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(nee Nalder)
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Memories! I was one of a privileged group of trained nurses to serve with one unit from its beginning to end. There were 10 original members when war ended, and I was one of them. Our hospital, a 1200 bed filled hospital served in Palestine, Greece, Abyssinia, New Guinea and Morotai.

The memory of one occasion has haunted me ever since.

In April 1941 we sailed with some of the Sixth Division to Greece, on board the "Pennland" when Greece was invaded by Germany from the north - a massive Panzer Division and well trained troops. Australia and New Zealand and Britain sent token forces, and on April 14th we were declared an Anzac Force. It was a lost cause from the beginning, and by 24th April troops were ordered to evacuate. Our hospital had been hastily set up within two days in a pine forest, in Ekali, an upmarket holiday resort, north of Athens. We had tents set up amid a pine forest, mostly with paliasses on the floor and our equipment was very scarce. Badly wounded arrived day and night, starting two days after we landed, and although we displayed red crosses on our tents we were constantly buzzed by German aircraft.

. I had a ward of wounded men, "minimal" equipment, a phial of morphine tablets and a hypodermic syringe. I was told to do the dressings, give morphia as required, and mark on the patient's head what they had had, and when, and then when possible, they were to be evacuated.

Our C.O. Colonel Kay was with one load going on to a ship in Piraeus Harbour when it was bombed- he was killed and the ship was sunk. We were told we were to leave, in 2 hours time, and 170 of our medical orderlies, and 7 of our Doctors ordered to stay- we did not want to go- and we were almost forcibly put into 3 ton trucks and so began a very frightening journey to the southern end of Greece, where we were eventually taken off on HMAS "Voyager" and taken to Crete.

Having to leave wounded men, knowing they were to be taken prisoner, and not knowing how they would be treated was one of the most dreadful moments of my life.

Nursing in Greece and Crete

Molly Nalder enlisted in the A.I.F. in mid 1940 as a Staff Nurse-later as NX34831 Captain Nalder she served in the ill-fated battles of Greece and Crete.

When I finished my training in 1938 I put my name on the reserve list of AANS. I was on duty in Casualty at RPAH in July 1940 when I received a phone call from Matron Keary (Principal Matron AANS at Victoria Barracks) to say I was to report for duty, in Sydney Showground, and be prepared to proceed overseas on active service- I had to see Matron Dan, the Matron of PA, and ask her if I could go immediately, and take my Prince Alfred uniforms until I was issued with my Army uniform. I went to the Victoria Barracks, was billeted in the Olympic Hotel in Moore Park Road- and taken, with several other trained nurses, from various hospitals, to the Horden Pavilion at the Showground.

There a hospital ward was being set up. At first it was very crude but we soon received proper beds and were kept very busy with troops who were being recruited and having vaccinations and all the various "shots"- and having quite bad reactions. The troops started getting Rubella and there was quite an epidemic throughout Sydney.

In between duty we were busy getting equipped- David Jones made our uniforms- a grey linen frock and scarlet cape. Peapes tailored our smart grey flannel outdoor suits and overcoats- all made to measure and caused a lot of interest when we ventured forth in them. We knew we were to be in 2/5th Australian General Hospital and it was to be a 1200 bed field hospital.