

# Veronica Norton (1890 – 1959)

Veronica Norton was posted overseas to hospitals in India and in England. She provided vivid impressions of her experiences in India in expansive letters home which were published in the local newspapers. Veronica received training in music under the AIF Education Scheme. Post-war she moved back to England to marry.



Veronica Norton was born in Sale and attended school at the Convent of Note Dame de Sion in Sale, matriculating in 1906.

Following completion of her nursing training, Veronica worked at the Ballarat District Hospital and then at the Base Hospital, No. 5 Australian General Hospital in St Kilda Road.

Following a call from the Australian Defence Department for trained nurses to enrol to relieve British nurses working in overseas hospitals, Veronica enlisted for overseas service and set sail for India.

Veronica worked at the Cumballa Hill War Hospital, located on a hill overlooking the harbour at Bombay, now Mumbai, and at the Deccan War Hospital in Poona, now Pune, a couple of hours south-east of Bombay. The patients at both hospitals were casualties from the fighting between the British and Turks in Mesopotamia, now Iraq.

Veronica's letters home indicated both her wonder at the new and exotic world she was discovering; and that she was fortunate in receiving postings where the conditions were good and the workload not particularly onerous. In her words - "not anything like as strenuous as at the Base in Melbourne". The realities of war obtruded in references to troops sailing off to the front and the nursing of exchanged prisoners of war. However, there were also detailed accounts of her explorations of the local countryside and attendance at social events during time off duty.

Veronica worked at the Deccan Hospital for two years, despite recurring bouts of malaria.

At the end of 1918, Veronica returned to England, where she worked at the No. 1 Australian Auxiliary Hospital in Harefield, a village on the outskirts of Greater London, and at the No. 1 Australian General Hospital at Sutton Veny, near Salisbury. The convalescing Australian troops at these hospitals were at the further risk from the Spanish influenza.

Awaiting transport back to Australia, Veronica took up the opportunity to pursue further study at the Royal Academy of Music in London. The AIF Education Scheme provided bursaries to members of the AIF, including nurses, for training leading to employment opportunities when they returned to the civilian workforce in Australia.

Veronica arrived back in Australia at the beginning of 1920.

The following year, Veronica returned to England to marry Arthur Mace, of Kent. The couple remained in England.

**Service summary:** 5 AGH (Base Hospital, St Kilda Road, Melbourne); Cumballa Hill War Hospital (Bombay, India); Deccan War Hospital (Poona, India); 1 AAH (Harefield, England); 1 AGH (Sutton Veny, England).

**Graduation St Vincent's Hospital Melbourne:** 1913

**Enlistment:** 1916

**Final rank:** Sister

**Medals:** British War Medal

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