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[1004]

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.E. Major West

Salonica 142A
105

To

 Asst: Collaloi
 Med: Nestoy
 Horsefury Road.

In accordance with the desire expressed in your Circular of 14th February, I submit the following narrative of my experiences during the two years I have been serving with the A.M.S. Leaving Australia by the S.S. Mooltan as No 2 Unit to join the M.E.F. on 9/6/17 and arriving in Salonika on 29/7/17 immediately proceeded to Hortiach where we established a tent hospital the patients being British were arriving from various fronts. Monan, Vardar, & Struma, being about twenty miles distance from us, the patients were both medical and surgical cases, many of them having Malaria and dysentery, as well as gunshot and shrapnel wounds.

After being a month here, we were relieved by No 3 Unit and returned to Salonika with Miss Capt. Campbell as Matron, and took over the 4th Canadian Hospital of 1800 beds, here we had British and Greek patients many hundreds of which perished with the dreadful Influenza scourge of August 1918 as well as the Influenza outbreak we had Malaria, dysentery, Black water Fever and many other medical and surgical cases.

We remained in Salonika till February 1919, during the whole time the work was very heavy, at times the hours on duty were particularly long, the conditions were occasioned by the



Prevalence of Sickness amongst the Sealer
and Medical Officers
Frequently the Bulgars & Germans were
seen in Planes endeavouring to bomb
the Town but the vicinity of the Hospital
was never damaged, During the Month
of August 1917 the town was partially
destroyed by fire, supposed to have
been the work of spies

We left Salonika in February 1919
for England, and on arrival were
granted three weeks leave, after which
we took up duties at No 1 A.S. Hospital
Sutton Veng, under Miss Gray, formerly
Matron of No 2 A.S.H. Boulogne.

Amie. Major-Went: R.R.C
S/r

No 1 A.S.H

Sutton Veng



Australian War Memorial

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