

My story of Aunt, Clarice Isobel Halligan

By her niece, Lorraine Clarice Curtis (nee Halligan) born on 6th January, 1943, when the family thought Clarice was possibly a prisoner of war.



LIEUT. CLARICE ISOBEL HALLIGAN – VFX47776

EARLY LIFE IN MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

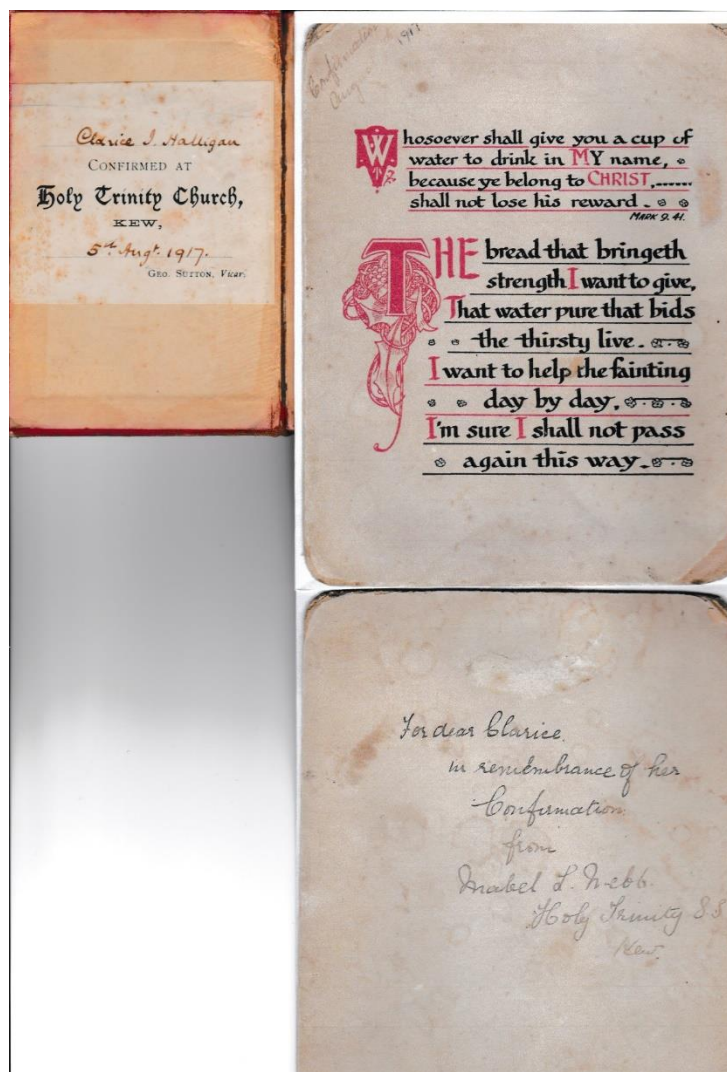
Clarice Isobel Halligan was born in Ballarat, Victoria, in 1904, the third daughter of Joseph Patrick Halligan (22 yrs) and Emily Watson Chalmers (17yrs) who were married in Ballarat on 11th May, 1898. They had eight children altogether, 30/8/1899 Violet May (Chalmers), 2/7/1900 Minnie Margaret (Davenport), 17/9/1904 Clarice Isobel (Halligan), 12/9/1906 James Joseph Gordon, 9/3/1910 Jessie Chalmers (Piggott), 11/7/1913 John William, 1/11/1915 Winifred Elaine Emily (Rylah) and on 24/4/1918, Wallace Robert.

She was the first of the siblings to die, on 16th February 1942, at the age of 37years.

Joseph Patrick Halligan, started work at Ballarat Brewery and left to join Abbotsford Brewery, in Melbourne. The family at that time lived in a lovely Victorian House in the grounds of the Brewery in Abbotsford. Later on, they all moved to 167 Derby Street, Kew. (First photo in black and white) is of the house in a deteriorating situation after Clarice's brother James Joseph Gordon (a bachelor) finally moved out in his older years. Second coloured photo is after it was sold and renovated. It still stands in 2017.



Joseph rented stables in a back block, where a horse and jinker were kept for travel around Melbourne and for Joseph to get to work in East Melbourne. The children had a carefree childhood and played down at the Yarra River in Kew, where they swam and bought ice cream from a punt on the River. They all went to school in Kew. They also went for escapades into the expansive grounds of the Kew Mental Asylum, which was forbidden of course. The first daughter Violet, married young, to a dashing cousin, Lieut Chester Chalmers, a returned soldier, who lived at "Devon" in Deniliquin, which was later turned into a lucrative sheep station. From then onwards, all the family went up north for family holidays, Emily to help her daughter Violet through the birth of her children, and the other siblings for holidays.



2. Confirmed at Holy Trinity Church Kew – dated 5th August 1917

3. **Australian Nursing Federation CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION – Dated 3rd October, 1929** To certify that **Clarice Isobel Halligan**, No 4969, who in October, 1924 completed the prescribed course of Training at Melbourne Hospital, After examination, been admitted to Membership of the Australian Nursing Federation as a General Nurse.



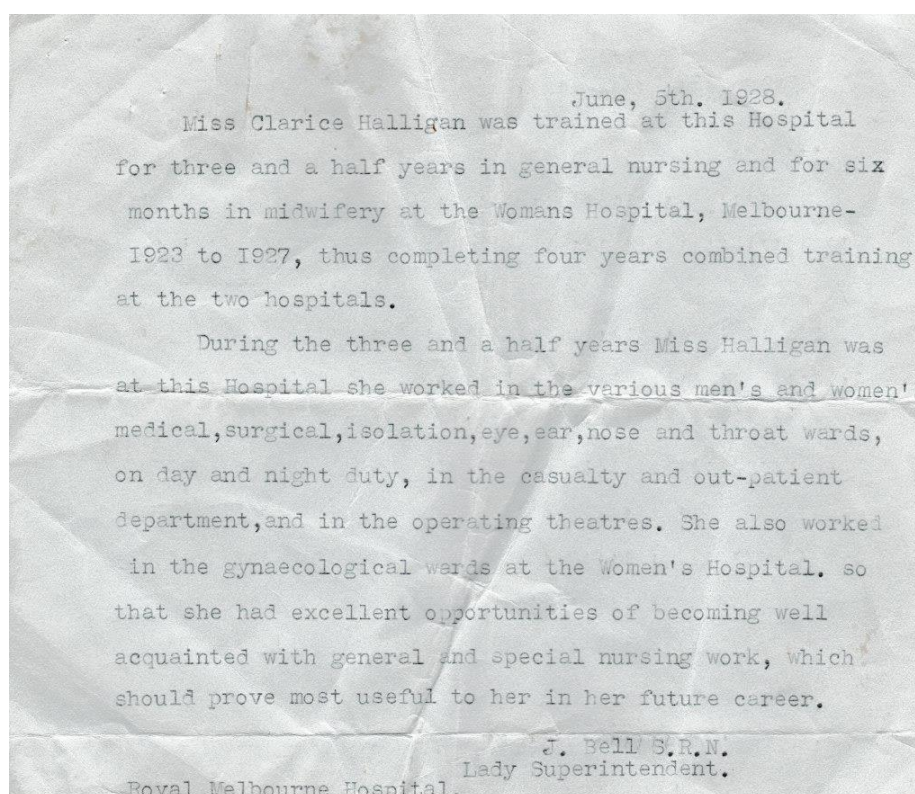
4. **Australian Nursing Federation CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION – Dated 3rd October, 1929** – to certify that **Clarice Isobel Halligan**, No. 4970, who in October, 1927, completed the prescribed course of Training at Womens' Hospital has, after examination, been admitted to Membership of the Australian Nursing Federation as an Obstetric Nurse.



5. Certificate from The Melbourne Hospital and Women's Hospital Melbourne (combined training school for Nurses). Dated 3rd October, 1927.

To certify that **Clarice Isobel Halligan** had been trained at these Hospitals for three and a half years in Medical, Surgical and Nursing and six months in Midwifery.

6. Type written record of service from J.Bell R.R.N. Lady Superintendent, Royal Melbourne Hospital, - Dated 5th June, 1928 recording that Clarice worked for three and a half years at this hospital in various men's and women's, medical, surgical, isolation, eye, ear, nose and throat wards, on day and night duty, in the casualty and out-patient department, and in the operating theatres. She also worked in the gynaecological wards at the Women's hospital. So that she had excellent opportunities of becoming well acquainted with general and special nursing work, which should prove most useful to her in her career.



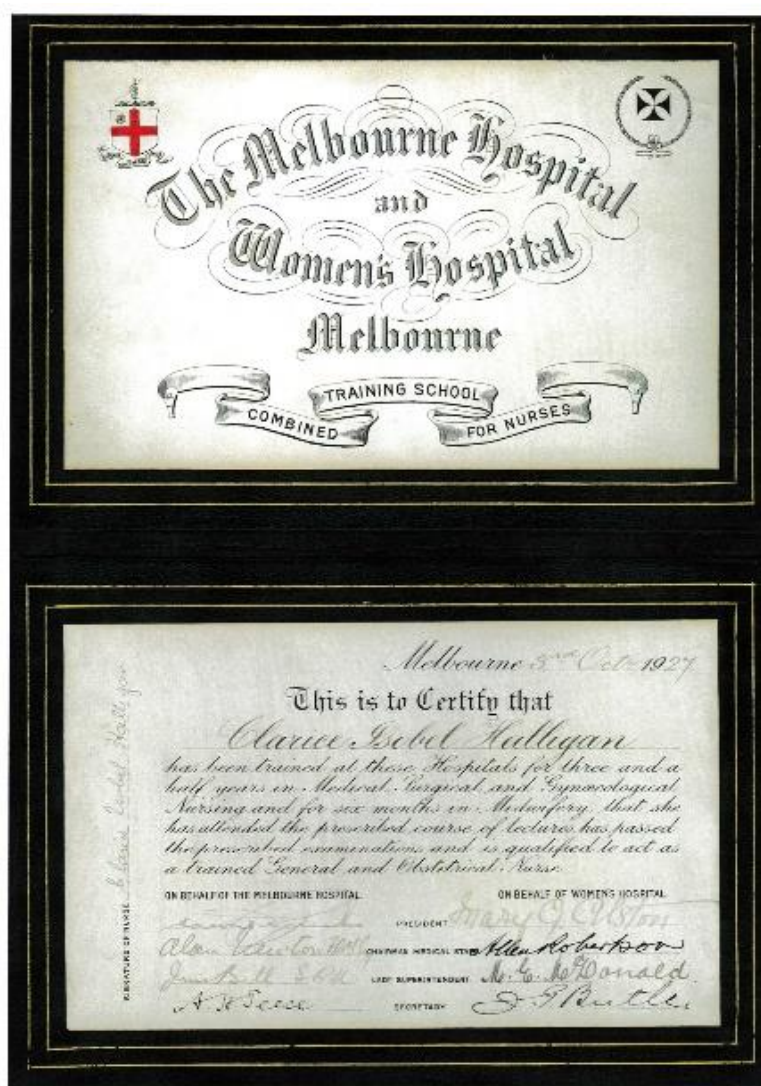
June, 5th. 1928.

Miss Clarice Halligan was trained at this Hospital for three and a half years in general nursing and for six months in midwifery at the Womans Hospital, Melbourne- 1923 to 1927, thus completing four years combined training at the two hospitals.

During the three and a half years Miss Halligan was at this Hospital she worked in the various men's and women's medical, surgical, isolation, eye, ear, nose and throat wards, on day and night duty, in the casualty and out-patient department, and in the operating theatres. She also worked in the gynaecological wards at the Women's Hospital. so that she had excellent opportunities of becoming well acquainted with general and special nursing work, which should prove most useful to her in her future career.

J. Bell B.R.N.
Lady Superintendent.
Royal Melbourne Hospital.

7. LEATHERBOUND CERTIFICATE FROM THE MELBOURNE HOSPITAL AND WOMEN'S HOSPITAL MELBOURNE, TRAINING SCHOOL COMBINED FOR NURSES DATED 3 OCTOBER, 1927



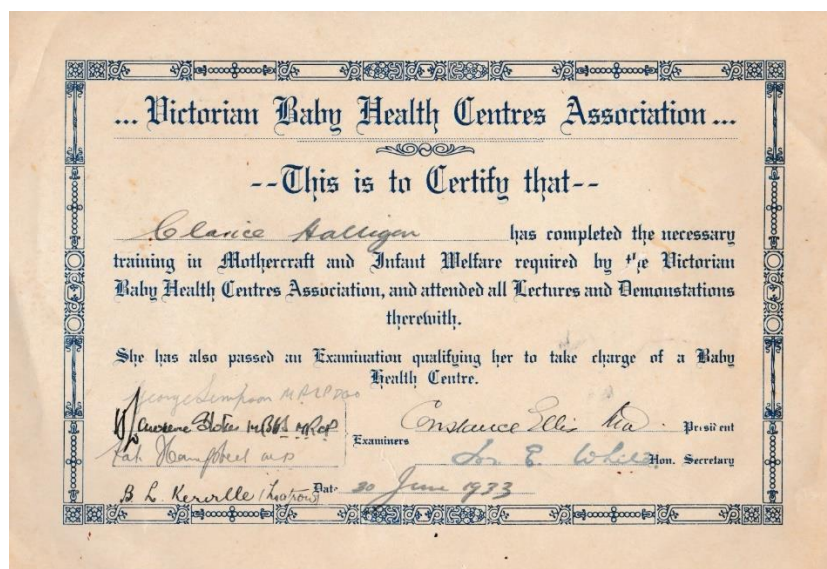
8. St Margaret's Trained Nurses' home, 361 Church Street, Richmond, dated 22 April, 1931, stating that Sister Clarice Halligan was a non-resident member from October 1929 – February 1930.

St. Margaret's Trained Nurses' Home
 361 Church Street
 Richmond, E. 1
 22nd April 1931

Permae food to be
 T. J. 3348

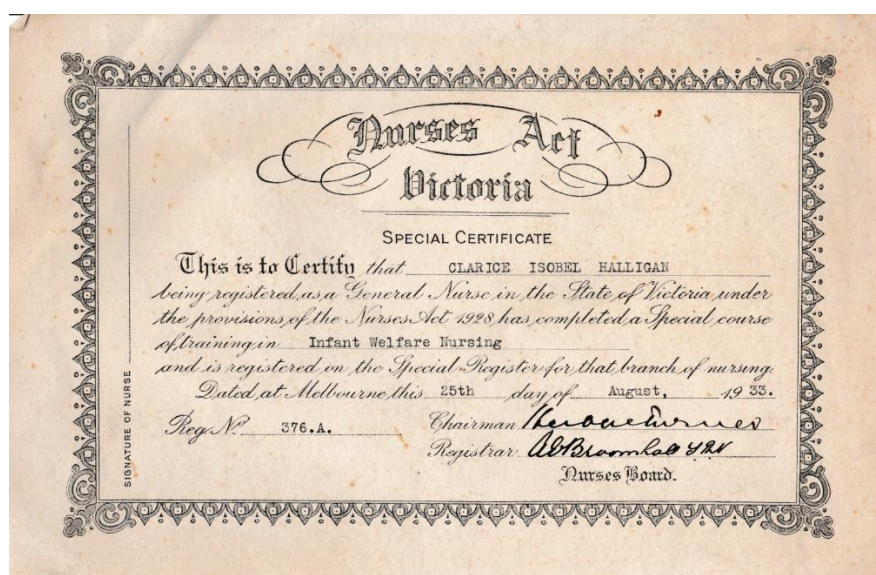
Sister Clarice Halligan was a
 Non-Resident member here
 from Oct. 1929 - Feb. 1930
 I have pleasure in stating
 that I held Sister in high esteem
 for her permae character and
 nursing qualities.
 Sister resigned from the Home
 leupnairp & I was unable to
 v. appnd. her later when she
 was free again, but I have
 heard of her from her since
 Feb 1930 & can testify to her
 continued good work and

9. **VICTORIAN BABY HEALTH CENTRES ASSOCIATION** Certificate – dated 30th June, 1933, This is to Certify that **Clarice Halligan** has completed the necessary training in Mothercraft and Infant Welfare required by the Victorian Baby Health Centres Association, qualifying her to take charge of a Baby Health Centre.



10. **NURSES ACT VICTORIA – SPECIAL CERTIFICATE – DATED 25th August, 1933**

To Certify that **Clarice Isobel Halligan** No 376.A., being registered as a General Nurse in the State of Victoria under the provision of the Nurses Act 1928 has completed a Special course of training in Infant Welfare Nursing.



11. SOUTH AUSTRALIA – NURSES REGISTRATION ACT, 1920 – MIDWIFE'S
CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION – DATED 2ND MARCH, 1938,

To certify that [Clarice Isobel Halligan](#) was Registered as a Midwife by the Nurses' Board of South Australia, and that the prescribed fee of Ten Shilling and Sixpence has been duly received for such Registration.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

NURSES REGISTRATION ACT, 1920. (FORM 5).

MIDWIFE'S

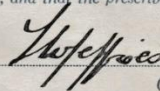
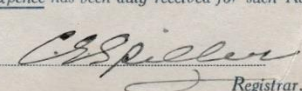
Certificate of Registration.

Registrar's Office,
C/o Inspector-General of Hospitals' Office,
Adelaide.

CERTIFICATE No. 1906

NAME.	ADDRESS	DATE OF REGISTRATION.	QUALIFICATIONS.
HALLIGAN, Clarice Isobel	167 Derby Street, KEW, VICTORIA.	2.3.1938	Women's Hospital, Melbourne Victorian Registration Certificate

Certified that the above-mentioned person was Registered as a Midwife by the Nurses' Board of South Australia on the date specified herein, and that the prescribed fee of Ten Shillings and Sixpence has been duly received for such Registration.

 Chairman.
  Registrar.

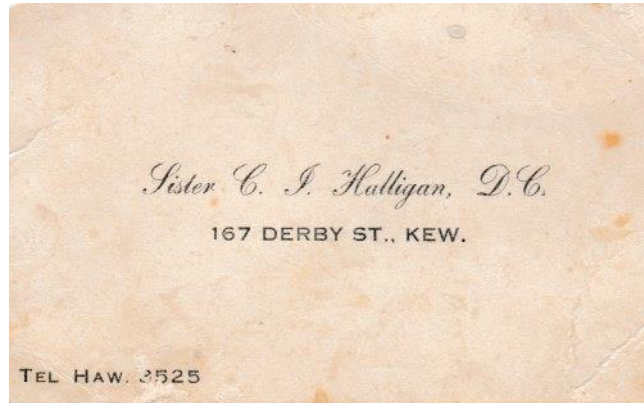
NOTE.—Registration must be renewed before the 31st day of December each year.

Signature of person registered.

12. [Drivers Licence](#) – [Clarice](#) owned and drove a convertible Ford, which was driven by members of her family when she was overseas. I have a photo of my father, John William (her brother) in the driver's seat. In fact, in one letter whilst in Malaya, she asked about her car.

NURSING CAREER

1. Her Calling Card –



2. Clarice worked for three and a half years at the Royal Melbourne Hospital



3. Clarice as a young woman (no date on back of photo)

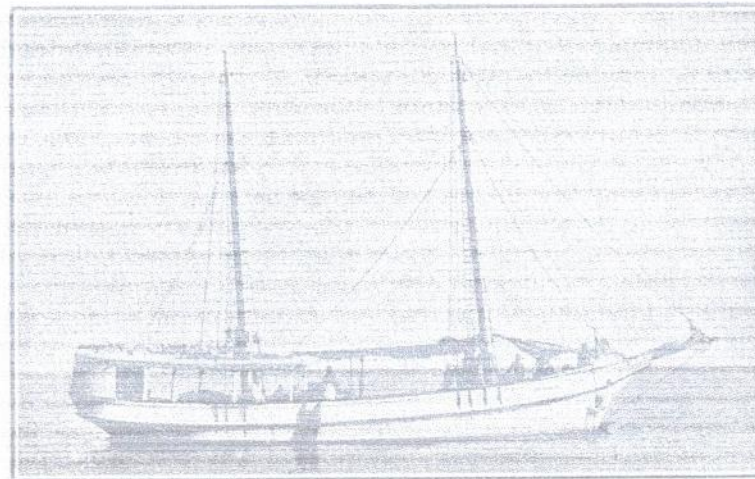
4. **DOGURA, PAPUA NEW GUINEA - 31.07.1934** (DIARY written in pencil in the middle of a text book owned her youngest brother, Wallace Robert Halligan's written school work, from the time he attended Melbourne Grammar School, in St. Kilda Road, Melbourne. Paper was obviously in short supply in New Guinea and lead pencils as well. It is assumed that she may have written many Diaries which were mistakenly thrown out by relatives who didn't know that hidden in between school work were diaries. This is an extract from one which survived.

"As you probably know I am one of the newer missionaries, having landed in Papua on the last day of July, 1934. Port Moresby of Hanua Bada being my first introduction to the New Guinea native and to a native village, was so full of surprises that I am afraid I did not take in much that day. We landed about 4.00pm, hundreds of small boys swimming round the ship looking like frogs as they dived for money which some of the white people threw to them. I went to the other side of the ship, and there were dozens of large puffing dirty natives unloading the cargo. The native in Port Moresby has been rather spoiled by the white tourist throwing money to them. They then set out for Samarai, which is like a dream, so beautiful at first sight, that one is left gasping.Four a.m. we left in pitch dark, rain coming down in sheets, so cold that I had to fish out my top coat. The sea so high that it was impossible for the "Maclaren King" to come onto the wharf, so we went out to her in a mission dinghy. I thought my last day had come when we stood on her hind legs several times before we got to the "Mac". After gingerly picking our way through the small group of islands, found our way into the open sea. So started our eighty odd mile trip round the tail end of Papua.By this time we had turned the corner and headed into Milne Bay, which is supposed to be the deepest and the most dangerous sea in the world, but apart from nasty looking sharks that we could see, and a toss and a roll now and then nothing happened to give us a pang of fear. We passed Taupota and then onto Laronai, where all the missionaries lived, then on to Wamira, the next port of call and onto Weadawand the end of my journey."...

Weadaw lies flat on the sea shore, the village very small, has a population of about 200.....Then she goes on to describe village life, with dogs, pigs sharing the houses, and very often the baby pigs share the human milk with the baby of the house, and it is one of the reasons why a native will never eat his own pigs. Faro is the main food for the village, a rather grey stodgey root vegetable, and also sweet potatoes, pumpkins, corn and yams. Men wear a strip of banana or pandanas leaf, but most of them wear a strip of calico tied around the waist. Girls and women wear skirts made from the leaves of pandanas. They are a cheerful mob and have no fear of the white people.....Clarice meets a retired Teacher who has been in Papua for 30 years, who is crippled with arthritis and nearly blind. The school has 116 boys and 35 girl boarders, some come from hundreds of miles away. All clean and neat in their blue school "Aras" as the native dress is called. They attend school until 12.30pm then lunchtime. They play football or cricket then in the afternoon school until 3.30pm, when there is another parade to the hospital. Then there are pages of life in the village. They are 80 miles across the sea from any store, and a boat every six weeks if we are lucky. It is a case of living on yesterday's meal, but we all look healthy enough, so it is not as bad after all.....

Our work progress is slowly but surely, but we are hampered by the lack of money, workers and sickness of some of our numbers. There are thousands of people in the mountains who have never been touched, and they are crying out for missionaries to go into them, but there is nobody to go in.

The mission stations along the coast are Taupota, Laronia, Lamira, Dogura, Baranari and Mukawa [where the houses are built high up in the air on long posts, because the crocodiles wander about.] The whole place is on a swamp. In a report I obtained from the Anglican Board of Mission-Australia Ltd, The New Guinea Mission (Papua) — dated Year ending December 31st, 1936, Clarice Isobel Halligan is mentioned, and the report said that there had been 29,258 Out Patients at the hospital in Dogura, many serious cases of blackwater fever, pneumonia, fractures of limbs, fractures of skulls (usually from village fights) and lacerations by wild pigs, and so on. Clarice and the other nurses must have been very busy. Also it was mentioned "that the yacht the MacLaren-King travelled ten thousand miles in 1935 alone, and has been as reliable as ever."



THE "MACLAREN-KING."

The only known photo of [Clarice](#) in Papua New Guinea. With an unknown man and native children, described as "Up the side of Mt. Pati Pati, 1,000 ft, pronounced "passi passi"



There are five pages in total of this diary and I am more than happy to send copies to anyone who had relatives living over there. (Lorraine Curtis – alcurtis@bigpond.net.au)

5. From stories told to us by relatives, [Clarice](#) worked in Melbourne for the Grey Sisters, an order of Anglican sisters who looked after poor people in Abbotsford. She then went to Neerim South as the Matron of the local hospital, where her mother and father went down to meet the Doctor who was thinking of marrying [Clarice](#). But for one reason or another they deemed him unsuitable for marriage to their daughter. Something wrong with his foot! - maybe what used to be called a "club foot". This is where she worked while awaiting a call up for the Army Nursing Service. She originally wanted to serve in the Middle East, but was posted to Singapore instead.

BACK HOME IN KEW, MELBOURNE

1. VFX47776 LIEUT. CLARICE ISOBEL HALLIGAN, A.I.F. 2/10 GENERAL HOSPITAL, AUSTRALIAN ARMY NURSING SERVICE. (CLARICE ENROLLED ON 11.7.1940)

The only evidence of her being trained for the Army, is a little poem, written about the Nurses in Seymour Victoria, by an unknown writer about the Seven Sisters of the Seymour C.D.S. Unfortunately, the last paragraph about the seventh Nurse has been lost. But later on, when I read [Vivian Bullwinkel's](#) book "Bullwinkel" I discovered "Vivian took a phone call from the Army, instructing her to report at 1430 hours on the following Monday and to be prepared to board a train at 1900 hours for the Military Training Camp at Puckapunyal. Puckapunyal was set amongst the rolling hills of countryside Victoria. Accommodation has been hastily thrown up to cater for the thousands mobilized into the army.

The contingent of nurses, which included Staff Nurse [Vivian Bullwinkel](#), who held the nominal rank of Lieutenant, were hardly noticed amongst the larger formations that were arriving daily. They were allocated barracks sub-divided into a series of twin rooms. Each unit contained two cyclone-wire beds, each with a palliasse stuffed with straw, two very thick blankets and a pillow and a dresser for clothes and personal items.

The government allotted nursing sisters a clothing allowance of 20 Australian pounds for service within the country, paid upon entering the camp, with a further 20 pounds for overseas duty, payable upon departure. This meant enlisted members had to initially bear the cost of their uniforms. After four months, some of the nurses were transferred to the Lady Dugan Hostel, just outside central Melbourne. It was a beautiful piece of early colonial architecture with timbered balconies and rustic stonework, surrounded by manicured lawns and picturesque garden beds. In this delightful environment 56 staff Nurses had been assembled before embarkation for overseas. [Vivian's](#) unit was the 2/13th, so I assume [Clarice](#) was earlier as she was in the 2/10th, but her situation would have been similar.

2. THE SONG OF THE C.D.S. – Written when the Nurses were training at Puckapunyal, Seymour in Victoria (Clarice must have been in the Army for twelve months before she left Melbourne – enrolled on 11.7.1940 – left 29.7.1941)

. Among the hills of Seymour
In the most delightful Mess,
There dwell the Seven Sisters,
Of the Seymour C.D.S.

. Well, first of all there's Bobbie,
Greatest scrounger of them all
She's never late for anything,
Whoever comes to call.

Now, you must meet our Halligan
She rules the lads in "A",
In her shorts she's pretty snappy
Or so the Majors say.

- . And then our little Duchess,
She'd a halo once I'm told,
But now I fear she's lost it
Because her knights were bold.
- . If you haven't played with Gibbie,
Then you have missed a treat,
Maybe you'll get surprises
But you know, she's most discreet.
- . You'd better hear our Brady
If your ears can stand the strain,
But Brigadiers have bent their knees
And followed in her train.
You'd really like our Margot,
Though she doesn't make a noise,

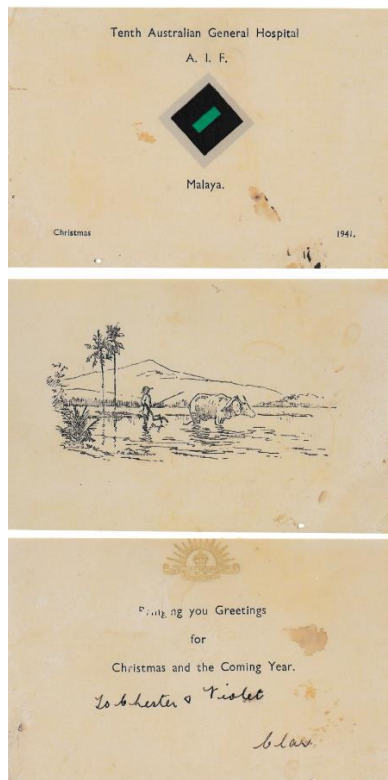
(6th Nurse Margot, end of page missing and also the one about the seventh Nurse.
What a pity!! Who were Bobbie, Duchess, Gibbie, Brady, Margot? Maybe someone will recognize a relative who trained up in Seymour.)

3. Leaving the country on 29th July, 1941 in Full Army Uniform – AWM collection Record: 008557, embarkation of the ship Malaya 3.



Mary Cuthbertson, Clare Halligan, Ada 'Mickey' Syer and Ruby Wilson
en route to Singapore.

4. CHRISTMAS CARD SENT BY CLARICE ISOBEL HALLIGAN FROM MALAYA TO HER OLDER SISTER VIOLET AND HER HUSBAND CHESTER CHALMERS, - DATED CHRISTMAS 1941



5.

Clarice was at the Hospital at Malacca, with the 10th AGH Nursing Staff to start with. [Pat Darling \(nee Gunther\)](#) in her book *Portrait of a Nurse*, has written the following. "Malacca was a pleasant little town on the west coast of Malaya. The Chinese had occupied it in the 15th Century, building it into a major trading port. The Portuguese wrested it from the Chinese in the early 16th Century, by 17th Century, the Dutch took control by which time the port had lost its major trading role. Britain gained control in the early years of the 19th Century. Apparently, our nurses were treated very nicely by the local people and in 1941, journalists from at least one Australian magazine came to Malaya and they wrote such glowing accounts of their life-style and that of the troops, they raised the ire of some service personnel. Some reinforcements arrived during the year, including [Betty Jeffrey](#) from Victoria, and in September 1941, the 13th AGH arrived in Malaya.

6. A letter written by Clarice in Malaya to her Mum, Dad & Family

UX 47746.
 Giles C. i. Halligan
 10th A. G. H.
 A. I. F.
 Abroad.

Dear Mum & Dad & family

Just a line to let you know that we are alright, up to the moment we are not in any danger, so you are not to worry, we must all be prepared to take whatever comes after all we are better off than lots of others. we are just starting & they have been getting it for years.

The loss of our ships was not so good but the fact that there were more than 2000 men saved from the Repulse & the Prince of Wales makes good news. for every bad piece of news there is always a good bit. so long as the men at home do their bit to support the soldiers out here we will come out alright in the end, so long as we get a steady flow of munitions. nothing can stop our boys they have been waiting a long time for this business to start, they won't be caught napping now.

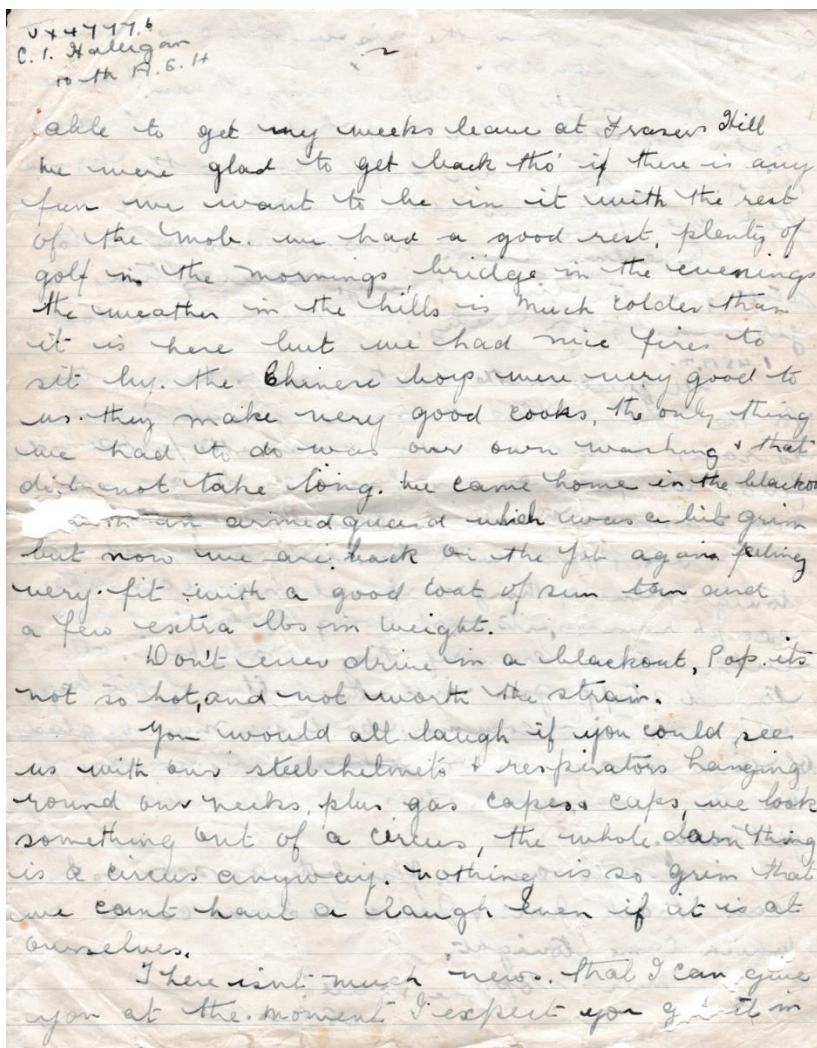
I think the parcels you sent must have gone astray because none have arrived yet. I don't suppose I will get much chance to make a garden now anyway however one never knows.

Yr. will be glad to know that I am

Just a letter to let you know we are alright, up to the moment we are not in any danger, so you are not to worry, we must all be prepared to take whatever comes after all we are better off than lots of others. We are just starting and they have been getting it for years. The loss of our ships was not so good but, the fact that there were more than 2,000 men saved from the Repulse and the Prince of Wales makes good news for every bad piece of news. There is always a good bit, so long as the men at home do their bit to support the

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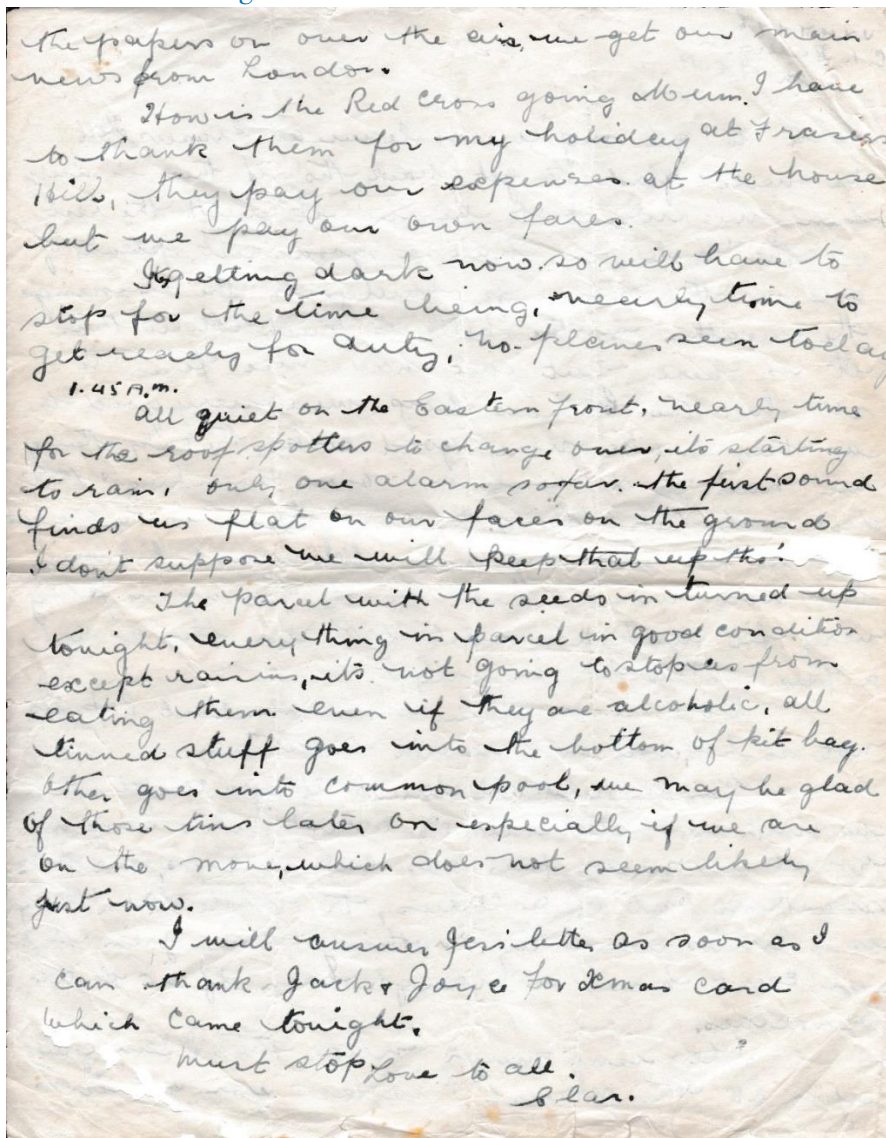


able to get my weeks leave at Fraser Hill. We were glad to get back tho', if there is any fun we want to be in it with the rest of the mob. We had a good rest with plenty of golf in the mornings, bridge in the evenings. The weather in the hills is much colder than it is here, but we had nice fires to sit by. The Chinese boys were very good to us. They make very good cooks, the only thing we had to do was our own washing, and that did not take long. We came home in the blackout with an armed guard which was a bit grim, but now we are back on the job again, feeling very fit with a good coat of sun tan and a few extra lbs of weight.

Don't ever drive in a blackout, Pop (her father) it's not so hot and not worth the strain.

You would all laugh if you could see us with our steel hats and respirators hanging round our necks plus, gas, capes & caps, we look something out of a circus, the whole darn thing is a circus anyway. Nothing is so grim that we can't have a laugh even if it is at ourselves.

There isn't much news that I can give you at the moment. I expect you get it in the papers or over the air. We get our main news from London.



The papers on over the air, we get our main news from London.

How is the Red Cross going mum. I have to thank them for my holiday at Frasers Hill, they pay our expenses at the house but we pay our own fares.

It's getting dark now, so will have to stop for the time being, nearly time to get ready for duty, no planes seen today.

1.45 a.m.

All quiet on the Eastern front, nearly time for the roof spotters to change over, it's starting to rain, only one alarm so far. The first sound finds us flat on our faces on the ground. I don't suppose we will keep that up tho!

The parcel with the seeds in turned up tonight, everything in parcel in good condition except raisins, it's not going to stop us from eating them even if they are alcoholic, all tinned stuff goes into the bottom of kit bag, other goes into common pool, we may be glad of those tins later on especially if we are on the move, which does not seem likely just now.

I will answer Jess' letter as soon as I can. Thank Jack & Joyce for Xmas card which came tonight.

Must stop, love to all.

Clarice.

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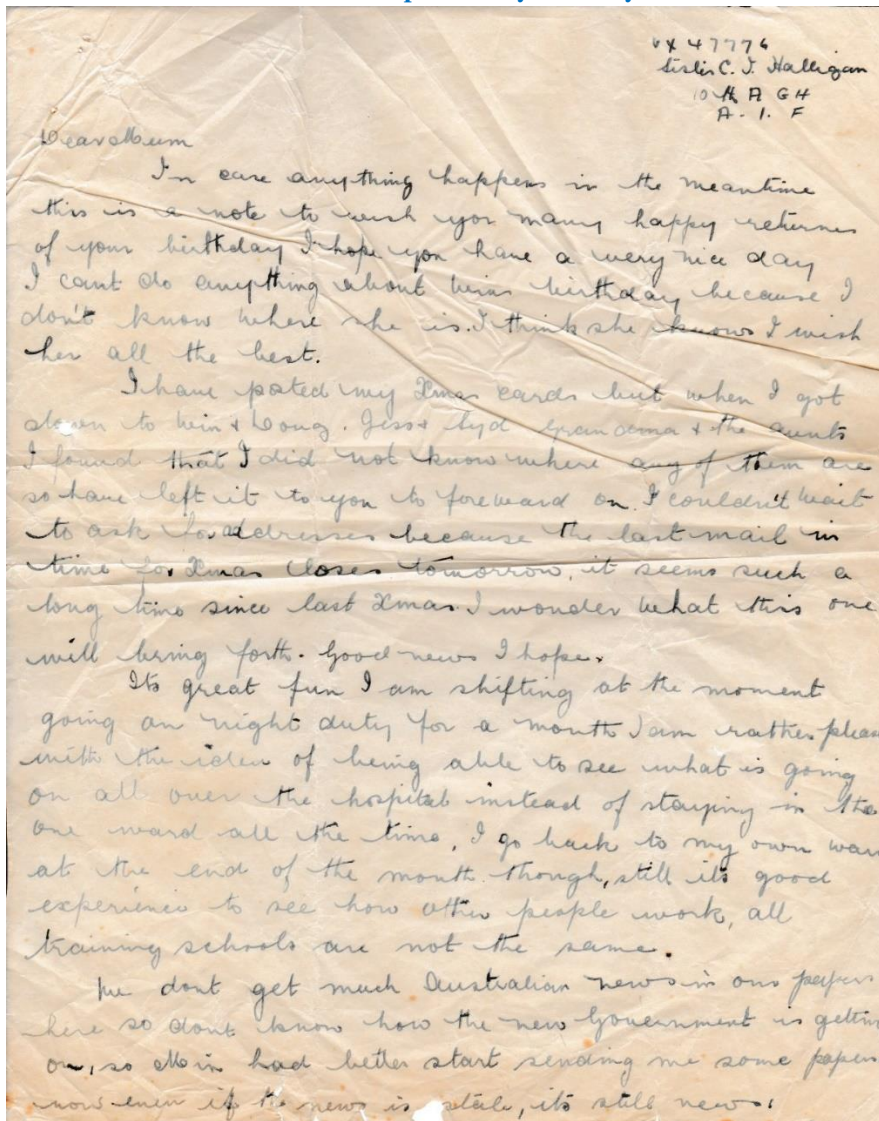
1.45am

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I will answer Jess' (sister) letter as soon as I can. Thank Jack & Joyce (John, brother & wife Joyce) for Xmas card which came tonight. Must stop, love to all Clarice.

A three-page letter written by Clarice when she was in Malaya, and she described how much the Australian Red Cross (of which her mother Emily Watson Chalmers was a life-long

member) were so generous in paying for the nurses to have a rest up in the coolness of Frasers Hill, where the British expats always holidayed.



Dear Mum in case anything happens in the meantime, this is a note to wish you many happy returns of your Birthday. I hope you have a very nice day. I can't do anything about Win's (sister) birthday because I don't know where she is. I think she knows I wish her all the very best. I have posted my Xmas cards, but when I got to Win and Doug (Rylah) and Jess and Syd (Piggott) Grandma and the Aunts, I found that I did not know where any of them are, so have left it to you to forward on. I couldn't wait to ask for addresses, because the last mail in time for Christmas, closes tomorrow. It seems such a long time since last Xmas. I wonder what this one will bring forth. Good news I hope. It's great fun, I am shifting at the moment, going on night duty for a month. I am rather pleased with the idea of being able to see what is going on all over the hospital instead of staying in the one ward all the time. I go back to my own ward at the end of the month. Though, still it's good experience to see how other people work, all training schools are not the same. We don't get much Australian news in our papers here so don't know how the new government is getting on, so Min had better start sending me some papers now, even if the news is stale, it's still news.

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We don't get much Australian news in our papers here, so don't know how the new government is getting on, so Min (sister) had better start sending me some papers now, even if the news is stale, it's still news!

I, Lorraine Clarice Curtis (niece) have many other hand written letters from Clarice in my possession.

In her book "Bullwinkel", Vivian describes that she was astounded that her group were being sent to join the 2/10th which had already set up a hospital in the town of Malacca, in southern Malaya, and the 2/13th will take over Saint Patrick's Boys' School in Singapore. It was hot and sticky and the morning air was heavy with humidity as their ship the Wanganella glided by small jungle-grown islands to the inner harbour of Singapore. Sampans and junks scurried around, their crews sheltering from the already ferocious sun under large conical hats and umbrellas. A heavy, sweet aroma, a mixture of spices dominated by sandalwood, wafted on a faint breeze and for Vivian, standing transfixed at the ship's railing, it was cloying, dominating, and above all fascinating. It was the essence of Singapore and she loved it. Major Home announced that Bullwinkel, and ten others were to be detached for duty with the 2/10th at Malacca. Transport for those people would not be ready until later that night. The small group of women watched bleakly from the upper deck as the last of the trucks and ambulances drove off the wharf leaving them with several medicos and a skeleton ship's crew. Some of the nurses were crying while others looked forlornly at the point where the last vehicle had disappeared with their friends. It was then they were approached by Doctor Manson. Manson, who was looked upon by the nurses of the 2/13th as a fatherly figure, was a gentle man, always available to offer advice or assistance where it was needed. He called the girls together, expressed his sympathy and concluded with the reminder. "Remember you are in the Army so you come under its discipline." Finally he reminded them that they were Australian Army Nursing Sisters, and not emotional little schoolgirls. Later that night the detached party of nurses left the ship by ambulance with orders to report to the Railway Transport Officer, Captain Abramovich, at the Railway Station. As they hustled aboard the waiting train Abramovich warned them about staying together. He also briefed them on the overnight journey to Lampin where they would be met by transport by the Australian 2/15th Field Artillery. Following breakfast at Lampin, they would be taken onto Malacca. They set off on the final leg of their journey in high spirits and settled back to watch the jungle and the occasional village with its smiling, waving children slip by. Finally, the tangle of greenery gave way to vast rubber-tree plantations. The hospital at Malacca was a two-story structure located north of the city on a hill overlooking the Straits.

They were seconded to the 10th AGH, and were somewhat surprised to find the nurses housed in a large modern building. We pointed out that we sterilized our instruments on top of primus stoves. On December 8th, our relaxed lifestyle came to an abrupt end. Japan, without declaring war, invaded north Malaya, and bombed Singapore and Kota Baru, and at the same time bombed Pearl Harbour, an American naval base in the Pacific, with devastating effect on the US navy. The final location of 10th AGH was in the Cathay Building and adjoining Cathay Theatre (which was used for walking patients). This locality received a direct hit from the Japanese and many of the casualties were buried in the nearby shell-holes. In mid or late January, the hospitals were evacuated to Singapore, the 10th AGH to Manor House and Oldham Hall on the north side of the city. [Sister Pat Darling](#) said she was put in charge of a ward which consisted of two concrete tennis courts covered by a huge marquee. Not the safest place to be when things are being dropped from the skies. The day staff worked a straight twelve-hour shift, and the night staff, two six hour periods.

The intensity of the Japanese attacks on Singapore increased daily. Consequently, she said our native servants left. All army hospitals in war zones have red crosses on the roofs and nearby. At 11.00am on the same day, Matron called us all together and said she had been ordered to send half the sisters out of Singapore. All that night, the big gun blasted overhead, the windows rattled and flakes of plaster fell on our stretchers.

About 11.00am the next day, one of the doctors came and said “don’t you nurses know the sisters are leaving?”

EVACUATING SINGAPORE

[Sister Darling](#) always considered leaving the hospital one of the worst moments in my life. The sisters all met at St. Andrew’s Cathedral, and were accounted for by [Matron Paschke](#), and Colonel Glyn White, DDMS. Driving through Singapore in ambulances, we saw little of the devastation caused by the Japanese onslaught. On 12th February, reaching the wharf, we saw the Vyner Brooke loading up, preparing to take evacuees aboard. She was small and old, having once been the Rajah of Sarawak’s private yacht. The captain and crew had come hopefully to Singapore to have a rest. They had been chased around the Islands by Japanese planes during the previous few days. On arrival in Singapore, they were ordered to prepare immediately for sailing. We settled on deck. The ship moved from the wharf at approximately 4.00pm. One of the nurses, [Jennie Greer](#) started the song, “Wish me luck as you wave me goodbye.” As we approached the middle of the harbor, a naval launch dashed towards us. An officer standing on the deck, a revolver in his raised hand shouted, “Stop, and await further sailing orders.” We settled down to sleep where we were, when darkness came. Shortly before midnight, we felt a lighter bump against the ship and heard people scrambling aboard. Sometime later, in the early hours of Friday 13th February, the Vyner Brooke slipped out of the harbour.

All the next day, the ship clung closely to the islands, hiding among the mangroves. The Captain felt that hiding by day and progressing by night, he may succeed in getting through the treacherous Passage, which he well knew was under strict surveillance by enemy planes. Also, he had to think of his weary crew. Next morning, as we were steaming quietly along, three small Japanese planes appeared. They strafed the decks with machine gun fire, holing the lifeboats on the port side. The Captain put on as much speed as he could.

At 1.45pm, a flight of bombers appeared on the horizon. Everyone went inside. The first bombs hit the gun and crew on the forward deck, another went through the funnel, another hit the life-rafts on the rear deck. Vyner Brooke, almost immediately, listed to starboard. There were of course several near misses which made her bounce in the ocean. Two life boats were launched. Passengers jumped overboard and slid down ropes into the sea.

[Kath Neuss](#) was bleeding from her left hip. I helped her down the ladder into a lifeboat, [Win Davis](#) followed. Realising the life-boat was filling up with women and children, [Win](#) and I felt we shouldn’t stay. I gave my tin hat to [Kath](#) in case she needed to bail water from the lifeboat. Saying, “We’ll see you on shore”, [Win](#) and I slipped into the sea. The cool water felt wonderful after the restricted use of water on the ship. We swam off after watching the life-boat pull away. Dead bodies floated around us. The Vyner Brooke slid into the sea.

From [Ian W. Shaw’s “On Radji Beach”](#), I discovered “a number of the nurses were injured in the bomb blasts, primarily by the one that caused all the damage to the aft of the vessel. The worst of the injuries appeared to be those suffered by sisters [Rosetta Wight](#), who was one of the older nurses, and [Clarice Halligan](#). The two nurses had been in the rear of the

saloon near the passageway to the cabins when the bomb landed behind them. Both had been facing towards the front of the boat and suffered deep shrapnel wounds to the back of their thighs and buttocks, wounds that penetrated to the bone.

Partly in shock and bleeding profusely, both women were unable to move, and their wounds were treated where they lay by fellow nurses, who then half carried them to the upper deck. As the first lifeboat was being filled and lowered, a second was also being filled, a process temporarily interrupted when another Japanese aircraft made a final strafing run over the ship. No one was struck and no more damage was inflicted on the stricken vessel. [Sister Paschke](#) directed that this lifeboat be filled with the frail elderly and with mothers who had accompanying children, with priority in both cases being given to those who couldn't swim. The more seriously wounded nurses were among the first to be assisted aboard – [Rosetta Wight](#) and [Clarice Halligan](#) – joined shortly afterwards by [Kath Neuss](#) who had been practically carried all the way by Wilma and Mona, and assisted by her best friend, Pat Gunther. There was a moment of farce when one of the older women complained loudly that one of the sailors helping people climb into the lifeboat was also trying to look up the female passengers' dresses. Again, two sailors climbed into the lifeboat which was filled with 30 or so people before it, too, was lowered towards the water. It may have been that some aboard the lifeboat moved suddenly or that there was greater damage to the lifeboat than was apparent, for as soon as it entered the water, the lifeboat overturned, throwing most of its passengers out. Some of the other nurses hoped to swim to the second lifeboat and hang on to one of the ropes that trailed from it. Although it was still upside down, a number of people had swum to it and were either hanging on to the ropes or making futile attempts to turn the heavy wooden boat over.

ARRIVING AT RADJI BEACH, MUNTOK

For those who were eventually able to stagger ashore (after a night at sea) and catch their breath, then taking off their life jackets, they waded back into the water and helped [Clarice Halligan](#) and [Rosetta Wight](#) up onto the beach and made them comfortable on the sand. They had all been in the water for almost eight hours, and it took a while for them to recover all their faculties, both physical and mental. Throughout the night of 14th February, individuals and small groups of shipwreck survivors attempted to reach the beacon on [Radji Beach](#). A few were so close to the beacon that they could recognize the clothes being worn by some of the women on the beach as being AANS uniforms; others could clearly hear the voices of those nurses and recognized them as being Australian. But that was as close as they got.

A few did make it to the beach, generally in ones or twos. Among them were several crewmen from the *Vyner Brooke*, including at least one officer, a number of civilians – mainly women and children – and several nurses. Around 2230 hours, the tall figures of [Vivian Bullwinkel](#) and Jimmy Miller walked into the firelight and greeted Bill Sedgemen, [Irene Drummond](#) and the others gathered around the fire. As recounted, [Bullwinkel](#) and Miller had attached themselves to the second lifeboat launched, and had travelled with it until it ran ashore some distance away. Included in the number they had drifted with were the badly wounded nurses [Clarice Halligan](#), [Flo Casson](#) and [Rosetta Wight](#). Miller and [Bullwinkel](#) outlined the circumstances that brought them there, and how they would need assistance to bring all their survivors back to the larger group. The nurses were a special concern. All three were Victorians. [Clarice Halligan, the oldest, a 38 yr old from Kew](#), was the least severely wounded. Her thigh had been cut deeply by a bomb splinter but she was able to walk and

simply needed some stitching and some medication to be guaranteed a full recovery. Miller eventually put together a rescue party and set off. The journey to the second lifeboat and back with its survivors took over two hours, and the wounded nurses were in agony on the return journey, having to be half-dragged, half-carried for most of the distance. Their pain was obvious and it, in turn, increased the distress of the other survivors. It was still some hours to dawn when the rescue party returned from the second lifeboat. Their wounded were made as comfortable as possible and the able-bodied joined the others around the fire, talking over their recent experiences. The officers discussed bringing all the survivors together into one big group and then seeking food and assistance from any local villagers they could find, and then going further afield to establish contact with local authorities, whoever they may be. Most of the others simply stared into the flames or sought out a comfortable spot where they could sleep.

We kept getting caught in the oil. How could a small ship have so much oil? We found a long spar and clung to it, trying to push and pull it towards the shore. About 4.00pm a life-raft picked us up. Amongst those on board was the Malay wireless operator from the *Vyner Brooke* and a burned gunner, also from the *Vyner Brooke*. I gave the burned man some morphia tablets to swallow.

After a rest, I slide into the sea, leaving Mrs Brown on the raft with the burned gunner. With no oars, we could not steer the raft. Despite this, we struggled to pull it to the shore by the ropes around the sides. A few times, we were within a couple of hundred yards from Banka Island, only to be caught in rips and borne swiftly seaward. Island currents are contrary things.

At 5.00pm, smoke stacks appeared on the horizon. We thought, "The good old British Navy, it wouldn't let us down." It was the Japanese landing fleet. At midnight it landed near us. Motor boats, fully laden with armed soldiers, slid out from the sterns of the larger vessels. Torches were flashed on us, and then the boats sped to the beach.

The Japanese soldier who appeared to be in charge picked up a coconut from the bottom of the boat. With a parang, a heavy iron Malay knife, he chopped the top off, and handed it to me. I passed it to Mrs Brown. One after another, we drank the cool soothing coconut juice. It was a balm to our sore, parched throats. I felt sorry for Elizabeth Simons. She had taken her uniform off to protect the burned gunner. She now stood in her slip. One of the Japanese looked down her chest. Instantly, the Malay wireless operator whipped off his shirt and gave it to her.

The Japs were very interested in our watches. The others had large sensible ones, which had stopped immediately they hit the water at 2.15pm. The Japs were a medical group and very kind. They gave us food and drink. We were taken to a house to get some clothes. We collected a few bits and pieces, and a young Japanese who was our escort, took a mirror from the wall and showed me my reflection. He doubled up with mirth at my exclamation of horror. My eyes were scarlet, my face purple and my hair full of black oil.

As the day wore on, we wondered what fate had in store for us. On arriving, we had explained as nicely as we could, as non-combatants, we couldn't be taken prisoner, and asked the Japanese to get in touch with the Victoria Barracks in either Sydney or Melbourne. They said that they had already taken both cities. We settled down to sleep, and we all had a fairly restless night.

Next day at about 2.00pm we set off to walk to Muntok. All the others were barefoot. I bandaged Mrs Browns feet with strips torn from a sarong. We reach Muntok around 4.00pm. There at the cinema, we met other sisters. There was 29 of the 65 of us who had left Singapore. Many of the girls had been slapped, hit or kicked. Few had been given food. We realized how lucky we had been. After a meal of rice and stewed vegetables, we lay down on the floor to sleep.

On Tuesday 17th February 1941, we, men, women and children, were marched to some coolie lines. They were probably two miles away. The period following our incarceration in the coolie lines was most distressing, with people seeking news of relatives and friends whom they knew, or thought had been on certain ships. It was surprising how many we, collectively, could account for. One report said that 28 ship had been sunk in the vicinity.

About three days after our arrival in Muntok, [Betty Jeffrey](#) and [Iole Harper](#) walked in, very distressed. They had swum into a mangrove swamp and couldn't find a way out. At night, they climbed into higher ground to avoid being caught by rising tides. Eventually a native fisherman brought them ashore. A week or so later, [Viv Bullwinkel](#) came in. She, with other nurses, wounded men, women and children, landed in a leaking life boat on a beach about 5.00pm on 14th February. The men lit fires as beacons for those of us still trying to get ashore.

Next morning, a Japanese patrol found them and ordered them to stay where they were. As the day grew hotter, the women with children realized they had to find shelter, as well as food and water for their families. They left to find a village. The Australian nurses stayed with the wounded. Later another Japanese patrol came by. The men were taken to a secluded part of the beach and bayoneted. The Japs then returned wiping their bayonets, ordered the nurses into the sea, and machine gunned them. Viv was hit on her side. When she realised we was still alive and that the Japs had left, Viv walked into the surrounding jungle. There she met a wounded Englishmen who had feigned death after the bayonetting. The village people helped them with food as much as they could. Understandably, they were afraid of reprisals from the Japs if they found out. So, [Vivian](#) and the Englishman gave themselves up.

We were all greatly shocked, but thankful to have [Viv](#) with us. We then knew that of sixty five nurses who had left Singapore on the 13th February 1942, there were now 32.

In her book, [White Coolies](#), [Betty Jeffrey](#) wrote "On Thursday there was worse to come. Matron drove [Sisters Halligan](#), [Cuthbertson](#), [Blanch](#), [Freeman](#) and myself ([Betty Jeffrey](#)) over to our other hospital on the next hill. Never had I seen such a sight. There were wounded men everywhere – in beds, on stretches on the floor, on verandas, in garages, tents, and dug-outs. Low-flying planes were machine-gunning all around us. They just cleared the roof and trees, but did turn their guns off while passing over us. We had rigged a huge red cross on the lawn with white sheets and yards of red material Matron had obtained.

At 1.45pm Matron made us stop working and have lunch. Just as we started a car arrived. It was to take us to the wharf at Singapore, about three miles away. There were only six of us. We all flatly refused to go. There was so much to be done. Wounded were arriving constantly; no hospital ships were in Singapore to relieve the congestion.

Our two-hundred-bed Manor House hospital, with the smaller homes, was rapidly approaching the one thousand mark. But our refusal was useless. We were ordered to

leave and had to walk out on those superb fellows. All needed attention; not one complained – doctors too, who needed our help so badly. I have never felt worse about anything. This was the work we had gone overseas to do. We sat in that car quite dazed by the suddenness of it all. Back at our main hospital we were transferred to ambulances and joined a convey of all the remaining sisters. We got under way at once, taking only what we could carry. An orderly threw my half-filled kitbag to me – what a pal! The last person I saw was a doctor with the same name as mine, standing there waving and wishing us luck. I shall never forget the expression on his face. We drove through an air raid into Singapore by side tracks. Japs were everywhere and the main road was taboo. Once we took cover – in St Andrew's Cathedral. It was a queer sensation, sitting in that huge cathedral seeing the rows of Army sisters – some wearing captails, some in tin hats, one or two with outdoor felt hats on (we had all been on duty) – sitting quietly while an air raid raged and ack-ack guns echoed loudly through the church.

Later we were joined by the remaining sisters of the 13th A.G.H. and the 2/4th Casualty Clearing Station, whose names and numbers were added to the list. We now numbered sixty-five. When the all clear sounded, we were driven to the wharf. Singapore seemed to be ablaze. As we walked along the wharf we noticed that dozens of beautiful cars had been dumped in the water; some were smashed on top of each other.

At last we were on the move – into a tug which took us down the harbor to a small, sinister-looking dark-grey ship, *Vyner Brooke*, flying a naval flag, a white ensign, I think. Before the war, she had been owned by Sir Charles Vyner Brooke, Rajah of Sarawak. To my relief, we were told to live on the top deck. Next morning, we learnt that we had lost our convoy during the night and got lost in the minefields. This day, significantly, was Friday, 13th February. The next day at 2.00pm we were wakened by the ship's siren from the first decent sleep we had had for at least a week. Aircraft ahead, no doubting whose – those horrible red spots told the story. We went down one deck and lay on the floor of the lounge. We had a view – too horribly clear – of it all. First time they missed, but she was a very small ship and the near misses made her rattle. She zigzagged and I felt certain that the bombs would miss us. We were able to relax a little while the planes gathered themselves together to try again, but it was nerve-racking really, waiting. It was most uncomfortable on the floor. There were about two hundred people on board, far too many for so small a ship. Back came the planes... and this time we were just about lifted out of the water. Down the planes came again, and what a crash. It felt as if the bomb had landed right in the room with us. Then shattering glass, tons of it, smoke, and the sounds of crashing walls. We had been given instructions that morning what the drill was to be if we were bombed or torpedoed. Different jobs were allotted to each nurse. Now everyone hurried about the decks doing the task assigned to her. We had been told to see that every civilian person was off the ship before leaving it ourselves. But the planes had not finished with us. Over they came again and machine-gunned the deck and all the lifeboats – rather effectively. The ropes holding the three lifeboats on our side were severed. Two dropped into the sea. One filled and sank, the other turned upside down and floated away. [Beth Cuthbertson](#) searched the ship when it was at a very odd angle to make sure all wounded people had been taken off and that nobody remained, while the other nurses were busy getting people into the sea. The oldest people, the wounded, [Matron Drummond](#) and some of our girls with all the first-aid equipment, were put into the remaining lifeboats on the starboard side and lowered into the sea. Two boats got away safely. Greatcoats and rugs were thrown down into them and with

bright calls of, "See you later!" they rowed away. The last I saw of them, some sisters were frantically bailing out water with their steel helmets.

[Matron Paschke](#) set a superb example to us all by the calm way in which she organized the evacuation of the ship. It was wonderful to see the way those girls jumped over or crawled down ladders into the sea. They made no more fuss than if they had been jumping into the swimming pool in Malacca.

Land was just visible, a big hill jutting up out of the sea about ten miles away. The coolness of the water was marvelous after the heat of the ship. We all swam well away from her and grabbed anything that floated and hung on to it in small groups. We hopelessly watched the *Vyner Brooke* take her last roll and disappear under the waves. I looked at my watch – twenty to three. I was swimming from group to group looking for [Matron Paschke](#), who that very morning had jokingly asked me to help her swim for it if we had to go over the side. I saw a raft packed with people after swimming through that revolting oil. There was Matron, clinging to this terrible thing. She was terribly pleased with herself for having kept afloat for three hours, and as she was no swimmer, I quite agreed with her.

We seemed to pass, or be passed by, many of the sisters in small groups on wreckage or rafts. Everybody appeared to be gradually making slow progress towards the shore, and every one of us felt quite sure she would eventually get in.

The last thing we saw before night fell was the smoke from at least five ships on the horizon and we thought we were saved. Surely this was the British Navy? That night during a storm it was very rough and dark and we rocked and tossed until everyone was sick. We kept coming in towards a lighthouse, but the currents wouldn't let us, and out to sea we went for the third time. Many large motorboats, each packed with armed Japanese soldiers, surrounded us, chatting away, spoke to us in Japanese, then away they went in a fan-shaped formation towards the town of Muntok.

When eventually [Betty Jeffrey](#) reached shore and met other sisters, they all heard terrible tales of how they eventually got ashore from the *Vyner Brooke*. Some landed on the pier, the others were scattered for some miles along the beach and walked towards the pier. We were now thirty-one – thirty-four missing, including some of the sisters who passed us on their rafts. We discussed those missing to see if we could account for them all. What had happened to those people and our girls who left the *Vyner Brooke*. From the sea some of us had seen them land on a beach and later that night had seen them grouped around a fire, but they had not turned up.

We heard an ugly rumour, which we refused to believe. About a week later another Australian sister arrived, alone – Vivian Bullwinkle. We were terribly relieved to see her, and she was just as relieved to see us. We hoped this meant that the others might gradually come in, but this hope was dashed when we heard her story. Vivian was with a group of servicemen, civilian women, and twenty-two Australian Army Nursing Service sisters. They had all gathered at this one spot on the sandy beach about two or three miles from Muntok, and had come ashore in lifeboats or had swum in. They spent the first night sitting round a fire we had all seen from the sea. There were quite a few wounded people with them, so they decided that when morning came they would search for some Japanese and see if the wounded could be cared for properly. They waited all day, but nothing happened, and when night fell they were still there. Next morning it was decided that a naval officer should walk into Muntok and bring back some Japanese with stretchers for the wounded, also informing

them of the presence of the party on the beach. Our sisters, with [Matron Drummond](#) of the 13th A.G.H. in charge, stayed behind to look after the wounded members of the party.

My aunt [Clarice Isobel Halligan](#) was in this group, but no more mentioned was made of her by [Betty Jeffrey](#).

More from [Ian W. Shaw's](#) book [Radji Beach](#)

The Japanese turned to the prisoners lined up on the beach. Within a few minutes, all had been blindfolded and bayoneted. This time the Japanese did not bother to hide the bodies. The nurses had continued to sit on the beach under the gaze of the remaining Japanese soldiers and their officer, as the second group of prisoners had been led away, beyond the headland. They heard a volley of rifle fire, then the Japanese returned single file, with several appearing to be cleaning their bayonets with small cloths. The nurses chatted and reported experiencing a number of emotions, everything from rage to acceptance of the inevitability of death, but for Vivian at least, the overwhelming emotion at that point was one of disbelief. They were all committed to the saving, and not the taking of life. Individually and collectively, they had done nothing to deserve the kind of ending that seemed to be their destiny.

The Japanese squad stopped in front of the nurses and squatted down to clean and reload their rifles, glancing across at the officer, and at the girls themselves. After an eternity that lasted no more than two minutes, Captain Orita Masaru called to his soldiers who stood up, and using both gestures and bayonet tips, forced the nurses into a line facing the sea about 10 meters away. At the far right stood Irene Drummond, quietly encouraging and bustling over the wounded girls like the mother hen that she was. To her left were Clarice Halligan, Rosetta Wight and Flo Casson, each too weak and in too much pain to stand alone, so they were supported on either side by sisters and friends. A line of 23 was formed, 22 nurses joined by the elderly civilian who had refused to leave her husband, and now stood weeping in the middle of the line. On the far left, the line ended with Alma Beard, Vivian Bullwinkel and Jenny Kerr. There was no shouting and tears, no panic and no hysteria, even when two of the nurses had to be prodded into line by the Japanese bayonets. At the end of the line, Alma Beard leaned across and said to Vivian: "Bully, there are two things I've always hated in my life, the Japanese and the sea, and today I've ended up with both."

There was a moment or almost supernatural silence as they set off. Several of the girls looked across and made eye contact with friends, but they mostly looked straight ahead. And then the killing began. Flo and Rosetta and Clarice and the sisters supporting them fell under the gun, grouped together in death as they had been in life.

After reading [White Coolies by Betty Jeffrey](#), first published in 1954 and

[Bullwinkel](#), by Norman G. Manners, published in 1999

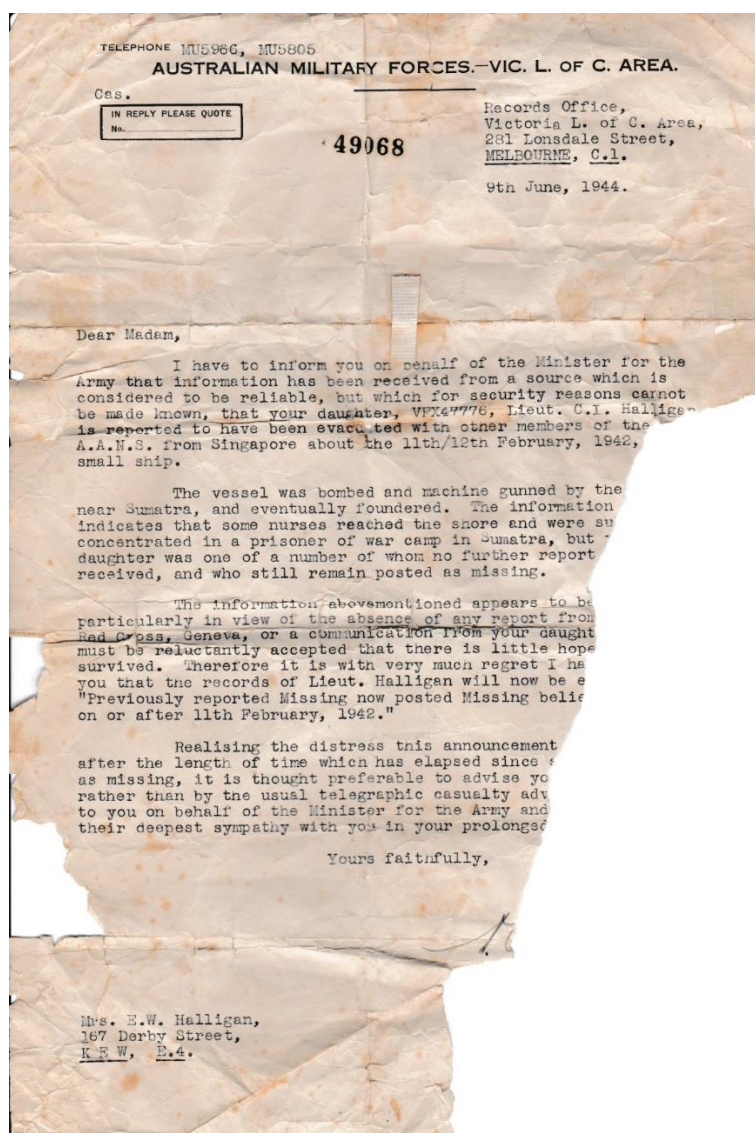
And Portrait of a Nurse, by [Pat Darling](#) (nee Gunther), published in 2013

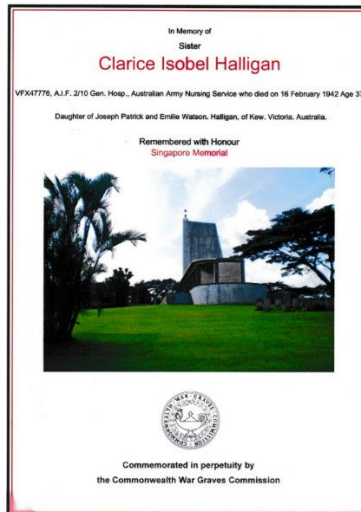
And finally, [On Radji Beach](#), by Ian W. Shaw, published in 2010, I have gathered a story from all these, together with notes and letters about [Clarice Isobel Halligan](#) to pass on to my relatives, including my grandchildren. I have somehow felt I have had an obligation to do this as I was the daughter, grandchild, niece, to have been given her name, which I felt as a child was an unusual name, and I don't think I have met a person with this name in my 74

years of life. But, I am proud to have been given this name and will travel with my husband, Allan Edwin Curtis (who was incidentally, given the name Allan in memory of his uncle Allan Cameron, who was captured by the Japanese, worked on the Thai Burma Railway and was a prisoner in Changi), to Radji Beach, in Muntok, Indonesia on 16th February, 2017, with a group of fellow travelers who wish to remember the terrible things that happened to our relatives, 75 years ago. And to also thank all the local people on Muntok and in Palembang who were so kind to all those who landed on their shores so many years ago.

Continued.....

BACK HOME IN MELBOURNE AFTER THE FAMILY WERE TOLD THAT CLARICE HAD DIED ON RADJI BEACH, MUNTOK ISLAND, INDONESIA. All their hopes were shattered as they had prayed she had been a prisoner of War.





Lorraine Clarice Curtis (nee Halligan) and her husband Allan Edwin Curtis visited in 2016, where we found a book containing Clarice's name. Allan also discovered his Uncle Allan Cameron's details in the Changi Prison records on the same day.

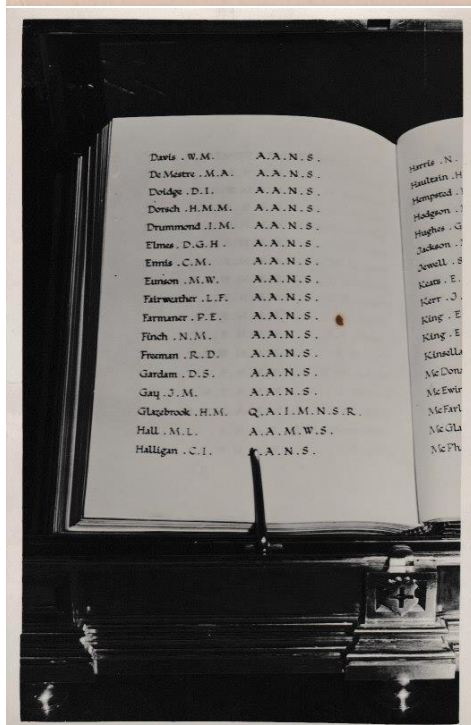
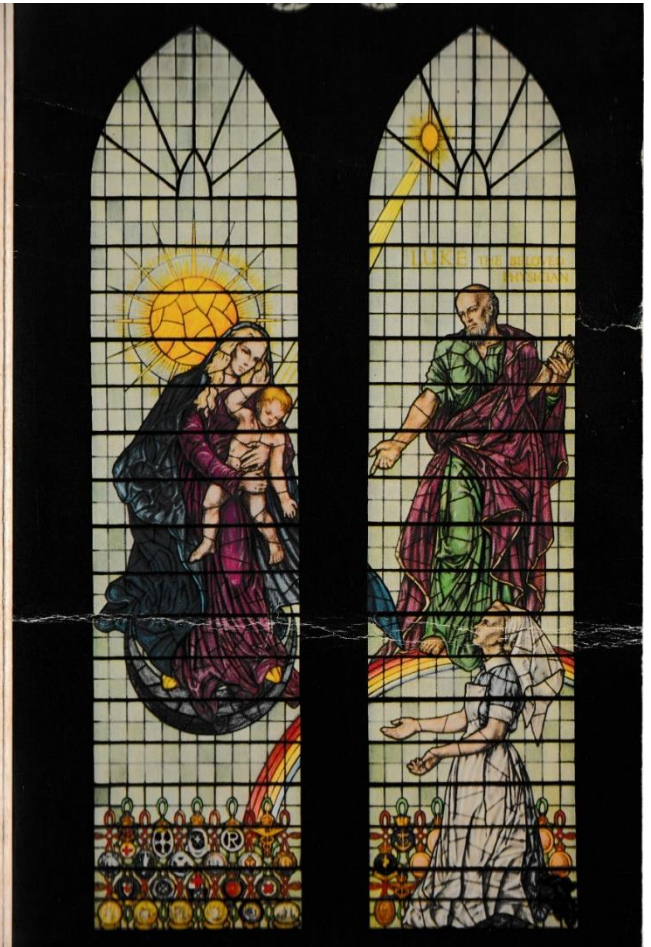
The NURSING MIRROR

welcomes you to London, and hopes that you will have a happy stay in this country.

Probably during your visit you will go to Westminster Abbey to see the Nurses' War Memorial Chapel there, the only one of its kind in the world. This is the memorial set up by the nurses and midwives of the British Commonwealth to their fallen colleagues in World War II, and it was made possible by their gifts to the British Commonwealth and Empire Nurses' War Memorial Fund.

You may care, therefore, to have this reproduction (which appeared in the pages of the *Nursing Mirror*) of the window in the Chapel, to remind you of your visit and to express our hope that we shall see you again.

NURSING MIRROR, DORSET HOUSE, STAMFORD STREET, LONDON, S.E.1



Clarice's name in the Nurses Memorial Chapel in Westminster Abbey. Visited by Joyce and John Halligan (brother) and Lorraine Clarice Curtis when visiting London, in different occasions. You only need ask a guide and they will take you up some very narrow steps to see the Chapel.

As did Betty Jeffrey and Vivian Bullwinkel in November, 1951, when they wrote this letter to Clarice's mother, Emily Watson Halligan on 12th November, 1951.

4 Bank of N. S. W.,
47 Berkeley Square,
London. W. 1.
12. 11. 51

Dear Mrs. Halligan,

While here in London we went to Westminster Abbey and saw the Nurses Memorial Chapel and windows. In a sealed Casket in the Chapel is the Roll of Honour which contains the names of all Empire nurses who gave their lives in the last war.

With much help and interest from the "Nursing Mirror", an English nursing journal, we have been able to obtain a photograph of the page showing your daughter's name. The "Nursing Mirror" also gave us a folder showing the window at the Abbey which they would like you to accept.

Yours sincerely,

Betty Jeffrey and
Vivian Bullwinkel



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

For Service with the Armed Forces in the
Second World War 1939/45, during which she
died on service

VEX 47776 Lieutenant C.I. Halligan,
10 Australian General Hospital.

was awarded the following Campaign Stars
and War Medals:-

1939/45	Star.
Pacific	Star.
War	Medal.
Australia	Service Medal.

[Signature]
Records Officer,
Army Headquarters

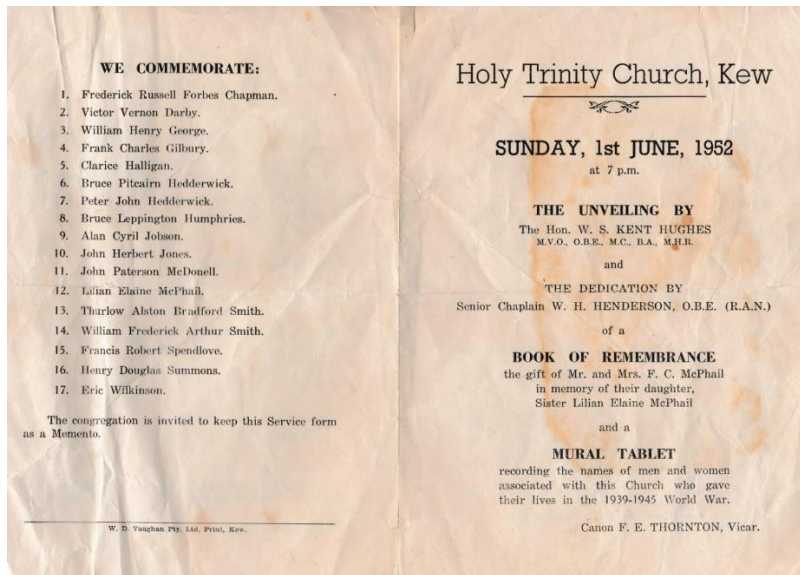
These medals lay loose in a box with a sprig of rosemary, and my father eventually arranged to have them displayed in accordance with tradition, and they are now in the hands of Lorraine Clarice Curtis (nee Halligan) Eventually they will be given to the War Memorial in Canberra, together with her Army Uniform, or to a safe place in Melbourne.

NOTES for GUIDANCE in the MOUNTING of CAMPAIGN
STARS, DEFENCE and WAR MEDALS.

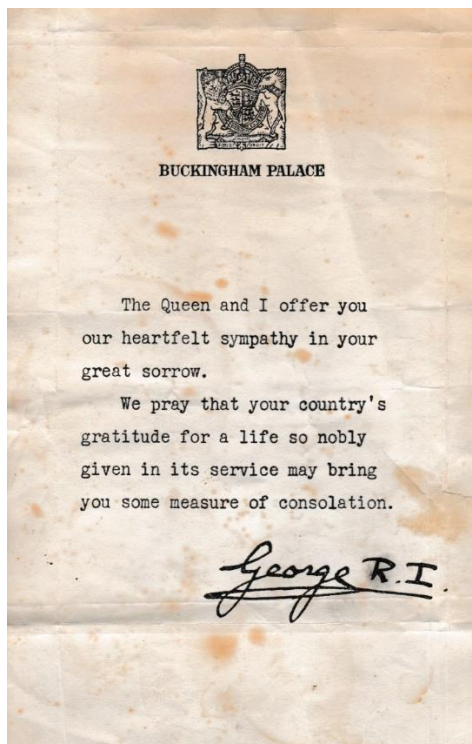
Order of Mounting, etc	Description of Riband:	Clasp or Emblem Worn (If awarded)
✓ 1. 1939-45 Star	Dark blue, red and light blue in three equivalent vertical stripes. This riband is worn with the dark blue stripe furthest from the left shoulder	Battle of Britain
2. Atlantic Star	Blue, white and sea green shaded and watered. The riband is worn with the blue edge furthest from the left shoulder	Air Crew Europe or France and Germany
3. Air Crew Europe Star	Light blue with black edges and in addition a narrow yellow stripe on either side	Atlantic or France and Germany
4. Africa Star	Pale buff, with a central vertical red stripe and two narrower stripes, one dark blue and the other light blue. This riband is worn with the dark blue stripe furthest from the left shoulder	8th Army or 1st Army Air Force Navy 18th Army Group HQ
✓ 5. Pacific Star	Dark green, with red edges, a central yellow stripe, and two narrow stripes, one dark blue and the other light blue. This riband is worn with the dark blue stripe furthest from the left shoulder	Burma
6. Burma Star	Dark blue with a central red stripe, and in addition two orange stripes	Pacific
7. Italy Star	Five vertical stripes of equal width, one in red at either edge and one in green at the centre, and two intervening stripes being white	
8. France and Germany Star	Five vertical stripes of equal width, one in blue at either edge and one in red at the centre, the two intervening stripes being white	Atlantic
9. Defence Medal	Flame coloured with green edge upon each of which is a thin black stripe	
✓ 10. War Medal 1939-45	A narrow central red stripe with a narrow white stripe on either side. A broad red stripe at either edge, and two intervening stripes in blue	Mentioned in Despatches
✓ 11. Australia Service Medal	A khaki ribbon edged dark blue and light blue respectively with two intervening red stripes	

TOTAL AWARDS FOUR

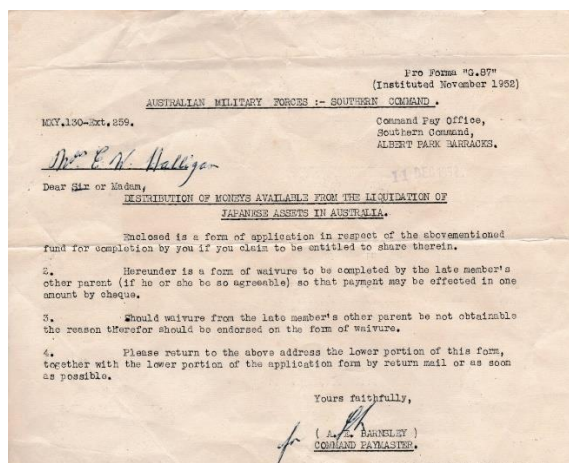
VFX 47776. C. I. HALLIGAN.



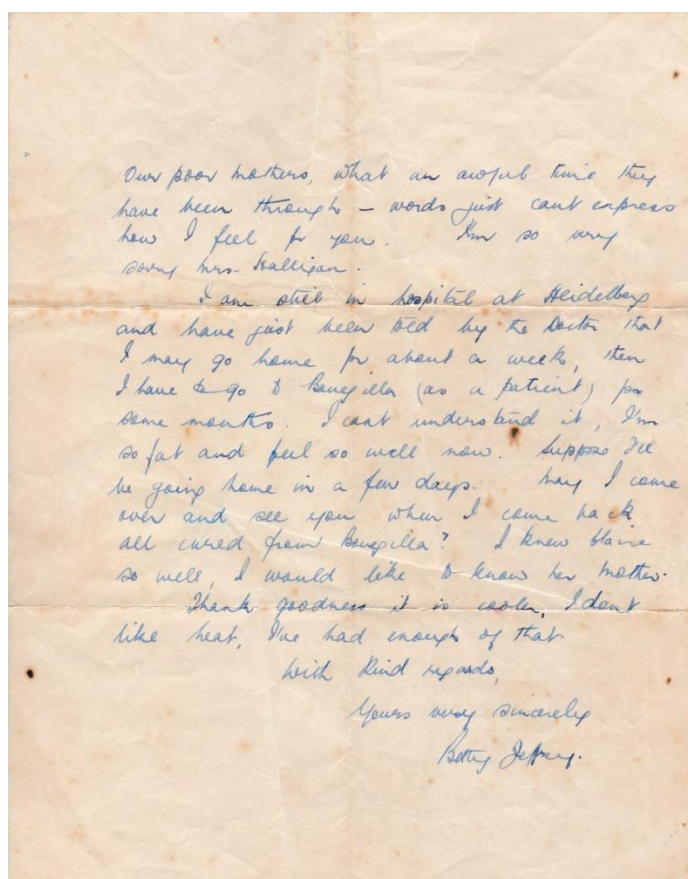
The family church, the same church where Clarice Isobel Halligan was “Confirmed” on 5th August, 1917



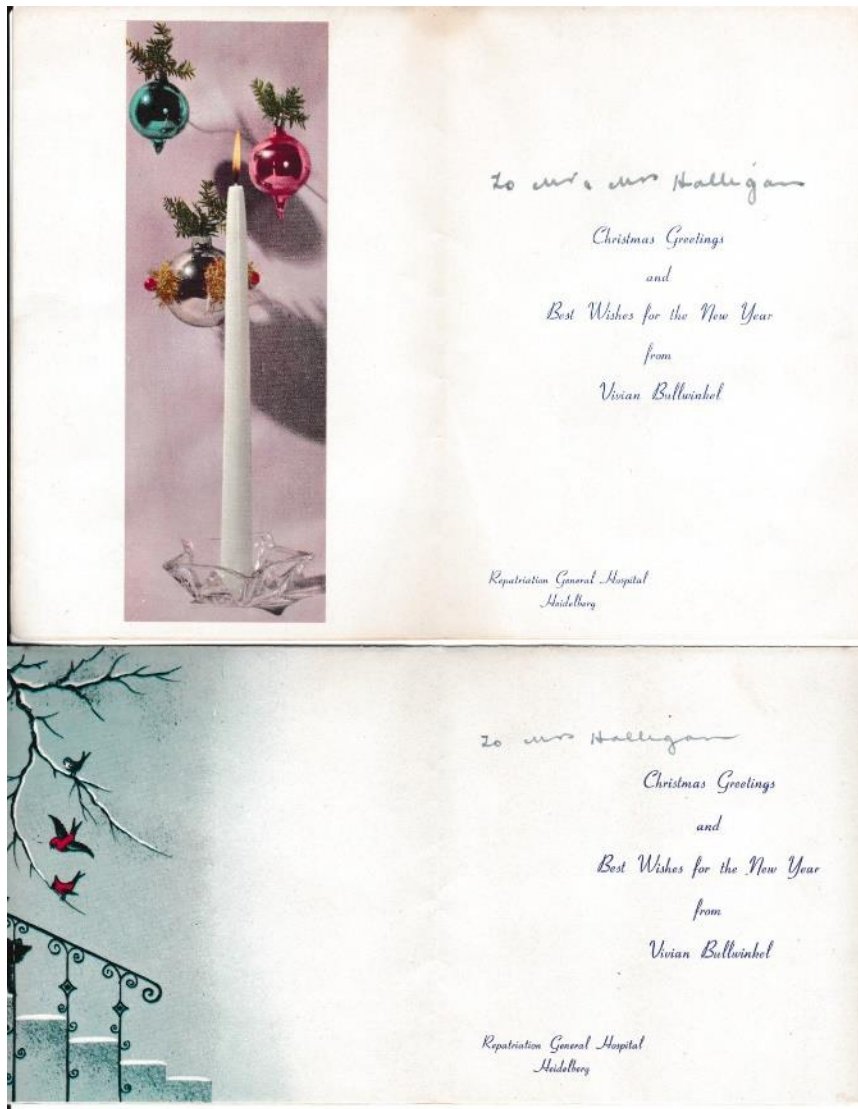
I wonder if every family who had a relative who died, received one of these!



A letter sent to Clarice's mother Emily Watson Halligan, about the liquidation of Japanese assets in Australia



Written to Mrs Emily Watson Halligan (Clarice's mother) by Sister Betty Jeffrey, while she was recovering in hospital at Heidelberg. She later wrote the book "White Coolies" about her survival in a prisoner of war camp.



Christmas cards sent to Clarice's parents by Sister Vivian Bullwinkel, who survived the massacre by the Japanese, and who was one of Clarice's friends, who walked down the Radji Beach together, and fortunately Vivian survived to tell the tale, and to later write a book "Bullwinkel". She was also the matron at Repatriation General Hospital in Heidelberg for many years.

Ech AG 8(a)(4)/PK



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

MILITARY--BOARD.
 ADJUTANT-GENERAL

 2nd Echelon LHQ
 ARMY HEAD-QUARTERS
 VICTORIA BARRACKS

(Ech 140/10/31) 02650

Melbourne, S.Ct. S.1 27 JAN 1945

Dear Madam,

Forwarded herewith in response to your application to Vic Ech & Rec, Melbourne, is Certificate of Death (Presumption) No 182 in respect of the presumed death on War Service of VFX 47776, Lieut Clarice Isobel HALLIGAN, 10 Aust Gen Hosp AIF.

Please acknowledge receipt in due course.

Yours faithfully,

Colonel.
Officer i/c 2nd Echelon LHQ.

Mrs E. W. Halligan,
167 Derby Street,
KEW E.4.

SCHEDULE "F"

Victoria Echelon and Records,
281 Lonsdale Street,
MELBOURNE, C.I.

Mrs. E.W. Halligan,
107 Derby Street,
K E W.

28522

15th April, 1946

Dear Madam,

Forwarded herewith, ~~in response to your application,~~
~~amended~~ Certificate of Death No. 5536 in respect
of the death on War Service of VFX47776, Lieut. C.I. Halligan.

This certificate is issued to take the place of Certificate No. 162. If possible, the latter should be recovered from the present holder and returned to this office for cancellation.

Please complete the subjoined form of receipt and return to this office.

Yours faithfully,

[Signature]
for Lieut.Col.,
Officer in Charge,
Victoria Echelon and Records.

A.A. Form W.5
(Introduced March 1942)

AMENDEDCOMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIAN^o 5536DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMYNATIONAL SECURITY (WAR DEATHS) REGULATIONSCertificate of Death on War Service

I, PHILIP CHASEMORE RAPER
being the person for the time being holding the office or performing the duties of the office of the officer in charge of Southern Command Victoria Echelon and Records and duly authorized by the Minister of State for the Army to issue certificates of death on war service for the purpose of the National Security (War Deaths) Regulations, HEREBY CERTIFY that VFX47776,
LIEUTENANT CLARICE ISOBEL HALLIGAN, 13 AUST. GEN. HOSP. A.I.P.
while engaged on war service within the meaning of those regulations:—

Died on the SIXTEENTH day of FEBRUARY

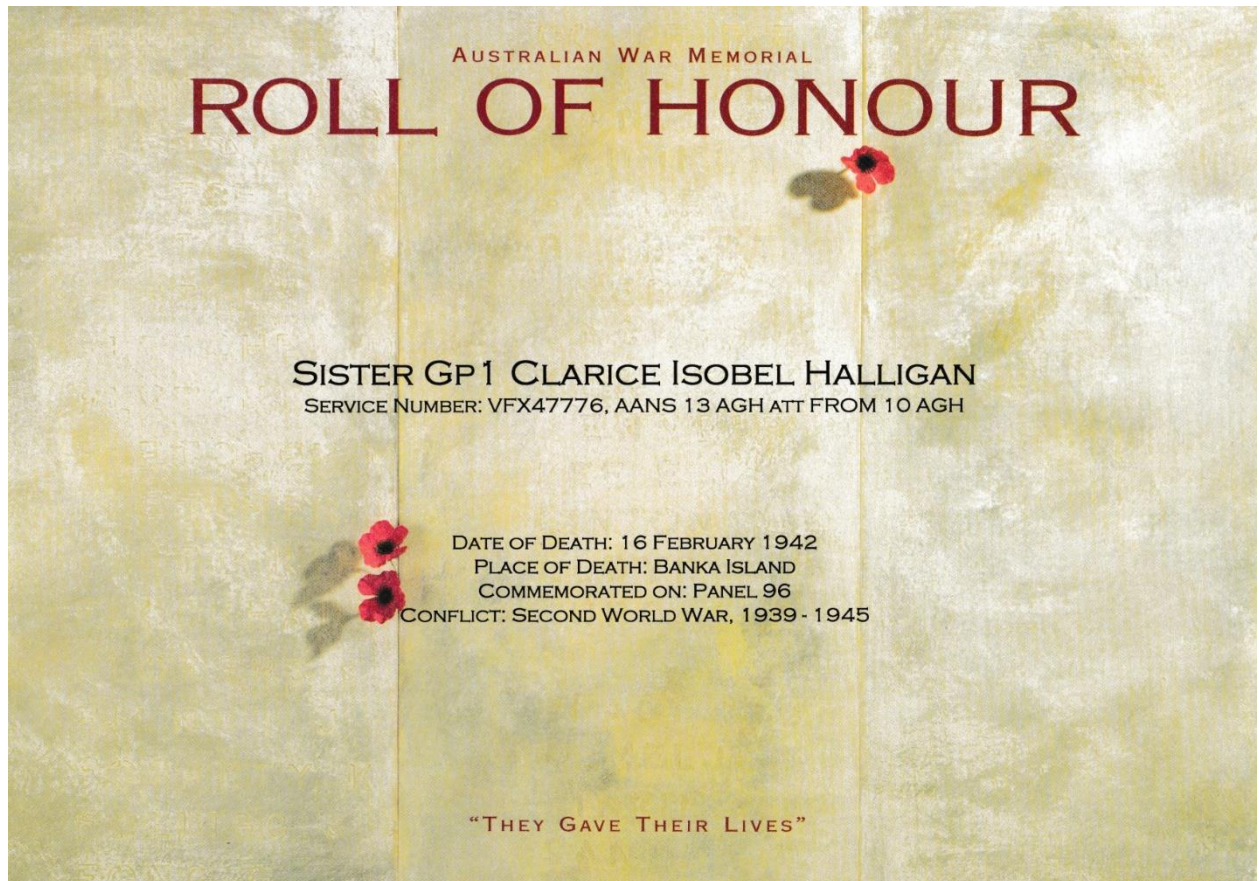
One thousand nine hundred and forty two

DATED the 15TH day of APRIL 1946

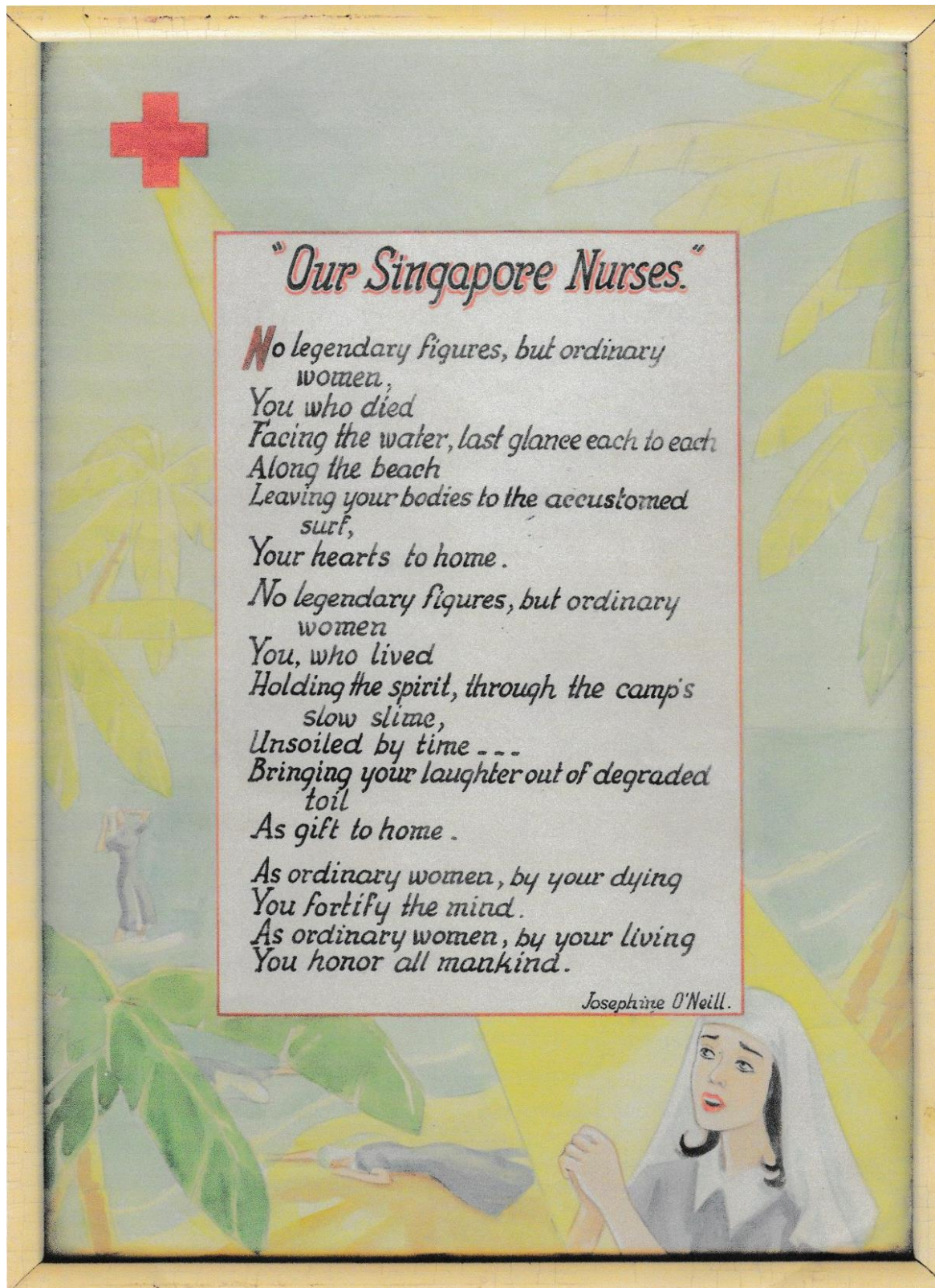
H.Q. A.M.F. Press—2890—12/45—2m.

[Signature]
LIEUT.COL.,
Southern Command Victoria Echelon and Records

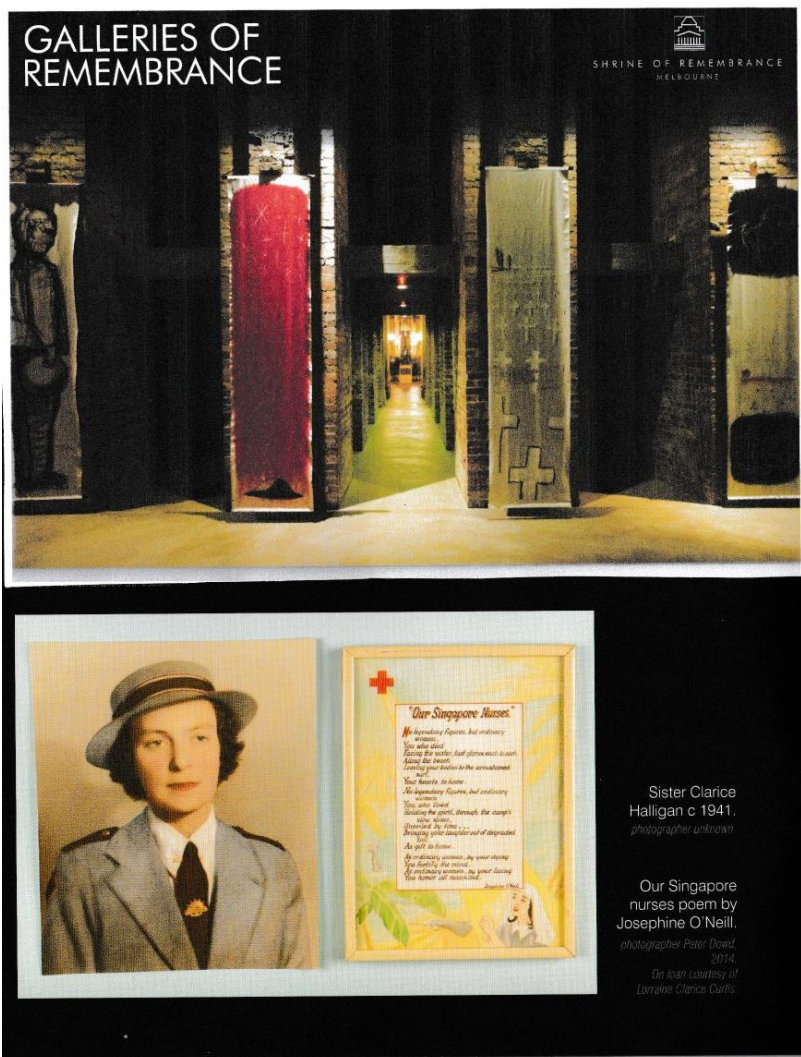
OFFICIAL DEATH CERTIFICATE FOR CLARICE ISOBEL HALLIGAN



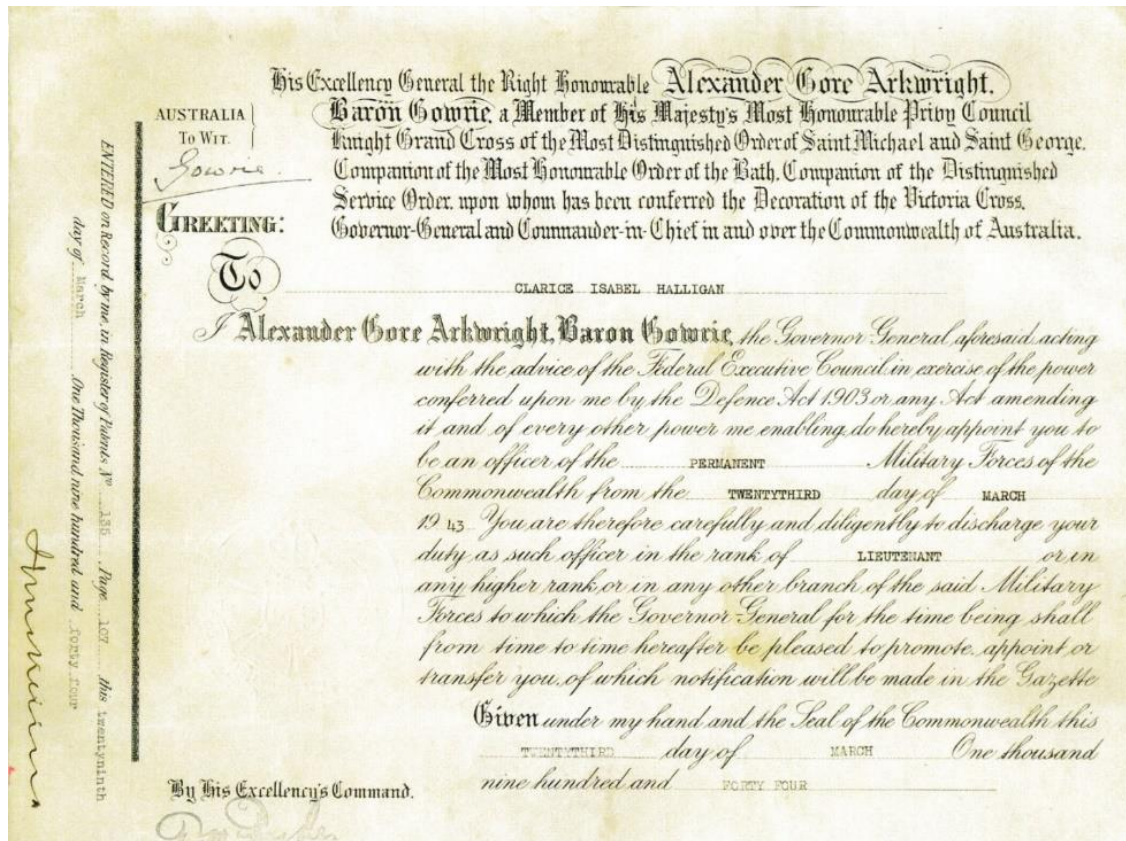
A CERTIFICATE WE BOUGHT AT THE WAR MEMORIAL IN CANBERRA



A POEM ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE WOMENS WEEKLY WHICH GRANDMA EMILY WATSON HALLIGAN KEPT IN A CREAM WOODEN FRAME, UNTIL HER DEATH. HER ORIGINAL COPY OF THE POEM IN ITS ORIGINAL FRAME IS IN THE HALLS OF REMEMBRANCE, ON LOAN, AT THE SHRINE IN MELBOURNE. Josephine O'Neill was a New Zealand Journalist who was living Sydney when she wrote it. (I only just found out in the January 2017 about the origin of this poem – Lorraine Curtis)



This is part of a lovely book I purchased at the Shrine of Remembrance Melbourne in their bookshop.



Another official document, advising that Clarice was promoted to Lieutenant on 23 March, 1944

NET CLOSING MURDERERS OF NURSES

2 LEADERS CAUGHT

The net is closing around the Japanese responsible for the massacre of 21 Australian Army nurses on Banka Island, off Sumatra, in February, 1942.

Lieut. Masayuki Takeuchi, commander of one of the Jap companies on Banka Island, was identified recently in a prisoner of war stockade, and is now in Taiping Gaol, northern Malaya.

A second suspect, Sgt.-Major Taro Kato, was captured in New Guinea.

Officers of the Australian Army Directorate of Prisoners-of-War and Internees investigating the worst individual crime on Australia's long list against the Japanese, have uncovered these facts:—

The nurses and other survivors of an escape ship from Singapore, bombed 10 miles from the beach, were shot by men of two Jap companies of the 229th Regiment of the 38th Infantry Division.

They were regular army veterans who fought against China, took part in the storming of Hongkong in December, 1941, and followed the Japanese paratroops into Palembang, Sumatra, early in 1942.

The two companies were detached from the main force for the capture of Banka Island.

RETRIBUTION

The entire division later went to the Eastern Area, and met retribution almost to the last man at the hands of Australians and Americans.

In November, 1942, a battalion of the regiment sailed for Guadalcanal in 14 ships, 11 of which were sunk with 1000 men. Most of the 500 survivors died in the fighting around Henderson Airfield.

Another battalion of the 229th was almost wiped out by the 7th Division AIF, at Buna, only 11 escaping.

A third battalion tried to land in the New Admiralty Islands in June, 1944. Half landed, and were subsequently reported missing. The other half failed to land, and returned to Rabaul.

Twenty-six survivors of the regiment are still being interrogated at Rabaul, including Major-General Tanaka, who commanded during the Sumatra operations.

RUSSIANS HUNT

Capt. (later Major) Masaru Orita, who commanded the two companies at the time of the massacre, fought on the Manchurian front against the Russians in 1945.

Concerning this badly-wanted man, the Soviet Section of the Allied Council for Japan has just informed Australia that he has not been found so far in the Soviet's prisoner-of-war com-

When other wanted Japanese have been caught and interrogated, the evidence of the Banka massacre will be heard before a special Australian War Crimes Court in Singapore.

The Search for those Japanese responsible for the massacre of 21 Australian Army Nurses on Banka Island, off Sumatra, in February, 1942.

use 443879

* Page 20 — The Sun, Tuesday, Dec. 12, 1961

Jakarta graves for war dead

JAKARTA, Mon., AAP-Reuter. — Twelve hundred British and Commonwealth war dead were reburied today in Jakarta.

They included those of 12 Australian nurses killed by the Japanese on the Java Sea island of Banka.

The bodies, gathered from the countryside of Java, from Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes and Banka, were brought together here as part of a plan to establish two Commonwealth military cemeteries in Indonesia.

One will be in Jakarta and the other at Ambon, in the South Moluccas.

The Commonwealth was represented at the ceremony by Chief of the Australian General Staff Sir Reginald Pollard, who is touring Indonesia.

Representing Indonesia were the Deputy Defence Minister, Lieut.-Gen. Hidayat, and Deputy Army Chief of Staff, Brig. Suharto.

Flags of the Commonwealth nations flew with the Indonesian red and white banner.

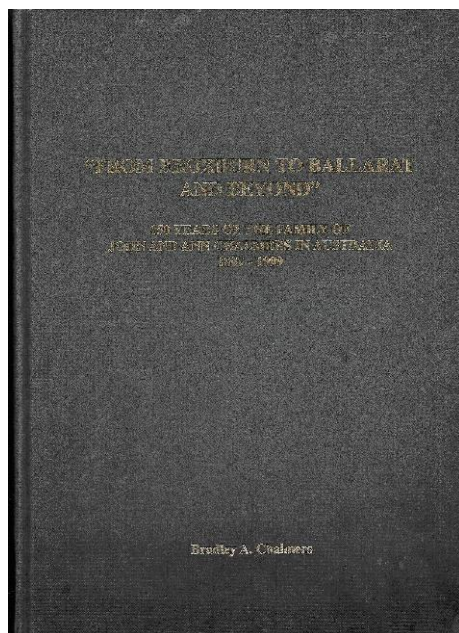
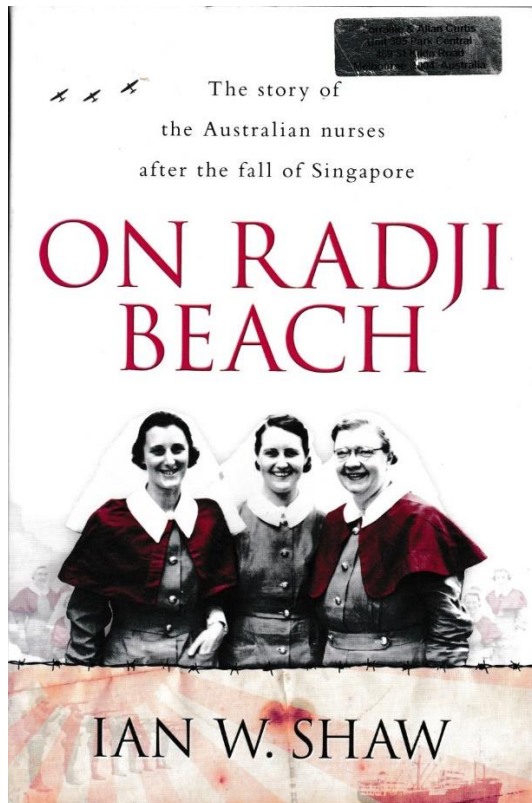
NEWSPAPER ARTICLE, 12 DECEMBER, 1961, MELBOURNE



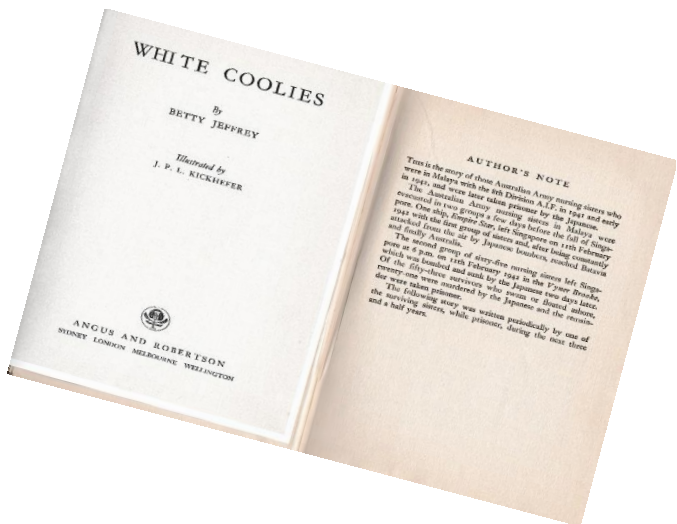
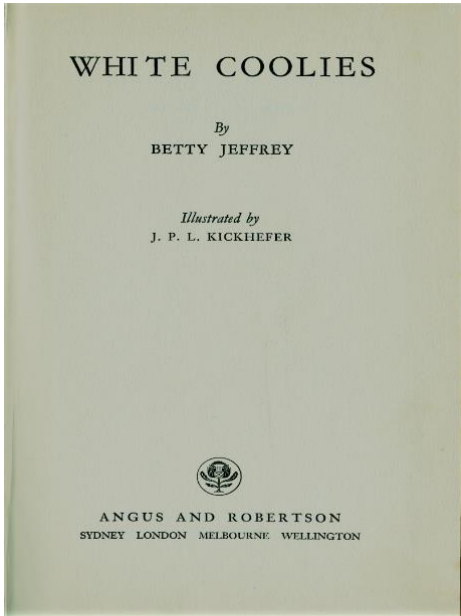
Medals and badges which were Clarice Isobel Halligans – a couple are on loan in the Halls of Remembrance at the Melbourne Shrine.



CLARICE ISOBEL HALLIGAN'S ARMY JACKET AND BADGES, WHICH ARE IN THE POSSESSION OF LORRAINE CLARICE CURTIS (NEE HALLIGAN), WHICH HOPEFULLY WILL BE GIVEN TO A MUSEUM WHO WILL KEEP THE COLLECTION IN ITS ENTIRETY.

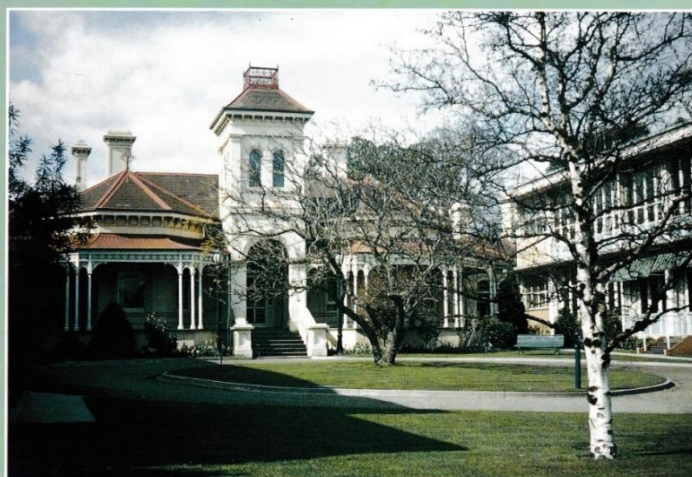


A HISTORY OF THE CHALMERS FAMILY (CLARICE'S MOTHERS FAMILY) BY BRADLEY A. CHALMERS



Victoria's Living Memorial

History of the Nurses Memorial Centre
1948–1990



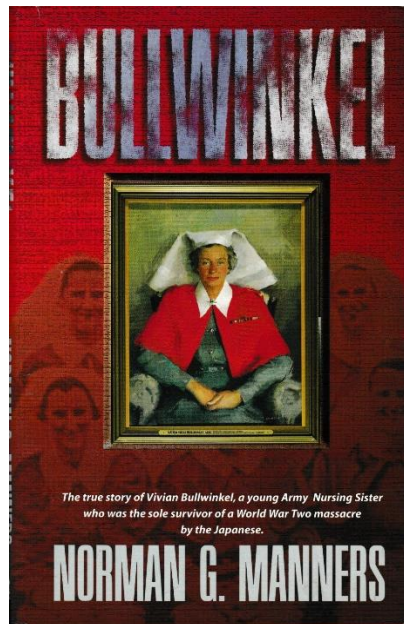
Jennifer Williams

PORTRAIT OF A NURSE



PRISONER OF WAR OF THE JAPANESE 1942-1945
SUMATRA

BY
PAT DARLING (NEE GUNTHER)
MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES



These are the books I have at home and had read over the years, and they have helped me gain personal information about my Aunt Clarice Isobel Halligan, as she unfortunately didn't return to Australia to tell her story.

THE END

Lorraine Clarice Curtis (Nee Halligan) 31st January, 2017