

Miss H. M. Keith.  
A.A.N.S.  
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I embarked on the 10th November, 1915, on the "Orsova" with 120 sisters on board. The duty was not very much, as there were so many sisters, and we only did about four hours a day. We had a very nice trip, arriving at Suez quite safely. I then went to No. 2 A.G.H., Ghezirah Palace.. I was in the surgical ward, and though we had no frightfully heavy work, we were kept very busy.

The food was excellent, and the amusements good, and we were not in want of anything, as we had a number of Australia Red Cross workers here, who looked after the patients excellently. The patients were nearly all from the Peninsula, and were very bright. After two months at Ghezirah, I went to No. 1 A.S.H., Ismailia, which had been a large convent. The French gave up four large houses towards the billeting of the staff, and we were extremely comfortable.

The Hospital was situated in a very picturesque spot, and we had plenty of boating, bathing, tennis and other sports. We had 60,000 Australians camped there, and so we were never far from our country men. The work was mostly medical, and we were nearly always full. We had a very good staff concert party, and they gave a concert nearly every week. The food here was good, and was liberally supplemented by the Red Cross, and we were extremely happy there. After No. 1 A.S.H. was handed over to the British, I was transferred to No. 3 A.A.H., Dartford, which was a large Hospital capable of holding one thousand, two hundred patients. Our cases were nearly all medical, and convalescent. It was a pre-War Convalescent Infectious Hospital and was excellently equipped. The Sisters' Quarters were good, and were fully equipped with central heating, etc.

After twelve months, the Hospital was turned into an acute Hospital, and then we received cases direct from France.

After twenty months service here, I was transferred to No. 3 A.G.H., Abbeville, and here the work was of a much more severe nature. I was in a big surgical ward, and the wounds were nearly all treated with Carrell Dakin's method, with excellent results.

We could not keep the patients for long, as the evacuations were as rapid as the convoys.

As the Germans advanced on Amiens, and we thought Abbeville was threatened, the Hospital was evacuated, and all but fifty patients who were too ill to move, and the sisters were evacuated, eighty in one night, until only 24 sisters were left, and before our turn came to be evacuated, the patients simply poured in, and in 24 hours, we had taken in 2,000 men.

The work was beyond the power of 24 sisters, and applications were made for the return of other sisters. We were left for four weeks without any reinforcements of sisters.

The orderlies worked very well.

The Hospital was bombed nearly every night, and we had three bombs dropped in the grounds. We had some excellent dug-outs built by the German prisoners.

After six months there, I was transferred to No. 38 Stationary, in Genoa, Italy. This was a British Hospital, with an Australian Matron, and Nursing Staff, and an R.A.M.C. male personnel. It was a large school, beautifully equipped, and held about 500 beds. We received patients straight from the line, and they were nearly all Tommies, but later we took in Austrians, who were in a terribly emaciated state, and had terribly wounds.

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They were very grateful to us, and when they understood a little English, were very good. They did very well, and their one dread was that they should be transferred to the Italians.

The food was not specially good.

We had a suite of rooms at a large Hotel, for billets, and were very comfortable. The Italians made ten times more fuss over the taking of Trieste, that for the signing of the Armistice. I stayed there until the Hospital was closed, and then crossed to England and went to No. 3 A.A.H., Dartford, after some furlough, and am now awaiting for transport for Australia.

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