

"These words were the conclusion of a report recommending the formation of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service. The Service was founded in 1902 with the Queen as its first President, and her help greatly strengthened its claim to recognition as an integral part of the regular forces. She was succeeded in her office by Her Majesty Queen Mary, whose Foreword clearly shows the never-failing interest with which the tie has been kept up.

"In 1914 the Actual Service was only 300 strong; but in the same year 2,223 trained nurses were enrolled with the Reserve, and 1,803 were sent abroad. By 1919 the Service and its Reserve had a membership of 10,404.

"At the outbreak of the present war, the total peace establishment of Q.A.I.M.N.S. in the various military hospitals at home and abroad was 624.

"Ever since the days of Florence Nightingale, the Army Sisters have had the status of officers, in 1926 they were officially granted relative rank in King's Regulations, and in 1940 they were authorised to wear rank badges. In 1941 they became commissioned officers in their own units of the Women's Forces, with relative rank ranging from Lieutenant (Sister) to Brigadier (Matron-in-Chief).

"The Territorial Army has always had its own Nursing Service."

"On September 10th, 1939, the first six Army Sisters landed in France; 1,300 were evacuated with the B.E.F. in the summer of 1940."

"The Sisters do their work wherever it is required. They may be posted to base hospitals, to field hospitals, to casualty clearing stations, to ambulance trains, to hospital ships, or to mobile surgical trains. Like any other members of His Majesty's forces, they may find themselves in comparative safety or in great danger."

"When the Prime Minister and General Montgomery took the salute at Tripoli in January, 1943, Q.A.s and T.A.N.S. marched past with the army and bore witness publicly to their share in the victory."

"For the rest, the letters may be left to speak for themselves. They have no pretension to literary excellence, but are offered as a single record of work in progress and as a glimpse of the War from a particular angle, which may add a few details to the general view. I am confident that the public will find some interest in the part played by the Nursing Service alongside the brother and sister services; also that it will feel some pride in the work and in the picture of the nursing profession carrying on the traditions of one of the noblest and most devoted callings to which women can belong."

The Letters.

The letters from Matrons and Sisters are evidence of the intimate participation of Q.A.I.M.N.S. in every department of war, including the departure of the British Military Hospital, Marseilles; Evacuation from France; Duty in an Ambulance Train; A Casualty Clearing Station in France; Taking Off the Wounded from Dunkirk; Iceland; Twelve Days in a Lifeboat; The Sudan and Eritrea; A Hospital Ship at Tobruk; Desert Hospital; Gibraltar; Greece and the Middle East; West Africa; Torpedoed; Malta; The Escape from Singapore: Malaya, Singapore and the Voyage to Sumatra.

Courage and initiative to overcome insuperable difficulties is a marked feature of the letters, and as we turn the pages eleven illustrations, drawn by Robert Austin, A.R.A., give

a realistic and sincere impression of the skilled nursing rendered under the exigencies of war.

With growing admiration we follow the restrained accounts of these brave sisters, whose combined experience is of service in every theatre of war—from Iceland to the Tropics—which tell their own story of loyalty and fortitude to endure unprecedented hardships even unto death.

Nevertheless, the book is not a record of suffering only, there are flashes of humour and arresting descriptions of scenes and countries by the way—added to which a never failing high endeavour to battle cheerfully through the undreamed of horrors of war—is an inspiration for all ranks of nurses maintaining the high traditions of a calling second to none.

A. S. B.

ARMY NURSES SAVE MANY LIVES.

We have received the following paragraph from an official source.

Extracts from Reports and Letters re Q.A.I.M.N.S. on Active Service.

Principal Matron.

I was asked to investigate the reaction of East African patients to British Nursing Sisters. The Matron speaks in the highest terms of their behaviour and the respect shown by these patients to all members of the Nursing Services.

I am convinced, more than ever now, that members of the nursing profession in this and other military hospitals in this Command are wonderful "Ambassadors," they help so much in creating a feeling of tolerance and a better understanding between the different nations.

D.D.M.S.

Would you please give Dame Katharine a special message from me and say that all the Q.As. in the C.C.Ss. are first rate in every way. They work far forward now, and like it, and rough the journeys and other inconveniences just like men. From the nursing point of view they have done some excellent work in the C.C.Ss. and, by their care and attention in nursing, have saved many lives.

THE PASSING BELL.

It is with deep regret that we record the loss of the following members of the Military Nursing Services, who are presumed to have been killed in action while serving on a hospital ship in the Mediterranean:—

Miss Agnes Cheyne, S.R.N., S.C.M., Q.A.I.M.N.S.—Trained at the Abbey Hospital, Paisley, 1916-1920.

Miss Dorothy Mary Cole, S.R.N., Sister, Q.A.I.M.N.S.R.—Miss Cole trained at the Royal Free Hospital, 1936-1939.

Miss Phyllis Gibson, S.R.N., S.C.M., Sister, Q.A.I.M.N.S.R.—Trained at Dundee Royal Infirmary, 1933-37.

Miss Annie Margaret O'Loughlin, S.R.N., R.F.N., Sister, Q.A.I.M.N.S.R.—Miss O'Loughlin received her fever training at the Bucknall Hospital, Stoke-on-Trent (1931-39), and general training at Smithdown Road Hospital, Liverpool (1939-41).

Miss Una Cameron, S.R.N., Sister, Territorial Army Nursing Service.—Trained at the Royal Infirmary, Glasgow, 1933-37.

Miss Mary Lea, S.R.N., S.C.M., Sister, T.A.N.S.—Miss Lea received her general nursing training at Manchester Royal Infirmary, 1931-34.

The memory of these patriotic women will receive the honour due to them, we have no fear, after the war.

There can be no greater honour than to die for our country.

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