

NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY -

OPEN FOUNDATION COURSE

TIME: 10am - 12 noon THU

FROM: MARGAEN TOBIN

TO: M/S MARG. HENRY.

TERM 3: REGIONAL HISTORY ASSIGNMENT.

ABOUT A MRS. MELISSA CAMERON, MAYFIELD WEST, EX EMPLOYEE
THE NEWCASTLE STORE, EX WOMEN'S ARMY SERVICE. (1921-1988.)

Mrs. Melissa Cameron was born at a small mining town, in Western Australia, in a family moved in 1923, to the Hunter Valley coal where they settled at Kurri Kurri. Mrs. Cameron the time during the great depression, her father came home to try and find work in the country. The butcher, she said, helped the community each afternoon with the left over offal, which they called 'The Communist Party' (1) operated a soup kitchen day to help the needy families, and Mrs. Cameron speaks highly of their effort, she said, without support many families would have starved. Her father gained employment at the B.M.P. in 1934, and the family then moved to Mayfield East. Mrs. Cameron had her education at Newcastle Central School, where she matriculated, and in 1936 was employed as a typist at the Newcastle Co-Operative Society Store.

The Newcastle and Suburban Co-op Store, was founded in 1898, by 12 men, whose aim was to provide food and groceries to working class people (2). The industrial structure of Newcastle, from the second decade of the 20th century, had an important influence on its future development, with the establishment of the B.M.P., and its satellites at Port Waratah and also the State Dockyard (3). People from the country moved into the nearby suburbs, as more people found employment at the different industries. Also with

(1) SHEILAN GRAY, NEWCASTLE IN THE GREAT DEPRESSION, BROADMEADOW, 1974,
(2) G.C. DOHERTY, NEWCASTLE THE MAKING OF AN AUSTRALIAN CITY, STONEY, 1983,
(3) D.P. HAMPTON, RETAIL CO-OPERATIVE IN THE HUNTER VALLEY, 1983.

and tram links, people from outlying suburbs could travel to 'The Store', and place their orders and them home delivered. Between 1916-1920, 'The Store' had financial problems, because of mismanagement but overcame this to carry on successfully. The club did not harm 'The Store', as it did many other clubs (in fact membership) - grew, with strength from Pla Moreweather and Waratah, as most of its members from non-mining groups, and two-thirds were

Mrs. Cameron tells of her interview for a job as a typist at 'The Store', with her Intermediate Certificate. She was told to write essays on subjects of science and how to handle merchandise, pages of written arithmetic, and finally after a hundred applicants she was one of the three hired. Her days of working at 'The Store' she speaks affectionately of the picnics, the friendships that were made - staff, to the eccentrics. She was a member of the Women's Guild, and was aware of the financial difficulties encountered by 1979 which finally led to its closure in 1981.

When Australia declared war on Germany in 1914 no one thought of women other than nurses, serving in the Armed Forces. As men enlisted, women went into the male work domains in munitions, air and ship building, and many more forms of employment. Mrs. Cameron planned to attend Hawkesbury College.

and join the Australian Womens Land Army,⁽⁵⁾ unable to afford jodpurs and other necessary equip. a typist wage; travelled to Sydney instead to en-
The Australian Women's Army Service (A.W.A.S.

The Australian Women's Army Service, was fo-
the 13th August 1941, and approved on the 29th Sep-
1941.⁽⁶⁾ The principal object of the service was to-
men from certain military duties, for their employ-
with fighting units. To organise and establish the
the responsibility was given to Miss Sybil Irwin
October 1941, later to become Lieutenant-Colonel, w-
the daughter of Brigadier-General Godfrey Irwin
for officers began, as other ranks could not be fo-
without officers to take charge and school the
First enlistments began in January 1942, for cler-
typists, stenographers, cooks and transport drivers
was soon expanded into other occupations, and
two years it grew from nothing to a strength of

On arrival at the Sydney Showground, Mrs
was rejected because she needed three teeth.
Not deterred she went back home had her tee-
filled, and returned to Sydney on 11th November
and ~~was~~ enlisted. What a shock! for where wa-
posting, ^{was} Mayfield West, with thirteen other A.W.
houses commandeered for army personnel, Two of t-
were for the A.W.A.S, one for the mess another
the regimental post, with the rest occupied by so-

(5) JEAN SCOTT GIRLS WITH GRIT, Sydney, 1946,
(6) PATSY ADITH-SMITH AUSTRALIAN WOMEN AT WAR MELBOURNE 1946

The A.W.A.S., were trained to operate height and predictors, working in conjunction with 3.7 inch anti-aircraft guns, feeding information to a gunner who set the fuse on shells and fired. In Australia became a target, the men were sent for the fighting, and the women took their place. Newcastle, Manning searchlights and doing duty. Newcastle, Stockton, B.M.P., Mayfield, and Mereweather were high priority areas, to for attack, ~~said Mrs. Cameron~~. It was for their duty to learn to fire a .303 rifle and Vickers machine gun. At Mereweather they put on the heavy 3.7 guns shooting at simulated attacks attached to aeroplanes. Then Mrs Cameron was transferred to a radar station near Williamstown and her home was a seven story watch tower one door, the top of the tower was 3 parts glass, the whole construction moved and swayed in another posting for Mrs. Cameron was at Stockton close to the breakwater, which was known as 3RD DIVY A/A. The three (3.7) gun sites were manned by A.W.A.S., as many of the gunners were sent to fighting units, Only Mereweather Heights gun site, wholly manned by male gunners.

The women had twelve hours off in seven days received about 40° a day for women under 21 years of age, and about 44° for women over 21 years of

and those fortunate to pass special examination
guns and instruments were paid 60' a day.

Mrs. Cameron was discharged in December 1946,
after a short time was married to the blue-eyed
haired, searchlight gunner, she met on the way to
medical hut. They now live on the ex-gunnery at
West, opposite where No. 3. gun stood, and the 5th Ho
her first barracks. She believed that World War
taught her discipline and common sense, every
ringing in her ears of anti-aircraft guns, and she
really hopes for is that people are educated
to realise peace is precious and worth fighting
for. What an interesting woman,
fascinating story!

Mauder, this is excellent.
Your reading list is again
outstanding. and you've
fitted your interview into a
context superbly

You need to refer to the
interview in foot-note
e.g. "Interview with Mollie Cameron
& date" then *ibid* & of it,
if you like or abbreviated title.

Have you ever thought of
learning to type? You obviously
are going to write
what about summaries, transcripts

if it
left a
legacy
of
did it

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WEIR, Jean KIMAKI - Australian Women's Army Service SYDNEY

great!

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE

OPEN FOUNDATION COURSE

1988

I, MELISSA CAMERON give my

permission to MAUREEN TOBIN

to use this interview, or part of this interview, for
research, publication and/or broadcasting (delete one
of these if required) and for copies to be lodged in
the NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

for the use of other bona fide researchers.

Signed Melissa Cameron

Date 6-6-88

Interviewer M. J. H.

NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY.

OPEN FOUNDATION COURSE.

NEWCASTLE REGIONAL HISTORY.

TRANSCRIPT OF MELISSA CAMERON.

TERM 3

1988

TO: MARG. HENRY

Maureen TOBIN

INTERVIEW OF Mrs. M. CAMERON - THE DEPRESSION,
EX NEWCASTLE 'STORE' EMPLOYEE.
EX AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S ARMY SERVICE.
EX COMMITTEE FORT SCRATCHLEY.

Born on the 13-1-1921, at Collie, a small mining town in West Australia. I have no memories of living there, for just after my second birthday my Mother, eldest sister Eileen and I moved to N.S.W., where my Father was now working at Airfield No I. He had returned in 1919 to Collie, after World War I, and gone back into the pit. But even then mine work fluctuated, so in 1920, he came to the Maitland coal fields having worked there ten years before. As we had no home awaiting, we lived at Pelaw Main with my Grandma and her two single sons, while Dad with help from one of them and my Uncle Rollie, built our house at Telorah, out of West Maitland. He had bought a double block of land, and the house had an orchard on one side of the house, while across the bottom was an enclosed area which had fowls, ducks and the occasional turkey, and the front verandah looked out across grass paddocks. Miners houses of that time did not have an inside bathroom, the custom being for a miner returning from work to bath in the wash house laundry.

Mum wanted to move, and where else, but to Kurri Kurri, for there and at Pelaw Main lived her mother, brothers, and two married sisters. And so we settled down in Kurri, and got to know our Aunts, Uncles and cousins, and our kind patient Grandma. She too had the customary outside wash house, which was linked to the back verandah by a small wooden bridge, I haven't ever seen another like it. From Grandma I learnt to make floor rugs, made from strips of old blue serge trouser material, and this was pushed into burlap bags. But the high light

of those days, was Christmases at Grandma's. We would walk over on Christmas Eve, and after tea, excitedly wait for Santa Claus, who came as fast as my uncle could ride home from Kurri after work, and then change into a Santa suit. Christmas day was the beautiful smell of the turkey baking, and Grandma's own Christmas pudding, which had threepences for the young, and sixpences for the grown ups. And always for my Christmas present there was a book to read, and only a book worm could appreciate that delight. Often the past is spoken of as "the good old days", when really there is a good old period.

Then came the depression, and the coal fields were badly hit, along with many miners, Dad was out of work. I remember when in 5th class, the teacher asking the 45 pupils in the class, 'hands up the girls whose Father is working,' and 3 girls slowly putting there hands up. At home we had no lights in the house, other than a candle, when Mum put us to bed. No shoes for school in summer, and sandshoes in winter, and considered this normal. Looking back I realised what a wonderful job Mum did. Feeding and caring for we 4 young ones, as Dad was away in the country trying for work, and my eldest sister working in Sydney. The 'Store' butcher helped the budget by offering, for free, the left over tripe and brains at midday Saturday, and we collected these, and the Communist Party organised soup kitchens. Grandma helped me by buying my Sunday best dress. But I can't leave Kurri without telling of the one place which held endless fascination for Allan, Normy, and me. It was just down the road from where we lived, and we would wander down and

silently stand watching Mr. Bailey work. He was the local Blacksmith Farmer, and it was the making and shoeing of horses that entranced us. Yes I can hear and see the forge being heated, the metal bar struck into shape, and then the peculiar smell of the hot shoe being put onto the horses hoof. Another memory that is part of the good old days.

Then in 1934, Dad got work in Newcastle, at B.H.S. and Mum began the task of finding a house to rent, which meant she could only do this on a Saturday, and we kids would stay with an Aunt, or I would come with her, and mind my baby brother. Eventually just before Christmas, we moved, to Kitcheners Parade Mayfield East, and we kids were delighted to find a big vacant allotment along the backyards of the houses, and behind this a reed swamp, which was home to many birds. We felt we still had a foot in the country. Also a great joy to us was the house having an indoor toilet, no more a chamber pot under the bed, or a pan lavatory way up the back yard. The school boys helped us settle in, and then the normal routine of School, Church and Sunday School began. Being 14 I was sent to Central Domestic Science School, and what a confusing difference this school was from Kerri. Where it had a 1st and 2nd year, these classes were in the same building as the primary classes, and all of 6th class went to become 1st year and particularly the same thing happened to make up 2nd year. I had been at Central for 3 weeks, when I had the misfortune to break my right arm, but with arm in splint and sling I went each day, and began to try and write left handed. Only sport and needle work were beyond me. Another set back came in June, when Mum had to go to hospital, and with my eldest

sister still away, I had to take time off and look after Dad and my 4 brothers. Despite these interruptions, I did pass my Intermediate, and start thinking of getting work. The situation for this was akin to what today's youngsters are experiencing. So I went back to 11th year, and it was June before the opportunity of work came, and I applied as a typist at the Co-Operative Store. From over a 100 applicants 3 of us were selected, and I began in the Grocery office, typing delivery orders at a wage of £10/3 or \$1.03. The threepence was deducted for welfare contributions, and I gave mum the ten shillings or one dollar, from this she gave me 2/6 for tram fare, which was 2^d from Light Mill to the Store. As a schoolgirl I had needed only one best dress, so for several weeks as an alternative dress, I wore to work my mother's skirt and cordigan. The work was repetitive, but certainly developed one's typing skill. The girls were friendly, and this made the office a happy place to work. From the beginning of the Co-op. Store, which you know, grew to be the largest Co-Op. in the Southern Hemisphere. Before the Newcastle and Suburban Co-Op. Store came into existence, there had been attempts to establish local Co-Op's, but their success or failure depended on the support, and participation of the mining community around them. The Store was never wholly a miners' Co-Op., thus making it less vulnerable to the uncertainties of the coal industries. The good selection of a site in Wickham, amongst relatively high and concentrated areas of population, with established rail and tram links to the Newcastle Suburbs was to its advantage. As Newcastle in the 1920's developed industrially, with B.M.P. and satellites, State Dockyard and Money Suckle Railway installations, the majority of working class families associated with these

industries, settled in Wickham, Carrington, Islington, Waratah - Mayfield through to Lambton. Thus a huge new support base was formed to buy bread, groceries, crockery, iron-mongery, manchester, green groceries and even tailoring. All of these were the result of a reorganisation, for the store had had serious management problems in the second decade of the 1900's. In 1924 milk deliveries began, and in 1925 the tea rooms opened. I have an 80 year old friend, who began her working days in these tea rooms for 7/6 per week, and one of her strongest memories is turning the handle on the bread cutter, slicing bread for sandwiches. Unfortunately she accidentally took the top off her little finger during the cutting session, and on returning to work was informed by the management, to gain compensation she needed to loose the whole finger! The Store weathered the depression rather well, though, during 1930 - 34, the workforce was put on a roster, 3 weeks work and 1 week off without pay, thus avoiding retrenchments. With their weekly pay packets, all employees were given notice, which read something like this, 'you are given notice of termination of your employment from this day, however, you should enquire from your Departmental Manager when your service will again be required?'. This notice saved provision of holiday pay as no one was a permanent employee. When I started work in 1936, the holiday situation was 1 week with pay and 1 week without, and as my wage was 10/3 a week a two week off was impossible. Compulsory unionism was a must, and management allowed a shop steward to collect union dues in work periods. My contribution was a penny a week, and although a typist, I belonged to the Shop Assistance Union. This allowed management to send clerical staff during busy periods onto a counter and write out the docket, while the shop assistant collected and

wraps articles asked for, and the reverse would happen after dividend payout, when shop assistance would be called into the main office to sort cloths. Our hours of work were a 48 hour week, with Friday being the 12 hour day. A Welfare Club also operated, and payments started with 2^d for juniors and went up to 1/-, according to age, management gave a subsidy, and payments were made to employees who were away with an illness, and when necessary a small allowance for funeral. Our picnic day was really looked forward to, and planned for, and was the occasion for we females to have a new outfit. Also I've been told it was a time for those who were courting to plight their troth. After 3 picnic outings to Speers Point Park, we juniors wanted to go forth afield, so away by train to Gosford and this was considered a real outing. Show day holiday was another time of going out in a group, and The Store always had decorated floats in the procession. Along with the milk and bread carts whose horses were beautifully groomed for the occasion. As you know the west end of Newcastle had storm water drains built under the streets, and The Store apparently had been constructed over one of these, for when a high tide coincided with heavy rain, the water rose in the basement, but the stock was kept dry by the use of a heavy pump, keeping the water down. In applying for a position at The Store, the applicants were interviewed by the Manager, secretary and sales manager plus a female clerk to take notes. Applicants filled in personal details of age, any qualifications, religion and produced 3 references. Tests of written arithmetic, mental arithmetic, short essays on advertising material, for example, lounge suites, tennis racquets, and alarm clocks were held. Then the room was emptied for the applicant to conduct an imaginary

sale to the panel of one of these articles. With up to 100 applicants or sometimes more, it would be now lunch time, and the store taken care into its own. After lunch it was time to be tested with psychiatry, questions asked what is the difference between a cow, bird and snake, or if you had an important appointment in Kuroi and missed the train at Hamilton what would you do? The last was asked of me, and I've never been able to relate the importance of the question to being a typist in a grocery office. When my work was 6 of sugar, 10 of mira plum jam, 7 of potatoes, 2 lb. self raising flour etc. After the questions came a memory test, pick up the articles on the table and put them down on the other table, using your left hand for the match box, right hand for the cigarettes, left hand for the pen, right hand for the book, and left hand for the handkerchief. When this was accomplished, and one was breathing with a sigh of relief, you were told, now please replace them in the same order, using the same hand as before. At the end of the day, by this interview 1, 2 or perhaps 3 were chosen to begin work. After 3 years as a typist I graduated to putting prices on the cloths next to the items and adding these up. Then I was moved to the grocery complaints counter, and of course the customer was always right? So I learnt, that a polite smiling offer to rectify the complaint, while the customer went on with other shopping was the way to turn many a scowl and grizzle into a reasonable human being. Of course, such a big department, as the grocery, with so many males and females, had people to be avoided, yes there was sexual harassment, and there were the others who were real gentlemen. There was one man who quoted Shakespeare for all situations even to the point of insult, but this unusual approach was tolerated and enjoyed by customers and us. Then came the war and slowly changes took place, as males left to go into the services

the girls were allowed into the male shopping assistant positions, and at male rates of pay. Friday night shopping ended, rationing of tea, sugar and butter with coupons began, and materials, elastic and other commodities were in short supply. It was the end of an era, but those of us who were part of the pre-war work force at the Store, it was akin to an extended family, and at our twice a year get togethers, it is a lovely feeling of turning back the clock. In 1937, Dad went back to mining at Lambton B. Colliery, and this meant more money, and the big decision we buy our own home. We moved one street away, to Margaret Street. Then my eldest brother began working in the pit, and I began paying board of 12/6 a week from my wage of £1 or \$2, and sometimes my board was all the money in my mother's purse, for the pit would be on strike. By nature my mother was an excellent housekeeper and manager, and to remember the table set for our Sunday evening meal with scones, custard tart, mince mulberry or apple pies plus a variety of cakes makes me truly appreciate her cooking, which was done on or in a fuel stove. Mum made sure we went to Church, Sunday School, and the Youth Organization in the Methodist Church. By the time I was 18, I wanted to go dancing, so I decided to join the Young Women's Christian Association, this organization and the Y.W.C.A. had supervised dances at Tyrell Mall, and without an official card it was impossible to get in. In 1941, I went as a Newcastle representative to a Y.W.C.A. conference in Melbourne, and the highlight of that week was being a boarder at an exclusive Melbourne Girls College. This showed me another side to living, an experience I needed, as well as being away from my family. I didn't know it then but it was excellent preparation for my next step which was to enlist in the Australian Women's Army Service or A.W.A.S. I did this in August

1942, but after a medical examination I was told I needed 3 teeth filled. Not to be put off, I went to the dentist who astonished me by asking, "Christ girl did they say which three." Anyway he did the fillings and on completion, hoped they were the right teeth. Again I applied for the Army, and eventually a call up and the 11-11-1942 saw me having another medical and too my great annoyance 3 dentists filling teeth. Then it was two weeks rookie training at Ingleburn, and a porting into an anti-aircraft unit, where was it? Mayfield West Newcastle, can you imagine my disappointment and dismay, seeing I lived at Mayfield East, but my mother was delighted. By the end of December 1942, we were trained in the use of height finder predictor and gun layers on 3.7 heavy anti-aircraft guns, and were considered by the Army, to be able to do most of the work in running a gunsite. This meant we did 12 hours telephone duty, a days mess duty, and guard duty of 2 hours on and 4 hours off, for a 24 hour roster. Of a day this was done singly, then from 1900 or 7pm we were allowed to be in pairs till 0700 the next morning. We were given a sword as a means of defence, this eventually became lost, and then we had a whistle, and that too was lost, so we did guard just as we were. But the instruments and guns were not just to be theory, we had to know how they really worked and that meant going to Merewether Heights where there was a gunsite that allowed live shells to drop into the ocean, the target was called a droge and towed behind a plane on a long length of cable. At both gun shoots we A.W.A.S. were a part of we could not be faulted on our instrument work. Instruction was also received on .303 rifle drill, and a shoot was held with these, and Vickers Machine guns at Adamstown Rifle Range. Normal A.W.A.S. working dress was unsuitable for

gunsites, so we were issued with men's blue overalls, men's light heavy boots and slouch hats. The Army also gave me the opportunity to travel, and as 3 of my other friends lived in other towns, leave time meant I would go home with one of them. In this way I visited Singleton, lovely unspoiled Terrigal and Golan a small wheat farming area outside Wellington. A trip to Bowral was made at a cost of 1/8, and our afternoon visits to Singleton, were done without buying a rail ticket. How can I criticise today's youth, when we too were scally wags. Then came the time for the unit to be broken up and I was moved to Radar. This was a station called Wipers and was located behind the Stockton sandhills approximately where the Sigma went aground. We lived in a 7 story high asbestos tower with 3 beds on each floor, and these were wedged between outside and inner steel girders. The top floor of the tower was glass on 3 sides, and gave a magnificent view of the coast to the north and south, but how it did sway in a strong wind. We did our own cooking on a fuel stove, so naturally had to chop the wood, but the meals were of a variety that surpassed army cooking. When we arrived the pantry was stocked with tins and tins of condensed milk, and on the suggestion of someone with cooking skills we made caramel by stacking 2 or 3 tins in a saucepan of water and simmering it. We had caramel on scones, caramel on rice, and caramel tarts. One girl came out in boils, and everyone put on weight. Does it sound as though we were a greedy undisciplined group, not really, just people who were enjoying the change from army bulk cooking, and knowing that our stay at Wipers wouldn't be for long. We found transport a problem, the station being a mile from the main road, so after walking to this, we were then dependent upon walking into Stockton or hitchhiking a

ride, and there was some odd ways we did get transport. Fortunately the Radar was in a cement bunker at ground level, and revolved by electricity which made it easy work. When we moved to Nobbys the radar there had to be manually operated, we longed for Wipers again. Also at Nobbys we learned to operate searchlights, and again not just theory but a mock attack. At the end of 1944 Newcastle A.W.A.S. artillery was disbanded, and my 4 friends and I sent to signals in Sydney. As a typist I was suitable for teleprinter training, and this was given at Bowengilla in Victoria. Imagine my delight when I was sent back to the same unit, and with my 4 mates again, and we stayed till discharged in December 1946. Overall I enjoyed my army days, and the friendships formed then have lasted over the years, keeping evergreen those days together, and an interesting experience for me was to find out that the depression which had brought so much material poverty into my life had left others untouched. Also I was to query the church teaching that girls who smoked and drank were not nice, for I soon found that in so many ways they were the equal of those of us who did not. And now it was back to civvy life and after 4 years of shift work and living in barracks and uniforms, I would need to adapt to this change. I planned to stay in Sydney and use my teleprinting training at T.A.A., and to marry, but before any of this happened my Mother took ill, and being home for that Christmas, I stayed home to help her out. When it came time for Dad and the two older brothers to start work in the pit, I kept on helping, and then the two youngest went back to school, and with Mum no better, I thought my plans could wait. Mum gradually improved and I settled back in my pre-war pattern of Y.W.C.A. friendships, and then as part time typist at the Store. Eventually my fiancée came to work in

Newcastle, at his trade of solid plastering, and liking
Newcastle we were married here. And where do we live,
why on the Mayfield gunsite, where we first met at
the R.A.P. or army medical centre, he with a foot
injury, and I with broken ribs.

OPEN FOUNDATION COURSE 1988.

TERM. 3.

REGIONAL HISTORY

TO. M/S MARG. HENRY

FROM: MAUSEEN TOBIN

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW WITH MRS. M. CAMERON.

Mrs. Melissa Cameron was born at Collie, West Australia in 1921. At the age of two, the family moved to the coal fields where her Father was employed as a miner. Mrs. Cameron tells of growing up in the coal fields, of the good and hard times. The good times as children playing in the paddocks and the orchards, of the bird life in the area, and Christmases spent with all the families together. Then the not so good time, when the great depression hit the area, and her father leaving home to try and find work in the country. She tells of the community helping each other out, through that time, of the soup kitchen run by the Communist Party to help the needy families of the area.

In 1934, her father gained employment at the B.M.P., and the family moved then to Mayfield East. Mrs. Cameron then finished her schooling in Newcastle. After much job searching she finally gained employment, in 1936, at the Newcastle Co-Operative Store, as a typist. Mrs. Cameron tells of her intense interview, and of others, of gaining employment at 'The Store'. The personell, and her many friendships, made while an employee of the 'Store'. She tells of the picnic days, and of the procession of floats down Hunter Street each year, which the Store was a great part of that procession, especially the fine horses all groomed and reined up for the great day.

In 1942, Mrs. Cameron enlisted in the Australian Womens Army Service (A.W.A.S.). With two weeks training, she was then ported back to Newcastle with her unit. She talks of the training then given at Newcastle, with 3.7 heavy anti-aircraft guns, .303 rifles and Vickers machine guns. The training with these

weapons was done at Mereweather Heights and Adamstown Rifle Range. When more men were required for overseas duties, Mrs. Cameron with her unit, was then posted at Nobbys, manning the searchlights, and doing guard duty. Then she was transferred to a radar station at Williamtown, keeping watch from a seven story watchtower. Again great friendships were made, and great times were had when possible. At the end of 1944, the Newcastle A.W.A.S. artillery was abandoned, and she was sent to Sydney, then over to Victoria for more training as a teleprinter. Being posted back to Sydney from Victoria, Mrs. Cameron was delighted to be placed back with her old unit in which she served in till 1946.

Discharged from the Army, Mrs Cameron returned to Newcastle and helped her sick mother in looking after the family. She then began work as a part time typist at The Store. Her fiancée then came to Newcastle and liking the town he decided to settle here. They were married, and now live a Mayfield West, where they first met at the Army Camp in 1942.