



NSW NURSES AND MIDWIVES' ASSOCIATION **MEDIA RELEASE**

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Queen of Marrickville immortalised in bronze

"It was a terrible cruel night; and one that will stand out in memory all one's life."

A registered nurse, who was the first Australian to be awarded a Royal Red Cross (RRC 1st class) plus the bar for bravery during World War I, will have a bronze statue erected in her honour next to her unmarked grave.

Alice Cashin, who trained at St Vincent's Hospital in Sydney, joined Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service Reserve (QAIMNSR) during the war, serving in Egypt and later aboard the hospital ship, *HMHS Gloucester Castle*, when it was torpedoed by a German U-boat in 1917.

As Matron of the ship at the time, Alice put her patients and nursing sisters first, making sure all 400 wounded were safe on lifeboats before climbing aboard the final one herself. Once picked up by a rescue vessel, Alice continued her work caring for the injured with the limited tools she had, administering pain relief and dressing wounds with olive oil.

NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) General Secretary, Brett Holmes said her bravery and courage was something all nurses and midwives could relate to.

"Nurse Alice was a member of the Australasian Trained Nurses' Association (ATNA), Australia's first nursing association. Her fair values and commitment to caring for the sick underpin the NSWNMA's principles that many of our members connect with strongly," Mr Holmes said.

"Because of this and her extraordinary story, it was important for us to arrange a proper memorial alongside her unmarked grave, to make sure Alice gets the acknowledgement she deserves. Generous support from the NSWNMA, First State Super, St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney, Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps. (QARANC), past NSWNMA General Secretary Patricia Stanton and Tradies Gynea, has allowed us to build a statue of Alice in her full traditional uniform, which will watch over her grave at Woronora Memorial Park."

From May 1917 to July 1919, Alice was in charge of the 400-bed military hospital at Whittingham Barracks, Lichfield, where she was much loved by her patients. She sailed home to Australia to see her father, who was in ailing health, on 18 October 1919.

On her return to Australia, Alice, who was a member of the Marrickville ANZAC Memorial Club, was crowned the Queen of Marrickville. She worked as a sales assistant and died on the 4 November 1939 from chronic nephritis.

Graham Boyd, on behalf of the Southern Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust in NSW, has generously donated the land on which the memorial will stand and is assisting with its build. The bronze statue will be unveiled at Woronora Memorial Park, Sutherland on 11 October, 2016.

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