

# Kathleen Devine (1884 – 1947)

# Maysie Devine (1893 - 1966)

**Sisters Kathleen and Maysie Devine enlisted together and were both posted to the same hospital in Bombay, nursing British soldiers. Thereafter their paths diverged. Maysie met and married a British doctor. Post-war Kathleen continued her nursing career, specialising in infant health.**



Kathleen and Maysie Devine grew up in Geelong. Kathleen was the eldest and Maysie was the second youngest of eight children.

Following the completion of Maysie's nursing studies, the two sisters enlisted on the same day. They were both posted to the Colaba War Hospital in Bombay, now Mumbai, which mainly treated patients from the British garrisons in India.

After serving for seventeen months, Maysie married Dr William Lawrence O'Neill of the Royal Army Medical Corps and her appointment with the Australian Imperial Force was consequently terminated. The couple moved to Britain and they started a family.

Kathleen was posted to the Hospital Ship 'Ellora' where she served in the Persian Gulf for five months.

Following the war Kathleen continued her nursing career in Melbourne, undertaking specialist study in infant welfare. In the 1940s, she was the Sister presiding over the Tweddle Hospital for Babies and the School of Mothercraft in Footscray. This organisation still exists today in the form of the Tweddle Child and Family Health Service, providing early parenting services across multiple sites in Victoria.

Another member of the Devine family played an important role in the development of St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne. Hugh Berchmans Devine, a cousin to the sisters, was a prominent Melbourne surgeon. The high quality of his work, and others, added to the hospital's reputation for clinical excellence and gave impetus to the hospital's affiliation with the University of Melbourne as a clinical school. Devine also played a key role in the establishment of the College of Surgeons of Australasia. Devine was knighted in 1936 and the University Chair of Surgery established at St Vincent's Hospital in 1965 was named after him, the Hugh Devine Chair of Surgery.

#### **Service summary:**

**Kathleen:** Colaba War Hospital (Bombay, India); Hospital Ship 'Ellora'.

**Maysie:** Colaba War Hospital (Bombay, India).

#### **Graduated St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne:**

**Kathleen:** 1913; **Maysie:** 1917

**Enlisted (both):** 1917

**Final rank (both):** Staff Nurse

**Medals (both):** British War Medal

**Image:** Group portrait of bride, groom and guests at the wedding of Staff Nurse Maysie Devine.

**Image source:** Australian War Memorial, P07133.00.

**Story:** SVHM Archives, November 2024.