

except in twos and threes. Tea and sugar are a great difficulty, neither can be bought.

The weather had been so cold, the tents at Walton had to be taken down, and therefore the numbers reduced for the winter. The convalescent camp at Hornchurch had been quite full, and so prevented many semi-convalescent patients being sent on, and convoys from France had to be refused for five weeks, but they were then beginning to admit again.

Several members of the first fifty sisters had returned to Walton from France. Sisters Ingram, Mitchell, Sutherland, and Stewart. They enjoyed their work in France very much, but were thankful to have the comforts of England again.

45th Stationary Hospital,  
E.E.F.,  
10/12/17.

Dear Miss Maclean,—I'm afraid I have been a very poor correspondent since starting out on active service now two years ago. Now that I am the only representative of the N.Z.A.N.S. working so far up the line, I felt that I really must write and tell you a little of our life and work in the above hospital, through which so many of our mounted men have gone through during the last operations in Palestine.

I was one of the nursing staff of fifteen (matron, eleven sisters, and three V.A.D.'s) sent to this hospital at the beginning of November, previously to that it had only M.O.'s and orderlies. Our accommodation is for 1050, and for a little time we were taxed to the utmost, every available bed in use, so you will understand, on both medical and surgical sides of the line, we have had a very strenuous time. Convoy trains were arriving at all hours, and for a time we got our rest in snatches. Nevertheless it has been a great experience, and one I would not have missed for a great deal. Another thing in our favour is that the weather is beautifully cool—in fact, very cold at night—but it makes the work easier than in heat. Our camp is facing the sea, and until the last week we have endeavoured to find time to go in for a bathe, bath water being a scarcity on the Desert.

At present I occupy the position of home sister. The matron thought I should pro-

bably be able to make a home in the Desert, knowing something about housekeeping and Colonial life. Shopping is a great problem, we draw rations, but that does not provide us with much in the way of change, so we have to use the canteen to supplement our requirements. All our provisions come on camels, and makes a most interesting sight. Our quarters are very comfortable; a row of mud huts with verandah in the front. I am enclosing a snapshot to give you an idea. A nice mess-room, which we are gradually making very homely with deck chairs, which I have covered with some native linen, camp beds covered with some Oriental material gives quite an Eastern effect to the place. In our bedrooms we have beds provided, and the rest is our camp kit.

I have met many friends amongst those who have been wounded in the last fighting, and although I am home sister I keep a good deal in the surgical wards and dressing tents. Naturally I would rather do ward work, but as matron could not find any one who knew anything about housekeeping, I had to take it on. I am rewarded for endeavours to make the sisters comfortable, and keep them well fed in that they all look better for the change, in spite of the hard work, and to do honour to our country they are calling the middle block of huts, where the mess and several bedrooms are, "Te Hinemoa." The matron's hut is called "Coolbeg," Gallic for "My little Home," and the huts on the hill are called "Tredemock," meaning the "house on the hill," rather pretty and appropriate I think.

Our nursing service in Egypt gets smaller every day now, there are only a very few of us out that came on the first voyage of the "Marama." Although I have been out East all the time, with India and Persian Gulf as well, I have kept remarkably well, and can say I have never had to be off duty for one day from ill-health.

I sincerely hope that the New Year will bring us peace, and that our boys will soon be able to return to the land they love so well, and are longing to see. If any of them are in the wards they always hail me when they see my badge, and we have quite a talk over where we each come from. Several poor boys have not got any further