

members of contributory schemes. In case there should be any misunderstanding, let it be made clear what the position is.

"The White Paper is not an Act of Parliament—it represents what the Government believes to be the best means of bringing a national health service into operation. The Government's proposals will now be examined and discussed in detail with the representatives of the voluntary hospitals and with others concerned. After that, legislation, which it is hoped may be largely agreed, will be framed, and submitted to Parliament.

"Even when legislation is in being, there will be much work to be done before the new service can come into operation, and there must be quite a long period before any new financial proposals made in the White Paper can replace existing arrangements. It would therefore be the height of short-sightedness to discontinue any form of financial support to voluntary hospitals simply because of the appearance of the White Paper."

In our opinion, to maintain the voluntary and State-supported hospitals side by side, in an organised National Health Service, presents great difficulties, as it means double financial support from the public. It remains to be seen if they will add charitable subscriptions to necessary taxation.

PRINCESS MARY'S ROYAL AIR FORCE NURSING SERVICE IN ACTION.

"We have been having a most interesting time since we have been in Italy. We landed on the beach just south of Salerno having travelled on a tank-landing craft and the beach was still being shelled by the Germans. We were in a Camp Hospital half a mile from the beach. We had quite a busy time."

This extract is from a letter written by a member of Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service and indicates something of the work of this Service under actual conditions of warfare.

With the climax of the war close at hand there is an ever-growing demand for Nursing Sisters, and much greater opportunities for travel and work in widely-separated theatres of war. Nursing Sisters are serving in Italy, India, Africa, and Iceland, as well as in many parts of the British Isles. In fact, wherever the Royal Air Force is operational the Nursing Service is operational also—in the front line with Advanced Surgical Units and Mobile Field Hospitals—evacuating casualties by air—in hospitals and convalescent homes situated in famous beauty spots in many parts of the world.

Conditions of Service.

Princess Mary's R.A.F. Nursing Service is open to selected State Registered Nurses of good education between the ages of 24 and 35 years for the Regular Service, and 22 and 45 for the Reserve Service. Commissioned rank to members was granted in 1943. The Sisters have the relative rank of Flying Officer—Senior Sisters, Flight-Lieutenant—Matron, Squadron Leader—Principal Matron, Wing Commander—Chief Principal Matron, Group Captain—Matron-in-Chief, Air Commodore.

Sisters are posted on joining to one of the larger hospitals for initial training in Service routine and etiquette, and then sent for duty where their services can be best utilised.

Selected Members go to an Establishment in Sussex for training in chest surgery, and others are sent to sick quarters where they instruct the orderlies in nursing duties, supervise the nursing and help with W.A.A.F. welfare from a health viewpoint.

Any special training that Members have received before joining is utilised in the Service, and extra certificates, such

as theatre, orthopædic, ophthalmic, and massage are a valuable asset.

All the hospitals are using the most up-to-date treatment, and Members of P.M.R.A.F.N.S. have opportunities of becoming proficient in the modern treatment of burns, fractures, plastic and chest surgery, tropical diseases, etc.

A few Members are posted for duties on troopships and these have had many interesting and novel experiences.

The Rushcliffe scales of salary are in force.

Uniform.

For outdoor wear the Nursing Sisters use a blue tunic and skirt, white shirt blouse, black tie, black four-cornered hat with R.A.F. officer's badge in front, and black shoes and stockings. For indoor and ward use they wear a white overall and blue cape, white shoes and stockings, and square white cap embroidered with a blue bird. Overseas the blue coat and skirt is changed for a white dress and white felt hat. Overalls are worn open at the neck with no cape.

Sisters in Mobile Field Hospitals when accommodated in buildings wear the white uniform and blue cape. Under canvas in cold and wet weather the Sisters wear blue skirts, white shirts, black ties and blue battledress blouses. In tropical and sub-tropical climates khaki drill skirts and shirts are worn instead of blue.

Some Aspects of the Work.

Work with Mobile Field Hospitals in the line is one of the most interesting of the many duties undertaken by Nursing Sisters. One Sister, writing home from North Africa last year, says: "Travelling round the country is most interesting and one cannot go more than half a mile without seeing by the roadside shells of burnt-out trucks, lorries, guns and tanks, both ours and German."

Another letter from India, written in February, this year, reads: "We have at last started our Mobile Field Hospital. We moved from our original site into one that might have been built for us, as far as basha huts are concerned. Basha huts are built of bamboo with thatched roof, straw walls with mud slapped on either side and holes cut for windows. No glass, of course, but wooden shutters. We find 250 lb. bomb cases most useful, serving as stools, lockers, stands for bowls and duty dressing containers, etc. We hope to be here some little time and unless we get very busy we shall not evacuate many patients."

Forward Surgical Units.

Nursing Sisters also serve in Forward Surgical Units, which are now operating in Italy and elsewhere. These usually consist of a surgeon, an anaesthetist, two nursing sisters, and four orderlies, and are transported by air to the battle front. Serious cases are enabled to receive surgical treatment at the earliest moment after being wounded, and may, if necessary, be evacuated by air to hospital. Many lives which might otherwise have been lost have been saved by this prompt attention, and the courage displayed by Forward Surgical Units under operational conditions is in the highest traditions of the Medical and Nursing professions.

It can be seen that service in the Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service affords many opportunities of advancement in the career of nursing, or actively participating in the war in one of the most vital capacities, and of travel in many different countries. In addition, Members join in the life of their station and there are numerous facilities for all kinds of sport and recreation, foreign language classes, cultural study, and, in fact, every opportunity of living a full, interesting and exciting life both at work and play.

We hope to refer to this indispensable Nursing Service in the near future, as it is with regret we are unable to use, in this issue, topical pictures sent.

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