



CEW Bean Prize Citation - 2008

Dr Kirsty Harris

‘Not just “routine nursing”’: the roles and skills of the Australian Army Nursing Service during World War I’

PhD, University of Melbourne

Utilising an extensive range of sources, Kirsty Harris discusses the evolution of, and the significant changes in, Australian military nursing practices that occurred over the course of the First World War. Unlike the British distinction between the professional officer Queen Alexandra’s Imperial Military Nursing Service (QAIMNS) and the untrained civilian Voluntary Aid Detachments (VADs) who worked for the British Red Cross Society (BRCS), all Australian Army Nursing Service personnel were professionals and members of the Australian Army. As such, by charting the impact of the war on their professional development, Kirsty Harris’s thesis offers new understanding of a military branch that is often overlooked. She discusses the technical facets of nursing in a clear and accessible manner while the database of Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS) members included as an Appendix is particularly impressive and provides a useful new research tool for historians. From today’s perspective, these Australian nurses were “soldiers” with an affinity that linked them to the AIF, and as such her thesis bears a close link with the history of the Australian Army in meeting the fundamental criterion of the CEW Bean Prize.