

# Nancy Guaran (1891 – 1968)

**Nancy Guaran served in hospitals near Salonica in Greece under difficult conditions. Her wider family had strong connections to St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne and St Vincent's Hospital Toowoomba.**

Nancy Guaran was born in Melbourne, the eldest of five children. She attended the Presentation Convent in Windsor.

Nancy's brother, Patrick, a medical student, enlisted at the start of hostilities in August 1914 at the age of 19. As a Lieutenant in the Royal Munster Fusiliers, an Irish regiment, he saw service in Britain, Gallipoli, France, the Middle East and Greece.

Nancy enlisted in May 1917 and embarked on the 'Mooltan' with the first contingent of Australian nurses sent in response to an urgent call from the Britain for nurses needed to expand hospital services on Salonica (now Thessaloniki) in Greece. She narrowly escaped disaster as the 'Mooltan' was torpedoed and sunk by a German submarine near Sardinia in July, just seven days after they had landed safely.

Nancy was posted to No. 66 British General Hospital, a tent hospital at Hortiach, about 20 kilometres from Salonica, nursing British soldiers and Bulgarian prisoners of war. She was then transferred to No. 52 British General Hospital, on the coast, in Kalamaria near the centre of Salonica and now a suburb of Thessaloniki, where she remained for the greater part of the next eighteen months.



Conditions were far from ideal. While ministering to sick and wounded soldiers, Nancy and her fellow nurses contended with poor living conditions, extremes of temperature, threats to their safety from marauders, and with flies, lice, malaria, dysentery and typhus.

Nancy left Greece in early 1919 for leave in Britain. She returned to Australia later in that year.

After her return home Nancy continued her nursing career. She moved temporarily to live and work at Casterton, possibly at the Casterton Hospital which had opened just prior to the war.

While continuing her nursing, in 1932 she took over the victualler's licence of the Post Office Hotel St Kilda from her mother following her death. She retired from nursing in 1942.

There are other connections between Nancy's family and St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne.

Nancy's sister, Rita, married Dr Glen Hickey in 1918. He had been an early graduate, in 1915, of the St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne Clinical School and then member of the Resident Medical Staff. He was later appointed to St Vincent's Hospital Toowoomba, where he played a formative role in the development of that hospital until his retirement.

Their son, Dr Glen Hickey junior, was a 1944 graduate of the St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne Clinical School and was appointed a general clinician at St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne the following year.

**Service summary:** No. 66 BGH (Hortiach, Greece); No. 52 BGH (Kalamaria, Greece).

**Graduation St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne:** 1914

**Enlistment:** 1917

**Final rank:** Staff Nurse

**Medals:** British War Medal, Victory Medal

**Image source:** SVHM Archives, copy of original in family collection

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