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The Official War Historian of the Commonwealth Government (Dr. C. E. W. Bean), after his study of the collection of private war records preserved in the Australian War Memorial Library, wrote:—

"The private diaries in this collection furnish some of its most valuable historical records, but, like all private memoirs which were not compiled with any historical purpose, they should not be regarded as first-hand evidence except where it is certain that they are so. The diarist is almost always sincere in his desire to record accurately, but he is subject to an obligation or inducement to indicate whether he is recording his own observations or incidents told him by friends or heard at third or fourth hand at the moment. Thus, in some of the diaries in this collection, scenes described with vivid detail, and without any warning that they are told at second or third hand, have been found to be completely inaccurate in important details. A certain number also have been written up or revised long after the events, though doubtless mostly from notes made at the time. In most cases the student must rely on his experience and on external evidence to guide him in judging what is and what is not likely to be historically accurate."

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for classification



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MEMO BY SISTER E.H. OUTHBERT A.A.N.S.

No. 1 A.G.H. 1914 HELIOPOLIS : Canal operations January 1915 :  
 1st A.G.H. HELIOPOLIS , during 1915 GALLIPOLI casualties : Transport duty  
 to Australia, August 1915 : Return on transport : To MARSEILLES on  
 Transport ' SALPA ' : duty with No. 3 British : Duty with No. 6 British  
 Stationary Hospital : " Gas " nursing. - Rejoins A.I.F. Headquarters and  
 attached No.3 A.G.H. at BRIGHTON.-- Accompanies it to ABBEVILLE - Transferred  
 No 2 A.G.H. BOULOGNE - With it up to 1919.

On Dec 5<sup>th</sup> 1914 On the Ryana we (16 Sisters & Staff) left Melbourne for a destination unknown, but quite ready & eager to do our duty and give help wherever we might get orders to land.

14<sup>th</sup> Jan 1915 We arrived at Alexandria and after waiting here for eleven days, which were most enjoyable, leave being freely given. It was decided we were to start Hospital in Cairo, arriving there on the 24<sup>th</sup> Jan. I belonging to No. 1 A.G.H. went to the Palace Heliopolis, there were no patients and nothing ready for the Hospital work, so here the pioneering work was to commence. Our relations that day allotted so many for day and night duty (if wanted) Our quarters here were of course very sumptuous.

25<sup>th</sup> Jan 1915 Hospital Equipment commenced to arrive and the Orderly's room got busy opening packing cases.

26<sup>th</sup> Jan Volunteers were called from amongst the Sisters for active duty at Port Said, as an attack on the Canal was feared. almost every Sister put her name down

27<sup>th</sup> Jan After breakfast the names chosen were read out, my name amongst them. Our luggage not exceeding 50 lbs. to be ready in 15 mins and given into the Orderly's hands, it was a wild rush, but the Sisters did my packing for me as I sorted out the articles required, then we were paid in full & assembled 2.30 p.m. Six Sisters (6) & 10 non-com Staff nurses (14) we were attached to the Aust. Clearing Hospital with Medical Officers & Orderly's. A Special train had been engaged & at Cairo we picked up the No. 1 Staff Hosp. Leaving Cairo 4.30 p.m.

at 7 p.m. in the train we partook of our first active service meal (How kind I knew then, how often I should be eating Bully Beef) Bully Beef, bread Cheese &c. the Officers served it out & looked after us well.

Then we tried to get some sleep. Switching off the light, but the intensity of the desert, and the missions upon which we were bent, was much too stirring for sleep. On reaching Ismaelia the Staly Hoops detained. On leaving Ismaelia we immediately came in sight of the Canal and proceeded directly beside it, which had sentries all along its banks - mostly Indians - We arrived Port Said 12.15 a.m. here we felt we were ready, wanted British Officers to meet us and Charlie in a row waiting for us, all was order as we got away immediately, even then not knowing where we were going to. Our destination proved to be a boat vacated that day. Twenty one beds made up for us as perked and tier, when we had come prepared to sleep anywhere. Supper was set ready for us, and a native in attendance. We awakened next morning to find dozens of Port Saiders gazing in our windows at us, and the interest taken in us all day was immense. The Council on Hospital was just beside the Church and in the afternoons there was a double funeral, two Aviators, the Coffins being taken into the Church. One Frenchman with the French flag over his coffin was taken in by the French Marines. The other a Britisher, with the Union Jack over his coffin and his military cap resting on top, was carried in by British Marines. These Aviators were shot down by mistake by Indian troops. This scene indeed made us realize the cause for which we had come so many miles to give a landing hand.

British, French and Italian War Ships were stationed here

30<sup>th</sup> Jan 1915. Busy all day getting Hospital ready.  
 Australian second contingent of men arrived safely at Port Said and in the evening we went down to the Quay to see them. The boats looked splendid, too dark to see the men, and to our great disappointment we were not allowed on board.

31<sup>st</sup> Jan Some wounded and a few prisoners were brought in but not to this Hospital

1<sup>st</sup> Feb 1915 We received our first patients.

the attack on the Canal proved to be only a very small affair although on the night of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb. The Turks managed to get a few pontoons nearly across the Canal, which were captured. The British Medical Authorities had made full arrangements for a large attack, which I am glad to say did not come off. We got very few patients and many of them were men requiring only clean operations and so on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> Feb. The Sirdars were all recalled to Cairo, the Medical Officers and orderlies being left to close up the Hospital, although we did not get any nursing work mentioned. It was all a great experience this getting together of our first Hospital in an empty convent, which when all complete was inspected by the British Medical Authorities who were greatly pleased with all the arrangements.

On reaching Helipolis we found many wards open, and filled with our boys who were sick, most of the Sirdars who had returned, were allotted by Matrons to the packing of Splints and cutting up of dressings, so getting supplies together for future use.

April 19<sup>th</sup> 1915 The first lot of sick men were returned from Fermos Island, and they were very sick men indeed, more wards were opened & equipped, and by now the Hospital was a very large one.

April 28<sup>th</sup> 1915. Wednesday we received our first wounded men at 6.30 p.m. The big Red Crescent train arrived just at the back of our Hospital and our excitement was great when we saw our poor wounded boys getting out being helped out and as they arrived I just felt I could not meet them all crippled & wounded, but they were all so wonderfully jolly & brave and just loved to hear of us all about the fight. They were all received in the big entrance Hall where they were first given hot cocoa & biscuits and then at the same time their particulars were taken.

Name, No. Nature of wound etc. other allotted to the various wards, where they had a bath and change of clothes which was greatly appreciated — we thought these cases were

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bad, but it was three days late. we got the seriously, and  
dangerously wounded men, so many came we had not  
enough room, so, the less seriously wounded ones, were  
all ordered up and get dressed and go down to the  
Auxiliary Hosp. and this had to be repeatedly done,  
Sometimes the wounded would just arrive, have some  
food, a bath, get dressings done, and get to bed  
with many exclamations of delight at all this  
care and good surroundings, when they would almost  
immediately be ordered up again to get dressed for  
an Aux. Hosp. as train loads of severely wounded  
were just about to arrive, and never once were  
hard words spoken of this treatment by the Boys.  
Their general remark was, "We know they are badly  
wounded Sicks, we saw them lying there in the field  
waiting for help, when we were just able to walk  
or crawl away."

The wounded were so many more than were expected  
or than we had provided for, that the strain and  
rush of work, and Raising up supplies of dressing  
was terrific, and many a badly wounded boy  
would arrive only half clad, and the whole situation  
was so new to us, that many a Sick, when the  
wounded first arrived, had to at times suddenly  
disappear into the pantry to control her feelings for  
these poor suffering Boys, and their wonderful  
patience and endurance, and kindly sympathy  
and care for each other, really seemed to make it  
harder for the women to bear.

But we soon, very soon, realized that there was work, and  
abundance of work to be done, that we were in the very  
midst of war, and must learn to take the days and their  
rights & happenings, just as they arrived and every  
moment was precious, and therefore must not be spent  
in giving way to one's feelings, and so one and all  
learned to face these sights of strong young manhood

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arriving with his body in a torn & wounded condition. It was a hard school, perhaps, learning from our own teeth and skin from a peaceful far away country, but it stood us in good stead for the many years of war that were ahead of us.

With the advance of summer we got many cases of sunstroke, who would arrive in a very collapsed condition, and high temperature, they were frequently aided by the M.O. who talked by an orderly & kept under the shower in a given period, which greatly revived them. This would be repeated several times, and the temperature would soon drop to normal, and the patient be quite fit again in a few days.

August 11<sup>th</sup> 1915. I went on transport to Australia, having on board over 900 sick & wounded men, most wounded the greater number being cot cases, many cases were men who had had discharging wounds for months and were having dressings done two and three times a day at the start of the voyage, it was remarkable how in about one week time the discharge lessened and wounds began to heal. The trip and sea air did wonders in these cases. We lost only one case of dysentery.

After three weeks holiday at home, I proceeded to Sydney on the Oct 2<sup>nd</sup> 1915 to take charge of the same boat which was now a transport with some 1500 men on board reinforcements in various units. We had very little sickness during the voyage, the usual inoculation of all the men, and one case that later in the voyage required operation - Suppurating Appendix - We carried only one M.O. in charge of troops at this time, so the ship Surgeon was called to assist. We fitted up an empty cabin for an operating theatre, there being no theatre on board, and everything went off very well, and on arriving at Sydney 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov 1915 one patient was left at the Hosp there, instead of undertaking the journey to Cairo.

Christmas time, English ladies came and decorated



the main entrance hall, which looked very pretty, Sisters patients decorated their wards, and most of the Boys hung up their socks overnight. They had a very good dinner, after which their bicycles from Aust. were given out to each man, and a band from one of the units came and played in the grounds.

By this time Gallipoli was evacuated and no more wounded men were arriving. During March 1916 we commenced to close down many of the wards and prepare generally for our departure to some further field of action. And so the Sisters embraced this opportunity of applying for time to see upper Egypt, and so in rotation we were given one week's leave. On this trip, head was one of a party of five Sisters. Going first to Luxor, where we stayed for days, we engaged a guide who took us many interesting trips, to the wonderful ruins of the Temple of Karnak and for a whole day excursions to the Tombs of the Kings and Queens, which had only been discovered of late, recent years, we get there we rode on donkeys.

Another day a very interesting excursion up the Nile, then we left for Assuan, here seeing the wonderful Assuan Dam. The Chief Engineer, an Englishman, meeting us and explaining everything to us, he also placed the Government launch at our disposal, and in this we went up to see the partly submerged Temple of Philae, which naturally looks rather strange with the many Egyptian figures & writings on it, standing in the middle of the Dam. Our intention was to return to Luxor by boat, as there are many old Temples of interest to be seen this way. The boat was provisioned for the journey, and our guide who was still with us, had all arrangements made, and we were just about to start, when at breakfast I received a telegram to return at once as the Hosp. was leaving, so we had to return the quick way, by train. Then naturally we were interested to know when we might be leaving to, and such

Speculations was done by us in this direction. We had all left our luggage ready packed, so did not have this to worry about. We arrived Cairo 7 a.m. 28<sup>th</sup> March 1916 and reached the Ho. A. G. H. to find it all bustle and excitement, no one really knew where we were going to be on a that it was Alexandria. The whole unit left Cairo 29<sup>th</sup> March 1916 & proceeded by train to Alex. and so we said good bye to Cairo, where we had known much happiness and many sorrows. And now our one thought and hope was, that we should be sent to the same place that our Boys were being sent to, we wanted so much to see & look after them.

30<sup>th</sup> March 1916. We left Alex. on the Hosp. Ship "Paulia"; the complete staff of the Ho. A. G. H. being on board. Here we slept in the different wards, my allocated corner was in a ward of three; beds with three; & the Sisters. The British Hosp. Staff were also on board, one Sister of the staff a New Zealander with the British, had not so long before been torpedoed while doing hospital duty in the Mediterranean, and had spent seven hours in the water before being rescued. However she had requested to be again put on Hosp. Ship & was now on the "Paulia".

During this trip we were not allowed to move without carrying our life belt with us, up & down decks, and to my great relief, however we arrived safely at Marseilles but the "Paulia" was later torpedoed & sunk in the Mediterranean. <sup>April</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> 1916. We arrived at Marseilles, and were kept on board until the 8<sup>th</sup> March, during which time British Authorities and our O. C. conferred as to future arrangements. There being only room enough at Rouen for a small Hosp. with work for 50 Sisters, the remaining numbers were to be sent to British Hospitals, the news of which caused much unhappiness amongst our unit which had been one big happy unit up to this time. Then our Mission was busy making up lists of Sisters of ten or sixteen with a senior Sister in charge

and their destinations and we waited to know our fate, and it came on the night of the 7<sup>th</sup>. My lot was to go wandering in charge of three Sisters, and my destination Li Treport. I was very unhappy at the thought of leaving my unit; yet felt pleased that I was going to see the workings of a British Military Hospital, and my few months spent in British Hosp. in France was a very happy time, as I had just went in France.

<sup>8<sup>th</sup> April</sup> ~~8<sup>th</sup> April~~ 1916 we all left the boat and were billeted at the Regina Hotel in Marseilles until the 10<sup>th</sup> when we all embarked in Special train for Rouen, this was a long tedious journey, arriving at Rouen on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Here a British Hosp. billeted us for the night, and next night, after an interesting day spent seeing round Rouen, we who were going to British Hosp. started on our journey. Myself and party left Rouen 8 p.m. 13<sup>th</sup> April 1916 and arrived Li Treport 3 a.m. that night. There was no one to meet us, it was very cold and raining with rain, and not one French scholar amongst us. The Railway Police informed us the journey was finished, it being the terminus of the line, however, our Sisters with many gratulations informed him we were going to remain in the carriage until morning, and he left us peacefully alone. Then we settled in a sleep until daylight, when we rang up the Hosp. and told them of our arrival and while awaiting an Ambulance Co. got hot coffee and something to eat on the station.

15<sup>th</sup> April 1916. We started out - I was sent to the Officer's Surgical wards. There was no special treatment, just the ordinary Surgical dressings. We found many of our own Boys in the men's wards, and glad we were to meet them again even if it was in Hosp. This Hosp. No 3. British General, was situated in an enormous Hotel,

and I thought most inconvenient for working. So many very small rooms. There was two Canadian and another British Hosp. in the area, all situated on the sea cliffs, and the surroundings were very beautiful. After spending two months in the Officers wards, a British Sister from Aust. Sister and myself got orders to proceed to Hob St. Hosp. June 10<sup>th</sup> 1916 we left Le Treport and arrived at Abbeville, where we spent the night at a Sister's Home and next day proceeded to Hob Hospital, arriving there 5 p.m. we were met and taken straight to billets in the very small village, where we could get a room only, one in each house, mine being in a tiny very stuffy room, over a little drapers shop. The English Sister who accompanied us having been out since the days of Mons was a fluent French scholar, and so she did the housekeeping for us (Army Rations) and the arrangement was, we all met at her billet for our three meals. The Frenchwoman then doing the cooking and looking after us, from here we walked to the Hospital, a Camp Hospital. The 42 Casualty Clearing Hosp. having just moved out, and the 6<sup>th</sup> St. Staff, came up from Havre to take it over the day before we arrived. There was nothing left in the Hosp. - except plans of patients, not a broom to sweep the floor with, or a chain to sit on while writing your report, and the Quartermaster would not give them out, as he said it should have been left equipped. I could see some pioneering work ahead. Here we heard the big guns for the first time, and aeroplanes circling overhead. Continuously, we were right beside the Railhead, here the Troops all detained and marched to the Trenches. This Hosp was the first receiving Hosp. behind Arras, where the Field Amb. was situated. Our Staff consisted of one Matron and twelve Sisters. The Hosp. comprised mostly huts and a few Tents, with an Officers Hosp. in a convent in the village managed by the Staff. Here also we had numbers of German patients. And the prisoners

Cage was just beside the Hoop. where prisoners just taken were brought for one night only, or perhaps just for a few hrs. About June 17<sup>th</sup> 1916 It was rumored that Arras was to be the scene of another big attack, so Matiers said she must have her staff concentrated, where at any hour of the night she could get at them, at a few moments notice, whereas at the time the whole staff was scattered over the village. So an Orchard adjoining the Hoop. was commandeered where tents were pitched, and the Lickis housed two in a tent on the 28<sup>th</sup> June we moved into our new quarters, having one tent for a mess room. I liked tent life very much indeed, but missed my bath greatly, as since leaving No. 3 B. G. H. it had not been possible to get a bath, just a sponge over from a small enamel basin. Now especially did we feel the need of a bath, when the big rush of work came and we found, we no more than the soldiers were exempt from being attacked by the body vermin, it is a sickening sensation when you first find these creatures on you, but there is only one thing to do search for them and change every day.

For some nights kept having my billet it had not been possible to sleep much, as from 10 o'clock at night on, the line of heavy Artillery going to the front would pass along the little narrow bobbed street which shook the houses and even my bed. and one night the noise being so great and unable to sleep. I put on my coat went down to look through the little glass door of the shop, it was raining with rain, and the guns in the line were booming - but all I could see of the Artillery, was a bright cigarette showing from every soldier's mouth along the whole row, and there was lively conversation amongst them, even though the hour was well advanced in the night. And the next night, equally as wet, and the guns booming equally as loudly, we were wakened up at 1 a.m. to the sound of hundreds of beautiful

voices singing, this was an Infantry Reg. of Welsh Soldiers on their way to the trenches, who were halted to rest, and so they sang hymn after hymn. In about fifteen minutes time a clear voice called out "Form Form - Hands -" and so they passed on in the darkness, the rain, the cold and the noise to what? Day and night this continuous stream of men and material passed along on way, and in the day time they were so pleased if they met us on the roadway, and would wave to us and call some message to "Sister" as they marched along. And the bright smiles which some boys gave can never be forgotten, and you knew, that being so near the line, that possibly you would be the last woman some would ever see. And this wonderful spirit stayed with them when a few days later, we received them wounded in the wards.

Our Hosp. was just a clearing Hosp. Some nights we would go off duty leaving an empty ward, and would be called early next morning to be told our ward was full as patients to have their dressings done and some food given them and evacuated by 8.30 a.m. or again we would have full wards and an order would come through in the night to have it emptied and so about 4 a.m. Some day Sisters would be called to do dressings and get patients ready for evacuation, not necessarily, as the day staff would be called, just a certain number chosen by the Matron. But of course often we received patients too ill to be moved for many weeks. Here I saw for the first time the Carrel Traction treatment. Here also we used the Thomas Splints freely for fractured legs & arms. Our wards were constantly being changed from one class of patient to another.

25<sup>th</sup> August 1916. My ward was changed from Surgical into a "Gassed" ward since filled with Gassed patients

\* The men were wonderfully patient, slung up in this unusual looking position, But after the first 24 hrs. it was wonderful how complacently the limbs settled into the splints, & they had no complaints to make, unless perhaps they had twisted them while asleep. but a little readjustment soon made them comfortable again. Even with two arms in splints & suspended and lying flat on his back a patient was still able to enjoy his cigarette with an ash tray propped under his chin, he managed quite cleverly, all on his own.

many of these men belonged to the Special Gas Corps, and these men we were not allowed to evacuate, as they had been specially trained in the sending over of Gas, and if they went down the line, it was often many months before their unit saw them again, and attached to their unit was a M.O. Specialist, to look after them, so we nursed these men until we were enough to return, It was a very terrible sight to see a badly gassed man black in the face, neck ears, struggling for breath, and there was very little medicinal one could give them beyond the ordinary Nursing Care, with oxygen to hand if necessary. Here I feel very sorry for the slight, wounded boy, who, if he would be well enough again for the line in two weeks time, had to remain with us, and so he watched his wound healing each day, within sound of the guns, which must have ever kept in his mind the scenes he would have to so soon face again. But they love the loneliness and comfort of the wards these boys and were ever ready to lend a helping hand and do what they could like for Pishi, or a badly wounded mate.

29/9/16 A great bombardment has been going on day night continuously in the past few days, and was so terrific last night and the flashes from the guns so continuous in our tents that no one could sleep, and one wonders how any man comes out of it alive. This was out of an area further down on the Somme, that area sent over to this Hosp. today for some of our Pishis to help cope with the work there at Tulle Villers and at the Hosp. The Pishis found hundreds of our own Aust boys, we never get any of them in this area, but sometimes the New Zealanders.

All Pishis here have been issued with gas masks, we never get any bombs but the village next to us was bombed and there were many casualties amongst the civil population.

12/10/16. The Nursing Staff moved from the tents into



wooden outside cubicles erected for our winter quarters. The O.C. had got this done, as he one day recently paid a visit of inspection to our Orchard quarters and was horrified at the conditions under which we were living, leaking tents, and you sank ankle deep in mud getting to your tent, our mess tent and some of the sleeping tents had old Tarpsaulin on the floor and as you walked the water underneath sprang up and hit you, as I don't think really it had stopped raining since my arrival here in June and the O.C. remarked not one of them complained. Certainly I never thought of complaining just look at the conditions one must expect near the line, and we were all well & quite a happy staff.

Oct. 1916. Was now on night duty at the Officers Hosp. in the Convent, but slept and lived at our own quarters in the main Hosp. Walked down track during a light drizzle along a quite dark narrow muddy lane commencing duty 8 p.m. When the two day Sisters would then walk back to their quarters at the Hosp. the walk back in the morning in the day light & fresh air I quite enjoyed being then quite ready for breakfast. Apart from the patient the M.O. an orderly and myself was the only occupant of the Convent. Winter time had quite set in and things were quiet in the line we rarely got a surgical case or slightly sick officers so at the end of my month's night duty Matron asked if I cared to do another month, but I knew I was happier with her to do in my ward amongst the boys, so came off. Matron was very good to me and gave me back my same ward. That I had had all through 18/11/16 I saw the first fall of snow and being first up called to everyone that the ground was white with snow, but only got groans from the British Sisters who were requested to shut the back door, it being too new sight to them. However the Aust. Sisters were more enthusiastic.

the wards were fair, black, trench feet being the chief complaint, and various treatments were tried, some were kept warmer, wrapped up, others were exposed to the cool air unprotected - massage was used. And some unfortunately had gone so far the toes sometimes a foot had to be amputated - but on the whole they responded well to treatment. December 25<sup>th</sup> 1916. Was quite a happy day for the Boys, we were not allowed to decorate the huts at all, but had plenty of red berries & leaves, as there were beautiful woods all around us. All walking cases 5:00 of them sat down to a meal in the largest hut and each man had a bowl of ale, which was greatly appreciated. The Sisters gave the patients their tea with all good things that could be procured.

Jan 21<sup>st</sup> 1917 Another Aust. Sister and myself had a most interesting day outing. Some British Army Service Corps <sup>Officers</sup> had occasion to go to Amiens from an area, and asked our O.C. for permission to take Sister & myself, our O.C. very kindly gave permission and issued us with a pass for the road, and so we started 9:30 a.m. it was very cold and the fields were white with snow - we motored straight to Amiens, and had lunch at the New Zealand Hosp. Here, being very kindly received by the Matron & Sisters. Here we found an Australian Band playing to the patients and of course we were greatly excited. After lunch we visited the Amiens Cathedral which was sandbagged on the outside, and many parts of it inside also. I think it the most beautiful Cathedral I have seen in France, and the scene inside impressed me very much. Two organs was being played at the same time, one at either end of the Cathedral, and young children and old men of the Choir were walking round singing, their voices were beautiful. Rumbas of French Soldiers in their light blue uniform and many of our own Aust. Boys in their khaki were kneeling in the Cathedral at prayer, and many others like ourselves were just walking round, or standing.

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During the scene, the wood carving of the Pulpit is also very beautiful. The famous "Weeping Angel" was not to be seen. From here we evolved to the Casuals, C. S. at Corbie, where we had afternoon tea. Many Aust. Soldiers were patients in here, their headquarters at the time being at Heilly, near by. As the Aust. was still in the line on the Somme, from here we went to the C. S. at Contay which was one of the stations very near the line then back through Albert, here the Sentries made us travel with the Car lights almost extinguished, so progress was very slow through poor ruined Albert. On reaching the Cathedral we alighted and in the moonlight saw the leaning Madonna (La Vierge d'or) and the pinnac. Of course all along here the noise of the guns sounded very near and the vivid flashes in the air at times quite startled one. At all these cross roads there were Australian Sentries swinging their lanterns saying "pass on"; on the return journey we passed through Acheux we arrived back at 8.30 p.m. after a very interesting day.

Jan 28<sup>th</sup> 1917. My movement order arrived to report at A. J. F. Headquarters London, so after a very interesting and happy eight months, I said good bye to Hob Staly. Leaving there 3 p.m. and arriving at Boulogne 1 a.m. that night, after seeing my luggage stored at the station, and finding out from the R. T. O. here that the boat would leave at 9 a.m. in the morning, I went in search of ~~some~~ somewhere to spend the night, and found a room at one of the hotels. At 8 a.m. the next morning there was a terrific explosion which shook the hotel. On arriving at the quay we learned the boat would not leave until 1 p.m. at midday there was another great explosion soon again going to the quay we were informed that the boat would not leave until next morning 10 a.m. Later I heard that the Channel was free of loose mines others were what had been exploded during the day. The weather being intensely rough & cold. Next morning 4/2/17 again

reporting at the Quay were allowed to get on board the boat & started off 11 a.m. They were armed with a Life Belt. But had not gone far when Destroyer came dashing towards us, on either side a man in Hawkers Signalling to our boat. When we suddenly stopped dead, there was great excitement on board as a mine passed within a few yards of us. But we arrived safely at Folkestone. On reaching H. Q. on Matron-in-Chief told me she wished me to join up again with the Aust. Unit and join the No. 3 Aust. Gen. Hosp. at Brighton, I did not at all like the idea of working in England, but wanted to be back in France, and I got my wish as before one week had expired the No. 3 A. G. H. got order to proceed as a unit to France. So the Canadians took over the Brighton Hosp. which was full of patients. And the unit proceeded to London where we were billeted waiting for the new Hosp. which was being built at Abbeville to be ready for us.

This life of waiting became very monotonous. So many Sisters went round helping at deficient loan chairs; Distinctions, I went with others to the Prisoners of War rooms where we helped to sew up the parcels.

25/4/17 we all went to an Aug. Memorial Service held in the Y. M. C. A. that was on the quarters.

April 27<sup>th</sup> 1917. The unit left England for France staying the night in Boulogne, here we were met by the British Transport Matron who informed our Matron the Hosp. was not yet ready for us and we were to be sent out to the British units until it was finished. I proceeded with others to Abbeville arriving there 2.30 a.m. Fifteen of us went to No. 3 Stal. Hosp. and Matron & three Sisters to the South African Hosp. which was side by side our Hosp. was being built on the adjoining piece of ground. The rest of our Sisters were left in Boulogne to proceed to Le Treport. The night sick gave us some tea then we sailed on the light. Sisters beds until 7 a.m. when we got up to breakfast, we were given the day off and called beds in our quarters.

which we got fixed up comfortable, two in a tent. The next day we went on duty, in the various wards in the British Hosp. I was sent to take charge of two new Medical Tents just opened for a Convoy that night. Such a sight as met my eyes, in our tent: thirty six dejected looking new Cases, Kit's everywhere - and no Equipment - whatever in the wards, and in the other tent: twenty two new Cases, Equally, as dejected looking. With bedding & Kit's all over the ward. - More pioneering to be done - So, to get some order, and a brighter aspect in the ward, was the order of the moment; so an orderly & neatly set right - into it; Everything was to be had for the asking, so we soon got things in order, and when the men got a wash and a hot dinner. - Conversations began to flow. They were very busy in the Hospital's here, and very glad of the India help - we arrived over in good time.

4/5/17 The first German aeroplane was brought down intact by the Anti-A. Craft guns near the Abbeville Station

9/5/17 Many of the Aust. Lilia's myself included were recalled to HQ S.A.G.H. I was given charge of one of the Tents, it was a tent Hosp. & many was now complete & ready for Equipping to receive patients. From now on we started to receive a few patients.

26/5/17 Here we was subject to very severe thunder storms. I have never known them so loud & so near, or the lightning like so strong and on each occasion there was always some Soldier of the adjoining Camps killed, and others struck & burned by the lightning, becoming delirious, one Soldier on being admitted to Hosp. was found to have the patterns of a tree burned across his chest; and under his arm the pattern of the Cross on the Crucifix, they had just turned the corner of the road where the Crucifix was. - when struck, one so frequently sees the Cross on the Crucifix at the turning of the roads here in France. Another morning on entering my ward. I found four of our orderlies admitted there, struck by lightning during a storm the

Previous night. They were going to bed in their tent when the  
 form in the same tent got struck and thrown to the ground.  
 Fortunately, they had their rubber ground sheet spread on  
 the floor, which broke the current. They were all burned  
 slightly, & suffered very much with their heads & on no boy,  
 the burning started on his R. shoulder, travelled right  
 across his back, down the left leg about the big toe. They  
 all recovered on these occasions many of the tent poles  
 were splintered. The French people explained that it was  
 something to do with Abberville being in the hollow between the  
 sea and the river, that the moisture attracted the storm, but  
 we never quite knew why they were so severe.

May 5<sup>th</sup> 1917. General Birdwood came to inspect the Hospital  
 and to address the Orderlies, who were called on parade  
 and a splendid looking lot of men they were. He appealed  
 to them as coming fresh to France to volunteer for work  
 up the line as stretcher bearers, who's ranks had been  
 so greatly thinned, and to allow the boys from up there,  
 who had done such magnificent work to come down  
 to the Base for a short spell.

In Abberville at times we were able to hire a car which  
 held five seats, so making apart one afternoon, went  
 out to see the old battlefields of Crecy, in the middle of  
 which stands a stone monument erected to commem-  
 orate that occasion, returning by a different road  
 through which the French called a forest, it was certainly  
 very pretty.

There were many places of interest within walking  
 distance of the Hosp. and, a great advantage, there was  
 usually a cafe, where one could get quite a nice  
 meal. So, the Hosp. being very quiet, we all made  
 the most of this opportunity in exploring the surroundings  
 here, also we had red poppies & cornflowers right  
 up to the tent walls, as crops were growing right up around  
 our compound, and the woods were full of wild violet  
 and blue-bells.

August 1<sup>st</sup> 1917.

19.

I went on night duty as Sidi-in-Chief and from this time our Hospital started to fill up, each night getting one or two big convoys. On night a rather strange coincidence happened in the first convoy two New Zealanders brothers, wounded by the same shell were admitted, they had managed to keep together, after being picked up, both stretch cases, and there were anxious inquiries could they be put in beds beside each other, which was certainly managed. In the next convoy a few hours later two Australian brothers, wounded in the same attack, also both stretch cases had managed to keep together, who also requested to be together in the ward. The Hosp. by now was completed, with a row of very nice huts for severe cases two operating theatres, with a large acute surgical ward immediately off, in this ward we had the Carrel Tassin treatment in use with the ampoules suspended from the wires at the head of the bed, two other huts were set apart for the use of Thomas Splints for fractures of humeri & arm cases. The beds having the scaffolding built round them necessary for the suspension of the limb. Another hut for acute medical cases, which soon contained many severe nephritic cases, which responded well to decubal & the usual treatment.

It was a very wet month, and as many of the roads round the Hosp. were as yet unmade, it was very difficult work getting round at night time. Gum boots were the only thing possible to wear, with short skirts, rain coat & macintosh hat. Many German prisoners of war were at work here on the roads, and also building the Hosp. There being two large prison camps at Abbeville

Sept 6<sup>th</sup> 1917 Having just come off night duty a movement order came for me to report at No. 2 Aust. Gen. Hosp. So leaving Abbeville on the 7. 9. 17 I arrived at Boulogne at 3 p.m. Reporting at Wimereux that afternoon where the No. 2. G. H. was situated

It is a very desolate spot on the sea-cliffs, quite close to Wimereux, and about ten miles from side to Boulogne. The Aust Hosp. having been established for about eight months, I had hoped to find that it was our own Aust Nurses who would be admitted here, but I was to be disappointed as the 2<sup>nd</sup> A.H.H. received any patients but the Nurses. The British Hosp. adjoining ours and the B.H. across the road always received our boys. It being quite exceptional for us to have a few in the wards. This Hosp. comprised 17 beds and one line of beds, which were very conveniently arranged, and the Sisters' quarters were the most comfortable I had been in in France, with warm showers both had either morning or afternoon. They were certainly half way across the paddock and it was quite laughable to see Sisters preparing for a bath on a wet or snowing night: when they would get into gum boots, rain coats under which they would shove their bath towels, then a rain hat or bath cap and they were ready, but when once there, the showers were well worth all this preparation.

Here there were wards set up for Fractured Femur Cases which stayed for six months until up swathing about on the Calve's Splint - some then evacuated to England. Once just before my arrival here they had a German aeroplane over which had dropped bombs in Boulogne, and on the night of the 1.10.17 Having gone to bed and to sleep Paul, I was wakened up by the explosion of a bomb quite near and the noise of bursting shrapnel falling on the roofs of our quarters, which were shaking on their foundations. Then they began to fall on the floor photo. frames and iron stands were lying slipping round the room, and wash caps from the Anti-aircraft guns were also falling on the roofs. It did not take long for all Sisters to be up seeing what was happening as bomb after bomb fell in all were dropped beside (fortunately not on) the Railway line just outside our quarters. A train passed along just



The second one exploded, we thought it had got the train which had stopped immediately, which we could see well outlined by the light of the explosion, but after a few seconds later proceeded on its journey. Of course all the anti. a. c. gas was going and machine guns barking their hardest, and rays from thirteen searchlights filling the sky all centred on our Hosp. The Wimmerose Railway Station was also quite close to us from here we were horrified to present, saw the train emerge when directly under the spot where all the other bombs had fallen. The driver opened wide his furnace doors. This was too much for us we all disappeared into our bedrooms from the hall door. In we knew exactly what would happen, and down came another bomb & exploded, we hardly thought it possible for this train to escape, but to our surprise on going out again to have a look, it was passing along the line slowly & cautiously. All trains except Red Cross trains travelled in darkness. This was the last of the bombs just here five smaller ones were dropped in a paddock just beside our tent lines. The roofs of which got many holes in them from bursting shrapnel. The patients being all walking cases were able to see to the bullets in safety, or were safer than they had there.

The Siles' courage & demeanour throughout all this was wonderful as many of them had never been away from this Base and so not used to the noise and sound of the guns to say nothing of the bombs, and one could not help feeling proud of their fellow workers. All the time we were wondering about the boys in the wards, especially those who had their limbs suspended, but each ward had a Siles and orderly, & so we decided it was wiser to remain where we were. Our O. C. amputation had been along to see all was well with us. Then there was peace & quietness again so we commenced clearing up our rooms picking things out of the beds off the floor and adjusting them to their right places. Next day there was much that it was aerial torpedoes that was dropped so very near the Railway line and the holes were enormous & huge clouds

of earth thrown in great distances, but the R. line was quite  
 in fact - the fire dropped near on Leul's killed two horses  
 but beyond the holes in the Leul's no further damage was  
 done, and we were sorry for all the hard things which we had  
 said about that Engine driver, who opened up his furnace  
 as he proved to be a very brave <sup>French</sup> man. The Station it seemed  
 was full of trains amongst them a troop train. This was the  
 line which took all the men and materials up north, and  
 one Aeroplane would keep hovering over the station the whole  
 time they were afraid of it being bombed any minute, so a  
 volunteer was called for to take an empty train out of the  
 station open the furnace and so draw fire away from  
 the station this is what happened so successfully, and  
 the Engine driver was rewarded for his bravery by the French  
 nation. It is said these machines was one. This night was  
 as clear as crystal with full moon. The next night we all  
 watched anxiously for the moonrise, but it came up wet-  
 much to our ones delight.

7.10.17. A big attack had started up north toward Tassoulade  
 Syria, but was checked by awful weather, it is true, awful  
 weather, rain and wind, but there have been some days of  
 furious fighting and on Hosp. is very busy. Lines since of  
 motor ambulances coming every day night. I am at the T<sup>h</sup>os  
 Station where all the walking cases who can possibly get on  
 their feet come in dress up, here also they get bits of metal  
 or foreign bodies, as they are correctly called, taken from  
 their wounds, and the patient is then classified as for either  
 "Bligh", or remaining here. It is mostly "Bligh", after these big  
 attacks. It was wonderful to watch these boys quickly getting  
 their having these bits of metal taken away from the wound  
 for at times it must have hurt very much, for no Chloroform  
 was given at the Dressing Station, sometimes a Hypodermic Inj  
 would be given under the skin round the wound to deaden the  
 pain a little. One felt so inclined to pity them, but as Beach  
 Thomas said in one of his articles "Pity is a dangerous  
 indulgence; well then, one thought it best just to carry on".

From we had quite a number of walking cases of Tiggers, but an Australian Soldier, was walk very often, where other Soldiers would expect to be a Sibelche. Case.

There was a medical Office a Corporal amply amogot through hundreds of dressings a day.

November 9<sup>th</sup> 1917. We Sibelis had such an enjoyable surprise about four of our Tiggers Boys of the 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> Field Amb. Came all the way down from R. Penleques to entertain the Sibelis. They provided all the supper, bringing the Ham with them, then buying the Cakes & Co in Boulogne. It was a beautiful supper and delightful evening. They wanted to celebrate their coming out of the line other is how they did it. And how we did appreciate their kind thought for the Sibelis. Leaving about 11 p.m. they then walked back to Camp, which was a considerable distance up the line. In this area I see a great deal more of the Australian Soldier than in any other area, not as a Hosp. patient, but well as fit. The 1<sup>st</sup> Division are out resting about 30 Kilometres away, but some of the Officers & Tiggers are in at the hosp., each day seeing us, where our Matron Eva makes them most welcome, and how we do enjoy having a talk to them when off duty. Their Band has been in playing round the Hosp. to the patients, and been greatly appreciated, also their Concert Company has given some fine concerts, both in the Acute wards and the 4<sup>th</sup> M. C. Hut in these grounds for the walking patients. Also there is a Rest Camp on the sea cliffs where in the summer time a certain percentage of men from all different British units, needing a few days rest (10 days) are sent. Other are always some Australians, when we would ask for a few Tiggers down to spend the evening & supper, when we all enjoyed ourselves very much, and they usually held sports at the Camp the day before leaving it for the line. Also the Camp Commandant always asked some Sibelis from each Hosp. in the area, and this days outing was always greatly appreciated, especially as the Tiggers usually won all the prizes.

December 22<sup>nd</sup> 1917. About 8 p.m. the warning signal went off as a Gotha was on its way to visit us. The signal in this area was the firing of the big Fort gun, and at eight times all electric lights were also instantly switched off over the whole area from the main power house. The Gotha soon arrived passing over us in to Boulogne, where he dropped many bombs, it was learned later there were many casualties also to property.

This is the first fine <sup>full</sup> moon since he visited us in Oct. We have a number of patients in at present with Trench-ket. These cases need a great deal of constant care. There is a routine treatment in use now, which is very satisfactory. Some patients feet are swollen to an enormous size with broken skin in parts, others have toes quite gangrenous so they cannot bear the weight of the bed clothes on the feet, so iron cradles are placed over them to rest the clothes on.

Also we have a large number of 'Gassed' patients in mostly victims of 'Mustard Gas'. These are very pathetic cases. The boys come in quite blind with enormous swollen eyelids they are quite unable to open them, and the eyes discharging freely also the patient's <sup>is burned</sup> over the face & body with huge blisters & burned by the effect of the 'Mustard gas'. These burns are very painful, and the patient is mostly of a dusky color or may be quite black in the face & neck. Frequently the patient is unable to speak above a whisper. The mucous membrane of the throat & digestive tract having also been burned.

It is on seeing such cases as these that one feels the injustice of this war. It is not war - just murder. These gassed boys are always such wonderful patients. feeble too. Lying back there quite helpless being fed & looked after. For these also there is a routine treatment now to which in many cases they respond quite well. Frequently in a few days the eye trouble will clear up & sight be restored. The eyes & burns receive treatment every two or three hours, also medicated inhalations for the throat. The patient wearing a lint mask over the eyes all the time

As even after the night has<sup>25.</sup> been restored the eyes are very weak for some time. In some cases the Gas. has effected the heart.

The Nephritis cases we are now treating with the dry hot pack and getting excellent results.

25/12/17 Christmas day we had the first fall of snow. As the ward was very prettily decorated, and the Boys had a beautiful Christmas dinner of Turkey, & Plum Pudding and greatly appreciated it. And the Sisters provided all kinds of good things for tea, and there was a good concert held in the Y. M. C. A. tent.

26/12/17 A little Australian Boy we were all very fond of & were watching very anxiously, died. Some of his mates from the line had just called in to see him, and as a last service to him asked to be allowed to lay him out, which they did. A wonderful action I thought.

31/12/17 I went on night duty as Sister in charge. The hosp. was fairly quiet, but of course this being a Base Hosp. we report some cases quite a long time, so that there was many acuti wad.

25/1/18 At 10.45 p.m. I had just finished my round of the ward and was sitting down getting my report books in order when the warning gun was fired, and all lights went out. Not more than five minutes later, there was the drowning sound of Fritz's engines directly overhead then all the guns in the area started firing at him from their the noise is appalling, together with the falling shrapnel on the roofs, but once the guns start I always feel quite contented & have no fear, but I certainly do not like listening to the drone of the engines of his machines. From I started on my round of the huts, going first to the most acuti, where all the helpless patients are. I found it reassured them so much to see some one come in out of the night and its noise. It was brilliantly clear moonlight. and I could hear the shells whizzing through the air & shrapnel falling on some of the roofs of the huts as I walked from ward to ward. When not one Sister showed any signs of nervousness they were one case in talking to her patient.

Just a few helpless patients were a little nervous. With different wards I met the O.C. Tado Mabron was also up. It was all over by 11.30 p.m. and damage was done. There sounded like their machine over. It is thought he was kept too high up by the anti-a.c. gun to drop his bombs. Once it was quiet the patients was soon fast asleep. Next morning I went to bed about 11 a.m. and had just got to sleep when the warning gun again sounded. I could hear the drone of his engines, but being very sleepy did not get up. He did not stay more than ten minutes, but in that time, the day Sissi told me he twice swooped down most courageously low, evidently to take photos. Of course the guns were going all the time, but could not get him. The Germans want the Fort and the bridge, which are on the side of us. 29/1/18 10.30 p.m. Having again just completed my round the warning gun sounded and lights out, but nothing happened as we are at patients waiting in the darkness, and the lights came on at 11 p.m. on these occasions one is not allowed to show the slightest glimmer of light from either lantern or electric torch - we could hear bombs being falling over Calais way and the a.c. gun going on there 12. M. M. the warning signal and lights out again, we was at supper all Sissi's hurriedly left to get back to their wards and their patients, one murmuring as they left, 'what a life'. We have supper in our mess kitchen, as it is warmer there, one half of the night staff relieving the other. Again ~~4 a.m.~~ lights on again 12.30 a.m. and 4.15. Again 4 a.m. There was a loud explosion or was like a heavy thud and the beds all vibrated most. Sissi thought it was a patient <sup>fallen</sup> out of bed, and went in search of the unfortunates man, but no one found him. We think it must have been a mine found & exploded out at sea.

Feb 15<sup>th</sup> 1918 Mabron went on leave and I have come off night duty like acting Mabron during his absence. An order has come through all beds & tents in this area are to be tarred or sand thrown on them before the next fuel burn.

March 5<sup>th</sup> 1918

27

Mation has returned, and another Sicel myself went on leave to the 5th France, where we had a most delightful holiday staying at a large Sicel Hotel at Cannes, here there were eight Sicels staying, British, Canadian, New Zealand, American, and quite a number of Australian, we would make up parties still trips to different places, seeing their thouris Carlo mentions. Fourteen days soon passed and on the 22/3/18 we started on our return journey. Leaving Cannes at 12.30 p.m. we arrived in Paris the next morning at 9.30 a.m. feeling very pleased at our early arrival and looking forward to some time in Paris before leaving for Boulogne that day. But as soon as we drew into the Paris Station, the air raid signal was going. Here we were met by a Red Cross Officer whose duty it was to always meet Sicels passing through either to or from leave, he told us an air raid had started at 7 a.m. that morning, from here we were conveyed by car to the Gare du Nord where the Boulogne train left from. Here we interviewed the Railway Transport Office, and arranged to leave by the train at 1 p.m. also he told us the German advance had started, that Gen. Foch had taken command and that the British were retreating and altogether told a very dismal story, which made us very anxious to get back to work where we knew they would be very busy. During this drive from station to station, we saw the whole town was deserted, many omnibus cars all lined up empty in the middle of the street. The R.T.O. advised us to go to the British Canteen in shelter, which was underground, the stations, as the bombs were falling quite frequently, and where we could get a cup of hot coffee. We stayed underground in quite a long time then got tired of it, as the place was crowded with all the Railway officials and came up deciding to try get into the city of Paris, we had great work evading a couple of Patrols who were strict on the station. They should all around at us and pointed to the sky however we reached the street immediately there was a third explosion near at hand which sent us hurriedly into an

underground Tube station, this too was crowded and hairs up  
 at the platform. Here we stayed again for some time. Again  
 we emerged into the daylight once more and a taxi passed  
 just at this moment, which we hailed and took us into  
 Paris, only to find the shutters had never been lifted from  
 the shops that morning, and all traffic was suspended.  
 This was 11.45 p.m. however, we found a Café open, and  
 here we ordered some lunch, hoping the air raid would then  
 be over, it was not, bombs could still be heard falling  
 and we found we would have to walk back to the station, as  
 the streets had only empty taxis in them, no drivers to be seen  
 anywhere. On reaching the station we were told our train would  
 not leave until half an hour after the 'all clear', signal  
 had been given. About 2 p.m. the train came in, so we got in  
 and all went sound asleep, fully realizing we were in the worst  
 possible position, as the first bomb that morning had got the  
 Eastern Station but - Est la guerre - as the French people  
 was see murmuring, we knew a party of six Poles, three Aust.  
 one N. Zealand & two British. Our train left 4 p.m. we all  
 felt somewhat refreshed after our sleep, and glad to be away  
 from Paris. Towards 7 p.m. we began to look forward to  
 getting into Amiens station where we knew we could get  
 some nice hot coffee & something to eat. However, a little after  
 8 p.m. when about one kilometre outside Amiens the train  
 pulled up. we found ourselves in the midst of another line,  
 air raid, distantly the train lights all went out, we sat in  
 the darkness listening to the dron of Fritz's machines all the way  
 of all the guns. Units a number of Diggers, were also on the train  
 evidently coming back from leave & experience, we heard their  
 voices under our carriage windows & had a few words with them.  
 Then the bombardment eased off a little and we pulled into  
 the station. when it all started over again - and a change  
 to say none of us was feeling like getting out to have some  
 coffee. instead sat ~~to~~ on where we were. The station was full of  
 troop trains, packed with troops. these troops were being hurried  
 through to the Somme, others came & talked to us, and two soldiers



told us that Peronne had fallen that morning. They had been left behind to blow up the Ammunition Dump that morning before the Germans got in other had only just managed to escape with their lives. Presently the Digges ever thoughtful & kind came along in the darkness, calling out "where are you Poles?" and there were these boys outside with huge jugs of hot coffee, cups, and something to eat for all us Poles.

They just about saved our lives - we all greatly appreciated his wonderful thoughtfulness on their part. We were held up here for a long time to allow the Gooch train to get through and all this time the air-raid went on every bridge across the station seemed to be free of machine guns. going all the time continually, we got away at a great speed. And we began to wonder what we should find at Boulogne. The night was such that in peace times one would call perfect; with its brilliant moonlight - but not these times -

we arrived at 10 4 a.m. to learn that they had had the biggest air raid that night; that they had ever had.

I procured transport from the R. T. O. and after leaving the other Poles at the Sisters Home in Boulogne. The Aust. Poles simply reached our Hosp. at 5 a.m. and glad to get there.

This was holidaying in war time. Next day it was learned it had not been an air raid on Paris, but the first day of the Long Range gun on Paris, when it was the shell from this gun which had been falling regularly every fifteen minutes but Parisians up to the time of our departure, they thought it was hostile aircraft. After having the next day of duty, I started

night duty again as Poles in charge, the tenure of night duty was two months at a time in this Hosp. so I went on again to finish my time. It was some days before we got any of the wounded in some were all anxious, wondering where they were all going to, as now were coming down

on way. 1/4/18 At 2.45 a.m. we had another air-raid and many of the new patients were very nervous, thinking that with all these guns going, the Hosp. must be very near the firing line - but it was the big Fort gun which made such

a terrific noise, and shook the tents so much. No special damage was done, although one bomb dropped in the grounds of the British Hosp. at the back of us. On entering the different wards the boys would call out, well Sister, where have you come from, avowed Enquiries anxious, which direction Fritz was going in. The patients always said they would rather hear shells up the line, than hear the bombs falling down here, or even to know that Fritz was overhead. After this we began to get many wounded in Cowry's coming day night, and the brook - all very excited with the retreating of the rear of the fighting, Esch's Tents had been put up, all over the Hosp. grounds filled with patients and on J. M. C. A. Hut - was also turned into a receiving ward this too was filled with mostly walking wounded. At this time things were very critical of from Abbeville the worst Base to us almost. All the Dicks were evacuated with the exception of a few being left at the U.S. A. C. H. The English & Australian Sisters arriving here at Wimereux also some of our Sisters who had been sent to the British and were working with them at the advanced C. C. S. and who had only just managed to escape arriving here in just what they stood up in, having lost everything they possessed. Many of the Dicks are sleeping on the floors in billets in Wimereux, those who could not be taken into the Hosp. in this area. The patients are all so very despondent these days at the situation, that the Dicks are having a busy time, trying to cheer them up, & also a brighter view of things. 25/4/18 we had an Amzac Memorial Service held in on J. M. C. A. Hut. 18/5/18 I came off night duty, took charge of one of the Trailed Gun wards, then an order came through that all these cases were to be evacuated to England Boulogne arounds day night - to the tramps of Roseres arriving over from England, all singing as they march along. May 19<sup>th</sup> 1918. Lights went out at 10.20 p.m. and the warning signal told of Fritz's approach. It sounded like a whole circus of them when he did arrive, and the

Sims put up a wonderful barrage, and sky rockets were sent up for the first time here - a couple of nose caps from the shells fell on our hut, the Repat. going away when coming back, he was very persistent - it lasting two hours altogether, being 12.30 a.m. when he finally left. The Siles find it very difficult to get to sleep after these late air-raids. There was no damage done here, but this was the night that he did so much damage to the hospitals at Etaples and so many lives were lost - further on from us. The wards have now all been sand-bagged outside to protect them against bursting shrapnel, also trenches have been built. In any walking cases to go to if they feel inclined, and a dug out outside the Siles's quarters where they can go during a raid. Most Siles prefer to stay in their own rooms.

May 20<sup>th</sup> 1918. The Hosp. is almost empty awaiting Fritz's next blow. Another Siles. couple went out to Mandelot in the afternoon to the woods there. They are a right worthy of an artist's brush therefore are as good as the best tonic to the Siles's these hard times. There are to be gathered Primrose Cowslips, violet's bluebells in profusion, also yellow & white daisies, and by the creek huge yellow Iris. Unfortunately, it is a long way out there and the train service very poor.

Our wards are very busy again, the boys coming in with not one wound but many serious wounds to each man, in my ward are concentrated the arm wounds, but many boys have badly wounded legs as well & many cases with both arms or a leg & arm wounded & broken which necessitates them both being in splints & suspended with the man having. So many serious wounds each, naturally, the dressings to each man take a considerable time therefore Siles are doing dressings as hard as they can go all day long. Also there are many cases of haemorrhage it is watching for those haemorrhages that is so very trying at night. There is a great lark on the Siles's nerves, during air-raids when all lights are out, and yet a haemorrhage not found

as one may mean a man's life, therefore the Sister has to go very cautiously to a bed side case has electric torches, and amputated limbs are kept outside the bedclothes at night-time so that they may be more easily watched for haemorrhage or other wound likely to haemorrhage.

When a patient has had a severe haemorrhage the treatment is to give the patient a pint or more of another man's blood this man the donor, who has willingly offered his blood which is tested it is then transfused direct from his vein into the patient's vein, and it is wonderful how it immediately revives the collapsed patient & the condition soon begins to improve. This transfusion of blood out here has saved many men's lives.

The fields around us are during the season full of beautiful large red Poppies and yellow Daisies, and we don't have any trouble in gathering great areas full for our wards, and on these little excursions Amp Cowales. Cent patients just about ready to return to the line, love to be asked to accompany us & help bring back their share of the flowers.

August 1<sup>st</sup> 1918. We have had many air raids lately. But last night was especially tragic the Gotha's arrived about 10.30 p.m. passing over us to Doullage where they dropped many bombs one being his new illuminated bomb which lights up the place as bright as day. Then an incendiary bomb & others, then he came back here and dropped many bombs also an illuminated one. here he dropped two in the British hosp. opposite us completely demolishing two huts, but fortunately one had been emptied of patients that day and the other was the Quartermaster's Store, so that no lives were lost with the huts, but unfortunately two orderlies on night duty were killed in the ground. Two bombs were dropped on the main line just outside the house where all the British Sisters lived from that hosp. and every pane of glass in the house a two storied was shattered to atoms, no Sister was injured. The G.M.C.A. hut on the Road & other buildings

was also destroyed, and the main line, but no other lives lost. The noise through all this was terrific. It was all over by midnight. And in Boulogne he got a direct hit on the British Headquarters completely demolishing the building killing an Officer. Two soldiers who were on duty there. This building was still demolishing the next day. Other buildings also suffered & all glass windows were broken within a large area.

The Sisters always leave some warm clothing that can be easily got into beside one's bed at night-time now.

August 4<sup>th</sup> 1918 we had a Special Church parade and anniversary service in one of the M.C.A. Halls in the morning, and in the afternoon some Sisters went to the funeral of the Major and men killed in the air raid. They were buried at a new cemetery, which had just been opened. Other Sisters went to a Special Service held in Boulogne, and Matron myself to the Sisters' house who could be spared off duty, to a Special Service held in the Wimereux Cemetery where all the soldiers were buried up to that time. It was very sad yet very beautiful — Every Hosp. was represented here by medical officers. During Sisters and Orderly's, and we Sisters from all the hospitals took arms full of flowers with us, so that there were flowers on every grave either tied on the little wooden cross or lying on the grave itself. A band played the hymns and a Padre gave a short address, after which the Last Post was sounded. There are a great many Australian soldiers buried here.

9/8/18. Quite a number of Diggers were admitted to my ward in the morning. Each one a bad arm wound, but all quite cheery, and most enthusiastic about the organization of the attack, one an Aussie had never seen such organization through all the years of the war, and he added, it was my Mother's birthday the morning I got this, pointing to his arm wound.

10/8/18 he received on first French patients, quite a number of badly wounded men being admitted

to my ward, in the morning, and in the afternoon the Conway was again, Australian & Canadian, since Gen. Foch has taken command and all the troops are being moved about and a picked Army of French Soldiers were now up North at Remell where these Frenchmen had come from, they were splendid fellows, and so brave when getting their dressings done, but I had never seen men bleed to the same extent as these men had done from their wounds, everything was covered with blood, we concluded it was on account of their being a wine drinking people. They were very jolly and we had great fun learning each other's language. and one Frenchman told a Sister "he had met many Tiggas in different parts of France, but never before had the honor to meet Mademoiselle Pigger".

14/8/18 Another air raid 10.30 p.m. One bomb being dropped in a potato crop beside us, another again at the British Hosp opposite, outside the main building which is a three storied Casino & every pane of glass in that big building is shattered to pieces, more on the roadway just outside Wimerus killing several people also dropped here at a B. Hosp. a little further out killing one Sister & wounding three more, who were seeing to their Aug. out, one of the wounded Sisters dying a few days later, and fifteen patients were injured.

Sept 1918. Mathew being on leave, I am acting matron during his absence. The Hosp. is much quieter.

Sept 23<sup>rd</sup> 1918 Another Sister supposedly went on leave, having a very enjoyable time in Ireland, but two weeks soon goes, and it was a very cold rough trip crossing the Channel coming back.

10/11/18 Word came through early in the morning that the armistice had been signed, but every one took it very quietly until 3 o'clock in the afternoon when the big Fort gun fired twenty one rounds then all got excited for we knew then it was a certainty & all Sisters & staff went into Boulogne, but it was the day

troops who were the most demonstrative the French people. I noticed was very calm. These days the patients were all given a special dinner and a bottle of ale to celebrate the occasion. On the night of the 15<sup>th</sup> we Poles had a special dinner amongst ourselves to celebrate the Armistice and that night I started to write and again as Poles - in charge I had bad luck with all my writing. And, as it came and always in the middle of writing, but no good thing about it, it always proved to be a sure cure for sore feet, which so many Poles suffered from in the winter time, and it certainly always cured mine. The Hosp. is now very full of Influenza Cases, and many boys are dangerously ill.

12/18 A convoy of over 200 Italian Prisoners of War sick & wounded were admitted during the night - we thought the war and all its tragedies were over, but these sick men were in a shocking condition and it made one's heart ache even to look at them, one or two could speak English and the stories they told of ill treatment were appalling, some died on the train coming down. Others shortly after arriving at our Hosp. They were the first sick P. O. W. from Prussia & came from a camp known for its ill treatment called "Froscheda", where they said their comrades died in hundreds.

Our Hosp. at present contains patients of varied nationalities having, Arabs, Italians, French, American, Canadian, French Canadian, many of whom speak no English New Zealanders and a couple of Diggers.

Christmas 1918. With the Armistice signed was a very happy time, and the wards looked prettier than I had ever seen them, also our French patients, was very jolly and quite mixed into the spirit of everything, helping to gather green leaves & hollies from the fields around.

15/1/19 Eleven Poles including myself, are Poles who had been on active service since 1914 got orders through

from A. S. Headquarters to proceed to London for transport home to Australia. Leaving by the Troopship Kashmir on 9.3.19 and arriving in Melbourne on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1919. So ending my four years and a few months active Service. During which time I enjoyed the best of health - as apart from a very slight attack of mumps contracted in Egypt in 1915 I was not ill due to one day through illness of any kind.

Home address.

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28 Pais Avenue  
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Victoria

5/8/19.

8/8/19 No 16 Aust. Gen. Hosp.  
Macleod.  
Victoria.





Australian War Memorial

Item count:



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