

**Glenholm Churchyard,
Broughton, Scotland
War Grave**



Lest We Forget

World War 1



SISTER

A. ALEXANDER

VOLUNTARY AID DETACHMENT

10TH NOVEMBER, 1918 Age 33

Annie ALEXANDER

Anne Alexander was born on 4th September, 1885 at Geelong, Victoria, Australia to parents James & Jane Hodgkinson Alexander (nee Hutton).

James Alexander, father of Annie Alexander, died 30th June, 1887 at Geelong, Victoria,

Jane Hodgkinson Alexander, mother of Annie Alexander, died 1892 in London, England.

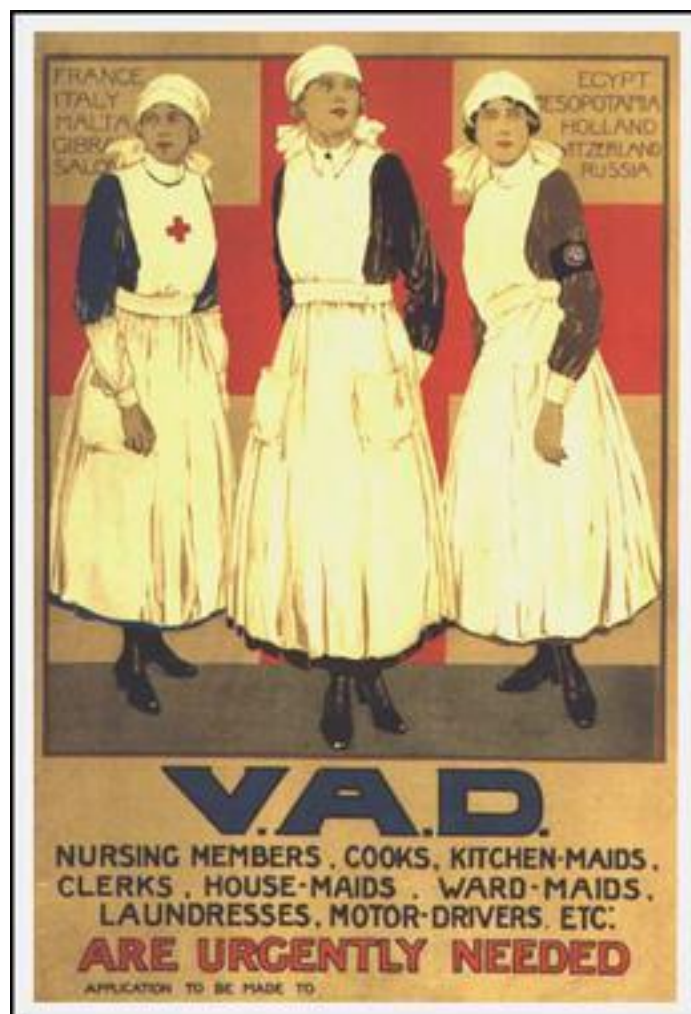
Annie Alexander joined V.A.D. in March, 1916 when she went to Whitehill Red Cross Hospital, Scotland. In April, 1918 she joined the staff of the Royal Naval Hospital, Peebles, Scotland.

Voluntary Aid Detachment

The primary role of a Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) member was that of nursing orderly in hospitals, carrying out menial but essential tasks - scrubbing floors, sweeping, dusting and cleaning bathrooms and other areas, dealing with bedpans, and washing patients. They were not employed in military hospitals, except as ward and pantry maids; rather, they worked in Red Cross convalescent and rest homes, canteens, and on troop trains.

At the start of the First World War, Australian VADs were restricted from traveling overseas by the Defence Council. As a result, many chose to travel on their own initiative and join British detachments, often in Australian Hospitals. It is reported that the 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital included in their nursing staff some 120 VADs, chiefly Australians in the British service, employed through the Australian Red Cross Society. This policy was changed in 1916 after a request from Great Britain, and the first detachment of thirty official Australian VADs to serve overseas left Australia in September 1916.

(Information from The Australian War Memorial)



World War 1 recruitment poster for Voluntary Aid Detachments

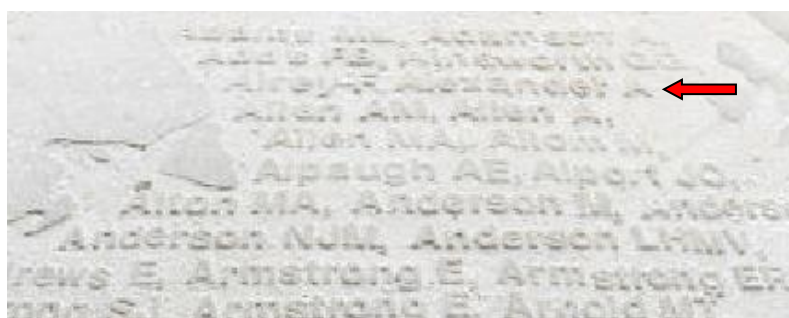
Sister Annie Alexander died on 10th November, 1918 at Royal Naval Hospital, Peebles, Scotland from Pneumonia.

Sister Annie Alexander was buried in Glenholm Churchyard, Broughton, Peebleshire, Scotland.

Scotland National Probate Index – 1920:

Alexander, Anne or Annie, of Aphrasia Street, Newtown, Geelong, State of Victoria, Australia, latterly residing at Chapelgill, Broughton, Peeblesshire, and V.A.D. Head Waitress, Royal Naval Auxiliary Hospital, Peebles, died 10 November 1918, at Peebles, intestate. Conformation granted at Edinburgh, 16 February, to Elizabeth Margaret Alexander of Deans Ritchie, wife of George Deans Ritchie, Farmer, Chapelgill aforesaid, her sister, Executrix dativa qua next of kin. Value of Estate, £175. 17s. 1d.

A. Alexander is remembered on the Memorial to the Nurses and Voluntary Aid Detachment Nurses who died during both World Wars. The Memorial lists almost 1,300 names & is located at the National Memorial Arboretum, Croxwall Road, Alrewas, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire, England.



Miss Anne Alexander, V.A.D. is remembered on the Broughton War Memorial, Tweeddale, Borders, Scotland (adjacent to school).



Postcard of Broughton War Memorial, Scotland in original position *(Photo from War Memorials Online)*



Broughton War Memorial, Scotland

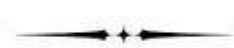


Broughton War Memorial, Scotland

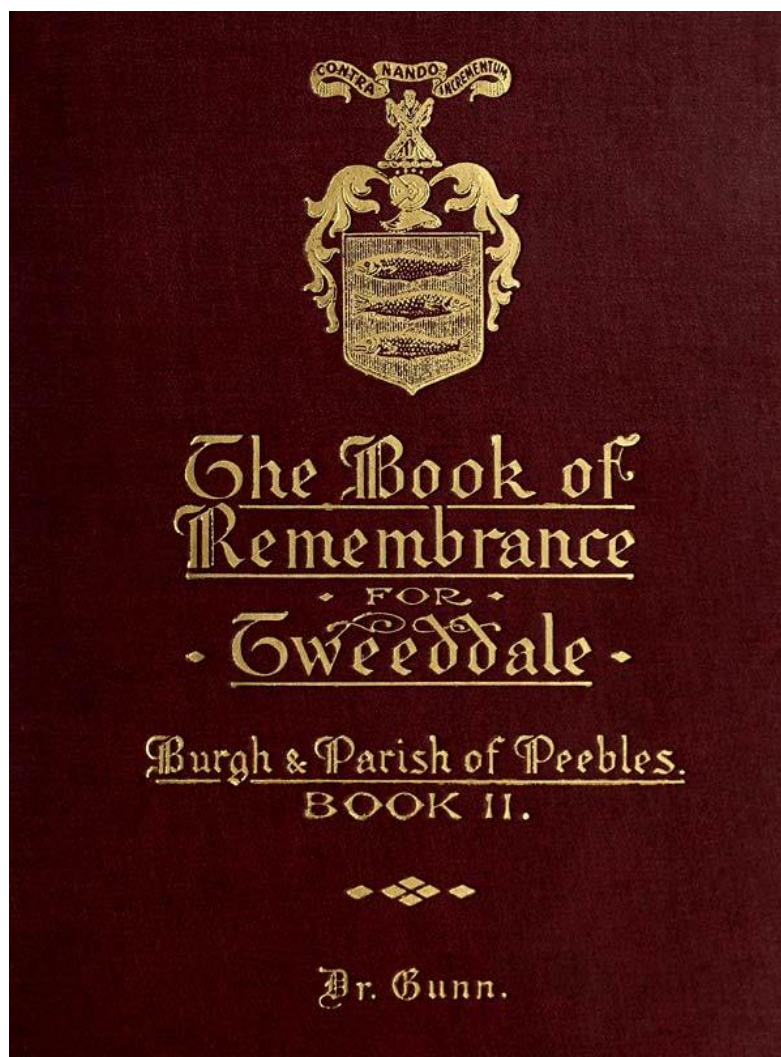
[NOTE: At the time of researching (January, 2020) Sister Annie Alexander was not listed on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission nor the Commemorative Roll at the Australian War Memorial.

I have submitted her name to the Australian War Memorial & the "In From The Cold" project has submitted Sister Alexander's name to the CWGC.}

**Update: Terry Denham "In From The Cold" project advised me on 10th October, 2023 that the CWGC have rejected Sister Alexander's name to be included in CWGC as there was "a lack of evidence that she was contracted to the military at death."



From the Book of Remembrance for Tweeddale by Dr Gunn:



Burgh and Parish of Peebles

Sister Annie Alexander

Voluntary Aid Detachment

1918- November 10.

This lady, Sister ANNIE ALEXANDER, was the third member of the staff who succumbed during an epidemic of septic pneumonia at the Royal Naval Auxiliary Hospital, Peebles. Sister Ainsworth was the first to go, and George Bortfield the second. After Sister Alexander's death the plague ceased.

Miss Alexander belonged to an ancient Peeblesshire family, but she herself was born in Geelong, Australia, on the 4th of September 1885. She was visiting her sister at Chapelgrill, Broughton, when war broke out. In March 1916 she went to Whitehill Red Cross Hospital, and continued until March 1918, receiving the V.A.D.'s two stripes. In April 1918 she joined the staff of the Royal Naval Hospital at Peebles, and there performed duties of a most onerous nature, until she became infected with pneumonia, which carried her off on the 10th November 1918. So passed out of mortal ken one of that band of noble women who, during the Great War, did, not their bit, but their all.

She was of a hard-working, unselfish nature. The hospital was understaffed, but she insisted on carrying on under great disadvantages, and this continuous struggle undermined her strength, so that she was not able to resist the epidemic when it visited the Hospital, All her comrades of the staff, and all the naval officers who were patients, mourned her sincerely. Her funeral was conducted with full naval honours, being attended by every available resident in the Hospital, who reverently saluted as the motor hearse passed between their lines at the Cross of Peebles, on its way to the sequestered Churchyard of Glenholm, where her tired body now rests in peace.

*O gracious ones, we bless your name
Upon our bended knee;
The voice of love with tongue of flame
Records your charity.*

*Your hearts, your lives right willingly ye gave,
That sacred ruth might shine;
Ye fell, bright spirits, brave amongst the brave,
Compassionate, divine.*

*And when our griefs have passed on gloomy wing,
When friend and foe are sped,
Sons of a morning to be born shall sing
The radiant Cross of Red;
Sons of a morning to be born shall sing
The radiant Cross of Red.*



Sister Annie Alexander



Newspaper Notices

DEATHS

ALEXANDER – On the 10th November, 1918, in Scotland, Anne, youngest daughter of late James and Jane Alexander, Newtown-Brae, Geelong. (By cable).

(*The Argus*, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia – 13 November, 1918)

DISTRICT INTELLIGENCE

BONNYRIGG

COCKPEN RED CROSS DETACHMENT – One of the number of this Detachment has died at Peebles Naval Hospital. Miss Annie Alexander, who was head tablemaid at the Hospital, took ill a few days ago with influenza, which developed into pneumonia, and she passed away on Saturday. Of a bright and cheery disposition, she was loved by all. She was at Whitehill Hospital, Rosewell, for nearly two years before going to Peebles. This is the second V.A.D. of Midlothian who has given her life on service.

(*Dalkeith Advertiser*, Dalkeith, Midlothian, Scotland - 14 November, 1918)

WILLS AND ESTATES

Administration of the estate of Annie Alexander, late of Newtown, Geelong, who died in Scotland on 10th November last intestate, has been applied for by the Union Trustee Co. of Australia Ltd. Personal estate in Victoria left by deceased, and valued at £2088, goes to brothers and sisters in equal shares as next of kin.

(*The Age*, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia – 27 June, 1919)

Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission cares for cemeteries and memorials in 23,000 locations, in 153 countries. In all 1.7 million men and women from the Commonwealth forces from WWI and WWII have been honoured and commemorated in perpetuity.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission, as part of its mandate, is responsible for commemorating all Commonwealth war dead individually and equally. To this end, the war dead are commemorated by name on a headstone, at an identified site of a burial, or on a memorial. War dead are commemorated uniformly and equally, irrespective of military or civil rank, race or creed.

Not all service personnel have a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. In some instances the relative chose to have their own memorial/headstone placed on the deceased's grave. These private headstones are not maintained by the CWGC as they have no jurisdiction to maintain them.

Sister Annie Alexander is not acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission at the time of researching (January, 2020). Her details were sent to the "In From The Cold" project & they have forwarded a submission to CWGC.

Photo of Anne Alexander's Private Headstone in Glenholm Churchyard, Broughton, Peebleshire, Scotland.



(Photo courtesy of Fiona Burnett)



(Photo courtesy of Fiona Burnett)

In Loving Memory Of

ANNE

Daughter Of

James Alexander

Born Geelong, Australia, 4TH Sep, 1885

Died Royal Naval Hospital, Peebles

10TH Nov. 1918



Annie Alexander's headstone covered in daffodils – Easter 2018

(Photo by Sheila Milne – courtesy of Fiona Burnett)

Anne/Annie's Alexander's headstone covered in daffodils has been used on the front cover of the Parishes of Upper Tweeddale "*Kirk Matters*" Church magazine in Easter 2017 & Easter 2018.

Annie's headstone in Glenholm Churchyard is used by the parishes of Upper Tweeddale in their Easter "pilgrimage" where a headstone is covered in chicken wire & then adorned with daffodils. An open-air service is conducted in the churchyard at Glenholm on Easter Sunday morning.

(with thanks to Fiona Burnett for this information)

Parishes of Upper Tweeddale
KIRK MATTERS



EASTER 2017

Parishes of Upper Tweeddale
KIRK MATTERS



EASTER 2018

Parishes of Upper Tweeddale “*Kirk Matters*” Church magazine for Easter 2017 & Easter 2018



Anne Alexander’s Private Headstone in Glenholm Churchyard

(Photo courtesy of Fiona Burnett)