

# McLean Lydia McLellan

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**Name:** Lydia McLellan McLean

**Born:** 5 March 1912

**Rank:** Sister

**Regiment:** Queen Alexandra's  
Imperial Military Nursing Service  
(Reserve) (QAIMNS(R))

**Died:** 10 March 1975



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## Pre-War:

Lydia trained at City Hospital Edinburgh to become a Registered Fever Nurse (RFN) and went on to be a State Registered Nurse (SRN) at the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary.

## Wartime experience:

Lydia joined the QAIMNS(R) and nursed during Dunkirk at Millbank Military Hospital, London. She was posted to the Alexandra Hospital, Singapore where she manned ambulance trains to Kuala Lumpur and back, some of her patients on board the train included survivors from The Prince of Wales and Repulse. Lydia was ordered to leave and embarked on the SS Kuala which was sunk at Pom Pong Island on 14 February 1942, the day before Singapore fell, with the loss of many women, children and babies. Lydia spent 9½ hours in the shark infested waters of the South China Seas, before being picked up by an islander. All the survivors were captured and Lydia spent her time nursing in POW camps in Palembang and Bankanang, Sumatra. When she was liberated, she returned home on the SS Antenor arriving in Liverpool on 28 October 1945. She met Rev Gordon Bennett on Corby Railway Station when she was being repatriated, arriving in Glasgow in October 1945.

She was awarded the ARRC, Associate of the Royal Red Cross.

## Post War:

Lydia married the Reverend Gordon M R Bennett on 9 October 1946 at Clackmannan Parish Church. She went into private nursing in London with London Scottish. She then went on to become a Missionary nurse with the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society Hospital in Nazareth and then joined her husband in Moascar, Ismailia, Egypt. Lydia returned to Britain on board the Empire Windrush in March 1950 – plus a daughter! She served with her husband Gordon, in Catterick, flew by seaplane from Southampton water to Singapore, Fort George, Inverness-shire, Germany, Dundonald, Ayrshire and Edinburgh.

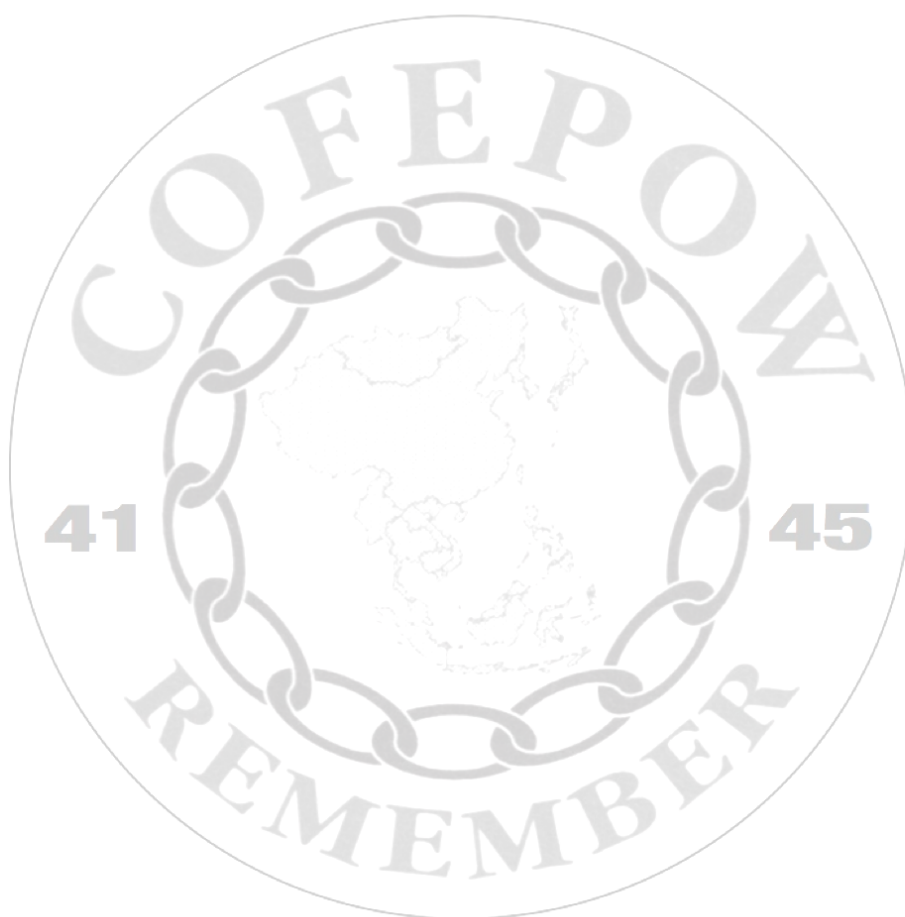


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Eventually, both Lydia and Gordon settled down, he as a Parish Minister and she, as a Parish Minister's wife in Alness, Ross-shire.

When they retired they moved to Edinburgh and sadly, Lydia passed away in Edinburgh Royal Infirmary on 10 March 1975 – just 5 days after her 63<sup>rd</sup> birthday.

*The above information and wording has been provided by Christine Harfoot (daughter)*



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