

**Lieutenant Jean Hamilton BLACK  
NX315 - Australian Medical Army Corps  
- 2/1 Australian General Hospital (AGH)**

Jean Hamilton Black was born on 20 Nov 1908 at Cargo, a daughter of George and Grace Black.

John's grandfather, William Black, was born at Dumfriesshires, Scotland, in 1851. He immigrated to Australia in the 1870s and married Susan Pearce in Bathurst in 1878. The couple moved to the Molong district before settling in Cumnock around 1882, and establishing the Cumnock Store. William and Susan had six children, one of whom was George John Black.



William Black was a driving force of the development of Cumnock, and the Cumnock Store is still being maintained as a General Store at the present time. William was, over some years, President of the Cumnock Pastoral and Agricultural Society, President of the Amaroo Shire Council and a Justice of the Peace. He handed over the Cumnock Store to his sons, George and Wallace, in Jan 1910, and the store then became named as the Black Bros. Store. William and Susan retired to their home, "Park House," in Cumnock. Susan died, aged 69 years, on 21 Jul 1928, at Sydney. William died, aged 77 years, on 28 Jul 1929, at Cumnock. Both Susan and William are buried in the Anglican section of the Cumnock Cemetery.

Jean's father, George Black, opened a store in Cargo in 1905. George married Grace Hamilton, daughter of Elizabeth and James Hamilton, of Cargo, on 16 Jul 1907 at the Church of England, Cargo. They had five children: Jean, John, Keith, Ruth and Margaret. The couple moved back to Cumnock in late 1909. George and his brother Wallace took over their father's shop in January 1910, which then became known as Black Bros. Wallace managed the Yeoval Black Bros store 1915 - 1921.

George and Susan built a brick house, named "Notlimah" opposite his father's house in Black Street, in 1911. He was a good cricketer and played an important part in community organisations. George owned the property "Kabadah" around 1927. He sold the Black Bros store to Bruce Sparkes in 1961. Grace died, aged 79 years, in Molong on 2 Mar 1964. George died, aged 85 years, on 5 Sep 1967, in Sydney. They are both interred at the Christ Church Cathedral Columbarium & Memorial Garden, Newcastle.

After completing schooling, Jean attended Sydney University to complete a Masseur (Physiotherapy) Degree from 1930 - 1933. She spent time from 1933 at the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital as a masseuse before opening up a private practice in Macquarie Street.

*The Molong Express and Western District Advertiser (WDA) - 15 Oct 1938, P8 reported:  
"AERONAUTICS AT CUMNOCK - Last Saturday afternoon Cumnock received a visitor from the skies when Miss Jean Black arrived by plane from Sydney. Most of the 'rising generation' went over to Mr Black's paddock where the plane landed, to "give it the once over" and to see that everything worked as it should. The plane was a Leopold Moth and was piloted by Mr. Dick Perry of Narromine... Miss Black intends spending her annual holiday leave with her parents at Cumnock."*

Jean Black, aged 31 years, enlisted in the Australian Medical Corps on 2 Jan 1940. She was one of four NSW masseuses chosen to go overseas with the Second AIF. The four were farewelled at the Australia Hotel, Sydney, as reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* -9 Jan 1940, p4. Their outdoor uniform consisted of a navy serge coat and skirt with military button and maroon shoulder tabs; navy shirt and collar, maroon tie with AIF badge, tan shoes, and navy "pork-pie" hat.

Masseur Jean Black embarked at Sydney on *U4 Otranto* on 10 Jan 1940, sailed via Colombo, and disembarked at Kantara, Egypt, on 13 Feb 1940. They then boarded a train for Gaza Ridge, Palestine, where they slowly established a hospital, beginning with meagre resources.

The *Wellington Times* - 22 Feb 1940, p4, stated:  
*"During the week Mr and Mrs GJ Black received a cable from their daughter, Jean, stating that she is attached to the staff of the AIF hospital, at Gazeh, in Palestine, and is quite well and happy."*



Jean's two brothers, Captain John Black NX5629 - 6 Division Cavalry Regiment and Wing Commander Keith Black, RAAF 261132, also served in WW2.

*The Sun*, Sydney - 17 Sep 1940, p11, reported:

*"By a coincidence, Lieut. John Black and his sister, Nurse Jean Black, of the AIF in Palestine, have always managed to be together when parcels arrive for them from their home at Cumnock, NSW. They have written to their parents saying that mail is often delivered at night and under black-out conditions they have great fun opening their parcels."*



*View of 2/1 AGH, Gaza Ridge, 1941.*

*"On 8 June 1941 the 2/1 AGH had 484 patients. Soon after the 2/2 AGH (1200 beds) joined them at Gaza Ridge, and with the 7th Division, the 2/5 AGH, another 1200 bed unit helped lighten the load. During the Syrian campaign the 2/1st's bed state rose to nearly 2,000."*

[www.birtwistlewiki.com.au/wiki/2/1st\\_Australian\\_General\\_Hospital](http://www.birtwistlewiki.com.au/wiki/2/1st_Australian_General_Hospital)

Nurse Jean Black was hospitalised at 2/1 AGH with enteritis/sandfly fever from 13 - 19 Nov 1941. In March 1942 the main body of 2/1 AGH boarded the *SS Laconia* at Port Tewfik for Bombay, where she boarded *SS Duntroon*, returning to Fremantle via Colombo, Mombasa, and Durban—a total journey of twelve weeks. Jean was promoted to be a Lieutenant on 7 Apr 1942.

#### **WELCOME HOME TO MISS BLACK**

On Tuesday evening Miss Jean Black, who has recently returned from overseas, where she had been a massuer in the A.I.F., was tendered a welcome home. The function took place in the Shire Hall, and the large room was crowded with those who had assembled to welcome her back to Cumnock. On arrival the guest was presented with a bunch of violets by Mrs. R. Reynolds, and a hearty welcome was accorded Miss Black, who passed around the room renewing old acquaintances. Refreshments were provided by the ladies present, and a most enjoyable evening was spent. Miss Black had many exciting and strange experiences in foreign lands, but is very modest in the part she took herself.

Jean returned to Australia in May 1942 and was welcomed home to Cumnock at the Shire Hall on 2 Jun 1942, as reported in the *Molong Express & WDA* – 5 Jun 1943, p8.

Jean married Major Frank Cox, AIF, of Melbourne, at St Philip's Church, Sydney, on 2 Oct 1942.

Jean was discharged from the Australian Army on 11 Aug 1943 and received the Active Service Badge. She is commemorated on the WW2 Plaque, Cumnock Memorial Gates.

Frank Cox was discharged on 17 Jan 1946 from the Signals 11 Aust Division, as a Lieutenant Colonel.

Jean and Frank lived in Newcastle, where Frank worked as a commercial manager. They had one child, Jennie.

Frank Cox died, aged 65 years, on 6 Nov 1970, at Sydney.

Jean Hamilton Cox died, aged 82 years, on 11 Dec 1990, at Sydney. A funeral service was held for Jean at St James Anglican Church, Sydney.