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Thames in S. S. Dobson

90
66

Ambulance Train

To 20 Gen. Hosp. British
Nurses and discipline
after nursing care for Australian
British. Matron & Officers very kind
and considerate to Australian Sisters.
Special jaw ward.

The Ambulance Train - carries
800 patients during rushes.
Water scarce - hair - no way
of getting personal attire washed.
(3 baths in 3 months)

Winter 1916

To 12th Stab. Hosp. St Pol -
Infection was - a good deal of
C.M. each patient was nursed in
a separate section of tent,
divided by much barbed wire
but on the same side and
2 orderlies attended all the
patients - the barbed wire
was not of much use.

Very little linen - only an
occasional pair of pyjamas.
Auntie deputy nurse on duty
Blankets. Dig cases had to
be made. Most had been unscathed
& antiseptics seem so ones
not to give their full dose
of antiseptic. The infection
being spread at 1/2 hourly
intervals. Difficulty of

sterilizing needles with
everything freezing, and a
shortage of coal, kerosene and
methyl spirit. Splendid
orderlies - volunteers to R.A.M.C.
Spent 12 months in British and
left them with sincere regret

at 101 A.S.H. Bases, Dec 1917 -
Cambria Street - had 14 amputations
some double, as the time in his
ward.

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

"The private diaries in this collection are
valuable historical records, but, like all private
not compiled with any historical purpose,
regarded as first-hand evidence except where
are so. The diarist is almost always since
accurately, but he is subject to no obligation
indicate whether he is recording his own
told him by friends or heard at third or fourth
Thus, in some of the diaries in this collection
vivid detail, and without any warning that
or third hand, have been found to be
important details. A certain number also
or revised long after the events, though done
made at the time. In most cases the
experience and on internal evidence to guide
and what is not likely to be historically accurate

France 80 ✓
80
66
Paris - 25th June 1915 to 25th June 1919.

(Lane work)

Leaving Fremantle on June 25th - Dept. M. I. S. A. 63. Karoola
I proceeded to Egypt to join No. 1. A. G. H.

We carried, I think about 400 troops, - mixing
deck spots. dances on the top deck & various
studies & occupied our time till Aden was
reached. There were 45 members of the A. H. N. S. on
board - There have a good many cases of
measles, & some meningitis - So that those
who were well were fairly busy - I did about
15 nights' night duty for me got near the Equator
in the Red Sea. - sleeping in the daytime
was almost an impossibility - It always
seemed that the piece of deck above my
head was specially chosen for ailments or
physical duress, etc. - She that was a very
little trouble

Teaching Aden, we found ~~we found~~ that the Turks
were attacking that town, & we stayed
in Aden for 2 or 3 days. - we were told "to
see how things were going

The scene was wonderful - the vivid sea -
the distant coast-line yellow. & brown - &
ships from every where. Great cheers ^{arose} when
along came the "night of Asia" - with Indian troops
almsby transport carried right horsemen &
their horses. Here the war has intense - &
of course. She did not land - as the town was
considered unsafe. As has he started again
for Yemen. ^{my teaching (read) part} I said "good bye" to the Karoola &
the people on board who had, indeed been.
Kind to us - I felt that we had really
left Australia behind us!

I was ~~to~~ assigned to the 3rd Troop train
& we reached Cairo at night - I No. 1. A. G. H. at
Heliopolis about 10.30 p.m. It had been a most

being day. our Thick Serge Quits were NOT
 comfortable here for that climate!
 A great trade has done. by the fruit Sellers -
 Oranges, grapes, Thelons were bought in
 abundance. On arrival at the Hospital,
 refreshment, bath & food received in - 8
 next morn. we reported for duty - I
 was put on night duty in the "Eyehard"
 It was most unpleasant - as many were
 infected eyes. Some were wounded -
 There were 73 beds in this ward. ~~One~~
 orderly on duty all night. a relieving orderly
 after 4 a.m. they sleep. I did 3 weeks duty
 in that ward. I was then sent to No 3.
 Aux. Hosp. "The Sporting Club" - This was
 then used as an Infirmary Hosp. I
 continued my night duty with some
 Diphtheria Cases later. helped get the Hosp.
 ready for No 3. Aux. This Hosp. when complete
 contained over 2000 beds. I saw first cases
 were from the Aone Pine fighting, I think -
 In one night over 700 cases were admitted -
 I will never forget the seemingly endless
 line of men coming in - till every bed in
 my section was full. The men were bathed
 or sponged. dressings done - I by morning
 our Hosp. was in full going order.
 This Hosp. was happily situated in the
 grounds of the Heliopolis Sporting Club.
 avenues of gums, shrubs, & flowering
 trees made it a very pretty spot.
 It was a happy Hosp. too. I was almost
 completely Staffed by "Karoola" & "handilla"
 Eskimo. Mrs Conyers being the Matron.
 I believe a happy contented family
 he ~~lived~~ ^{was} at the Palace having our meals
 at the Hosp. our Servants here natives

3
very picturesque in white frocks & red shawls & caps.
I continued on night duty till October.
& during time of duty many interesting
excursions were made to the surrounding
sights - ———— Xmas 1915: was indeed
happy. The men were off Gallipoli - & one
remembered those who would never return
made, as happy as possible, Christmas for
the others. Any amount of gum leaves were
forthcoming & my hard hat decorated
with these & flowers - that the boys brought
in - .

I again went on night duty on 15th Jan'y. till
10th February. & that was 'Goodbye' to ever
home at the Sporting Club. - for I with
nearly all of the then staff was sent
to No 3. A. G. H. at Abbassia - The ~~Staff~~
The 3rd A. G. H. was mainly staffed by No 2.
A. G. H. Sisters, after we left.

While at No 3 A. G. H. I did relieving duty
till I was granted 5 days leave & went
to Luxor & Assuan, a wonderful place.
Cairo & its surroundings was ~~not~~ ^{but} indeed
different to the Egypt one saw there.
The natives were a much more respectabil-
less beggarly type - Dr. emp 5th day.
I was recalled to Cairo - & was put on
duty on an Ambulance train - running
from Cairo to ^{to} Assualia - . We loaded
at Assualia ^{Tel el Helwan} at the New Zealand Camp.
The staff on this train consisted of one
M.O. & 2 Sisters. ^{and} Staff under a
Sergeant to attend to certain work - but
the main staffing on the train as
regards orderlies was done by
Indians - & I have nothing but
admiration for their excellent work.

This duty lasted for a few days. I saw much of interest in a short time - I was at Ismailia when the Prince of Wales landed there - A most pleasing incident occurred each morn. A handful of Sikhs, soldiers - splendidly mounted, saluted our train with its Star & Crescent & Red Cross. - I left Egypt with the mail - by the "Sacta" - 29th March & a most trying journey ensued. We were allotted to the patients' berths - 56 beds in all - no privacy was possible - The bathrooms were at the other end of the ship & Sisters & Staff nurses did not dine together on one occasion when there was no room for me at the 1st (Staff nurses) meal. I was sent to the 3rd meal. I was asked, "Is a Sister ^{the Sub-Matron} or a Nurse? I know I am a staff nurse & not a Sister!" She seemed to forget we were all trained nurses.

Reaching Marseilles - we were greeted with "Coops" & "Australia will be here" from 2 or 3 transports with Australian troops on board. & their happy welcome cheered us much. Most of the time has spent on the "Sacta" & then we disembarked & went to an Hotel for 2 days, enquiring then for the War of France. We were told that "Someone" was ahead making arrangements for us, "well! if that was a fact, that brain journey & our arrival at Rouen, did not speak much for his efforts: he left Marseilles 9 am. reaching it on Monday. Reaching Rouen at 4 pm on Wednesday. - He sat up, 4 in a compartment during that time, in ordinary carriage - There was no corridors - no sanitary arrangements were

provided for - we washed our hands & faces with ~~old~~ water obtained when the

Train stopped. Meals were obtained - with
difficulty - at the Stations en route.
It was bitterly cold & uncomfortable.
We were on a slow luggage train which
Crawled along - On arrival at Rouen.
The lack of arrangements again met us.
We were very kindly treated by the
Staff of No 12. Brit. Gen. Hosp. who did everything
possible for our comfort. I gave up their
rooms. Many of us slept in the wards.
For over 100 Sisters arrived that day.
If No 12 had withheld its hospitality, I
wonder how we would have fared?
That day I left with 56 others for various
British Hosps. I was sent to 20th Gen. Hosp.
at Camiers - near Etaples - Again instead
of going on a passenger train we were
put on a luggage train - reaching Etaples
on Friday even. apparently we were to do
without food for that journey - An
Australian I knew on the troop train that
came along side us, gave me a Thermos
of tea & some bully beef & biscuits. We
received much kindness from the British Postal
Staff on the train, who gave us their ration &
bought some eggs for us at a farm house at the
place I reached the Hosp. I received every
kindness - my luggage was not delivered till
later, so she lent me a hot water bag, and then
her oil stone. The following day was given me
for resting. Then I went on duty in a medical
battalion. The manners & discipline of the Trench.
was remarkable after ^{meeting} their care-free Australians
I was at that hosp. about 3 weeks. I think
I received much kindness from the Matrons
& Sisters while there. At all small hospital
festivities, they made sure that I should be there

There were a few Australians there, in the Hosp. & one
 boy seriously ill. I visited a frequently - at that
 Hosp. They had a Special ward for jaw Cases.
 & patients from everywhere were sent to that
 ward. He under the care of a ^{Tan.} specialist
 If I remember rightly - he has an American Specialist
 & a child had been rescued in Armenia by
 an American Mission - The Australian
 had his jaw fractured & his tongue severely
 lacerated & was unable to speak. He seemed pleased
 to see me. - On 25th April - "Nabon" told me three
 Australians - that we were to go to an Anzac
 Service. A large vehicle conveyed a number
 of Australian Soldiers to the Service - which was
 held on a grass field - surrounded by pine
 clad hills - Played in by a Highland Band.
 The Australians marched in & formed a
 hollow square. - The fourth side being formed
 by the Chaplains. Various Officers & about
 60 Austr. Soldiers. Hundreds of patients in their
 bright blue suits, from the Hosp. by Hospital
 British Sisters & Sisters, sat on the little
 hills round this field - the Service was a
 beautiful one. - I do not say too. The tongue
 how many had gone. Since the preceding
 25th April. & wondered how many of those
 who so beautifully sang "Jesus, Lover of my
 Soul" at the end of last Service - would attend
 the next celebration of Anzac Day.
 At the close of this Service the troops were
 addressed by General. Mason. (I think that
 was his name) who represented the British
 Army. & spoke splendidly - The Colours were
 saluted (to this the correct time) ~~by the~~ & then, all
 those who had been at the landing on that
 memorable day. - about 40 men - out of the
 7000. troops who were at the Service, marched.

47
before the General. He specially addressed them
later. These men ^{throughout the year} the march past. & how
very proud we were of "our boys". That day,
the 2nd Division people had arranged for our
entertainment - with a Luncheon & Sports meeting
but we were not permitted to partake of this
officially - but went round to the Officers Mess &
had light refreshment - unofficially. Returned to
our respective Ho Quats
That evening at our Hosp. we were ~~at a dinner~~ having
a progressive evening party. & just as we were finishing
up - our mess the lights - the Germans were
overhead - & a few seconds later bombs were
dropped. at No 26. Gen Hosp some distance
from us - he were told they were trying to
get the Machine Gun & Australian Camps. which were
quite close to us. No one was injured - he went to
bed that night - in the dark. - I won the Gentlemen Prize
& it now is a Londoner of that night - my first
& experience in bombing - After days talk on 7th May
went on duty on No 10 Ambulance train - &
that was indeed my most interesting time while
on duty up to date. The staff of an H.T. is
M.O. 3 Sisters & about 45 orderlies -
All the trains No 12. & onwards are specially
made for that work. I have a corridor
running the whole length of the train - Spring
stretches & every convenience. From No. 1 to No. 10.
They are converted French passenger trains - The
interiors of the coaches had been removed &
ordinary stretches on iron brackets placed in
averaging about 40 stretches to a coach. 2.
orderlies to each coach. For sitting patients. The
~~brackets~~ ~~are~~ seats ^{with} left in other coaches. with
stretches overhead. An average load would be
about ~~to~~ 700 to 750 - but when pushes
were on - we carried nearly 850 patients.

8
But then there were stretchers everywhere - on
the floor, in corridors - one walked on the edges
of stretchers. I joined the train on
left in on. - & almost every day
of that line was crowded with interest.

Our duties took us to practically every Casualty
Clearing on the Bentley front. & therefore was
never monotonous. Sometimes we would only
carry 2 loads per week. Other times we would
be busy night & day for days. Our complete
home was the train. We could not leave it for
any length of time, for no one knew where we
would be sent out - so that excursions

to neighbouring towns, rarely lasted more than
hours. Our duties were divided up. The Sirai in
Charge, a Territorial Sirai - looked after the Officers
& our train accommodation was provided for.

36 - ²⁰⁰ stretchers were in the forward end
of the train which was connected throughout
by a Corridor - but on the other end of train
(my end) the coaches were disconnected, & in
no time I was an adept footboard walker. Such
was necessary, for on a long run. The train
might only stop once or twice, & to attend to
serious cases one had to walk the train. "Short"
fuel skirts & sensible shoes, were necessary for
this performance. for the coaches were
separated by a gap, 3 or 4 ft wide - but there
was always an orderly with a guiding hand
to help one over the chasm! On another train an
orderly fell, & had both legs cut off. There were then
told me must not do over the footboards, but, for
my part did not obey that instruction, - it
was quite impossible to do so, & still carry out
ones duties. One always chose a time when
the train was going slowly for such adventures.
A necessary supply of Stuntants, drugs, etc.

9
has carried in a bag on my belt & a bag
of cigarette & matches has also on my belt
The duties in each coach would report on loading
any severe cases & in due course each coach
would be visited by the T.M.O. Also being
in attendance - of course. Sometimes we had
deaths on the train but if possible - when it was
found a patient was not standing the journey -
he would be sent to various Stationary Hosp.
one at Abbeville, one at St. Omer, & one at
Hazebrouck. being not convenient for such.
Dressings were not done, unless a haemorrhage
occurring - the train would be stopped &
such would be attended to, but ordinarily
packing over with fresh dressing would be done.
Each coach carried a dressing case &
Trays, special foods, Cigarettes, & magazines
were provided - the extras in the food, like
being for. Serious cases - Macaroniche stew
pudding, bread & cheese. Milk, & ~~tea~~ ^{was} the
diet for ordinary cases. On arrival at one
destination - a box, Rouen - de Trepoit - Etapes
Etriat - Calais & Boulogne, our duties were over.
In bad cases, I would specially see off into the
first Ambulance, & then the ordinary unloading
began, & I still ^{were} ~~was~~ only in the way - when loading
unloading was in progress. On ordinary
journeys one could supervise every patient, but
when probes were on - one could only do what
one could - Two particular occasions
stand out in my memory - when the Canadians
were so fearfully cut up at Ypres in May or early June
usually the men are talkative & willing to tell
stories all about it - but on that occasion the
train was packed with a silent & exhausted band
of men - they had held Ypres, they
had saved Calais but at what a cost! he had
moued in that night, up to was Remy Siding

The nearest the trains could go in - & we didn't go to
 bed that night. We sat on the table under the
 window & watched the Cruisers. Shooting flares.
 listened to the incessant awful crossing of the fuses.
 till the train rocked & the windows rattled &
 knew that here were in that hell. - We
 knew we would have a full load next morning
 we did - Popping & has these messages &
 trains could not go further. I have many souvenirs
 of that time. - Cap. badges. from almost every
 Canadian Regiment, but I could not remember
 the history of each badge - each scrap of rag!
 For some time we ran regularly from Chapuquoy
 to Boulogne. & garaged each night on futures
 to Chapuquoy - along side an Ammunition dump.
 The C.C.S. was a few yards away. across the rails
 while there on Aug. 4th 1916. we watched.

Bethune being badly shelled. A review of troops
 had been planned to take place at 9 a.m. on
 Monday. - The British were wise & held the review
 at 9 a.m. on Sunday but the Germans had not
 been notified of the change of time. Started
 shelling on Monday a.m. causing fearful
 casualties among the civilians. getting the
 church. & C.C.S. & troops in the nearby wood.
 we were upon the hill ~~to~~ picking blackberries
 when the shelling started. but hurried home
 in case we were needed. next day we loaded
 the casualties from Bethune but later went up on
 the Calvary Hill & with glasses could watch the
 shells get their mark. It was indeed interesting.
 next day we loaded. The casualties from Bethune
 from this Hill at night time we would watch.
 The battle line La Bassée. Poncheu. & Lens. a
 glittering line of light. Star shells. Very light &
 & all the heavy illuminations of the line
 July & The 1st Somme posts was the second occasion
 when the work became terrible. for during that

time, we carried hundreds & hundreds of wounded
men - we were garaged at Solonville with Brown.
& that afternoon were having a cricket match with
No 8. train & we received urgent orders to
depart. Coats, crickets bats etc were hastily
seized & the ~~respective~~ ^{respective} G.I.s went aboard their
respective trains. We were told to go on
the up journey in readiness for late work.
Arriving at Posh ^{the half past} (near Albert) we
loaded at once. wounded were lying on
stretchers, showing grey in the early morning light
to C.C.S. was full. & these men were placed in
a field of beautiful orange poppies that are
grown for medicinal purposes - & such.
wounded - The ordinary liquid cases were
placed on T. A. Trains - ordinary passenger
trains carrying one. No. & a few orderlies - &
the severe cases were sent on to our train
It was almost impossible to cope with the work.
I had ~~1400~~ ¹⁴⁰⁰ men in my end of the train (on
one trip we carried 168 Officers) & I did the
best I could for the very bad cases. - we
carried fine loads in 3 days. Freshing on the return
journey - the men were buoyed up with
success - "we've had a great time" - "we
just had a fearful doing" despite their
awful casualties. They were jubilant -
A friend Ruddy sent me the news about this
time of the great doings of our boys at
Pozzen - but we did not carry any from
their post. We only "northern guns" we loaded
at the Aust. C.C.S. & carried our own troops.
but mostly worked from British C.C.S. of
course. I visited the C.C.S. at La G. Station
& had morning tea with our Sisters there, & getting
some flowers from the garden at the C.C.S.
which ~~was~~ had been a boys school. & also
when in that locality we travelled over.

13
Some of the old battlefields of 1914. Having wheat
& scarlet poppies hid the ground
of former strife from us. Then, but up on
the hill in the ~~concealed~~ ^{marginally} ground we saw the
crosses - of the British, French, & German forces.
In that ground the Crown Prince of Weid was
buried to our C.O. to a mo. Passing over
the B.E.F. line - we viewed the defences - barbed
wire entanglements - machine gun emplacements.
& such like. The scenic interests of those
A.I. days were intense too - Spring - Summer &
the beginning of Autumn - in France -

Spring with its orchards in full bloom. Summer
with daisies, poppies, corn flowers, blazing
the fields with colour. The early understood
why Francis colours were Red White & Blue.
Every field proclaimed it - every bank
flamed the colours of the Republic -

Hedges of wild roses & honey suckle. Gave
charm & romance to the passing scene. I would
sit on the steps of the train & watch this
wonderful scene, when going up, to hear the
line - we had very cramped living space.
Sisters in a small compartment - each seat was a
bed. & when pulled out to be wide enough to
lie on. There was no place to stand. So we
took turns at undressing & going to bed. -
The arm seats were still in place. & I needed to
accommodate my length to fit in these
projections! It was not comfortable.

Everything we possessed was in that compartment
except ~~our~~ ^{our} luggage & that was in the stretchers
van. We utilized the racks for our clothes,
bottle articles etc, & a bath was a luxury only
indulged in when we were unloading
at Staples & 4024 Gen. Hosp. Rapidly placed
two bathrooms at the disposal of train ~~brothers~~ ^{staff}

13
I had 3 baths in 3 months. & the water supply
on the train was scarce as we only carried a
small quantity, & it had to be treated with care.
The bathmen did not like carrying it from
the stand pipe which was our supply.
When our ~~water~~ tank was exhausted.

The laundry question was an acute one. We
could not send our clothes out because we did
not stay in any place long enough, so washing
days had to be when we were up the line
waiting - at some secluded spots. The work
was wonderfully interesting, & its pleasure
quite outweighed the discomforts. A.

My father's spirit's iron was indeed a treasure. &
kept us going in caps etc., & the N.O.s in ironed
collars! The Railhead men. P.T.O.s. Advance
people. all hailed A.T.s with joy - & it
was a great pleasure to Sister Jenkins' p. & I.
have them in afternoon tea. These men would
say they had not spoken to a British woman
for weeks. One evening I was walking along
the road at Lapuquoy, going to gather

corn flowers, in the crop, for our train tables.
I passed two Tommies & spoke to them.
They seemed surprised. & later told me that
Sister did not usually speak to them, &
helped me pick my flowers. Reaching the
road at which they turned off, one said,
Sister, we haven't spoken to an English woman
for ~~months~~ over 12 months - not since we said
Goodbye, at home, & we're going into the
front line tomorrow & we'll be thinking of
you & the flowers. It will be something to thank
of, & "Thank you" what a reward for a few
words! To be a reminder of their own
women folk, & their own peaceful
homes & ~~land~~ country lanes. I feel that, at any
rate, that day I had not lived in vain

44
I have many Sweet remembrances of those
days on the A. T.
The great ~~difficulty~~ & trouble & annoyance too.
my letters. For a time I received no letters at
all. & one day when our brains were at home.
I went up to No 1. A.G. H. to see about them.
Previously when Josi going on the 10.20 Gen. H.
I the A. T. I had written the Major. Miss Friday
giving my address. but apparently the P.O.
had not been instructed, for when I looked at
the orderly's book. my add. has five or six lines
he assured me he had forwarded. any amount of
letters to that address - which was quite
incorrect as I had never been there - & I
never got those letters. & some letters were very
valuable to me. apparently lost thru carelessness.
I did not mention earlier in my narrative
that while at Berquatte. we were shelled.
They were shelling that town. trying to get a
foundry there. & we came into range. Our
brain backed out. & we sustained no hurt. but
it was most interesting. After Bethune had
shelled we were not permitted to go into the town
without gas-helmets

I had some splendid sights of air fights too.
we'd watch a fight. - So interested in the
bursts of straphuel. H.E. etc. wondering
each time. "would they get him" observation
balloons. Came in for their share of trouble too.
we were at. Capuquoy. when Audriche was
destroyed. I was told it was the largest
Amm. dump in France & we ran past it
a couple of days later. & what a scene of
desolation. - what had once been a ^{large} centre.
was nothing but a heap of blackened ruins
trees round for a great distance were
charred & blackened. hills out of the town.
the houses were in ruins. & what had once.

15
them rails, bridges - & such like heavy railroad material was then a twisted - distorted mass. It was a fearful disaster & a fearful ruin. I was told that as the first bomb was dropped. it was found the wires were cut. & that only a day or two before the A.A. gun had been removed to another centre. - apparently, if this was true the Germans had been well informed. The lines were shaken near Audricum for some time & our course was diverted for a time - Machine guns & an additional A.A. gun was brought at Napuquoy - to guard that dump. & I believe that much ammunition was distributed to smaller centres after that lesson. I often wondered if they'd get us some night.

One of my greatest treasures was an Australian flag given me ~~at~~ the very early days in France. & when passing thro' the ports occupied by our troops. that flag came in for much cheering - The day - an American Column (Australian) had halted to let us pass. I hastened to get my flag to wave. But found the C.O. had raced me. He was furiously waving his flag out the windows. So I joined the flag to be greeted too. Now they cheered that flag & waved their hats. On August 7th he went to St. Pol. to load. & there I received my movement orders to proceed to 12 Stai. Hosp. outside St. Pol. It was with great regret I left the base & my friends there - I reached the Hosp. at 5:30 pm. & at 8 pm. went on night duty in charge of the Infections Hosp. There a lent. Hosp. some little distance from the main buildings of 12 S. H. I continued on night duty 1/2c. at the Hosp. till 4th Feb. 1917.

There I ~~had~~ nursed. all Infection Cases including much *St. meningitidis*. At first I had only 2 orderlies. but later was granted an additional 2 orderlies & again later another Sister was sent across to help. but at first it was really fearfully busy. I was on duty there during the famous "1916. bout" - Officers & men were my patients. Each infection was nursed in a separate section of tents, divided by much barbed wire - but on the same Sister & 2 orderlies attended to all the patients. I'm afraid the barbed wire was hot of much use. Anyway, no one ever caught anything that any one else had. At first we were fairly near the main Hosp. but after a while we moved across on to a small rising - soft clayey ground. - which was our undoing in any way. for as soon as it rained & it did frequently, up came the tent pegs. & at least once a week on windy nights the orderlies would be up all night long & I'd have to be wakened to stay orderlies & then would ensue a frantic performance of getting the tent secure again. The tent ropes that were in place, only served to trip up some unwary person. My occupation was to "hold the lantern". I soon found the only garment possible was a black water proof coat & hood. leggings & gaiters. so all the tents were separated & some ^{quite} distance apart. & by the time I had completed a ground of about 40 tents, it was time to start the ground again - with intervals for 6 or 8 hours. we averaged up to 100 patients. The officers were in bell tents. separate ones. The men being nursed in large

14 - Sometimes there would be only one man
in a tent. Still he had to be looked after & his
fire kept up. In Nov. & December ^{the} ~~my~~ ^{my} bombs
were many. It was bitterly cold - & later
everything was frozen. Taps were frozen
everywhere. - all the water for a large
S. Hoop had to be drawn from a well by
a rope & bucket: & every little while the
rope had to be banged with a hammer
to get the ice off. Coal was very scarce indeed
& many nights I had no fire at all. ^{my}
only warmth being a Bearuce Stone in
the duty tent. Bitterly cold winds blew
from the north. but one's eyes smarted &
one's face felt raw - Crawling out of the
tent flaps under a blanket to keep out
the snow & wind - one met the full blast
of steel faden wind - after snow came &
everything ^{was} frozen over. it was more
endurable. Laundry ~~was~~ was most
difficult to obtain - sheets & pyjamas were
almost unheard of - I nursed C. S. men
with a shortage of bed linen - an occasional
pr of pyjamas was a "god send" & I
only wonder all the C. S. m- patients did
not get sore backs. Acute Dysentery
passing almost purely blood was
mixed in brown army blankets. which
hurdly were fumigated before being
used again - Still we were hard to
the line & very busy indeed & the
laundry I suppose could not be done.
Amongst the dysentery cases. There were
many German prisoners. - Most of
the patients were Canadians for Vimy
Ridge was the front for which we worked.
& they seem to be very fond of measles &
humps. & mostly all the C. S. meningitis
cases were. Canadian diphtheria cases

58
were very trying - because most of them had been
inoculated with Antitetanus Serum. So could not
be given their full dose of Antitetin.
The injections being spaced at $\frac{1}{2}$ daily intervals
& mm. doses given at those times - One can
imagine the difficulty of keeping Serum warm
& needles sterilised with everything frozen
& a shortage of coal, Resene, & kettling water
spirits.

Was fortunate in having splendid orderlies
only volunteers to the R.A.M.C. but what
splendid men. One man had been a
Commercial Traveller - another a barman.
Yet what fine service they rendered
their mates in that Isolation Hospital
the barman - R.A.M.C orderly specialised
the C. S. Meningitis cases. With heroic
determination to duty he stuck to those highly
infectious cases. Those two worked through
all that infect. work with only the thought
for their comrades. My duty hours were from
8 pm to 8 am. - my midnight-supper &
morning tea I had in the duty tent - cooked
or warmed up over a Beatrice stove.
I was alone ^{most} there for 4 months. going across
to the general. ~~top~~ part of the Hosp. to sleep &
for breakfast & dinner. It was very lonely when
on duty. & I was not very happy. & I have
much gratitude to the two orderlies for
many kindnesses. They were indeed
"natures gentlemen!" Iain I had to assist
me. a very heroic Irish Sister & it
was much nicer than
we were near enough to bring Ridge 10000 mines
going up - to watch star shells. - to see the flashes
& ~~illumination~~ Crimson illumination of the fumes
Sometimes the wind on the roof would rattle so much it
wake one up. we ~~to~~ got our cases straight from the field
ambulances. To stand the cold - kept - on all.

19
The warm clothing I could make. I was
very healthy. I did not have a chiblain
any time in France. The Matron of the Hosp.
was very charming, indeed. I enjoyed
my stay while at her Hosp. The social life
was pleasant especially on Sundays.
The Hosp. kept open house for the
officers. Many came from Arras to our
tea parties. The Tank Officers came much.
They were camped near to us. I saw the
first original tanks ever used. Certainly
they were well covered but I saw them or
parts of them. General Allenby has in
charge of 3rd A. Army H. 2. There is St. Pol. has
then H. 2. So ^{that} much of interest occurred.
The King & the P. of Wales. Visited while I was
there - the King of Montenegro. & Sir Douglas Haig
also being among the distinguished visitors to
our Hosp. When the snow was there & frozen.
I joined parties to go tobogganing - down
the hills - but I preferred to watch the others.
I can indulge myself. One night we heard
a great rumbling coming up the hill so the
orderly went scouting & came in to advise.
to go out too. I saw. Sneaking along in the
darkness - drawn by a traction engine a
huge naval gun - with gun team sitting
on its long snout. I was told it was one of
the guns that helped the Canadians take
Timber Ridge. Another morning this orderly came
hastening in. "Sir! Some of your boys are
passing"! Out I hastened. it was the 25th
Battery if I remember ^{rightly} passing from 5th to
6th. This was the advance party.
This I hung my flag from my window. &
I found it was no use staying inside there. So
went out to talk to them & I received many
requests for that flag. but I did not part with it.

Tamp. 7" I was granted leave. - my first really
leave. & went to London. - it was too cold
to do anything else. But sit by a fire.
returned to hosp. & a short time later.
got movement orders. to return to No 1. A.G. Hospo
I had spent nearly 12 months with the British
& left them with sincere regret.

The journey to Rouen. was indeed trying
At that time bread. meat. eggs. everything was
frozen solid - icicles hung from the roofs.
to have a bath(?) I would take a bucket
of icicles & put it on my stone overnight
& by morning I had a fine bucket of
boiling water for washing purposes &
hot bags. & a warm room. It was under
these climatic conditions I started for Rouen
at St. Pol. Station the R.T.O. when ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~train~~ ^{train} ~~was~~ ^{was} ~~full~~ ^{full} ~~of~~ ^{of} ~~passengers~~ ^{passengers}.
on the train. gave me a small flask of
rum & I wondered then at the gift.
but later I rejoiced. I left 12 S.H. on Sunday
4 pm. I reached Staples at 2 a.m. on
Monday. The R.T.O. would not permit me to
proceed that night. - he told me some men
had been found frozen to death on the leave train
by which I travelled. I suppose they were
exhausted & wet through & could not resist
the further cold. So I was sent per bus -
in a blinding snow storm to 24th General.
to spend the rest of the night. I descended
into the snow & rug & hot water bag. &
wandered round for some time. till I saw
a light & made for it - tho about a foot of
snow - & found I had come to No 7. Canadian
Hosp. The ~~doctor~~ ^{doctor} ~~duty~~ ^{duty} in the kitchen looked
after me like a brother. filled my hot water bag.
& gave me an excellent supper of
fried eggs & fried potatoes & went to find the

21
The night Sister of No 24. He found her. & when she came. She was scandalised to find me enjoying a homely repast with the Canadian Good Samaritans. - Later I was given a bed. There - but I could see she did not approve of skippy Sisters who dined at 4. am. on fried eggs & potatoes - I spent the next night at Abberville at the Hosp. There & the following night at the N. Zealand Hosp. at Arminiers where that town was badly bombed. Over 300 people were killed that night. & I was aroused. by the night Sister & asked to go down into the Cellar. All the patients & Staff were under shelter but I was too cold & tired to care what happened. & stayed where I was. - in a bed in the empty Officers ward. & watched the Sign. The Hosp. had been a convent. & the room I was in, had apparently, been the Chapel. a life sized figure of the Virgin filled the window. & this figure was silhouetted against the bright moonlight. & flashes of A.A. guns. Shrapnel rattled on the roof like hail. The Hosp. was situated quite close to the Railway Station & it was not possible to aim for the Stn. & miss the Hosp. Anyway. - The Hosp was not touched. & I was so tired I went to sleep in the under of it & Sister woke me at 4. a.m. to continue my wandering. Oh! so cold. - I had had for travelling. companions 2 British Officers - I've forgot the unpleasantness of our journey in each other's company. - They were very merry & helpful - & joined me at ~~Stoch~~ Stoch. The Hosp at 4. 30 am & we went to St Roch. reaching Rome at 7. pm. The night Sister had filled my Thermos with coffee. & we had some sandwiches so procured on that obscure

I stayed with No. 1. A. G. H. till the present time. my days of adventure & absorbing interest were over. I had had splendid experience "up the line" & was content to do "Base Hosp" work. - For some months I was doing medical nursing & then night duty in October 1917. till the end of the year, in an acute surgical ward - I was on duty for the Cambrai posts in that ward - night duty - at one time there were 14 amputations in that section. Some of them "double amputations" Corroy. in - evacuations out - dressings & ordinary ward nursing kept me fully occupied those days. One night we evacuated 23. acute surgical cases. 1/2 after that had gone. & we were just beginning to finish the clearing up of solid linen. Ring cushions, splints dressing buckets. - Caroll's tubes. & such like. when the cheering information of "Corroy in 1/2 hr." came to us. myself & one orderly for 56 patients - The beds were not made or were we tied up. before in they came stretchers. & bearers. patients & ston. & there it was a race to get finished. by 7. am. when the ^{day} night people came on. In the summer time I was on duty in the Sisters mess & gardening was my pet pastime & I was proud of my gardens at the Irish Quarters at No. 1. A. G. H. The work being done by Convalescent patients. About this time - we were being bombed. or rather I should say the men were being bombed. for we were never touched. Tho we could hardly expect to escape. as we were surrounded by camps. Many nights we spent an hour or two in trenches. clad in weird garments. & ^{steel} hats

A Camp stool or door mat was a treasure. a cushion & an army blanket - were my best friends - I have a long piece of Shrapnel. that fell a inch or so from my shoulder. which I recovered with more in the sand of the trench - It is a souvenir. The night at 10.30 The alarm went & we obediently trotted into our trenches. Stayed there till 12. m.d. Everything seemed over. & I went back to bed. just had succeeded in dusting the sand from my toes & getting warm. & once more. a jaunt to the trenches & this time we stayed till nearly 3 am. that time we stayed in bed & were not further disturbed. my worst result was a bad cold & a pain in my back. After one of these pleasant nights. sometimes Duty was fought over our heads flying fairly low. - once he dropped a flare that lit up everything with a greenish glare. he was aiming for the two bridges. One a wonderful Railway bridge. called Le Pont des Anglais. This bridge was built for a great river in another land. & was shipped to a distant port. They found the then railway bridge insufficient to carry the increased traffic. & so erected part of this bridge. It had an incomplete span. - it was erected by the R.E's we hired the ground. it stood on. & therefore was known as the Pont des Anglais. Twice the enemy got very close to that bridge on one occasion damaging the observation post & the street. In Sep. I went on night duty musing Influenza cases. - part of the time I was on night duty when the Committee

24 was signed - coming to England with the
second detachment of Sisters: At present I
am on duty in an acute medical ward, but
leave it for night duty next week.

In all my service with the hospitals, I have
been so happy in the great patience &
cheerfulness shown by the patients.

Two badly wounded. They would always
try to make the best of it - & in the
many kindnesses shown me by men
from all over the world. Doctors, Canadian
Americans S. Africans, N. Z. English &
Irish troops - & our own ^{Antipian} here everywhere
there has been the great spirit of
kindness & helping from the boys of
course at times one gets the reverse of this
as in such minor cases. to of.

Such infrequency one does well to
forget any such little unpleasantness.
The great & splendid spirit of helping
their cohorts - helping Sisters to get their
work done - helping the blinded - poor
suffering gas cases - The making the best
of the worst - has shone like a great wheel
light all through my 4 yrs of nursing
the men of the British armies.

Who the many tiny courtesies & kindnesses
from the French people in the villages
a basket of apples for the "blesses" on
the train - a bunch of roses to
cheer up the table - these & many such
little thoughtless acts make one almost
forget that the days in the Army
are almost over.

I carry many precious memories
with me. as I complete 4 yrs
service with the A.A.S. - A.I.F.

Yrs. Grace. Johnson.

— Sister —

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