

Matron McAllister was a tireless servant

Jan Hunter

Charlotte Joan McAllister is best known as matron of Albury Base Hospital.



Charlotte McAllister was long-term matron of Albury Base Hospital. She also served her nation during World War I and II.

Less well known is her service as matron of Heidelberg Military Hospital during World War II. Almost completely unknown is her World War I service with the Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS) in India.

Charlotte McAllister trained as a nurse in Melbourne and in 1916 enlisted as a staff nurse in the AANS, aged 26.

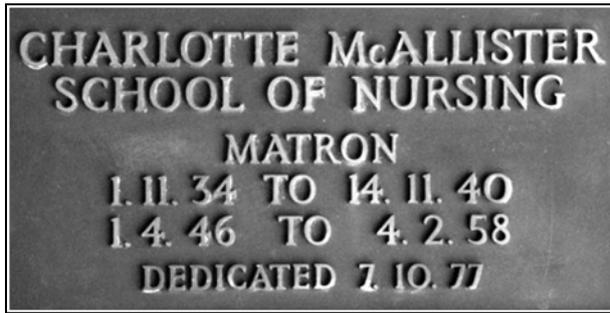
She disembarked at Bombay on January 15, 1917, nursing at Victoria War Hospital before transferring to Waziristan Field Force, North West Frontier, where she served for seven months. She was mentioned in dispatches for her service on the North West Frontier.

She returned to Melbourne following the war and on November 1, 1934 was appointed matron at Albury District Hospital.

On December 2, 1940 she re-enlisted in the AANS and was posted to the newly established 115th Australian General Hospital at Heidelberg, on the outskirts of Melbourne.

In December 1942, she volunteered for overseas service but illness, and in all probability her age (52), precluded her departure for overseas, so she continued as matron of the redesignated 115th Heidelberg Military Hospital until April 26, 1945 when she was placed on the retired list with the rank of lieutenant colonel.

Charlotte McAllister resumed duty as matron of Albury Base Hospital on April 1, 1946.



Albury Base Hospital's School of Nursing was named in the matron's honour.

She was made a Member of the British Empire (MBE) in 1954 for her services to nursing. She was the founder of the Albury Base Hospital Post Graduates' Association, and the hospital's School of Nursing was named in her honour. She retired on February 4, 1958 and moved to Melbourne to care for her sister.

She was accorded a farewell by the City of Albury at which civic, medical and community dignitaries paid tribute to her contribution to Albury and presented her with a silver tea service.

Matron Charlotte McAllister died in Melbourne on March 31, 1987. She was in her 98th year.