OLIVE GOLDRIDGE HALL – Staff Nurse, 3rd Australian General Hospital, Australian Army Nurse Service

Olive was born in 1887. Prior to the outbreak of World War 1 she lived with her mother Ellen Margaret Hall on George Road. At the time of enlistment she was a trained nurse, 28 years old and unmarried. She enlisted in North Perth as a Staff Nurse in the 3rd Australian General Hospital Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS) on 6 August 1915 and left from Fremantle on the RMS Orontes on the 11th of August 1915 (see First World War Embarkation Rolls – Olive Goldridge Hall). She returned on the 9th of December 1918 after doing service in Lemnos, Egypt and France. Lemnos Island was the first hospital for the wounded from Gallipoli. She was stationed in hospitals close to the front line and wrote home about the bad cases that she had seen. The following is from the article 1918: Australians in France – Nurses – “The roses of No Man’s Land” which is on the Australian War Memorial website.

“Nurses had a unique role in the war. On one hand they were busy cleaning wounds, sometimes even performing minor surgery, administering treatments and frequently doing heavy physical labour, often living in squalid conditions, in trying climatic environments. They were usually understaffed and lacking supplies, sometimes under threat of attack and constantly fighting off exhaustion and sickness themselves. On the other hand, they were also expected to be feminine, cheerful, and a sweetheart and mother to every patient – the physical substitute for all the women back home.”

Olive wrote back to her mother in 1918 and her letter was published in the Geraldton Guardian of March 14, 1918 (see article Geraldton Nurse Experiences Christmas Festivities in France) about the conditions that she was working in and the Christmas they celebrated whilst at war.

On her return to Geraldton Nurse Hall was accorded a public reception at the town hall (see article Welcome Home Geraldton Nurse). She was appointed the first nurse for the Visiting Nurse Scheme (see article Geraldton Visiting Nurse Scheme from Geraldton Guardian 2 September 1920). Her appointment was a popular one. She was well known in the district and her knowledge of Geraldton and the surrounding localities was a benefit.

She never married and died in Perth in 1974 aged 87.