

HENDERSON, Millicent May (SF113524) AWAS



Name	HENDERSON, Millicent May Driver (AWAS)
Service Number	SF113524
Date of Birth	27th November 1922
Place of Birth	Victor Harbor SA
Resident	Victor Harbor SA

Image 1 ©Millie Smith family collection 2011
Studio circa late 1945,

Millicent (Millie) May Henderson was born on 27 November 1922 at Victor Harbor, the eldest of eight children of Frank Stanley Henderson and Eva May Henderson (nee Martin). Her father Frank had served in the 10th Infantry Battalion in France during the First World War, and her younger sister, Thelma Blanche also served.

Millie was educated at the Victor Harbor Primary and High Schools. During her school years she was a member of the Girl Guides. She left school in 1937 and commenced employment with the Post Master General's Department as a trainee telephonist and switchboard operator. Her duties with the PMG placed her in a reserved occupation and she was not allowed to join the armed forces until a suitable replacement had been found. Millie was 22 years old when she enlisted in the Australian Women's Army Service (AWAS) on 21 January 1945. Her younger sister, Thelma, enlisted immediately after her and was given the serial number SF113525, whereas Millie's was SF113524.

Millie undertook her basic training at the Australian Army Women's Service Training Depot at Camp Darley, near Bacchus Marsh, Victoria. On completion of her basic training, Millie was then posted to the Drivers' School at Bonegilla and after qualifying in her driving training course, she was posted to the 3rd Australian Ambulance Car Company based in South Melbourne.

During Millie's time in Melbourne she was detached to various units around the Melbourne area, principally driving patients between hospitals. On 23 August 1945, Millie was detached to the 20th Convalescent Hospital at Broadmeadows; where she was responsible for transporting ex-prisoners of war from the Port Melbourne pier to hospital.

On 30 September 1945, she met the Hospital Ship Oranje at Princess Pier, Port Melbourne to transport repatriated 8th Division former POWs to the 116th Military Hospital at Heidelberg. Millie

recalled that some of the soldiers were still terribly emaciated and were taken off the ship by stretchers.

“It was a scene I would never forget ... I didn’t know any of them as I was from South Australia (these were Victorian soldiers) but I was very shocked at their appearance and condition”.

Millie had known that a number of soldiers from Victor Harbor had been captured at the Fall of Singapore in February 1942, and many of these she had gone to school with. Millie remained with the 20th Convalescent Hospital until 9 January 1946 when she returned to 3 Company. In early June, she was posted back to Adelaide for discharge processing.

Millie Henderson was demobilised from the AWAS on 5 June 1946. She returned to her job at the PMG and retired after she married. Millie continues to live at Victor Harbor.

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Compiled by the Victor Harbor RSL History Team, January 2011. Updated by T. Young & M. Young 09/09/2025

Appendix



Image 2 ©rslvictorharbor.com.au
2011 – purchased from naa.gov.au
Enlistment photograph circa 1945.



Image 3 ©Millie Smith family collection 2011
Two sisters in uniform, circa December 1945, Victor Harbor. Thelma (left) and Millie (right) who are both on leave, are shown with their grandmother, Mrs Emma Martin at the family home.



Image 4 ©Millie Smith family collection 2011
Millie in her regulation uniforms – summer dress.



Image 5©Millie Smith family collection 2011
Millie in her regulation uniforms – summer
Millie in her regulation uniforms winter
uniform and gloves.



Image 6©Millie Smith family collection 2011
Millie in her regulation uniform winter
trousers and pullover. Note in all three photos
Millie's hair length is also the regulation
length.