



## South Australians at war – transcript – PRG 621/21

### Diary of Irene Bonnin

1915

Extracts from the diaries of nurse Irene Bonnin describing her experiences as an army nurse in Egypt during World War One

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#### Volume 1

#### Transcription of selected text

Transcribed by Susie van der Sluys, February 2002

Sat. June 12<sup>th</sup> My last day at home. Nat came to lunch. Busy finishing up things. Tom came after lunch & helped. Percy came at 3.15 in Professor Mitchell's motor & took Nat Con & me also luggage to station. Ever so many friends to see us off among whom were N.A. nurses, Mrs Schomburgk, Mrs Moncrieff, Nellie Staynes, Ethel Butler & (?) Mrs Bussell & many others. Ever so many flowers, sweets & cakes also books. Dear old Nat & Con were so good, could not see them as the train left, made me feel horrid. Had sleeper with Palmer, had a fairly good night, dinner. Stanton came & talked to us a little. Did not have dinner at Murray Bridge but had tea & dear Nat's lovely sandwiches.

Monday July 12<sup>th</sup> Arrived (?) about 6.30 am. Simply awful weather. Great stalemate. Turks fighting just behind (?). Lots of transport boats in. Forgot to say all the nurses were vaccinated on Sunday but Dr Kelsey would not do me as I was not well enough. Today I am tons better feeling grand. Have been moved into single berthed cabin not much better. Tons of natives in little boats with all their goods cigars cigarettes pineapples etc alongside the boat, sending up things in baskets on the strings ropes. Big high rocks but barren country. Did nothing but lie about all day. Nurse Meade very ill. Mess dinner & dance in evening. Palmer & I sat at the Purcer's table did not dance frightfully hot. We started once more on our way about (?) (?). We did not know if we would have to land here but were thankful when we moved off again.

Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> Oh what a night!! & what a day!! Going through the red sea. Just like glass. High rocky country. McCarthy, one of the troops generally known as Scottie & took prominent part in Saturdays performances, frightfully ill all day with sunstroke. Died in evening, buried at 9 pm. Most solemn. Poor fellow. Such a gloom over everything. He had said that we must From tonight we are allowed to wear white dresses without caps etc for dinner ó now (?) (?) the Karoola & must have a funeral before we land.

#### Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup>

Another brute of a day. Gave tea to Matron in afternoon. Mr Grounds, Mr Stephenson, Mr Burton & Capt. Steele at our table Band played. Sang "for she's a jolly good fellow" Had ice creams etc. Most of us were feeling horribly sick after dinner but picked up after tea. We have a deck orderly now to run & get things for us. Nurse Meade still very sick. Three cases of sunstroke taken to Hospital. Had a talk with Arthur Davenport who is on duty in



Hospital. In evening had talk with 3<sup>rd</sup> mate who is an awfully nice chap Mr Fletcher. Went with Mawson on his expedition knew Cecil & spoke very highly of him.

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> Much cooler cross Tropic of Cancer today & so will be out of tropics. We are supposed to arrive at Suez & will probably land there & go overland to Heliopolis but so far nobody really knows anything we may go to Malta or even Marseilles. We'll know soon enough I suppose. Anyhow we can't go much longer on the boat as things are, water (?) most horrible, no cool drinks left, no lemons. It will be simply grand to get a drink of good water again.

Friday 16<sup>th</sup> Beautifully cool. Lovely breeze. Matron had lovely letter from Major showing appreciation of her & her staff. Made copy. Land quite close. Probably land tomorrow. How I hope Palm & I go together. Last night. Bennets said to Nurse Meade that some of the nurses' had the manners of 3<sup>rd</sup> rate housemaids! Kind of him (?)? He also said once that he would rather look after a troop of horses than the nurses!! We were allowed to stay up till 11 o'clock.

Saturday July 17<sup>th</sup>

We arrived a Suez during the early hours of the morning. Very hot. Lots of boats, big & small. Saw a glorious colour High barren hills on one side, town on other Quaint square flat roofed houses. Put into dock about 10 am. Station just alongside. Tons of natives squalling on ground with long flowing robes. Strange police-men some with long robes others in white suits with scarlet on them. They carried little canes with which they spanked the natives at intervals. It was funny to see them scoot but as soon as he passed on they would go on just as before. The uncertainty of our disembarkation was most trying, first anytime then 8 o'clock on Sunday morning then 4, 12.30, 2.30 & ended up with 4. Two trains went before ours with troops & some doctors. It was so sad seeing them go. All our luggage went too. Then off we went A.M.C. boys doctors, nurses & (?) troops. The ship's officers came down to see us off. A lady made us tea before leaving & we also had some water. Sorry after that I had, wondered if mugs were clean & water good. Hope so, never mind done now. I took (?) photographs of Suez as we went in. On the train so quaint, our carriage fearfully narrow, only room comfortably for one each side, very large windows. Passage down middle of car & little carriage opposite. Palm & I together & Giles & Graham opposite. Long journey did not get to Cairo till about 10.30 p.m. Strange country, most intensely flat desert country, canal in distance occasional ships. Small canal (said to have been made in Pharaohs time.) running alongside train with beautiful green growth, tall palms rushed, solitary occasional villages, native children running out for "backsheesh" Armed native soldiers patrol desert. Once three apparent European soldiers waved their helmets to us right out in that lonely country. It was a strange sight. About half way we stopped for about ten minutes at a station & how I wished I had had another film in my camera but I hadn't. The sun was just down or going, & the natives in their quaint varied coloured dresses right to the ground swarmed the side of the train selling pie mellons it was like an eastern market. Such a weird feeling, (?) in that strange land. About 3 hrs before reaching Cairo we passed through a most grand town Ziddar or something, one beautiful building all lighted up, lights hanging over the doorways, clusters of natives sitting under verandah etc. Lovely station, garden etc. ~~About 3 (?) from Cairo.~~ At last about 10 pm. we arrived at Cairo. Electric cars motors, etc. beautiful large white buildings flat roofed etc. Did not go into Cairo, stopped outside about \_ hour & then went backwards imagine our dismay!! Got out at some station met by officials & bundled into ambulance



waggon & taken to Heliopolis Most magnificent. About 700 rooms fairly slack expecting rush. Any time! Lovely supper waiting, natives in white robes & red bands & fezzes waited on us. Did not get to sleep till about 2 am. Palm & I together bath room etc leading off our room & also another room with Giles Graham, Spriggins & Stephenson. Lovely beds etc.

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> Woke very early 5 am. & munched round, watched men round rotunda. Breakfast in full uniform at 8 a.m. Lounge after R.C's went to mass at church at 9.30. There was mass in lounge at 6 but did not know in time to go. Heat great. Seven or eight our nurses on duty. Palm & I went for little walk in evening were making beds for Karoola girls all the afternoon frightfully tired. Tried to send cable but too late. Wrote long letters home. Saw Cockburn in evening. Very depressed & cross in evening.

Monday 19<sup>th</sup> Still horribly depressed, worst & most unhappy day since I left home! Oh how I longed for Nat & home - Hardly spoke to Palm all day. She & Graham Spriggins out all day, others on duty. I got dressed to go out in afternoon but no one to go with so undressed again. Found S. Hobler & had talk with her, very nice. She Palm & I went for stroll in evening. Heard from Dowell that we are off to Europe tomorrow but nothing official is heard yet. Hope we don't go yet awhile. Oh why ever did I come out here, I don't know. Feel sure Palm doesn't really care two straws for me more than any of the others - never mind what matter. Have feeling I shall never see home again. Wish I could fly away home, but I can't be done. Think I shall desert.

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> Still pippy. Went into Ciaro with Thompson & had my hair shampooed at Sheppard's Hotel - Lovely. Longed to spend more time in Ciaro, most fascinating. The electric trams are like little trains in the way that they have little stations & guards with flags. Thompson had to be back at the Palace at 12 so we did not have time to buy anything. Perhaps I shall go in tomorrow. In the afternoon Miss Bell the General Matron of the Egyptian Hospitals had us in the mess room & took all our names & next of kin, age etc. All our pay books were gathered up & handed up in the morning. In the evening Palm, Graham & I went for a walk down the street in front of Palace & bought some postcards & then went out the piazza at the Hotel opposite & had cool drinks & watched (?). Did not go to bed till after 11. Graham has a chance of going back to Australia on a transport. I wonder if she will take it!

Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> Still blazing hot & neither Palm nor I are on duty yet. How I wonder what is in store for us! Our day ~~in~~ out. ~~Saw Prof~~ Went with Sister Hobler & Palm & some others to Zoo at Gizierah. Hippopotamus very clever. Had cool drinks. Lovely car ride along banks of Nile. House boats etc most interesting. Got back in time for 2<sup>nd</sup> dinner. Sat on Hotel Piazza, think in evening. (?) to Prof.

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> Saw Prof with Palm in Sister Mielson's ward. Had long talk. Is going to take us out tomorrow. Walked out in street in evening.

Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> Prof. Col. Springthorp, Cap. Sinclair, Graham, Giles, Palm & I went in Red Cross wagon to Gizierah Palace (Hospital) lovely drive. Saw locals & some nurses. Then car into Ciaro & dinner at Continental Hotel & home. Were going back to concert at Gizierah but too late finishing dinner. Generals etc bristling everywhere at dinner!

Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> Day in. Did not do anything.



Sunday July 25<sup>th</sup> In morning went to Church at 6am. In No 16. Only a few nurses & orderlies. The Priest tall fair don't know his name, knows Mr (?). No lights etc. In afternoon Frank Ringwood & Matt Woodley came. Went for walk & then sat on Hotel Piazza & had ice creams & cool drinks. I shouted - felt as though I oughtn't to go being Sunday but there is absolutely nowhere else to go to see your fiends so what are we to do. In the evening at 6 pm Hobler, Kerr, Smith Palmer & I & also a Sister Field took our tea & went in a motor ambulance to Pyramids. It was simply lovely. We drove through the City of the Dead, old Ciaro near the Citadal, along the beautiful Pyramid, on Mena Road passed to Mena Camp and Mena House right to the Pyramids. Oh it was glorious. We stopped & had our tea & then our driver took us right round the Pyramids to the Sphinx where we had our fortunes told by Dizzy Limit, sitting on the sand in the moonlight at the foot of the Sphinx. It was wonderful. Then we rode back to our motor on camels. Palm & I on one, oh it was killing fun, I thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it. We left about 9.30 & had a beautiful drive home, right round Gizierah Island & through Gizeh Gardens & got home at 10.20. I had not enjoyed anything so much since I left home. Matt had wanted me to go to church with him but as I had promised Hobler to go we thought I ought not to disappoint her. Next Sunday if we are still here & are off duty we'll go.

Monday 26<sup>th</sup> Palm & the others on emergency duty & I off so went by myself into Ciaro & bought 2 veils & hat saw two nurses from here & all came home together in ambulance. Took films to be developed. In evening went out with Frank Ringwood for drive in Garry(?) Man argued & chased us for money ó we had given him 10 (?) & had only been driving just an hour. Two soldiers saved the situation by jumping in the garry & pretending to drive off ó of course the man left us to get his garry!! Afterwards Frank Palm & I went for lovely walk.

Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> Most of us put on Sewing Duty. Treyans & I sewed together in No 8 ward all the morning, mending pyjamas & making bandages. Two trains arrived one about 4.45 & other about 10 pm. Most of them were convalescent & were transferred to Luna Palm & I went into town in aft. Palm bought pretty dress, stockings gloves. I bought pair of white shoes & called for photographs, some very good others no good. In evening went over to Hotel with Frank Ringwood & then for walk with him.

Wednesday I was on emergency duty all day. Palm & Frank went into town in afternoon & went to Intermediate Base. Palm did not go out in evening.

Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> Sewed all the morning. In aft. went to town with Trey and in evening went for Garry ride with Palm Frank & Merry.

Friday 30<sup>th</sup> Sewed all the morning. In afternoon went with Frank Ringwood into Ciaro. Icecream at (?) then to Intermediate Base to find out about Glen Morphett. Sat in gardens near Sheppherd then home. Palm couldn't come was on Emergency duty & then relieved Sprig as orderly sister. In evening Frank took me for a walk. All our A.M.C. boys went yesterday, at least about 70 of them. Matt & Arthur are in 4 Field Ambulance.

Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> Sewed all the morning In afternoon Palm, Hobler Row & I went to Mary's Wall & Tree & also church there. Then on to Obelisk. In evening got 7 home letters simply lovely. 3 from Nat, 2 Con, Dwyer & Cornely. In evening Frank to Palm & me for walk. Leaves for front tomorrow at 9. A.M. But he is awfully glad.



Sunday August 1<sup>st</sup> Church at 7 am. On Emergency duty so did nothing all day.

Monday August 2<sup>nd</sup> Very hot stayed in all day. Sports' Club being opened. Sister Conyers matron some nurses went over today Walker & others more to go later. In evening Palm, Graham & I went & sat on Piazza to get a breath of fresh air.

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> Palm on duty in wards 10 & 11. Graham in 6 me - nowhere as yet. cooler today. Relieving orderly Sister in aft. Saw Priest Luxmoore.

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> On Emergency duty as yesterday Last evening Palm & I went for motor drive with the matron & O.C. right out to the desert. Were told to "halt! "Hands up who goes there!" etc I was frightened out of my wits!! We were asked for our passports but as we had none we had to turn back. The men from the camp were (?) (?) that's what it was all about. This evening Giles & Spriggins went. We stayed home as were on Emergency. I forgot to say that last night Palm & I went over for an ice cream to the Hotel after our ride & coming home at 20 past ten, had our names taken by the guard, nothing came of it, we were entitled to be out till 11 oclock with our passes.

Thursday Aug 5<sup>th</sup> A year today since war began! Palm & Graham & I went to town & shopped. I got darning cotton, tea towels, gloves & several little things. In the evening we went across to the Piazza. Major Lazarus & Mr Kriechledorff (?) came up & spoke to us & then who should I see but Fred Geyer!! Major went and asked him if his name was Geyer & when we found it was up I went & had a talk. He had been here five weeks & is a Major in 13<sup>th</sup> L.H.!! Said something about going up the Nile & also taking me to the theatre. Knows Topsey Tyron, S. Field & S. Gardan. I wonder how?!

Friday Aug. 6<sup>th</sup> Nothing particular as far as I can remember

Saturday Aug. 7<sup>th</sup> About 10 oclock told to go duty in 10 & 11 where Palmer is working it is on the top of the rotunda & is a surgical ward. I loved it but felt horrible the first day. Palm & I were sent off together in the aft. & we went with Miss Wilson & Tyson to the Gymkana at the camp to which we had all been invited. Saw Dr. Burston playing polo in shorts!! Killing sight! Ice creams etc. most exciting drive home in gary (?) man drove at a furious rate. Saw Bruce in evening

Sunday Aug. 8<sup>th</sup> Overslept & so could not go to church. Long day on. Very tired. Bruce came up to ward to see us.

Monday Aug 9<sup>th</sup> Short day. Lay down all the afternoon. Went with girls to watch picture. I think -

Tuesday Aug 10<sup>th</sup> Long day. A good many trains came in got lot of new patients in our ward - No news.

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> Short day pretty tired, busy morning.

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> Long day.

No news.



PRG 621/21/2

Volume 2

Transcription of selected text

Transcribed by Susie van der Sluys, February 2002

Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> Stayed in bed till about four then into Cairo to try & get a pr. of shoes. no good. Dear E's birthday.

Friday Jan 28. Did not say that several of our sisters Annie Bill, Bonnily, A Hart, Thistlewaite, Allan, & went to Tel-el-Kebir on Friday morning. They believe (?) or 11 Stationary (?). I should much have liked to have gone too. Old Nellie Smith returned from Transport the other day looking very well. So many of the men are going off to Tel-el-Kebir there must be thousands there now. The aeroplanes are always hovering about all over the place it seems quite the ordinary thing! About fifty of the Lemnos girls arrived here the other night, about Monday, Mary Reed & Mullins amongst them. Another bunch have gone to Ghezireh. I believe they are to start a garrison hospital at Abassia & I believe it is quite true that we are moving off to France sooner or later. Capt. Spreah, who was in charge of my ward went to Tel-el-Kebir some time ago, about a fortnight or more. We are sorry as he took such an interest & knew what he was about. Smith, Aunt Clara's gardener's son at Mt Lofty has been one of my patients for some time. I don't know why I have got so lengthy all of a sudden. Suppose I shall not write again for ages.

Before going to bed this morning Turnbull & I went for a lovely donkey ride to Matarieh - Sister Whipham & S. Dibbings were coming but could not get a gharry so we went off on our own. It was a glorious morning the air was so sharp & fresh & the sun so bright. We went right down to the Ismalia Canal & took several photographs. We got home about 11.15. had some breakfast & ~~went~~ or lunch I should say, & went off to bed & had a good sleep.

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup>

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup>

Monday 31<sup>st</sup>

Tuesday Feb. 1

Forget if anything of importance happened but think not, just the same old game.

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup>

Had note from Arthur

D(?): one of these days. He is at Abbassia.



Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> with No 3. A.G.H. back from Lemnos.

Friday 4<sup>th</sup> Went with Miller to No III General at Abbassiah to see Arthur. Arranged to go out with him tomorrow if all is well.

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> Off night duty to report for duty, after first dinner, in Ward 15! In afternoon went with Arthur Davenport to Camel Corps. He is looking so well.

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> Church in morning. In aftn. we went, Butler & I to the Camel Corps & took photographs. Mine are all failures. 7 pm Church.

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> In morning went into Continental & spent morning with Miss Ellis. Morning tea at Groppis then home. After dinner on duty in Ward 15. with S. Cuthbert, Smith, Tyson & Peterson.

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> Feel just like a fish out of water in my new home. Don't like leaving my old boys, Caffyn, Moss, Sanderman etc. Aft. off. Went for lovely excursion with Matron & about 8 other sisters

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> to the petrified forest out beyond the tombs of the Caliphs. Captain Douglas came with us. We had great fun. took car to town then gharries to tombs of Caliphs or thereabouts then donkeys. We rode right out into the desert, miles it seemed, to this petrified forest which is supposed to have been growing in the time of Moses. It was just desert with pieces of petrified wood, large & small lying all over the place. Most interesting but not much to see. On we rode to Moses Well. A small dark hole in the side of a sandy stony hill at the end of which was a spring with a pool of water known as Moses Well. Then we rode on to the Mokattain Hill & had aft. tea which we took with us & watched the sunset which was simply lovely, the colouring was beautiful & we could hear the Mohammedans calling to Prayer it was all so wonderful. Came on to the Citadel & caught train to Cairo & then home.

Wednesday Feb 9<sup>th</sup>

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup>

Friday 11<sup>th</sup>

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup>

Nothing special. Transferring & discharging all our (?) patients as our ward is to be mixed medical & skin diseases! Cleaning & tidying chiefly.

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> Aft. off! took Adams to the pyramids & to tea afterwards at the Military Club. Rather a funny day! Church 7.30 am. Still no patients.

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> Long day, still no patients till late in afternoon when I believe 2 or 3 came.

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> Day off. Went for donkey ride with night staff in morning. In aft. went to Barrage with McKinnell most lovely place.



Wednesday 16 Long day. Very busy. Got Home & Eng. letters, lovely. We got a good many pts yesterday.

Thursday 17 Nothing special did nothing but lie down all aft. Felt a bit off.

Friday 18<sup>th</sup> Long day. My poor double pneumonia, Gardner, died.

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> In aft. went to lunch at Contin. Hotel with Carrie Ellis then to Helouan. Killing day. Tea with Butler at Military Club.

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> Long day. Church in Chapel at 6.30. Nothing special.

Monday 21<sup>st</sup> Day off. Stayed in bed to break. which Thompson brought up. Tided up & loafed, wrote etc all the morning. In aft. went to Malareh with Turnbull & McKinnell. Mac & Tweed No2. A.G.H. to tea.

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> Getting quite hot again. Ann Bell & Bonnilly came up from Ismalia for the day yesterday. So nice to see Bell again.

Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> Short day. Was going with Palmer & others up the Nile or with Murray & her brother to the tombs of the Caliphs but had to be home in time to go with Fred Geyer for motor ride ó promised to be ready at 7.20 of course he was late so I could have go. Jolly ride to Maadi - tea there & home.

Thursday As usual

Friday 25 Aft. off. Can't remember if anything exciting happened but don't expect so.

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> Long day on. Nasty cold nothing special

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> Whole day off. Nasty cough & cold, stayed in room lying down most of day. Church in morning & evening.

Monday 28<sup>th</sup> Long day on. Very busy.

Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> Aft. off. Turnbull & Sargeant Otway, & I went out to the Aquarium at Ghizierah such a lovely place, (?) grotto & gardens etc. Tea at Club afterwards.

Wednesday March 1<sup>st</sup> Long day on. Pretty busy. Nothing special happened

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> Afternoon off. Terrible day Khamse blowing strong! Lay down & read all aft. French alone in evening.

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> Long day on duty. Felt pretty tired in evening.

Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> I am trying to write up my diary before "lights out" goes. Have begun with todays but have to write back to Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> dash it. It seems only the other day since I wrote the old thing up! Today was my aft. off. Washed hair ó loafed ó did a little sewing



putting clean cuffs in dress etc. Went with S. Tait & French in evening. Didn't feel a bit "french" & couldn't talk!

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> Long day on. Church 6.30 am. Pretty busy day. Innoculated in the morning. Paratyphoid & enteric serum I think. Felt pretty off colour in the evening.

Monday 6<sup>th</sup> Short day. Busy morning. In aft went with Turnbull to the New Zealand nurses home & then with Sisters Douglas & Love into Cairo, bought muslin for caps grey zephyr for dress; came home in a N.Z. Ambulance. All the supernumeries left here today to live at Abbassia, No3A.G.H Sporting club staff coming here or Abbassia very soon & No2.A.G.H. going to Sporting Club. Everything is in a muddle - reumours & reports flying everywhere - we are going to France Bombay, England etc!! We hear that after 10<sup>th</sup> if this month no. A lot of us, members of the A.T.N. A I think had parcels sent from ATNA association the other day, a tin of cocoa & milk & a tin of chocolate. So go of them to send them.

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> Another short day as Sister Whipham asked me to go for a motor drive with her & a great friend of hers Colonel Spencer Browne also a Lieut. Turner. Sister Peterson stayed on for me. Had a lovely afternoon motored to the Barrage enjoyed it immensely. The Colonel is a dear old man & brought a whole lot of sweets for the native kiddies & threw them out in handfuls for them. Of course there were dozens round him. Took some snaps. Had aft tea there & then went to the Directors House. Mr Drapers such a beautiful home, lawns, palms, flowers etc & all sorts of interesting things inside. Mr Draper let us pick some violets & also gave Sister & me both a pot of geranium & primula each. Got home about 7.15.

Wednesday On all day Saw Guy (B?).

Thursday On all day one of these I (?) quite accidentally in the (?) Hall. He is not long back from England & is not yet feeling himself has been pretty ill with rheumatism.

Friday Whole day off. Spent morning in bed went for donkey ride with Turnbull & several N.Z. Sisters - went down to the (?) Canal. Of course I had a spill & hurt my face a bit but still it was a jolly ride.

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> Face too swollen to go on duty so stayed in bed all day & got up for dinner.

Sunday Stayed in bed & went to 9 o'clock Church. Went down to Matron, who said if I stayed "off" another day I wd. have to report "sick". So sent me to sit with Sister Taylor who is pretty ill with pneumonia. Went to 6 pm church.

Monday 13<sup>th</sup>

Back in 15 Ward, M. Millar is there too. Poor old Hardie died yesterday. Off in aft. Went into town to get in aft. Had motor drive home with some strange man who was jolly nice. Went for gharry drive in evening with Wilberforce & Turnbull.

Tuesday On all day. Alone in aft.



Wednesday Half day. Went into town with Miss Whipham. Home in time for 7.30 pm Church which we are having on Wednesday evenings during Lent. Had my 2<sup>nd</sup> dose of Para: A & B & euteric this aft. Arm pretty sore in aft. Took photos of Chapel

Thursday On all day. Sister Pines sent to help in our ward. It really is beginning to look like moving now. Wards are being closed & beds & lockers packed & I believe we are not admitting any cases except immediates, so I suppose we are off somewhere. I feel quite sad at the thought of leaving. I don't know where we (?) be going to I'm sure.

Friday Whole day off. Stayed in bed till dinner (midday) then got up & went into town with Christina Murray. did little shopping with her, called for photographs had tea & home. Felt a bit off colour, arm very sore ó Very hot. Heard today that Matron Knowles is off to Australia tomorrow. About fifty Sisters are going too I believe. I think most of us are glad about Matron (!) Though we are sorry she had such short notice.

Saturday. March 18<sup>th</sup>

Matron & Sisters left this morning for Australia. Who is going to be our Matron now! We are all wondering. The big hall where 13 & 12 ward patients are is looking very bare; half the beds have been taken away. I believe we'll be off in no time. Where to, I wonder!!! Oh what an exciting life this is, every hour brings forth fresh movements almost.

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> till Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> Nothing very exciting just emptying the poor old Palace & clearing & the boys packing. Sister Cuthbert went to Luxor also Turnbull. Sister Weston came to the Ward at the end. I was made orderly Sister & helped Miss Whipham a bit. Sister Kerr came & slept in Turnbells bed as all the white beds had to be out of our rooms. On Saturday all No 2. departed for France. On Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> no church at the Palace, so Tyers & I went to H.C. at the Sporting club in one of the tents! As I had the day off I went into Cairo to All Saints at 11 am. Stayed home & packed etc in afternoon. In evening went to Sporting Club but too late for church, saw Sister Kildael though. Our new Matron, Miss Finlay, arrived yesterday. She seems charming but look so ill.

Monday 27<sup>th</sup>. We are sure to be going any day now & are only allowed leave at times. Went into Cairo & did shopping, red capes etc. In aft. went to old Cairo with Ashton, & Weston, took some snapshots. Pretty hot, & oh such smelly native quarters. Went to Coptic church & to the Mosque of Armron (?) or something like that !

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> Nothing startling. We go tomorrow. Turnbull came home from Luxor, which she enjoyed muchly. Went into town in the morning saw Currie Elles & did some shopping. Morning tea at Groppie's with Kerr, then home. Thought leave was stopped at 12 am, but found it wasn't. Helped tidy rooms in aft. & then over to Abbassia to see Palmer, who I found very down. Leave tomorrow morning! Palace days over!

Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> Up early, breakfast at 7 am. Great excitement leaving the poor old Palace. Such a host of us! All those in the "pool" who had not been disposed of were sent off to Luna Park early before breakfast. We left about 8.30. by ambulances to PíÝdeÝKoubeh station where there was a train waiting for us. Miss Conyers & several officers also some N.Z. sisters were there to see us off. The M.O's & orderlies marched from the Palace; pretty hot. Came straight on to Alexandria arriving about 1.30 or 2 pm. right alongside H.M.H.S.



"Salta" March on in single file & were given our quarters, huge wards with 30-40 in each in swinging cots. I am in B. ward with my head against the hatchway next to Wilkins. Christina Murray, Sisters Guille, Margaret Stephenson, Samsing etc are there too. In the afternoon we had leave granted until 9.30. Sister Turnbull & I had afternoon tea on board & then went by gharry (one horse affairs) to town & met a N.Z. pal of Turnbolls who went with us to Nouzah gardens. Came back, did a little shopping & had tea to Groppi's & then gharry back to ship with Scott & Kelly who we met on the way. Of course we went to the wrong dock first of all but finally got back safely & went to bed (in public!!!) most of them, as the loading was still going on. No baths until tomorrow! Did not have at all a good night - could not sleep.

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> March Did not leave till 5pm. Some of the girls went out as leave was granted but I did not as I felt too seedy. We have our meals partly in dining saloon & partly on deck as there are too many of us all to go into the saloon. Turnbull, Nerey, White, Jacobson, another & I are all at a table on deck, it is so lovely. Still there are two sittings, staff nurses chiefly go to the first 7.45 - 12. 6 One solitary Scotchie played on his bagpipes as we left - it was a sorry spectacle, but so amusing. ~~but~~ poor old thing he did his best to give us a send off!