

Sisters rather a strain—the bombing was often so very close, and one said he would never face home if a Sister became a corpse while under his care. June 1st saw us on the road among the thousands of refugees, arrived at Villeneuve Sur Seine and stayed at the Bois Robeire. The officers had the small Chateau, the Sisters the groom's flat over the stables, a small, dark, funny little flat, with attic ceiling—no water laid on, but easily carried from the farm-yard well. No German planes had been there at all and it was utter peace in wonderful weather. We had a wireless set and listened to the fall of Belgium and the heroic work of Dunkirk. It was here three Sisters, feeling rested and grateful for peaceful nights, realised some of the officers had lost all their kit and had worn their underwear in the heat long enough, so offered to become laundry maids. The offer was most gratefully accepted and their clothes dried in the hot sunshine while they waited. The old-fashioned flat irons proved most useful—as did the Beatrice oil stoves. All our food was cooked on those. Twice Lady Beatty cooked the supper and was always cheerful. Mrs. Benson helped mend and darn for the men folks. We stayed in this glorious spot for a week, gathering wild strawberries by the basketful, and swimming daily in the Seine. On the Sunday morning of June 3rd we were up at 5 a.m. and away on the road joining a large British Air Force convoy, some 10 kilos away, and this well-organised convoy got safely through Blois-sur-Loire and on to Bauge. No billets were available, but a small chateau put ready and waiting for evacuee children from Paris allowed us to sleep on the floors, and the men folk in the grounds. This place hardly knew there was a war on at all, and was like a quiet English town in summer. Two nights we halted—going to a village tavern for one main meal. The stoves again were used to feed the company, and proved so worth while. Two days later in early evening Sisters closed into an ambulance and we moved again to Chateau du Loire, and through four kilos from Chateau du Loire we camped in a large wood on the banks of the Lois, a smaller swiftly-flowing stream. Though close to the main road the tents were so deep in the wood no one noticed them, but the German planes were over and dropped many bombs here all round the camp day and night. Trenches were dug and one realised that any light would show and the entire convoy suffer. The Lois was clean and wonderful for swimming. The Sisters had four tents at a secluded corner near the farm, and had all meals out of doors once more getting socks to wash, etc.

A healthy, enjoyable week was spent though an anxious one, as no letters were getting through and the rumours were that England was suffering (Fifth Columnist work evidently). While there we visited Vendome Le Mans and called on No. 9 General, the first Q.A.I.M.N.S. Mess we had known in France. On June 13th we again packed and the tents were struck, moved off early afternoon. The roads round Angers were impassable with refugees. The last of our group to get through saw havoc done from the air among civilians, where panic was rife. Arriving outside Nantes late, there were again no billets, so the C.O. took a field—the Maire of the village had only one. We slept in ambulances that night—five in one, four in the other—and at dawn "Jerry" came over. A night watchman from the factory 50 yards over the hedge screamed at us to go away, and we found it was a munition factory which might be hit in trying to hit the British, so we had to gather up and dress and get off quickly. June 14 we drew up by the roadside and watched convoys of French armoured cars, civilians trekking again in terror. The Boche were just behind, we ate ration biscuits and bully beef and wondered. At 4 p.m., June 14, a dispatch rider came with a letter—Sisters into one ambulance and drive like the wind to La Baule. We all packed in and arrived at La Baule about 5 p.m., where we were made welcome,

given tea with No. 4 General—allowed to have baths, and given beds for the night. Just getting sleepy when the alert went—off down to the shelter, later back to bed. Next day we were advised to purchase rations for three days. In the tea hour, 4 o'clock, we were hurried to the station—train in—wounded were being embarked, all settled in—train moved off when boomph, boomph, bombs and machine guns—hectic time. Waited at St. Nazaire, train all ready alongside Ram for the boat. Got on board, sent down below and told to hide ourselves—terrific barrage. Sometime later the *Dorsetshire* moved off, many ambulances coming by road with serious cases were severely bombed, but got through. On board we were given real meals in a dining saloon—very delicious food and served by native stewards. Many went on night duty, many put down for day duty next a.m. Five of our C.C.S. did duty all the way over. The first night was calm, restful, very comfortable, steady going. The second night, 11.30 p.m., "Jerry" came over and dropped three horrible bangs. Order was given to dress and be ready for the boats—we did. All was silence, kindly helpful noble women, 100 in one room and not a murmur. Then, 15 minutes later, orders came, "All's well," return to bed. Everyone kept the fat, friendly lifebelt on. We were enormously grateful to the Navy. There was the hospital ship seemingly alone as far as the eye could see on the water, but exactly seven minutes after the first bomb dropped the British Navy was alongside us—it was thrilling. Nothing but peaceful calm sailing next day and into Southampton safely at 10 o'clock, where buses met the ship to take us to comfortable hotels. We were given railway warrants to our homes and could draw money—wonderful organisation. Someone had certainly thought of everything. Hats off to the British Army.

E. C. M. HUFFAM,

Sister, Q.A.I.M.N.S.R.

## THE PASSING BELL.

THE WAR OFFICE.

We regret to announce the death of Miss S. Davidson, Q.A.I.M.N.S. Reserve, S.R.N., on November 29th, 1941, while serving in the Middle East.

Miss Davidson, who was 30 years of age, trained at the Auckland Hospital, New Zealand, from 1929—1933, and was appointed Sister in Q.A.I.M.N.S.R., on January 21, 1940.

She embarked for Palestine on March 20th, 1940. Her death was the result of an accident.

We regret to announce the death, following an accident, of Miss H. M. Glazebrook, Q.A.I.M.N.S. Reserve, S.R.N., on November 18, 1941, while serving in the Middle East, aged 32 years.

Miss Glazebrook was trained at the Perth Public School Hospital, Western Australia, from 1928—1931; appointed Sister in Q.A.I.M.N.S.R., on November 20th, 1939; and embarked for Palestine on April 28th, 1940.

We regret to record the death, on September 1st, 1941, of Miss Hilda Iris Martin, Q.A.I.M.N.S. (Reserve), S.R.N., S.C.M., while serving in India.

Miss Martin was trained at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, joined Q.A.I.M.N.S.R. in November, 1939, and was at once posted to India.

The seasons know,  
Flowers of the resurrection blow,  
Our hope and faith restore;  
And through the bitterness of death  
And loss and sorrow, breathe a breath  
Of life for ever more.

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

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