

A TRIBUTE
TO THE 5 TH AUSTRALIAN GENERAL HOSPITAL

They left this sunny land inspired by all that is humane
To tend our sick and wounded men; alleviate their pain
How well they carried out this trust. How steadfastly they stood –
The men and women of the 5 th have earned our gratitude.

They sojourned first in Palestine, in sunshine and in rain
(It seems the population there ne'er pray for rain in vain)
But whether dust or mud prevailed, their hearts were light and true,
Their slogan aye was "Carry on! We're here to see this through".

The call to Greece was welcomed. Here was their chance to show
How they could work in total war against our Nazi foe.
The trip was fraught with danger, and within sight of Greece
Dive-bombers rained death all round. At last they had to cease.
For suddenly a snowstorm came and hid the ship so well;
'Twas surely Providence that gave such respite from that Hell.

All night they lay down stream and when dawn's early light appeared,
They landed. Not one injured. Then how the Greeks all cheered,
And gave them such a welcome, tho' they couldn't understand
Just what they had to say to them – but anyway, 'twas grand.

In record time they set about establishing their unit,
For speed and for efficiency they earned a lot of credit.
Now things went badly with us; the Huns were much too strong,
The wounded came in steadily, the 5 th worked hard and long.

For three whole weeks our men fought hard and covered their retreat,
While advance guards cleared the way and ships took them on to Crete.
'Twas thought at first that all the 5 th would have to stay behind,
But not one man or woman flinched, their duty was to mind
The wounded men; they must come first, but some were got away.
Then orders came for volunteers, the whole 5 th said they'd stay.

So forty nurses were picked out, the others had to go;
Some men were picked to escort them. By truck they went, but Oh!
The raiders bombed them heavily. At last they went on foot,
They all got safely to the Port, Nazis in hot pursuit

Meanwhile the nurses who had stayed were ordered to leave Greece,
They also got back safely. But the rearguard did not cease
To tend our wounded, pouring in, and so they just all stayed;
Thus all were taken prisoners; it was the price they paid
For loyalty to duty. How proud they make one feel.
Such disregard for hardships, such courage and such zeal.

So until this dread War of Wars is over, aye and won
Our thoughts and prayers are with the 5 th until their job is done.

Written by Mary Young.

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A TRIBUTE TO THE 5TH AUSTRALIAN DIVISION

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