

**Mona Laura Corlett**  
**No 813461 NZ Army Nursing Sister**  
**18 August 1917 – 09 July 2017**

My dear friend Mona

"I have told you so many times that I wish I had known you for a longer time. I missed out on so many lovely years".

It was the game of bridge which brought us together. When I first began playing bridge I used to really admire this lady with the elegant posture and the way she wore her hair in a chignon( bun on the top to you men). Then I was asked to fill in for a private four and met Mona there and realised that under that elegant posture was a very clever and fun loving lady. Through that meeting we became good friends and regular partners at the Bridge club and had lots of fun even at one stage being promoted to Wednesday Night. We enjoyed it but soon realised that that was not our level and quite happily settled down to Thursday night. I remember that when the Bridge Mates were first introduced to the Club, Mona mastered it's intricacies while some others who were younger were still struggling. We used to go to tournaments around the Waikato where we really just made up the numbers but enjoyed the game of bridge and meeting like-minded people.

I don't know of Mona's life as an Army Nurse (Officer) but did hear the story of her having to guard the Camp at the front Line one night in Italy- even donning the drunk guard's great coat, hat and holding his Rifle - she was so convincing she even fooled the General when he returned to Camp greeting him with her gruffest voice. She was a member of the Officers Club whose dwindling numbers met regularly - she was the last Nursing Officer.

As such each year until this, she laid the Wreath on Anzac Day representing all Nurses who served in the Wars.

I didn't know her either when she was a golfer, but I believe the reason she and her husband Fred chose their retirement home, was the lovely view of the golf course and the river. Nor did I know Fred an ex Prisoner of War he died just before they were to move from their home in Tamahere but I have been so blessed to know and love her family. After her return from active service her nursing career took a different slant she became a Plunket Nurse.

After she moved to Hamilton she worked part time in the newly built Lions Hostel (now called Lodge) which was then situated in the grounds of Waikato Hospital where I also worked-until her retirement. Even then I did not meet her.

In 1982 a mutual friend, Liz Wright St Clair suggested to me one day that as we were both getting near to retirement we should take up bridge to try to keep our brains active in old age.

I had for years resisted as I was brought up with both parents fanatical social bridge players they had tried to enthuse me without success and reluctantly agreed with Liz that perhaps it would be a good idea. So we joined the Hamilton Contract Bridge Club and were hooked.

Thank goodness Liz persuaded me, for had we not joined the Club I would never have met Mona and formed such a close bond with a fantastic kind and lovely lady in the true meaning of the word - lovely in manner and nature who never had an unkind word to say about anyone and who has been and her memory always will be an inspiration to so many people.

I admired Mona so much she remained as physically active as she was able to she put me to shame. She loved watching all sport particularly tennis and golf.

She always maintained a keen interest and knowledge of current affairs.

She was a true model to follow as she was utterly unselfish always putting others' needs before her own

Billie Phillips