settlement in Australia after World War One that was national in focus let alone one that included nurses as soldier settlers. This is still the case. Studies undertaken from a State perspective are also few. Although work began early in 2009 on an Australian Research Council Linkage Project that is examining the social, cultural and environmental history

of soldier settlement in NSW. Marilyn Lake’s book, *The Limits of Hope – a study of soldier settlement in Victoria* which focused on soldier settlement in that State after World War One has been the main study to date. That aside, it is still the best academic published analysis of soldier settlement currently available. Marilyn Lake used a sample of Advance files up to 1937 held by the Public Record Office of Victoria covering different geographical areas in that state. These files dealt mainly with soldier settlers seeking financial aid. Other studies that take a State focus include the study about the Tasmanian soldier settlement scheme by Quentin Beresford and the recent doctoral study by Murray Johnson into soldier settlement in Queensland. A 1968 honours thesis by Rosemary Milton also looked at soldier settlement in Queensland, examining how the Commonwealth system impacted on the Scheme in that State.

The number of narratives about people who became soldier settlers is slowly growing in number. Many of these describe the lives of soldier settlers from a personal or genealogical perspective and have been written by, or about, family members on small settlements. Even though these vary in quality and have their own bias, they are valuable as they provide evidence of local history giving detailed personal information from the ground level so to speak, in a manner that is often excluded from more academic studies. Included in this genre are the studies by Jack Hepher about the Campbelltown Soldiers Settlement which had 36 poultry farms each of 7-8 acres; French’s Forrest with 27

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4 In this thesis, ‘advance file’ and ‘loan file’ will be used when referring to soldier settler loans, as both were used at different times in archival documents.


6 Elizabeth Milton, Soldier Settlement in Queensland after World War One, BA Hons, University of Queensland, 1968.
families by J.R. Fox; and another by Dorothy Balcomb, Richard Johnson and Mae Vanderschaar examined a Group Settlement Purchase at Canowindra. Another by I. Dempster after World War I focused on an area in the Atherton-Tolga-Kauri area of northern Queensland.

Possibly one of the best of this type is the study by Jack Cockerill, about the larger estate at Dyraaba in northern NSW which had over 100 settlers. This book portrays well not only the excitement before a land ballot, but indicates clearly that many of these settlers had no experience on the land whilst others had not even viewed the land before they applied for it. In her account of the soldier settler families who settled on the land at Woden in the Australian Capital Territory, Fiona Douglas used oral accounts taken from the oldest surviving members of these families. One aspect that is particularly notable about this research is the way the writer outlines the growth of suburban Canberra over the original soldier settler blocks settled in the years after World War One.

There have also been an increasing number of theses by undergraduate and postgraduate students written about soldier settlement taking a regional or estate focus such as those written about Stanthorpe, Kentucky and Bankstown Soldier Settlements. The latter, a returned soldiers group settlement, underlined how returned soldiers who

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were not considered fit for other duties or types of soldier settlement tenures were given a small block to raise poultry, an occupation judged to be suitable for men not totally fit. Because of their physical condition when they took up land, they had little chance of success. Another thesis by Rosemary Sparkes sought to discover the historical soldier settlement origin of her property. She then undertook a comparative study of soldier settlement in Australia between the two wars. The academic Kent Fedorowich investigated differences in government policy formulated after World War One and World War Two and also undertook a broad and comparative investigation of soldier settlement across the British Empire looking at policies in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

Other studies that take a regional perspective include one by Murray Johnson that explores the difficulties faced by soldier settlers at Beerburrum in Queensland while another by Monica Kenneley studies soldier settlement in the north-west region of Victoria. The study by Ken Frost, also carried out in Victoria but focusing on the South Western region, took a different perspective by exploring the relationship that soldier settlers had with their physical environment, the effects this had on their well-being and how this impacted on or contributed to their success as farmers. Studies such as these are continuing, albeit slowly, to bring the story of soldier settlement into the forefront of mainstream Australian (rural) history.

15 Ken Frost, Soldier Settlement after World War One in South Western Victoria, PhD, Deakin University, 2002.
Except for the paper written by Marilyn Lake in 1985 on the Victorian soldier settler nurse Annie Smith, studies about the experiences of individual returned nurses as farmers and settlers, are notable by their absence. In only two examples located have nurse soldier settlers been included. The first, – *A Land Fit for Heroes – The story of Soldier Settlement at Red Cliffs*, written by Ken Mackenzie Wright (a descendent of one of the Red Cliff settlers), is simply a one paragraph per block by block listing of each of the 708 settlers who settled on Red Cliffs Estate near Mildura, Victoria. This book with no bibliography or references provides very little personal information about the applicants but does record that Nellie Veir Scott who served with the QAIMNS was the only woman out of the 708 applicants to obtain a block at Red Cliffs under her own name. The second study that mentions a nurse as a soldier settler provides details of the soldier settlement block taken up by Millicent Sylvia Armstrong, who served as a medical orderly in France with the Scottish Women’s Hospital for Home and Foreign Service and who, despite not having nursing qualifications and not being a member of the AANS or QAIMNS, applied for and was granted a soldier settlement block. The section in this book on Millicent outlines her story as a successful writer and soldier settler within the larger genealogical study of the Armstrong family.

Even though the literature written about nurse soldier settlers is limited there has since the mid 1980s, been a number of general studies written about the experiences of women serving in war and on the home front. The late Patsy Adam-Smith described the

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experiences of Australian women in war from 1900 until World War Two – a work that was ground-breaking for its time as it brought the experiences of women in war at last into the open.20 Raelene Frances and Bruce Scates believe however that nurses who served in World War One particularly have been given little credence with their experiences hidden behind the exploits of the Australian digger.21 Other writers have focused directly on aspects of the nursing profession at a hospital or State level such as those by Maylean Cordia, Joan Durdin, Russel G. Smith, Carol Piercey and Kirsty Harris.22 Others have focused on the AANS particularly and these include those by Janice Gill, Rupert Goodman, Marianne Barker, Jan Bassett and Ruth Rae whilst Anne Summers and Lyn Macdonald have focused on the QAIMNS.23

Toward the end of 1918 and early in 1919, there were attempts by Matron A.M. Kellett and the official historian of the Australian Army Medical Services, A.G. Butler, to collect personal narratives from nurses who had served during World War One.24 These recollections have their limitations. As these interviews were undertaken as an official record, Ruth Rae believes that nurses, who had served during the war, may not have felt

24 A.G. Butler, Official History of the Australian Army Medical Services 1914-18, 3 Vols. Melbourne and Canberra, Australian War Memorial 1930-43; Matron Kellet was appointed between 26 March and 11 May 1919 to assist the medical history war records section to bring together the records of the AANS.
at ease discussing matters of an organizational or administrative kind, and as memory is fallible, these may not have been accurate. Some accounts by the nurses May Tilton and Anne Donnell were reminiscences of their war service and relied on memory. Their narratives are more of a personal nature written without the confines or restrictions usual when passing information to officials. Surviving letters and diaries held at the Australian War Memorial and State Libraries and at the National Library of Australia in Canberra written as the events of war unfolded provide an insight into the perceptions, spirit, personality and character of individual nurses during their war service. Studies by Katie Holmes and Janet Butler particularly, who used the diaries of nurses to make their activities and adventures come to life, brought the past so brilliantly into the present.

Ruth Rae and Melanie Oppenheimer have done this as well but with a different focus. In her PhD thesis, Ruth Rae wrote about the World War One service and experiences of her great aunt Jessie Tomlins while Melanie Oppenheimer told the story of Narelle Hobbes – an Australian nurse who died returning to Australia after serving with the QAIMNS.

Although there has been a great deal of work undertaken into the recruitment of members of the AIF, such as that by L. L. Robson, Richard White and Bill Gammage, there has been limited quantitative or qualitative research undertaken on nurses either at a state or national level. The work carried out by the late Jan Bassett is the exception.

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Within the context of this thesis, such research into the nursing profession would possibly provide a clearer understanding of the connection between a nurse’s social and cultural origin, place of birth and successful application and settlement on the land as soldier settlers. The dearth of such data on nurses in NSW is indeed notable when compared to the study by John McQuilton on the enlistment of members of the AIF from north-eastern Victoria 1914-1918. He estimates that 40 nurses from that region enlisted in World War One. It would be fortunate indeed to be able to ascertain if any of these nurses took up land as soldier settlers.

Much has been written about the repatriation of the AIF by L. J. Pryor, A. Gough, Clem Lloyd and Jacqui Rees, and Stephen Garton, but very little about the repatriation of returning nurses. In 1992, Jan Bassett outlined in *Guns and Brooches* a chapter titled ‘A General Depression’, which provided clear evidence of the suffering and hardship suffered during and after their repatriation by a large majority of nurses in the decades after World War One. Apart from this chapter, and some brief mention of the repatriation of nurses in histories written about the nursing services mentioned previously, I have been unable to locate another study written primarily about the repatriation of World War One nurses. In *The Last Shilling – A History of Repatriation in Australia*, Clem Lloyd and Jacqui Rees clearly outline land settlement as an important form of repatriation for members of the Australian Infantry Force in a chapter titled

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‘Farms for Heroes’. It is ironic, in this most articulate and informative account of the repatriation of Australian service personnel after World War One, that there is little mention of the repatriation of World War One nurses who served overseas.

It is important for this thesis therefore to determine just where women who had served overseas fitted into the legislation that outlined land settlement as a means of repatriation and rehabilitation because deep within these policies of application and implementation was the ideal of providing for returned soldiers – ‘land fit for heroes’. These words, possibly originating from a speech by the British leader David Lloyd George, at Wolverhampton, England in November 1918, when he expressed his wish to provide for returning British soldiers, ‘a fit country for heroes to live in’. In the near century that has passed since these words were spoken, the phrase and/or its variations have been used frequently in titles of books, chapters, journals and documentaries written about soldier settlement after World War One. Where then do nurses who were never considered heroes in war, but were eligible participants in the soldier settlement scheme, to fit into this ideology, one that is clearly masculine in imagery and context? Were they to be equal to their male counterparts in all respects, as the issuing of land to returned soldiers (the men of the AIF) was meant to be for their resettlement and rehabilitation?

This thesis will attempt to address the omissions and exclusions in the current literature that fails to include or consider not only the repatriation of returned nurses but their place in the soldier settlement scheme. But more than that, it is also the status of

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34 *The London Times*, 25 November 1918.
these nurses more broadly on their return to Australia that will be examined. Australia at
the end of World War One was a country that had undergone immense societal changes
where the traditional position of men and women was weakened. Anne Summers argued
in *Damned Whores and God’s Police*, that World War One did nothing to allow women
to ‘step beyond their traditional roles’ and it is difficult in many respects to disagree with
her.36 She asserted strongly that even though World War One gave Australian women the
chance to serve, it was as supporters to the male population.37 In line with this, women
soldier settlers were encroaching on a scheme that was predominantly male in
development and application and by applying for land in a scheme that had been designed
for the AIF they were, as a consequence, intruding on and challenging this construction
of masculinity. This was to be important and particularly evident for nurses who wanted
to settle on the land after World War One as these women were to be almost invisible
within the vast expanse of the soldier settlement scheme which had been set up for the
returning men of the AIF.

A further theme to emerge from this study has been the place of nurses who
served overseas, within the Anzac legend. This legend, Charles Edwin Woodrow Bean
believed, was instigated on 25 April 1915, with the Gallipoli landing, when ‘the
consciousness of Australian nationhood was born’.38 The deeds undertaken by the
ANZAC had a profoundly masculine, almost sentimental context that effectively defined
the Australian soldier as heroic, self-sacrificing and loyal. He was a soldier who defied

1977, p. 382.
37 Ibid.
authority and always stood by his mates. Because of this the ANZAC tradition was a profound celebration of masculinity that excluded female nurses who had served so valiantly. Women and nurses in particular, by their inclusion in the private sphere of home and respectability have, as Gail Reekie so clearly outlined in her seminal article ‘Contesting Australia’, ‘carried the burden materially and symbolically of a relationship that was essentially one that was sacrificial to the ‘nation’ of Australia’ – a nation forged and initiated by these young ANZAC heroes at Gallipoli. Soldier Settlement was to be central to the building of the ‘nation’ in post-war Australia not merely in a metaphorical sense, but in a political, economic and physical sense and essential not only for Australia but also for the health and well being of these returning members of the AIF. In this context, these women – nurses, medical orderlies, members of the Voluntary Aid Detachments and masseurs who wanted to settle on the land as ‘soldier settlers’, were on the periphery of this nation building – if not hidden – then certainly undisclosed.

Locating individual nurse soldier settlers was to be a constant and ongoing problem during the course of this study as indeed they were hidden in archival records. The main reason for this related directly to how files for soldier settlement were originally created after World War One and in what format the application and estate management files for land were arranged and filed. In NSW in particular, the archives of the Department of Lands held at State Records of NSW consist of thousands of files in over two thousand boxes covering many record series including Closer and Soldier

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Settlement Annual files, Promotion files, Estate files and general correspondence files.\textsuperscript{41} All of these record series contain files that were originally listed under the name of the Estate or Farm or under the name of the vendor for example: George Brown – the file would then be named accordingly - Brown’s Estate. The vendor was the individual from whom the land was originally purchased or resumed by the government for soldier settlement. There is, therefore, no indication from the file title how many applied for land on this estate or farm or indeed what the names of the applicants were. Practices such as these have made it extremely difficult to locate individual settlers by name or gender. This does not just relate to nurse soldier settlers, but also applies when researching any soldier who took up land in NSW.

Other records in archival institutions include land registers that are arranged according to geographical area such as a Land District or under the type of land tenure applied for, such as a Homestead Farm, Group Settlement Purchase or Returned Soldiers’ Special Holding. Unless the type of tenure or geographical location for a soldier settler is known, the search can be exceptionally time consuming as it can involve random searches for settlers, without a specific direction or focus. As nurse soldier settlers were ‘hidden’ in the files, finding them frequently became one of serendipity and luck with many being located whilst undertaking other research work on the soldier settlement scheme in NSW.

Because of the many difficulties locating nurse soldier settlers, this thesis will also make an empirical examination of sources held by surviving relatives of identified nurse soldier settlers that include photographs, letters and oral interviews with family

\textsuperscript{41} SRNSW: Closer and Soldier Settlement Annual files, NRS 8050; Closer and Soldier Settlement Estate files, NRS 8051; Closer and Soldier Settlement Promotion files NRS 8052; Closer and Soldier Settlement Correspondence files NRS 8053.
members. The memories of country people located in the course of researching this thesis are strong when talking about their World War One nurse family members, who are still held in high esteem by them today. The methodology undertaken to find files and to trace nurses on the land involved placing advertisements in papers such as the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Vet Affairs* to locate connections to nurse soldier settlers. If it was know where the nurse came from, family and local history societies from that region were contacted on the chance that they may hold information that she was a soldier settler. Known family members were also approached in an attempt to determine if the nurse in question was ever a soldier settler. Newspapers were searched for obituaries as well as the internet site, *The Ryerson Index*, which provides a list created by volunteers taken from death and obituary notices in some Australian newspapers.⁴² A search of the Purchasers and Sellers Indexes at the Department of Lands in Sydney was carried out, but failed to provide details of the land transactions of no more than a few nurse soldier settlers.⁴³

In some cases to prove an initial assumption the methodology used to locate nurses entailed a complex genealogical assessment being taken to determine if a returned nurse was ever a soldier settler. Nurses who married changed their name which didn’t contribute to easy identification as soldier settlers. Death certificates, not only for nurses but known family members, were obtained from the Birth, Death and Marriage Registries in NSW and Victoria in the hope that these may provide leads to verify a correct identity. Probate records such as wills and death duty records were also examined to locate any other family members mentioned. An examination such as this could determine if the

⁴² Family History Website The Ryerson Index, [http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nswsdps/dpsindx1.htm](http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nswsdps/dpsindx1.htm)
⁴³ Indexes to Purchases and Sellers, Department of Lands, Macquarie Street, Sydney.
executors of a Deceased Estate were still living and a trace carried out as to their whereabouts in the hope of throwing some light on the life of a returned nurse so as to locate details of any land held when she was alive, or still in her possession at the time of death. This was certainly not always successful, especially if a nurse soldier settler transferred ownership of her land many years before her death. Except for the Commonwealth census records (which are on the internet up until 1954), most census records were not of use unless place of residence or electoral district was known.\textsuperscript{44}

To date, the location of individual applicant files has also been extremely difficult despite the ongoing work by volunteers at State Records of NSW who continue to index some of the record series relating to soldier settlement held by that organization. In Victoria, the search for particular nurse settlers takes on an even more complicated form with initial searches for application files involving the viewing of Parish maps on microfiche – step one in a three step process – involving the location of a numeric fraction which provides access to the files. In this instance it is necessary to have some idea when a nurse took up land. This process is the main way to locate relevant application files at the Public Records Office (PRO) of Victoria.

To add to the difficulty regarding research for this thesis, there are no figures in surviving registers or files at the National Archives of Australia, State Records of NSW or the Public Record Office of Victoria, to give any indication how many returned nurses applied for land under any of the various Soldier Settlement Schemes in these States. Even though some figures in Department of Lands and Annual Reports or State and Commonwealth Year Books give the number of soldier settlers and the type of land tenure taken up, there is nothing to indicate how many of these applicants were returning

\textsuperscript{44} Ancestry Family History Website: http://www.ancestry.com.au
nurses. This omission certainly confirms the theory put forward in this thesis that nurses were hidden within the definition of ‘soldier’ within these books and reports. Most importantly, an essential factor in the location of files in both NSW and Victoria is to have some idea where the settler took up land. If this is known, it is then possible in NSW to search the NSW Government Gazettes or Parish maps for the name of the settler and the type of land tenure – although again these can be laborious, time consuming tasks with no guarantee of success.

Chapter One of this thesis outlines the nature and purpose of the Soldier Settlement Scheme after World War One. It investigates how and why returned nurses were included in the legislation and the circumstances surrounding their application and eligibility for land as soldier settlers. It examines their place as women albeit as returning nurses in the Commonwealth Australian Soldiers’ Repatriation Bill (No. 37 1917) and the problems some had in their applications for land. In Chapter Two, the individual motivations of nurse soldier settlers will be assessed and some understanding will be reached as to why these women decided to apply for land. Also examined will be their health and repatriation after the war and how their closeness to family or place of origin impacted why and where they applied for land.

Chapter Three will provide examples of many of the personal experiences of nurse soldier settlers who either applied by themselves, with their husbands or were married to soldier settlers. It will show that, even though land was taken up in areas geographically diverse, most female settlers suffered the same problems of poverty, floods, drought and increasing debt, as their male counterparts. For married soldier settlers survival on a settlement was dependent on husband and wife being fit and
healthy. With only a few exceptions, ongoing health issues as a result of war service were to have a profound effect on the ability of a soldier settler to farm well.

This thesis is therefore not only a study of the experiences of a number of nurse soldier settlers but also a study of the many omissions and oversights that will provide clear evidence of a lack of encouragement and consistency in how the applications for land by nurses were received and dealt with by the Returned Soldier Settlement Board and the Department of Lands. The history of women soldier settlers in post-war Australia mirrors the history of women generally, as that of a marginalized and forgotten group. For nurse soldier settlers, their categorization along with the men of the AIF as ‘soldiers’, has contributed to them being a hidden and invisible minority.
CHAPTER ONE

Land – for reward and rehabilitation

“There is no better outlet for personal effort and ambition than that afforded by settlement on the land”
WG Ashford Minister for Lands in NSW, February 1918

This chapter assesses the place of returned nurses within the Soldier Settlement Scheme in New South Wales and Victoria after World War One where they were a hidden minority – a small number when compared to their male counterparts. Moreover, as nurse soldier settlers were hidden in surviving archival documentation relating to the soldier settlement scheme, this chapter will show that as women in a scheme predominantly masculine in structure and administration, they were placed away from the central decision making process. Various legislative and administrative decisions by both State and Commonwealth governments show that they were overwhelmed by the task at hand but that also, dealing with nurses as soldier settlers, particularly in the early years, was to bring about some consternation in government circles. This chapter will therefore examine the foundation of the Scheme from 1915 through the progression of policies and strategies put in place from that date until the implementation of the Commonwealth Australian Soldiers’ Repatriation Bill (No. 37 1917) and explain how and why nurses were included.

As well, the position of nurses within the ‘Land for Heroes’ ideology that permeated land settlement rhetoric for returned soldiers after World War One will also be examined. This chapter will address how and to what level the ideology of ‘Land for Heroes’ impacted not only on the application for land by nurses but also on their experiences as farmers. The government decision making process will also be examined
to show clearly that the status of nurses and of women generally was shaped by masculine ideologies that typified the Anzac legend. This chapter will show that this ideology influenced a nurse’s entitlement to repatriation benefits, medical assistance and sustenance. A brief examination of nineteenth century legislation that included the Closer Settlement Acts and the Women’s Property Acts of the latter half of the nineteenth century will be undertaken as this evolving legislation impacted on the entitlement of women for land after World War One.

Because so many soldiers returned to Australia after the Gallipoli campaign medically unfit, the Commonwealth government was made aware that there were no provisions within the Pension Act (1914) for a repatriation scheme, or for the treatment and rehabilitation of incapacitated soldiers. To assist with what was to become a growing problem, patriotic funds were established by members of the public to raise funds to provide for the care of these soldiers. In his official history of the war, Ernest Scott stated that a total of 185 patriotic funds were established across Australia. Although there were many more minor ones and it is possible that this number was under-estimated. In 1916, the government passed the Australian Soldiers Repatriation Fund Bill which was to be operated by a Board of Trustees. This Bill, one that Prime Minister Hughes described as ‘vague and unsatisfactory’ was eventually replaced by the Repatriation Act of (1917-1918).

As well as the need for funding to care for incapacitated soldiers and to aid the war effort, there was a growing need to coordinate these activities from a federal level down to a regional one. A Federal Parliamentary War Committee (consisting of twelve members from both houses of Parliament and from both political parties) was created in July 1915 to deal with matters put forward by the Government relating to the resettlement of an increasing number of invalided and able-bodied returned soldiers.6 This War Committee set out to co-ordinate activities between federal and state bodies and to provide guidance to municipal authorities. A stratified system of administration was established which was supposed to provide sound governance from the Commonwealth through the various States to the district and then the local level. The initiatives outlined by the War Committee included the creation of War Councils in each State that were set up in part to provide artificial limbs and training for injured men, to help returned soldiers gain employment, and as a central place for returned soldiers to register for a block of land.

Committees set up in local government areas between 1915 and 1917 were responsible for the repatriation and care of invalided men and their dependants. These Local Committees were created by statutory authority and were empowered to raise funds and disburse them to soldiers and their dependants within a defined area. 158 Local Committees were proposed in NSW with 130 eventually being formed.7 In Victoria, 175 were proposed with 128 being formed.8 These Local Committees also worked with medical services including hospitals, employers and labour exchanges to secure work for

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6 Ibid., p. 29.
7 AWM: Australian Repatriation Scheme Brochure, For the Information of members of the AIF, Nature and Scope of Assistance Rendered, 8 April 1918-31, October 1918.
8 Ibid.
returned service personnel able to undertake it. One of the additional roles undertaken by members of the Local Committee was to inspect for soldier settlers on behalf of the Department of Lands, property and/or stock purchases to gauge their age and quality.\footnote{SRNSW: NRS 8058: There are many examples within this record series that provide information about the duties and responsibilities of Local Committee members.}

It was from the Federal Parliamentary War Committee mentioned above that a sub-committee was formed to deal principally with the settlement of returned soldiers on the land. There is no evidence that the sub-committee responsible for land settlement considered or included nurses as soldier settlers at this date, which was before the drawing up of the Repatriation Act (1917-1918) where they were incorporated in the legislation under the broad definition of ‘soldiers’. The sub-committee however recommended that dependants (wives or sisters for instance) of deceased soldiers would be afforded the same opportunities under the Soldier Settlement Scheme as a returned man. The report stated that ‘many women have some practical experience of farm life, and could undoubtedly find a congenial and profitable living upon the smaller forms of holdings, such as poultry or bee farming’.\footnote{Report and Recommendations of the Sub-Committee appointed by the Federal Parliamentary War Committee to consider the question of Settling Returned Soldiers upon the land, Melbourne, 17-19 February 1916, p. 1454.} Even though the very economic survival of a female dependant without a male wage earner was difficult and of apparent concern to the government, it could be difficult for a woman to farm by herself. Why then give land to female dependants who had not served and \textbf{not} include women who had served – the nurses? In this context, such a policy to give land to female dependants of returned soldiers was profoundly exclusory and discriminatory to nurses who had served in the War and further evidence that they were not equal recipients of all the repatriation benefits handed out to the returning men.
The sub-committee also reported back to the Federal Parliamentary War Committee on the difficulty of forming any ‘reliable estimate of numbers of men who may be willing to avail themselves of the facilities proposed’. There was a great sense of urgency to reach consensus setting up policies before the end of the war to deal with the expected large numbers of returned men. Employment Census Cards were distributed to soldiers serving overseas in 1915 in an attempt to clarify the number of men expected to take up land on their return to Australia. [See Table 1]

Prospective Soldier Settlers – Analysis of Employment Census Cards to February 14, 1916

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Total Card analysed.</th>
<th>Definitely Desiring Land.</th>
<th>Doubtful Cards.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>With experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>1,760</td>
<td>890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>1,183</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>3,600</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>7,400</td>
<td>2,250</td>
<td>1,420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>2,060</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth</td>
<td>29,543</td>
<td>5,399</td>
<td>3,303</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is unclear or indeed unlikely if at that date nurses would have been invited to provide information on these Census Cards about their preference for land. Surviving figures

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11 Ibid., p. 1453.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
showing the numbers of soldiers who wished to become soldier settlers were grouped together on a State by State basis.\textsuperscript{14}

Excluding the cards from men in Egypt, a total of 29,543 cards for the Commonwealth were assessed – 14,000 from NSW and 1,183 from Victoria. Of the total assessed, 24.6\% stated that they wished to go on the land with only half of these indicating that they had farming experience and only 13\% stating they had capital.\textsuperscript{15} This figure, however, was never taken as a final one with concerns raised in the later debates of the Parliamentary War Committee that clearly indicate that the Commonwealth Government had no real idea what the number of soldier settlers would be or how they would deal with them.

Member of the Federal Parliamentary War Committee and former Prime Minister John Christian Watson stated:\textsuperscript{16}

I shudder to think what might happen if 200,000 or 250,000 men were to return and try to get into their old niches or try to find an opportunity to make a livelihood. (At least) at the present time men are coming in driblets.

And again,

I am quite convinced that after, say 12 months or more at the front there will be a proportion who did not desire to go on the land but who will ultimately desire to do so. \textsuperscript{17}

Dealing with the large numbers of returned men and putting in place strategies such as locating enough available land to settle thousands of men on soldier settlement blocks was to be a problem right up until the end of the war. It has been estimated by A.G. Butler that as many as 44,761 invalids had returned to Australia by April 1918 which in

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., p. 1456.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} Debates of the Federal Parliamentary War Committee, First Day, 17 February 1916, pp. 1467 & 1468.
itself presented further problems in relation to the location of adequate hospitals and treatment and care of these men.  

Even though a number of nurses returned to Australia in poor health, Butler does not state if women were included in this figure. The employment and resettlement of approximately 172,624 members of the AIF, their dependants and various munitions workers were to be fraught with difficulties in the immediate post-war period.

Settling returned soldiers on the land was to be the most significant and extensive means of repatriation. At a 1916 Conference in Melbourne, representatives from all the States and the Commonwealth reached agreement that land settlement and farming was to be central to the rehabilitation and resettlement process. It is surprising that men who were not considered fit enough to remain in the army would be judged fit enough to take up land as farmers. Despite this, and even though many of the delegates at this 1916 Conference also believed that small farms had historically not been economically successful in Australia, the idea prevailed that farming would provide great recuperative benefits for returning men. Notwithstanding reports such as the early one in the Argus of 11 November 1881 which raised the issue of only ‘partial success’ for small land holders, the wish for a continuance of this old yeoman system of agriculture placing farmers on small holdings was again strongly promoted in 1916 and quickly put in place. It was believed that such a system of self sufficient farming would contribute to the workings of a strong and vibrant Australia socially, politically and economically – the nation’s future prosperity depended on and would benefit from it. These men with farms of small

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acreages, some no larger than 30 acres, were continuing an ideal that mirrored that of the yeomanry on small agricultural holdings in Britain.

In August 1918 in a Confidential Report, William Ashford, the NSW Minister of Lands stated that he had originally expected soldier settlers to number approximately 5,000 in the first two years after the war but that with the sudden and unexpected demobilization of so many men, the Department was now expected to settle 7,077 men on the land within thirteen months of the war’s end.21 The Minister declared that, ‘we are greatly handicapped not only by the scarcity of funds but the availability of suitable lands’.22 Of the anticipated 19,000 settlers in the Commonwealth, NSW was expected to settle the highest number.

For the State and Commonwealth governments, the financial management of the Soldier Settlement Scheme was difficult from the beginning. After considerable debate between the States and the Commonwealth, agreement was reached at the 1916 Melbourne conference that the State Governments were to provide the land, supervise the expenditure of money advanced and provide direction and training to inexperienced settlers during the initial period of settlement. The Commonwealth initially made available an amount of £500 in the form of a loan, which was to be distributed to each applicant to be spent on improvements including a house, sheds, fencing, livestock and implements. This amount was soon found to be inadequate due to the expectedly high cost of materials such as fencing.23 Financial support continued to be an important factor for soldier settlers as few had any capital other than their severance pay. Another problem

22 Ibid.
23 SRNSW: Returned Soldiers Settlement Miscellaneous files, NRS 8056, [19/7028], Mr. W. Ashford Minister for Lands, Minute Paper.
was that by the middle of 1916, the Commonwealth had an ever increasing war debt which was exacerbated and not helped by the British Exchequer putting a stop to short term borrowing by the Australian States. 24 On 10 June 1916 the Commonwealth’s Department of the Treasury cabled the Prime Minister in London requesting that he make a request to the British government for finance to assist with soldier settlement.

It is of great importance that we shall obtain advances of money … for the soldier settlement scheme. Unless we are able to do so … the States will be able to throw on the Commonwealth the whole responsibility for returned soldiers’. If (you) are unable to arrange advances … England … money will have to be raised here. 25

In England Prime Minister Hughes was unable to raise the money needed for soldier settlement and returned to Australia empty handed. There continued to be ongoing problems not only with financing the administration of the soldier settlement scheme but it became clear that settlers on the land required individual finance to run their properties.

At the 1917 Premiers Conference there was ongoing dissent between the States and the Commonwealth about money and the rights of the States over the Commonwealth. It was at this Conference that Prime Minister Hughes failed to bring together a unified soldier settlement scheme with the same terms and conditions across all States of Australia. The plan he proposed was one that he thought would give the Commonwealth greater control and centralised authority. The Prime Minister outlined this as being one that would aid ‘the co-ordination’ of the repatriation process. 26 Hughes pushed strongly for land settlement becoming a full part of the general repatriation scheme. He exclaimed:

25 NAA: A2, A2/1 1917/3547, Department of Repatriation, Settlement in Land and Assistance to Returned Soldiers, Cable sent by the Federal Treasurer to Prime Minister Hughes in Paris, 12 June 1916.
Our soldiers fight not for Queensland, NSW or Tasmania, but for Australia. They enlisted under the Commonwealth banner. They go out to fight our battles. We say to them: When you come back, we will look after you.\textsuperscript{27}

Hughes failed to influence the States on this issue, with Mr Ashford the Minister for Lands in NSW replying that ‘… the Commonwealth is not the general manager as far as land settlement is concerned’.\textsuperscript{28} Agreement was finally reached that the State War Councils be retained ‘subordinate to a central Federal authority’ and that the Commonwealth would take on the full responsibility for repatriation, but only subject to the States controlling land settlement within their own borders.\textsuperscript{29} As well as land administration being an individual State responsibility, each State had different legislation that determined the management and distribution of land to soldier settlers.

On 18 July 1918, the Minister for Lands Mr Ashford strongly pushed for an increase in the amount settlers were receiving as he believed it was not enough to cover all the costs a farmer would incur.\textsuperscript{30} The amount of £500 was subsequently increased to £625 which again was to be in the form of a loan paid to the settlers by the Commonwealth.\textsuperscript{31} The individual soldier settler was to be responsible for the repayment of the advance loan, along with cumulative interest – ‘not exceeding 3 ½% in the first year increasing by ½% each subsequent year’.\textsuperscript{32} On 20 February 1924, at the 8\textsuperscript{th} conference of the RSSILA a request was made to the Commonwealth for an increase of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{27} Ibid., p. 231.
\item \textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{29} Ernest Scott, \textit{The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, Vol.XI, Australia During the War}, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1936, p. 831.
\item \textsuperscript{30} SRNSW: NRS 8056, [19/7028], \textit{Op.cit.}
\item \textsuperscript{31} Ibid., Note re: Premiers’ Conference held at Commonwealth Office, Melbourne, 31 October to 4 November 1921. Extract from Schedule of Resolutions accompanying Prime Minister’s Letter of 8 November 1921.
\item \textsuperscript{32} NAA: A2479, 17/997, Memorandum from the Prime Minister to the Premier of NSW, 23 August 1917.
\end{itemize}
the £625 advance.\textsuperscript{33} The Assistant Secretary of the Treasury contacted the Prime Minister’s Department who replied to the RSSILA on 17 April 1924 stating that:

In view of the great obligations of the Commonwealth in respect of the loan expenditure and the difficulty of borrowing in the present state of the market, the Treasurer regrets the extension of those obligations cannot be contemplated.\textsuperscript{34}

One of the difficulties in locating and interpreting the experiences of nurses as soldier settlers is due to these different legislative and administrative processes across the various States. Moreover, soldier settlement legislation within each State occurred at different dates. This meant that whilst a nurse was eligible for land in one State at a given time, she may not have been in another. In NSW nurses were eligible to apply for land under the same legislation as returned members of the AIF – the Returned Soldiers Settlement Act, 1916 (Act No 21 1916). Similarly, in Victoria, provision was made for nurses in the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act 1918 (Section 12 (a & b). Nurses were not included in Soldier Settlement legislation in Tasmania, Queensland and Western Australia up to July 1919, although all States amended soldier settlement legislation to include nurses by the beginning of 1920. Notably South Australia included nurses as early as 1915 in the Returned Soldiers Settlement Act 1915 (No 1226). South Australia had also been the first to give its women the right to vote and the right to be elected to its Parliament in 1894.

Across all States the first step in acquiring land as a soldier settler was to obtain a Qualification Certificate. This was again the responsibility of the State in question who

\textsuperscript{33} NAA: A458, 745/1/4 Resolution by the RSSILA re: Land Settlement for Returned Soldiers, Request made to the 8\textsuperscript{th} conference of the RSSILA for an increase in Advance, 20 February 1924.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., Prime Minister’s Department to RSSILA, 17 April 1924.
would then gauge the suitability of each applicant for land. A Qualification Certificate did not automatically mean the right to land nor did it mean that the State believed the individual in question had the ability to succeed on the land. It was simply a guarantee that ‘the person, to whom the Qualification Certificate was issued, enlisted for active service and received a good discharge’. Applicants were then required to send the Qualification Certificate to the Department of Lands attached to their application for land. The application was then considered by the Returned Soldiers Classification Committee. All Qualification Certificates were in the same format as the one below for Elizabeth Helen Draper.

![Qualification Certificate – Elizabeth Helen Draper](image)

35 Obtaining a Qualification Certificate was a compulsory first step when applying for land. It did not mean eligibility to obtain land, but rather that the applicant was honourably discharged from the services and met all other requirements.

36 SRNSW: Department of Lands, Closer Settlement, Copies of circulars from the Director 1918-1924, NRS 8071, [3/6470 p. 101], J.G.R. Bryant, Director of Soldier Settlements to the Secretary Repatriation Committee, 16 December 1919.

37 SRNSW: Department of Lands, Closer Settlement Promotion Files, NRS 8052, [10/13274, No.1585], Bennett’s Farm.
Once the application for land was approved, soldier settlers, both male and female applicants, were entitled to obtain land under either of two methods – either ‘ballot’ or ‘promotion’. In the case of a ‘ballot’ the Crown acquired an estate either by sale or resumption, subdivided it and then invited applications from eligible ex-service men and women – a name drawn out of a hat or barrel was therefore to determine success in a land acquisition. If not successful in a first ballot some soldier settlers would put their name forward further ballots. In the case of a ‘promotion’ land was acquired under the Closer Settlement Promotion Act where usually, three to five discharged soldiers purchased privately owned land with the terms being approved by the Minister of Lands. Under the ‘promotion scheme’ the land was subsequently occupied as a ‘Settlement Purchase’ with terms involving ten years residency, improvements equal to 10% of the capital value within two years, 15% within five years and 25% within ten years from the commencement of the purchase. Nurses could apply for land using the same forms of tenure as members of the AIF. Other forms of tenure available to them were: a Homestead Farm, a Returned Soldiers’ Special Holding, a Suburban Holding, a Crown Lease, or a Group Settlement Purchase. The distribution of land after World War One was to involve a complex administrative process at a State level.

At a Commonwealth level, repatriation and the reinstatement of returned men and women to society equal to that of the pre-war period was to be a multifaceted and complicated process. On 18 July 1917 when the Australian Soldiers’ Repatriation Act (1917-18), was introduced into parliament, the Minister for Repatriation Senator Edward Millen admitted ‘it was a new proposal’. It was therefore to be a policy that enforced

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great changes that were in the main untried and untested. One case in point, was that the eligibility of war nurses for full repatriation benefits, that included land and the payment of sustenance (a form of financial aid), were laid down in this Act. On the 24 September 1917 during the debates for this Act, William Fyfe Finlayson ALP member from Brisbane declared:

It should be distinctly stated in the Bill that its provisions should apply to nurses as well as soldiers. I am sure that we all have an especially high regard for the women who have done such splendid work as nurses during the war. Any assistance that we can give them to find suitable opportunities for the exercise of their abilities should form an essential part of our repatriation scheme.39

In a brochure titled ‘What Australia is doing for her Returned Soldiers’ that was distributed so soldiers, the terms of the Repatriation Act were laid down. It was stated that:

The Australian Soldier’s Repatriation Act is a sober and solid attempt to restore, as far as possible, the returned soldier to his pre-war-status40

Nurses were however listed in this three page pamphlet in one short paragraph titled ‘Women’ that stated:

These advantages are extended to all members of the Australian Imperial Forces who are married or about to marry, to nurses as well as soldiers, to the widows or fallen men, and to widowed mothers of soldiers who have lost their lives.41

Similar to some of the other initiatives proposed at the 1917 Premiers Conference, the Repatriation Act (1917-1918) introduced a system that had greater administrative uniformity so as to provide assistance and benefits to returned soldiers. Within this Act, members of the nursing and medical services were included along with members of the

40 NAA: Mp367/1, Item 535/4/381, ‘What Australia is doing for its Returned Soldiers’, Department of Repatriation and Demobilization Pamphlet, 26 July 1919.
41 Ibid.
AIF under the broad term of ‘soldier’. In Section 4, 2 (b) of the Act the definition of ‘soldier’ was outlined as being:

Any person during the present war, who was a member of the Army Medical Corps Nursing Service accepted or appointed by the Director-General of Medical Services for service outside Australia’.42

This effectively determined that female medical personnel were entitled to the same repatriation privileges as members of the AIF. The entitlement of nurses as returned ‘soldiers’ for repatriation benefits that included land, loans and sustenance was also summarized in, ‘Assistance and Benefits provided by the Department of Repatriation under the Provisions of the Australian Soldiers’ Repatriation Act 1917-1918’.43

The inclusion of nurses in the Repatriation Act within the categorization of ‘soldiers’ aligned them with members of the AIF and raises questions about the fairness or even adequacy of this inclusion. From the time of their enlistment the status of nurses never allowed them to be equal to members of the AIF and on their return to Australia it was the men of the AIF who were seen as the ‘heroes’ not the women of the nursing services. This prejudicial attitude was typical of the way their service was seen since the inception of military nursing in Australia. The incorporation of nurses as full members of the Army Medical Corps during World War One was fraught with administrative and organizational problems. These related not only to factors such as who was to supervise them - the army or senior nursing staff - but there were also questions still being asked about the suitability of women nursing on a war front. Despite the influence of Florence

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42 The Australian Soldier’s Repatriation Act 1917-18, Section 4, 2 (b): In Section (d) also, ‘a person who is or has been, during the present war, a member of the Army Medical Corps Nursing Service of any part of the King’s Dominions, other than the Commonwealth, on proof to the satisfaction of the Commission, that she had, before her acceptance by or appointment to that service resided in Australia so shall be deemed to be an Australian soldier within the meaning of this Act.

43 Senator Hon E.D. Millen, Summary of Assistance and Benefits provided by the Department of Repatriation under the provisions of the Australian Soldier’s Repatriation Act 1917-1918, Melbourne, 31 July 1918, p. 4.
Nightingale and the fact that nursing may have been an acceptable occupation for women in times of peace, their inclusion in the Army Medical Corps in war-time did not undergo a smooth transition. It was believed that a military hospital was not a fit place for nurses and as they were women they would not be strong enough to stand the horror of war.\textsuperscript{44} Their inclusion brought them into conflict with those in the highest ranks of the Commonwealth Forces with the chief medical officer Colonel Charles Ryan stating that:

\begin{quote}
... the average woman could do for greater service for her country by making bandages, pyjamas, warm clothing for the men, and by keeping within their own sphere to the best of her knowledge and ability.\textsuperscript{45}
\end{quote}

As well as nurses having to deal with discriminatory attitudes such as this in relation to what it was believed they were capable of, another group of nurses found that the manner of their enlistment meant they were ineligible for repatriation benefits. This group of twenty Australian nurses and a masseuse, who represented the Australian Red Cross Society in a ‘private’ capacity, sailed for Europe on 4 July 1916 onboard the Kanowna.\textsuperscript{46} As exemplified above, nurses were never considered as highly as soldiers and this case reeks of discrimination and policy that was unfair and unjust. These nurses who were highly trained having worked in various hospitals in Sydney thought when they left Australia, that they would be immediately engaged on active service when they arrived overseas.\textsuperscript{47} As the nurses were under the auspices of the Red Cross the Australian government believed this effectively removed the nurses from their responsibility.\textsuperscript{48} On arrival in France, few were placed in positions that mirrored their skills and experience.


\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Ibid}.

\textsuperscript{48} \textit{Ibid}.
with several being sent to small hospitals away from the fighting.\textsuperscript{49} There is no evidence that these women received repatriation benefits or any gratuity on their return to Australia, their status as ‘private nurses’ rendering them exempt in the eyes of the government.

Initially, nurses who served with the QAIMNS or QAIMNS Reserve were not eligible for the same repatriation benefits as nurses who had served with the AANS. Some of these women had volunteered for service when they were living abroad while others left for England in 1915, paying their own fares. These women eventually served with British units, but as they were under the auspices of the War Office, they were not regarded by the Australian Department of Defence as being ‘AIF nurses’ equal to the AANS.\textsuperscript{50} As late as December 1919 their eligibility for repatriation benefits was still being debated and, ‘as the matter is to be governed by technical points’ a ruling on the matter was referred to the Crown Solicitor by the Comptroller of Repatriation on 21 January 1920.\textsuperscript{51} The matter was eventually resolved in favour of the QAIMNS.\textsuperscript{52} However, only 129 Australian women of the several hundred who served with the British QAIMNS were to receive any war gratuity, something only achieved after an intense struggle.\textsuperscript{53}

In 1943 the historian of the Australian Medical Corps, A. G. Butler, wrote that during World War One, ‘Nurses were subject to military law as though they were commissioned officers but a woman could not then in a legal sense be either an officer or

\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 70.
\textsuperscript{50} NAA: A2487 1920/4039, Eligibility of Imperial Nurses for Repatriation Benefits.
\textsuperscript{51} DVA: Comptroller of Repatriation, Repatriation Commission, Minutes of Meetings 19/8495, 30 December 1919, Department of Veteran Affairs, Woden, ACT.
a soldier’. 54 With the benefit of hindsight, Butler’s observation in this instance was particularly astute and insightful. Whilst serving overseas, nurses were given courtesies and privileges suitable to their positions as officers, although they never received pay that was indicative of this rank.55 As well, nurses with two or more year’s active service found that on their return to Australia when they were working in military hospitals after the war, even if they held the rank of sister, their pay reverted to that of a staff nurse. Moreover, it was not until 26 April 1921, that continuous service, both abroad and in a military hospital in Australia, was counted as a nurse’s qualifying service for promotion.56 It is important to note as well that, unlike members of the AIF, World War One nurses did not receive medical and hospital treatment in repatriation hospitals until 1 July 1958. Yet, even though the Doctor attending Mary Standish Cox was advised by the Deputy Commissioner of Repatriation on 18 March 1959 that she was eligible for medical benefits, in the years between this date and 1961 when she passed away, debate between her Doctor and the Department of Repatriation continued, about who was to pay her medical bills.57 Just prior to her death, approval was granted to maintain her at the Blue Mountains District Anzac Hospital at Intermediate Rate (sic).58 These examples provide clear evidence that the inclusion of nurses in the Repatriation Act as ‘soldiers’ supposedly equal in all respects to returning members of the AIF, was in fact not only a misrepresentation but profoundly inadequate. Mary Standish Cox is buried in the Church of England Cemetery, Katoomba. As shown in the following image, her head-stone is unadorned and well worn, simply stating she was a nurse of the 1st AIF.

56 NAA: MP367/1, 556/49/716, Department of Defence, Minute Paper.
57 NAA: C138, M74219, Medical Case File, Mary Standish Cox.
58 Ibid.
The inclusion of nurses and their entitlement to land and sustenance with full repatriation benefits outlined in the Repatriation Act was not promoted extensively either. There was uncertainty and ignorance amongst nurses about their rights and benefits leading up to and after the passing of the Act. One example of this occurred on 4 August 1917, when L. Crocker the Secretary of the Royal Victorian Trained Nurses Association wrote to Edward Millen requesting information about the possible inclusion of nurses in the Act. Senator Millen replied on 8 August 1917 with the set statement that for the purposes of the Act ‘an Australian Soldier was a member of the Army Nursing Medical Service’. Despite this assurance, concerns by the Australian Women’s National League that nurses were not to be included in the Act continued, evidenced by the following statement by Mrs. I. S. Moss of the AWNL which was reported by the *Argus* on 25 September 1917.

> In the Repatriation Bill, not a word was said about the war-worn Florence Nightingales who had gone to the front as the fitting complement to our brave soldiers.

In reply, Senator Millen accused the AWNL of making ‘inadvertent mis-statements that created a false impression that made an admittedly difficult problem still more difficult’.

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59 NAA: A2479 17/964, L. Crocker to Edward Millen, 4 August 1917.
At that time, women from the AWNL were participating in a Parliamentary Bills Committee that closely followed the progress of any Act relating to women. They believed in this instance that nurses were not included in the initial Act and were only included in the Act after Senator Millen introduced it into Parliament. This Senator Millen stringently denied and on 5 October he again wrote to the AWNL declaring:

I have been a little disappointed at the frequency with which uninformed criticisms have been launched … which certainly would never have been made if those advancing them had first been informed themselves of the facts.63

What is clear from this exchange is that, even from the initial inception of the Repatriation Act, the Commonwealth Government never made full representation about it to those it concerned the most. In this instance certainly, the government did not clearly inform returned nurses of their rights and eligibility to benefits. Nor did it notify organizations such as the Royal Victorian Trained Nurses Association and the AWNL – organizations to which many nurses belonged - what the benefits within the Repatriation Act meant for nurses personally.

There also appears to be discrepancies and imbalance for returned nurses in relation to their entitlement to and the distribution of sustenance. This was laid down in the Repatriation Act as being the right of every ‘soldier’ – man or woman. Sustenance was to be used for soldiers awaiting employment or waiting to take up land or in the initial unproductive period of their holding, for vocational re-training and education courses and for other expenses such as funerals. On 22 May 1918, the Repatriation Department formally approved the payment of sustenance to soldier settlers on the land, with the proviso that ‘there is a reasonable chance at the end of the first six months of

62 Ibid., Edward Millen to Mrs. F. G. Hughes, ANWL, 5 October 1917.
63 Ibid.
settlement that the applicant would succeed in his enterprise’. Edward Millen outlined the proposal when writing to WG Ashford MP:

Sustenance for soldier settlers was to be for a period of six months upon a scale which including pensions (if any) will ensure a weekly payment for single men of 20/- a week, a man and wife 30/- per week with 2/6 extra for each child up to four. This allowance was designed to be a gift to the settler and to provide financial means before there were returns from stock or produce.

On 3 March 1919, the Repatriation Commission declined a request from the Director of Returned Soldier Settlement Branch in NSW, that sustenance payments be increased from a period of six months (which was considered inadequate) to one of twelve months. The Commission declined the proposal on the grounds that to extend the period ‘would provide a means of unlimited unemployment relief for the rest of (a settler’s) life’.

For the nursing community, obtaining sustenance either for a training course or for soldier settlement was again never clear cut or adequately defined, and the way it was distributed to them an indication of government disregard as to the value of their war service and subsequent entitlement to benefits. There was also considerable inconsistency in the distribution of sustenance for whatever purpose it was requested. In some cases decline appears to have been the result of pedantic or unfair decisions. Even though successful application for sustenance did occur for some nurses there are examples such as in Jessie Buchanan’s case, where its receipt was only forthcoming after more than one appeal was declined. Jessie Helena Buchanan, initially made a claim for sustenance to cover a period of four months when she was unemployed, after leaving her appointment as matron at a Picton hospital. Jessie had embarked on the Orsova on 14 July 1915 and

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64 NAA: A2485/1 C/7, Sustenance to Land Settlers, Department of Works and Railways, Melbourne, to Major M B Ryan, Department of Repatriation, Melbourne, 7 August 1918.
66 DVA: Comptroller of Repatriation, Repatriation Commission, Minutes of Meetings, 27 March 1919, Department of Veteran Affairs, Woden, ACT.
67 NAA: A2487, 1921/13348, Miss J.H. Buchanan regarding sustenance.
had been demobilized on the 8 August 1919. For auspicious service, she was awarded the
Royal Red Cross First Class.\textsuperscript{68} When considering her application for sustenance, it
appears that there was little or no consideration given by the Repatriation Commission to
this decoration or the length of her war service. Despite a medical examiner stating she
was suffering from nerves and her condition warranting a ‘prolonged rest from active
work’ her application was declined.\textsuperscript{69} After appealing again without success and after
taking a further medical examination, the main reason given for the refusal of payment
was that her condition was judged to be not due to war service. Another nurse Dorothy
M. Adams applied for sustenance to learn the drapery trade stating on her application
that, because of her service overseas, she had formed a dislike for nursing. The
Commission declined her request on the grounds that ‘mental dislike to one’s normal
occupation does not necessarily constitute a disability’.\textsuperscript{70} While this may be the case, a
mental dislike for one’s own occupation could also have been an indication of her
inability to deal with her memories of war. Grief and loss for nurses who had served
close to the front were ongoing dark shadows in their memory. Caring for men who
returned to Australia with devastating and ongoing war injuries would have allowed the
dark shadows of memory to remain.

The credentials of another returned nurse, Sister F. Collett who was a member of
the Victorian Trained Nurses Association before leaving for England were questioned
when she applied for the same repatriation benefits as those received by members of the
AANS who had served overseas. She had worked in Egypt and with the English Home
and Comforts Fund at Tallesbury, England as well as with the American forces in

\textsuperscript{68} NAA: B2455, First Australian Imperial Force Personnel Dossiers 1914-1920, Jessie Helena Buchanan.
\textsuperscript{69} NAA: A2487, 1921/13348, Buchanan \textit{Op.cit.}
\textsuperscript{70} DVA: Minutes of the Repatriation Commission, 19/10869, 3 December 1919.
Palestine. Despite her service with the allied forces, the Repatriation Commission informed her ‘that none of these services outlined came within the categories quoted within the Act and ‘to grant this application would create a most undesirable precedent’.71

Another example of the difficulties nurses were experiencing obtaining repatriation benefits such as sustenance was in the petition signed by 38 returned military nurses from No 11 AGH Caulfield asking for sustenance payments. Again their inclusion as ‘soldiers’ in the terminology is an indication of an oversight in this consideration of sustenance payments. The nurses wanted to undertake a midwifery course, one that they had been enrolled in before the war.

We the undersigned, wish to bring under your notice that in applying for sustenance during the time we take up a midwifery course we were informed that the Repatriation Department have decided not to help us’. We would like to know where we are placed as regards Returned Soldiers

1)  Soldiers may go on the land if they are unfit for their former employment
2)  Soldiers may apply for a house if they desire to be married or have a dependent
3)  In many other ways soldiers have received assistance.

We would like to know in what way sisters are to be repatriated?72

On 8 January 1920, the Repatriation Commission agreed to the payment of fees for the course, but not surprisingly would not provide for other benefits such as uniforms or sustenance for a living allowance.73  A large number of nurses found therefore that their eligibility for repatriation benefits was not assured and did not occur in many cases without consistent questioning by those in authority. A peaceful life after the war was not to be gained easily.

71 Ibid., 8 August 1919.
72 Ibid., 8 January 1920.
73 Ibid.
Even though most of the AIF did not return to Australia until mid 1919 due to a shortage of shipping to transport them, their demobilization and repatriation was central to government policy under the direction of Sir John Monash.\textsuperscript{74} The same concern was certainly not given to the demobilization of nurses – many of whom did not return to Australia until late 1919 or early 1920. In a letter to A.P.K. Morris, the Acting General Secretary of the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia, the Assistant Secretary of the same organization stated:

> The demobilization scheme has been discussed and put into operation so far as it affects returned soldiers, but absolutely no provision is made for the demobilizing of sisters, who I might say are being demobilized in a haphazard and indiscriminate way.\textsuperscript{75}

In addition it was reported in \textit{The Times} on 5 April 1919 that, ‘Army nurses are still being dismissed on demobilization at a few hours’ notice in some cases without funds or anywhere to go’.\textsuperscript{76} As of 14 October 1919, 164 nurses from the AANS were still working in Europe.\textsuperscript{77} The total number of returning nurses for the period 25 November 1918 to 30 September 1919 was 883 with another 16 returning on three ships in January 1920.\textsuperscript{78} The reason for the delay and the disorganization of their demobilization may have related in some part to the fact that even though their duties in France were winding down and nurses from the AANS were being withdrawn from the 74th General Hospital at Trouville and the No. 5 Stationary Hospital at Dieppe, they were still required to work at


\textsuperscript{75} NLA: MS6609/1019, Returned Services League, Assistant Secretary for Victoria, RSSILA, to APK Morris Acting General Secretary RSSILA, Melbourne, 7 October 1919.

\textsuperscript{76} ‘Justice for Army Nurses’ \textit{The Times}, 5 April 1919, p. 13.

\textsuperscript{77} Australian War Memorial: AWM25 245/9 part 8, Demobilization Circular.

\textsuperscript{78} NAA: MP.367/1, 535/4/582, Australian Imperial Force, Repatriation and Demobilization – Bulletin No 31, Issued by Repatriation and Demobilization Department, Liaison Headquarters, Sutton Veny, 1 October 1919; NAA: MP367/1, 535/4/694, AIF Headquarters to Department of Defence, Melbourne, 30 January 1920.
the Australian Hospitals in England.\textsuperscript{79} After the Armistice, it was not only the wounded they were required to nurse but the many others who fell ill, particularly in Salonica and Palestine where the influenza epidemic raged throughout 1918 and 1919.

For others, any thought of quickly returning home quickly was to become secondary because of the need to care for those with the influenza pneumonic flu. In an account written in 1973 Sarah White remembered clearly the mixed feelings she and other hospital staff had about the Armistice – their happiness clouded somewhat by the deaths of so many from around them.

We were only a few miles from where the Armistice was signed and I vividly remember the silence on the 11\textsuperscript{th} hour of the 11\textsuperscript{th} day. We were hysterical, laughing and crying. But it was peculiar, we didn’t feel much like celebrating, only crying. That night in my tent 18 men died of pneumonic flu.\textsuperscript{80}

Other nurses were required to care for the severely wounded or recovering soldiers aboard hospital ships and transports returning to Australia. Many nurses returning to Australia were allocated the unpopular ‘family ships’ with newly married soldiers, often with their very young new wives and children - unpopular with nurses because of the large amount of baby bottle sterilizing and counselling of soldiers wives they were required to do.\textsuperscript{81} This sentiment was voiced by one nurse returning on the Marga, an orthopaedic ship with 600 troops on board, that even though she was required to nurse a large number of troops which she was glad to do, she was glad to be ‘free of the crying of the wee cherubs’.\textsuperscript{82}

Alice Joan Twynam, applied for land as a soldier settler in the Goulburn area on her return to Australia, was extremely frustrated at the time the Government was taking

\textsuperscript{82} Donnell, \textit{Ibid.}, p. 95.
returning her to Australia. She was one of the first AANS nurses who from each Military District, left Australia in 1914.\textsuperscript{83} The nurses were dispersed across the seven ships that made up the first convoy. The sentiments expressed by Alice, clearly exemplify those of other nurses still serving overseas. Writing from England early in December 1918 to her sister Mary Cunningham she wrote, ‘hoping every day to be recalled but nothing comes – we sort of feel forgotten’.\textsuperscript{84} And, on 19 February 1919, she again wrote to Mary agonizing about the delay. ‘I have applied for transport home but they are taking no notice of me. It’s an awful mistake to work hard, be obedient and do your duty in this life. If you do nobody takes any notice of you’.\textsuperscript{85} When one considers the length of her war service her impatience to return home can be understood. It is ironic but hardly surprising considering their low status, that nurses who enlisted in 1914 were not treated similarly to the men of the AIF who also enlisted in 1914. These 1914 men were given leave in 1918 to return home and nurses were not. Alice Twynam eventually returned to Australia on the \textit{Anchises} 18 April 1919.\textsuperscript{86}

Central to the Repatriation Act was the Government’s obligation to provide for each returning soldier or nurse, the ‘opportunity to earn a living wage’.\textsuperscript{87} A living wage had one central component in that it was established and accepted primarily as a humanitarian way to reduce poverty.\textsuperscript{88} A living wage was introduced by Justice Higgins in 1907 when he brought down the Harvester Judgement and was formulated according to the amount on which an unskilled labourer and his family could live. It was also

\textsuperscript{83} Each Military district represented a different Australian State.

\textsuperscript{84} NLA: MS6749, Folder 3, Cunningham Papers, Alice Joan Twynam to Mary Cunningham, 26 January 1919.

\textsuperscript{85} \textit{Ibid.}, Alice Joan Twynam to Mary Cunningham 19 February 1919.

\textsuperscript{86} NAA: B2455, First Australian Imperial Force Personnel Dossiers 1914-1920, Alice Joan Twynam.


assumed that most women would not work and those who did such as working class women, were not as respectable as women from the middle class. For nurses, who were generally women of this latter class, a judgement such as this presents a conundrum and challenges contemporary thoughts of the period. It would seem therefore that ‘a living wage’ and the means to return to their pre-war profession of choice, so graciously outlined in Repatriation legislation, was to be beyond the means of many nurses in the post war period. The Harvester Judgement determined that unmarried women, as many of these nurses were, entitled them to only 54% of the male basic wage.

It was also believed that unmarried women would not have dependents. Consequently, if a nurse wanted to continue in her profession, ‘a living wage’ would not even provide a moderate standard of living. In 1926 Mary Redfern Watt, in accordance with what happened to other single women including returned nurses, was providing a home on her soldier settlement block at Dubbo for her aged parents and a sister which added markedly to her financial burden.89 Mary’s sister, Mona Martell Watt also served as a nurse in the AANS but was discharged medically unfit. It is possible that the sister living with Mary was Mona. Earning a living wage and being reinstated in society so changed by war was therefore not to be achieved without some difficulty. Throughout the war years, the cost of living had risen markedly. Now, even though it began to fall again around 1923, so ironically did wages, with the basic wage not undergoing a rise again until 1927.90 If nurses were to seek employment in their profession, the system of wage inequality between men and women was to their detriment.

89 SRNSW: Department of Lands, Returned Soldiers Settlement Loan files, NRS 8058, [12/7308, No 8490], Returned Soldiers Settlement Branch Office Memorandum, 10 March 1926.
The period between the signing of the armistice and the return to Australia was difficult not only for the thousands of military personnel anxious to return home but also for the Australian government who wanted to return soldiers to Australia as quickly as possible. There was also an economic reason for the training of military personnel in non-military occupations as it was thought by Prime Minister Hughes that this would “assist the transition from soldiering to future citizenship”. Initiatives were set up to rehabilitate military personnel that included vocational training courses under the Non-Military Employment Scheme. Jan Bassett estimated that over 300 nurses who served with the AANS took the opportunity of attending these courses in the United Kingdom before they returned to Australia. She believed that because so many nurses did not want to return to nursing that they undertook these courses as a means to obtain a living away from it. These courses were therefore generally but not always, in professions other than their own and included activities such as book-keeping, motor driving, beekeeping, business courses or massage. Claudine Cadwallader served with the AANS requested instruction in beekeeping and poultry farming. On 16 June 1919, Mary Redfern Watt attended The National School of Cookery on Buckingham Palace Road, undertaking a Cookery and Household Management Course there. (See image below).

93 *Ibid*.
95 AWM: 19, TE 10/10, Staff Nurse C. Cadwallader AANS, Request for instruction in beekeeping and poultry farming.
96 NAA: B2455, First Australian Imperial Force Personnel Dossiers 1914-1920, Mary Redfern Watt.
Mary Redfern Watt – Cooking Certificate – (Judith Ciok)

She was granted leave of absence with pay and subsistence allowance at the rate of six shillings per day with an additional allowance of four guineas toward payment of fees. This was to be for the period 4 June 1919 until 25 July 1919.97

Toward the end of 1921, Rose Eleanor Carter who served in India with the AANS and who was later to take up land in Victoria in the 1920s took a course run by the Repatriation Department in typing and short-hand at the South Melbourne Technical School.98 She had applied on 30 June 1921 and by 24 November 1921, was declared to be about 20% efficient and although judged to be intelligent and willing to work, was handicapped by being in indifferent health.99

Other nurses took the opportunity to increase their nursing qualifications by undertaking midwifery courses in the United Kingdom before returning home. The qualifications they received in the United Kingdom where they trained in midwifery for

97 AWM: 5276/ Part 5, Australian Imperial Force Headquarters (London) Administrative Registry, Medical personnel administration file, Sister M.R. Watt.
98 NAA: B73/18, M18119, Medical Case File, Rose Eleanor Carter, South Melbourne Technical School, John S. McIntosh Instructor, Memorandum to Mr. McAllister, Supervisor, 24 November 1921.
99 Ibid.
four months, did not allow them to be registered as midwives in Australia as this overseas qualification was not recognized in their own country.\textsuperscript{100} The General Secretary of the Returned Sailors’ and Soldiers’ Imperial League of Australia questioned the Prime Minister about the unfairness of this policy asking if the provision of this qualification could be made within the Nurses Registration Act. The Prime Minister replied stating that the regulation of such matters were the responsibility of the State in question.\textsuperscript{101}

As outlined previously, there are examples of nurses being hindered in their application for sustenance, their application retarded to a great extent by various anomalies and inconsistencies relating to its eventual payment. Yet, in line with what was being offered to the men who were to become soldier settlers, nurses who were either on the land or who intended taking it up, were also given the opportunity of studying various facets of horticulture at training farms. At the completion of the course it was possible to obtain a Certificate of Competency in Poultry and Elementary Agriculture. Although, there is again no clear indication that this number was large or how many nurses took advantage of this. During the course of this study only three nurses who undertook agricultural training have been located. All of these attended Hawkesbury Agricultural College. Mary Standish Cox who applied for a small block of land on Vimiera Road, Eastwood stated when applying for training at Hawkesbury that she intended to take up horticulture professionally. Bernice Collopy intended to learn grape growing and Lillian Mitchell wanted to learn aspects of poultry raising, orchard growing and general gardening. In the period of their attendance directly after the war, each

\textsuperscript{100} NAA: A2, 20/2049, Prime Minister’s Department, General Correspondence files Repatriation AIF Nurses, Amendment of Nursing Act J Henderson, General Secretary of the Federal Executive of the Returned Sailors’ and Soldiers’ Imperial League of Australia, to the Prime Minister, 8 March 1920.

\textsuperscript{101} \textit{Ibid.}, Reply from the Prime Minister, 19 March 1920.
student was given her own room at Hawkesbury but was required to share a bathroom. Bernice Collopy attended the College for only twelve days between 10 March 1919 and 22 March 1919, so would not have completed her Certificate. Neither she nor her husband, were to take up land as soldier settlers. The other two nurses were to do well in their studies with Lillian Mitchell’s time at Hawkesbury characterized by ‘earnest application and keen attention and a display of high intelligence – (she) was a capable and patient worker’.102

At the Cowra Experiment and Training Farm which was in operation between 1911 and 1938, 1,246 men and women passed through under various training schemes to gain experience in agriculture. There are no surviving figures to ascertain if any of these women were nurses who served in World War One. It is possible to assume that as the dates correspond with the period after the war, that nurses may have gone to Cowra for agricultural training prior to 1920 when the Cowra Women’s Training Farm was closed. From September of 1920, it was reported in the Hawkesbury Agricultural Journal that the Women’s training farm was only to be used by returned soldiers.103

Woman Student at Cowra Women’s Training Farm – nd – (SLNSW 35613)

102 Hawkesbury Agricultural College: AS-401 Student Card System.
103 HAC: AS-4, HAC Journal 1 September 1920, p. 103.
Before analyzing fully the applications for land by returned nurses as soldier settlers, it is essential to look back at the difficulties women had acquiring land before the Married Women’s Property Act of 1879 (NSW) and Married Women’s Property Act of 1884 (Vic). Before these Acts became law married women in the States that are the focus of this thesis, NSW and Victoria, were not eligible to own land in their own name. The eligibility and entitlement of single and married nurses to land after World War One therefore, not only had its foundation in nineteenth colonial land policy but was to be the result of evolving legislation that saw the legal rights of women change and become stronger.

From the first years of white settlement restrictions were placed on the rights of married women to own land with only married white women married to convicts eligible to do so. This was because convict men were unable to own land if they were still serving their sentence. Single women and widows could own land in the early colonial period although depending on the Governor, this was not treated consistently and the applications of single women for land grants were questioned, not because of their gender but because of their marital status.104

One such case was that of Eliza Walsh who arrived in the colony on the Globe in January 1819 with her sister and brother-in-law Frederick Drennan who had been appointed Commissariat General. In a letter dated 17 January 1821, Eliza wrote to Governor Macquarie, stating that she had wished to settle a farm in ‘this country’ and had

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purchased one 8 miles from Mr. Bell’s at Richmond Hill. Governor Macquarie refused her request for a land grant as he stated that it was contrary to regulations to give such grants to ladies. Eliza persisted in her request saying in her letter that she was quite able to farm as well as any gentleman. After Eliza’s marriage to John Galt Smith in September 1823 she again applied for a land grant which was refused because of her marriage. She believed that marriage should never prevent her owning land. Eliza’s persistence paid off and she was given a Primary Grant of 120 acres on 15 December 1828 in the Parish of Butterwick, Country of Durham and requested in 1839 that the ‘deeds be made out in her own name’ – these were subsequently executed in her favour. A remarkable feat, as this was many decades before the passing of the Women’s Property Acts.

In NSW as a result of the progression of the nineteenth century Property Acts that included the Women’s Property Act of 1893 particularly, a married woman had complete legal rights over her own property in all matters of contracts and wills. The rights and foundations for both single and married women to own land was a central component of these Acts and subsequently, created the means for women to purchase land under the Closer Settlement Acts (1901) and (1904) and the Amendments to these Acts of (1906) and (1907) that were to follow. The provisions of the Closer Settlement Promotion Act (1910) under which many of the nurse soldier settlers applied for land in NSW, was extended by Section 4C of the Returned Soldiers’ Settlement Act (1916) to allow the land

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105 SRNSW: Colonial Secretary’s Correspondence, Eliza Walsh to the Governor, [Fiche 3055, 4/1832, 397B] 17 January 1821.
106 Colonial Secretary, Ibid., Eliza Walsh to the Governor, [Fiche 3055, 4/1832, nd.]
107 SRNSW: Colonial Secretary Letters Re: Land, [2/7981], Eliza Smith to Colonial Secretary 18 September 1828.
108 Ibid., Description of Primary Grant, County of Durham, Parish of Butterwick, 15 December 1828; Ibid., Eliza Smith to Colonial Secretary, [39/3675], 26 March 1839.
application of returned soldiers including nurses. Under the Closer Settlement Promotion Act, the sale had to be approved by the Crown before it could proceed.

As had occurred in NSW, legislation for Closer Settlement was also implemented in Victoria in the 1890s, the primary Act in that State being the Land Act of 1898. At this date the controlling government agency was the Crown Lands and Survey Department with the administration of Closer Settlement being taken over in 1905 by the Lands Purchase and Management Board, which was replaced in 1918 by the Closer Settlement Board. In Victoria, land for returned soldiers was outlined in its Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act (No.2916) 1917 and was an extension of its Closer Settlement legislation thus enabling objectives laid down in the Closer Settlement Act (No. 2629) 1915, to include returned soldiers. Closer Settlement Acts in Victoria were also proclaimed in 1904, 1912, 1915, 1928, 1932 and 1938. The inclusion of women in the Closer Settlement Acts in both States was outlined accordingly as being ‘any female over 21 years of age’."109 This legislation had many of the same central principals and was established to place as many small settlers on the land as possible - on farms of limited acreage of between 40 and 340 acres.

Closer Settlement was one of the major ways that a returned nurse could obtain land and even prior to the war there is evidence that single women took advantage of the Closer Settlement Acts to do so. Although despite being legally able, in 1912, the *bona fides* of two unmarried women, the Misses Murray and Flannery, who applied for land under the Closer Settlement Act from Wargundy Estate in NSW, were questioned. Here again is evidence of pedantic and restrictive processes in place, when women applied for land. For approval of their application to be granted, the two women were required to...

furnish statutory declarations outlining their financial positions stating that they were not ‘in reality agents for undisclosed principals nor were engaged to marry one of the other settlers’.\footnote{SRNSW: Rural Bank, Unregistered Series, Papers relating to the administration of the Closer Settlement Promotion Act 1911-23, Applications by unmarried women, [10/32037 File 12/1933].} The Minister decided after due consideration ‘that there are no existing reasonable grounds for refusal’.\footnote{Ibid.}

The marital status of nurses when applying for land in the early years after the war brought about some discussion and consternation in sections of State and Commonwealth governments. On 11 September 1919, largely as a result of an application for land by Beulah McMinn who had served with the AANS, shortly before her marriage on 23 June 1920 to Edmund Frank Lind, the Land Settlement Branches in Victoria, Western Australia, NSW and Queensland were contacted by the Repatriation Commission asking for details about their policy in relation to married nurses who wanted to apply for land along with that of their husband.\footnote{NAA: A2487, 20/3265, Department of Repatriation Minute Paper Comptroller of Repatriation to Victorian Discharged Soldiers Qualification Committee; this opinion was also outlined in the Minutes of the Repatriation Commission 19 Sep. 1919, Department of Veteran’s Affairs, Canberra, ACT; I would like to thank Associate Professor Melanie Oppenheimer of the University of New England for drawing my attention to this documentation.} Beulah’s intended husband, an ex-serviceman who had embarked on 21 October 1914 with the 5th Battalion had also applied for land in his own name. Beulah’s application was subsequently agreed to by the Repatriation Commission although she should have considered herself particularly fortunate. Even though she was deemed to be eligible along with her husband, the Comptroller of the Repatriation Commission wrote on 19 September 1919 that though he would approve her application, he still ‘doubted that it would be wise to extend eligibility for Land Grants to Sisters of the Army Nursing Service as he believed that by extending eligibility for land to these nurses it ‘would open the door for ‘others’ to apply such as
those who hadn’t served their country in its time of need’.\textsuperscript{\text{113}} There is no evidence to indicate if this derogatory attitude to nurses was widespread. Although it does show clearly that in his opinion nurse soldier settlers were inconsequential, devaluing their war service and aligning them with ‘shirkers’ who had not contributed in the war, a group held by the majority of the population during and after the war in low esteem.

Even though nurses were eligible for land there was an assumption by the Repatriation Department, ‘that very few (would) apply for holdings’.\textsuperscript{\text{114}} The Comptroller of Repatriation declaring that, ‘although theoretically entitled to the benefits prescribed for soldiers, nurses, in point of fact, are rarely applicants for these classes of benefits’.\textsuperscript{\text{115}} Despite nurses being included in all the points listed under the Repatriation Act (1917-1918), irrespective if they were single or married, agreement and uniformity of action in relation to their land application did not occur without some difficulty. Across the various States, requirements for land entitlement varied considerably. Moreover several nurses found that their marital status when applying for land, impacted on how their application was dealt with.

In NSW, a nurse married to an ex-member of the AIF was eligible only if the combined acreage of his block and hers did not exceed the size of a home maintenance area – the size of the block was to be enough to make a living on.\textsuperscript{\text{116}} This in itself bears some consideration as usually one soldier, alone, would receive land judged to be the size of one home maintenance area. In the period after World War One this was envisaged as being a ‘one man’ family farm and as A.G. Lloyd stated in 1961 ‘erred on the side of

\textsuperscript{\text{113}} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{\text{114}} NAA: A2489 1920/1575, Acting Prime Minister to the Premier of QLD.
\textsuperscript{\text{115}} DVA: Minutes of Meetings, 6 November 1919.
\textsuperscript{\text{116}} The Crown Lands Consolidation Act of NSW defines a ‘home maintenance area’ as: ‘An area which, when used for the purpose for which it is reasonably fitted, would be sufficient for the maintenance in average seasons and circumstances, for an average family’.
frugality’.

This policy was profoundly discriminatory to married nurse soldier settlers, preventing the single application by a married returned nurse being judged on its merits alone. In South Australia and Western Australia the eligibility of a nurse settler for land was received and processed according to a system which was much fairer. In South Australia a nurse’s application for land depended simply on her ability to farm by herself if she was single and being married, did not invalidate her claim. In Western Australia, if a nurse was married, she was still able to apply under her own name along with that of her husband.

On 12 September 1919 the Secretary of the Victorian Discharged Soldiers Qualification Committee wrote to the Department of Repatriation in Melbourne, almost two years after the passing of the Repatriation Act, stating ‘It is extremely doubtful whether members of the AANS can be regarded as discharged soldiers and obtain land’. Moreover it was also stated that, ‘it was never intended (if a nursing sister is eligible at all) that a soldier would be able to receive an additional area of land through his wife’. Another Victorian nurse Amy Alice Cordingley, (nee Simpson), who had married on 21 January 1920, wrote to the Director of Soldiers’ Settlements on 6 May 1922, complaining about this: ‘it is most unfair as single nurses thus enjoy a privilege which is denied me on account of my marriage’. Her husband was already in possession of a block consisting of 117 acres. She applied for a dairy farm as her husband had a spinal complaint and they thought this would be more suitable to his

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118 NAA: A2487, 20/3265, Eligibility of nurses who are about to marry for repatriation benefits, Minute Paper.
119 Ibid.
120 Ibid.
121 Ibid.
122 NAA: A2487 1922/6924, Application for Soldier Settlement block of land, Amy Alice Cordingley to A.A. Watson, Director of Soldier Settlements, 6 May 1922.
physical needs. It appears that Amy’s application was declined although she was told if she had applied whilst single it may have been approved. She died on 29 October 1922 in childbirth.\textsuperscript{123} Her Probate stated that at the time of her death her ‘estate was valued at £68 and that she owned no real estate’.\textsuperscript{124}

Nellie View Scott served with the QAIMNS and applied for a block at Red Cliffs Soldier Settlement Estate at Mildura, Victoria. Another woman Isobel Tyzack served with the WAACS in France and married Jim Taylor who took up block No 673, also settled on Red Cliffs, although she did not make an individual application for land under her own name.\textsuperscript{125} When Nellie Scott applied as a single woman her application was approved, as was the application of her future husband Frank Carey. After their marriage she and Frank were asked by the Closer Settlement Commission to withdraw from one of their allotments as the ‘Commission feels that one allotment on this Estate is sufficient to give an ample living for a family’.\textsuperscript{126} Frank Carey replied to the Commission, ‘There was no secret about our engagement when block 429 was allotted to me, and I am perfectly sure three of the gentlemen on the board knew about the relationship that existed between my wife (then Sister Scott) and myself’.\textsuperscript{127} Despite pressure from the Commission the couple retained ownership of both blocks, living on one. After Frank’s death at the Caulfield Military Hospital in 1939, Nellie worked both properties until Frank’s was sold to their son Colin in 1953. It is apparent from these examples that even though Victoria

\textsuperscript{123} Department for Victorian Communities Registry of Birth Death and Marriages: Death Certificate 1922/12257, Amy Cordingley.
\textsuperscript{124} PRO: Supreme Court of Victoria, Probate Jurisdiction, VPRS 28/P3 1365, File 191/490.
\textsuperscript{125} Ken Mackenzie Wright, \textit{A Land Fit for heroes, The Story of the Soldier Settlement of Red Cliffs after World War 1}, self published, Mildura 1995, p. iv: WAACS generally served as clerks, telephonists, waitresses and cooks and were not given full military status.
\textsuperscript{126} PRO: VPRS: 5714/P, 1910, 2455/12, Closer and Soldier Settlement file, Closer Settlement Commission, Victoria to Mrs. F. B. Carey, Red Cliffs, 11 November 1921.
\textsuperscript{127} \textit{Ibid.}, Frank Carey to Closer Settlement Commission, 29 November 1921.
had included nurses in its 1918 legislation, the application of married nurses in that State particularly, was still open to scrutiny and bias.

Sometime toward the end of July 1919 Priscilla Wardle contacted the Department of Repatriation requesting information about what she was entitled to as member of the QAIMNS. She made enquiries not only about obtaining land in her own name, but also about obtaining a War Service Home.128 Her request for information certainly again brought about some questioning by those in authority. She was seeking the same entitlements as those who served with the AANS. In a letter written to the Department of Repatriation, the Under Secretary of Lands, who seemed to favour her case stated:

Nurse Wardle represents that these thirty nurses (who left Australia April 1915 at the request of the British Government and who joined the QAIMNS) and should be entitled to the same benefits’.129

Her eligibility for benefits were approved by 10 November 1920 although there was continuing dissent between the Department of Repatriation and the Local Repatriation Committee at Ballarat about a figure of £1.4.9 which the Committee had paid her for the transport of furniture.130 The Department of Repatriation believed that the payment of the money was irregular and should be refunded, as the land was in fact granted to her husband Cyril Kirby and not to her. The Local Repatriation Committee on the other hand stated that she was eligible under Regulation 124 (c). It is clear that in this case the Department of Repatriation was being particularly fussy, difficult and hard to get along with. The payment (which was still judged to be irregular) was in time grudgingly approved, but not without some sarcasm on the part of J.M. Semmens the Chairman of the Repatriation Commission.

128 NAA: A2487 1919/7682, Request for Advice on entitlements, Miss P. I. Wardle.
129 Ibid.
130 NAA: A2489 1920/7240, Transportation of furniture, Mrs. Priscilla Kirby, Sister QANS (sic).
The decision of the Deputy-Commission is correct. The special pleading of the Chairman of the Local Committee breaks down under careful scrutiny. What employment has Mrs. Kirby found? None. Regulation 124 (c) says ‘obtained employment and desires to establish his home’. It is Kirby’s home. There might be something in the Chairman’s contention if the word ‘or’ occurred in the subsection but it does not.\textsuperscript{131}

It appears that returned nurses were included in soldier settlement legislation in both Canada and New Zealand but when it came down to it, they were not regarded or considered highly, thus mirroring what was happening in Australia. In Canada where an estimated 262,000 soldiers applied for land, nursing sisters though ‘technically eligible’ were urged on demobilization to look for occupations other than land settlement.\textsuperscript{132} It was considered by the Secretary of State (and soon to be Prime Minister) Arthur Meighen that ‘they cannot qualify for the rough and strenuous duties of settlers’.\textsuperscript{133} Even though they were eligible for land and included in the Soldier Settlement legislation in Canada, a 1920 amendment to the Act excluded them.\textsuperscript{134}

Anna Rogers who wrote a history of the New Zealand army nursing service believed that a ‘half-dozen returned nurses’ applied for land in that country after World War One.\textsuperscript{135} Ellen Iris Schaw was the first to successfully draw a block in that country after a 1919 Soldier Settlement Act was amended to include nurses.\textsuperscript{136} She was one of fourteen successful applicants out of thirty seven who applied for land on Cloverlea Soldier Settlement near Palmerston North on New Zealand’s North Island.\textsuperscript{137} In July

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., J. M. Semmens to the Deputy Commissioner Department of Repatriation, Melbourne, 30 November 1920.
\textsuperscript{132} D. Morton & G. Wright, Winning the Second Battle: Canadian Veterans and the Return to Civilian Life 1915-1930, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1987, p. 145
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{134} Canadian Parliamentary Debates, 23 June 1919 and 7 May 1920, cited in Ibid.
1920, she had one cow, a horse and trap, three chickens, three cats and one dog but was waiting on her fowl house being built so that she could have more poultry.138

Anna Rogers believes however that ‘even though nurses were officially included in the land settlement scheme in New Zealand after 1919, the government had to be reminded of their right to land’.140 The application for land by nurses as soldier settlers in Canada and New Zealand can be closely aligned with Australia. In all respects their applications were treated indifferently and without consequence.

**Conclusion**

As has been demonstrated throughout this chapter, nurses were an oversight in most forms of repatriation policy. By in large they were generally ignored. It is clear as well that they were not considered equally as soldier settlers – they were women in a man’s domain. They were restricted nominally by the ‘Land for Heroes’ ideology, one that allowed their applications for land to be frequently overlooked and not considered

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138 *Kai Tiaki, The Journal of the Nurses of New Zealand*, July 1920, p. 159, [http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/](http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/) in this article her name is given as G.T. Schaw which is incorrect. On a list naming NZ nurses, she is listed as Ellen Iris Schaw, [http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~sooty/nurses.htm](http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~sooty/nurses.htm); in the *Grey River Argus, Ibid.*, she is named E.I. Schaw.


importantly. If land ownership was to give them a peaceful life after the war then it was to be on terms and conditions that were defined in a dominant masculine context – as the soldier settlement scheme was established primarily for the returning men of the AIF. Single and married women found that their right to land was rarely considered independently of their husbands and their entitlement to it was judged or considered within the patriarchal expectations and mores of society and/or the controls of government. In the next chapter the cases of the nurses who were successful in their application will be examined as well as those nurses whose application was unsuccessful. An examination will also be undertaken of their background and social and cultural origins.
CHAPTER TWO

Motivations and expectations for a new beginning

‘Everything seems to come to perfection over there. Of course I should love to go on the land when I get back home. I wonder if it would be possible’

Sister Alice Joan Twynam, 25th General Hospital France, 9 February 1919

The number of nurse soldier settlers was small within the total of 37,561 soldiers who settled on the land in Australia after World War One. As outlined in the previous chapter, they were a hidden minority. The application for land by nurses was not well received by government officials particularly in the early years, when they were first eligible to apply. Applications were not considered to be of any importance and there was a lack of consistency and uniformity in the application and settlement process. This chapter will therefore examine why a limited number of women decided to take up land in a scheme designed for the men of the AIF where as women soldier settlers, they were a marginal group.

The poor mental and physical health of a large number of nurses when they were demobilized and in the years after the war has been a major theme to emerge in this thesis. This chapter will assess if the diminished health of nurses played any part in their decision to take up farming. This chapter will also assess the social and cultural background of nurses so as to determine what part this played in how and why they took up land where they did.

Of the forty three women located in this study, thirty four served with the Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS), one with the Queen Alexandra’s Imperial Military Nursing Service (QAIMNS) and two with the Queen Alexandra’s Imperial Medical Nursing Service Reserve (QAIMNSR). (See Table 2) Lillian Charlotte Mitchell
worked at the 3rd Auxiliary General Hospital in London with the Imperial Army Nursing Service and therefore may also have served with the QAIMNS. She was also known as Charlotte Lillian Mitchell as her marriage was registered under both names.¹ It is not known where Irene Charlotte Underwood served although she was listed in the Closer Settlement file as a ‘military nurse’.² No record has been located of any overseas service for her within the personnel records of QAIMNS held at the National Archives in the UK.³ She is not on any surviving list of nurses at the Australian War Memorial, or those at the National Archives of Australia, nor is she on any of the Australian Nursing Association lists. Irene Underwood may possibly have served with the Voluntary Aid Detachments (VADs). There are no surviving lists that contain a full record of all the Australian women who served with that organization. The remaining four women were not fully trained nurses although all were Australian and worked in a medical capacity overseas. Alice Beatrice Earle and Helen May Clifton were members of the VADs, Marion Isabele Broughton was a member of the Almeric Paget Military Massage Corps (APMMC) and Millicent Sylvia Armstrong served with the Scottish Hospitals for Home and Foreign Service (SHFFS) in France.

¹ NSW Registry of Birth Deaths and Marriages: Index to Marriage Certificates 1921/1541, Lillian C & Charlotte L Mitchell.
² SRNSW: Returned Soldiers Settlement miscellaneous files, NRS 8056, [19/7032].
³ There is a record at the National Archives in England for an Irene Underwood, but on examination, this woman was English with the middle name of Florence.
Millicent Sylvia Armstrong (extreme left) – in France, possibly at Royaumont, nd
(Cecilia Homerlein)

Elizabeth Helen Draper in Egypt nd – (Draper family)
## Name and service details of nurses

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>First Name</th>
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<td>-</td>
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AANS – Australian Army Nursing Service  
QAIMNS – Queen Alexandra’s Imperial Military Nursing Service  
QAIMNSR – Queen Alexandra’s Imperial Military Nursing Service Reserve  
SHHFS – Scottish Hospitals for Home and Foreign Service  
VADs – Voluntary Aid Detachments  
APMMC - Almeric Paget Military Massage Corp
Five nurses who left on the *Mooltan* on 15 May 1915 were to own land on their return to Australia: Evelyn Maud Reid, Mary Redfern Watt, Edith Danson Rush, Evelyn Percy Wright and Beulah McMinn. All served with the 3rd Australian General Hospital on Lemnos. Unfortunately, they are not identified in this photograph nor is it known what factors united them after the war in their decision to take up land.

![Australian Sisters on the *Mooltan* 1915 – (SLNSW PXE698)](image)

With the exception of Penelope Frater, Evelyn Percy Wright and Euphemia Weir Huntley Scott, who owned land prior to World War One, the majority of nurse soldier settlers researched in this study applied for or took up their block of land between 1919 and 1924 toward the end of their service or just after being demobilized. Women from the other services, the QAIMNS, the SHHFS, the APMMS and the VADs also applied for and obtained their land in the first decade after the war.

In the course of this study, the applications, land holdings and rural training of forty three women was examined - twenty nine from NSW and fourteen from Victoria. As outlined in Table 3 on the following page, the circumstance of their application, the

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locality of their block and the marital status of nurse soldier settlers, indicate a diverse range and complexity of experiences. To clearly show the degree of this diversity, was to be a challenging task for two reasons: as outlined previously, nurses were hidden in surviving records but also their place as soldier settlers was markedly undervalued and was not recorded in government documentation greatly.

Several Victorian nurses Daphne Cadwallader, Priscilla Wardle, Edith Jones and Marjorie Reilly were on the land after World War One.

![Claudine Cadwallader and Daphne Morgan](image)

Claudine Cadwallader and Daphne Morgan (nee Cadwallader) - Bemm River - nd (Jan Woods)

The last three listed were married to soldier settlers. Robert John Morgan, the husband of Daphne Cadwallader, obtained a Certificate of Title for land at Bemm River, Victoria, on 7 January 1927. This property, a little over 107 acres, was transferred from an Annie

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5 Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Victoria: Certificate of Title Vol. 5219, Fol. 1043624, Robert John Morgan.
Morgan (possibly his mother), on 19 November 1911. It is not known if he or any of these married nurses also applied for land as returned soldiers under their own name. Priscilla Kirby, as outlined in the previous chapter, did express an interest in obtaining land under her own name.

Penelope Frater, Nellie Veir Scott and Edith Dean Williams were in possession of their land at the time of their death. Two Victorian nurses, Rose Eleanor Carter and Miriam Selina Welshman, remained on their land until ill health and old age forced them to leave it. It is unclear if these last two holdings were obtained under the soldier settlement scheme. Although as Miriam Welshman purchased her land from the Victorian State Water Commission she could possibly have done this as a returned soldier.

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6 Ibid., Vol. 3572, Fol. 714235
Details of land requests, applications for land/or loans and approvals

* Expressed an interest in obtaining land in her own name
** On the land – no application papers for soldier settlement located
*** Owned land before World War One
MSS Married to a soldier settler or returned soldier
# Applied for a loan/advance
© Application unsuccessful
T Known to have underwent training in agriculture, poultry or squab farming
S Successful application as a returned nurse

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As indicated in Table 3, the nurses acquired their land using different methods. Several women, Alice Beatrice Earle, Mary Redfern Watt, Florence Josephine Reardon and Julia Bligh Johnston, obtained their land by transfer of ownership from another party. This method was in line with that used by many male soldier settlers and was normal practice when the original land holder was either unable to continue farming or chose to sell the block. Alice Beatrice Earle obtained her land, a Settlement Purchase next to that of her husband’s block, by the transfer of ownership from a William John Cooper, a soldier settler in ill health who had abandoned it. Before the transfer could be approved she was required to provide details of her military service and to submit her Qualification Certificate to the Soldier Settlement Board.7 Similarly, in Florence Reardon’s case, her holding in the Parkes locality was transferred from a returned soldier who had forfeited the block because of ill health. In the early years after World War One it was normal procedure for holdings to be transferred from one returned soldier to another exclusively, although by the late 1920s this was not stringently enforced.

Mary Redfern Watt obtained her land by seeking Letters of Administration from the estate of her brother Joseph Martel Watt who died in 1920 as a result of being gassed in France.8 Julia Bligh Johnston’s block was sold to her by a family friend, Ada Marion Gould. While this cannot be classed as a soldier’s holding, as a returned soldier, Julia applied for the £625 Advance to assist her on her property. Even though she is listed in the Card Index to Loan files held at State Records of NSW, the corresponding Loan’s file

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8 SRNSW: Closer Settlement Promotion file - Appraisement, NRS 8052, [10/37108, No. 241], New Myton Estate.
has not survived. Julia mortgaged her property several times to the Department of Lands.9

Two nurses took up land using a type of tenure unlike that of any other nurses located for this thesis. The first, Edith Dean Williams took up a Soldiers’ Special Holding on 26 September 1921. This was a suburban holding of seven acres in the Parish of Sutherland, her cottage named *Wiwurrri*.10 Little is known about her family or her life after the war or why she settled in Sutherland. The second, Emily Jane Sheil, took up a Western Land Lease at Mossgiel, near Ivanhoe, NSW - the only Western Land Lease located for a returned nurse. Emily Sheil’s reason for taking up a Western Land Lease could have been because it was the tenure her brothers also took up. A WLL was the most common tenure in the Western Division of NSW where large acreages were needed to sustain stock – at Mossgiel where Emily’s block was located – it was one beast to six acres.11

As indicated in Table 3, ten out of forty three nurses in this thesis who applied for land individually were unsuccessful in their application. Even though the way the land was acquired is not known for others, at least fifteen nurses successfully applied for land as returned soldiers in their own name, either as a single or married woman. It is the experiences of these women that will provide the main focus in this thesis on women as farmers and soldier settlers. With a few exceptions, farms and farming were traditionally for the men-folk. The accepted place for women, wives, sisters and daughters, was in the home and not on the land. This attitude was clearly exemplified in an account given by Ann Donnell, a member of the AANS, who made an interesting observation when

9 NSW Department of Lands: Certificate of Title, Julia Bligh Johnston Vol. 2797 Folio 95. 
10 SRNSW: Supreme Court Probate Packets NRS 13660, Series 4 [No. 384479, Box 10379], Edith Williams. 
11 Stock information provided by Beryl Sheil in a telephone interview, 8 March 2006.
returning by ship to Australia with other nursing sisters on 16 February 1919. The sisters sat on deck chairs sewing, listening to a member of the Imperial League of Australia urging returned soldiers to join the League but also suggesting to them that ‘they buy a little farm and invite someone to share it with them’.12 Nurses were not included in the discussion on board ship as prospective land owners in their own right despite having the same entitlements to a ‘farm’ as members of the AIF. Certainly, the dominant discourse was that ‘farm’ and ‘farming’ fell within a profoundly masculine context. Nurses were not included in this discussion nor encouraged as farmers as this did not befit their respectable ladylike image.

As shown in Table 2 Emma Mary Duffy and Esther Edith Coggin, both served with the AANS and embarked overseas together on the Mooltan on 9 June 1917.13 On their return to Australia they undertook training at Blackheath in the Blue Mountains, to raise squabs - an occupation seen as a suitable and manageable one for women. They applied for five acres of land on Vimiera Road, Eastwood so that they could work the property together.14 Another nurse Margaret Ellen Goggin also applied for land on Vimiera Road to raise squabs.15 None of these three nurses was successful in their land application. Margaret Goggin’s application was refused because the block, (a little over one acre), was judged to be a residential site. The asking price of £825 which included a house was thought to be too expensive.16 A similar judgement for refusal was made in the case of Emma Duffy.17 Another nurse, Mary Standish Cox, who also wanted to raise

13 AWM 253: Nurses who embarked on RMS Mooltan, June 1919.
14 SRNSW: Closer Settlement Promotion file NRS 8052, [10/37158, No. 2427].
15 SRNSW: Closer Settlement Promotion file NRS 8052, [10/ 37160, No. 2525]; SRNSW: NRS 8052, [10/37158, No. 2413].
squabs, applied for a one acre block on Bobbin Head Road, near Gordon, NSW. Her application was declined because, ‘as the land measured only one acre, the Act (the Closer Settlement Promotion Act) does not provide for the purchase of any area less than 5 acres’. Other than the size of the blocks being reason for refusal there is nothing in surviving records to indicate if refusal was because they were women. Although the following case clearly shows an undercurrent of inconsistency in how their applications were dealt with.

Evelyn Maud Reid applied successfully for land to grow strawberries on Vimiera Road, Eastwood, this block close to the other unsuccessful applications listed above. To begin with, her block was larger, consisting of two and one half acres. Although considering the statement in Mary Standish Cox’s file stipulating that successful application was dependent on the size of the block being five acres and above, the successful application of Evelyn Maud Reid does show methods used by government officials that appear to be contradictory. Evelyn had a long career prior to the war caring for well-to do members of society. Although there is nothing in surviving documentation to indicate if she called on these connections to provide a character reference so that her application for land would be approved.

Hilda Hope McMaugh applied unsuccessfully for a holding. The block consisted of approximately 430 acres and was located about four miles from Guyra. It was sought from Edward J. Stevenson, under the Closer Settlement Promotion Act. The value of the land was £8 an acre although Hilda offered £5.10.00 an acre. Despite the vendor

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18 SRNSW: Department of Lands, Closer Settlement Promotion Files, c.1913-72, NRS 8052, [10/13315, No. 2525], Letter from Illidge, Cromack & Armstrong Real Estate Agents and Auctioneers to the Under Secretary for Lands, Sydney 15 June 1920.
19 SRNSW: NRS 8052, [10/37162, No. 2609].
20 Ibid.
Stevenson wanting a quick settlement of the sale, ‘I would be thankful if you would push this matter through as early as possible as time is approaching when plowing should be done for next year’s crops’.21 There was no prospect of an agreement over the price so the sale did not proceed. Stevenson stating that [he] believed £8 very reasonable and the lowest price [he] would consider’22. It appears Hilda applied for the £625 which was approved, although without the land she did not go ahead with the loan.23 Again, there is nothing to indicate if Hilda’s application was treated differently because she was a woman.

Yet, women of the Australian nursing services and other women who had served in a medical capacity and who wanted to be soldier settlers and farmers after World War One were encroaching on an area that was traditionally the domain of men, one determined intrinsically by the public and male sphere of business, land and agriculture. By undertaking or seeking to change their livelihood they were moving away from the private sphere of nursing, one that defined them as carers, nurturers and comforters. Nurses were well respected during the war although images such as those that portrayed them popularly as ‘the roses of no-man’s land’ did little to strengthen their status or to allow them, during and after the war, to move outside the gendered limitations placed on women in society.

21 Ibid., E.J. Stevenson to the Under Secretary, Department of Lands 26 February 1920.
22 Ibid., E.J. Stevenson to the Chairman, Closer Settlement Advisory Board, Sydney, 20 April 1920.
23 SRNSW: Department of Lands, Returned Soldiers Settlement loan files, NRS 8050, [12/6969 No. 3886].
A number of nurses in this thesis were from large families where their fathers and brothers ran the property which was usually handed down to the son - the daughter receiving only a minimal inheritance. Taking up nursing would have allowed women such as these financial independence but as well, it meant they wouldn’t have had to rely on marriage for security.24

Elsie Wildash’s entry into nursing on the other hand was due to her local doctor needing someone to care for one of his patients during convalescence.25 The doctor was so impressed he encouraged her to take up nursing as a career.26

Throughout most of the late nineteenth century Australia’s prosperity was linked to the establishment and growth of the Australian beef, wheat and wool industries. The price of wool for instance, rose after 1855 peaking in the 1870s with the number of sheep in flocks on properties increasing rapidly - a period of economic growth which continued into what has been judged to be a ‘long boom’ between the years 1860 and 1890.27 Even though many on the land suffered in the depression of the 1890s and the terrible drought between the years 1895-1903, as did the family of Miles Franklin who left their property Stillwater near Goulburn for Penrith in 1901, owning land was at the heart and centre of

25 Oral Interview – ‘Reflections of Mrs Elsie Alford – Formerly nursing Sister Elsie Wildash, No.1 Australian Army Nursing Service, as told to Bill Buxton and Viviene Gastine, for the Australian Society of World War One Aero Historians 1986.
26 Ibid.
rural life.28 Land was also ‘a prime means of acquiring wealth and achieving upward mobility’ and could determine an individual’s place in society.29 Such a mind set was central to country living, despite the hardship of drought which Michael McKernan believes is ‘always in some pocket of this country’.30 There is no evidence to indicate that nurse soldier settlers took up their land to acquire wealth. There was however an entrenched ideal among European Australians that country living or ‘the bush’ provided many economic benefits, far more than were available in the cities.31

The circumstances surrounding the land ownership of two single nurses, Emily Sheil and Rose Eleanor Carter, are a clear indication of the economic benefits of being a land owner. These two examples were quite different to that of other nurses in this study as both women had entrepreneurial skills that allowed both of them to own several blocks of land. Emily Sheil owned two Western Land Leases in western NSW, a homestead farm near Griffith and a suburban block at Thornleigh in Sydney which she acquired in 1922 and which was sold to Cecil Gillett, a local butcher in 1936. At the time of her death in 1951 Rose Carter owned six blocks of land, four in the Shire of Chiltern, one that was in the shire of Flinders about 264 km from her home and the last in the Broadmeadows district, was over 300 km from her home.32 This example shows that these two nurses are the exception to the rule that saw the lives of a large number of returned nurses dogged by poverty, as these two at the time of their deaths were

32 PROV: Supreme Court of Victoria, Probate Jurisdiction, WPRS 28/P4, 278, File 447/382.
considerably well off. Rose’s estate was valued at the time of her death at £1360.\textsuperscript{33} Emily’s estate at the time of her death was valued at over £2503.\textsuperscript{34} That they went on to acquire more than one block of land mirrors the entrenched ideal that owning land provided economic viability and stability.

All of the NSW nurse soldier settlers in this study were either born in the country and/or lived there from early childhood as did more than half of the Victorian nurses. For these women the land and country living, was something they knew and were familiar with. This connection between where a nurse came from and the possibility of obtaining land in the country after the war, was outlined in the \textit{Australasian Nursing Journal}:

\begin{quote}
Quite a large percentage of nurses originally came from the country, and I have heard many express a longing to return to the land, to an out-door life and no ‘night-duty’.\textsuperscript{35}
\end{quote}

Several nurses had ancestors that were not only farmers and selectors but squatters and pastoralists. For NSW nurses, the links to their country origins is much in evidence in documentation that record births, deaths and marriages, not only of themselves, but also other family members. As well, military files recorded their place of birth and the name and address of their next of kin. Considering the methodology undertaken to search for and identify nurses as soldier settlers, obtaining documentation such as this, became a vital part of the research process. The father’s occupation could be listed simply as ‘farmer’, as in the case of Edward Draper, the father of Elizabeth Draper. In his obituary, he was also listed as being a ‘pioneer selector’ of the Parkes District of NSW.\textsuperscript{36} As well, the father’s occupation given for several nurse soldier settlers was ‘grazier’. The first

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{34} SRNSW: Supreme Court of NSW, Probate Packets, NRS 13660, Series 4 [No. 336389, Box 8436].
\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Australasian Nurses’ Journal}, 15 October 1917, p. 369.
\textsuperscript{36} \textit{The Western Champion}, 23 August 1907.
\end{flushright}
example of this was on the death certificate of Ella McMaugh, a sister of Hilda Hope McMaugh where their father George was listed as being a grazier. This certificate also showed that his address was a substantial property, *Tarrington*, near Armidale.\(^{37}\)

Florence Reardon’s father and grand-father were also listed as graziers. Other examples when this occurred were in the recording of the deaths of Ida Mary Atkinson, nee Garven, and Penelope Frater. In both examples, the occupation of their father was given as grazier. Ida’s father Andrew had a property along the Clarence River and Penelope Frater’s father’s property was listed as *Yarraman*, near Quirindi, NSW.\(^{38}\) The first property at Deep Creek, Narrabri where Penelope was born, was owned by her father until 1911.\(^{39}\) John Dennis Sheil the father of Emily Sheil, worked a large property titled *Park Vale* near Booligal, via Hay.\(^{40}\) The certificate that recorded her death on 6 December 1947 provided the information that her father’s occupation was station manager.\(^{41}\) The father of Elsie Wildash also worked as a station manager on a large rural station, *Yamma* near Jerilderie - where Elsie lived until she was a teenager.\(^{42}\) After spending a short time in Melbourne and finding city life not to her liking, ‘she forsook the big smoke’ and moved to *Bibbinluke* Station near Cooma where she stayed until she was twenty four when she entered the nursing profession.\(^{43}\) This is then further indication of her love of the country, and why she settled there again after the war.

Many of these nurse soldier settlers had connections to their settler ancestors only generations earlier, which may have given them a strong sense of their social and cultural
links to the country as well as a way of returning to what they knew and were familiar with. The ancestry of other nurses had its roots in the upper echelon of early colonial rural society. Being born into families such as these gave nurses the right to education, respectability and acceptance in society. Mary Redfern Watt was the grand-daughter of William Redfern Watt, pastoralist and squatter who was the member for Carcoar in the NSW Legislative Assembly between 1859 and 1862.

Her niece recalled that Mary was particularly proud of her background, ‘her parents, grand-parents and the connection with Dr. Redfern and John Grant in the early days of colonization of Australia.’44 In 1859 in the Lachlan district her grand-father owned 47,000 acres at Mumbaldry and 22,400 acres at Malloyan as well as two more large pastoral runs by 1866.45

A wealthy ancestral heritage is also much in evidence for Mary Standish Cox who was descended from William Cox who built the road over the Blue Mountains. The family had a property at Mulgoa, NSW, the residence Fernhill built by Mary’s grandfather Edward in 1840, is still there today. Julia Bligh Johnston was another with

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44 Judith Ciok niece of Mary Redfern Watt, Questionnaire, May 2006.
family connections that went back to the first decades of white settlement. She was the
daughter of James Bligh Johnston whose father Andrew was openly loyal to Governor
Bligh, hence the name ‘Bligh’ held by Julia as well. James Bligh Johnston was a
substantial property owner and business man in the Pitt Town area of NSW.
It is hard to determine if the ancestry of any of these nurses was relevant in how they
were judged or seen in society, although backgrounds such as theirs may have given them
a strong sense of their own place in rural society and may have instilled in them a love of
country living.

Alice Joan Twynam’s background and growing up near Goulburn, NSW and her
love of the country, relate directly to where and why she applied for land. Again,
she was one who came from a family of some
social standing with prominent pastoral links in the
Goulburn and Taralga area. In 1885, her father
Edward Twynam was appointed District Surveyor
for the Districts of Braidwood, Burrowa, Goulburn,
Gunning and Yass.46 Her sister Mary married well,
to James Cunningham of Tuggeranong, the son of one of the most respected pastoralists
in the Queanbeyan district.47 Alice’s family owned a part of Richland’s Estate, Taralga,
which was originally owned by John and Elizabeth Macarthur. The NSW government
resumed this estate in 1910 and broke it up into 37 tenanted farms. Her brother Henry
successfully tendered for the Homestead Block on which Riversdale is located and where
Alice lived for a part of her life after the war. Alice Twynam served in Egypt, in

hospital ships off the island of Crete, in France and England, was mentioned in Despatches on 1 March 1916 and was awarded, the rare and very high honour, the Royal Red Cross First Class. 48 Before enlisting, she was a member of the Bush Nursing Service and was a woman of remarkable energy, stamina, character, strength and bravery. She spent her childhood in rural NSW, but as well as this playing some part in returning to the country after the war, her love of nature and its beauty both in Europe and in the Australian countryside are much evident in her letters from overseas. The following letter was written to her sister Mary from the No. 25 General Hospital in France on 10 January 1918:

Snow is on the ground here and the whole world looking like Hans Anderson’s Christmas tale, even to the old woman carrying bundles of faggots in the forest. It’s a beautiful part of the world and if I were only taking a cottage here, (it) would be very pleasant.49

And again to Mary a year later on 26 January 1919:

How is the garden … that’s one of things I am never going to be without after the war – flowers? Our flowers in Australia are ever so much more beautiful than the flowers here. Everything seems to come to perfection over there. 50

On her return to Australia in 1919, Alice (known by her family as Joan) applied for land under the Closer and Soldier Settlement Promotion Scheme in the Goulburn area not far from the properties owned by her family. 51

Although family origins and rural background provide compelling reasons to take up land after World War One, the diminished physical and mental condition of nurses when they returned to Australia provide another key reason for doing so. Nurses, who worked in casualty clearing stations and on hospital ships off the coast of Gallipoli, were

48 NAA: B2455 First Australian Imperial Force Personnel Dossiers 1914-1920, Alice Joan Twynam.
49 NLA: MS 6749, Folder 3, Cunningham Papers, Alice Joan Twynam to Mary Cunningham, 10 January 1918.
50 NLA: MS 6749, Ibid., Alice Joan Twynam to Mary Cunningham, 26 January 1919.
51 SRNSW: Department of Lands, Closer Settlement Promotion Files, NRS 8052, [10/37120, No 827].
confronted daily with the horrors of war. Caring for the wounded, their thoughts were constantly with the Australians fighting a relatively short distance away. Anne Donnell writing in her diary at the 3rd AGH at Lemnos on 2 July 1915 outlined the close connection the nurses had with the Australian soldiers. Later in the year in December, she was feeling miserable and down hearted after enduring three nights without sleep because of the cold.

During those fearful days our thoughts were constantly with our boys on the peninsula, little did we realize their sufferings … hundreds … were drowned because their feet were so paralyzed (with frost bite) they couldn’t crawl away to safety in time, some of the boys loosing both feet, some both hands.\(^{52}\)

In line with what was to occur to the men of the AIF who returned to Australia in poor health because of war injuries, or shell shock, or the after affects of being gassed, very few military files reveal that nurses were unaffected by their nursing service.

It is evident from excerpts in the *Australasian Nursing Journal* that land settlement was recognized as a positive means for recuperating returning nurses who were debilitated mentally and physically by their war service. ‘Of course, if a nurse returns from the war suffering from nerves in any form, she would be better advised to take up poultry or fruit farming’, the *Journal* pointed out to readers in 1917.\(^{53}\) What is also evident by this account and the following one is that there was recognition by the nurses themselves of the recuperative benefits of country living as a way to heal not only the physical but also their diminished mental state caused by war service. A peaceful life in the country was one to be relished.

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\(^{52}\) NLA: MS 3962, Anne Donnell Diary.
\(^{53}\) ANJ: 15 November 1917, p. 399
Would it not be possible to set aside a block of land, say 10 to 20 acres, in some healthful resort, such as the mountains, the New England district, or some other spot easily accessible by road and rail … The like would be a nerve tonic, and is not that the first essential for nearly all those who have been to the front.  

Of course farming was not always to be an easy alternative but the benefits of country living or living on a small holding albeit with on-going health problems contributed to many of the 43 nurses in this study, never returning to nursing. Due to the difficulties tracing nurse soldier settlers, the exact number is unknown.

Elsie Wildash and Elizabeth Draper who later applied for land as soldier settlers returned to Australia to receive treatment for war related illnesses and then returned to nurse overseas again. Their poor health exemplified what many other nurses were suffering.

Elizabeth Draper front row fourth from the right – Heliopolis Egypt 1915 Staff of No. 1 Auxiliary Hospital 1st Australian General Hospital (AWM P00163.001)

54 Ibid.
Elsie Wildash stated in an interview given around the time of her hundredth birthday, her memory still vivid in 1986, that ‘work took its toll and (I) collapsed from exhaustion.56 In Elizabeth Draper’s case a doctor reported after she returned to Sydney ‘in a very neurasthenic condition from overwork at the front.’57 Nellie Pike was another who even before she returned to Australia in 1918, was suffering from insomnia, severe nervous depression and was on the verge of a complete nervous breakdown which was diagnosed as neurasthenia.58 Nellie had witnessed the evacuation of Gallipoli and was evacuated back to Australia on the troopship Gaika in November of 1918. Ida Mary Garven was also diagnosed as having neurasthenia which she contracted while serving on hospital transports off the coast of Egypt. On 3 April 1917, she had ‘undue nervous excitability and tremors, weakness in the arms and legs and undue rapidity of the heart and neuritis’.59 The neurasthenic conditions that these nurses suffered from was similar to the shell-shock suffered by soldiers they nursed and were certainly due to ‘the strain of service’ as outlined in Ida’s Repatriation file.60 That nurses could suffer similarly as the soldiers did, was hardly noted or acknowledged. Matron Grace Wilson believed ‘that nurses have proved themselves in danger zones and have shown high courage and good nerve’ and if there was evidence of a decline in their health they would be removed from the front.61 Ida Garven was suffering from neurasthenia for nine months however before she was transferred to England.62 A.G. Butler, when writing about the AANS described the physical proximity of nurses to shelling but does not consider or state that nurses could

58 NAA: C138 R32446, Repatriation Case file, Nellie Alfreda Laffin (nee Pike).
59 NAA: C138 R59258 C91215 Part 1, Ida Mary Atkinson.
60 Ibid.
be affected detrimentally by it. Little was known about neurasthenia or shell-shock during World War One, or even the best way to treat it. For the most part, the effect on nurses was two fold, nurses were supposed to be able to treat mental illness, but they were also supposed to be able to deal with it themselves. May Tilton described nearby shelling from the third battle of Ypes and Passchendaele when she was working at the No. 3 Australian Casualty Clearing Station and how it affected her,

The pulsings and vibrations worked into our bodies and brains, the screech of big shells, and the awful crash when they burst at no great distance, kept our nerves on edge. The World War One poet, Siegfried Sassoon, who suffered from shell-shock himself, described how it affected soldiers not only in the short term, but also in the long term.

Many a brief bombardment had its long-delayed after-effect in the minds of survivors, many of whom had looked at their companions and laughed while the inferno did its best to destroy them. Not then was their evil hour, but now; now in the sweating, suffocation of nightmare, in paralysis of limbs, in the stammering of dislocated speech.

The long term after affects of shell-shock was also not fully understood. For many nurses who frequently worked long hours in difficult conditions, close to the front, they too suffered from exhaustion and lack of sleep as well as having to deal with the pain and horror of war. All of these were contributing factors to neurasthenia. Priscilla Wardle, who married a Victorian soldier settler, was to suffer ill health for many years after the war. She outlined in her diary the difficulties of nursing men with shell shock. She wrote of those she nursed, ‘the men suffering from shell-shock, absolutely dumb, 63

they cannot speak a word’. It would be reasonable to assume that caring for men who were inflicted in this way could have had a detrimental effect on her. Except for the work undertaken by the late Jan Bassett, who considers not only the physical conditions of nurses on their return to Australia but also the mental state of many, there has been little research undertaken into the psychological affects of war on the mental condition of nurses who served in World War One.

In 1915 nurses when nurses became eligible for service and disability pensions under the War Pensions Act (1914) their pension was based on expected salary entitlement as a working woman. War pensions eventually came under the control of the Repatriation Department on 1 July 1920 with further amendments of the 1914 Act occurring in 1915, 1916, 1920 and 1922. Prior to World War One, the welfare system in Australia consisted of a maternity allowance (1912) with pensions for the aged poor and invalids introduced in 1908 and 1910 respectively. The latter was in line with pensions that were handed out under the War Pensions Act (1914), as disability to gain monetary assistance had to be proven. As in the case of a number of the men of the AIF, a large number of nurses could not prove that their ongoing ill health was due to war service, as many had declared themselves medically fit on demobilization. Moreover, at the end of World War One no steps were undertaken to make sure that full and comprehensive medical history details were retained. As a consequence, this lack of medical history (some files containing information from before the war) created tension

66 State Library of Victoria: Australian Manuscripts Collections, SLV MS 10125 MSB 503, Priscilla Isabel Wardle dairy.
68 Ernest Scott, The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, VoLXI, Australia During the War, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia 1936, p. 838.
between the repatriation authorities and people who wished to make a claim for benefits. Thus a true picture of the ongoing health problems suffered by nurses was lost. In some cases, after a long struggle, claims awarded were as little as 10% of the full amount.

Although suffering from rheumatism when she returned to Australia in January 1918 Penelope Frater was reluctant to let the authorities know the true state of her health. To prevent early discharge, she managed to have her disability recorded as debility.70 As the war was still ongoing, she may have felt that her services were still needed - her dedication to duty remarkable, as according to her military file, she left Sydney again in October 1918 for India.71 In 1935, when applying for a disability pension she requested that a heart condition be accepted as due to war service. Her application for a pension was declined, a decision which she appealed again. ‘My long war service (two and a half and six years) means it is impossible for me to continue my nursing work. Dr. Sanbrook has told me I should give up work’.72 On 22 February 1935, the Repatriation Board again rejected her claim, as they could find no evidence of any disease on service likely to have damaged her heart’.73

Similar to what happened in Penelope Frater’s case, for Emily Maud Reid, proving disability was due to war service, was nearly impossible. She took up a small holding in the Eastwood area but first became ill in France in 1916 with septic pneumonia and pleurisy. After returning to Australia she continued to be unwell with joint pain in the knees, ankles and back, falling seriously ill again in that year.74 When applying for a War Pension in the years after the war, she repeatedly gave testimony to

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70 NAA: C138/1, R40110 Box 3200, Penelope Frater.
71 Penelope Frater was possibly with the group of Australian nurses requested by the Viceroy of India. This group included Rose Carter.
73 Ibid.
74 NAA: C138/2, R41257, Repatriation Case File, Box 3304, Evelyn Maud Reid.
the fact that a full pension be approved and ‘that she was a fit subject’.\textsuperscript{75} She outlined her connections before the war, listing the ladies of some wealth and status that she had as patients - these included Lady Fairfax, of \textit{Fairwater} Rose Bay, Lady Gordon and Mrs. Windeyer.\textsuperscript{76} At this time she was judged to be ‘rather garrulous and easily excited’ which considering the state of her health and the difficulty she was having obtaining financial assistance, was understandable.\textsuperscript{77} She was 52 years of age by this time. Her case was particularly sad as in 1936, she was still only receiving a 20\% pension and even after writing to Dr. Earle Page the Acting Prime Minister in 1937, the review of her pension and her financial problems continued for many years.\textsuperscript{78}

Ida Mary Atkinson (nee) Garven was another nurse married to a soldier settler who found that obtaining a disability pension was fraught with difficulty. She had originally obtained a pension prior to 1924, when at that date she requested it be suspended as her arms were becoming stronger and she was capable of doing some domestic duties - ‘I do not feel it right to continue with it’.\textsuperscript{79} Part of her pension was reinstated by 1927 although having her health problems after that date attributed to war service was to be a continuing battle. In 1936 she applied for acceptance of neuritis being the result of war service and was granted a 10\% military pension, as ‘Drs Heriot and Willis could not dissociate her condition from war service’.\textsuperscript{80} When appealing against this low pension in June, she stated ‘it is inadequate for my purposes. My

\textsuperscript{75} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{76} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{77} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{78} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{79} NAA: C138, 59258 C91215 Part 1, \textit{Op.cit.}, Ida Mary Atkinson to Deputy Commissioner, Department of Repatriation, 5 June 1924.
\textsuperscript{80} \textit{Ibid.}
disability interferes with the complete performance of my duties as a nurse’.  

Her appeal for a higher pension was disallowed.

Jan Bassett in *Guns and Brooches* showed clearly that a large number of nurses who returned to Australia after the war, were in poor physical and mental health. As well as suffering from mental conditions such as neurasthenia other ailments included uterine trouble caused by lifting patients, rheumatoid arthritis, headaches and deafness. Many of the nurses in this study suffered the ongoing effects of conditions such as these for most of their lives. Julia Bligh Johnston contracted a cold on the voyage home and even though she was not a young woman at this time (she was in her late 50s by this), other ailments she was suffering from, headaches, deafness and neuritis with difficulties opening and closing one of her hands were all due to war service. In the long-term she also had difficulty proving this to the Department of Repatriation. In 1928, when she sought medical treatment and hospitalization Julia was requested to sign a declaration that stated:

> I understand that I am being admitted to a Repatriation hospital for examination and report and that this admission does not give me any claim for pension or other benefits unless my disability is accepted by the Repatriation Commission as due to war Service. I also understand that any medical sustenance which may be paid to me during my stay in hospital will cease in the event of the Commission not accepting my disability as due to war service.  

The signing of such a declaration appeared to have been normal procedure not only for Julia, but for other ex-nurses. Similarly to Penelope Frater, Julia’s long service for Australia in both the Boer War and World War One was hardly acknowledged either. Julia’s life after the war was plagued by ill health and she never fully regained the health

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81 Ibid.
83 NAA: Series C138, M109342, Medical File, Julia Bligh Johnston.
and fitness she had when she left for overseas in 1914. Julia Bligh Johnston died in Rydalmere Mental Hospital 23 June 1940.

A second woman, Marion Broughton, was another of the forty three women in this study who died in a mental institution after the war. She died at Callan Park Mental Hospital on 17 December 1933 with assets of only £43.5.7. Tanja Luckins stated that an asylum was ‘a place of loss – of memory, sanity, identity and stability’. This analysis was certainly relevant for nurses who were to end their days in a mental institution as there was little or no credence given to their past contributions in the war or to their identity as returned soldiers. The popular Victorian view defined ‘women as the weaker sex’ which supposedly made them more vulnerable to nervous disorders. Yet nurses who served can never be defined as mentally or physically weak. That these women could die this way could be the result of many things, memories of war and loss or simply declining mental health. From the 1880s to the 1930s almost 40% of women admitted to mental hospitals were single, like these two women.

There is a definite link between insanity and war time loss however. In the years after World War One, the break-down and insanity suffered by many women related to the loss of a husband, son or brother in the war. Marion Broughton’s brother, Travers, was shot in both legs and unable to move. He was killed by ‘our own bombs being fired

84 NAA: Series C138, C109342, Pension File, Julia Bligh Johnston.
85 SRNSW: Supreme Court of NSW Probate, Series 4 [No 251173, Box S1264], Julia Bligh Johnson.
86 SRNSW: Supreme Court of New South Wales, Probate Packets, NRS 13660, Series 4 [No. 194266, Box 1715]
Marion Broughton.
89 Ibid., p. 144.
at the Turks … his head and shoulders the only parts not disfigured’. Marion also suffered a decline in her standard of living in the years before her death which may have led to severe depression and/or a mental breakdown. Even though her father Henry Bingham Broughton stressed in his will that family members were to support each other in times of need - ‘the most prosperous assisting the less fortunate’ - in Marion’s case, it appears this did not happen.

When she took up her soldier’s block near Inverell in rural NSW, she stated that she had been residing in the district for six months and was currently employed as a domestic for 15/- per week which is a clear indication of her drop in social status. She worked for most of her adult life as a nurse in a children’s hospital in Carlton, Victoria. It is unclear what factors contributed to her descent from nursing into domestic work which would have been below the social expectations she was used to. Her mental and physical health after the war may also have contributed to her working in an occupation below the one she was trained in. As shown earlier in this chapter, Marion Broughton’s case was in line with that of a large number of nurses who were unable to settle down peacefully after the war. For women such as these the voices, sounds and images of war remained. It has been estimated that 19.11% of World War One nurses who served with the AANS were discharged medically unfit. In line with the limited knowledge about the mental health of the majority of the 43 nurses in this study, it is not known what

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92 Marion Broughton was a direct descendant of William Broughton who arrived in the colony on the First Fleet as a servant to surgeon John White.
93 SRNSW: Supreme Court of NSW, Probate Packets NRS 13660, Series 4 [No. 25693, Box SC 1077, Henry Bingham Broughton.
94 SRNSW: Returned Soldiers Settlement loan files, nos. 263-15125, NRS 8058, [12/7066, No. 5106], Marion Broughton.
percentage of the total number of women who served, not only with the AANS but other nursing services as well, were to suffer short or long term depression and/or mental illness because of their war service.

As has already been argued in this chapter, injuries and illness that occurred in the early decades after the war were certainly the result of war service and were ongoing and were difficult to prove. Even though Mary Redfern Watt was not discharged medically unfit, her niece said in a questionnaire, that ‘she (Mary) had a TB infection in her neck and often complained of cardiac and hypertension symptoms. She had to fight for her Repat. (sic) pension even meeting with a parliamentarian about it’. 97 In Gender and War Joy Damousi and Marilyn Lake defined repatriation as being ‘a crisis of masculinity’ as it was frequently seen in terms that were masculine and not feminine.98 Because of the difficulties in proving war injuries to gain a disability pension, they believed that nurses had a more difficult time.

Returned servicemen’s organizations championed the plight of their ‘sisters’ and raised their own charitable funds to assist aging and ill sisters with a certain paternalist inflection – it was a gift for a job well done, not compensation for spilling blood for the nation (even if some nurses had lost their lives in the line of duty).99

The following cases taken from the forty three nurses in this study show clearly that these nurses were also to have considerable difficulty proving that their ongoing and declining health problems were due to war service. In 1925, Marjorie Gardener (nee Reilly) a returned nurse married to a soldier settler when seeking a full pension stated, ‘I returned with neuritis of the spine … I have been suffering off and on since the war’.100

97 Judith Ciok niece of Mary Redfern Watt, Questionnaire May 2006.
99 Ibid., p. 197.
100 NAA: C138/10, M84114, Box 31072. Medical Case File, Marjorie Sarah Gardener.
Her poor health continued and in 1925 when writing to the Edith Cavell Trust Fund for assistance she stated:  

Since demobilization, I have suffered greatly from rheumatism and arthritis of the spine which has prevented me from working. This is due to a fall on board ship. My husband and I are on the land and having a hard time financially. I am feeling ill and run-down.  

Marjorie Gardner only received a three quarters war pension.  

Another nurse married to a soldier settler, Edith Wraight (nee Jones), didn’t apply for a war pension or medical treatment at the Repatriation Department’s expense until 2 August 1949. When she did, she was unable to prove the poor health issues she was having, were due to war service. There is no surviving documentation to show what the condition of her health was between 1931 and 1943. This was the first year stated on her application for a war service pension, that her health issues were chronic. She was certainly in poor health up until 1931 when the couple left their soldier settlement block. It is unclear why she waited so long to apply, possibly she may have felt her health was not bad enough, or it may have been simply that she was reluctant to ask for repatriation assistance, even though she had applied for limited financial assistance amounting only to several pounds from the Edith Cavell Trust Fund when she was on the land. According to Jan Bassett, this reluctance to ask for assistance was a common trait for nurses who had served during the war. On 8 September 1949 because the disabilities she was suffering

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101 The Edith Cavell Trust Fund was set up to aid nurses in financial difficulties. The Fund was named in memory of Nurse Edith Cavell who was executed by the Germans on 12 October 1915 for helping British soldiers escape from Belgium.
102 NAA: Edith Cavell Trust Fund, Folders of applications for grants, Series M290, Marjorie Sarah Gardner to ECTF 1 April 1925.
104 NAA: B73/62, M113235, Medical Case File, Edith Wraight (nee Jones).
from, anaemia with debility and sclero-malaria, were considered to be not due to war
service, her application for a disability pension was declined.106

The difficulty proving war disability after some time had lapsed was mirrored also
for Edith Danson Rush who owned a small block of land at Dee Why. On 4 December
1935 when writing the initial application for a war pension she said ‘at this late date’ that
even though she had no employment since being discharged, she previously had enough
money to live on up until 19 March 1925, when after that her husband had kept her.107 He
was working as a door to door salesman, selling a line of table mats in country towns as
the city was not a viable proposition.108 Even though she claimed no disability since
demobilization, she had suffered constantly from biliary colic, and joint pains in the
hands, knees back and neck. Edith stated that she wanted a pension because she had
rheumatism which she claimed was an after affect of becoming seriously ill with
paratyphoid on Lemnos Island. From there she had been transferred ‘as a cot case’ to the
hospital ship *Aquatainia*. Before becoming ill, she had been a happy hardworking
woman, liked and respected by her fellow nurses.109

Edith Danson Rush – nd (NLA MS3962)

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107 NAA: C138/3 C104732 Repatriation Case File, Edith Danson Rush.
109 NLA: MS 3962, Sister Anne Donnell.
A part pension was eventually granted to Edith on 5 May 1939. Similarly to Jessie Buchanan mentioned previously, the awards given to her because of her war service: a 1916 Mention in Despatches and Associate of the Royal Red Cross on 1 January 1917, were not considered in her application. On 30 April 1951, her case was heard by the War Pensions Entitlement Appeal Tribunal where the evidence of Matron Elsie Pidgeon verified that Edith had indeed been ill with typhoid on Lemnos as she had originally claimed. It was clear to the Tribunal that she was not well, as she was seen as ‘a small fresh complexioned woman, very emotional and very crippled, with hands distorted, both knees grossly swollen’. Being able to prove these disabilities were due to war service was crucial in her obtaining a full pension. The Tribunal stated however, that as it was typhoid and not paratyphoid (which had after affects such as the heart problems that Edith stated she had), there were no grounds for her claiming a full pension. On 30 July 1950 the Repatriation Board after a long struggle, finally amended her classification as being ‘totally and permanently incapacitated’ and granted her a full pension. On 27 July 1951, this report was written about her:

"It is difficult indeed to assess an aged person in relation to war service. The myocardial degeneration is an age factor and after all 70 is quite a good old age. In the general labour market is a negligible asset naturally and so is 100%."  

To get an increase in her pension Edith was required to inform the Repatriation Commission every few years of any changes to her income and accumulated property – her assets were under close scrutiny. Nellie Laffin (nee Pike), found that having to disclose her financial situation every six months, was to cause her severe distress. In Nellie’s case, whilst this was not directly related to her war pension, it was required she

109 Ibid.  
110 Ibid.  
111 Ibid.  
112 NAA: C139, RX35763, Repatriation Case File, Charles George Laffin.
do so when she wanted financial relief under the Widows Relief Scheme through the War Service Homes Division. For Nellie this was an intolerable occurrence:

All I ask is to be allowed to live in peace and enjoy my home, instead of the canker eating into my heart with the shame of the knowledge that every six months, I must disclose what I do with every penny … maybe my sensitivity should have been shed with the years. But night and day the requirements stalk me’.

After being discharged medically unfit, and having to deal with her husband’s ongoing health problems, he ‘had the most peculiar turns’, - she suffered ill health for many years. Nellie also had trouble proving her health problems were due to war service.

Miss E Morris of Dubbo wrote to the Prime Minister on 10 November 1937 outlining the poor state of Nellie’s health and that she and Charles were in need of financial assistance.

(She) is in great distress through no fault of her own, four years of war have left its mark and the long years since of mental torture with a husband who is not by any means normal. Such as lot has been done for the men, surely for one of the little Army Sisters something should be done about it. Wasn’t her four years as important as the Diggers?

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113 Ibid., Edith Morris to Prime Minister Hughes 18 November 1937.
114 Ibid., 10 November 1937.
Nellie’s ailments, including an ongoing nervous disorder, (which had been diagnosed as neurasthenia), depression and insomnia, were assessed as not being due to war service. In 1965, she was receiving a war widow’s pension of £12 per fortnight plus a domestic allowance of £7 per fortnight.¹¹⁶

Rose Eleanor Carter’s health on her return to Australia meant that she was initially unable to return to nursing and her requests for a pension and benefits during this time show clearly that her eligibility for these was under close scrutiny. Rose didn’t have the country background that a large number of the nurses in this study did. From North Wangaratta, her parents worked for Victorian Railways, her mother Mary Ann as a gate-woman at Chiltern Railway Station and her father Robert as a train repairer in the Engineers Branch.¹¹⁷ Rose joined the AANS on 12 August 1918 and embarked at Sydney on SS Malta disembarking at Bombay where she was posted to duty at 34th General Hospital, at Deolali.¹¹⁸ In February 1919, the Viceroy of India cabled the Prime Minister and Minister for Defence requesting that Australian nurses, ‘who were physically fit’ be retained over the ‘next hot season’.¹¹⁹ Rose Carter remained in India throughout 1919 disembarking at Melbourne on 27 December 1919 after serving a little over twelve months there. She was discharged medically unfit from the AANS 8 May 1921. Rose first became ill in India with dysentery and in September 1920 was treated for periostitis of the sacroiliac joint in the lower back.¹²⁰ She continued to receive medical treatment between November and December 1921 at the Caulfield Repatriation Hospital in

¹¹⁶ Ibid.
¹¹⁹ NAA: A11804, 1920/488, Request from Viceroy in India for nurses, 12 February 1919.
¹²⁰ NAA: B73/18, M18119, Medical Case File, Rose Eleanor Carter, Medical Report of an Invalid, 31 March 1921.
Melbourne. Her health seems to have improved enough by 1924 when she applied successfully for the position as nurse at the Government Hospital at Nauru in the Pacific Ocean. The first indication that she was still suffering with problems with her back were in April 1933 when she was receiving treatment through the Repatriation Commission. In 1935, when writing to the Deputy Commission of Repatriation she stated that her disability prevented her returning to nursing although she found that work on her dairy farm ‘congenial and healthy’. She continued to have trouble with her back for many years until her death in 1951. Nevertheless a medical examiner reported on the state of her health on 30 October 1951, that the problems with her health were not due to war service and ‘she had no battle stress’. Health problems in the decades after the war were to affect many returned nurses irrespective of their occupation - nurse, farmer or farmer’s wife.

As well as having health issues, the decision for many nurses to take up land instead of nursing, may have related to their mature age when they returned from the war. For these nurses, owning land represented a change and a new beginning. When they enlisted with the AANS, nurses were required to be between 21 and 40 years old, with the three year training period to be completed before they left Australia. Consequently, the majority of the forty three nurses in this study were mature women. Only four were in their twenties when they returned to Australia. 29 were over thirty years of age, eight were over forty, and two others, Julia Bligh Johnston and Penelope Frater were 59 and 51 respectively. In contrast, the men of the AIF were on average younger - of the 330,770

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121 NAA: B73/18, M18119, Medical Case File, Rose Eleanor Carter.
122 NAA: A518, I118/12, Nauru, Staff, Carter, R.E. Nurse at Government Hospital.
124 Ibid., Rose Carter to Deputy Commission of Repatriation, 22 October 1935.
125 Ibid., Report from Medical Practitioner, 30 October 1951.
men who enlisted in the Australian Infantry Force, 259,350 were aged 30 and below. Consequently, when they took up land, men soldier settlers would on average have been younger than nurse soldier settlers.

There were other reasons not to continue nursing when these nurses returned to Australia. Memories of the war were harsh and painful. Several of the nurses who applied for land as soldier settlers, including Marion Broughton mentioned previously, lost one brother in the war or in the early years after it ended as a result of war injuries. Two other nurses who applied for a small block of land in the Eastwood area of Sydney, Mary Standish Cox and Emily Reid, each suffered the loss of two brothers. Edward and Myles the brothers of Mary Standish Cox sailed with the first contingent on the *Euripides* in October 1914 died in Egypt, not from a bullet but from pneumonia, three days apart on the 13 and 16 December 1914 respectively. Two of Emily Maud Reid’s brothers, Mordant Leslie Reid age 33 and Cyril Lindsay Reid age 25 were killed at the landing of Gallipoli. The brothers were both buried at Lone Pine Cemetery. Edith Danson Rush also lost her brother George at Gallipoli and as well, two of her cousins Horace and Bertie were killed in 1916 and 1918 respectively. The pain and heartache felt by many nurses about the terrible waste and loss of life was expressed clearly by Anne Donnell on hearing news about the end of the war:

> The war’s over – the news seems too much for words … Some are overjoyed and I wish I could feel as they do, but I am terribly depressed. I think of the gladness, then follows the sadness … Because I think of those who have lost, the mothers at home whose sunny boys are not going back to make them glad.

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128 NAA: C138/2, R41257 Box 3304, Evelyn Maud Reid.
130 AIF Project, [http://www.aif.adfa.edu.au](http://www.aif.adfa.edu.au)
For many nurses a block of land in the country represented the means to have a new beginning and a fresh start - something they longed for.

15 of the 29 nurses from NSW applied for their land under the Closer Settlement Promotion Scheme with the principle tenure being a Settlement Purchase. Under the provisions of the Closer Settlement Promotion Scheme, privately owned land could be purchased by one or more individuals – approval of the sale was then to be made by the Department of Lands. Frequently the land applied for was known to the nurse soldier settler previously having been originally owned by a family friend or a member of the family such as a brother-in-law or brother.

Map 1 – Parish Mickibri, Country of Kennedy, CD PMapOE11, 1931 image ID 11288901 (Land and Property Management NSW, Bathurst, NSW)

The Closer Settlement Board looked closely at the application for land by Elizabeth Draper with this in mind. Elizabeth had originally applied for a block of land with a returned soldier, Reuben Littlewood. Elizabeth’s block is below Reuben’s in the top half of the preceding map, surrounded by a pink border, directly above the one owned by her
brother Edward. Their applications consisted of two adjoining blocks, one of 477 acres which was considered big enough to be a home maintenance area and the second block of 397 acres (which was Elizabeth’s) which was considered too small on which to make a living. Her brother Edward who owned the adjoining block to these two was seen as a ‘first class farmer’ and someone from whom she could receive assistance. Unlike many other nurse soldier settlers she intended continuing her ‘professional calling’. Even though she stated on her application for land that she would farm with the assistance of her brother it is unclear if she ever intended to do so.

In the case of Alice Twynam, the requirement that her brother was close by was specified by the Closer Settlement Board and appeared to be one of the major requirements for her land application to be approved. ‘(The) applicant is eligible though inexperienced but working conjointly with her brother there is no reason why a success should not be made of the combined holdings’. The proposal suggested that her brother Major Edward Twynam (who owned the land next to the block she was applying for), would run both properties jointly because of her lack of experience. It was suggested also that it would be more feasible to permit Major Twynam to acquire her block himself as a

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134 Ibid.
135 SRNSW: NRS 8052 [10/37120, No. 827], Emery’s Farm.
Settlement Purchase, thus ‘relieving her from nominal ownership’.\textsuperscript{136} It is difficult to discern from the Closer Settlement Promotion file the reason for the suggestion of ‘nominal’ ownership other than her lack of experience. It was also stated that her block alone was not big enough to be a ‘living’ area or up to ‘home maintenance requirement’. The block of 513 acres was located near Taralga but in this case, it seems that it was not the size of the block that was questioned, but the quality of the land. This was judged by Inspectors Small and Dennis from the Closer Settlement Advisory Board to be ‘hilly with slate formations with few basalt outcrop – about 40 acres agricultural with the remainder being second class grazing – fairly sound but light carrying’.\textsuperscript{137}

On her application for land, Joan stated that she was unmarried, had a Qualification Certificate, owned two horses, that she had cash capital of £180 and an interest to the extent of about £1000 in her mother’s estate.\textsuperscript{138} It is clear from this that unlike some soldier settlers she did have some capital behind her. Her application for this block was declined as difficulties arose when the vendor’s title to the block could not be proven.\textsuperscript{139} On 2 December 1919, around the time of her unsuccessful application for land her brother Edward wrote to the Director of Soldier Settlements requesting the £625 loan, one for him and another for Joan.\textsuperscript{140} Approval of the loan was given and a portion of the money used for the purchase of galvanized iron and a horse. Because her land application was declined, this created problems for Joan as she was unable to put the loan fully into operation. On 10 June 1921, the Director of Soldier Settlements A.A. Watson wrote to her advising that if she were to obtain another block of land, she would be able to use the

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid.
first loan. On 24 June, Joan replied outlining what she believed was her right and entitlement to the loan, as she wanted to use it in partnership with her brother Edward, ‘as there is more vacant land adjoining’.

Her request was again refused, because Joan was not in possession of a home maintenance area. The matter did not end there. On 28 July and again on 25 August 1921, an officer of the Returned Soldier’s Settlement Branch, asked her to return by cheque to the Department, a figure of £10.5.5 – the amount she had used from the original advance. On 30 July 1923, Joan’s cheque for the amount owing was duly paid, her unhappiness about the transaction evident in her accompanying letter, ‘the delay has been caused owing to the SS [sic] Departments failure to carry out the purchase that they undertook, so I felt to complete the transaction at some inconvenience’. The Department again contacted her declaring there was still a figure of nearly £6 outstanding to be paid within a month, an amount which appears to have been paid. In July 1924, after purchasing several blocks of land, including the one that was adjoining land owned by her brother (this may have been the original block that had the faulty title), as instructed in 1921 by Watson, she again put in an application for a new loan to be used in connection with 891 acres of freehold and an unencumbered Conditional lease at Paling Yards. She wrote again in August, asking if the loan was approved that it be held back ‘until she had some use for it’. In 1927, she again placed an application for a loan to purchase sheep, with this application being declined because it was stated that she was only part owner of the property in question and that, ‘great trouble has been experienced in all cases of partnerships, even between brothers and

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141 Ibid., The Director of Soldier Settlement, A.A. Watson to Joan Twynam, 10 June 1921.
142 Ibid., Joan Twynam to A.A. Watson, 24 June 1921.
143 Ibid., A.A.Watson to Joan Twynam 1 July 1921.
144 Ibid., 28 July 1921 and 25 August 1921.
145 Ibid., Joan Twynam to Under Secretary for Lands, 30 July 1923.
146 Ibid.
Of course this decision did not go well with Joan or her brother Henry, (who was not a returned soldier), who then wrote to Sir George Fuller, M.L.A. asking that he intercede in the matter. Unfortunately, there is no surviving documentation to indicate if he was able to change the declined application for the loan. The final word and the reason for the decision were laid down by the Under-Secretary of Lands, Mr Roper,

The proposal as regards the advance is that Sister Twynam should give security to the Department for it over the 891 acres at Goulburn, which is leased and to depasture the sheep on the Lithgow property which application owns in conjunction with her brother Henry (not a returned soldier). An advance to Sister Twynam (a discharged soldier) under such a partnership could not be made under the Returned Soldiers’ Act.

Another example of a returned nurse selecting land next to her brother was Emily Sheil. She also had difficulty dealing with the Closer Settlement Board although this was to do with obtaining the full Commonwealth Advance. She was told that residence on her property was crucial to obtaining the £625, a directive certainly no different to that of male soldier settlers. Emily however, had sought the Advance before taking up occupation of her land while she was still working at the Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick. To obtain the Advance, she took up residency and on 15 August 1921 she wrote to the Director of Soldier Settlements: ‘I am living in a tent and cooking in a camp oven with many the night in June where we had such a lot of rain, not even a dry bed to get into’. And, on 18 August, ‘my brothers’ applied for their loan through the Soldier Settlement and had no trouble in getting it’. It is unclear how long Emily lived in the tent although other documentation suggests that it was at least from April until August of

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147 Ibid.
148 Ibid.
149 SRNSW: NRS 8052, [10/29935 No. 4684], Emily Jane Sheil to the Director of Soldier Settlements, 15 August 1921.
150 Ibid., 18 August 1921.
that year. She did receive the Advance although transferred ownership of the property to one of her brothers as a single purchaser in 1927.

Here is more evidence of the ‘land for heroes’ ideology and the lack of acceptance that women who wanted to farm for their own benefit may be able to do so. The properties owned by Emily Sheil and Elizabeth Draper were eventually sold to the brother whom they had been required to get assistance from initially – Emily’s to William Alexander Sheil on 14 February 1927 and Elizabeth’s to Edward Alexander Draper on 26 August 1949. It was never going to be easy for these women soldier settlers who were encroaching on a scheme that was set up for returning members of the AIF. Emily remained on her block for about six years, longer than many soldier settlers. Nevertheless as several of these cases represent, there were frequently hurdles and barriers placed before these nurse soldier settlers that prevented their land application and acquisition being trouble free.

Millicent Armstrong purchased land from her brother-in-law under the Closer Settlement Promotion Scheme. Her case was different to other nurses who applied as she was not a member of the Australian forces. Her case provides clear evidence of the lack of consistency that many nurse soldier settlers also suffered in their dealings with the Commonwealth and NSW Lands Department. Millicent Sylvia Armstrong was born on 1 May 1888, the fourth daughter of William Harvey Armstrong, a well to do merchant, grazier and pastoralist who owned land in Western and Central NSW. She attended the University of Sydney receiving first class honours in English. Millicent travelled to England in August 1914 and joined the Scottish Hospitals for Home and Foreign Service, an organization that several fellow University of Sydney graduates also joined. She
served with the Scottish Hospitals at Royaumont in France and was awarded the Croix de Guerre for bravery under fire.

Royaumont Abbey – (AWM H18906)

It is not known what drew Millicent to the Scottish Hospitals although there is a family account that she was in Scotland in 1914, sometime around the time they were formed there by Dr. Elsie Inglis who had wanted to create a medical unit consisting of women doctors and nurses. Many other Australian women served with the Scottish Hospitals in World War One, including Miles Franklin who served in Serbia for six months.151

Millicent returned to Australia on the Osterley on 21 May 1919 - the passenger list stated that she was ‘non AIF’.152 Even though she was classed as a civilian she applied for land as a Returned Soldier in Gunning NSW in August of that year. Initially her application was rejected by the Soldier Settlement Board as it was thought that the Scottish Hospitals were not a part of the British Army Medical Services. After supplying

152 NAA: Series MT1487/1 Passenger List, Osterley, 21 May 1919.
details of her military service and showing proof of the award of the Croix de Guerre, she eventually received her Qualification Certificate on 3 February 1920.

Millicent applied for land under the Closer Settlement Promotion Scheme with two returned soldiers who were old family friends, Gordon Johnson and Reuben Swallow, ‘two boys I have known all my life’. The property they applied for was ‘Watson’s (7) Estate’ and was owned by Millicent’s brother-in-law Leopold (Leo) Watson (who was married to her sister Ina). It was broken up into three allotments and granted to the three soldier settler applicants. Millicent’s block can be seen at the bottom of the following Parish Map.

Map 2 – Parish Lampton, County of King, CD PMapGN08, image ID 102334
(Land and Property Management NSW, Bathurst, NSW)

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155 Land and Property Management NSW, Bathurst, NSW: Parish of Lampton, County of King, CD PMapGN08, Image ID 102334
Approval of the application was listed in the NSW Government Gazette on 23 September 1921 after a frustrating waiting period of two years due to problems about an acceptable price for the land. The Soldier Settlement Board when approving her application stated:

The applicant is a capable woman, and has for some time been doing miscellaneous war work; her relatives are successful land owners in the district.\textsuperscript{156}

In time the two soldiers, Swallow and Johnson, sold their portions to Millicent and her sister Daphne (who was to join her on the land later) who subsequently divided the property into two portions. The property reverted to the old family name of \textit{Clear Hills}, under Millicent and Daphne’s management.

Did her family’s long pastoral connection with the Gunning and Goulburn region play any part in how and why her application was approved? Certainly, there was some inconsistency in how her application was dealt with at a State and Commonwealth level. On 22 December 1921, Millicent applied to the Department of Repatriation for Land Sustenance – financial aid that was to be used by settlers before a suitable living could be made on the land.

On 11 January 1922, her application for sustenance was declined because it was considered that ‘the Scottish War Hospitals did not appear in the Army list and that this unit was not a part of the Australian Army Nursing Service’.\textsuperscript{157}

Her application for land was approved in NSW where her family lived but her application

\textsuperscript{156} SRNSW: Department of Lands, Closer Settlement Promotion Files, NRS 8052, [10/13335, No 3077], Local Repatriation Committee to the Chairman, Closer Settlement Advisory Board, 18 October 1919.

\textsuperscript{157} NAA: A2487 1922/598, Department of Repatriation, Commonwealth of Australia, 17 January 1922.
for sustenance was not approved by the Commonwealth, despite Miss Evelyn Conyers Matron in Chief of the AANS informing the Department of Repatriation that the Scottish Hospitals were recognized by the War Office.\textsuperscript{158}

Another factor to consider was the process of ‘dummying’ as several nurses applied for land next to or in close proximity to properties owned by members of their family. Although in the documentation covering their applications for land there is no clear evidence of dummying to increase family land holdings.\textsuperscript{159} One consideration however, is that even though the application for land by nurses such as Elizabeth Draper, Alice Twynam, Millicent Armstrong and Emily Sheil next to a family member for instance, provided close proximity to an additional source of labour it also allowed the family holdings to be recognized as being of a larger acreage, even with two or more titles rather than one formal title to the whole holding. The early Selection Acts of the 1860s and 1870s did not have penalties for dummying and it was common practice for squatters to have relatives and even employees acquire land on their behalf. Many other squatters engaged in pea-cocking where they set out to acquire the best land near rivers, preventing the land being used by selectors who without access to the water were unable to farm – the land was useless without water. Peacocking was still of a concern as late as 1923 when the journal the \textit{Farmer and Settler} wrote to the Minister for Lands in Sydney in relation to the way blocks of land at South Yathong Estate were being distributed by the Messers Campbell Bros.\textsuperscript{160}

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\textsuperscript{158} \textit{Ibid}: annotation on above document noting the statement made by Matron Conyers.
\textsuperscript{159} Dummying was the process of purchasing land under the Selection Acts on behalf of a squatter or large land owner. This may have been carried out by a member of the family or an employee. The land then became the property of the squatter.
\textsuperscript{160} SRNSW: Closer and Soldier Settlement Miscellaneous files, NRS 8056, [19/7032], Letter to the Minister for Lands from the Farmer and Settlers Journal, 27 July 1923.
\end{flushright}
Five of the forty three women in this study ‘expressed an interest’ in obtaining land although no record has been located of any land possession for them. Hilda Francis Daniels (nee Chenery) for instance, was born in Albury where the local Repatriation Committee was contacted in January 1920 by Base Records Melbourne to ascertain her discharge date, ‘in order that she might obtain a block of land’. In 1936 Hilda was living on Mornington Road, Frankston and at the time of her death in March 1975 was living on the Nepean Highway, Seaford. Her husband Charles’s occupation in the 1936 Census records was listed as being a Secretary, with her occupation listed as being ‘home duties’. Surviving Chenery family members have no knowledge of Hilda ever receiving land under her own name. Three other nursing sisters who expressed interest in obtaining land, Ellen May McCarthy, Rosalind Eva Ballard and Rose C. McKenzie did so in the years directly after the war. On 28 September 1921 Sisters McCarthy and Ballard (who both joined the nursing service on the same day and left Australia on the Mooltan together in December 1916) applied for a block at Red Cliffs while they were both working at the District Hospital at Mildura, Victoria. In their application which was written by Ellen McCarthy, it was stated that they had practical knowledge of horses, plowing and at the time of writing were attempting to learn something about pruning vines. Sister McKenzie was living at Princes Hill North

163 NAA: A2487 1921/15382, 28 September 1921.
164 Ibid.
Carlton when she applied for land on 6 April 1921.\textsuperscript{165} Even though it was stated by the Acting Minister for Repatriation that ‘this sister is experiencing some difficulty in connection with her settlement’, no record of a successful application by Rose McKenzie for land has been located.\textsuperscript{166} It is not known if any of these last three were eventually successful in obtaining land, McCarthy and Ballard certainly did not receive a block at Red Cliffs where they had applied for land. Ellen McCarthy was working at the Baby Welfare Centre at Williamstown, Victoria in June 1935.\textsuperscript{167} According to the Commonwealth Electoral Roll Rosalind Ballard was working at the \textit{Windoula} Private Hospital, Mildura in 1936.\textsuperscript{168} Rose McKenzie married a returned soldier by the name of Kerr, ‘a delicate man owing to war service’, who after the war ran a drapery and mercury business which failed in the depression of the 1930s.\textsuperscript{169}

Helen May Clifton was the fifth woman in this study to contact the Repatriation Department requesting information about obtaining land. She left for England in 1915 paying her own passage and joined the VADs serving in England and France for nearly four years.\textsuperscript{170} On 11 March 1920 she wrote to the Department of Repatriation Headquarters outlining her case. ‘I am a returned VAD and am anxious to settle on the land but am not in a position to do so’ she went on ‘would it be possible for you to help us to the same privileges as the soldiers and sisters’?\textsuperscript{171} On 6 April 1920, she was informed by the Acting Director of Soldier Settlements that she was eligible for

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
  \item NAA: A2487 1921/5706, 6 April 1921.
  \item \textit{Ibid.}
  \item NAA: Series B2455, First Australian Imperial Force Personnel Dossiers 1914-1920, Ellen May McCarthy.
  \item Commonwealth Electoral Roll 1936, \url{www.ancestry.com.au}
  \item Cited in Bassett, \textit{Op.cit.}
  \item NAA: A2489, 1920/769, Helen Clifton to the Department of Repatriation 11 March 1920; VADs generally had little formal training and were employed to undertake menial jobs such as cleaning bedpans, scrubbing floors and washing patients. In 1926 the VAD movement became a reserve of the Army Medical Corps. During World War Two some VADs began to receive pay for their work as members of the AAMWS and in 1996 were awarded the Civilian Service Medal.
  \item \textit{Ibid.}
\end{itemize}
assistance, provided she held title to a holding the size of a Home Maintenance area"). On 12 April 1920, the matter of her eligibility was passed onto Prime Minister Hughes who referred it back to the NSW Department of Lands as being their responsibility. It seems that her request for land was becoming too difficult to handle. A search of Parish maps has not revealed that Helen even received a soldier settlement block. On 3 March 1935 she was living on Yarrodon, near Burra Creek (about 20 km south of Queanbeyan) where she was keeping house for her cousins, one who was to commit suicide by a gunshot wound to his head in 1935. She died shortly after at the age of 46 from breast and liver cancer in Queanbeyan.

Another VAD, Alice Beatrice Earle, served at the Military Hospital, City Road London and as nurse-in-charge in a munitions factory in Croydon, Surrey for about eighteen months. She obtained her land by transfer, a Settlement Purchase next to the block owned by her husband Frederick Moulden Vavasour Earle, both properties located at Kangaroo Creek near Grafton, NSW. On 21 April 1925 the transfer of the property was approved subject to Alice obtaining a Qualification Certificate and her ability to assume all Cooper’s liabilities.

The application for land by Alice Earle and Helen May Clifton was not treated differently to that of returned nurses who had served with the AANS, the QAIMNS or the Massage Corps. However, the inclusion of VADs in the legislation and clarification as to what constituted the definition of ‘war worker’ was discussed in parliament at length. In

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172 SRNSW: Returned Soldiers Settlement loan files NRS 8058, [12/6997, No.4210], Helen May Clifton.
173 SRNSW: Supreme Court of N.S.W, Coroners Inquest and Magisterial Inquiries, NRS 343, [Reel 2768, Inquest No. 1935/401], Norman McKenzie Davidson.
176 Ibid.
1919 the NSW, Minister for Lands Mr. Ashford in the second reading of the Returned Soldiers Settlement Amendment Bill stated that VADs were eligible for land:

The provisions of the bill are extended to those citizens of the Commonwealth who were called upon to serve in the other allied forces. The bill also includes nurses and VADs who actually performed war service.177

This was still being considered however, when on 7 June 1921, the Director of the Returned Soldier Settlement Branch in NSW wrote to the Acting Under-Secretary for Finance and Trade outlining a proposed Memorandum of Agreement between the Commonwealth of Australia and the State of NSW. In this document the non-eligibility of VADs, Voluntary War Chest and Comfort Fund Workers for the Advance was outlined.178 In this draft agreement, it was stated that VADs were eligible for a Qualification Certificate that entitled them to land, as outlined in NSW Soldier Settlement legislation, but were not eligible for the £625 Advance from the Commonwealth.179 The policy used when Alice Earle applied for land appears to have been mirrored in the case of Helen May Clifton. When writing to the Department of Repatriation she said, ‘I am eligible for the land but not for the £600 [sic] grant or sustenance, and as the land is useless without money to stock it, etc, I thought you would be able to help me’.180 It appears that this judgement was to remain, as VADs who had served in a voluntary capacity, did not receive any repatriation benefits for their World War One service. Unlike women who served in the nursing services such as the AANS

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177 NSW Parliamentary Papers Vol. 77, 19 November 1919, p. 2702.
and the QAIMNS, women who served with the VADs were volunteers – they were not paid employees – and were usually ‘middle class women of independent means’. As indicated in the image below when they marched together after the war, a large number of Australian women served with the VADs – the exact number is not known.

![VADs marching along Macquarie Street Sydney during peace celebrations in 1918](AWM H18780)

In contrast to other returned nurses who settled on the war after World War One, Euphemia Weir Scott, Evelyn Percy Wright and Penelope owned land in their own name before the war and returned to it afterwards. Euphemia Weir Huntley Scott purchased four Conditional Leases in the Moree area in about 1906 that were converted to Conditional Purchase tenures in 1911. She still owned these at the time of her death in 1964 when the properties were valued at over £15,000. Evelyn Percy Wright also owned land in her own name before World War One and obtained further land holdings

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182 SRNSW: Supreme Court of NSW, Probate Packets NRS 13660, Series 4 [No. 588435, Box 19166], Euphemia Weir Huntley Scott.
of 1,641 acres from part of the southern subdivision of Goonoo Goonoo Estate near Walcha, NSW in partnership with her sister Irene Percy Wright on 18 May 1935. She received a national appointment as Patron of the Australian Hereford Society and even as an agile seventy one year old was fully engaged in the development of the *Lomani* and *Benami* Hereford Studs at Walcha. She passed away at the age of 103, having maintained a strong connection with rural NSW during her long life. She received the Order of the British Empire in 1977 for services to Agriculture.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined factors that have showed how, why and where nurse soldier settlers applied for land. It has also shown that rural background and social and cultural origins had some considerable impact on their reasons for doing so. This chapter has also used several cases to show there were marked inconsistencies in how some of the nurses’ applications were dealt with. But most importantly, it has been argued that the profoundly diminished physical and mental health of some nurses did not warrant a return to nursing. For others the struggle to gain full financial compensation albeit by obtaining a war pension was to become a long and painful struggle, often without a fair result. Nurses sought a peaceful life in rural Australia, an entitlement not only earned but desperately needed. It will be argued in the next chapter, that what they set out to obtain, was to be beyond the reach of many. Single returned nurses, those married to soldier settlers and others who took up land with their husbands did so in the 1920s at a time when women were to have greater independence and autonomy. With this in mind in the next chapter, the place of nurse soldier settlers in rural Australia in the decades after

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NSW Department of Lands: Certificate of Title, Book 1720 Folio 269, Evelyn Percy Wright.
World War One will be examined. As well, various examples will show how the experiences of single settlers differed from that of their married sisters. Single farm women needed to be able to cope with the tough work of farming by themselves, without the assistance of a husband to do the heavy work.
CHAPTER THREE

A little money, a lot of drought and some despair

'The water is coming through and the plaster sheets are giving away ... the chimney is starting to cant over and has taken with it the spouting from under the iron, and when it rains the water just flows through the house'

Inspector’s Report Wraight Residence, Irrewarra 1924

The previous chapter outlined the reasons why many single and married women who served as nurses overseas during World War One, applied for land as soldier settlers. To leave the horror of war behind them was to be a central fundamental component in the desire for a fresh start and a new life. As many nurse soldier settlers and their husbands were discharged medically unfit or suffered declining health after the war, consideration will be given in this chapter, how this impacted on their time on the land and how their varying levels of health and fitness affected their day to day work and their ability to run their property. Additionally, the worry and pressure of maintaining a living in the face of growing debt, was to be a dark cloud over many of their farms. Poor seasons and the loss of crops also impacted heavily on the health of soldier settlers and their wives, notwithstanding those who appeared to be reasonably fit when they took up their land.

This Chapter will argue that the economic survival on a soldier settlement block was dependent on both husband and wife being able to contribute their labour. With a few exceptions the soldier settlers in this study took up their block with hope and optimism, enthusiastic about being able to begin a new life. As will be demonstrated, a fresh start was not what they thought it would be but rather one dogged by poverty and extreme hardship. The soldier settlement scheme after World War One was promoted

1 PROV: VPRS 15796/P0001/2, Appeals Board Files, Discharged Soldier Settlement, Harry Wraight, Inspector’s Report.
avidly and optimistically by both the States and the Commonwealth not only as a means of repatriation but also as a reward for war service. The examples provided here will reveal that this was far from reality.

It has been argued that throughout the nineteenth century the role of the family in ‘material production diminished’ and the expected role of women particularly became one of nurturer and supporter of their children and husbands. Marilyn Lake identified two narrow spheres emerging in the first decades of the twentieth century – housewife as dependent and husband as breadwinner. She argued also, ‘that the burden of work and poverty (on farms) made a mockery of (any) notion of partnership’. As outlined in Chapter One of this thesis, the Harvester Judgement created a ‘living wage’ but this was also fundamentally a ‘family wage’ where a wife working within the home was a dependent, someone who had to work very hard, often on a twenty four hour rotation caring for family and farm. Yet without the contribution of both husband and wife, it was sometimes impossible to survive on a soldier settlement block. Single rural farm women on the other hand have held a complex place in the gendered discourse of farming, by crossing over from the dominant and expected ideology of domesticity and dependency into one that saw them taking on a greater range of farming duties out of necessity.

Millicent Armstrong was a single woman who took up land near Gunning in NSW. Unlike other soldier settlers, she was one of the few in this study - either male or female, who had some money behind them. She stated when she applied for her land,
that she had £500 from her father’s estate.\(^5\) She took up a soldier settlement block of approximately 350 acres by herself initially although asked her sister Daphne to join her there in 1923. Daphne who was working at the Mitchell Library wrote from Sydney:

> Seeing as you are all going broke, the only sensible thing for me to do is to throw up my job – you wouldn’t have me sitting down on a singularly insufficient income, when you are having so much fun would you?\(^6\)

The sisters went on to form a business partnership raising sheep for wool, pigs, chickens and vegetables. Despite having the initial finance the sisters were not able to run the property *Clear Hills* profitably. In 1929 while on a trip to England Millicent received a letter from Daphne outlining in simple terms their financial difficulties:

> Consie and I went into Goulburn and I signed up the income tax returns … we don’t seem to have had any income to speak of and when the money turns up … we need it.\(^7\)

At the time of Daphne’s death on 4 September 1939 after all debts were accounted for the sisters owed £3,550 to their brother-in-law’s *Wollogorang Pastoral Company*, with their business partnership having assets of only £195.15.01.\(^8\) Certainly up to the time Daphne joined Millicent she had not been making a profit and it would seem that this was to continue for most of her time on the land, her circumstances in line with other soldier settlers who also found survival on the land increasingly impossible because of debt, poverty, floods and droughts.

Millicent Armstrong was also a playwright of some note with several of her plays performed in Sydney and London. Even though Millicent’s successful writing was separate from her application for land as a soldier settler, it is through her writing that her

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5 SRNSW: Closer Settlement Promotion files NRS 8052, [10/13335 No 5077], Watson’s (7); NSW Registry of Birth Death and Marriages, Death Certificate 17643/1918, William Harvey Armstrong.
6 Letter held by the Armstrong family, Daphne Armstrong to Millicent Armstrong, nd.
8 SRNSW: Supreme Court of NSW Probate Packets, NRS 13660, Series 4 [No. 247430, Box S1-77], Helen Daphne Armstrong.
voice as a country woman and a land holder can be heard. Her three sisters also dabbled in the writing of amateur literature. Millicent’s family believed that when she won the Rupert Brook prize in 1923 for her play *Drought* it would be the beginning of real recognition. In 1934, in an international competition, *Drought* was one of three first place prizes awarded for one act plays. The play *Drought* with its searing sun, heat and lack of rain epitomizes what many soldier settlers endured. When starting out the initial optimism and hope of the selector Joe and his wife Ellie portrayed in *Drought* is evident. Their experience also markedly mirrors the initial optimism felt by nurse soldier settlers who had gone through years of war and now wanted a new start.

Ellie: and do you remember at the gates you made me take the reins and drive through, and laughed at me so for being a town girl and frightened at poor little Greygown? And night come on before we got home and then I was really frightened out there in the endless plains, and yet glad …

Joe: yes, the whole world seemed to belong to us that night, all doubt and partin’ finished. We lay together hour after hour, and out in the glitterin’ darkness we could hear a wagtail callin’, callin’, and his mate answerin’, and we heard the possums scramblin’ in the trees by the veranda. The sound of ‘em made a feelin’ of home, in the loneliness and splendour of the night.

Joe and Ellie did not continue with this feeling of hope and optimism as drought was to strangle not only their hope but their lives. For Joe as for many of the soldier settlers in this study, drought became a living entity that had to be faced, an enemy to be feared.

Joe: this thing that’s killin’ us, isn’t just lack of rain but a real live thing, slinkin’ a slinkin’, filthy beast, that befouls the air and preys on life.

Joe was unable to continue farming and the play ends with Ellie walking off the property and him committing suicide just as rain began to fall. Millicent’s writing a picture with

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words, of what life was like for many soldier settlers in rural New South Wales – no
water or feed, crops failing, stock dying - the paddocks bare and dusty – their land to
become a dark and desperate entitlement.

Single women farmers such as Millicent Armstrong hold a paradoxical position in
relation to class and gender. As many nurse soldier settlers were from the rural middle
class, they were now returning to the land on different levels of cultural standing and
acceptance. In the 1920s, images in the rural press such as the Farmers Advocate the
journal of the Victorian Farmer’s Union and women’s magazines presented single farm
women as young healthy, wholesome Outdoor Girls capable of doing all that came before
them.11 There was status in this portrayal that allowed these farm women to be seen as
heroines, breaking away from the confinements of the strict idealized nineteenth century
images of female respectability. The Agricultural Gazette of January 1900 outlined
occupations suitable for women such as growing strawberries, vegetables, vines or
having an orchard. ‘A woman near Liverpool having been left a widow, kept on her
orchard and with bees and poultry succeeded very well’.12 There was the other opinion
voiced by Miss Moss in an issue of The Lone Hand in 1920, who after working
continually on her own place, ‘frankly confesses that land-work is too hard for women,
and land settlement should only be undertaken by women who have sufficient income to
live and enough capital to pay for men’s labour’.13

The reality for the women in this thesis is more in keeping with the latter. There is
little evidence of single women soldier settlers making a go of their farm without help

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11 Kathryn McKerral Hunter, Dutiful Daughters and Father’s Right Hand Man: Single White Women in Rural Victoria
1880s to the 1920s, PhD, University of Melbourne, 1998.
13 Hilda Vane, ‘Land Women of Australia’, The Lone Hand 1 June 1920, p. 29.
from hired labour, friends or members of the family. Because of her re-occurring back problems Rose Carter was only able to work her dairy farm at Chiltern, in Victoria occasionally and had to employ a man to assist her with some of the labour.\textsuperscript{14} As well, Marion Broughton’s situation also meant that she was dependent on the help of her neighbours to make a go on her land. Her case clearly exemplifies the difficulties that single women farmers were to have coping with the hard labour needed to undertake clearing land, fencing and plowing. When applying for her property of 437 acres, which was Block No. 3 on Hutson’s Estate near Inverell in rural NSW, Marion stated that the Job brothers who were old friends and who had the adjoining block to hers were willing to assist her.\textsuperscript{15} The brothers were to work her sheep and generally assist her with the running of the farm.\textsuperscript{16} When she applied for her Advance her suitability and credentials were outlined as were details of the assistance she thought she was going to receive from her neighbours:

Miss Broughton, ex Imperial Army Nurse is we understand an Australian native and claims to be entitled to the Advance under the Returned Soldiers Act. The land that has been allotted to her adjoins the Messrs Job holdings and they have undertaken to work her holding for her. As they are practical farmers, the scheme should produce good results … have no hesitation in recommending that the Advance asked for be granted.\textsuperscript{17}

On these grounds Marion was granted the full £625 to finance a water supply, purchase implements, horses, sheep and seed. From the time of first occupation on her block on 12 December 1919, she had difficulties coping, due mainly to a lack of water. From a letter of 29 July 1920 it can be discerned also that she had no set written agreement with

\textsuperscript{14} NAA: B73/18, M18119, Medical Case File, Rose Eleanor Carter to Deputy Commission of Repatriation, 22 October 1935.


\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Ibid.}, Marion Broughton to Director of Soldier Settlement, 29 July 1920.

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Ibid.}
the brothers and it seems they did not provide the assistance she had expected.18 Again when writing to the Returned Soldiers’ Settlement Branch on 20 December 1920, she outlined how she was going to use some of her advance money to pay a ‘man who has now completed the third week’s work clearing and fencing’.19 It is clear from this that she was not undertaking this work herself and was relying on outside help. Marion Broughton resided alone on her property until June 1922 when she abandoned the holding. After trying unsuccessfully to transfer the property, it seems she just walked off, leaving 140 ewes and 60 lambs ‘that need prompt attention as they are still in the wool and there is no water’.20 In an Inspector’s Report dated 7 October 1922, it was declared that these animals were now being watered and looked after by K. McKenzie who was also a neighbour and who was cultivating 30 acres of her land on a share basis.21 It would appear, and there is no evidence to discount this, that the neighbour McKenzie did little to assist her, or she was too proud to ask for his assistance.

On 15 April 1923, Marion visited the office of the Returned Soldiers’ Settlement Branch in Sydney, stating ‘that she could not carry on’.22 She had hoped to transfer her property to D.L. Yass who had served with the submarines, although there is nothing to indicate if this occurred. It is difficult to say if trying to make a go of it on the land in any way contributed to her death in Callan Park Mental Hospital (as mentioned in the previous chapter) or that it caused a mental breakdown that then exacerbated her demise. Certainly, living alone on a relatively large block of 437 acres would have been terribly lonely aside from the usual demands of farm labour.

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18 Ibid., 29 July 1920.
19 Ibid., Marion Broughton to Acting Director, Returned Soldiers’ Settlement Branch, 20 December 1920.
20 Ibid., 16 November 1922.
21 Ibid., Inspection of Returned Soldiers Holding, 7 October 1922.
22 Ibid., Returned Soldiers’ Settlement Branch Office Memorandum, 15 April 1923.
On the other hand, Agnes Cairns a deceased soldier’s dependent was carrying on pig farming by herself on her property Willarong Farm via Sutherland. When writing to Prime Minister Hughes asking for financial assistance she outlined her case,

I have worked up from two to 20 sows. I have worked and often gone hungry to save sufficient money to feed my stock and I have walked two and three miles carrying a couple of bushels of pollard. You will naturally conclude I am a big muscular woman which I am far from being. I have the will power but no money. I have struggled to raise them and it would be dreadful for me … if I had to sacrifice my stock’.  

Unfortunately for Agnes her request for an advance was declined on the grounds that as a dependent she was ineligible. In this case particularly, considering the help given to other dependents of soldiers, her treatment appears to have been inconsistent and harsh.

Another single nurse soldier settler, Mary Redfern Watt, did not hesitate asking for advice from the Returned Soldiers Settlement Branch and appeared to be full of enthusiasm for her new life as a soldier settler. Mary was known to her family as Molly but more usually Aunty Dux or Ducky, so called her niece said, because of her unusual waddling walk. Her brother, Joseph Martel Watt, first obtained the soldier settlement block of 328 ½ acres for £6 an acre on 1 February 1920. Joseph died on 4 July 1920 at the age of 27. As he died intestate, the property was transferred to his father William, as next of kin. With William’s consent, (as outlined previously) Mary sought Letters of Administration on Joseph’s estate requesting that the Minister for Lands transfer the property to her – this occurred 1 May 1922. On 17 June 1923, writing from her property Marylands (formerly known as New Myton), located about seven miles from Dubbo,

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23 SRNSW: Returned Soldiers Settlement loan files, NRS 8058, [12/7242, No. 7365], Agnes Cairns to Prime Minister Hughes.
24 Judith Ciok, Questionnaire, May 2006.
25 SRNSW: NRS 8052, [10/37108, No 241].
26 Obituary Joseph Martel Watt, Daily Liberal, 6 July 1920, p. 2.
NSW she wrote ‘I should be grateful for advice and direction as to the best site for dairy buildings and general layout … being inexperienced myself’.\(^{27}\)

Mary’s time on the land was difficult from the beginning. As early as August 1922 she was having difficulty paying the instalments on her property. She had little time to work the farm because she was settling her brother’s estate. Even though she was eligible for the £625 Advance, which was to be distributed in portions as required, the Returned Soldiers’ Settlement Branch believed that she would have difficulty keeping under this amount because of her mounting debt. She also contemplated starting a dairy and purchasing a milk run, proposals not received well by the RSS Board. Dairy farming was not a suitable occupation for the dry country around Dubbo. The RSS Branch Inspector reported that the property should never be considered for dairying unless extra ample fodder could be grown.

The pasturage is chiefly of the herbage variety which disappears during the hot months and unless supplies of fodder be conserved the condition of stock and milk (will) diminish rapidly.\(^{28}\)

Mary’s niece Judith, who in her later life Mary lived with for several years, remembers her as a strong confident person, with a high self esteem.\(^{29}\) This possibly is then an indication of her belief in being able to succeed at anything she set out to do. She may simply have chosen to ignore the overtures made by the Department about the unsuitability of her intended pursuit. Or because of her inexperience, did not comprehend the difficulties she could have dairying in Western New South Wales an activity that was more suitable to the lush green areas of the State. Choosing dairying when the whole


industry was suffering due to drought, even though it was something she may have done herself, also reveals her limited knowledge on the subject.\textsuperscript{30}

Her problems were not only due to her inexperience farming but that she also failed to manage the business of farming well. She leased part of the property at one time but the lessee left owing her £400. In 1923 and 1924 when her crops failed because of the drought it was believed by an Inspector from the RSS Branch of the Dept of Lands that he expected she would have a minimum yearly debt of £150 due to her inexperience and the need to employ labour to assist her. By August 1927 an Inspector reported that the property was not being looked after satisfactorily. This continued and in March 1928 the block was infested with weeds, the buildings were in disrepair and the fencing was in poor order.\textsuperscript{31} It is fair to state however that in Mary’s case her treatment by the RSS Branch was no different to other soldier settlers who were failing to pay their debts. In 1930, when she was working in a private hospital her non-residence on her block was to raise some dissent in the local community with the question asked if she was receiving special consideration. On 24 July 1930, a W.N. Morton wrote to the Minister for Lands, complaining about the non-residence on her block.

Why is a woman, Miss Watt, allowed to hold a block of land under the departmental control and not living on it, making a good living in a private hospital in Sydney … Is it through some influence that this woman got this land and still holds it?\textsuperscript{32}

As Mary’s family had lived in the Dubbo area for many years being prominent nineteenth century pastoralists in the district, there appears to have been an element that saw her

\textsuperscript{30} Department of Agriculture Annual Report, Dairy Industry, Parliamentary Papers, 1922.
\textsuperscript{31} SRNSW, NRS 8058, [12/7308, No 8490], \textit{Op.cit.}, Returned Soldiers Settlement Branch Office Memorandum, 8 March 1928.
\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Ibid.}, W.N. Morton to Minister for Lands, 24 July 1930.
land ownership as a woman from that level of rural society, detrimental to the rights of the working man. There may therefore have also been an element of jealousy about her land acquisition. Also as a single woman her entitlement for land albeit as a nurse who had served in the war, may have been seen as being below that of the returning men of the AIF who many thought were more deserving. The Rate books for the Talbragar Shire reveal that some time around 1932-1934 Mary ran The Kiosk, at Little Bay at the Coast Hospital, but returned to the property between the years 1935-1937.33 By 1940, Marylands was owned by John Ernest Wright.

Miriam Welshman was another single woman who was to have trouble running her property by herself. She purchased the property on Station Road, Narra Warren, in rural Victoria from the State Rivers and Water Commission sometime around July or August 1927.34 It is hard to imagine how she endeavored to make a living on her block working as a gardener and flower farmer, as water was not laid on. Because of this and possibly unbeknown to her, she was setting herself up to fail. From the time of first occupation she was having difficulties because of the large expenditure needed to start her farm off as well as having to pay the instalments on her land. In 1932, her strawberry crop was a complete failure. Later in 1936 she suffered because of flooding to a section of her property and in 1938, frost and a hard drought caused severe damage to her

33 Dubbo and District Family History Society Inc., Talbragar Shire Rate and Valuation Books 1911-1937.
flowers.\textsuperscript{35} In 1940, she averaged only £1 per week barely enough to meet her commitments of £32 per year for insurance, rates and taxes.\textsuperscript{36} She was by this time receiving two shillings a week pension.\textsuperscript{37} Miriam’s circumstances on her property as a single woman reveal similarities to other single woman soldier settlers outlined previously. There is evidence of lives dogged by hardship, debt and a constant struggle with the elements. What has become clear is that most had little experience or money behind them – a common trait for many soldier settlers. As single women on their own, they had an added burden as they were without the support of a husband or brother to do the heavy work. Consequently farming for these single women soldier settlers, even to make ends meet, was to be a constant battle.

Four single nurses - Edith Toan, Julia Bligh Johnston, Edith Williams and Penelope Frater – took up blocks of land in the Sutherland Shire. Land holders in this locality were aided to some extent by a regular train service from Central station to Sutherland and by a new tramway from Sutherland to Cronulla which began just after the war. Yet despite a growth in urbanization, some areas in the 1920s still had no water, electricity or sealed roads.\textsuperscript{38} It was not until 1931 that the Shire’s water supply was turned on with the building of the Woronora Dam.\textsuperscript{39} As well, in the 1920s public health services were nonexistent even though there were several doctors at Cronulla.\textsuperscript{40}

Julia and Penelope Frater had a long association so one would assume they kept in contact after the war, especially living in such close proximity.

\textsuperscript{35} NAA: MP 290 Box 3 Edith Cavell Cavell Trust Fund Correspondence.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., p. 70 & 71.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., p. 72.
Julia shared the property at Miranda called *Ghezeriah* with Nellie Gould named after the hospital in Egypt where they both worked.\(^{41}\) Other than the war service of the nurses, there does not appear to be any other real connection between these land holdings in the Sutherland Shire except that it originated from the Holt Sutherland Estate. The two blocks owned by Penelope Frater and Edith Williams on the Princes Highway which were used as poultry Farms, (Edith’s a Returned Soldiers’ Special Holding) were originally a part of this Estate as were the block owned by Edith Toan on Karimbla Road, Miranda, and the one owned by Julia Bligh Johnston on Port Hacking Road, Miranda.\(^{42}\)

The property occupied by Edith Toan appears to have been a suburban block or a Town Lot, which was allowed under the terms for land acquired from the Holt Sutherland

\(^{41}\) SRNSW: Supreme Court of NSW, Probate Packets, NRS 13660, Series 4 [No. 251172, Box S1264], Julia Bligh Johnston.; Matron Ellen Julia Gould (aka) Nellie served in the Boer War and World War One with Julia.

\(^{42}\) SLNSW: The following notes were copied exactly from the Biographical notes for the record series relating to the Holt Sutherland Estate ‘The Holt Sutherland Estate Land Company was formed in 1881 to lease 12,000 acres of Thomas Holt’s Sutherland Estate. The Company sub-divided much of the land and leased it to tenants for ninety nine years. In 1900 the Holt Sutherland Estate Act enabled tenants to convert their land to freehold title. The Company went into liquidation and reformed several times. In 1899 it became the Holt Sutherland Estate Company Ltd; in 1916 the Holt Sutherland Company Limited; and in 1933 The Holt Sutherland (1933) Limited and in 1960 the Holt Sutherland Company Pty. Ltd’.
Estate. Edith shared this property with her sister Clara as ‘tenants in common’. 43 The Holt Sutherland Estate was promoted as the easy way to ‘get a home and a good living, a fine place for orchards, vineyards, poultry runs and dairy farms’.44 The larger sub-divisions were sub-divided again and it was one of these that Edith and Clara purchased from Caroline and Bessie Bennison in 1920. In the Rate Books of the area, Caroline Bennison’s occupation was listed as matron of a nurses’ home, although in 1926, her occupation was listed in the Sands Directory as ‘poultry farmer’.45

The house the Toan sisters owned *Kio-ora Whare*, was located on a block with a frontage to Karimbla Road of only 66 feet and a depth of 429 feet. Because of the size of this block, it is unlikely that Edith was engaged in agriculture or poultry for profit, although

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43 Thomas Holt leased his lands to the Holt Sutherland Land Company in 1881 and there were subsequently three major sub-divisions which allowed for 99 year leases with blocks ranging in size from one third of an acre to five acres.

44 Holt Sutherland Estate Land Company, *Holt Sutherland Estate 12000 acres Illawarra line*, Advertising material, Sydney, 19--?

45 Information provided by Helen McDonald Local Studies Librarian, Sutherland Shire Library, by email. 8 October 2009.
she and her sister Clara operated a pigeon loft in Miranda in 1926.\textsuperscript{46} In 1936 at the age of 62 Edith was working in her profession as a private nurse.\textsuperscript{47} She passed away on 19 April 1937 well respected in her community. Her death:

left a gap in church, charitable and digger life that will be hard to fill. The Digger’s soul to her was an open book. She knew him sick and well, she knew his strength and his frailties and keenly resented the slightest injustice to him.\textsuperscript{48}

At her funeral, the mourners included her four sisters, nursing sisters from far and wide and members of the RSSILA.\textsuperscript{49}

Women soldier settlers, either single or married, were required to be involved in work inside the home where domestic frugality was an attribute and the ability to be able to survive on little or no income imperative. As well as the normal household chores such as cleaning, washing, cooking, sewing of clothes and curtains women would also be required to work on the farm milking, fruit picking and raising poultry. In rural NSW and Victoria, good health meant that a woman settler would be better able to deal with the harsh climatic conditions of drought and heat. Good health was also crucial not only in carrying the work load but also to raise a family.

Although in this thesis, none of the married nurse soldier settlers had large families with several having no children at all. During the war years due to a high death rate, the birth rate declined from 1.8% in 1914 to 1.1% in 1919.\textsuperscript{50} This continued throughout the 1920s until 1934 - the lowest point for the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{51} Whilst a small family meant there were fewer mouths to feed, it also meant that there were fewer children to work on the farm. Duncan Waterson, when writing about the squatters and

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\textsuperscript{46} Sands Directory, 1926.
\textsuperscript{47} Commonwealth Electoral Roll 1936, www.ancestry.com.au
\textsuperscript{48} AWM: AWM43 A876, The death of Edith May Toan, as reported in \textit{Reveille}, June 1937.
\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Ibid.}
selectors in the Darling Downs between 1859 and 1893, believed that children, particularly those that were fit and strong were a great economic asset to the family property. Consequently, most of the soldier settler families in this study did not benefit from an inbuilt labour force that a large family could provide. This may have been due to the relatively mature age of some returned nurses or the declining health of both themselves and their husband.

The two nurse soldier settlers in this study who died in childbirth, Amy Alice Cordingley (nee Simpson) and Ida May Moore (nee Graham), were 34 and 40 respectively. There were several reports put out by the Director-General of Public Health in NSW between 1909 and 1938 outlining concerns about the high mortality rate in child birth which fluctuated between 4.4 and 5.2 per 1000 births in the 1920s and 1930s. Women in rural areas were often handicapped by the lack of medical facilities available, although puerperal septicaemia, which caused the death of Ida Graham, was thought to be more common in urban areas, where the obstetric practices of doctors who used forceps in deliveries, did so to excess. Because of this practice a large number of women suffered long term physical and emotional damage after the delivery of the child using this method. Puerperal septicaemia was classed as a preventable disease and yet nearly 37% of all deaths in child birth in 1919 were caused by it. Both Amy Cordingley and Ida Moore were ill during the war and continued to have health problems after demobilization which could have contributed to their fate in child birth. Amy Cordingley

54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
56 H.A. Smith, The Official Year Book of NSW 1920, NSW Government 1921.
died as a result of shock and exhaustion after a twenty four labour. She was seriously ill with influenza and pneumonia while on active service. In June 1919 her condition was bad due to breathlessness and back pains, her memory was poor and her hair was falling out. To add to her health problems, her husband Richard when writing to Senator Pearce on 7 June 1916, requesting information about settling on a farm, stated that he was also suffering from spinal neurasthenia as result of his war service. Even before they began their new life, the level of their health and fitness was questionable.

The continuing illness after the war of Ida Moore was to have a profound and detrimental impact on the running of their property. Unfortunately, Ida’s husband, Clarence Stewart Moore, also had ongoing health problems as a result of his war service. In June 1922, when writing about his inability to meet the repayments that were due on their farm near Inverell, he wrote about the difficulty of having to meet doctors and hospitals bills. ‘My wife (has) been in hospital on three different occasions’. It is not known what she was hospitalized for or if these visits related to her later death in childbirth.

With a few exceptions, nurse soldier settlers with ongoing health problems were unable to contribute fully to the running of the farm. Priscilla Wardle had a condition which affected her mobility. She wrote many times between 1919 and 1933 to the Edith Cavell Fund seeking financial assistance claiming necessitous circumstances. When writing in 1933, she stated that she had two children and was totally incapacitated. The

57 Registry of Birth Death and Marriages, Victoria: Death Certificate, Amy Alice Cordingley (nee Simpson), 1922/12257.
59 NAA: A2479, 17/566, Richard George Cordingley to Senator Pearce, 7 June 1916.
60 SRNSW: Returned Soldiers Settlement loan files, NRS 8058, [12/7077 No.5218], Clarence Moore
61 NAA: MP 290 Box 3 Edith Cavell Cavell Trust Fund Correspondence.
medical condition that affected her mobility was ‘hammer toes’ - a contracture or bending of one or both joints of the toes that frequently prevented the wearing of footwear. The most common cause of this ailment was muscle and tendon imbalance. This medical problem, which could have been the result of nursing standing on her feet for many hours during the war, may have prevented her being able to contribute fully to the work on their soldier settlement block. Because of the problems with her feet which never got better as she aged, she needed to visit a chiropractor and orthopaedic specialist many times and needed a walking frame. As well as this ongoing condition Priscilla suffered from heart problems and bronchitis. The economic survival of farms was dependent upon the labour of wives that were fit and healthy which Priscilla was not.

Another couple who were soldier settlers with ongoing health problems was Frederick Moulden Earle and Alice Beatrice Earle (nee Jones). Frederick was 41 when he was discharged from the army medically unfit and suffered the effects of being gassed, for many years after the war. The first indication from surviving documentation that Alice was also ill was around the middle of 1926 when she was sent to the mountains for six months to receive treatment for pulmonary tuberculosis. It is not known how or where Alice caught tuberculosis, although she had worked at a military hospital in London where she possibly nursed soldiers inflicted with the disease. Marina Larsson when writing about the returned Anzacs of World War One stated that some soldiers did not find until several years after the war that they had TB and this appears to have been what happened with Alice Earle. TB was, Larsson wrote, a scourge that ‘revealed itself

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62 Ibid.
63 SRNSW: Returned Soldiers Settlement loan files, CGS 8058, [12/7060 No. 5044], Alice Beatrice Earle, H.G. Barrie District Surveyor to the Under Secretary for Lands, 3 December 1926.
64 Marina Larsson, *Shattered Anzacs, living with the scars of war*, University of NSW Press, Sydney, 2009, p. 179-180.
slowly’, and because of its infectious nature, did not fit neatly into the definition of what was a war disability. Because of this, TB had long term and far reaching effects on other family members not only because they may have been unaware of the illness in their kin, but the financial effects were extreme. For Alice and Frederick Earle, this was certainly the case as when asking for a suspension of his monthly payments because of the drought and the fact that he was hand feeding his stock, he also spoke of the added expenditure of having to send Alice away for treatment for her illness. Frederick’s health also continued to decline and prevented him working the holding after Alice died from TB on 7 June 1929.

The absences from the property due to poor and constant ill health problems greatly impacted on the ability of Ida Mary Garven and her husband Herbert Sydney Charles Atkinson, to run their holding. Both husband and wife were discharged medically unfit from the Randwick Military Hospital on the same day 4 April 1917. Herbert served with the First Australian Light Horse at Gallipoli and Ida with the 2nd Australian General Hospital at Ghezeriah. During 1924 and 1925, Herbert was in Sydney ‘desperately sick due to war injuries’. Because of his ongoing health problems permission was given in 1925 to leave the holding for a period of twelve months. The property was then leased to Henry Kitching. In a Statutory Declaration written in 1928, after forfeiting the property, Herbert declared ‘I am out of work at present owing to war injuries’.

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65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
68 NSWBDM: Death Certificate, Alice Beatrice Earle, 1929/8604.
70 NAA: B2455 First Australian Imperial Force Personnel Dossiers 1914-1920, Ida Mary Garven; Herbert Sydney Charles Atkinson.
72 Ibid.
wounds and in my present circumstances I cannot see how I will ever be in a position to repay the department.’\textsuperscript{73}

It is clear from surviving documentation that Herbert and Ida in particular, had enough of farm life very early on, with Inspector Garland reporting gossip he had heard, ‘that several people believed Mrs. Atkinson before leaving for Sydney, would never return to the farm.’\textsuperscript{74} He went on, ‘her husband appears to be very much in debt in Quirindi and cannot get any further credit’.\textsuperscript{75} Herbert’s quite good reputation when he took up the holding appears to have diminished by 1925 when this was reported. The District Surveyor went on:

I have always had very great suspicion that his man was only malingering and his present appearance would not lead anyone to believe him ill. He was in attendance at the Tamworth Cup meeting and he looked the picture of health.\textsuperscript{76}

Insofar as there is some indication in surviving documentation generated by government departments of the hardship that soldier settlers were going through, this can is in itself be introspective and judgmental. Except in a minor way the voices of the settler and his wife have frequently been lost. In this case even official documents indicate clearly Herbert was in poor physical condition for many years. Even before enlistment he received treatment for eighteen months after a horse rolled on him injuring his right knee.\textsuperscript{77} While serving on Gallipoli in September 1915 he fell through the roof of a tunnel onto a pick injuring the same knee.\textsuperscript{78} It would be fair to speculate therefore that he may have not been fully fit at any time when he was on the land. This together with the poor health of Ida clearly impacted on their ability to work their farm. Neither Ida nor Herbert, even

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., Herbert Atkinson, Statutory Declaration 4 April 1928.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., Inspector Garland 11 May 1925.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 13 May 1925.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{78} NAA: C138, M91215, Medical Case file, Ida Mary Atkinson (nee Garven).
though he did have the pre-war knee injury, regained the level of health they had before the war. After leaving the block Herbert’s health continued to decline and he passed away 22 January 1936 at Sydney Hospital. After Herbert’s death Ida attempted to operate a small convalescent home which may possibly have been the same one she was admitted to, in 1958, when she became ill, the *Araluen Convalescent Home* at Cremorne. In the last two years of her life she was nearly blind with cataracts with her condition judged to be too frail for an operation. In February 1958 a sad medical report outlined her condition, stating she was ‘a thin mentally alert blind old woman’.79 She passed away at the age of 79 from a coronary occlusion and hypertensive cardiovascular heart disease on 6 April 1960 at the Repatriation General Hospital Concord.80

Poultry farming was a popular occupation for both men and women settlers who had ongoing health problems. Lillian Charlotte Mitchell and Harold Mylbrea Walker had a small poultry farm Block No. 366 at Chipping Norton. At the time of their marriage in 1921, Harold gave his occupation as poultry farmer.81 As Lillian had applied for training in agriculture immediately after the war, her health appears to have been fairly sound. It is possible that her husband Harold who had served with the 34th Battalion had been discharged medically unfit and continued to be unwell from the time of their initial settlement on Block No. 366 on Chipping Norton Soldier Settlement until May 1923, when they left the block. Nellie Pike and Charles Laffin were both discharged medically unfit and wanted to make their living as poultry farmers on a small block of six acres at Hoxton Park, near Liverpool.82 On 30 March 1921, Nellie wrote requesting the £625 loan

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82 SRNSW: Returned Soldiers Settlement loan files, NRS 8058, [12/7242, No. 7375], Nellie Alfreda Laffin (nee Pike).
so that she could stock their farm. Unfortunately, her application for a loan was refused because their holding was not a Soldiers Group Settlement - it was mortgaged for the amount of £450, and had not been purchased under the Closer Settlement Promotion Act.\textsuperscript{83}

Before enlistment, Penelope Frater gave her occupation as ‘poultry farmer’ and on discharge returned to her poultry farm in the Sutherland shire, the one that she owned prior to the war.\textsuperscript{84} She served in the Boer War and World War One and like Narrelle Hobbes who passed away returning to Australia after the war, had only 14 days leave from nursing duty after she left with the first contingent in August 1914, certainly a long period of service without much of a break. A medical report written at the time of her demobilization stated she was very run down and sleeping only fairly. On 25 October 1922, possibly around the time when she applied for her Advance she was running 500 white leghorn chicks which were held as security for the Advance, to the Minister of Lands.\textsuperscript{85} Despite this debt and problems with rheumatism, that she begun to suffer as early as 1915, she seemed to manage her poultry farm fairly well until 1925 without assistance up to early March 1935.\textsuperscript{86} In a letter to the Deputy Commissioner for Repatriation, her doctor stated that ‘until recently, she had been an unusually strong woman for her age’.\textsuperscript{87} From 1935, due to declining health when she was sixty six years old Penelope was having difficulties carrying on, even though her Doctor judged her to be ‘quite well preserved for her age, she was suffering from breathlessness and giddiness and needed

\begin{footnotes}
\item[83] Ibid., A.A. Watson to Nellie Laffin, 28 April 1921.
\item[84] NAA: C138/1, Repatriation Case File, R40110 Box 3200, Penelope Frater.
\item[85] SRNSW: Supreme Court of New South Wales, Probate Packets, NRS 13660, Series 4 [No. 246523, Box S132], Penelope Frater, G.F. Allman Under Secretary to Verner W. Cocks & Graham Solicitors, 5 January 1940.
\item[86] NAA: C138/1 R40110, Box 3200, Op.cit.
\item[87] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
assistance working her farm".88 As well as health problems, 450 of her hens were stolen which added to her problems. At the time of Penelope’s death at Sutherland on 12 December 1939, an amount of £338.0.9 was still outstanding from her Returned Soldiers’ Advance and her assets amounted to a little over £99.89 The financial position of Edith Danson Rush was also not good. When she sold the block in 1940 her financial position was seen by the Repatriation Commission, as a ‘wreck’ - she was not receiving any income from her small block, did not have any stock or was not taking in any lodgers.90 The sale of the land did not pay out her mortgage in full. 91

For soldier settlers in remote rural areas such as Elsie and Ken Alford as well as financial difficulties such as these, they had the added problems of distance, drought, isolation and a lack of facilities. Even though Elsie Alford’s (nee Wildash) health suffered because of over work during the war, she was not discharged medically unfit. Her husband Kenneth Alford, however, was treated for neurasthenia during the war and immediately afterwards.92 The couple met in Cairo when Elsie was carrying out her second posting to the No.29 General Hospital, Heliopolis Camp. Ken had been transferred to Cairo ‘as a nerve case’ after the landing at Gallipoli, where he had served as a Lieutenant with the 6th Australian Light Horse.93 Ken’s quick elevation through the ranks was exacerbated by the losses at Gallipoli and he was promoted to Sergeant in July 1915 and then to Lieutenant in February 1916.94 He was also, as Elsie stated ‘at Lone

88 Ibid.
89 Ibid.
90 NAA: C138 C104732, Box 7595, Edith Danson Rush.
91 Ibid.
92 NAA: B2455 First Australian Imperial Force Personnel Dossiers, Kenneth Fitzgerald Alford, SERN 211.
93 Oral Interview – Reflections of Mrs Elsie Alford – Formerly nursing sister Elsie Wildash, No. 1 Australian Army Nursing Service, as told to Bill Buxton and Viviene Gastine, for the Australian Society of World War One Aero Historians 1986.
Pine till evacuation’ contributing to his mental breakdown. In is not known if Ken’s condition was ongoing and they remained on their property for many years.

The same pattern occurred in Victoria where being physically unfit had profound effects not only on the ability of soldier settlers to succeed on their land but also in trying to make a living in the face of drought and increasing debt, impacted directly on their well being. Miriam Selina Welshman (known as Minnie) first became ill overseas with sand fly fever and continued to be unwell after her demobilization on 26 April 1920. From 20 May 1920 to 22 June 1927, she was employed at the Anzac Repatriation Hospital, North Road, Brighton, Victoria. In 1922 and 1927 she had two operations for uterine trouble and a prolapse - conditions she believed were caused by lifting heavy patients. On appeal it was agreed by the Repatriation Commission that her prolapse was indeed aggravated by war service. Her continued ill health contributed to her giving up nursing and in about 1927 she obtained her property at Narra Warren North. Minnie wrote many times to the Edith Cavell Trust Fund – first in 1922 when she requested financial assistance to pay for a surgeon to perform the operation to repair her prolapse and then between 1927 and 1940 repeatedly seeking financial assistance to help with her farm. Her living conditions in these years were clouded with poverty and hardship. Gardening, she wrote in 1940, was becoming too strenuous for her and making a living almost impossible, she was in dire straights. In 1945 when she was living at 20 Docker Street, Elwood, Melbourne her pension was increased to 25%. When Minnie drew up her will in April 1954, she was living at the same address with her sister Ilma, who was

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95 Ibid., Elsie Alford, to the Secretary Department of Army, Canberra, 6 August 1967.
96 Sand fly fever is an acute viral disease characterized by fever, malaise, eye pain and headaches. It is transmitted by the female sand fly and is also known as pappataci fever.
97 NAA: MP290, Box 3, Correspondence of the Edith Cavell Trust Fund.
98 Ibid.
99 PROVIC: VPRS 28/P4 1579, 527/023, Will, Miriam Selina Welshman
also single. Minnie died after a long illness as a result of bowel and stomach at the Repatriation General Hospital, Heidelberg West on 13 September 1957.

No record has been located that shows if the Victorian nurse Edith Jones applied for land as a returned soldier under her own name although her husband Harry Thomas Wraight did. Neither Edith nor her husband, who had won the Military Medal and the Distinguished Conduct Medal, were discharged medically unfit. Yet, in the years after Edith and Harry took up their two blocks first at Irrawarra and then at Narra Warren Road, Cranbourne, her health declined rapidly and was certainly exacerbated by being on the land as the wife of a soldier settler. Edith’s health was poor for some time when she wrote to the Edith Cavell Trust Fund in November 1928 asking for financial assistance. At the time of writing she was clearly suffering emotional and financial anguish with her health being affected detrimentally by the continued worry of crop failure and growing debt.

I have had eczema for (off and on) for one and half years under different medical men. Owing to eight bad years on farm am now unable to continue treatment or carry out Drs advice. I am afraid of becoming chronic.

In this letter, she wrote that she had not become ill overseas. Although her husband firmly believed her constant ill health after the war was due to the break down she had overseas and that her condition then, was incorrectly diagnosed. He stated in a Record of Evidence given to the Repatriation Officer that his wife’s health first showed signs of breaking when she was working in France and it was because of this break down, that she

100 Ibid.
101 NAA: B73, H99763, Medical Case File, Miriam Welshman
103 NAA: MP290, Box 3, Correspondence of the Edith Cavell Trust fund, 19 November 1928.
104 Ibid.
105 NAA: B73/62 M113235, Medical Case File, Edith Wraight (nee Jones), 3 February 1950.
was transferred to England. The constant worry and harsh conditions on their soldier settlement block directly affected their ability to live comfortably. In 1927 and 1928, they lost money on their peas and the whole crop remained unsold, and in 1929 their wheat and potatoes were not profitable either. On 30 November 1929, Edith again wrote to the Edith Cavell Fund complaining about her continuing poor health and their growing debt.

Owing to adverse circumstances under soldier settlement, bad markets etc, find it difficult to continue. We put both our gratuities and savings into the land and now the Closer Settlement Board is so loading us with unexpected charges at increasing interest which means forfeiture of the place with no prospects of work with so much unemployment, we have been living on the barest necessities the last your years and I am feeling desperate. Drs. Accounts have eaten up more than we could afford the last few years for eczema and bad sight.

The constant rigours and stresses of land occupation as well as the pressure placed on the family by the Closer Settlement Board, clearly impacted heavy on her health and well being. The circumstances of Nelly Veir Scott who applied successfully for block No. 267 on Red Cliffs Estate at Mildura were quite different. She appeared to have no health problems when she was demobilized and was fit and well in the years after the war in contrast to many other nurse soldier settlers.

106 Ibid.
107 PRO: VPRS 10381/P/0000, 000256, Advances file No. 3195, H.T. Wraight to Closer Settlement Inquiry Board, 6 August 1930.
108 Ibid., 30 November 1929.
Even when she first applied for her block her referees outlined her capabilities and suitability for farm work. They stated she was capable of managing a block and doing a great portion of the work herself, she was familiar with pruning and block work and had gained a certain amount of experience on fruit blocks around Mildura previously. Even though she did have assistance from her husband who also had a block nearby (No. 428), she appears to have had quite a lot of say and autonomy in the running of her own block.

The Closer Settlement Promotion Scheme was a sound way for family land to be disposed of to other family members. Even though the process had to be approved by the Department of Lands, many such transactions were implemented. Under the Promotion Scheme small groups of returned soldiers could apply for land in areas they selected themselves or from family members. Using this process, Ida May Graham and her

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husband Clarence Stuart Moore applied for a block of land from Clarence’s father George Robert Moore. He had three blocks he wanted to dispose of, one block each to go to Ida and Clarence and the third to another son, Charles Mervyn Moore. The block Ida originally applied for consisted of 577 acres situated about 15 miles from Inverell suitable for wheat, maize or for the breeding or fattening of sheep or cattle. The Closer Settlement Advisory Board recommended that Ida only get 277 acres and not the 577 she had applied for, because of ‘restrictions placed upon applicants, relative to home maintenance’. It seems that the first block she applied for together with Clarence’s would have been bigger than the recommended size. Because Ida and Clarence had married before the transaction was finalized, the larger block she should have obtained was divided into two. The father, George Moore, still wished Ida to have the greater acreage because of his desire to help the couple make a start. Because of this he stated that he would take 2/- per acre less than the original price asked. It was believed by the Under-Secretary that the problem arose because Ida had married before she had been allotted the original area intended for her. He was not prepared to penalize her for this and gave her another option which was to contact the Rural Bank ‘who were prepared to finance the subdivision of private estates such as the one owned by the senior member of the Moore family’. The Bank accepted the Advisory Board’s valuation of the block, although it is unclear if the couple purchased the additional land.

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110 SRNSW: Department of Lands, Closer Settlement Promotion Files, c.1913-72, NRS 8052, [10/37172, No. 3216], Closer Settlement Advisory Board Report, 4 January 1921.  
111 SRNSW: NRS 8052, [10/13340 No. 3216], Closer Settlement Advisory Board Report, 17 November 1920.  
112 Ibid., Under-Secretary Report, 5 June 1924.  
113 Ibid., Information Leaflet, Government Savings Bank of NSW, Rural Bank Department, Advances to Facilitate Subdivision of private estates under Section 64, Government Savings Bank Act 1906.  
114 SRNSW: Returned Soldiers Settlement loan files, nos.263-15125, NRS 8058, [12/7077 No 5218], Clarence S. Moore to D.R. Drummond MLA, 29 June 1922.
Adverse circumstances between 1920 and 1923 caused Clarence to apply for a postponement of instalments. After taking possession on 1 July although early in 1921 rain spoilt the wheat crop and in 1922, they were again in drought. In February 1923 Ida also applied for a postponement of her payments with her reasons for doing so ‘due to her wool being burned in storage buildings and wheat being ruined by flood’. After Ida’s death in 1924, her advance and land were transferred to her husband although he seemed to have lost interest in farming and took up employment at a stock and station agency in Inverell, eventually marrying the lady who ran the agency. In 1930 the property was listed in the NSW Government Gazette as forfeited. At this date there was an outstanding debt of £1355.15.7 still to be paid. In 1935, due to Clarence stating that there was no way that he could repay the debt it was suggested by Mr. C. Drummond of the Loans and Arrears Section of the Closer Settlement branch that the debt be waived under Section 21 of the Returned Soldier Settlement Act. That this was to occur was still to be debated at some length by the First Clerk of the Loans Section:

I cannot see why Moore’s debt should be written off simply because he says he cannot pay anything. Moore certainly did not work the property energetically or to the best advantage. He preferred to live in town and leave the working of the land to his aged father – a man too old to work. The Moore family, have had a very good time out of this estate at the expense of the Department, and I believe certainly C.S. Moore should not now get a clearance. He preferred to follow another and easier physical occupation and to get what he could from the land for himself, whilst leaving the Department to go without reasonable payment.

The Under-Secretary stepped in stating that Mr. Drummond’s recommendation for the

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115 Ibid.
116 SRNSW: NRS 8050, [12/7077 No. 6850], Loan file, Ida May Graham, Application for Postponement of interest or instalments, 15 February 1923.
117 Ibid.
118 Ibid., Report from the Loans and Arrears Section, 5 November 1936.
waiving of Moore’s debt was to stand.\textsuperscript{119}

Kenneth Fitzgerald Alford and Elsie Wildash also applied for their land at Mickibri, near Parkes, NSW under the Closer Settlement Promotion. Kenneth applied on 28 February 1919 - one of ten soldiers who successfully obtained a block from Crawford’s Belmount Estate. At the time of his application he stated that his assets amounted to only £50. It appears the other nine had very little money either, although ‘taken as a whole the settlers, two who were not returned soldiers, were good types personally’.\textsuperscript{120} The block Ken applied for was a Settlement Purchase No.1920/9, Portion 69 consisting of 545 acres with a homestead, and as he was the only one planning to get married, this was allocated to him.\textsuperscript{121} Elsie applied for her block on 3 February 1920 which consisted of Portions 37 and 57 which was judged to be a ‘single farm proposal of 202 acres’.\textsuperscript{122} The two blocks the couple applied for, were across the road from each other. Elsie’s application was declined however as the selling price of £6.2.6 an acre was above the Local Repatriation Committee estimation of £4.15.0 per acre.\textsuperscript{123} The vendor, A.J. McIntyre refused to reduce his price.\textsuperscript{124} As there was no prospect of agreement over this, the proposal was declined. Elsie’s daughter Judith has no knowledge of her mother ever receiving land in her own name. There is a brief hand written notation on Ken’s application for appraisement dated 3 June 1932, which states that as well as Portion 69,

\textsuperscript{119} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{120} SRNSW: Department of Lands, Closer Settlement Promotion Files, NRS 8052, [10/13235, No.260], Belmount Estate, Memorandum from Under-Secretary for Lands to the Closer Settlement Advisory Board, 28 April 1919.
\textsuperscript{121} Bill Buxton and Viviene Gastine, \textit{Op cit.}
\textsuperscript{122} SRNSW: Department of Lands, Closer Settlement Promotion Files, NRS 8052, [10/37139, No.1602], McIntyre’s Farm, Elsie Wildash.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid.
SP 1920/9, he also owned CP 1913/42, Portion 57. This handwritten notation appears to be incorrect, as Portion 41 was CP 1913/42, as indicated on the Parish maps below.

That aside, this appears to have been the block that Elsie originally applied for. It is not known when he acquired this block or what he paid for it or if the problems over the vendor’s price were ever addressed.

At the time of his death on 13 December 1958, Kenneth and Elsie were not in possession of the land at Mickibri having sold it to a William Joseph McCann on 16 March 1951, the mortgage to the Department of Lands was also discharged a month

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125 Appraisements were carried out under the Closer Settlement and Returned Soldier Settlement (Amendment Act 1927) as amended by Section 15 (c) of the Crown Lands Amendment Act of 1931. At this date the value of all improvements were listed as well as the capital value of the property; CP – Conditional Purchase, ACP – Additional Conditional Purchase.

earlier.\textsuperscript{127} Kenneth’s probate states that he had three adjoining properties when he died – the acreage totaled 4400 acres. This property named ‘Hilton’ was situated about sixteen miles north-west of Tottenham.\textsuperscript{128} Even though the Alfords had little money to begin with, they did stay on the land, moving into the township of Parkes several years before Kenneth’s death on 13 December 1958. They as other families in rural NSW had to deal with severe a drought between the years 1926-1929 and 1933-1938.\textsuperscript{129}

\textsuperscript{127} SRNSW: Closer and Soldier Settlement Transfer files, NRS 8054, [10/26015B No. 460], Kenneth Alford to William Joseph McCann; \textit{Ibid.}, [10/26015B No. 459], Release of Mortgage.
\textsuperscript{128} SRNSW: Supreme Court of New South Wales, Probate Packets, NRS 13660, Series 4 [No. 494396, Box 15225], Kenneth Alford.
Another couple who were both returned soldiers, Alice Earle and her husband Frederick Moulden Vavasour Earle occupied adjoining properties at Kangaroo Creek, about 30 miles from Grafton where there was a railway station and butter factory. This farm was in an area where normally there would be a higher rainfall than the area around Parkes where the Alford family took up their soldier settlement block. Instead of raising sheep and beef as they did, Alice and Frederick Earle were occupied as dairy farmers. In December 1919, their prospects looked good, there was a small house on the block and the property was well watered with twenty acres already under cultivation. The area was judged to be suitable for pigs, cattle and dairying. Approval for the transfer from William Cooper (who had also been discharged medically unfit), to Alice was given by 14 May 1923, although it seems even at this early stage she already had considerable debt. Alice was required to pay £64.8.11 together with interest of eleven pence per day from 20 February of 1923, up until the date of the transfer. As was normal procedure, she was also required to be responsible for the balance of William Cooper’s Advance which amounted to £378.11.10. By the end of December 1923 the two farms of 708 acres in total were being worked together. As well as making her repayments on the land, loan and interest, Alice was also expected by 28 November 1924, to make improvements on her property amounting to £300. This she was unable to do with the improvements she made, only amounting to £264.18.0. It is also clear that working both holdings was
difficult for them financially, as the annual instalments for both farms amounted to £239.13.3.133

Frederick called at the office of the District Surveyor requesting that payments by himself and his wife be suspended until the end of the year. This was despite him obtaining a job as the Secretary of the local branch of the Primary Producers Union where he was to start work on 1 January 1925. By December 1926, in line with what was happening to many other settlers in western New South Wales, the couple found that the usually lush north coast was also in the grip of a very severe drought.

By May 1926 they had left the property and were living at Grafton. On 7 February 1928, Alice received a letter from the Under-Secretary stating that she was to be granted concessions on her debts. These included the waiving of interest owing, a complete restructuring of how her advance was to be repaid and a postponement of the 1925 and 1926 purchase money. In this letter particularly, the Under-Secretary was very compassionate and understanding about her circumstances. ‘It is hoped that these concessions will place you in a sound position and enable you to now carry on successfully’.134 Earle stated that due to his continuing poor health he had moved to Grafton on doctors orders. At this date the property was being worked on a share basis with Earle returning frequently to oversee the work there. By March 1931 however the Department of Lands objected to only one block being worked which Earle believed was the most profitable way to proceed due to the cost of constantly clearing of black berries. He went on:

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133 Ibid., District Surveyor to Under-Secretary for Lands, 4 December 1923.
134 Ibid., Under-Secretary to A.B. Earle.
You do not realize the lean time the man on the land has had; although his production has increased his cheques have diminished, owing to the very low price of cream and pigs, the worst for many years. The bone of contention with the District Surveyor is that I am not living on the holding. The District Surveyor is not taking into consideration the fact that I had worked the place from four o’clock in the morning till dark every day for five years. It seems unfair to me that I should be singled out simply because through war disability, I am unable to continue working on the holding.\footnote{Ibid., Frederick Earle to Under-Secretary, 2 March 1931.}

By 1932, Earle was in arrears to the amount of £112.15.1 which he was unable to pay. The District Surveyor in this case again showed compassion as ‘he was of the opinion that the settler should not be pressed for more than 50% of his monthly cream returns’.\footnote{Ibid., Memorandum Returned Soldiers’ Settlers Branch, 19 May 1932.}

Frederick was the sole beneficiary of Alice’s will after she died on 7 June 1929 and because of this had the option of transferring her Settlement Purchase to his own name.\footnote{NSWBDM: Death Certificate 1929/8604, Alice Beatrice Earle, 7 June 1929.}

Another married couple, a nurse who served with the AANS, Ida Mary Garven and a returned soldier Herbert Sydney Charles Atkinson both applied for land as soldier settlers near Quirindi in NSW. Ida applied for her block of land around 31 July 1919 when she stated that she had £20 in cash and held a beneficiary interest in her late father’s will amounting to £300. The blocks, both Settlement Purchases - SP 1920/16 and SP 1920/15 - were situated at Quipolly about 10 miles from Quirindi Railway Station. The two blocks of 377 acres in total, although considered small, were large enough to be a home maintenance area.\footnote{SRNSW: Department of Lands, Closer Settlement Promotion Files, c.1913-72, NRS 8052, [10/37122, No.988] Valuer’s Report, 20 December 1919.} Both Herbert and Ida applied for a loan in their own name and they each received one.

From the beginning, farming for the couple was difficult because of a hard drought in the region. In a letter written on 26 May 1923 by Herbert to the Minister for Lands, his growing despondency about their circumstances clearly shows.
I have already spent over £300 on agistment country and fodder and have exhausted my ready cash. I have been hand feeding the weaker ones, but cannot afford to do so any longer … After the December downpour I planted thirty acres of corn for cow feed, but with no rain since and the hot winds, it was a failure. The last season’s wheat crop owing to the drought also failed. 139

Despite his experience before the war as a dairy farmer and the fact that now he was running between 60 and 70 cows with good milking machines and a good separator he was having trouble making a go of it. He was however judged to be a good steady man who knew his job. There is no indication in documentation what Ida’s role on the farm was, although her Advance was used for stocking the farm. Also, early in 1924, the Atkinson stated that they had lost 49 head of cattle during the drought. Inspector Garland discounted this, saying that ‘he believed the losses probably occurred during the last three years’ and not recently.140 The couple’s request for an extension of the amount of their original advance was refused. They had also taken out another mortgage to McIntosh and Co. and Mr. Bonthorne the District Court Registrar and were in arrears with their repayments on their land and their advance.141 It was recommended by the officer in charge of the Closer Settlement Branch that the two holdings be forfeited because of non-payment of instalments and the outstanding combined amounts of their Advances which totalled over one thousand pounds, be recalled. Forfeiture occurred by 28 August 1925.142

Conditions for soldier settlers in Victoria mirrored in many ways the circumstances of settlers in NSW. After serving with the AANS at Harefield in England and with the 3rd Australian General Hospital at Rouen in France for two months, Edith Jones married Harry Thomas Wraight in England in December 1917 and because of this

140 Ibid., Local land Board office Memorandum, 8 April 1924.
141 Ibid., W.E.Waterford Solicitor, Quirindi to the Under-Secretary, 4 September 1925.
142 Ibid., Memorandum from the Under-Secretary 23 May 1928; NSW Government Gazette, 28 August 1925, p. -.
marriage was disqualified from the AANS. The couple took up their first block prior to 1921 (as Harry’s Appeals Board file begins at that date) in south western Victoria near Colac. Unfortunately for them there was a ‘fine line between success and failure’ in the Colac-Otway Shire and while some prospered others struggled to eke out a living.143 The latter appears to have been the case for Edith and Harry as the living conditions at Irrewarra were appalling. Sometime before they left the property, early in 1924, it was reported that the house needed urgent attention.

The water is coming through and the plaster sheets are giving away through it: also the chimney is starting to cant over and has taken with it the spouting from under the iron, and when it rains the water just flows through the house and they have to sweep it out with the broom. Mrs Wraight informed me that if something is not done she could not live in the house another winter.144

The Wraight family transferred to a second property located on Narra Warren Road, Cranbourne in May 1926 where the district was dominated by the ‘great swamp’ from which areas of thick tea-tree scrub had to be cleared.145 Attempts to clear the water from the swamp had a long history, with work beginning in the 1830s continuing up to the turn of century, with teams of workers engaged in the creation of a system to drain the water so as to allow more land for Closer Settlement and after World War One, soldier settlement.146 Due to the drainage system not being fully effective the settlers suffered devastating floods for many years. Soldier Settlement Estates were located throughout the Cranbourne region at Tooradin, Yannathan, Koo Wee Rup and Caldermeade.147 At nearby Narra Warren where Edith and Thomas Wraight took up their second holding, poverty

146 Ibid.  
147 Ibid.
among settlers was endemic. Many including the Wraight family suffered profound hardship not only due to floods, but also because of poor returns on their crops and dairy produce and an ever increasing debt. In August, 1930, Edith and Harry Wraight were struggling to make a living with only 12 milking cows and a small number of pigs. One of the main problems for them was that their block consisting of only 60 acres was too small on which to make a living, a factor recognized by the Closer Settlement Board. Because of this Harry believed that as it was the fault of the Board, he should not be responsible for arrears on the holding. By July 1931 they had walked off their farm.

Red Cliffs Soldier Settlement at Mildura where Nellie Veir Scott was one of 708 soldier settlers was one of two main river settlements on the Murray River, the other at Renmark in South Australia. Red Cliffs in its unimproved condition, with red soil, mallee and blue brush was hard country with a minimum rainfall of 11 inches. Both settlements had come from land previously owned by the Chaffey brothers who had gone into liquidation. In 1921, George Picton officer-in-charge at Red Cliffs when reporting to a Select Committee of Agriculture estimated that the 33,000 acres purchased by the Commonwealth could be divided into 1,000 blocks. The blocks were allocated in various numbered lots until June 1923 with 708 finally being settled.

One account by a returned soldier who successfully applied for a block at Red Cliffs outlined the initial confidence and optimism he felt about the venture.

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148 PROV: VPRS 10381/P/0000 Unit, 000256, Advances file No. 3195, Harry Thomas Wraight
149 Ibid., 12 August 1930.
151 Interim Reports from the Section Committee on the Conditions and Prospects of the Agricultural Industry, NSW Parliamentary Papers, Section XVII, 2 November 1921, p. 570.
We thought it was as good as drawing the first ticket in Tattersalls’, drawing a block at Red Cliffs on the Murray River in Victoria. We looked like making as much as four hundred pounds an acre. A working man earned only three pounds a week then. We’d be millionaires! \(^{152}\)

The reality for soldier settlers on Red Cliffs as in other parts of Victoria, in the early years particularly, was very different. Despite the Murray River irrigating many of these areas the settlers at Red Cliffs suffered all the hardships and difficulties faced by other Victorian men and nurse soldier settlers. The optimism they had when they first took up their blocks, long gone. Also, land settlement at Red Cliffs changed the demographics of the area where twenty-four original settlers were replaced by over seven hundred soldier settlers. \(^{153}\) This created a system that was as the geographical historian J.M. Powell outlined, an intensification of settlement where the demand on resources such as water, outweighed the reality. \(^{154}\) The year that Red Cliffs came into operation, a drop in the world production of dried fruit caused great disappointment to the settlers and as well, they were to lose many crops due to frost, hail and storms. Ken Mackenzie Wright believes that it was not until after the Second World War that the fortunes of the settlers at Red Cliffs improved. \(^{155}\)

In these early years because of irrigation in the Murray basin, soldier settlement in Victoria showed every sign of being successful with irrigation channels being constructed in 1919 in several districts including Swan Hill, Tyntynder and Nyah, where Priscilla Kirby (nee Wardle) who served with the QAIMNS and her husband Cyril settled.

Another channel built in 1920 at Mildura was constructed by returned soldiers working

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\(^{154}\) *Ibid.*  
on a ‘gang system’ was to be the most prosperous although success in these areas was still mostly dependent on good rain.  

Despite the early difficulties suffered by settlers on Red Cliffs, Nellie Veir Scott was to become a successful grape grower there although mainly in the period after the depression of the 1930s and World War Two.

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Nellie’s son Colin outlined in an interview that his mother was the instigator of the move to take grapes to the markets in Melbourne. Another factor which may have contributed to her success was that at Red Cliffs there was a strong sense of community with balls and other social functions occurring frequently. This in itself appears to have been more extensive that some other soldier settlements. Working bees were also common at Red Cliffs to help an injured or sick farmer with pruning or harvesting. As well, Mildura had a very viable Co-operative Fruit Company with 627 share holders that contributed to the viability of fruit growing at Red Cliffs.

By 31 March 1919, 209 repatriated soldiers had also been placed on irrigation fruit blocks on the Murray by the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission of Victoria. 120 of these were ordinary Closer Settlement Estates to be used for fruit growing, dairying and mixed farming as were another eleven not yet decided. 70 holdings at Merbein were to be used for fruit growing as were another eight holdings at Nyah. At this date the Commission was subdividing another 800 acres on the Murray frontage at Merbein to provide a further 56 blocks, each consisting of an average area of 14 acres. Priscilla Wardle and her husband Cyril Kirby were to take up one of the irrigation blocks at Nyah West, near Swan Hill in June 1920. Their circumstances however did not mirror in any way the relative success of Nellie Veir Scott. The Kirbys wanted to grow sultanas, a venture that was doomed from the beginning. The Sunraysia Daily reporting that in 1921, sultanas suffered more than any other variety of grapes

158 Interim Reports from the Select Committee on the Conditions and Prospects of the Agricultural Industry, NSW Parliamentary Papers, Section XVII, (1923) p. 572.
159 NAA: A2487, 1919/2939, Settlement of soldiers on irrigation fruit blocks, Chairman of SR&WSC to D.J. Gilbert, Comptroller of Repatriation, 25 April 1919.
160 Ibid.
161 Ibid.
during the wet weather.\textsuperscript{162} The Kirbys struggled to make a living without success with their block reverting to the State Water Commission after seven years, as they had no hope of selling or making a living from it.\textsuperscript{163}

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s there was considerable discontent from soldier settlers across Australia not only about how their settlements were administrated at a State level, but also how the Repatriation Commission addressed their needs at a national level. Writing to Prime Minister Bruce on 16 October 1927, the Secretary of the Victorian Soldier Settlers Association outlined what he believed was the poor response by Governments to the plight of soldier settlers. He believed that the Inquiries held previously had not made fair recommendations, having only interviewed soldier settlers briefly and so did not present a true representation of their circumstances. He went on,

The report forms prescribed for use by the Boards contain a list of questions obviously designed to discover all possible shortcomings of settlers and to cloak the equally important part played by the administration. Some of the Inquiry Boards have admitted that their inquiries have been influenced by inadmissible evidence.\textsuperscript{164}

Soldier settlers were leaving their blocks in great numbers across Australia.

By June 1938, at Taromeo Soldier Settlement near Nanango in Queensland there were only six settlers left out of the original 28 settlers. Mrs. B. Templeton writing for the wives and children of soldier settlers from Taromeo, to Senator Foll at Parliament House in Canberra, angrily outlined the discontentment felt by soldier settlers and the hardships they were putting up with. On May 20 1938 she wrote,

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{162} The Dried Fruits Association, Secretary’s Report to the Annual Conference of the ADFA in Melbourne 25 October and following days, \textit{Sunraysia Daily}, 5 November 1921, p. -.
\textsuperscript{163} NAA: MP290, Box 3, Correspondence of the Edith Cavell Trust fund, 10 May 1933.
\textsuperscript{164} NAA: A461, C394/1/3/ part 2, Land Settlement, returned soldiers, general representations. Secretary of Victorian Soldier Settlers Association to Prime Minister S.M. Bruce, 16 October 1927.
\end{flushright}
You are no doubt aware of the tragedy of soldier settlers, placed on the worst type of country, promises of water … our husbands are prematurely aged from war disabilities, hard work and poverty.\textsuperscript{165}

And on 23 June,

Since our last letter there is another one who has received notice of forfeiture, a good soldier four years on active service, wife and five children, a sick man, eighteen years on this so called farm. When able, a good worker and will pay to his last shilling … refused a war pension, the usual ‘not due to war causes’ rubbish.\textsuperscript{166}

These statements mirror the circumstances of the nurse soldier settlers in this study as only five remained on their block until the end of their lives or at the very least, until they were too old to manage the property.

\textbf{Conclusion}

The experiences of nurse soldier settlers and returned nurses married to soldier settlers on the land varied according to many factors such as their health, the location of their block, closeness to railways and townships, the type of occupation undertaken or their marital status. A Royal Commission established in Victoria in 1925 found that soldier settlers failed because of inexperience, small blocks, no capital behind them and poor prices for their produce. For Victorian and NSW soldier settlers, including nurses who took up land, this was certainly the case but the majority suffered also because of increasing debt which was the result of having to repay their advance with mounting interest, payments on their land, rates and in some cases a second mortgage. Additionally, another factor to consider was the poor health of many of the nurse soldier settlers which impacted detrimentally on their ability to live and farm on their properties. The experience of

\textsuperscript{165} \textit{Ibid.}, Mrs. B. Templeton to Senator H.S. Foll, 20 May 1938.

\textsuperscript{166} \textit{Ibid.}, 23 June 1938.
family members not mentally and physically fit also indicates the debilitating effect of soldier settlement on their health and well being. Marina Larsson has estimated that in Victoria according to the files of the Closer Settlement Board as many as 40% of soldier settlers were disabled or unfit.\textsuperscript{167} The findings of this study appear to show that this number may have been higher.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined the place and experience of a number of Australian women who served overseas during World War One as nurses and in other medical occupations, and who after the war, took up land under the Soldier Settlement Scheme in NSW and Victoria. There were three main categories of women identified: single women who possessed land under their own name, women who did not apply for land as a soldier settler but who were married to a soldier settler and married couples where each, as a returned soldier applied for land individually. The experiences of these female soldier settlers varied according to their marital status, their health both during and after the war, the geographical location of their block and the vagaries of climate, closeness to amenities, railways and townships as well as the type of farming pursuit undertaken.

This thesis has revealed that farming profitably by single nurse soldier settlers was difficult. They were hindered by a lack of knowledge about the business and process of farming and were handicapped because they did not have a man to carry out the hard physical labour required on their farm. In some cases approval for the land was only granted if a brother was close by and while this does show a level of discrimination toward the applications of nurses, it also reveals that the Department of Lands believed labour provided by a male was vital to a woman’s success. Married female soldier settlers therefore, may have benefited from having the contribution of both husband and wife, but the appalling physical and mental condition of a large number of nurse soldier settlers and their husbands contributed to their problems and was to their detriment. All female soldier settlers under consideration in this thesis suffered the short and long term effects of crop losses caused by drought, insect plagues and floods. All, irrespective of whether
they were single nurse soldier settlers or married soldier settlers were subjected at varying times to poor administrative management by the Department of Lands and the Commonwealth Department of Repatriation. There was procrastination about the required policy needed to deal with their applications as well as barriers that impeded, restricted or delayed their rights and entitlements.

This thesis has shown that the prevailing attitude to nurse soldier settlers in NSW and Victoria in the post World War One period was decidedly ambivalent and that the applications for land by nurse soldier settlers were not treated consistently. Even leading up to the passing of the Repatriation Act of (1917-1918) which was meant to outline the rights and eligibility of all returned personnel including nurses and women who had served overseas to repatriation benefits, this was not actively promoted to women nor was their right to land openly encouraged. Nurses were included in post World War One repatriation legislation under the broad definition of ‘soldier’. Nurses therefore were fundamentally hindered because as women, their war service pensions, rehabilitation entitlements and pay as nurses, were tied to a politically and economically gendered structure that was profoundly male in administration and application. Even though there was some recognition by the public of the devotion to duty and in some cases heroism of nurses during the war, the private reality was starkly different, with many on the land and in their private lives suffering economic and financial difficulties and declining health in the years after World War One. This thesis has therefore not just been about nurses as soldier settlers but also reflects the general poor treatment of nurses during the repatriation process. There were a lack of facilities and processes put in place to deal with their demobilization their resettlement and repatriation.
One major theme to emerge during the research for this thesis was that a number of nurses suffered from nervous disorders such as neurasthenia. This was again not recognized by the Commonwealth with little consideration given to nurses who returned to Australia in poor mental and/or physical health which contributed to some being unable to work in their own profession. A large number had to struggle to survive on little or no war pension. Proving a disability was due to war service was extremely difficult for returned nurses and the constant requests by government for a review of their cases, not only injured their pride but also their well-being. Ongoing health problems were to have a detrimental effect on their ability to farm well. For most of the nurse soldier settlers in this thesis, land settlement in the face of extreme hardship, poverty, drought and despair was not what they had hoped and was, in many ways, equal to the pain, suffering and hardship they had gone through during the war.

The numerous accolades given to the returning men of the Australian forces after World War One were in sharp contrast to those given to the nurses. During the war, their nursing skills were praised – they were supporters and carers – the accepted role for women. It was on their return to Australia where they needed help, compassion and understanding – something they rarely received from the Commonwealth. This study has provided clear evidence of a lack of encouragement and consistency in how the applications for land by women who served overseas were received and dealt with by the Returned Soldier Settlement Board and the Department of Lands generally. The history of nurse soldier settlers mirrors the history of women as that of a marginalized and forgotten group, always cast in the shadows of their more famous digger brothers.
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A2479, 1917/997, Memorandum from the Prime Minister to the Premier of NSW,
A2479, 1917/964, Military Nurses.
A2485 C/7, Sustenance to Land Settlers.
A2487, 1919/7682, Priscilla I. Wardle, Request for advice on entitlements.
A2487, 1919/2939, Settlement of soldiers on irrigation fruit blocks.
A2487, 1920/3265, Eligibility of nurses who are about to marry for repatriation benefits.
A2487, 1920/4039, Eligibility of Imperial Nurses for Repatriation Benefits.
A2487, 1921/5706, Enquiry regarding land settlement – Miss R. McKenzie
A2487, 1921/13348, Miss J.H. Buchanan regarding sustenance.
A2487, 1922/598, Application for land sustenance, M.S. Armstrong.
A2487, 1922/6924, Application for Soldier Settlement block of land, Amy Alice
Cordingley.
A2489, 1920/7240, Transportation of furniture, Priscilla Kirby.
A2489, 1920/1575, Acting Prime Minister to the Premier of QLD
A2489, 1920/769, Application for land – Ms. Helen M. Clifton, Hauraki
B73/18, M18119, Medical Case File, Eleanor Rose Carter.
B73/53, M931189, Medical Case file, Priscilla Isabel Kirby (nee Wardle).
B73, R99763, Repatriation File, Miriam Welshman.
B73, H99763, Medical Case File, Miriam Welshman.
B73/62, M113235, Edith Wraight (nee Jones).
C138 R32446, Repatriation Case file, Nellie Alfred Laffin (nee Pike).
C138, R59278 C13712, Ida Mary Atkinson (nee Garven).
C138, R59258 C91215 Parts 1 & 2, Ida Mary Atkinson (nee Garven).
C138, M91215, Medical Case file, Ida Mary Atkinson (nee Garven).
C138, C109342, Pension File, Julia Bligh Johnston.
C138, M109342, Medical Files, Julia Bligh Johnston.
C138/1, R40110 Box 3200, Penelope Frater.
C138/3, M74219, Medical Case file, Mary Standish Cox.
C138/3, R104732 Box 7595, Repatriation File, Edith Danson Mullarkey (nee Rush).
C138/3, C104732, Box 7595 Repatriation File, Edith Danson Mullarkey (nee Rush).
C138/10, M84114, Box 31072. Medical Case File, Marjorie Sarah Gardner.
C139, RX35763 Charles George E. Laffin.
MT1487/1, Passenger List, Millicent Armstrong.
MT1487/1, Priscilla I. Wardle, AANS attached to QAIMNSR.
MT1487/1, Florence Reardon.
MP290, Box 3, Correspondence of the Edith Cavell Trust Fund.
MP367/1, 556/49/716, Department of Defence, Minute Paper.
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Alford, Kenneth Fitzgerald
Atkinson, Herbert
Ballard, Rosalind Eva
Buchanan, Jessy Helena
Carter, Rose Eleanor
Chenery, Hilda Francis
Collopy, Bernice Margaret
Cox, Mary Standish
Draper, Elizabeth Helen
Duffy, Emma Mary
Frater, Penelope
Garven, Ida Mary
Graham, Ida May
Johnston, Julia Bligh
McCarthy, Ellen May
McKenzie, Rose
McMaugh, Hilda Hope
Reid, Evelyn Maud
Rush, Edith Danson
Scott, Nellie Veir
Scott, Euphemia Weir
Sheil, Emily Jane
Simpson, Amy Alice
Toan, Edith May
Twynam, Alice Joan
Underwood, Irene Charlotte
Watt, Mary Redfern
Welshman, Miriam
Whitton, Thomas Evan
Wildash, Elsie Caroline
Williams, Edith
Wraight, Harry
Wright, Evelyn Percy

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AWM25: 245/9 part 8, Demobilization Circular.
AWM: Australian Repatriation Scheme Brochure, *For the Information of members of the AIF, Nature and Scope of Assistance Rendered, 8 April 1918-31 October 1918.*
AWM8: Embarkation Rolls.
AWM 253: Nurses who embarked on RMS *Mooltan*, June 1917.
AWM43: A876, The death of Edith May Toan, as reported in *Reveille*, June 1937.

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MS 3962:  Sister Anne Donnell
MS 6609:  Returned Services League
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WO 372/23:  Medal service card Priscilla Isabel Wardle
WO 372/23:  Medal service card Helen May Clifton
WO 399/7420:  War Service File Nellie Veir Scott
WO 399/6900:  War Service File Florence Josephine Reardon

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Registry of Birth Death and Marriages, Victoria

Death Certificate
Daniels, Hilda Francis, 1975/7768
Sheil, Emily Jane, 1947/2023
Beula Rotherdale Lind (nee McMinn), 1959/5969
Amy Alice Cordingley (nee Simpson), 1922/12257

Marriage Certificate
Edmund Frank Lind/Beula Rotherdale McMinn, 1920/391
Richard George Cordingley/Amy Alice Simpson, 1920/79
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VPRS 7591/P3, 208, 527/023, Will, Miriam Selina Welshman
VPRS 28/P4, 1579, 527/023, Probate, Miriam Selina Welshman
VPRS 28/P4, 278, 447/382, Probate, Rose Eleanor Carter

Soldier Settlement Advances Files
VPRS: 10381/P/0000, 000256, Advances file No. 3195, Harry Thomas Wraight.
VPRS: 5714/P, 1910, 2455/12, Closer and Soldier Settlement file, Nellie Veir Scott

Appeals Board Files, Discharged Soldier Settlement
VPRS, 15796/P0001/2, Appeals Board Files, Discharged Soldier Settlement, Harry Wraight.

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University of New England and Regional Archives


Oral Interviews and Questionnaires

Audrey Horn, niece of Alice Joan Twynam
Beryl Sheil, wife of the late Donald Sheil, nephew of Emily Jane Sheil
Lorna McFaydn (nee Sheil) niece of Emily Jane Sheil
Margaret Gilbert, niece of Emily Jane Sheil
Judith Ciok, niece of Mary Redfern Watt
Alan Draper, great nephew of Elizabeth Helena Draper
Cecilia Homerlein, great niece of Millicent Sylvia Armstrong
Colin Carey, son of Nellie Veir Scott.
Reflections of Mrs Elsie Alford, Formerly nursing sister Elsie Wildash, No.1 Australian Army Nursing Service, as told to Bill Buxton and Viviene Gastine, for the Australian Society of World War One Aero Historians, 1986.

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The Crown Lands Consolidation Act (NSW)
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**Television**

## Appendix 1

### LAND OWNED INDIVIDUALLY OR WITH A HUSBAND
APPLIED FOR WITH OR WITHOUT SUCCESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>State Records Ref No.</th>
<th>NAME OF ESTATE or FARM</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Holding /Portion Number</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date Taken up or applied</th>
<th>Success in applying</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Date sold/trans.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Elizabeth Helen</td>
<td>[10/3713 No. 1585]</td>
<td>Bennett’s (2) Farm</td>
<td>Closer Settlement Promotion – Homestead Farm 1920/2</td>
<td>Grazing</td>
<td>Portion 77</td>
<td>County of Kennedy, Parish of Mickibi, Land District of Parkes</td>
<td>4 Nov 1920</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>Edward Alexander Draper – 26 Aug 1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRAPER</td>
<td>[10/13274 No. 1585]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Edith WILLIAMS</td>
<td>Gov. Gaz. No 139, 23 Sep 1921, p. 5576 &amp; 5577</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Returned Soldiers’ Special Holding – Suburban Holding</td>
<td>Poultry Farming</td>
<td>Holding area No 534 – RRSH No 1921/2 Portion 435</td>
<td>County of Cumberland, Parish of Sutherland, Metropolitan Land District</td>
<td>26 Sep 1921</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>To Julia Bradley 16 May 1951</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Mary Redfern</td>
<td>[12/7508 No. 8490]</td>
<td>New Myton Estate</td>
<td>Closer Settlement Promotion – Settlement Purchase</td>
<td>Wheat, grains, hay and dairying</td>
<td>SP 1920/5</td>
<td>County of Gordon, Parish of Dubbo, Land District of Dubbo</td>
<td>1 Feb 1920 by JM Watt</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WATT</td>
<td>[10/37108 No. 241]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Ida Mary GARVEN</td>
<td>[10/37122 No. 988]</td>
<td>Reynold’s (2) Farm</td>
<td>Closer Settlement Promotion – Settlement Purchase 1920/15</td>
<td>Grazing – sheep previously</td>
<td>Portions 37-42, 45, 205</td>
<td>County of Buckland, Parishes of Coopolly &amp; Borambil, Land District of Tamworth</td>
<td>8 Jan 1920</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>Ida’s Settlement Purchase was next to that of her husbands. Both SPs were forfeited on the 28 Aug 1925.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Hilda Hope</td>
<td>[10/37162 No. 2609]</td>
<td>Stevenson’s (2) Farm</td>
<td>Closer Settlement Promotion</td>
<td>Used for Grazing or potatoes previously</td>
<td>Portions 260-263, 266, 268,289-1, 285-7,288.</td>
<td>County of Hardinge, Parish of Eldersbury, Land District of Armidale</td>
<td>25 Feb 1920</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCM HAUGH</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Alice Joan</td>
<td>[10/37120 No. 827]</td>
<td>Emery’s Farm</td>
<td>Closer Settlement Promotion – Settlement Purchase</td>
<td>Grazing – sheep</td>
<td>Portions 7,17,19,50,73,1 06,110,115, 118,119, 153,154</td>
<td>County of Georgiana, Parish of Bubalahla, Land District of Goulburn</td>
<td>Abt July 1919</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWYNHAM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Farm Type</th>
<th>Promotion</th>
<th>County, Parish, Land District</th>
<th>Applied Date</th>
<th>No. of Acres</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Elsie Caroline</td>
<td>[10/37139 No. 1602] McIntyre’s (2) Farm</td>
<td>Closer Settlement Promotion</td>
<td>Formerly ACP 13.41</td>
<td>County of Kennedy, Parish of Mickibi, Land District of Parkes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>202 acres</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mary Standish</td>
<td>[10/13315 No. 2525] Small’s (3) Farm</td>
<td>Closer Settlement Promotion</td>
<td>Squab Farming</td>
<td>County of Cumberland, Parish of Gordon, Land District Metropolitan</td>
<td>Applied 19 Feb 1920</td>
<td>No 1 acre</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ida May GRAHAM</td>
<td>[10/37172 No. 3216] [10/13340 No. 3216] Moore’s (8) Estate</td>
<td>Closer Settlement Promotion</td>
<td>Squab Farming – 1st case</td>
<td>County of Arrawatta, Parish of Champagne, Land District of Inverell</td>
<td>Applied 10 Jan 1921</td>
<td>Yes 277 acres</td>
<td>On Ida’s death her husband applied to have her land transferred to him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Emma Mary DUFFY</td>
<td>[10/37158 No. 2427] [10/13310 No. 2427] Evan’s (2) Farm</td>
<td>Closer Settlement Promotion</td>
<td>Squab Farming – Part of Portion</td>
<td>County of Cumberland, Parish of Field of Mars, Land District Metropolitan</td>
<td>Applied 16 Jan 1920</td>
<td>No 2 acres</td>
<td>but declared to be a residential site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Irene Charlotte UNDERWOOD</td>
<td>[19/7032] Rotherfield Estate</td>
<td>Closer Settlement Promotion</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>County of Pottinger, Parish of Rodd and Springfield, Land District of Murrundi</td>
<td>Prior to 1923</td>
<td>Unsure 2167 ½ acres, comprising 997 ½ acres freehold, 120 acres CP and 1050 Cond. Lease</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Evelyn Maud Reid</td>
<td>Certificate of Title Vol. 3084 Folio 144</td>
<td>Dawn 221 Vimiera Road, Eastwood, -</td>
<td>Strawberry farming</td>
<td>Eastwood, Field of Mars, County of Cumberland</td>
<td>5 Aug 1920</td>
<td>Yes 2 ½ acres</td>
<td>Land transferred from George Maddox - originally a Crown Grant – Dept of Lands Foreclosed in 1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Margaret Ellen GOGGIN</td>
<td>[10/37158 No.2413] [12/7023 No. 4500] Hooper’s (2) Vimiera Road, Eastwood, NSW</td>
<td>Closer Settlement Promotion</td>
<td>Property at time of purchase? Contained strawb.&amp; flowers</td>
<td>Eastwood, Field of Mars, County of Cumberland</td>
<td>Abt. Apr 1920</td>
<td>No 2 ½ acres</td>
<td>Referral given in Loan file to ‘Sister E.M. Reid’s Case’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Name and Surname</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Lot 75 of DP plan 2949</td>
<td>Date (DD/MM/YYYY)</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Area (Acres)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>187</td>
<td>Alice Beatrice EARLE</td>
<td>Shea’s (2) Farm Settlement</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>31 Oct 1917</td>
<td>Property transferred from Marian Gould</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>188</td>
<td>Julia Bligh JOHNSTON</td>
<td>Ghezeriah Port</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>23 Oct 1917</td>
<td>Two roods</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>189</td>
<td>Edith Danson RUSH</td>
<td>South Creek, Dee</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7 Dec 1940</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>190</td>
<td>Esther Edith COGGINS</td>
<td>Vimiera Road, Eastwood</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>April 1920</td>
<td>Close Settlement Promotion</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>191</td>
<td>Florence Josephine REARDON</td>
<td>Mungery SP Area</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Close Settlement Promotion</td>
<td>1540</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>192</td>
<td>Millicent Sylvia ARMSTRONG</td>
<td>Watson’s (4) Watson’s (7) Watson’s (7)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>193</td>
<td>Marion Isabel Bingham BROUGHTON</td>
<td>Hutson’s Estate Dinton Vale Estate</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19/7/1919</td>
<td>Settlement Promotion</td>
<td>437</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>194</td>
<td>Penelope FRATER</td>
<td>Umzinkulu Princes Highway</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Poultry Lots 1 &amp; 2 Sec 14 DP Plan 801</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Block</td>
<td>Parish</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Owned?</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Nellie Veri SCOTT</td>
<td>Red Cliffs Estate - Dried fruit</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Block No 267</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mildura</td>
<td>1 Jul</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dried fruit - sultanas, currents, Muscatels - packed fresh grapes for market in Melbourne.</td>
<td>Frank’s block was No 428</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1921</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Amy Alice SIMPSON</td>
<td>Derrinallum, Vic</td>
<td>Dairy farm</td>
<td>Parish of Sandhurst</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>48 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Beulah Rotherdale MCMINN</td>
<td>Purchased from State Rivers and Water Commission</td>
<td>Station Road, Narr Warren.</td>
<td>Parish of Irrewarra?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Epsom Road, Chiltern, Vic</td>
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She owned the Block until her death.
##Appendix 2

###BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF NURSES

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date of birth</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Died</th>
<th>Age at Death</th>
<th>Cause of death</th>
<th>Place of death</th>
<th>Enlist.</th>
<th>Left Australia</th>
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<td>1 Elizabeth Helen DRAPER</td>
<td>28 Feb 1882</td>
<td>No Mistake, near Parkes NSW</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>19 Oct 1974</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>Cerebral thrombosis</td>
<td>Scottish Hospital, Paddington, NSW</td>
<td>20 Mar 1915</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>19 Sep 1951</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>Congestive Cardiac failure</td>
<td>Princes Hwy Sutherland, NSW</td>
<td>3 Nov 1915</td>
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<td>Orsova 10 Nov 1915</td>
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<td>22 Feb 1963</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>Myocardial degeneration arteriosclerosis</td>
<td>Alexandria Convalescent Hospital, Lawson, NSW</td>
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<td>102</td>
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<td>Parkes, New South Wales</td>
<td>Sep 1914</td>
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<td>July 1964</td>
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<td>Cause of Death</td>
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<td>Melbourne, Vic</td>
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<td>Myocardial Degeneration Heart Failure</td>
<td>221 Vimiera Rd, Eastwood, NSW</td>
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<td>Warwick, QLD</td>
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<td>Queanbeyan, NSW</td>
<td>1915 V.A.D.</td>
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<td>Allambie Nursing Home, Tamworth</td>
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<td>15 Jun 1975</td>
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<td>Edmund Frank</td>
<td>14 May 1959</td>
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<td>Frederick Smith</td>
<td>8 May 1951</td>
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<td>Charles Daniell</td>
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<td>81</td>
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<td>26 Jul 1967</td>
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A settler’s home at Red Cliffs – c1926
(Dept. of Primary Industries, Victoria)