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AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL
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[975]

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 no 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 mess-table. 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 usually from notes made at the time. In most cases the student must rely on his experience and on internal evidence to guide him in judging what is and what is not likely to be historically accurate.”

copy
5713
Mrs. M. J. Jones
Nursing Chaplin

"Ghezireh"
Post-Hacking Road.

Miranda.

29th June 1933.

Dear Colonel Butler,

With these answers to your questions, I am sliding along by registered post, one of my greatest treasures, a book of the Boer War. Between pages 32.33 you will find a group of Nursing Service, New South Wales Sisters known as New South Wales Army Nursing Service Reserve, formed in February 1899. This group includes five who were attached to our Unit for Journey.

You here see the original uniform as described in my answer to N^o. 1. question.

On our return from the Boer War, August 1902, we were very soon merged into the A. A. N. S. and very little alteration was made in the Uniform until the war began.

The Lady Superintendent became a Principal Matron (Grade 1)

There were two Matrons. (Julia Bligh Johnston and Miss [unclear])

Sisters and Staff Nurses made up the rest of the staff.

I am of course, speaking only of New South Wales N^o. 2. District.

Until the Great War began, we remained on the Peace Basis (26. efficient every May - June) and a number of Reserve Sisters gradually brought up the numbers. If I can be of any further assistance please say so. Time has treated me well thank you. With kind regards Yours faithfully
Evelyn Stone.

(Typed 5/11/33)
W.C.

1. Did you have a special uniform in the pre-Federation days in the New South Wales Nursing Service formed by yourself and General Williams. If so what was its nature: and was it derived from the British?

Answer Yes. Early in 1899. (Feb:) a Lady Superintendent a Matron and twenty-three Sisters were sworn in. This swearing in brought us under the Queens Regulations and was never changed for our Unit. Later Staffs however, were not sworn in - merely filled in forms.

The question of uniform was settled by our Medical Officers, General (then Colonel) Williams and Lt-Col: Mundabor Kelly, who obtained a red cape from the War Office as a pattern, also the regulation cap (Mushie hem stitched square). The dress was of dark grey serge (made in Australia) with, in addition to the red cape, a three quarter length Cape of same and a bonnet for outdoor wear. The plain trimming was of brouse as worn by the A.M.C. Working uniform was of grey 3/4 pyp. washing capes (scarlet) and the Muslim square capes. These capes were made for us at the Army Tailors. Before the matter was finally settled, I was called to go with the Colonel to see General French and he approved of the arrangements to be made for that uniform.

When the Boer War broke out, later in the year, we had to add serviceable rain coats. All buttons used were as worn by the Military forces in N.S.W. Other travelling gear was also provided, only two travelling trunks and ~~and~~ strapped rugs & bedding allowed,

2. Was the N.S.W. Nursing Service framed on the lines of the British Army Nursing Service (as it was then called)

Answer. It was and any alterations necessary were made by the General after consultation.

3. When the Australian Army Nursing Service was formed, did you go to Melbourne to assist in its formation.

Answer No; I received a circular Memo, asking views about certain points.

4. Did you expect to have precedence over non-service nurses in the case of war.

Answer. Precedence was given to those who, on the date of war were efficient, i.e. had that year (army year) received the Military Instruction and had been examined by the Medical officers for efficiency.

Any other who were on the reserve of Military efficient came after them, in order of Seniority and if there were more needed the fully qualified A.T.N.A. Nurses were taken on. That secured precedence for those who knew most of the particular form of Nursing required.

5. You mention in your memorandum that the Matron in Chief in France (Miss Maude McCarthy) was trained at the Coast Hospital, Sydney. Do you know if she went through her full course there? "Who's Who" only records her as trained

No. 5. cont. at the London Hospital.

Answer In those far away days before the Box toax Nurses obtained a shorter time. But it was found that three and more years would be needed for Australia, as so often a doctor could not come such distances (60. or 70. miles) more than one and Nurse had to be trained to take and carry out orders, wholesale, instead of the daily detailed order. Some of us saw that the longer time would be insisted on soon and stepped on for our practical training in our several Hospitals. Miss Mauck McCarthy, I was told "trained at the Coast Hospital Sydney before she left Australia" and continued Nursing in England. She joined the Imperial Nursing Service. (These were called "The Regulars" and were always very carefully chosen. She must have shown special administrative ability to hold the position she had during the Great War.

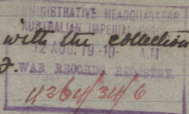
6. Re Uniform a. a. n. s. also a. s. d.

Answer This question is answered in detail in No. 1.

E. I. Gould
I. A. W. M. 4364/34/6.
01367

New South Wales.

Assistance asked in connection with the collection
of Historical Material for A.A.N.S. A.S.D.



1. Organisation of A.A.N.S. before outbreak of war. 1914.
In February 1899. Colonel Williams (afterwards Surgeon
General) asked me to help form a Nursing Service in
connection with his Army Medical Corps services.
In May of same year when the various branches were
receiving the training necessary before becoming militarily
efficient, the little band of 26. Nurses were sworn
in. One Lady Superintendent, one Matron and twenty
four Sister. Colonel Rolfe and Colonel Daudsbaur
Kelly succeeded in convincing us that only in the
Army would you find a Nursing field where everything
ran on "greased wheels" from the firing line, back
through the various collecting stations, stationary
Hospitals and Base Hospital. More greased still
the Army Service Corps.

Our place in this magic organisation was clearly
defined and twenty years after, the Australian Army
Sister still reaps the benefit of those preliminary
instructions for the Nursing Spirit of the New
South Wales section (of which alone I can speak
with authority) has always kept in time with
the rest of the Corp and worked wonderfully
harmoniously not only with the Medical, but
also with the Orderlies and others.

In 1900 (January) twelve of these efficient Nursing
Sisters, not one of whom had had less than seven years

1. A.M.M. 1844/54/6

Street, Wrexham

Respectfully
of the Medical Profession for A.S.S. & G.

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experience left Australia with the Second Contingent
 to the Boer war. On the "Moravian" we had crowded
 quarters, but messed in the Saloon comfortably. We ar-
 rived at Cape Town on the day Kimberley was relieved
 (Feb 19, 1900) Twenty four hours after, 4 Sisters who had
 been attached for voyage, were left to help at N^o 1. British
 General Hospital. After a few days the rest disembarked
 at East London where three more Sisters were left in
 charge of Sister Pessi Doover and the remainder commenced
 duty at a Stationary Hospital at Sterksdrom near
 Stormberg. Here we nursed three sick and wounded from
 General Buller's Division around Stormberg. They
 were mostly Irish troops and bonny lovely per-
 sonalities they were too. Here we met our first
 Australian Soldier who passed on. He was only with us
 five days and during that time only noticed some roses
 brought by a kindly clergyman from Durban. With
 one of these in his hand he remarked that similar ones
 grew at his home in St Marys near Parramatta.
 Under his pillow we found a little prayer book which
 later, I had the pleasure of returning to the donor, his
 special friend at home. Thirty one graves mark our
 short stay of three months, after which the army having
 got beyond Cronstadt in the Orange River Colony,
 we left Sterksdrom and passing Blomfontein full of
 dead and dying at Mr Imie, went on to Cronstadt.
 Here we nursed in connection with N^o 3. British General
 at a large Dutch Church and were quartered in an old
 corn store at night where rats clamped over us.
 We boarded with a family who were not too loyal

but they did their best for our creature comforts. One tin of condensed milk had to do some of us for one month but who cared?

Three months later, we were transferred to No 6. General British Hospital in Whaamseeburg.

Colonel Wood at No 3. General wanted me to remain and take over an Officers Hospital with one other Sister but we were only five now, so decided not to separate.

Our reception at No 6 was curious.

On handing in my Papers to the PMO he groaned "My God, Australian Sisters, what shall we do?"

On my asking the reason, he said, they did require help, but he understood we could not work with the R A M C Sisters.

Upon my assuring him that we not only could but would with pleasure, he sent for the Superintendent. Miss Craze was, to my mind then, exceptional and she has never come off that pedestal. (as Matron in Chief in Egypt) she only proved further, that a woman can drop all smallnesses and treat even Australian nurses as professional equals. This was a best hospital with 1200 beds and we worked in the General Division with 500 beds. Major Osborne asked me one day if we had many more nurses like these in Australia and I told him of our standard not only in the Army but for "General use." We stayed 18 months here and never once felt we were not wanted, for there were only 35 Sisters for the 1200. 14 hours duty was the minimum. No one grumbled.

When N^o. 6. closed down, we went to Ermelo in the Eastern Transvaal to N^o. 35. Stationery. It was a bare hillside at the end of sixty miles of Block houses. We were minding the SICK from 2000 troops about there. Mostly typhoid and yellow jaundice. Here we saw the start of seven columns which took part in the last drive of the war and here we saw the Boers come in to surrender arms.

No bitterness on either side.

August 2, 1902 found us landing in Australia from the monotone - the Boer war ended.

Again organisation proceeded apace and all the States having become one Commonwealth, decided to have one Nursing Service. Our ^{Military District N^o. 2.} Section, still intact, was merged into the present Defence Force of N.S. The Lady Superintendent became a Principal Matron otherwise no change.

The Efficiency Staff in May 1914 was complete and in addition there were about forty Reserves.

These were all Sisters who had been efficient one or more years since 1905.

As soon as war broke out we sent out notices to all Efficient and Reserve Sisters asking them whether in the event of the Nursing Service being required they were prepared for (a) Home service (b) overseas service. That year efficient, as was always understood, were to have first chance. By the second week in September arrangements were almost complete and in addition to the Efficient Sisters and Reserve Efficient Sisters, more than a hundred fully

qualified members of the Australian ^{Algebra} ~~Association~~ ^{Association} Injured Nurses Association were eagerly awaiting involvement. The ~~re-inforcements~~ ^{re-inforcements} continued to come on throughout the war and Australian Nurses found a very special niche for themselves among their Khaki comrades. None better than the nurses know what the strain has been on our Men of all ranks.

On 29.th September 1914. Principal Matron Gould S. J. Matron Johnston, T Bligh, Sisters Drate P. Killelt A. M., Jwynnau J. and the Matron of the Tasmanian A. A. N.S. who happened to be working on Reserve in Sydney, the late Miss Walker were detailed for duty on Transport "Euripides"; Sisters Powell A. B. and Marshall C for duty on the Troopship "Argyleshire".

The luggage for this Nursing Staff went on board on the 28.th but owing to delays rendered necessary by the presence of the Raider Emden, somewhere in Southern waters, the Fleet did not leave until later, 20.th October.

Meanwhile we had to practically disappear so that our ultimate departure might be unobscured. Miss Creal took over the duties of Principal Matron from the 28.th September in No 2. Military District and very ably did she do it, as witnessed the thorough way in which all details of equipment were carried out, as each batch of re-inforcements came forward.

I cannot speak personally of work in New South Wales after this, as I left on the Euripides.

IV A.A.N.S with 1st Expeditionary Force

The Senior Staff was detailed to leave first and each Troopship became in fact a moving Township containing among other Institutions a small Hospital according to the number of Troops and the Military Districts, from which they came. In all there were 25 Sisters on (List)

There were no dromes, all took turns in turning, irrespective of rank, for influenza and pneumonia accompanied us, as well as occasional cases of plomaine poisoning.

There were a few surgical operations who did very well and warts of inoculations, all requiring some little attention from Sister.

The Staff took it in turns to do night duty. One only went on before breakfast and the rest directly after.

The Matron did afternoon duty each day, while the others rested for two or three hours.

We had two thru berth cabins and a Private Sitting room, which in pe war days was the day nursery.

Our meals we had in the Saloon at a specially reserved table.

It was a busy ship and consequently a happy one.

On 4th December we arrived at Alexandria and here they requested a Sister to accompany some few sick we were leaving there. Sister J. Walker was detailed for this duty and remained some weeks.

On the evening of 5th we arrived at Grand House a large tourist hotel adapted for a Hospital. I found our frantic 2. A. A. N. S. Sister acting as Matron struggling to look after eighty Patients. The next morning we all commenced duty

Under the circumstances I decided to help and not take over any official duties as Matron, until the arrival of my own Hospital No 2, A. G. H.

I took over the Officers' wards and one Sister was detailed to work with me. The other Sisters were detailed to various wards and the theatre by the Acting Matron.

We were kept busy and so was the huge Training Camp.

On 20th January the personnel of No 2, A. G. H. arrived. There were 96 Sisters and Staff Nurses (to every Sister two Staff Nurses) for No 2.

1st Col Martin soon had the Hospital running like a good ordinary Hospital.

The idea of Staff Nurses was entirely new to Australia in the Army Nursing Service and it is due to the most good breeding of the individual members of our Service that we came through what was really an ordeal for so many

equally qualified nurses, to settle down to work in the various wards. Often, a Matron in Australia, found herself a Staff Nurse in the Army, under a Sister who had recently left her training school and perhaps only been a Sister a year or two.

The Spirit of Service however overcame the spirit of Rank and throughout the campaign continued to do so.

But it was later when our troops returned wounded from Gallipoli that the strain came. Our Staff was done

depleted and batches of lean and worthy Sisters were detailed for duty to help M^o-I. A. G. H. the R. A. M. C. Hospitals in Cairo and Alexandria and after the Troops left for the Mediterranean over land were soon engaged on the Troopships and two on the Train. This made the work in 2 A. G. H. very heavy while at Mena ^{at night} after May. The Equipment had been mostly packed and placed on Station ready to proceed - ? When.

Then the Landing 25 April took place and we got 24 hours notice to be prepared for over 1500. The Ghiseh Palace in addition to Mena House had to be prepared in this 24 hours.

The Sisters available, 45, had to be divided. I, with Sister Johnston, Bligh went with some Orderlies and prepared Ghiseh. Bands of Arabs cleared out the Hotel property and scoured & swept, Fatigue parties brought and unpacked Equipment from Station, Sisters made beds and supervised arrangements generally. 850 wounded arrived

that met us at Ghiseh and 600 at Mena. In two days another ~~two~~ 12 Sisters had to be brought from Mena. One Sister for 150 at night was too much, although they did it and most ably assisted by orderlies ~~and~~ succeeded, where one could not have planned much had they failed.

I spent from 8 pm to 2 am at Mena and then left Sister Walker in Charge. From 2 pm to 8 pm I was at Ghiseh and then left Sister Johnston in Charge. Now Mena had better assistance. ^{in addition} local ladies.

rallied round us and about twenty took it in turns for a few hours each day to help arrange flowers, prepare Benger food, &c feed helpless patients distribute little comforts and thus gave the trained Staff their chance to carry out their arduous duties. For weeks no one went off duty except to sleep or rest an hour.

Reinforcements came and went to various Auxiliary Hospitals and Squads.

On September 23 original Staff were detailed for Suddut and reinforcements took their place.

A little rift in 2. A. S. H. late occurred in connection with this. Some Sisters were sent out from Australia. They, in Army work were Junior and yet ranked over the Staff Nurses, who had been in all the heat of the preceding months.

Again good sense prevailed and they awaited patiently until in December they received the promotion they had so richly earned.

In February the Hospital once more packed and in turn, the staff who wished, had a few days ~~in turn~~ to go to Luxor, Saccarah or to the very comfortable Red Cross home for nurses at Alexandria. The first few weeks after we arrived in Egypt we missed many Hospital Comforts, but later when the Red Cross Commissioner arrived the truly splendid stores were unpacked and the distribution organised. Up to the last day of the war it never failed us. When our men returned from Gallipoli they were minus most things principally toothbrushes.

handkerchiefs, handy bags, soap, cigarettes and matches.

We could not get to handle our own stores, so Mr Harry Chisholm found out our plight and was able through the kindness of ? to purchase a supply.

Some of the more comfortable were invited to afternoon at Sheppard's Hotel by the Rev. Gilliam and Mr. Gilliam a new difficulty arose. Their fighting clothing was impossible, new khaki could not be issued while they were in hospital. This left pyjamas the only attire. These however had also had hard bed wear and were scarcely suitable. A gentleman offered to send up 50 good sets. They came and the 25. who were going the first afternoon dressed, and went and enjoyed themselves.

Our men are truly gentlemen, otherwise could they have worn above bright purple pyjamas, for that is what they were?

Colonel Springthorpe never ruled until he had requisited some similar garments but khaki for such occasions.

Before we left Egypt a combat club was established for nurses in the zone.

The Admiral ^{Lady Maxwell} and Lady Maxwell & others organised this. The Matrons were only asked to sit on Committee in an advisory capacity.

After the Hospital was packed we waited at the Race Course Hospital a week or two and on 25. March left Egypt on the

Brasmar Castle

Before I left it was a great pleasure not only to know but to be told that, our twenty-two who peripatented backwards and forwards on Hospital Ships had not once been mentioned in any adverse manner. They were good nurses, hard working and behaved like ladies! Being professional women, surely it was no wonder!

No 2. A. G. H and extra reinforcements numbering 119 quite appreciated the weeks rest which elapsed before we made a roundabout trip to Marseilles we landed on Sunday 1. April 1916.

We proceeded some miles out of town and the cobbles stones gave one some idea of what the tired Patients after a long train journey might have to suffer in La Belle France.

Open drains in all the villages compelled one to pray that some day we might be permitted to return to our own Board of Health protected cities.

The Hospital site had been an immense Indian Camp the previous summer. The Hospital was mostly tents and our quarters huts.

There were hills on both sides narrowing up behind us and I always felt we were in the narrow end of the cup of a funnel. The draught in the tents and some of the huts was difficult to manage at times, especially when the wind blew off the levines. etc.

Here the Sisters decided they would like to try and live on their rations. The C.O. gave permission. But good as the ration was, it required supplementing in milk & vegetables etc. In a few weeks the general health of

The Staff began to suffer and when several contracted sore throats a change was made, mess allowances drawn and a contractor installed. We were busy here moving the troops who although able to leave Egypt, were quarantined in France, not yet ready for front line.

However a few weeks remedied that. There were also a few measles and such like.

It was not long before the B.E.F. Head Quarters cast a longing eye on the resting nurses and a letter came from the Matron-in-Chief (who had earlier trained at the Coast Hospital) welcoming us and casually mentioning that their method of moving a large hospital was to draft the Staff in batches of 10. to various hospitals until such time as the equipment etc was sent on and preparation made for them in their own hospital. This therefore had to be done and the relief to the various hospitals was great. My objection to the plan was the difficulty we always had to get our Staff back in sufficient numbers to prevent services overworking.

There were not sufficient male Staff trained to do hospital cooking, so at Merville we called for volunteers and two Sisters, ^{and} ~~and~~ Staff nurse Richardson also Staff Nurse ^{and} ~~and~~ ^{and} proceeded to train six Orderlies. These formed the nucleus for the kitchen Staff at Wimereux where we next found ourselves after travelling in a special train with all our equipment and personnel for three days through France. It was done comfortably and we arrived and took over what had been a large convalescent camp in

we arrived on 30th June 1916, the Eve of Somme advanced.
Lents. What had been the Laundry was converted into
a theatre and in less than forty-eight hours convoys began
to arrive from the Somme battle.

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The wards would fill and empty again into the
Hospital ships at Boulogne two or three times in the
twenty-four hours at times. Those who stayed longer
were very sick and here again the Staff was indiginate.
It was only the thorough practical training they had,
received in Australia that enabled them to cope with
amount of work entailed.

Day in and day out they worked, tirelessly and
cheerfully until they dropped up in a few cases.
Our own Head Quarters in London came to the rescue as soon
as they could and got them to return some of our Staff
so that the others could in turn have a rest.

The Lents were gradually replaced by Huts and before
the end of the year the nursing Staff was housed in
four large huts, two in a cubicle. The Mess Hut and
Kitchen was available all the time. The cold was intense
but the Sisters were working on a very high plane
and made light of their share of trouble. The almost
daily convoys of suffering Brothers checked any wish
to even think of oneself.

The constant hum of heavy guns, the occasional
air raid scare, the train loads of Co-ees passing
up and down near the Hospital, all contributed to
the general efficiency.

The end of the year saw many changes. Gradually
the staff in France were transferred to England and
those who had been working there over a year were

Transferred to France.

1917. I spent at Warefield. This, originally a convalescent Hospital for 500 became from the end of 1916 in addition, the Collecting Hospital for cot cases from all over England, prior to embarkation for Australia. After our well equipped L.S.G.H the Nursing had to be done under difficult circumstances.

After a time when necessary additions were made to equipment it was better.

Here again the Sisters worked at very high pressure and never spared themselves.

Their off duty time was mostly spent in trying to lighten the burden many of our Patients were called on to carry either through loss of eyesight, or some other cause.

In the course of the year three Sisters were drafted to France and others returned from France to take their place.

Many were unnerved after cruelly taxing work and some came from the Ships after being torpedoed. Such as these frequently returned to Australia, but many, after a rest and regular peaceful work, were able to continue.

At the end of 1917 the Anzac leave became the next objective and while waiting, I went down to Cotham Hall, an Officers' Hospital. Here I had actual nursing to do, as there were twenty-five orderlies and a Massey Sister. The Nursing orderlies were excellent especially Lt Col Brown a Queensland who was a Gentleman, a true nurse and

all that is best in a bona fide Australian.

He was originally a German, but after over a year in France had bronchitis and had to be mobilised to England. Nothing daunted he faced the Gues of orderly life and made a complete success of it.

He had his 21st birthday while I was there.

I left Cotham Hall on 19th October and boarded the Troopship Marathon the next day. My furlough commenced that day and the armistice was signed before we left the English Channel. The Sister in Charge of the boat, ^{guarding staff} was one who went out on the Kyarra.

She mothered us all and was untiring in her efforts.

Miss Julia Gould.

Principal Matron A.S.F. A.M.S.

P.S.

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Boe War.
1900-1902.

A. A. N. S. in A. I. F.
1914-1918.

- N^o. 1. Annie Austin.
2. Sister. Elizabeth Ward,
3. Steh Mabel,
4. Woodley. Emily,
5. Pocock. Bessie, — — — " "
6. Martin. Marion,
7. Matchett. Annie.
8. Johnston. J. Bligh, — — " "
9. Gould. Eliza J. (Nellie) — " — "
10. Nixon.
11. Inster. Penelope, — " — "
12. Garden. Anna,
13. Newton. Nancy,
14. Woodward. Therese,

Dear Colonel Butler,

Elizabeth
Port Macquarie Road.
Miranda

I am very sorry to have so delayed answering
your request for names of Sisters.

Sometimes it is impossible for me to do anything properly.
However this list is correct.

Kind regards

Yours faithfully

Eliza Gould.

A. W. M.
A. 2766.



Australian War Memorial

Item control



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