

Old Comrades



Association

GAZETTE.

Duke of York's Headquarters, London, S.W.3. JANUARY, 1932.

Vol. XIV., No. 6. 3/6 per annum, post free.

NOTICE.

All Subscriptions Are Now Due.

HEADQUARTERS REPORT.

Clothing.

We had a great packing up of parcels before Christmas and not one application was left unanswered. This goes to prove that even at such a busy time as Christmas is in many households our comrades did not fail to remember our many wants and spared time to send us more generous supplies of clothing. We had an excellent stock available and from letters received many of the clothes made just all the difference at Christmas, and Santa Claus seemed to have been given the credit really due to the following: London Branch (3), Bournemouth Branch, Norfolk Branch, Golders Green Branch, Mrs. Gibbons (3) Mrs. Prue, Miss Gilbert, Miss E. Mason, Miss Cowley, Miss Davy, Miss Mount Stephen, Miss Passmore, five anonymous, Miss E. M. Leedal, Miss Madonna Watts and Miss Crombie.

RE-UNION IN NEW YORK.

I have been elected to write for the Gazette an account of a little dinner seven of us enjoyed Saturday, November 21st, which evening we specially chose to coincide with the annual dinner being held in London.

First of all I must let you know just who was present: Bushell, Pont de l'Arche; Polly Lockyer, Pont de l'Arche; Blanchard, D.G.T.; Jarvis, late London Branch; Johnston ("Johnny") Boulogne and Tours; Ray Reynolds, Boulogne, and myself (Lamb), Etaples. Unfortunately Pierce, St. Omer, was unable to be with us.

We assembled at about eight-thirty at Lockyer's apartment where we found the table beautifully decorated with a centrepiece of roses and autumn leaves, flanked by tall candles. Jarvie and Bushell did the catering for the group, arriving simply loaded down with good things to eat—creamed soup, chicken, salads, ice cream, cake, ginger-ale, etc. Lockyer had rolls heated up, balls of butter made and we were soon ready to "fall to."

The radio was most obliging, for at the psychological moment we were seating ourselves, came forth the strains of "Auld Lang Syne!" It should have come at the end of our evening's festivities but, early or late, up we jumped, crossed hands and sung lustily. The windows were all open for, strange as it may sound, it was a warm summer's evening. To anyone listening, we sounded more like a party of seventeen than seven!

The dinner progressed from the soup to the crackers and cheese stage; full justice being done to everything, including the marvellous home made ice cream and orange

layer cake prepared by Jarvie. Then Bushell had a surprise for us—wine! We didn't quite believe it at first, but sure enough, there it was, red wine donated by a friend, a Mrs. Turner, who was tremendously interested to hear about our little get-together, and who very kindly telephoned us during the evening. The arrival of the wine was the signal for proposing toasts. These were drunk to The King, The Queen, Our President, Dame Helen, Miss Thompson, Miss Ireland and The Corps. Then we sat down and had our glasses refilled; following this with coffee and cigarettes. We talked and talked—as usual—and found that we knew many of each others friends and acquaintances of Army days. Jarvie told us that she had sent a night cable to the Annual Dinner in London from the "New York gang," and we were all awfully pleased to learn this. The time passed all too quickly and I was obliged to leave the others at about eleven-thirty, still talking, but not drinking wine, for it was all gone!! How I did enjoy the evening, and I know I can say the same for each and every one of the others.

We are all most anxious to meet other ex-Waacs in New York and vicinity. My apartment is one of our meeting places, a "get together" being held there on the second Thursday of each month. The telephone number is Nevins 8-5250.

We hope that all those who were in the Corps, whether members of the O.C.A. or not, will come and help to swell the ranks. At present there are eight of us—our hope is that next Annual Dinner there will be eighteen! I suppose it would be too much to hope for eighty?

GERTRUDE ROSE (Lamb),
Camp I., Etaples.

BRANCH REPORTS FOR DECEMBER.

Brighton.

A special general meeting of the Branch was held on November 12th to discuss the agenda for the general meeting, and it was agreed that while the O.C.A. might come to an end as a limited company, there was no reason why it should not go for many years yet as an unlimited one.

Over a dozen of us managed the London Dinner and much enjoyed it.

We had a meeting at Jay's Cafe, 5 St. James's Street, on Wednesday, November 25th, to which we brought our contributions of toys to be sent up to the London Branch for their children's Christmas party, and an amusing array they made, too. At 8 p.m. Miss Snowball, head of the Barclay Home for Blind Girls, came to speak to us on the financial problems of the day, and explained very clearly to us various phrases that have been much in use lately. The evening passed all too quickly with the discussion that followed, and refreshments.

Local Annual Dinner, Thursday, January 14th, at the Ship Cafe. Meet inside the main entrance of the Regent at 8 p.m. for dinner at 8.15 p.m. Members may bring a friend if they wish. Cost, 3/6 each. While we like to have an idea who is coming, it is not necessary to give notice, so if anyone finds she can come at the last moment we hope she will do so.

H. A. BARON.

Manchester.

At a committee meeting held on Friday, November 27th, it was decided to hold our re-union dinner on December 19th, at Willoughby's Chop House, Cross Street. We hope there will be a good number present—it is very nice to meet those at the Dinner whom we see so seldom during the year.

There will be another whist drive on December 4th for which refreshments and prizes have kindly been given. Our last whist drive was quite a success in spite of the low temperature of the room.

The principal item of interest during November was, of course, Armistice Day. The various members of the Club did their best with poppy selling, and as many as could be present attended the Parade at 11 a.m. During the evening a Festival of Empire and Remembrance was held at Belle Vue, and I don't think I have ever seen anything more impressive.

The Festival was organised by the British Legion (North Western Area) and was the only one of its kind outside London.

The chairman was Captain G. L. Smith and he introduced the Earl of Harewood, K.G., D.S.O., vice-President of the British Legion. He gave a splendid speech which, I am sure, we shall all remember. There were also present the Earl of Derby, K.G., G.C.B., G.C.V.O., (President British Legion, North Western Area), the Lord Mayor of Manchester and the Lady Mayoress with other distinguished guests. But we were all of one degree that night, even as were the highest and the lowliest of the land who were present at the Albert Hall, London.

The Women's Services were well represented and it was inspiring to watch the women swinging along well in step to the strains of the military band.

We have had an offer from one of our members (Mrs. Coleman) to organize a whist drive in order to raise funds towards the cost of a banner to be carried by a member of our Club on Armistice Day. We think it a splendid idea as there are a good many onlookers on Armistice Day who are quite unaware of our identity. Perhaps by next November 11th we shall be able to announce ourselves and also advertise the Club.

H. FOSTER.

Sunderland.

During this year our usual meetings have been held on the second Wednesday in each month, at the Y.W.C.A., Burdon Road, Sunderland. The meetings have been fairly well attended and some very happy evenings have been spent.

Our membership now stands at 20, we are, therefore, able to report an increase of five members on 1930's total. This is very cheering and we hope we will be able to keep up our numbers in 1932.

We have been most delighted to welcome back two of our very first O.C.A. members, who have returned from abroad. Mrs. Bampton came home on holiday from Persia and we were very pleased to have her at our September meeting. Miss Lamb, who has been in Australia for some time is, we hope, going to stay in Sunderland and we are looking forward to having her at all our meetings.

The annual business meeting of the Branch was held on November 11th and 12 members attended. A committee was appointed to arrange meetings for 1932 and the following members were elected: Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Way, Miss Miller and Miss Lamb.

Owing to the kindness of Mrs. Hogben, who has so many times given us pleasant surprises and treats, we are to have a Christmas party on December 9th, in the Y.W.C.A. Hall, Burdon Road. We are hoping that the Newcastle O.C.A. members will be able to attend in full numbers and help in making the evening a great success.

May we take this opportunity of wishing all our fellow O.C.A. members the very best of good wishes for Christmas and 1932.

M. M. LOW, Hon. Sec.

Glasgow and West of Scotland.

Thirteen years after Armistice we held our twelfth annual re-union, when forty ex-Waacs and Mrs Holmes met in the Grand Hotel, Sauchiehall Street. The re-union took the form of a reception and dinner followed by a visit to the theatre to see "After All."

One member, Miss Byers, came all the way from Annan to be present, and we were also pleased to have with us Miss Knox, Signaller, at home from Canada. Edinburgh was ably represented by Miss Innes, who is a host in herself, and she it was who tackled the much beribboned and ought-to-have-known-better porter of the hotel when he asked her if she wanted the "ex-women's" party! So impressed was he when she left him that he saluted and said, "All right, soldier!!"

The event of the evening was the presentation to our chairman, Mrs. McFarlane, of a case containing a knife, fork and spoon for her three months' old son and heir. This was kept a strict secret, and, as the secretary remarked when presenting it, "This shows a woman can keep a secret."

General Meeting.—This took place on November 11th.

Edinburgh Re-Union.—Glasgow was represented by Miss Lillian Johnstone, and Miss Jean Maclellan was also present at the Edinburgh re-union.

London Dinner.—Misses Laird, Harvie and C. MacDonald were present at the London Dinner.

Genotaph Ceremonial.—Mrs. Pettigrew placed the wreath on the Genotaph and Misses Laird, Harvie and Foster were present.

Hallowe'en Fancy Dress Party.—This was a great success.

E. M. GILCHRIST.

Norfolk.

No Branch meeting has been held down in Norfolk this month. Owing to the annual dinner in London it was rather difficult to fix a suitable date. However, 10 members of our small band of 15 were present at the Dinner and most of us being in London on the following day, we were able to have a long chat together. We were delighted to enrol Miss Bailey—a friend of Miss Green's—as a new member of the Branch, and were pleased to have her with us at the dinner. One and all voted the week-end a great success.

As is customary with us, we have no Branch meeting in December, most of us being too busy preparing for the festive season.

A most interesting letter has been received from Miss Gore-Brown. We are glad to know that she has settled down comfortably in her new home in Somerset. We miss her from our Branch meetings.

January should see us all together once again. Will members kindly let me know if Thursday, January 7th, is a suitable date for all? We propose to celebrate our first meeting of the new year at 32 Grove Road, Norwich.

We are hoping to have a visit from Miss Edith Thompson early in the new year. A "red letter" event for the Branch to look forward to.

L. W. CHILVERS.

Birmingham.

We held a small dance on November 7th to celebrate Armistice Day. There were 80 members and friends, and all had a jolly time. A small profit was made after meeting all expenses, and this has been sent to the Poppy Day Fund.

17 members of this Branch attended the Annual Dinner, four for the first time, all declare that it won't be the last. In spite of arriving back in the small hours of the morning, all members appear to have enjoyed themselves.

E. I. DIPPLE.

Exeter.

We held our November meeting on Armistice Day, when we attended the service at the War Memorial,

Northernhay, and deposited a wreath, afterwards going to the Plaza Cafe for lunch. As our minds were filled with war time memories we thought it very appropriate to have the old favourite eggs and chips. Some of our members, who could not get away until after lunch, then joined us to go to the pictures and concluded with tea at the Plaza. Our party broke up at 6.30 and by this time, although the weather had been fairly fine all day was pouring with rain, we didn't mind in the least and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

Our next meeting will be the usual whist drive and tea at Mrs. Bond's house, and I'm hoping a good party will turn up.

M. VICARY, Sec.

BRANCH REPORTS FOR JANUARY.

London.

A Happy and Prosperous New Year Everybody!

* * * * *

And don't forget to send along your subscriptions as early as possible so that the Branch shall be happy and prosperous also!!

Our combined services evening on the 19th of December was a great success. A Christmas concert was arranged and the drawing-room was packed and the entertainment thoroughly enjoyed. Our friends the W.R.A.F.s added to the joy of the evening by lending their aid in the entertaining and, as usual, the Roamers were in excellent form. The first part of the programme was given over to variety and for the second half a delightful surprise was planned. Real Christmas Waits visited the darkened drawing room and by the light of old fashioned lanterns they sang many of the beautiful old carols, the audience joining in with the ones they knew and listening enraptured to those that were strange to them. It was a lovely Christmas touch and we all went home feeling very Christmassy and full of goodwill. I know that everyone feels grateful to the artistes who so very kindly gave their services for the evening's entertainment.

The drawing room sale was rather a scattered one this year owing to pressure of work in connection with the Reunion Dinner on the date fixed for the sale. However, we have had several sales since and realised a pound or two, the exact amount I do not remember at the moment, but the results will be published next month.

In future the reunion meetings will be held once a fortnight on first and third Thursdays in the month at the ex-Service Women's Club, 5 Buckingham Gate, S.W.1, and members will have a membership card showing the dates when they pay their subscriptions. The social programme arrangements will be published monthly in the Gazette and as far in advance as possible. The following dates may help members who have not yet sent their postal order: **Dates of meetings for the next three months:** January 21st, February 4th and 18th, March 1st and 15th. **Special Dates to Remember**—The members' social will be held on Thursday, 4th February, at the ex-Service Women's Club at 7.30 p.m. This is by invitation and open to members only.

The children's party will be held on Saturday, 6th February at the Duke of York's Headquarters, King's Road, Chelsea, S.W.3, from 4 p.m. till 8 p.m. All members who can spare the time are invited to attend and we require all the help we can get. Will members who are thinking of sending contributions please send them direct to the headquarters office addressed to Miss R. S. Andrews, also presents for boys would be welcome. There will be some sixty odd children at the party and it is some job to get them all fitted with the toy dearest to their hearts. If I may suggest, a postal order for a small amount, or six penny stamps would be very helpful because we can see how we stand at the last minute and thus spread the contributions to good advantage. Only those who make the arrangements know what is really wanted and an earnest endeavour is always made to distribute the toys evenly, but sometimes more expensive toys creep into the party and little eyes look very wistfully at them and the favoured ones who receive them. These are usually sent to some little Waaclet who is not present owing to sickness. We have to thank Brighton Branch for a lovely box of toys, thirty-two presents in all, and beautifully packed.

We are indeed indebted to the Brighton members and so will the children be when they receive their lovely presents. If there should be any member of the Brighton Branch in London on the 6th of February and can spare the time we shall be very pleased to welcome her.

Competition.—I am afraid the competition must be held over for yet another month as the Christmas rush and holidays have interfered with the honorary secretary's work and efficiency. I promise faithfully the names, along with the methods of raising cash, will be published in March.

Wanted.—Lots of 1932 subscriptions as soon as you like and please address all letters to Miss R. S. Andrews, 5 Buckingham Gate, S.W.1.

R. S. ANDREWS.

Exeter.

We held a Tea and Whist Drive at Mrs. Bond's house, Alphington, instead of our December meeting, and about 20 people were present. After the whist, the prize-winners of which were: 1, Miss Rose; 2, Mrs. Richards; consolation, Mrs. England, we had music. Mrs. England kept us all in roars of laughter with her ready humour, and Miss Rose was funnier than ever. Everybody thoroughly enjoyed it and thanks Mrs. Bond very much for her hospitality. We are now hoping she has made it an annual affair. I now take this opportunity of wishing all members a Happy New Year and to remind them that their subscriptions for 1932 are now due.

M. VICARY.

Leeds.

Local members who attended the Dinner in London had a thoroughly enjoyable time as usual. It was good to meet old friends and see familiar faces.

Council Representative. Mrs. Spaul has been obliged for health reasons to resign as Council representative for Leeds Branch, and it is with reluctance that we have accepted it. Mrs. Spaul has our very best thanks for the work she has done and her keen interest in all our affairs. She has our best wishes for the future.

Miss Olive Mainland has agreed to act as Council representative of our Branch, and we feel grateful to Miss Mainland for her help. Many Leeds members will remember Miss Mainland's attendance at one of our first Branch Annual Dinners. I cannot quite remember whether it was the first one or not.

From early reports received the Christmas raffle is proceeding well, but we still have some books if members can dispose of them.

We are collecting articles of clothing, etc., for a Jumble Sale, but more details will be given in the next month's Gazette.

A. ANNIKIN.

Glasgow and West of Scotland.

Party to Wounded Soldiers.—This party took place on January 19th at the headquarters of the Red Cross Society, as our club is too small now. Forty soldiers and as many members after tea enjoyed a whist drive from 3.30 to 6.0 p.m., after which they sat down to a sumptuous meal of hare soup, turkey and potato chips, apricot sponge and cream, and mince pies. A concert followed with a service of fruit, then the prize-giving and a distribution of cigarettes brought the evening to a close.

One could not help feeling depressed at the sight of these men still in "hospital blue" thirteen years after the war, but not a trace of this showed in the faces of those who entertained or those who assisted. As chairman of the club the heavy end falls on Miss Laird's shoulders, and though a busy woman, nothing is too much for her to do for these war-weary heroes.

Mrs. Holmes, as usual, began a week before to prepare the hare soup, and to make sufficient for 100 and bring it up from Gourock by train and taxi is no easy task. Her beaming face shows what a pleasure this is to her.

Norfolk.

E. M. GILCHRIST.

A Happy New Year to all from the branch. Our first meeting in 1932 will be held on January 7th at 32 Grove Road, Norwich. All members have been notified by post, and we hope to open the New Year with a record number.

L. W. CHILVERS.

HOSPITAL SAVINGS ASSOCIATION.

The Group Secretary of the Hospital Savings Association wishes to announce that she has received an intimation from the headquarters of the H.S.A.: "That in future no vouchers must be issued to contributors who are in arrears with their contributions." The H.S.A. used to give three months' grace.

Will all contributors please take note of this announcement, as the Group Secretary cannot be responsible for any contributor now in arrears.

The Group Secretary attends the re-union at 5 Buckingham Gate, on the first Thursday in every month to receive contributions, or they can be sent through the post to her private address, enclosing stamped (½d.) addressed envelope for the return of card—D. F. Hatfield, 99 Helix Road, Brixton Hill, S.W.2.

NEWS OF OLD COMRADES.

Dame Helen Gwynne-Vaughan, G.B.E., whose energy seems absolutely untiring, has undertaken yet another task, for the benefit of others. Invited by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, Dame Helen has consented to serve on the Out-patients' Enquiry Committee of King Edward's Hospital Fund for London.

Miss Gladys M. Davis, 9247 Falcon Avenue, Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A., says she has just received four copies of the Gazette and is overjoyed to see them and has read them over and over again. Now, she is anxious to join the O.C.A. and to get her Gazette regularly. She was among the last contingent to leave St. Pol and saw two years and nine months' service with the B.E.F. Davis would like news of her U.A., **Miss Welsford**, and also of **Miss Douche** and **Miss Hunnybun**. Others she wants word of are **M. Betts**, **Herrington**, **Carter**, A.F.w., all of Camp I, Etaples. Reading the Gazette makes her feel homesick when she thinks of all the doings at the various meetings. Davis sends good wishes to all and hopes to hear from some of those who knew her overseas.

Mrs. Mellinda Washer (F/w M. Davis, 1886), who is the sister of G. M. Davis, also writes for the Gazette to be sent to her. Her address is now 1084 Highland Avenue, Windsor, Ontario, Canada. She served at Queen Mary Camp and Queen Alexandra Camp, Calais. At a recent ceremony in memory of those who lost their lives in the war Mrs. Washer was chosen to lay one of the wreaths on the memorial, and in the newspaper that she sends is a large photograph of herself with Governor W. B. Brucker, of Michigan, and Colonel G. H. Wilkinson, V.D., just prior to laying the wreath. She wants us all to know that our women who lost their lives, are not forgotten in Ontario.

Miss Alice B. Anderson (Paris-Plage and Wimereux) is in Edinburgh just now but hopes to re-open the "Scotch House," Le Touquet, again in March. She had a great time at the Annual Re-union in London, and met again many old friends. Recently she has had a letter from **Mdme. Chagnon**, who was known as "Gran" in the units at Le Touquet. Mdme. Chagnon is living at the Edgewater Beach Hotel, 5000 Block, Sheridan Road, Chicago, U.S.A., and wants to get in touch with any W.A.A.C.s in Chicago. Can any one supply **Mrs. Ashton** (Hasting, D.1631) with the addresses of "**Pearly**" **White**, "**Fairy**" **Powell**, **Nancy Keates**, or others of Camp I, Abbeville? She asks also that greetings be conveyed to **Miss Welsford**, U.A., and adds "We were so happy under her administration, she was always so understanding." Are there any W.A.A.C.s in Seattle, Wash.? Mrs. Ashton's address is Apt. 111, Carter Hall, 905 East 43rd Street, Seattle, Wash., U.S.A.

Miss E. A. Smith hoped to visit London and look up old friends at Christmas. She has been living in Geneva for seven years and is on the staff of the National Labour Office attached to the League of Nations.

CALAIS AGAIN.

I have a great desire to write to you to-day. It is a most unusual thing for me to write my letters on a Sunday, in fact any day at all. I am a shocking correspon-

dent, my family, though small, seem to keep me fully occupied. I often wonder how you are disporting yourselves in London during these exciting times; the nearest we got to the excitement was the day when the King returned to London and the Government was about to be dissolved. We were passing through, on our way to Wimereux for our annual holiday, and you cannot imagine the thrill we country cousins received on being turned away from the front door of Downing Street. I felt I was almost in the Cabinet. You Londoners get those thrills every day, I suppose. I should love to visit more often, but once a year is our limit. We have been married ten years and Betty is eight years old.

We had a delightful time at Wimereux with the best of weather; we visited every place that was within easy reach by train or chara. I was very upset about Le Touquet and Paris Plage, I never saw such artificiality in all my life; I prefer the natural places, don't you?

F.—knew all along that I was keen on visiting Calais again; it's hardly a place for a holiday, is it? We have only been abroad three times since the war, twice to Belgium and once to France, and somehow we did not seem to be able to spare the time; however, this time we managed it. By catching the Paris express as it passed through, we just managed to have a rush round. Betty was a little sport, she dashed along from place to place without a murmur; the little cobbled roads nearly crippled us, and the evil smelling gullies running along the causeway edges are as fruity as ever. We first visited the old Bakery yard. Oh, the memories, as we crossed by the same old level crossing, the gate man came out with his little tin trumpet. I am sure it is the same one he had in our time (dare I mention it was twelve years ago?) There it was I said the final good-bye to my little brother. Do you remember him visiting me there? The Bakery yard is now the site of a huge paper mill, but dare I add that our very own latrine still stands in just the same place; also one of the Personnel buildings. We walked all round behind the bakery yard where the Rest Camp was, and from there we climbed up to Lagoon; it looks very peaceful with a plane resting on its waters. F.—tells me that it is now used as a taking-off and alighting place for the regular overseas mails service.

I should have been lost without F.—, he speaks the language fluently and was able to enquire about the missing landmarks.

After visiting the Lagoon we returned past the old D.I.S., you remember, over the old bridge, which always seemed to be open for the big boats just when we were returning to camp with not a minute to spare, past the hangars, and so on to the Place Dames, where we boarded a street car for Fontinettes. We wobbled our way down the Rue Royal and halted awhile at the Hotel Sauvage; you remember how narrow the street is there? Well, we had presumably wrenched off half of the mudguard of a stationary saloon car, courtesies passed between both drivers, arms waved, note-books flourished, and crowds gathered. These people seem to have heaps of time for any little diversion, don't they?

Our time was almost up now and I began to think that I should never again see Vendroux. However, hope springs eternal. When all seemed lost, a final blessing, highly trimmed, came from both aggrieved and aggressor, and our vehicle wobbled along at a snail's pace. F.—engaged the driver in conversation and gleaned lots of information about Vendroux. As we approached Fontinettes the silly little gates were pulled up for the car to pass. Betty was thrilled. There was the little shed or cart, selling frites. We halted at the little cafe there for a citron. The same old automatic tinkled out its old tunes, nothing seemed altered, the same ageless old people ambled about the still unpaved car-stop. We were very disappointed to learn that the next car to Vendroux would not be down from Guinnes for half-an-hour. It is a long way from Fontinettes to the bridge, you know, and all did indeed seem lost, so near and yet so far. F.—and I held a hurried consultation, and although it hardly seemed fair to Betty (we had just three-quarters of an hour to see Vendroux and return to catch the express). We set off

to walk as far as we could. The old canal seemed just the same. A wee fair was jingling out its cracked music in a field alongside. It was very primitive and yet the people seemed excited and happy. To the left is a large silk mill built by Courtaulds; it looks very flourishing. We simply ran along until we came to Le Nid; you remember the Chalet where the officers were billeted, and in the distance was the dear old wooden bridge built for the Forage depot. F.— held a conversation with the Frenchman now occupying the Chalet, and gleaned a lot of news which he regaled me with going back in the train. Betty and I ran on to climb the bridge just for old time's sake. The huts, of course, are all gone, Vendroux Farm is again in occupation on the site, and the bridge is a thoroughfare no longer, the left side being private for the farm people only. The little estaminets on the right are gone, and the farmhouse where Het and Bet stored their little boat seems to have spread very much further down the road. It has the usual yard around which the actual farm is built. In the middle of the yard is the usual filthy pond, where all the farmyard rubbish stinks at its leisure and the farm creatures wallow.

We were fortunate in accosting a tram from Guinnes to Fontinettes, otherwise I am afraid we should have had to spend the night in Calais, and for Betty's sake I am glad we just managed to catch the train.

My husband gathered up a few pieces of grass from the canal side, souvenir sort of thing. I send you one small piece to remind you of the old bridge. I have always had a sentimental feeling about old Vendroux, but having visited the old haunts I have laid the ghost as it were. Give me England every time. I never really hoped to visit the old place again, and candidly I think if my husband had known how only Calais *can* smell on a hot day, I don't think it would have come off this time.

BATTERSBY, A., 2376.

THE PEOPLE'S NATIONAL THEATRE.

It may interest Old Comrades to know about the People's National Theatre, which lives at the Duchess Theatre, Catherine Street, opposite Drury Lane.

Its director is Miss Nancy Price, whom you probably know already, and its object is to establish in London that which is found in most of the capitals of the world, namely, a permanent home for the drama at reasonable prices.

This is the time to support such an undertaking, for whilst it gives good plays with excellent casts, the price of the seat is far less than in the ordinary theatre.

In addition, on the second Sunday in the month, talks and lectures by well known people are given, followed by an open debate.

About eight plays a year are put on.

Membership costs 5s. 9d. per annum. Thereafter seats may be booked at 2s. 5d., 3s. 6d., and 5s. 6d. Debates are free.

By the way, will those who are already members renew their subscriptions for 1932, so as to save us labour and a stamp! Subscriptions should be sent to: **The People's National Theatre, Duchess Theatre, Catherine Street, Drury Lane.**

MRS. BIRCHAM, M.B.E.

It is with regret that we learn of the death, on Christmas Day, of Mrs. Grace Bircham. As Miss Sanders, she will be remembered as an administrator at St. Omer during part of 1917-1918. After a period of service with the B.E.F. Mrs. Bircham returned to home service and became a controller in the Northern Command. For her services she was awarded the M.B.E. After the war she continued her activities and was at the Ministry of Labour up to the time of her marriage. She was keenly interested in the Girl Guide movement and in the Women's Institute.

Mrs. Bircham was buried at Worplesdon Church.

DIARY OF A V.A.D., 1915 (Continued).

Saturday, April 10th, Midnight.

Last night, or rather at 1 a.m. this morning, we fed No. 7 ambulance train, about 250 cases. They were a hungry lot, and simply wolfed bread and butter. On our way down the platform we met three *Tommies* who were on their way home on 96 hours leave. They had some bread and butter too, though we are not supposed to feed belligerents. One of them said that it did him good to see English women again, he had been at the front seven months! The men on this train were in great spirits, it is really marvellous how cheerful they are, packed like sardines in the train, wounded and at 1 o'clock in the morning. I was carrying the bread and butter basket along and at one carriage, on asking the usual question, "How many are you in there?" I was told "Three regulars and one Territorial!" (These were "lying down" cases, in an ordinary first or second class carriage. Two men on the seats, and two on sort of shelves above them, arranged as the berths are in a wagon lit.) Apparently the whole way the three regulars had been ragging the one wretched Territorial! I said I thought it was a shame, and then a head came out of the next window and a voice said, "That's right, Sister, you stick up for the *terriers*, they're as good as the regulars any day!"

There are a very nice lot of orderlies on No. 7, all keen for their own cases to have the best of everything going. At night we ask the orderly for his jug and fill it up, instead of giving the cocoa out individually in mugs as we do by day, because it disturbs those who are asleep less.

The station is a weird sight at night; hardly any lights, and sentries standing with fixed bayonets.

We had rather an excitement one night. B. and F. saw a mysterious flashing light which they at once took to be signalling. They then called the attention of two young officers, who were having coffee in the kitchen, to the light, and these were at once very interested, and recognised letters in the morse code. None of these letters made sense, but this, they said, did not matter, as all spies signalled in code. One of the officers wanted to act at once and catch the spies red-handed, but the other advised him to fetch the R.T.O. as it was really more his job. This they went off to do, and we waited in a great state of excitement for their return. After some time they did return, and remarked quietly that it was only a street lamp swinging in the wind. At the time we didn't know whether to believe them or not, owing to their rather curious manner, and in the daylight B. went to examine the lamp. She reported it a fixed one, and though we watched on other windy nights we never saw that flashing light again!

April 13th.

While we were having supper this evening, an orderly came in to tell us that troops were landing and passing through the town. We ran out of the station, and in the pitch dark listened to the steady tramp of men passing that we couldn't see! It was most impressive. No orders were given, no one spoke, there was absolute silence except the sound of countless feet on the cobble stones. How thrilling it must be, after months of anticipation, to land in a foreign country in the dead of night, and march silently through a sleeping town to an unknown destination, "Somewhere in France!"

Thursday, April 15th.

There was an accident in the tunnel near our Chateau to-day and the line was blocked for a long while. A French ambulance train that was expected in at 6.30 p.m. did not come in until 5.30 this morning. The French trains are not as well equipped as ours are and they have no kitchens, so these men were quite starving and we were asked to feed them. We have fed French trains before, but only do so when asked to by the Chef de Gare. There were about 80 cases, most "sitting up." Nearly all "sick" (i.e. not wounded).

It was such a lovely morning that W. and I took the tram cut to Wimereux, a sort of suburb of Boulogne, to

No. 8 Hospital, where a friend of hers is nursing. No 8 is most interesting. Part of it is run by the Australian Red Cross contingent, and part by the R.A.M.C. and it is all under canvas. There are eight beds to a tent. The tents have wooden floors, and they are arranged in rows with a raised path to the level of these floors running right down the centre of each row linking the tents up one to another. These tents are only put up temporarily, wonderful wooden erections are being put up on the other side of the road to take their place, and the tents will then be used for isolation cases only. The air was lovely up there and the men ought to thrive on it. We missed the tram coming back and, as we were rather late, we got a returning ambulance to give us a lift. They will always take up anyone in a Red Cross uniform.

Saturday, April 18th.

We fed No. 7 ambulance train last night, 300 cases, nearly all wounded, so it is beginning to look like business again at the front.

Wednesday, April 21st.

On day duty again in the staff room.

This morning No. 8 came in about 10.30, a most unusual hour, and we fed 250 cases with cocoa and bread and butter. There was a big percentage of head wounds I noticed.

The other day we fed a trainload of Indians. A good many of these are too high caste to take anything from us, but a number of them will take tea and biscuits out of a tin as long as we do not touch them. They do not seem to realise that the biscuits do not grow in the tin, but have to be packed by an "unbeliever!"

April 23rd.

The new ambulance train, No. 17, that has been sent from England by the Millers' Association has been alongside our platform all day loading up and preparing for her maiden trip up to the front to-night. We were taken over the train by the M.O. and it is really beautiful. At each end there is a kitchen fitted with a range, dressers and everything arranged most conveniently, even hot and cold water laid on. In the centre of the train is the dispensary, operating theatre, clerk's office and linen store, and between this coach and the end kitchen are the carriages for the sitting up cases, ordinary third class carriages G.E.R. with even the advertisements of hotels and East Coast towns left up.

The front part of the train is made up of beautiful wards for the stretcher cases. The beds are arranged in three tiers, 36 beds to a ward, a wide passage running down the centre. There is an oilcloth covered floor, plenty of windows with pretty green curtains, and a green tiled lavatory at the end of each ward.

The exterior of the train is painted khaki, with a large red cross on each coach.

The great advantage this train has over all the others is that every coach communicates with its neighbour on either side. This train should really have been No. 13, as Nos. 14, 15 and 16 are not out yet, but its number was changed for superstitious reasons. This is the first of the English-made hospital trains to come out. This is rather absurd as there are No. 13 hospitals, both General and Stationary. (A "General" has 1,000 beds, a "Stationary" has 250.

Saturday, April 24th.

There has been a lot of fighting the last day or two, and all the trains are coming down very full and with some very bad cases.

Yesterday I walked along the part of the quay where the ambulances stand when not wanted, and while I was there a call came and 30 or 40 of them dashed off in a long line at top speed for the station. It was most interesting. They are rather a miscellaneous lot, though most are Red Cross and St. John Ambulance Association, quite a number are private ones and run by the owners, and some I saw labelled "Burberry," "Salvation Army," and so on. Some have been given names. I noticed "Taube," and "The Old Grey Mare" and others.

We gave magazines out to the men on No 1 A.T. this afternoon.

Our 'Tommies' pronunciation of the French and Belgian towns never fails to afford us great joy. "wyfers" (Ypres) is, of course, well known in England, but I think "Etables" (Etaples) and "stay a minute" (estaminet) are quite as funny.

A new song we heard to-day runs as follows:—

"Apres la guerre,
We'll go back to Angleterre,
In the sweet bye and bye."

April 26th.

The long-expected rush has come at last. Fresh German activities at Ypres, taking and re-taking of trenches and guns, have resulted in terrible casualties, especially among the Canadians (Hill 60). The night shift fed an improvised train of 500 last night, all in cattle trucks, sitting on the ground, with no straw or blankets, no orderlies or nurses, no food, no anything! We have been told that no more improvised would ever be used, and two have already come down and more are expected.

This morning we fed 365 cases on No. 17 A.T. and this afternoon an evacuation train of 1,000 odd! This train we fed in about an hour, with cocoa and biscuits (they had already been given rations in the shape of bread and jam) and we did them all but one coach and the train moved out of the station.

We used both carts, Commandant E.C. and myself on one, F. and M.B. on the other. We have another improvised due in at any moment with 830 cases.

April 28th.

We have worked a bit these last two days! The rush has been appalling, the hospitals are bursting full and trains are coming in all day.

Yesterday we fed 150 cases on No. 8 in the morning. In the afternoon we fed an evacuation train, 360 cases. These evacuation trains are too pathetic for words. The poor things come hobbling along the platform, helping one another, and looking too miserable for words at the thought of another journey.

The night shift fed about 600.

To-day we fed an improvised train of about 980 cases, not very bad ones. They were in long enough for us to give them cigarettes, too, and they were so pleased.

At this rate we shall easily beat our record of 5,000 fed in a week; we have nearly done that now! Our casualties must have been terrific this week.

I have just heard that I am to go to Abbeville to-morrow with three others to start a Rest Station there. I don't know if I'm glad or sorry! I am sorry to leave here, but it will be nice to go to a new place and start something right from the beginning.

I have just heard from Quartermaster that we have fed 6,777 men in 4 days.

ABBEVILLE, HOTEL DE LA GARE.

May 2nd.

We came here on the Thursday train with the Commandant. It took us three hours, and it is just 50 miles!

There are four of us here—P.—in charge (she was at a small hospital at Gournay), F.B., G., and myself. We have also got four orderlies with us.

There has been a sort of rest station here for some time, run by the hospital, but it really needs someone there all the time, and they only came down when an improvised train was expected in. All we found here was a space screened off by sagging canvas screens in a large goods shed—this is the dressing station. It contained six benches, and a long wooden table on tressles. Then there is a sort of sentry box with windows, where dressings, bowls, bottles of carbolic, etc., are kept. A small wooden table and three boilers made up the rest of the rest station.

In three days we seem to have made it look a bit different. The first day—Friday—we thoroughly turned out and scrubbed everything. We nailed the sagging canvas on to the lathes of wood to keep it taut, and then washed it well. We covered the tressle table with American cloth, and made extra tables from packing cases. We have also made some cupboards from cases. We are going to get jars for dressings, bottles for lotions, pails with lids for dirty dressings, and a lot of other things, and hope to make it a really nice looking place soon.

The night we arrived an improvised train came in and we went down to the station to watch how things were done. The men were all given cocoa, loaves of bread and tins of bully beef and jam. Any who needed fresh dressings were taken off to the dressing station by the R.A.M.C. orderlies from the hospital. We thought the feeding rather badly done, and they were much slower than we are.

I think I had better explain here how everything was eventually worked out at Abbeville; at the time it seemed so involved that we hardly understood it ourselves, so I find I have not made our position at all clear.

There were at that time two hospitals at Abbeville, No. 5 Stationary R.A.M.C., and No. 3 B.R.C.S. The Rest Station had been run between the two, No. 5 doing the dressings and No. 3 the feeding. The place was only opened up on the nights that trains were expected, and only used for improvised and evacuation trains. We were asked to take over the whole thing, and to keep the place always open in order that (1) a better and fuller equipment could be kept there without fear of its being stolen; (2) it would not be such a strain on the staff, as they had only been wanted at the station when there was a rush, and then they were always so frightfully busy at the hospital; (3) so that we could take charge of any bad cases dropped by the ambulance trains until the hospitals sent for them (a matter of 20 minutes or so). Up to that time they had just been left on the platform with no one to look after them; and (4) so that any small accidents, etc., in the neighbourhood could be attended to on the spot. We worked directly under Major M., C.O., of No. 5 Stationary, who supplied us with all equipment, bandages, and so on, and with all our cocoa, milk, sugar, etc., and sent down two of his M.O.s to do the dressings. We therefore found ourselves working under the R.A.M.C., a much more satisfactory arrangement than at Boulogne, where we were independent of them and yet had to ask their permission before feeding every train. Now also we feed *only* improvised and evacuation trains, and these being without kitchens are entirely dependent on us for anything hot, though, of course, they carry emergency rations. Another difference to Boulogne is that here the trains we are to feed are garaged in a siding and do not leave the station until we have finished, though, of course, we have to be as quick as possible in order not to delay the train and block the line.

The first night Major M— sent down a sister to help, but he evidently thought us quite equal to the job, as he never sent her again.

On Friday there were no non-ambulance trains, so we spent the whole day getting things straight. We got to bed about 10.30 p.m., pretty tired out, and were roused again at 11.30 p.m. and told a train was coming in at midnight and another at 1.30 a.m. We had to get up and dress and go down to a cold, dark station, feeling thoroughly miserable. Both trains were very late, and as they were ambulances they didn't want anything, and we crawled back to bed more dead than alive at 3 a.m. This is one of the little trials of being on "active service"! (To be continued).

MARRIAGE.

Ziegeler—Cape.—At Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, on November 19th, 1931, G. F. Ziegeler, of Brisbane, to Doris Cape, late Queen Mary Camp, Calais.

DEATH.

Bircham.—On Christmas Day, 1931, at Worplesdon, Grace (nee Sanders), wife of Bertram Okeden Bircham, aged 43.

ADVERTISEMENTS

Wanted, beginning January, Housekeeper; Ex-Service woman preferred.—Apply, by letter, stating experience, Secretary, Women's United Services Club, 12 Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh.

Flat, 44 Bedford Avenue, Barnet. (Miss) K. Wind would like to meet an Old Comrade who would share the expenses of her comfortably furnished and convenient flat. Good position.

Pure Home-made Chocolates, Bon-Bons, Toffees, Caramels, etc. Fancy boxes of Chocolates and Sweets, suitable for Presents, from 2s. 6d. to £2 2s. 0d. Price list on application.—Miss E. Cocksedge, 2 Bracken Road, West, Brighouse, Yorkshire.

Ann Wilkinson, 159 Ebury Street, Victoria, S.W.1, ex-W.A.A.C., has opened at the above address. Knitting wools, silks, art needlework lingerie, hosiery, children's frocks and woollies; maids' uniforms ready made and made to measure.—C. Wilkinson, Garrison Headquarters, Felixstowe.

St. Agnes, Cornwall.—Comfortably furnished timber bungalow, three bedrooms, sleep four, living-room, large kitchen, indoor sanitation, verandah, sea view, lovely country. Plate and linen provided. October 17th, 1931, to May 10th, 1932, 15/- per week inclusive; May, £1/1/- per week; June, £2/2/- per week; July, £3/3/- per week; August, £4/4/- per week; September, £2/2/- per week; October, £1/1/- per week.—Bertrand, 6 Wilmington Avenue, Chiswick, London, W.4

Bedsitting Rooms, Single or Double, available at 12 Nevers Road, Earl's Court. Rooms comfortably furnished, and terms moderate. Gas fires and rings in all rooms. Constant hot water. Breakfast as required. Apply, Miss H. Pink, Frobisher, 1740. Also available, partially furnished, very large, light and airy basement sitting-room. Small kitchenette attached with hot and cold water, gas ring, etc. Separate entrance. Gas fire, own meter. Electric light included.—Apply as above.

Numerology.—Your name your guide for life. Readings, 7/6, 5/-, and 2/6; U.S.A. and Canada, \$2 and \$1. Old readings brought up to date, 2/6. Send full names (maiden name if married), and date of birth to Blanche, c/o Miss Muuse, Apt. 2 South, 251 West, 81st Street, New York City.

George IV. Hotel, Gt. Amwell, Wares, Herts. Telephone: Stanstead Abbots 39. A beautiful spot for a quiet country holiday. Saturday to Monday, 15s. Other terms on application. Teas, luncheons. Parties catered for by arrangement. Combine a ramble with your general meeting and come here for tea. Club room accommodates 50.—A. G. Brown and A. Edwards (Camp 1, Etaples).

Scotch House, 44 Rue de la Paix, Le Touquet. Family Hotel; Pension; comfortable; moderate; central. Rooms fitted with hot and cold water. Excellent cuisine; personal supervision. Alice B. Anderson (Unit 11, Wimereux, and of Claims Commission, Le Touquet).

Bournemouth.—Mrs. A. Stocker, "Glencora," 3 Hawkwood Road, Boscombe. Comfortable board residence, good food; separate tables; 4 mins. sea, one minute Arcade, shops, etc. Every consideration for the comfort of visitors; large shady lawn, South aspect; Moderate terms.—Telephone: Bournemouth 962.

Stormont House, 43 and 45 Longridge Road, Earls Court, S.W.5. Misses A. Crockford and O. Mainland having extended their premises, are now able to offer additional accommodation. Bed, bath and breakfast from 5/6 single rooms; from 5/- each double rooms. Lunch, tea and dinner optional; 6d. per night extra for bookings for less than three nights. Gas fires in rooms. Telephone: Frobisher, 0986

Devon.—Comfortably furnished rooms. Every convenience with attendance: facing South. Five minutes walk from sea.—Apply Mrs. Waite, 1 Major Terrace, Seaton, Devon.

An Ideal Gift for Old Comrades, "Johnnie" of Q.M.A.A.C., by Agnes Anderson. Popular edition, 1/6; postage, 3d. An Old Comrade writes: I value this book more than all the presents I have ever had." Copies may be had from Miss Anderson, Ormiston, Bridge of Allan, Scotland.

Branch.	Name and Address of Secretary.	Address of Club or Meeting Place.	Day and Time of Meeting.
Birmingham.	Miss E. I. Dipple, 29 Marston Road, Erdington, Birmingham.	38 John Bright Street, Room 19.	Wednesdays. 7 to 10 p.m.
Bournemouth.	Miss Edith Trotter, C.B.E., 4 East Avenue, Bournemouth.	Caveadish House, 8 Christ Church Road.	Last Monday in each month 8 to 10 p.m. On last Wednesday in the month; 7.15—10.15.
Brighton.	Miss H. A. Baron, 25 Wellington Road, Brighton, Sussex.		
Bristol and West of England.	Miss Umpleby, "Rokeby," Long Aston, Bristol.	No permanent room fixed.	Not fixed.
Cheltenham.	Mrs. Mann, 84B High Street, Cheltenham, Gloucester.	Not fixed.	Not fixed.
Exeter.	Mrs. Vicary, The Belvedere. Powderham, near Exeter.	16 Dix Field, Exeter.	First Thursday of the month at 3.30 p.m.
Eastbourne.	Miss N. Peters, 5 Spencer Road, Eastbourne.	Not fixed.	Not fixed.
Edinburgh and East of Scotland.	Miss M. Innes, 1 Granville Terrace, Edinburgh. Benevolent Sec.: Miss F. M. Lush, 11a Gilmore Place, Edinburgh.	Women's United Services Club, 12 Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh.	1st Saturday of each month, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.
Glasgow and West of Scotland.	Miss E. M. Gilchrist, M.B.E., 13 Royal Terrace West, Glasgow.	316 Bath Street, Glasgow.	Every Wednesday, 7.30.
Headquarters.	Mrs. Pratt Barlow, O.B.E. 11 Grosvenor Crescent, S.W.1.	Not fixed.	Not fixed.
Ireland.	Miss E. C. Finny, Erith Lodge, Sandymount, Dublin.		Not fixed.
Leeds.	Miss E. Mair, 33 Victoria Terrace, Belle Vue Road, Leeds. Benevolent Sec.: Miss A. Annikin, 2 Hollin Park View, Roundhay, Leeds, Yorks.	British Legion (Women's Section) Rooms, 14 Hanover Square.	First Wednesday in the month, 7.30 p.m.
Liverpool.	Miss F. M. Bragg, 59 Victoria Road, Tue Brook, Liverpool.	30 Bluecoat Chambers, School Lane.	Alternate Friday, 7.30 p.m.
London.	Miss R. S. Andrews, 5 Buckingham Gate, S.W.1.	1st and 3rd Thursdays in each month at the Ex-Service Women's Club, 5 Buckingham Gate, S.W.1.	Thursday evenings, 7.30 to 10 p.m.
Golders Green.	Miss Setterfield, 12 Geary Road, Dollis Hill, N.W.10	Winchfield, Shirehall Lane, Golders Green Road (nearest 'bus stop Brent Bridge). Telephone: Hendon 1925.	First Tuesday of each month; 7.30—10 p.m.
Ilford.	Miss M. V. Druitt, 74 Belgrave Road, Ilford, Essex.	122 Cranbrook Road, Ilford. (Telephone Ilford 0058).	Alternate Tuesdays at 8 p.m.
Manchester.	Miss Aldred, 227 Oldham Road, Newton Heath, Manchester.	The Continental Cafe, 14 Oxford Street, Manchester.	Every Friday, 7—10.30 p.m.
Newcastle-on-Tyne.	Miss Margaret Moyes, 1A Eslington Terrace, Jesmond, Newcastle. Benevolent Sec.: Miss L. M. Floyd, 13 Beacon Street, Low Fell, Gateshead	No permanent room fixed. Interviews at British Legion, N.E. Area Offices, 10 Leazes Terrace, Newcastle.	Members notified individually.
Norfolk.	Mrs. L. W. Chilvers, 32 Grove Road, Norwich.	No permanent room fixed.	Monthly. Members notified individually.
North Staffs.	Mrs. E. Stretton 10 Sparrow Terrace, Porthill, Stoke-on-Trent.		
Oxford.	Mrs. Grundy, Woodside Cottage, Windsor Forest.	No permanent room fixed	Members notified individually.
Notts.	Mrs. Skellington, 94 Shakespeare Street, Nottingham.	Meldrum's Cafe, Lister Gate.	First Wednesday in the month, 7-9.30
Plymouth.	Mrs. O. Foster, 2 Notte Street, Plymouth.		
Cardiff. and S. Wales.	Miss Diana V. Viney, 201 Carlisle Street, Cardiff.	Y.M.C.A., Cardiff.	Second and Last Tuesday, at 7.30 p.m.
St. Leonard's.	Miss E. Taylor, 58 West Hill, St. Leonards-on-Sea.	58 West Hill, St. Leonard's-on-Sea.	Not fixed.
Sunderland.	Miss M. M. Low, 15 Featherstone Street, Roker, Sunderland	Y.W.C.A. Rooms, Burdon Road.	Second Wednesday each month, 7 p.m.
Tunbridge Wells.	Mrs. Houchen, Sunny Ridge, Rotherfield, Kent.		July 20th and Nov. 25th.

All Old Comrades are cordially invited to any of the above re-unions. If no definite meetings are fixed, application should be made to the Branch Secretary concerned, who will give the necessary particulars.