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[1002]

Salmicha  
Egypt

St. A. Mackenzie

33  
106

15th British General

Two of the things most remembered  
during the time there was the  
kindness and hospitality of  
Miss Chaffey - chairman of the Victoria  
Hotel then being used for  
military purposes - also the  
British Sisters who were  
quarters there."

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."

A. Mackenzie



Salonica

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I left Sydney 9<sup>th</sup> June 1917 on the S. S. "Mooltan"

Not being a born sailor, the trip was hardly an enjoyable one & what welcome was the day when I left the "Mooltan" at Port Suez, & entrained for Alexandria, where I spent three weeks. Some of the time relieving in the 15<sup>th</sup> British General Hospital.

One of the things most remembered during the time was the kindness & hospitality of Miss Chaffey, & the Matron of the Victoria Hotel - then being used as a hostel for Nursing Sisters, also the British Sisters who were quartered there.

Embarking on the "Osmanieh" on the 10<sup>th</sup> of August, we arrived in the Salonica Harbour on the evening of the 12<sup>th</sup> of August, & were taken ashore that evening, & thence to the 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian General Hospital. Being instructed or at least not allowed to take our luggage with us, (we were assured it would arrive there as soon as we would) we arrived at 10 p.m. there to be received very kindly by the Matron & her staff of nursing sisters, & one must always remember the kindness of the nursing staff of the 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian Hospital. In the twinkling of an eye, we <sup>were</sup> provided with supper, sleeping garments etc, & every <sup>thing</sup> possible done for our comfort.

Next day I was transferred for duty to the 56<sup>th</sup> British Gen. Hospital.

The work here was mostly medical. Malaria being our worst enemy, as the district occupied by the British troops being was a hot bed for this disease.

The hospital, which overlooked the harbour of Salonica, was pretty situated but in the winter was a puddle. There was no ramps or corridors between the wards. The night sister, who would often have as many as six wards to superintend, was obliged to don gum boots, & wade through niches of mud between the wards, incurring the great displeasure of the day sisters, whom she received her share from the Matron, or sub-matron, for having dirty floors. It was almost impossible to keep the mud in its proper place.

The summer was accompanied by swarms of flies & mosquitoes, & on night duty we were obliged to take refuge in masks, gloves & puttees. Despite these precautions I got an attack of malaria, & of the souvenirs I shall take back to Australia.

February 6<sup>th</sup> We were relieved of our Eastern worries, when we embarked on the "Czaritcha" & landed at Southampton on the 10<sup>th</sup> of Feb '19.

On arriving was greeted with three weeks leave, after which took up duty at the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian General Hospital Sutton Veny.

Annie Mackenzie



Australian War Memorial

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