

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

Patron :

HER MAJESTY QUEEN MARY, *Colonel-in-Chief, Q.A.R.A.N.C.*

Vol. 1 No. 2

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Editorial

OUR FIRST issue had quite a good reception considering its deficiencies, of which we became intensely aware as soon as we saw it in print. We have had many compliments of which we are, perhaps you will think, inordinately proud. Let us hope that the words of the proverb about pride going before a fall will not apply in this case. The preparation of the GAZETTE was a big effort on our part and we trembled in anticipation. Of course, all the comments received were not exactly what you would call compliments. Perhaps it was pride creeping in, but we even thought one or two rather carping. Still, we did ask for candid criticisms, and got them; but please let them be constructive as well. Do bear in mind that it is your GAZETTE as well as ours. We want it to become a link between members.

By the way, we think you should know that the GAZETTE is Editorless, though we have a promise of one in perhaps six months' time. Pressure of other work made it impossible for the potential Editor to take this task on in time for our first issue, which could not be delayed longer, so the Administrator and Honorary Secretary are doing their best meanwhile to fill the gap. A small GAZETTE Committee will be required. Some of you who are suitably gifted and available might like to put your names forward.

Our Patron, Queen Mary, honoured us by receiving a copy of the Q.A.R.A.N.C. ASSOCIATION GAZETTE No. 1, and has graciously signified that Her Majesty's name may appear as Patron in future issues. This will greatly please all members.

The mention in the article on Q.A. Day of "collections taken" impels me to remind Q.As. that two of their own funds are always ready to receive, as there is a big drain on them, viz., the Q.A. Association Benevolent Fund, and Queen Mary's House Fund.

The Annual General Meeting

THE MEMBERS' Annual General Meeting was held at 20 John Islip Street, on Wednesday, 22nd March. The number attending was quite satisfactory, though we would have liked to see more. We have been told since that Saturday would be a better day for most members. This has been noted for consideration next time.

It is hoped to publish an Annual Report and Balance Sheet later on.

We think that you would like to know who is representing your interests on the Central Committee, the managing body of the Association. Dame Louisa Wilkinson was re-elected Chairman and Dame Katharine Jones Vice-Chairman. Miss S. A. Rout, ex-Reserve, Miss C. L. A. Robinson and Miss M. Bremner, retired Regulars, are now entering their second year as Committee members. They will retire at the next Annual General Meeting. Miss D. C. Bridges was again elected to represent T.A.N.S., so she takes on for the next two years. Miss J. A. Patterson, retired Regular, and Miss E. A. Baldock, ex-Reserve, were also elected for a two-year tenure. All of them will be pleased to hear from members who wish to have any particular matter brought forward for discussion at the Central Committee.

The Honorary Secretary, the Honorary Treasurer and the Administrator are ex-officio members of the Committee. They are not elected. The Commandant of the Q.A.R.A.N.C. Depot is also an ex-officio member to give the necessary continuity of contact with Service matters.

Reunion

THE Central Committee has decided to venture on another Reunion. One or two of the Committee felt that it was perhaps too much to make it an annual event, but what are we to do? We want to satisfy the members of the Association, and many of them are always clamouring for such a function. When branches are formed, areas can have their own social events, and of course they can invite as many members from other areas as they have room for, but until then we feel that Headquarters must take the initiative and provide opportunity for you to get together.

Miss S. A. Rout, who has so successfully organized two previous Reunions, is again shouldering the spade work. She has been warned that there must not be a deficit this time!

It is to be at the Royal Horticultural Society Old Hall, Vincent Square, Westminster, London, S.W.1, on Saturday afternoon, 2nd September, 1950. It is a big place, so there will be plenty of room for husbands and friends.

Earmark the date and look out for further details in the July issue of the GAZETTE.

News Notes from the Branches

THERE still aren't any branches, but there is a little news. Scotland is to the fore as No. 1 Branch. The inaugural meeting of the Scottish Branch—that is what it is most likely to be called—is to be held on Monday, 15th May, 1950, at 2.30 p.m., at the Highlanders' Institute, 27, Elmbank Street, Glasgow. The Administrator expects to attend to give the first-born her blessing. The branch will have about seventy members to start off, and it is hoped a large number of them can manage to be at the first meeting.

Several London members have said that they would like a branch, and the suggestion is to be discussed. The Central Committee are a little dubious for various reasons, but we'll see what comes out of the discussions.

Which area is going to be No. 2 Branch?

Q.A. Day

THE 27th March is in the Army Calendar, with the approval of Her Majesty Queen Mary, as Q.A. Day. It commemorates the official birthday of the Q.A.I.M.N.S. in 1902.

Now that Q.As. have an Association GAZETTE, many serving officers felt that an account of their unit's birthday celebrations should be published—a very right and proper feeling, but it is doubtful if the whole of this issue of our GAZETTE could contain all the script matter received describing Q.A. Day activities this year. The only thing to do is to give a general report and hope that the time is not too far distant when we shall have more space at your disposal.

Special church services were held in the morning at most stations at home and overseas, and anybody who was anybody at all attended or sent a representative. Regimental bands, uniforms and beautiful floral decorations often added to the impressive and generally moving service. One Q.A. unit at least was determined to introduce their traditional colours into the floral decoration and, to achieve this, scarlet flowers were chosen and their green leaves were painted silver. Collections were taken at some of the services and donated to various charities.

Later in the day there seems to have been open house in most of the Q.A. Messes. A garden party, with an illuminated fountain, is mentioned; sherry parties, guest-night dinners, followed by dancing or some other form of entertainment. One Mess had an "At Home" and enquired from us the names and addresses of ex-Q.As. in their area, as they wanted to welcome them to Q.A. Day.

No wonder that the military and other guests are glad that Q.As. have an official "Day" of their own now.

Q.As. have always been noted as good hostesses!

Reminiscences

Sub Cruce Candida, Malaya.

On visiting a hospital in Malaya soon after the Japs surrendered, I was "introduced" to a little Malay boy about seven years old who was the hospital mascot and called "Charlie."

This was his story, pieced together by information from various Malay coolies who had known the boy's family.

He and his mother and father were taken by the Japs and put in a camp. He saw his father and mother beheaded, and was so frightened that he ran as hard as he could out of the camp. Being a child, no one bothered about him. He was found approximately two years later in the jungle. He had lived by himself in the trees; his legs were bent, his under-jaw over-developed like a monkey, his hair matted and long. He fought like a wild tiger when found, and had to be held down by male orderlies. He could not speak anything that anyone could understand, but made noises like an animal. Gradually he was taught to speak again. His legs were straightened and he was made to eat like a civilized person. He became extremely quick and intelligent and, except for his rather monkey-like face, it was hard to believe that he had survived two years alone in the jungle at the tender age of five, and had with care and understanding been brought back to normal.

A Matron's Dilemma.

Walking down the corridor of one of our large hospitals, I met two orderlies escorting a patient, whose mental condition had given some cause for anxiety. "What are you doing up here?" the patient asked me. "Did you die too?" I said "No"—but this answer was not accepted. "How then did you get here? Have you been a good woman?" Taking pity on the orderlies who were attempting to suppress their grins, I hastily made my escape, but could hear all down the corridor a louder and increasingly doubtful voice: "But has she been a good woman?"

Mistaken Identity.

Do you remember being taken for lascars when the rescue boat came up to the lifeboat, and saw us with our faces and clothing all covered with oil?

In the Days of Old.

Bath Lists were maintained in all wards, and one day a patient flatly refused to take his turn. The orderly reported this indiscipline to the Sergeant-Major, who came and ordered the patient to go at once and have a bath, but again there was a sullen refusal on the score that a bath had been taken the week before. "You'll have one this week as well," said the Sergeant-Major. "I am the Sergeant-Major, and I have to have two baths a week. How the hell would you like to be an officer and be obliged to have one every day?"

A.R.P., 1914-1918.

Open trenches had been dug near by, but no steel helmets issued. We were told to hold our enamel washing basins over our heads, and proceed to the trenches in the event of an air raid. The alarm went one evening just as we were retiring to bed. Most of us obeyed our orders to the letter, but after the raid was over, and I was just about asleep, there was a knock at my door. It was a Sister in great distress, with an enamel chamber pot firmly fixed on her head, which she had for some time been trying in vain to remove! We struggled and struggled, and finally, by snipping out bunches of hair here and there, regardless of style, off the thing came to sighs of relief from us both.

Samples from our Post

"Why not have paragraphs of Reminiscences, grave and gay?"

Grand—adopted; but we would like to receive Reminiscences rather than have to hunt for them.

"I hope it will become more interesting in future issues."

So do we, but it is up to you to make it so.

"It is very small and thin."

A face-saving device, dear member. We believe that expansion is better than diminution.

"What about pithy little bits of information of general interest to members, contained in about one sentence?"

Tres bon. Thank you for the examples.

"Why be anonymous?"

It was ignorance, we fear, not modesty.

"Why not start a Members' Contact Bureau?"

We have been doing that since the day we started. We shall gladly put anyone in touch with members whose names appear on the List, or we would attempt to find old pals if their names are not on the List.

"Why is my name not in the Members' List?"

It is—you watch for it.

"I like the cover very much. I can't quite make up my mind which should be my Pin-up Girl."

Take them in turn, A. G.

"The cover is a monstrosity."

Sorry, old boy, tastes differ.

"What about a Hatching and Matching column?"

You will see we have started already.

"I cheered to see your gay GAZETTE,

Lapped up your newsy chat,

Admired your elegant quintette,

Each in a different hat;

And wrote at once to shout for more

From Q.A.R.A. Nursing Corps."

Thank you, Padre.

"I think the Gazette rather a puny effort."

Its digestion is good. Please help to supply its nourishment and it will soon become a healthy toddler.

A Letter from Kinara, Malaya

ASSOCIATION members may be interested to hear something of our unit in this tropical spot so far away from, and so very different from home.

Of course, you won't "have a clue" as to where Kinara is. No wonder! It is the name of what was formerly a rubber plantation, about nine miles from Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Selangor State in Malaya.

The British Military Hospital is a huddled one of two hundred and fifty beds, recently built on this site. Several tin mines are adjacent to us on two sides, plus their hideous galvanized iron dredgers and large areas of clay-coloured water and bog, for the tin is washed out of the sand in running water. Behind us are plantations of rubber trees, a background of dull green. The hospital and messes are enclosed by a wire fence, ten feet high, which can be electrified if necessary. Guards at the gate check all entrances and exits, for this is bandit country. The wards are airy, with plenty of large ceiling fans. The messes are also spacious and cool—very necessary in this climate where the temperature rises almost daily to well over 90° all the year round, and the humidity can be nearly 100 per cent. Yes, it rains, inches at a time, practically every day, and the large open drains become roaring torrents. These drains, by the way, are a frequent cause of accidents. We have our hazards: the Communist bandits, and the traffic in Kuala Lumpur! Daily paludrine prevents malaria, though it does not stop the too-friendly anophelæ from biting.

The troops face many dangers with the courage and humour one has learnt to expect. Casualties are brought in frequently, having been shot at by the Communists. The medical wards also are kept busy as the result of this jungle warfare, for we admit numbers of bad cases of scrub typhus, Weil's disease (thank God for chloromycetin!), "N.Y.D. Fevers," and the occasional malaria and dysentery. The skin ward is invariably full, tinea being commonest trouble, for how can the feet, and the skin generally, be kept dry in a climate where even the shoes grow mould overnight? A large proportion of our patients are Gurkhas—gallant, smiling little slant-eyed men, and wonderful soldiers.

A great advantage of the life in Malaya is that there is no lack of native labour—Chinese, Indian and Malayan. It is such a joy to have an amah to do those chores which at home took up so much of one's precious off-duty.

Kuala Lumpur is a large town with some decorative Eastern buildings—some almost too "Hollywood"—good shops and cinemas; numbers of congested native streets, with perpendicular signs in Chinese scripts; a colourful mixed population, and goods at astronomical prices!

We carry on with our work, and a certain amount of play, in this unsettled country, which is neither at peace nor fully at war, and where the future is so uncertain.

We send greetings and good wishes to Q.As. past and present.

Association Brooch

THIS IS now available for members in silver metal with scarlet enamelled border and double pin fastenings at back for ease when wearing suspended name discs at meetings, functions, etc. Price 2s. 6d., post free.

Members will be interested to know the history of the cross in the Association brooch. It is the Danish cross or the Dannebrog, meaning "The Strength of Denmark."

This cross is associated with Her Majesty Queen Alexandra, who was a Danish Princess at the time of her marriage to the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) on 10th March, 1863. She became the first President of the Q.A.I.M.N.S. when it was inaugurated in 1902, and her name is still perpetuated in the title of the Q.A.R.A.N.C.

The origin of the Dannebrog is interesting. King Waldemar fought a great battle with the Estonians in 1219, at the outset of which his army was on the point of being heavily defeated. The moment was critical, so Waldemar prayed to God for help. Immediately he saw a great white cross in the sky on a blood-red background. This he interpreted as a providential sign for him to renew the battle with the assurance of victory. He told his army of the vision, and with fortified strength they went forward to complete victory.

Ever since then the white cross on the red ground has been the blazon of the National Flag of Denmark.

Ode to Confused Males

Poor Lambs ! You've never understood
The ranks of Army Womanhood.
You've always cried "What do we say
When introducing a Q.A. ?"

You knew with "Sister" what to do,
But with "Commander" you'd no clue.
The word "Controller" caused a moan ;
You missed the lot—left rank alone.

You floundered on in perfect bliss,
You labelled all and sundry "Miss,"
And so to help and give you poise
We've had to take your ranks, dear boys !

At last you're roused and up in arms,
Peterborough's column voiced your qualms,
And letters to the Editor state
"What's the Combatant Army's fate ?"

Take cheer, you need not be perplexed,
The ranks are clear—do not be vexed.
Our Colonels, we make bold to say,
Will not your Captains lead astray.

Do you know that—

THE NORMAL military rank titles have replaced the “stagey” and much disliked titles granted previously to nurses and other women officers in the Army?

Among our members we have at least one mother and daughter pair?

The Q.A.R.A.N.C. At Home for serving and retired Regular officers is being held on Monday, 22nd May, 1950, at 3.30 p.m., at the Hyde Park Hotel and the Annual Dinner of Regular officers, past and present, is at the Connaught Rooms, Great Queen Street, Kingsway, W.C.2, on the same day at 7.30 p.m. Dinner tickets price 18s., on application to Q.A.R.A.N.C. Officers' Club, Room 125, Lansdowne House, Berkeley Square, London, W.1.

The Q.A.R.A.N.C. Association have presented four clocks to the Victory (ex-Services) Club, Seymour Street, London, W.2, from past and present members of the Nursing Services of the Army?

You are eligible for membership of this Club?

In the list of the Presidents of the College of Nursing will be found the names of Dame Sylvia and Dame Louisa Wilkinson, the first and last in office as Matron-in-Chief, Q.A.N.C.

A very fine bust of Queen Alexandra, modelled from life for the Paris Exhibition of 1884 by Aristide Fontana, was presented to the Association, and with the approval of Lady Oliver, the kind donor, has been given to the Q.A.R.A.N.C. Depot, Liphook?

Friends, please note

Mrs. Pat Bryan (*née* Margaret Powell), at Exeter, a second daughter on 19th January, 1950.

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