

Creator	Deakin White, Lady Vera
Creator's Activity/Occupatio	Charities

Creator's Historical Note

Vera Deakin was the youngest daughter of Victorian-born Alfred Deakin (1856-1919), barrister and later Prime Minister of Australia, and Elizabeth Martha Anne ('Pattie') Deakin (nee Browne).

She attended the University of Melbourne studying English literature, but her principle interest was cello and singing. In 1912 she travelled in Europe to pursue her musical studies and was there when World War 1 broke out. Returning to Australia she joined the local Branch of the British Red Cross Society, but soon sought war work abroad. She was invited to Cairo where she opened the Australian Wounded and Missing Inquiry Bureau, which later moved its headquarters to London. For her work, helping thousands of soldiers and families, she was appointed an Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 1918.

Returning to Australia she held numerous senior positions in the Red Cross including Commandant of the Victorian Division (1938-1945), National Vice-Chairman (1945-1950, 1964-1966) and chairman of the Music Therapy Service (1950). Awarded an honorary life membership in 1945. Additionally, she worked on the management committee of the Royal Children's Hospital, and was President (1961-1965) of the Victorian Society for Crippled Children and Adults. She foresaw the need for the Emergency Service Corps after WW2 and in the 1970s was instrumental in establishing the Red Cross Music Therapy Service amongst other initiatives. Her work in Cairo, Egypt and in London, England with in the Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau during the First World War became the foundation of the Australian Red Cross Enquiry Bureau, work that has continued throughout the organization's history.

She married Sir Thomas Walter White (1888-1957) in 1920, together having four daughters. Her husband became the Australian High Commissioner in London (1951-1956), after his knighthood in 1952, she was entitled to be known as Lady White. Lady White remained an active worker for Australian Red Cross throughout her life retiring in 1977.

Creator	Australian Red Cross Society, Victorian Division
Creator's Activity/Occupatio	Charities - Community organisations

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.

The Victorian Division of the Australian Branch of the British Red Cross Society was formed on 21 August 1914, days after the establishment of the Branch itself. The inaugural President was Lady Margaret Stanley, wife of the Governor of Victoria. For much of the twentieth century the state Divisions of the Red Cross held primary responsibility for the delivery of Red Cross services, especially during peacetime. Blood transfusion services, missing persons tracing, hospital and convalescence, fundraising, disaster relief and a wide range of other community services largely have their origins in the state Divisions rather than the National Office. However during the latter part of the twentieth century coordination of services gradually shifted from state to national level. Organisational restructuring in the late 1990's consolidated this shift.

For a summary of the history and activities of the Australian Red Cross as a whole see the entry 'Australian Red Cross Society - National Office' in University of Melbourne Archives' online catalogue. Other sources include:

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 (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/

Australian Women's 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.

Date Range of Collection/Series	1915-1978
Size/Extent	1 unit (0.08m)
Access Conditions	Access: Open

Scope and Content of Collection/Series

[Red Cross Archives series reference: V80] Comprises papers of Vera Deakin (later, Lady White) relating to her lifelong career within the Australian Red Cross.

Comprises correspondence acknowledging her work overseas during WW1; photographs of the Wounded and Missing Bureau in London, official documents such as identify papers; an address given on the history of the Wounded and Missing Bureau, an address given by Sir John Angus Nimmo at her funeral service, as well as various biographical summaries.

She served on both the Victorian Divisional Council and National Council in senior roles. This collection of papers is in no way comprehensive, nor representative of her lifelong work within ARC.

See also: Central Bureau for Wounded, Missing and Prisoners of War, and of the National Tracing Bureau (NO4 2020.0062), and Photograph series***

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.

Collection Category	Community and Political, individuals
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This document dated	7/03/2022
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To request access to records on the list below via the University of Melbourne Archives Reading Room, quote the Unit/Box reference in full.

Unit/Box	Item Number	Title	Date Range	Description
2020.0060 Unit 1	2020.0060.0000 1	Lady White, nee Vera Deakin, file note	1978	Front part of a manila folder, buff colour, annotated: Lady White file. Born 25 December 1891. Died 9 August 1978. Collection of notes, articles, letters etc. re Lady White and her work with Red Cross from 1914-1978.

Unit/Box	Item Number	Title	Date Range	Description
2020.0060 Unit 1	2020.0060.0000 2	ARC involvement post WW1	1939-1974	File comprises photocopy of news clipping from The Herald dated 15 August 1974 and the original featured black and white photographic print; Report by Lilian Scantlebury on Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau, Australian Red Cross; Enquiry for Missing Persons and Prisoners of War Bureau, Bulletin No. 1. 7 February 1940 and No. 2. 24 May 1940; The Principles and purposes of the British Red Cross Society by Major-General Sir John Kennedy, GBE, CB, CMG, DSO, Deputy Chairman British Red Cross Society; reports of the Transport section 1939-1943 with cover letter to Lady White, letter dated 11 August 1959, from R. Nuttal; Extract from National Council 3 July 1951; Notes on the Picture Library; Disablement and the Causes by an Ex-Prisoner of War booklet; Memorandum dated 20 May 1975, to Secretary General from Maureen White re photographs acquired from Lady White suggested for the 'Historical Section'.

Unit/Box	Item Number	Title	Date Range	Description
2020.0060 Unit 1	2020.0060.0000 3	Miscellaneous references	1914-1978	Papers produced and used by Lady White during her career with Australian Red Cross. File comprises an Inventory list titled 'Lady White File (compiled September 1978)', 22 items [list compiled before cataloguing]; page titled 'Lady White Papers', held by Lady White's family, 4 papers listed; Sir John Monash 1865-1931 Bibliography; Extract from "East Melbourne Walkabout" by Winston H. Burchett (2 x copies); Summary of lectures in Elementary nutrition booklet; the Gift of Life pamphlet Vol. 1., No. 1 Perth, May 1959 and Vol. 1. No. 2, Perth, August 1959; Handicrafts to Aid in Rehabilitation booklet ARCS.
2020.0060 Unit 1	2020.0060.0000 4	Vera Deakin -Address re Wounded and Missing Bureau WW1	Undated	27 foolscap typed pages. Address delivered by Lady White and presented by her to the Library, on the work of ARCS Overseas Enquiry Bureau, 1914-1918
2020.0060 Unit 1	2020.0060.0000 5	Tributes, obituaries	August 1978-November 1978	File concerning the death of Lady White, comprises typed tributes and obituaries, outwards correspondence from ARC notifying of her death, Funeral Service booklet, Biography and family recollections.

Unit/Box	Item Number	Title	Date Range	Description
2020.0060 Unit 1	2020.0060.0000 6	Vera Deakin WW1 Wounded and Missing Bureau	1915-1919	File comprises Enquiry List October 1915; 2 x letters June 1919; letter November 1917; copy of Vera Deakin British Empire Army Certificate of Identity for Civilians wearing the Red Cross Brassard; handwritten letters October 1919 [?] and August 1918; letter July 1919; 4 x black and white photographs (Kaiser's Palace, Scene in Berlin during strike 1919, German workers at Rferat (sp?) III, Kriegsministerium for Australian Red Cross, Capt. C. Mills, first member of the Australian Imperial Force to reach the objective); 2 x Joint Voluntary Aid Detachments (VAD) Committee notes - British War medal award 1917, Assistant Commandant of Australian Detachment 1918; Joint war Committee special badge No. SL2563; Empire Nurses Red Cross Club, small typed note from Taha Adum; letter accompanying Chevron award and certificate, Egyptian State Railways pass 1916; Westminster Abbey Festival Service 1917 programme; 1 x black and white photograph of Vera in office 36 Grosvenor Place, London 1918 - Tracing Bureau, on telephone far left corner, Mrs Scantlebury beside her; 3 x photographs of Oxshott, Surrey (Mrs Lilian Scantlebury and Lady White 1918, Mrs

Unit/Box	Item Number	Title	Date Range	Description
				Lilian Scantelbury 1918 and Enquiry Bureau for Wounded Missing POW Australian Red Cross Society 26 Grosvenor Place London 1919); news clippings in German, sent from Berlin by Alwyn Hay stationed there between 1914-1918; object: Fabric Blue Chevrons from Lady White's uniform.
<div>End of List</div>				