

Sutton Veny War Graves



Lest we Forget

World War 1



MATRON

J. M. WALKER, RRC.

AUST. ARMY NURSING SCE.

30TH OCTOBER, 1918 AGE 39

*CWGC Headstone for Matron J. M. Walker is located in
Grave Plot # 15. H. 1. of St. John the Evangelist Churchyard, Sutton Veny*

Jean Miles WALKER / MILES-WALKER

Jean Nellie Miles-Walker was born at Hamilton, Tasmania on 16th November, 1878 to parents Alfred Miles & Louisa Mary Glover Walker (nee Wilkinson). Her birth was registered at Port Sorell, Tasmania as Jean Nellie Walker. (The date of birth recorded on her Attestation Papers was recorded as 16th November, 1879).

Jean Nellie Miles-Walker enrolled at the Collegiate School, Hobart, then trained at Hobart General Hospital from 1903-06.

A reference (not dated) from Molong Private Hospital, Forbes Street, Darlinghurst, Sydney, NSW reads:
“*This is to certify that Miss Jean Miles Walker of Molong Private Hospital is quite competent in all branches of nursing (Being in charge of above hospital) & further that she is in good health & physically for active service. (Sgd Stratford Sheldon).*”

Jean Miles-Walker was a 35 year old, single, Nursing Sister from Tongay, Culwalla Street, Hurstville, NSW when she joined the 2nd Australian General Hospital, Australian Army Nursing Service (A.A.N.S.) on 21st September, 1914 at Ismailia, Egypt. Her religion was Church of England & her next of kin was listed as her mother (father deceased) – Care of A. E. Walker, Tongay, Culwalla Street, Hurstville, NSW. Jean Miles-Walker stated that she had served with A.A.N.S. since 1906.

Nursing Sister Jean Miles-Walker embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Kyarra (A55)* on 28th November, 1914. (Records also state that Jean Miles-Walker embarked on *Euripides* on 20th October, 1914). A note at the foot of the Australian Imperial Force – Nominal Roll (Embarkation Roll) - “*38 Nurses embarked at Melbourne 5th December, 1914.*”

Nursing Sister Jean Miles-Walker left Alexandria & joined M.E.F. (Mediterranean Expeditionary Force) & transferred to Hospital Ships & Transports for duty. She was on duty on Hospital Ship *Gascon* from 2nd September, 1915.

Nursing Sister Jean Miles-Walker was on Dardanelles Transport Duty – she returned & reported for duty on 12th December, 1915.

Nursing Sister Jean Miles-Walker reported for duty & was attached to No. 1 Australian Stationary Hospital at Ismailia on 22nd January, 1916. She was appointed Temporary Matron of No. 1 Australian Stationary Hospital & was to have the Temporary rank of Matron while holding the appointment.

Nursing Sister Jean Miles-Walker joined 15th General Hospital at Alexandria on 4th September for temporary duty. She was “transferred elsewhere” on 25th September, 1916.

Nursing Sister Jean Miles-Walker embarked for U.K on *Karoola* from Alexandria on 25th September, 1916.

Nursing Sister Jean Miles-Walker was mentioned in Despatches on 1st October, 1916. (*London Gazette* – 1 December 1916; *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* – 19 April 1917)

Nursing Sister Jean Miles-Walker was attached to 3rd Australian Auxiliary Hospital at Dartford on 5th October, 1916.

Nursing Sister Jean Miles-Walker was to be Matron at No. 3 Australian Auxiliary Hospital (A.A.H.) on 8th October, 1916.

Matron Jean Miles-Walker was awarded Royal Red Cross 1st Class decoration on 1st January, 1917. The Royal Red Cross is a military decoration awarded in the United Kingdom and Commonwealth for exceptional services in military nursing. Recipients are entitled to use the post-nominal letters “RRC”.

Awarded the Royal Red Cross, 1st Class

The undermentioned lady is awarded the decoration of the Royal Red Cross in recognition of her valuable services with the Armies in the Field:-

Matron JEAN MILES WALKER

(Third Supplement No. 29886 to *London Gazette* – 29 December 1916; *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* – 29 June 1917)



Royal Red Cross 1st Class

Matron Miles-Walker was granted leave on 10th March, 1917 & rejoined from leave on 24th March, 1917.

Matron Miles-Walker was detached from 3rd A.A.H. on 10th July, 1917 & proceeded overseas to No. 5 British Stationary Hospital, France. She reported for duty at Dieppe on 13th July, 1917.

Matron Miles-Walker was to be Matron at No. 3 A.G.H. (Australian General Hospital) at Abbeville & reported for duty on 7th September, 1917.

Matron Miles-Walker proceeded on leave to the south of France on 14th January, 1918 & rejoined 3rd A.G.H. from leave on 6th February, 1918.

Matron Miles-Walker was posted to 5th Stationary Hospital at Abbeville for duty on 24th April, 1918.

Matron Miles-Walker proceeded to report to Administration Headquarters, London from 5th Stationary Hospital on 4th October, 1918.

Matron Miles-Walker was attached to 2nd Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Southall for duty on 6th October, 1918.

Matron Miles-Walker was detached from attached duty with 2nd Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Southall & marched out to No. 1 Group Clearing Hospital at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on 19th October, 1918. Matron Miles-Walker was attached for duty at No. 1 Group Clearing Hospital at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on 19th October, 1918.

Matron Jean Miles-Walker died at 18.00 hrs on 30th October, 1918 at the Military Hospital, Sutton Veny – Sisters Quarters of Influenza Pneumonia.

A death for Jean N. Miles-Walker, aged 38, was registered in the December quarter, 1918 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire.

Matron Jean Miles-Walker was buried at 3 pm on 3rd November, 1918 in St. John the Evangelist Churchyard at Sutton Veny - Grave no. 15. From the burial report of Matron Miles-Walker - *Coffin was polished Elm with heavy brass furnishings – Deceased was buried with full Military Honours, the coffin draped with the Australian flag being borne to the graveside on a Gun Carriage preceded by a Firing Party and Band from the 1st Australian Training Battalion. Six Captains of the A.I.F. supported the Pall. About 40 members of the A.A.N.S. and 30 Officers and 300 N.C.O.'s and Men followed the remains to the graveside. Representatives from Administrative Headquarters, Headquarters A.I.F. Depots in United Kingdom and all A.I.F. Training areas attended the funeral. Numerous wreaths and floral tributes were placed on the grave.*

Matron Jean Miles Walker was entitled to 1914/15 Star, British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Matron Miles-Walker's mother – Mrs Louisa Miles-Walker (Scroll sent August, 1922 which was returned & redespached in December, 1922. Plaque was sent February, 1923). However the Victory Medal was apparently returned to Base Records by Mrs Louisa Miles- Walker as it did not include the "Large oak leaf" that was apparently issued with the medal. Several letters were written back & forth & it appears

that the British War Medal was returned by Mrs Miles-Walker – thinking it was the Victory Medal without the oak leaf.

The CWGC lists Matron Jean Miles Walker, of Australian Army Nursing Service as the daughter of Alfred and Louisa Miles Walker of “Allowah” Dunburra Rd, Bellevue Hill, Sydney. Born in Tasmania. Awarded R R C.

Matron J. M. Walker is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 188.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

Matron Miles Walker RRC is remembered on the 1914-1918 Australian Army Nursing Service Plaque located at Angelsea Barracks Museum, Davey Street, Hobart, Tasmania.



1914-1918 Australian Army Nursing Service Plaque (Photo from Monument Australia – Arthur Garland)

Jean Miles Walker is also remembered on the Collegiate School Honour Roll located in Collegiate Girls School, 218 Macquarie Street, Hobart, Tasmania.



Collegiate School Honour Roll (Photo from Monument Australia – Arthur Garland)

Matron Jean Walker is one of the names remembered on a panel on the Roll of Honour Tablet that is beside the Five Sisters Window in York Minster, Yorkshire, England. The Tablet bears the names of representatives of many associations, services and corps, including Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service, Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service, Women's Royal Air Force, Women's Land Army, and the Canadian, Newfoundland, Australian, New Zealand and Union of South Africa Army Nursing Services.



Five Sisters Window in York Minster

The wooden memorial screen (right) is in the North Transept of York Minster. Each door bears the crest of a regiment and written inside are the names of the women who served in that regiment and were killed during the First World War. The doors can be opened by anyone to view the names inside.

The screen also records that the Five Sisters window in York Minster was restored by women in memory of their fallen comrades. The window is now a memorial to the women who gave their lives in both World Wars.

(125 pages of Matron Jean Miles Walker's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll & Red Cross Wounded & Missing file) & National Archives.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

H19428

Matron Jean Miles-Walker



BIOGRAPHY

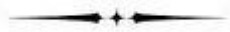
Jean Nellie Miles Walker (1878-1918), nursing sister and army matron, was born on 16 November 1878 at Port Sorell, Tasmania, daughter of Alfred Miles Walker, farmer, and his wife Louisa Mary Glover, née Wilkinson. Privately educated until 1893, she enrolled at the Collegiate School, Hobart, then trained at Hobart General Hospital in 1903-06. Having stayed on as staff nurse and later sister, in 1908 she entered private nursing. In early 1913 she completed six months training in obstetrical nursing at the Women's Hospital, Melbourne, following which she served as matron of private hospitals at Tallangatta, Victoria, and Darlinghurst, Sydney.

Joining the Australian Army Nursing Service Reserve in 1906 and becoming principal matron in 1909 of the 6th Military District (Tasmania), Miles-Walker (as she sometimes styled herself) was one of twenty-five nurses who sailed for Egypt with the Australian Imperial Force in November 1914. After several weeks with the British in Alexandria, she joined her own unit, the 2nd Australian General Hospital, at Mena House, Cairo. During the first rush of wounded from Gallipoli she took charge at Mena House while the matron was at the Ghezireh Palace Hotel, also run by the 2nd A.G.H. 'Never Matron had better assistance', Ellen Gould later wrote of Jean and her counterpart at Ghezireh. From September 1915 to January 1916 Sister Walker worked in the British hospital ship *Gascon* which carried patients from Anzac Cove, Cape Helles, Mudros and Salonika to Malta, Gibraltar, England and Egypt. She was next attached as temporary matron to the 1st Australian Stationary Hospital at Ismailia, Egypt, where wounded from the battle of Romani were treated.

When the 3rd Australian Auxiliary Hospital opened at Dartford, England, in October 1916, she had been promoted matron. In the following July she became matron with the A.A.N.S. staff of the 5th British Stationary Hospital at Dieppe, France; from September 1917 to April 1918 she acted as matron of the 3rd A.G.H. at Abbeville, replacing Grace Wilson. While the allies retreated towards Amiens in April, the hospital was used as a casualty clearing station: its remaining twenty-four nurses cared for some 1800 patients—many of whom were badly wounded—as bombs fell in the area. After a further term at Dieppe, Matron Walker went to London and on 19 October was attached to the 2nd A.A.H. at Southall. When working in the 1st Group Clearing Hospital at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire, she fell ill during the Spanish influenza epidemic.

Jean, who had never married, died of influenza on 30 October 1918 in the British military hospital, Sutton Veny, and was buried in the graveyard of nearby St John's Church. She had been mentioned in dispatches and awarded the Royal Red Cross (1st class) in 1916.

(Australian Dictionary of Biography)



Newspaper Reports

AWARDED ROYAL RED CROSS

Matron Walker was born in Tasmania, and is the daughter of Mrs Miles Walker, formerly of Hobart, and now residing at 7 Woolcott-street, Darlinghurst. She was trained at the General Hospital, Hobart, and later received an appointment at the Melbourne Women's Hospital. From there she became matron at Kallangatta Hospital. Latterly she was sister in charge at a private hospital at Darlinghurst.

Matron Walker left Sydney with the first nurses in October, 1914, and went to Egypt, where she was matron at the Heliopolis Hospital. She was transferred to Malta, and later to France.

She is now in charge of a large military hospital at Dartford, Kent. Her brother resides at Hurstville, and all her sisters are nurses.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW - Wednesday 03 January 1917)

DEATH OF DISTINGUISHED NURSE

News has been received by cable that Matron Jean Miles Walker, youngest daughter of the late Mr Alfred Miles Walker, of Tasmania, and of Mrs Walker, of, Woolcott-st. Darlinghurst, died at Sutton Veny Military Hospital, in England, of bronchial pneumonia, on October 30, after four years of active service. She left Sydney on October 10 1914, on the troopship Euripides, and landed at Alexandria on December 4 of the same year. In Egypt she did duty in various hospitals, and at the beginning of September, 1915, she went on transport duty on H.M.H.S. *Gascon* to Lemnos and Gallipoli. Then Nurse Walker went to Salonica with No. 29 General Hospital. From here she returned to Ghiezireh, and was soon after appointed matron of No. 1 Australian Stationary Hospital, Ismailia, Port Said. This hospital was later removed with its full staff in October, 1916-to Dartford, Kent, as No. 3 Australian General Hospital.

During General Murray's command of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force Nurse Walker was mentioned in despatches for devotion to duty, and was presented by the King in person with the order of the Royal Red Cross on February, 4, 1917. By request of Queen Alexandra, she afterwards attended at Marlborough House. In July, 1917, she received orders to take up duty at No. 5 Stationary Hospital, B.E.F., at Dieppe, and in the following month she was promoted to No. 3 A.G.H., B.E.P., Abbeville, France. In March, 1918, she returned to her old hospital at Dieppe, and from there she went to England, where she died. She was a sister of Mr A.E. Walker, of Hurstville.

(*The Sydney Morning Herald*, NSW - Wednesday 25 December 1918)

DISTINGUISHED NURSE'S FUNERAL

A description of the funeral of Matron Jean Miles Walker, of Sydney who died in England after four years of very distinguished service, has been sent to his parents in Goulburn by Lieut. A. Carver, who writes from Heytesbury, Wiltshire:-

Last week the matron of the hospital at Sutton Veney a camp a couple of miles from here died of this Influenza that's getting about. We arranged to supply the gun carriage and horses to bear the coffin from the R.B.A.A. The funeral took place this afternoon. We had three officers driving and two cadets as brakes men on the limber. I happened to be one of them. We moved off from Sutton Veney at the slow march a terrible thing for horses to keep up and we did the mile to the church in just under an hour. The two brakesmen walked behind the gun carriage, and walking along side me was Captain Jacks, the Australian V.C. and M.C. and bar. The road was lined with thousands of Australians, and it made the funeral ceremony even more impressive to see the way every man came up to the salute as the coffin passed - even little kiddies about 6 years old, seeing all the soldiers doing it, solemnly did the same. About 100 officers and 200 men attended, besides many others who came along, apart from the actual column at the slow march. I'm glad I had the privilege of going - it was most Impressive.

(*The Sydney Morning Herald*, NSW - Monday 30 December 1918)

THE LATE MATRON WALKER

Letters giving particulars of the death of Miss Miles Walker, R.R.C., shortly after her appointment as matron of the Australian Military Hospital at Sutton Veny, Wilts, England, and containing many expressions of regret, have been received by her mother, Mrs Miles Walker, of 7 Woolcott-street, Darlinghurst. Miss Walker received her important appointment on account of her exceptional administrative ability.

A letter from Sister Violet Aitken, who was with Nurse Walker, says that she died of septic pneumonia, following influenza. Her illness was the very first time that she had been off duty in four years, which was something to be proud of. Describing the funeral the sister says; "It was a full officers' funeral, and very widely attended. The coffin was borne on a gun-carriage covered with a Union Jack. There were about 200 officers present and thousands of men. People came from far and wide to do her honour. It was a wonderful sight to see all the Australians standing at the salute while the coffin, which was borne by six officers from the church to the graveside, was passing. A

volley was fired over the grave, and thousands of Australian soldiers stood at the salute while the 'Last Post' was sounded. The service was taken by one of our own padres whom the matron knew and liked. The flowers were beautiful."

(*The Sydney Morning Herald*, NSW – Saturday 11 January, 1919)

NURSES' MEMORIAL

LONDON APPEAL

Twenty-four members of the Australian nursing service either died or were killed on active service during the war. Their names are included in a list of Dominion nurses who made the supreme sacrifice, forwarded by the Committee of the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital Extension Fund in London to the Premier. The extension is to be a memorial to those women of the Dominions.

The committee suggests that if 10,000 hostesses in the Empire give a gift tea party—a dance, bridge, whist, or competition tea—to a few friends, asking them to do the same, a large proportion of the sum required to complete the extension of the hospital would be found.

The Australian nurses whose names are on the list are:- Matron J. M. Walker, R.R.C; Sisters H. M. Knox, E. A. Moorhouse, N.V. Mowbray, G. E. Munro, K. L. Porter, F. I. C. Tyson, B. Williams; Staff Nurses L. A. Bicknell, E. Clare, R. Dickinson, M. Hennesey, L. G. Moreton, A. V. O'Grady, R. O'Kane, K. Power, D. A. Ridgway, E. Rothery, A. M. Thompson, M. F. Stafford, B. M. Watson; and Voluntary Workers A. Brennan, Rignall, L.B., and L. Grant.

On the same list are the names of 60 Canadian women, 15 New Zealanders, four South Africans, one woman from India and three members of the overseas nursing association.

(*The Queenslander*, Brisbane, Qld – Saturday 9 May, 1925)

MEMORIAL SERVICE

EMPIRE ARMY SISTERS

The women of Melbourne yesterday paid a tribute to the memory of the women of the Empire who laid down their lives in the great war at a service held in St. Paul's Cathedral yesterday. This service was arranged to coincide with the service at which the Duchess of York would unveil after restoration the Five Sisters Window in York Minster. A roll of honor tablet has been placed beside the window bearing the names of representatives of many associations, services and corps, including Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service, Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service, Women's Royal Air Force, Women's Land Army, and the Canadian, Newfoundland, Australian, New Zealand and Union of South Africa Army Nursing Services. A panel of the tablet contains the following names of the Australian Army Nursing Service, Australian Imperial Forces: — Matron Jean Walker., R.R.C.; Sister Hilda Knox, Sister Edith Moorhouse, Sister Norma Mowbray, Sister Gertrude Munro, Sister Kathleen Porter, R.R.C; Sister Fanny Tyson, Sister Blodwyn Williams, Staff Nurse Louisa N. Bicknell, Staff Nurse Emily Clare, Staff Nurse Ruby Dickinson, Staff Nurse May Hennessey, Staff Nurse Letitia Moreton, Staff Nurse Amy O'Grady, Staff Nurse Rosa O'Kane. Staff Nurse Kathleen Power, Staff Nurse Doris Ridgway, Staff Nurse Elizabeth Rothery, Staff Nurse Mary Stafford, Staff Nurse Ada Thompson, Staff Nurse Beatrice Watson; Miss Adele Brennan, Miss Lydia Grant, Miss L. B. Riggall, V.A.D.'s.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria – Thursday 25 June, 1925)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Defence Department, in 1920/21, contacted the next of kin of the deceased World War 1 soldiers to see if they wanted to include a personal inscription on the permanent headstone at St. John the Evangelist Churchyard at Sutton Veny. Space was reserved for 66 letters only (with the space between any two words to be counted as an additional letter) & the rate per letter was around 3 ½ d (subject to fluctuation).

The expense in connection for the erection of permanent headstones over the graves of fallen soldiers was borne by the Australian Government.

(Information obtained from letters sent to next of kin in 1921)

Matron Jean Miles Walker does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.



War Graves at Sutton Veny *(Photos from CWGC)*



Photo of Matron J. M. Walker's CWGC headstone in St. John the Evangelist's Churchyard, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire.



(Photo courtesy of David Milborrow)