



THE QUEEN ALEXANDRA'S ROYAL ARMY
NURSING CORPS ASSOCIATION

GAZETTE

THE Q.A.R.A.N.C. ASSOCIATION GAZETTE

Vol. 1 No. 1

JANUARY, 1950

Editorial

WE ARE launching out on to unknown seas, not one of us responsible for this new venture, the Q.A. ASSOCIATION GAZETTE, has ever done anything of the sort before! No wonder we wanted the comfortable feeling of security engendered by your assured financial support *before* we finally weighed the anchor. In return it is our ambition to give you what you want as far as the limited space and our ability allows. The moving spirit of the Association is friendship, our aim is to keep in touch with old friends and to create new ones.

The Q.A.I.M.N.S. have often longed for a magazine of their own and now that they have become the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps it seems an opportune moment to make the attempt. The contents of the first issue of the GAZETTE are by no means necessarily typical of all that future editions may evolve.

The colour block of our cover—how do you like it? It is at least individual, but it is expensive and what is more we propose to ring the changes on it as and when we can. Still, it and its successors, if any, remain our property and will perhaps help us with other speculations in which we may indulge to recuperate our finances in time of need.

Of course the Association badge design is a friendly sight for all of us and will be sure of a welcome. Brooches are being made from it and will be available shortly for sale to members.

We await your candid criticisms, your contributions of ideas and literary efforts. We faintly hope that our post bag may perhaps contain a word or two of encouragement, even praise, though in this respect we are prepared to follow the example of our fellow-countrymen and accept austerity fare if we must. Maybe the cargo we shall land at your ports in due course will evoke pleasurable anticipation and turn out to be something worth having. Wait and see.

The Annual General Meeting

THE ANNUAL General Meeting of the Association is to be held on Wednesday, 22nd March, 1950, at 2.30 p.m., at 20 John Islip Street, Millbank, S.W.1. Tea will be available if we may be notified ten days previously of your intention to be present.

News Notes from the Branches

SORRY, THERE aren't any, neither news notes nor branches—yet. Branches there will be as soon as ever Association Headquarters can get them started, for each one formed will lessen the weight at the centre and, what is very much more important, will create more personal contacts between members and better opportunities for carrying out the Association aim of holding out the hand of friendship to our members.

What a lot there is to do and prepare for an offspring! It is astonishing! Probably it is just the inexperience, not having had any kind of offshoot before and certainly because of parental anxiety to make the way smooth for those about to be.

It is thought that Scotland is going to be the first-born Branch with the Midlands following on. They will not be twins—we cannot do with that. Perhaps there will be news notes from them both in the next GAZETTE.

There is even the possibility of an Australian Branch. We were delighted to hear that ex-Army Sisters there hold a Q.A. Reunion once a year and at their last meeting in Melbourne no less than twenty-seven turned up. Needless to say our indefatigable Headquarters have followed this up but there has not been time for tangible results. We are looking forward to something from Australia.

The Honorary Secretary would be very glad indeed to hear from the "exs" in other areas, at home or overseas; and where are the serving members in this? There have been husky whispers, very indistinct we found them, about a certain group of Q.A.R.A.N.C. taking the initiative in forming a Branch and branding it deeply with their name. Would a tin of voice pastilles help, though it is feared our Central Committee might object to our Benevolent Fund setting up in competition with Mr. Bevan at a shilling a time!

Army Sisters' Memorial

OWING TO the formation of the British Empire Nurses' Memorial Fund, it was felt to be impossible to launch an appeal for the Army Sisters' Memorial until that was well established. It was realized that this would seriously limit our efforts but the position was accepted as inevitable. The Fund, which was subscribed to by relatives and friends, amounted to £3,000-odd and the Committee, after much deliberation, decided to use the money in the following manner:—

- (a) A marble plaque, giving the names of two hundred and ten Sisters who lost their lives during the war, was placed in the Chapel at Millbank. The plaque was similar in design to the Sisters' Memorial of the 1914-1918 war near by, the names being arranged under the badges of Q.A.I.M.N.S., Reserves and T.A.N.S.

- (b) A History of the Army Nursing Service is being written by Ian Hay, the cost being defrayed by the Fund and all profits from the sale of the book will go into the Fund. It was hoped that the book would have been ready for publication by Christmas, in which case it would have considerably helped many of us with our Christmas present problems.
- (c) Grants are being given to assist serving or ex-Service Sisters with expenses of post-graduate and refresher courses, or for similar purposes. In 1948 three were given to the value of £65, two ex-Reserves and one T.A.N.S. Sister being the recipients. In 1949 thirty-two grants were awarded of varying amounts totalling £690, twenty-one being given to ex-Reserves, nine to ex-T.A.N.S. and two to Regulars. Grants will continue to be given until the Fund is exhausted. In this way the money will be used to assist those who served with the Sisters commemorated by the Fund.

The unveiling ceremony of the plaque took place on 28th May, 1949, at 2.30 p.m. The small Chapel, beautifully decorated with flowers—mainly scarlet carnations—by the Principal Matron and Sisters of the Q.A. Headquarters Mess, was crowded to capacity, and many visitors were standing round the entrance. Sisters in grey and scarlet acted as ushers, and several were in the choir with men of the R.A.M.C. They also formed a guard of honour for the representative of Queen Mary, Commandant-in-Chief, Q.A.R.A.N.C., Dame Louisa Wilkinson, Matron-in-Chief, 1944-1948, and now Controller Commandant of the Corps.

The Chaplain-General, Canon F. L. Hughes, conducted the service, dedicating the Memorial which was unveiled by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Field-Marshal Sir William Slim, who paid a tribute to the work of the Sisters in the war. The service was simple, impressive and moving, the crowded congregation joining in singing the hymns and psalm, the bugles of the Royal Army Medical Corps Band sounding the Last Post and Reveille.

Wreaths were laid by the Matron-in-Chief, Senior Controller Thomson, for all serving officers, Q.A.R.A.N.C., and by Dame Katherine Jones, Matron-in-Chief, 1940-1944, for all war-time Sisters. The Adjutant-General, Sir James Steele, with Controller Hobkirk, Deputy Director, W.R.A.C., placed a wreath on behalf of the men and women of the Army. The Director-General Army Medical Services, Lieut.-General Sir Neil Cantlie, laid the tribute from all ranks of the Royal Army Medical Corps.

Others present were the Dowager Lady Amptill, for so many years representing the Territorial Association on the Q.A. Army Nursing Board, and Colonel Fletcher Barrett, Officer Commanding Q.A. Military Hospital, Millbank.

Good photographs are available of the two Q.A. Memorial Plaques 1914-18 and 1939-45 wars, separately or together, if anyone desires to have them. Price 5s.

After the service all the visitors were entertained to tea by the Matron-in-Chief and nursing sisters in the Headquarters Mess.

Reunion

IT IS a common opinion that reunions are always popular, at least with the majority. How often one thinks of this and that station and then begins to wonder where so and so is, did she marry and has she any children.

How much busier the post offices would be if we frequently wrote to all the colleagues with whom we so happily worked through the war years. When would we get done the immediate jobs which keep body and soul together if we did what so often we would like to do, sit down and write reams of reminiscences to those who knew and endured us in all moods during the past years?

These unfortunately too infrequent reunions help to compensate this longing for news of associates of the past.

The first reunion after the war was held in February, 1946, at Slaters, in Kensington High Street, and another was held in January, 1947, at Chez August; both these were organized by the Matron-in-Chief's Department of the War Office. They were most successful and brought back many old memories of war-time comradeship and experiences. The popularity of these meetings was proved by the impatience for another which many ex-Service Sisters showed by getting one up for themselves at the Hyde Park Hotel in June, 1948.

From this happy meeting the Q.A. Benevolent Fund benefited to the extent of £36 5s. 4d. which was sent to us by Miss Rout, the Secretary. A much appreciated gift.

Then came the first reunion under the auspices of the Association, and Miss Rout, now a member of the Central Committee, again undertook the organizing; and what a trouble she had getting a suitable place for the numbers we hoped would attend. London is full of large and spacious buildings, and it was airily said by most of us that there would be no difficulty in finding the right place. Unfortunately this was not so easy. What the hotels wanted to provide was a banquet and not a simple little tea party. Some were willing to provide tea for two or three hundred, but when asked to cater for twice that number they refused. This will explain the overcrowding of Londonderry House which was finally found for us by Messrs. Searcy Tansley Ltd., who did the catering and supplied, I think you will agree, a very nice tea. It was undoubtedly a crush and it is hoped that next time we shall succeed in finding a larger place with the extra space needed to find old acquaintances without sacrificing any of the amenities necessary for a real old get-together. It is hoped that you were not discouraged on 17th September last by only managing to see the back of the person in front of you when you were desperately looking for old friends.

Alas and alack, no profits resulted; indeed, a small deficit. But never mind—be sure and come to the next merry meeting, wherever it may be.

Our Credentials

MOST REGIMENTS and Corps in the Army have their own Associations with friendly aspirations similar to ours. It is very fitting now that the Military Nursing Service has increased its stature by becoming a Royal Army Nursing Corps that it, too, should have a distinct organization for these activities. In the past the Matron-in-Chief's Department at the War Office undertook the work but that has become impossible with the increase of ex-members who served in World War II and the different type and volume of work the department must undertake with the changed status of the Corps.

Many months ago, on 11th October, 1948, precisely, this Head Office was opened. Files and correspondence were transferred from A.M.D.4 War Office and work for the Association began in its own two very pleasant rooms in 20 John Islip Street, London. The windows face Marsham Street and look over the tops of the buildings to the spire of Westminster Cathedral. With the help of kind friends we have accumulated furnishings which succeed, we hope, in giving the office a homely impression to our visitors. One visitor discovered we had no clock and in two days one appeared on our mantelpiece. There are tea cups of pre-war manufacture, a pseudo-silver teapot and several other home comforts. Our first experience with the teapot almost ended in a case of poisoning, but that tragedy was happily avoided. For some weeks we did not possess a kettle so with the help of an electric immerser water was boiled in the teapot for our coffee. On this first morning the coffee had a strong flavour of straw and was by no means agreeable to the eye or palate. Repeated washing had been of little avail to counteract the effects of many months of being stuffed with straw and Indian straw at that! Perseverance won in the long run and, anyway, we now have a kettle and stove, so all is well.

Settling down to routine and collecting all necessary office equipment did not take long. Our one big headache was buying a typewriter out of our small income. A kind friend, to whom the Association owes much, loaned us his portable which I am afraid we kept for rather a long time while we searched hard for one we could afford. Then a casual remark made to a lady in no way connected with either the Q.A.R.A.N.C., or typewriters, produced one for £18. This we rather dubiously bought and listened to for many a day with suspicious expectations, which to this very day have not been fulfilled despite the fact that the machine has been worked very hard and is still going strong.

After the first month our membership was 260. It is now 1,891, and we think that it is high time that number was doubled. We have

succeeded in contacting old friends for many members and, incidentally, for some folk who are not members. We think that was all above board. As far as we could ascertain the inquiries had no connection with tradesmen or Scotland Yard. We are very proud to have several South African War veterans as members. These ladies served with Princess Christian's Army Nursing Reserve which was in being prior to the reconstitution of the Army Nursing Service in 1902 as Q.A.I.M.N.S. Several of our colleagues have been most helpful in visiting sick or lonely members in their districts. These visits have brought great joy and we are most grateful for this practical friendship. Some of the annuities taken over from A.M.D.4 have been increased and monetary gifts have been sent to other members who in these expensive days have little to spare for anything but the barest necessities. Small gifts have been sent or friendly inquiries made when we have heard of the illness of any of our members, but many cases are not brought to our notice and might prove too numerous for our small band of helpers. This is one avenue where Branches can do so much. Through friends who visit South Africa we have received many food parcels which have been divided up and sent to some members to eke out the rations for one which are so difficult to live on. Other parcels from Canada have been promised and if the new restrictions in South Africa permit, we hope to see some more from there this winter. It will help us considerably if members will bring names and addresses to our notice and indicate how they think we could be helpful.

After our first experience it has been found, as is so often the case, that theory is different from practice, and not a few alterations have had to be made. In future all members, whether serving or not, will be issued with a membership card, a different colour for each successive year. Primrose yellow for 1950. New life membership cards will be sent out shortly as the current ones are out of date, because of the changes which have taken place in the Nursing Service. They will be smaller and more easily tucked into one's purse than the present type. Our Chairman is busily employed along with other arduous duties in organizing Branches, both at home and overseas, and will be pleased to know of any members who would like to form a Branch in their district.

Promotions & Appointments

IT IS not yet possible to provide for publication lists of appointments and postings of officers. Owing to the present period of reconstruction of the Corps, such information would be out of date before reaching the Association and therefore misleading.

It is hoped that these lists will be available before the next issue.

1854 to 1949

THE HISTORICAL development of nursing service in the Army from its inception in 1854 until present day can be traced by definite stages through four major wars and the intervening years of peace. Each war in turn has added to our experience, widened our field of service, strengthened and consolidated our position within the Army structure, while the intervening years have given opportunity for reorganization and reconstruction based on the knowledge gained during war.

Thus we find that the Crimean War was the direct cause of the employment of trained nurses in military hospitals and following the Crimea, the formation of an authorized recognized Army Nursing Service together with an Army Nursing Reserve.

On the outbreak of the South African War the Army Nursing Service, now considerably augmented by the Reserve, was able to mobilize some 1,400 women to nurse the sick and wounded soldiers in this campaign and once again as a result of the war, steps were quickly taken to enlarge and improve the Nursing Service of the future. In the report of a committee formed to consider the project, the following extract is of interest :—

“It has now been recognized that a further extension of the female nursing system in peace is necessary, and that the ability of female nurses in war is capable of an extension hitherto not contemplated.”

As a result of this committee the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service was established by Royal Warrant on the 27th March, 1902, with revised conditions of service pay and allowances and definite officer status. A uniform, badge, ribbon and motto were officially approved and a clearly defined position given within the Army organization.

Formation of the Q.A.I.M.N.S.R. and the T.A.N.S. quickly followed, these two services adopting their own individual uniform, badge, and ribbon, but keeping in main pattern to the parent organization so as to be of immediate help in time of emergency.

The first week of the 1914-18 war saw the Combined Nursing Service mobilized for duty with the Expeditionary Force, and through the years they served on every front, in every campaign.

Another war over, the Q.A.I.M.N.S. once again set about a programme of reconstruction, and the intervening years of peace brought about important but in comparison less spectacular changes in our history, certain revision of uniform, pay and allowances, conditions of service, was accomplished but the main reconstruction was the very valuable addition to the parent Q.A.I.M.N.S. of the Military Families

Nursing Service and the Queen Alexandra's Military Nursing Service, India.

1939 found us a service where members were in, but not of, the Army, civilian women with relative officer rank who nevertheless accepted to a large extent the responsibilities of Army administration, and organization.

Again the three Army Nursing formations formed together to nurse the fighting services in the 1939-45 war, serving in every campaign from Iceland to the Pacific and nursing sick and wounded of every caste, creed and colour, friend and enemy alike.

For the fourth time, yet another war behind us, we are going through a period of reorganization, once again the experience gained, the lessons learned, are being used to help reconstruct the Nursing Service of the future. The way of all life has changed completely as a result of the past war and we in particular are attempting to adjust our life to fit the new pattern without losing the tradition of the old.

Some of these readjustments are already in being, we are now one of the three Corps which together form the Army Medical Service, and as such we are self-administered and in the near future we hope to be self-contained with our own women other ranks.

However, while the other rank project is in the process of being established and to add to our Corps formation, a Depot and Training Establishment has been founded and gradually built up during the past two years. This foundation is common to all Army units other than ourselves: it forms the home of the Corps or Regiment concerned.

This Depot has four main wings which deal with Basic and Administrative Training, Holding and Drafting, Nurse Training and an H.Q. staff.

In keeping with modern methods of specialized preparation for work of any type, the newly joined Q.A. of today is taught by a basic training course how to fit into the Army structure and to approach military nursing with an assured understanding of the background of her patient in her particular role of officer and nurse.

Every aspect of Army life, methods, regulations, organizations, and administration is explained. Hospital routines are taught and visits are made to other units of interest, inoculations and medical inspections are given, personal documentation is completed, and uniform outfitting is supervised.

It is of interest that after a month in the Depot the average new officer weighs four to six pounds more and is greatly improved in general health, due to P.T., drill parades and a more outdoor life than usual and the large appetites that naturally follow.

The more senior Q.A. returns to the Depot to receive instruction in administration, both elementary and advanced, to equip her for future administrative appointments. Again every subject of military administration is given, and the senior Q.A. is fully prepared to undertake further responsibility stage by stage in her career.

The Nurse Training Scheme is another post-war reconstruction of great importance to us. Under the direction of a Chief Tutor, a number of qualified Sister Tutors cover the world, and each is responsible for the Nurse Training in her area. At the R.A.M.C. Depot Q.A. Tutors staff a Preliminary Training Centre where every recruit receives nursing instruction as part of his basic training. It is hoped to establish a similar centre in our own Depot when the Q.A. other rank section is formed.

The Sister Tutors are found from within the ranks of the regular officer seconded to civil organizations for the necessary training to gain a University Diploma. Preliminary training courses are given in the Depot by the Chief Tutor to equip and select those officers likely to qualify.

Thus the nurse training of the nursing orderly is brought into line with the training of the student nurse in civilian teaching hospitals and all curricula and time tables have been revised accordingly. It is hoped that in the near future this nurse training will be accepted by the governing authority as recognized training towards State Registration.

Details of the other rank scheme are not possible until the official inauguration takes place, but the coming of the project is widely known, and great interest is being shown by prospective candidates and many Service parents now foresee a useful and progressive future for daughters whose chosen career lies in nursing.

The future of T.A.N.S. is in process of reconstruction, and again it is not possible to give details of the scheme at this stage.

An attempt has been made in these notes to show how Nursing Service in the Army progressed stage by stage throughout the ninety-six years of its existence in one form or another. Each period of reconstruction has been fostered by the necessity to keep abreast of the times and the scope for development is not yet nor ever can be complete in such a Service.



THE QUEEN ALEXANDRA'S ROYAL ARMY
NURSING CORPS ASSOCIATION

GAZETTE

THE official ceremony of the opening of The Depot and Training Establishment Q.A.R.A.N.C., Ontario Camp, Hindhead, by The Adjutant-General to the Forces, Sir James S. Steele, K.C.B., K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., M.C., L.I.D. will be held on Wednesday, September 13th, at 3 p.m.

The ceremony will include a Drum Head Service conducted by The Chaplain-General to the Forces, Rev. Canon F. Ll. Hughes, C.B., C.B.E., M.C., T.D., M.A., (T.A.) K.H.C.

It is very much hoped that as many Q.A. Association members as possible will come and visit The Depot on that day.

Admission by ticket 4/6d. to include tea and transport to and from Liphook Station for those travelling by train, or Anchor Hotel, Liphook, for motor coaches. Visitors are requested to be seated by 2.45 p.m. Car Park available.

Apply with remittance to :

The Adjutant,
The Depot & T. E. Q.A.R.A.N.C.,
Ontario Camp,
Hindhead.

Cheques and P.Os. payable to The Commandant,
The Depot & T. E. Q.A.R.A.N.C.