



Reference Number: **2016.0050**  
Collection/Series Title: **VOLUNTARY AID DETACHMENT (VAD)  
AND FIELD FORCE PERSONNEL  
RECORDS**

<b>Creator</b>	Australian Red Cross Society, National Office
<b>Creator's Activity/Occupation</b>	Community organisations - Charities

**Creator's Historical Note**

Note: University of Melbourne Archives holds records of the Australian Red Cross National Office and the Victorian Division of the Australian Red Cross. Records of other state Divisions are not held by the University of Melbourne.

Red Cross began in Australia on the 13th August 1914 in response to the start of the First World War nine days earlier. Modelled on the British Red Cross Society and initially established as a branch of that Society, it formed at the instigation of Lady Helen Munro Ferguson, wife of the Governor-General. Vice-regal patronage and a predominantly female membership continued to be features of the Red Cross throughout the twentieth century. The Australian society was recognised by the International Committee of the Red Cross as a national society in its own right in 1927 and was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1941.

In keeping with the international Red Cross movement of which it is a part, and the Geneva Conventions which govern and vest its wartime role, the Australian Red Cross primary objectives are to alleviate human suffering and protect life and health, especially during armed conflicts and other emergency situations. Principles of humanity, impartiality and voluntary service guide its programs, which have evolved over the years in response to international and domestic needs.

The organisations development throughout the twentieth century has been extensively documented (see references at the end of this note), however the following points may assist researchers wishing to use Red Cross records held by the University of Melbourne Archives .

The organisations initial structure, still largely in place in the early 21st century, included three tiers of administration and activity. Its National Headquarters (later known as National Office) has been based in Melbourne since 1914. Divisions were established in all states and territories, most of them within weeks of the formation of the national body, and these operated with substantial autonomy until at least the 1950s and continued to be the locus of much of the organisations emergency and social services program delivery beyond this date. A Papua New Guinea Division also operated between 1940 and 1973 and subsequently became an independent national society. The third tier of the Red Cross is the extensive network of local branches which also commenced during World War I. These have been particularly active in wartime and it is through these branches that large numbers of Australians engage with and support the work of the Red Cross.

The scope and dates of operation of some distinctive Red Cross programs are:

Voluntary Aid Detachments (VADs, later known as Voluntary Aid Service Corps or VACs) were first formed in 1915 to provide nursing and domestic services in Australian military hospitals and convalescent homes. In peacetime this largely female volunteer labour force has assisted during natural disasters and other emergencies. As an organisational entity VACs were phased out by the 1970s, however volunteer service continues to be integral to the organisation's delivery of many of its programs.

Services to trace the whereabouts of missing and wounded service personnel were also first established in 1915. These services operated during both World Wars and after World War II evolved into services for tracing civilians displaced from their homelands in the aftermath of war and civil unrest. By the 1960s, with the growth of Red Cross role in disaster management, registration and enquiry services were set up to respond to inquiries about people displaced by natural disaster. The units responsible for this work and have been variously known as the Wounded and Missing Inquiry Bureau, Tracing Bureau, and the National Registration and Inquiry System. Like many Red Cross programs, administration of tracing services has gradually been centralised from state Divisions to national management. Note that Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau records from World War I are held by the Australian War Memorial.

Blood transfusion services were first established in 1929 in the Victorian Division and soon after in other states. These continued to be primarily state based services until 1996 although during the Second World War a level of national coordination was introduced to facilitate the supply of blood to the armed forces. In 1996, largely in response to the AIDS epidemic, the divisional services were amalgamated to form the Australian Red Cross Blood Service, a separate operating division of the Australian Red Cross.

References and Further Information

Melanie Oppenheimer: *The Power of Humanity: 100 Years of Australian Red Cross 1914-2014* (Sydney, Harper Collins, 2014)

Australian Red Cross web site: [www.redcross.org.au](http://www.redcross.org.au) (accessed June 2015)

Australian Red Cross Blood Service web site: <http://www.donateblood.com.au/about-us> (accessed June 2015)

Australian Red Cross has donated 100 years of archives to the University of Melbourne:

<http://www.redcross.org.au/gift-to-the-nation.aspx> (accessed June 2015)

Australian War Memorial, First World War Red Cross Wounded and Missing Files:

[https://www.awm.gov.au/people/roll-search/wounded\\_and\\_missing/](https://www.awm.gov.au/people/roll-search/wounded_and_missing/)

Australian Womens Register entry for the Australian Red Cross:

<http://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE0715b.htm> (accessed June 2015). See also Register entries for individual women prominent within the Red Cross.

<b>Date Range of Collection/Series</b>	1916-1990
<b>Size/Extent</b>	4 Units (0.68m)
<b>Access Conditions</b>	Access: Open

**Scope and Content of Collection/Series**

[Red Cross Archives series reference: NO2]

Comprises records of Australian Red Cross personnel who served as Voluntary Aid Detachments (VAD) or Field Force officers in Australia and overseas. The service cards are alphabetically sorted into groups Field Force Female A to D, Field Force Male J to M etc. They record the Army Number, Rank, Names & Addresses, places served and the period of service as well as dates that information was added to the card.

Also includes a register controlling the index cards, a small collection of passport sized photographs of personnel, list of the first official Australian contingent of VAD's to serve in England and France in 1916 as well as a Register of Certificates awarded to Field Force personnel (1946-1961).

Formed in 1915, Voluntary Aid Detachments had basic medical and home nursing certificates and were tasked with administering first aid, nursing and domestic assistance and other support for returned and wounded soldiers in convalescent homes, hospital ships and in blood banks. In 1916, Australia Red Cross sent Voluntary Aid Detachments to serve in military hospitals in France and England under the British Red Cross, subsequently in 1918 the Australian Imperial Voluntary Aid Detachment (AIVAD) was formed. Upon their return from Europe VADs were tasked with assisting the temporary hospitals treating the influenza epidemic of 1919.

<http://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE0491b.htm>

Red Cross Field Force officers were deployed during World War II with the Far East Land Forces (FARELF) and in subsequent theatres of Japan, Korea and Malaya. Field Force officers were attached to land based military units to meet operational commitments. The last Field Force officer returned to Australia following the closure of the Butterfield RAAF base in Malaysia in 1988.

Researchers should also refer to: 'Voluntary Aid Detachment Membership Registers' (1915- 1919) (2016.0074) Previous control V30 as well as 'Correspondence Files, National Headquarters' (2015.0033) Previous control NO.33.

Researchers should note that under the Geneva Conventions Act 1957 protections govern the use of the Red Cross emblem. For further information see Archives staff.

<b>Collection Category</b>	Community and Political, organisations
<b>This document dated</b>	22/03/2017

**To request access to records on the list below via the University of Melbourne Archives  
Reading Room, quote the Unit/Box reference in full.**

<b>Unit/Box</b>	<b>Item Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date Range</b>	<b>Description</b>
2016.0050 Unit 1	2016.0050.0000 1	Australian Red Cross Personnel who served in Australia and Overseas after World War 2	1945-1973	Field Force personnel who served in Japan, Korea and Malaya including with Far East Land Forces (FARELF). Includes Army Number, Rank, Names & Addresses, places served and the period of service. Also list of Field Force personnel who were demobilised.
2016.0050 Unit 1	2016.0050.0000 2	Australian Red Cross Personnel who served in Australia and Overseas during WW1	1916-1919	VAD's (Voluntary Aid Detachments) who served during World War 1. Includes first official Australian contingent of VAD's to serve in England and France in 1916.
2016.0050 Unit 1	2016.0050.0000 3	Certificate of Service [Field Force]	1946	Unclaimed Certificate of Service for Richard Grice, member of Field Force during World War II. Originally held within the Register of Field Force Certificates of Service.
2016.0050 Unit 1	2016.0050.0000 4	Field Force Male A to C	1939-1971	Personnel cards. Register controlling these cards in same box.
2016.0050 Unit 1	2016.0050.0000 5	Field Force Male D to I	1939-1971	Personnel cards. Register controlling these cards in same box.
2016.0050 Unit 1	2016.0050.0000 6	Field Force Male J to M	1939-1971	Personnel cards. Register controlling these cards in same box.
2016.0050 Unit 1	2016.0050.0000 7	Field Force Male N to R	1939-1971	Personnel cards. Register controlling these cards in same box.
2016.0050 Unit 1	2016.0050.0000 8	Field Force Male S to Z	1939-1971	Personnel cards. Register controlling these cards in same box.

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<b>Unit/Box</b>	<b>Item Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date Range</b>	<b>Description</b>
2016.0050 Unit 1	2016.0050.0000 9	Field Force personnel	1939-1945	Small passport size photographs, generally two each, of: Barker, Bilson, Brooks, Forward C F, Gardiner PJ, Moodie RA, Parker, Ross A, and Woodward F L.
2016.0050 Unit 1	2016.0050.0001 0	List of Field Force, male and female personnel serving in Australia and overseas (World War II)	1939-1945	Several lists of Australian Red Cross Field Force personnel serving during World War II. These appear to have been compiled at various times after the completion of the war and contain information such as addresses, periods of service, etc.
2016.0050 Unit 1	2016.0050.0001 1	Register of Certificates of Service	1946-1961	Bound register of Field Force personnel sent Certificates of Service, contains alphabetical tabs, and listing name, rank, certificate number, date sent and date acknowledged. The first pages shows Unattached Personnel. The first page under each tab lists female personnel; the second page male personnel. Most entries cover period of WW2 but last entry appears to have been made in 1961. Control Register for Field Force Personnel Cards for both male (Box 1) and female personnel (Box 2).
2016.0050 Unit 2	2016.0050.0001 2	Field Force Female A to D	1939-1960	Field Force personnel cards. Register controlling these cards in Box 1.
2016.0050 Unit 2	2016.0050.0001 3	Field Force Female E to J	1939-1960	Field Force personnel cards. Register controlling these cards in Box 1.
2016.0050 Unit 2	2016.0050.0001 4	Field Force Female K to P	1939-1960	Field Force personnel cards. Register controlling these cards in Box 1.

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Unit/Box	Item Number	Title	Date Range	Description
2016.0050 Unit 2	2016.0050.0001 5	Field Force Female R to Z	1939-1960	Field Force personnel cards. Register controlling these cards in Box 1.
2016.0050 Unit 2	2016.0050.0001 6	Field Force Female	1955-1973	Field Force personnel cards. Register controlling these cards in Box 1.
2016.0050 Unit 2	2016.0050.0001 7	Field Force Monthly Record Sheets	1942-1944	Record of placement and movement of Field Force officers, comprising monthly return sheets signed by Commissioners.
2016.0050 Unit 2	2016.0050.0001 8	Field Force operation orders and operation instructions, and associated other records	1950-1985	Field Force operation instructions (from 1966 operation orders). Each is addressed to an individual employed by Australian Red Cross and outlines details of the appointment, responsibilities, travel details, etc.
2016.0050 Unit 2	2016.0050.0001 9	Field Force Service Summary Sheets	1954-1973	Summaries of service, filed alphabetically in two sections, Ex-Field Force, and Ex-Commissioners.
2016.0050 Unit 2	2016.0050.0002 0	Headquarters staff - female	1939-1946	
2016.0050 Unit 2	2016.0050.0002 1	Mobile Aid	1943-1946	
2016.0050 Unit 2	2016.0050.0002 2	Field Force members attached to Service Hospitals	1943-1970	Index cards, alphabetically by last name, containing summary records of staff, several cards subsequently updated with notes re death etc. Accompanying alphabetical list and copies of memos such as report of death of Miss Helen Beggs. Previous number ARCV A00414.



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<b>Unit/Box</b>	<b>Item Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date Range</b>	<b>Description</b>
2016.0050 Unit 3	2016.0050.0002 3	Index Cards - A to Z Male staff and volunteers; A to I Female staff and volunteers	1938-1990	Index cards, alphabetically by last name, containing summary records of staff and volunteers based at Australian Red Cross National Headquarters in Melbourne.
2016.0050 Unit 4	2016.0050.0002 4	Index Cards - I to Z Female staff and volunteers	1938-1990	Index cards, alphabetically by last name, containing summary records of staff and volunteers based at Australian Red Cross National Headquarters in Melbourne.

**End of List**