

CRU/3/15

## DO IT TO-DAY--FOR FRANCE!

Your Subscription (p. 4).

Your Acknowledgment of the News-Letter (p. 5).

Your Authorization for Canteen Report (p. 14).

Your Part in the Reorganization (p. 39).

**To-morrow**  
**You may have missed the Boat.**

Printed in Great Britain by The Eastern Press, Ltd., London and Reading.

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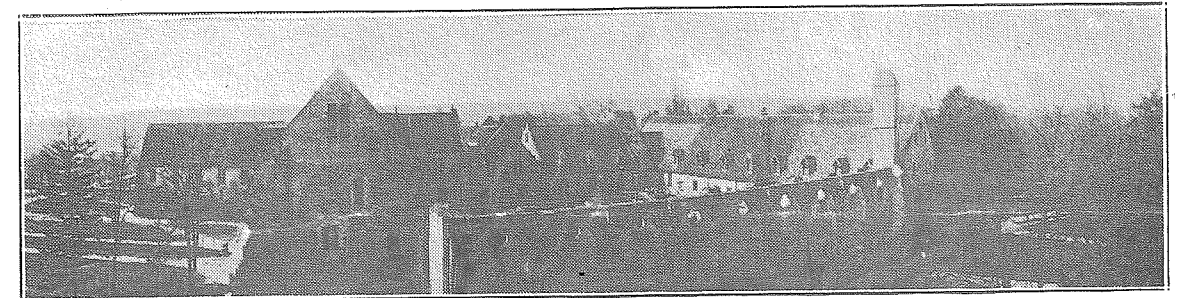
Double



Number

# Royaumont News-Letter

(WITH RECORD OF ROYAUMONT S.W.H. CANTEENS).



New Series

SEPTEMBER, 1941

No. 5

Published by the Royaumont and Villers Cotterets Association of the Scottish Women's Hospitals,  
c/o Mrs. Ivens-Knowles, C.B.E., M.S.(Lond.), Killagordon, Truro.  
Acting-Editor *pro tem.*: V. C. C. COLLUM, Withyfold, Wonham Way, Peaslake, Guildford.

**Object of the Association:** To maintain and strengthen our (1914-18) wartime comradeship.

**Subscription:** Half-a-crown per annum, due **December 1st**, for following year.

**President:** Mrs. Ivens-Knowles, C.B.E., M.S. (Lond.).

**Vice-Presidents:** Miss Ruth Nicholson, M.S., Miss Elizabeth Courtauld, M.D.

**Hon. Treasurer:** Miss F. M. Tollit, 12 Woodchurch Road, N.W.6.

### Letter from the Editor

Dear Everybody,

With this new number of the *Royaumont News-Letter* you will see that Collum is again Editor. This is not through any slackness or lack of interest on my part but due to the fortunes of war which have driven me to this outlandish corner of Scotland.

Perhaps a brief account of the work done by the administrative side of our Scottish Women's Hospital Royaumont Canteen may be of interest to members. Before anything had been done Morgan and I had conversations on the phone, and in my flat in Chelsea, about the possibility of us being able to do something in this War. Morgan at that time was in the A.F.S., and I was working in a Citizen's Advice Bureau in Glebe Place. Inglis, too, was enthusiastic; she was at that time in the W.V.S. and we decided to form a small committee—at first, with Mrs. Ivens-Knowles as our Vice-

President, Miss Hamilton as Chairman, Tollit, and Grandage as Treasurer and myself as Hon. Secretary. We got in touch with the Vicomtesse de la Panouse, who agreed to be our President, and Mrs. Leith Ross, and they assured us that a S.W.H. Canteen would be welcomed by the French soldiers, for whom very little in that way was being done. Meantime Mrs. Ivens-Knowles put an advertisement in *The Times* and we sent out notices to all Royaumont members and to many others asking for support, either financially or by offers of service. In the first leaflet we sent out we modestly hoped to raise £200, but this amount was soon exceeded. But, before we got definite instructions from the French Red Cross there were many anxious meetings in Markham Square, many long waits in Belgrave Square and conferences with the authorities there. All the knotty points about uniform and personnel had been settled. Inglis and Morgan were champing to be off, and then, at last, the news came through from Mme. de Wendel that Metz would welcome the dames Ecossaises.

From this point the interest in the story is with the Canteen workers who overcame great difficulties, suffered much discomfort and were latterly in great danger, but who made a great success of the job and were from all accounts much liked and respected by the Poilus. But although the interest in the story moves to Metz the Committee at home now having as members Smieton, Banks and Dr. Martland, were not idle. An executive Committee is never popular (see the S.W.H. Committee in the last war) and this was no exception. We had great difficulty in getting out money, but its delay was in no way our fault, and here I would like to say how loyal and helpful the members of my committee were, especially Miss Hamilton. She interviewed many would-be helpers, and latterly, after the fall of France when side-tracked by Mrs. Spears and Lady Peel into other work, Miss Hamilton was most helpful. Miss Macfie, a friend of Morgan, who is still working in Lady James's Canteen for Allied Seamen at Portsmouth, got this through our initiative. I went to Portsmouth (the day of their first raid), lunched at Admiralty House and attended Lady James's committee meeting, when they agreed that they would have two permanent S.W.H. workers there. Our second worker, Miss Vereker, has, I believe, since left. Then Lady Peel got us the Canteen in Cheshire, which was so well run by B. Bruce, Percival and Howard Smith, and about which Miss Hamilton took endless trouble.

You will read elsewhere of Anderson's brief visit to France after the debacle and how she and two others, both non-S.W.H. members, arrived in Paris to find Canteen work on the Swiss frontier or indeed anywhere else out of the question and how they sportingly worked for the Refugees by that time pouring out of central France. I do not think anything but the fortunes of war can be blamed for this abortive attempt on our part. At that time communications between Paris and London were very erratic and the Vicomtesse de la Panouse had many personal worries. What we should congratulate ourselves upon is that all our members returned safely, and that there is ample proof that much of the old spirit of endurance and bon camaraderie which helped to make Royaumont such a success, still exists among us. Recriminations at this point, are, as I think the Prime Minister said, a futile waste of time.

Some weeks before leaving London I ran a Canteen for the French Red Cross where, after having been fitted with clothes, French refugees had *gouter*, coffee, bread and biscuits. B. Bruce gave valuable help here before going to Cheshire. The house it was held in was just opposite

25 Belgrave Square and we made many new friends and acquaintances and in a small way tightened the bond between us and the French. Sheltering together and cursing the blitz, and wishing there was not quite so much glass about was all part of the game.

Here, were I not worked so hard, I would be very homesick, but the old idea that Government departments have a slack time is not the case in the M.O.I. office in this gray little town, but it is all very "hush, hush" so I cannot go into details. The cold is intense, like France in 1915. Poor France—so deeply allied to us Scots ever since the days when Mary, Queen of Scots, landed in Scotch mist in the port of Leith—but unlike her we must not say "Adieu charmante pays de France", but only *au revoir*. So to our next merry meeting.

Ever yours,

N. MACKAY

(Hon. Editor, *Royaumont News-Letter*).

Palace Hotel, Inverness.  
February, 1941.

#### Letter from our President

My dear Unit,

As a belated *News-Letter* is about to appear I send you all my best wishes and hopes for a happy end of the present conflict. You will be able to read elsewhere a full account of the fine effort made for our friends in France under the leadership of Inglis and Morgan, and how glad we were they all arrived home safely. The work done at the Cheshire camp under MacPherson was most useful, too. Now there is a halt until there is an opportunity to help in France again. I have been specially asked, however, by Commandant Simon, one of General de Gaulle's Headquarters staff, to give whatever help we can to the French fishermen and their families at Newlyn. Their best boat was commandeered by the Government and they have a very poor time in winter. I shall be most grateful for any warm clothing or gifts for them. A club has been started for them in Penzance and some of the Oulton Park equipment has arrived there. We are looking forward to the time when Free France will be able to take up the fight again and we shall hope to meet our friends there once more and to give what further help we can.

I am afraid there are some sad items of news in this number: the untimely loss of Chapman, who died in harness; now we read of the death in

Australia of General Smyth, Williams' husband. She has our deepest sympathy.

I heard with pleasure of the invaluable service Big Andy was giving in a camp reception hospital at Bude which the Red Cross Detachment there is running on a voluntary basis. I know we are all most grateful to Collum who has stepped into the breach and is bringing out this number of the *News-Letter*. It has been most difficult for her to collect the material and she has devoted an immense amount of time and trouble to the none too easy task. We wish Mackay well in her new job and thank her and Grandage for all they did on the Canteen Committee. Miss Hamilton and Tollit have been invaluable, for they were almost the only members of the Committee left in London. MacPherson is working at the Foyer Militaire Français at Thornhurst, Branksome Park Road, Camberley, with Miss Macfie, who was one of ours at Metz. With all good wishes in which my husband joins,

Yours affectionately,

FRANCES IVENS-KNOWLES.

Killagordon, Truro.  
August 8th, 1941.

#### The Royaumont Canteen Idea

Several Royaumontites believe themselves to have been the members who thought first of getting up a Canteen. Mackay, Inglis and Morgan, who called the meeting that led to the formation of the Canteen Committee; Mrs. Robinson, who wrote to Mrs. Ivens-Knowles on November 25th asking "Do you think the Committee of the S.W.H. could be persuaded to come to life again and consider the possibility of running a Scottish Women's Hut—canteen and recreation, etc., more or less on the lines of the Y.M.C.A. huts—behind the Maginot line, for French poilus? It occurred to me that such an offer to the French Authorities would be a friendly gesture and proof of our still warm affection and I feel strongly that they would welcome the proposal if it came from you. . . . I, for one, would love to go. . . . I can think of lots of old Royaumontites who would be splendid for such work. . . ." and then proceeded to give a list of canteen workers, clerks, drivers, entertainers, and store-keeper all complete! Your present Acting-Editor who, with Richmond, canvassed the idea at the time of the 1938 Reunion, feeling that a Hospital Unit would be unattainable; which was probably the reason why so many old R's wrote to

her when War broke out asking whether the tentative proposal discussed the year before was now to be put into operation, and hoping that, in spite of everything, it might be a Hospital Unit with our Medecin-chef once more leading it. Knowing that a hospital unit was out of the question, your Acting-Editor wrote to these people that she would bring up a proposal for a Canteen at the Annual Meeting. It was a great disappointment when this and the Dinner were cancelled. She still hoped to call a general meeting of those interested after the private and unofficial luncheon to which Salway invited a few friends at her Club for St. Andrew's Day, but sudden family illness prevented her from going to London, and Salway, to whom she had sent some of the offers to join up (Rolt's and Daunt's, e.g.), in case she could call interested members together, found that Mackay was already taking steps to canvass those members living in London, so gladly left the field to her. Probably at least as many others also thought of a Canteen! Fulton's letter offering to come home and join up if a Royaumont Unit of any kind were formed, was written from California the day war was declared. (Ill-health later prevented her from carrying out her intention.) Let us hope that this evidence of many minds having but a single thought augurs well for the reorganization proposed in this *News-Letter*.

#### The A.V.F.

Members who have been unfavourably impressed by the lack of team spirit among the various organizations and individuals, British and French, all whole-heartedly striving for the same object, will be glad to learn of the emergence in September, 1940, of the Association des Amis des Volontaires Français, with headquarters at the Maison de la France Libre at Westminster House, Dean Stanley Street, London, S.W.1 (now at 3 St. James's Square). "This Association", in its own words, "exclusively authorised by General de Gaulle, has been set up in London to co-ordinate all offers of help and to centralise all gifts emanating from Great Britain and from abroad sent to him for the welfare of the volunteers. The aim of the association is to establish a link between organizations and individuals, whatever their nationality, who wish to extend moral and material help to the French Volunteers and their families."

The President is Lord Tyrrell of Avon; the Chairman of the Executive Committee, Earl de la Warr; the Vice-Chairman, P. de Malglaive; the

Hon. Treasurer, H. Bellinger; and the joint Hon. Secretaries, Lord Ivor Spencer Churchill and Capitaine Hesse. The other members of the Committee are the Marchioness of Crewe, Lady Peel, the Hon. Mrs. Crawshaw and M. Morhange. The minimum contribution for adherents is one shilling, and the badge costs 5s. The enrolment form asks adherents to state any form of practical assistance they might wish to render, and asks them to recommend others likely to join. Each form sent out is sponsored by someone who has already enrolled. At the time of writing there are 4,000 duly enrolled adherents, and each member is asked to help in an ingenious scheme for collecting the names and addresses of all the unknown sympathizers in his or her own locality.

There is a Canteen at the Central Depot, and the Association subsidizes the Convalescent Home of the Free French Forces at Wellingborough. It has set up or recognized local committees in Scotland, the Isle of Man, at Kidderminster, Bradford, Newark, Norwich, Colchester, Leeds and Harrogate, and endeavours, through the Free French Consuls in England, to create groups of sympathizers in the principal English cities. Macfie, Prance and the Acting-Editor are willing to sponsor any of our members who care to send their names to the Acting-Editor. The liaison officer is G. du Moulin, assistant to Capitaine Hesse.

#### Royaumont Association Report

In the absence of the Hon. Secretary the Acting-Editor has the task of reporting. There is no record of an Annual Meeting in the Minute Book later than the eleventh, held on December 2, 1933, at the British Industries House, Park Street, by kind invitation of Inglis, and its minutes are not signed, so presumably no other was held. Subsequently, committee meetings were held on April 7th, 1934, November 20th, 1935, January 29th, 1936, October 21st, 1936, October 7th, 1937, December 8th, 1937, and October 28th, 1938, at which meeting it was decided to hold the 1939 Dinner on November 4th, and when the financial position of the Association was stated to be sound, the balance in hand then being £92 9s. 1d. The minutes of this, the last committee meeting to be held, were never signed. Inglis signed the minutes of the meeting of October 21st, 1936, on October 7th, 1937, as Chairman, and she was present at the next committee meeting on December 8th that year. Its minutes were signed on October 28th, 1938, by Smieton. There is no record that Inglis resigned

her position as Chairman, but Tollit states that she did resign. Both she and the Hon. Secretary had long, serious illnesses between 1933 and 1935 which accounted for the absence of a general meeting in 1935.

As members know, the last issue of the *News-Letter* was No. 4 of the New Series, dated January, 1939. This carried the accounts for 1938 of the Association (balance £92 9s. 1d.), the Dinner (balance £6 14s. 4d.), and the Emergency Fund (balance £206 9s. 3d.).

The outbreak of war in September, 1939, alone is responsible for the cancelling of the twenty-first Dinner, and for the failure of the January, 1940, *News-Letter* to appear. Of the Annual Meeting the less said the better!

Members should ponder these matters, together with the evidence, in the shape of the Canteens, that members still feel that the bond of Royaumont comradeship holds, and also the criticism by a member quoted in the Editorial, before they fill in the Questionnaire included in this number. Our Hon. Treasurer has not pressed by post for unpaid subscriptions considering that, without either Dinner or *News-Letter* to show, she could hardly do so. The time has now come to decide if the Association is to be let die. Our President and our Hon. Treasurer will never fail us. Mrs. Alison and Morgan are willing and eager to carry on as joint Hon. Secretaries. The Acting-Editor *pro tem.* will carry on as long as the Editor feels unable to give time to the *News-Letter*, and is also ready to undertake the duties of honorary publicity agent should members decide to revitalize the Association and either to take over the Canteens work of Mackay's Canteens Committee from Miss Hamilton (who has so gallantly shouldered the entire burden for the past twelve months), or start afresh with a new scheme; and Salway is willing to take over the office of Hon. Treasurer, Canteens, jointly with Tollit, or alone. If the Association is revived, members appointed to the first new committee will need to take their responsibility seriously. As a people we very nearly lost this war before it started by our easy-going unreadiness to shoulder the responsibility of stopping Hitler. Now we carry the burden alone, but will never give up. That is the spirit. It is to this spirit your Acting-Editor appeals. If members want to go on as an association, let them begin by paying up their subscriptions. There can be no *News-Letter* in 1942, no earlier circulars about business, without money. Those who can afford to do so are asked to send something extra.

#### Statement of Royaumont Association Accounts

##### For 1939

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
In hand from 1938 .. .. .	90	2	7	Printing .. .. .	1	1	4
Received in Subscriptions, 1939 .. .. .	3	13	0	Stamps .. .. .	6	8	
				Balance in hand .. .. .	92	7	7
	£93	15	7		£93	15	7

##### For 1940

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
In hand from 1939 .. .. .	92	7	7	Poppy wreath .. .. .	1	1	0
Received in Subscriptions, 1940 .. .. .	3	8	6	Balance in hand .. .. .	94	15	1
	£95	16	1		£95	16	1

January, 1941.

F. M. TOLLIT (Hon. Treasurer).

#### Royaumont Association Emergency Loan Fund, Balance Sheet, 1940

##### Bank Account

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
1/1/40 Balance brought forward from 1939 .. .. .	211	12	11	22/5/40 To P.O. account .. .. .	100	0	0
By interest to closing of account .. .. .	2	10	5	11/7/40 To P.O. account .. .. .	114	3	4
	£214	3	4		£214	3	4

##### Post Office Account

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
22/5/40 Transferred from Bank account .. .. .	100	0	0	31/12/40 To Balance .. .. .	216	16	3
1/7/40 Transferred from Bank account .. .. .	114	3	4				
31/12/40 By interest .. .. .	2	12	11				
	£216	16	3		£216	16	3

The Bank having notified us that interest on Deposit account would no longer be paid the Committee decided to transfer this account to the Post Office.  
7th July, 1941.

ISOBEL DOROTHY SIMMONDS (Hon. Treasurer).

#### Reception and Acknowledgment of News-Letter

In view of the possibility of mails being destroyed by enemy action, will you please send a post-card to Tollit (who has the Address Book and posts the *News-Letters* to members) acknowledging receipt of this number, especially those of you who are overseas or who have changed your address since January, 1939. Tollit will send another copy, marked "Duplicate", to those

overseas members from whom she receives no acknowledgment after three months. As the printing of these extra copies has involved some extra expense, recipients of "duplicates" are asked to arrange that the Hon. Treasurer receives English postage stamps or postage coupons to the value of 1s. Members can help by asking their own friends whether they got their *News-Letters* safely. An endeavour will be made not to post all copies for one place by the same mail.

## Old Comrades in Serbia

Several old Royaumontites also served for a time with the Serbs. Constituting herself for the nonce publicity agent, the Acting-Editor suggested that our President would be safe in voicing the general feeling of members by sending a telegram of greeting to the Yugoslav Minister in London when his country joined the allies in April. The following telegram was sent:—

Royaumont Association of the Scottish Women's Hospitals founded by Dr. Elsie Inglis who loved and worked for Serbia sends greetings to the Yugoslav united nation in this their most splendid hour. May all the allied peoples fighting for the integrity of their native lands stand fast and united and win through to freedom and victory.

FRANCES IVENS-KNOWLES,  
President, Royaumont Association.

Our President received the following letter, dated April 11th, from the Yugoslav Minister, M. Subotitch:—

Dear Dr. Ivens-Knowles,

I am writing to express to you and to all the members of the Royaumont Association of the Scottish Women's Hospital my sincere thanks for your telegram with the extremely kind expressions of good will towards my country.

The memory of Dr. Elsie Inglis is precious to every Yugoslav and we can only recall with emotion the work which she did, and for which we are ever grateful.

It is the more encouraging and helpful to receive so sympathetic a message from the members of an organization founded by her. With renewed thanks.

Those readers who heard King Peter's broadcast on "Vidovdan", anniversary sacred to the memory of Kosovo (June 28th), will have noted with emotion his warm reference to the Scottish Women's "heroism" in Serbia in the last war. The ties of old comradeship are indestructible. The French are drawing closer to the British and the Slavs once more stand shoulder to shoulder against the modern Teuton tyrants. Greece remembered Byron, and the Turks have not forgotten the Anglo-Turkish comradeship of 1853. Some day we shall all be "old comrades" in humanity's campaign against selfishness, poverty and parasitism whether of men or moulds, in defence of what Queen Elizabeth called "our precious Soil" and the ideal of "the good neighbour".

## Memoranda

**French Fisherfolk.**—In February Lady Peel wrote to *The Times* suggesting that allotments should be given to French fishermen and their wives marooned in idleness at Torquay. (She lives in Torquay.) The Chairman of the International Commission for War Refugees in Great Britain (10 Woburn Square, W.C.1) thereupon wrote that this body, assisted by American donors, had re-equipped the Breton and Boulogne fishermen in Cornwall who had brought their own and other refugee families over in their boats, of necessity leaving their bulky equipment behind. It is strange that the Free French have now to appeal for help for French fishermen in Newlyn because our Government has commandeered their best boat. Could not the friends of the Free French use their influence for the prevention of such muddles? This is where publicity can be of service.

**Club.**—A Club for naval officers of the Free French Forces was opened in April in Tufton Street, Westminster. There is also a club for Free French sailors in Stanhope Gate, W. Everywhere where Free French and Belgians congregate there is a demand for French books, classical literature or novels. The A.V.F. is the best clearing house.

**French Broadcasts.**—Radio Brazzaville, the Free French African station, broadcasts in English each evening at 8.45 (normal) B.S.T. on 25.06 metres (12,000 kc.), directed by beam to Great Britain and South Africa, and on the same wavelength another broadcast is given in English at 4.45 a.m. (B.S.T.) for North America.

**News from France.**—The Acting-Editor has just heard of a heartening exploit by two Frenchmen. They were Free French officers billeted in the home of her mother's maid in Camberley, and are now serving in the Near East in the Free French Air Force. These two stole an enemy aeroplane in France and flew it to Britain. The pilot knew no English when he came. Both were quiet fellows who preferred to pay for rooms in an English home than to sleep in camp. Here is something equally heartening. Members remember the London Society for Women's Suffrage and the help it gave to the S.W.H. It became the Society for Women's Service and it still has the same Secretary. Her sister is married to a Frenchman. Miss S. wrote to the Acting-Editor in July "we hear from them . . . they think very highly of the B.B.C. Everybody seems to listen to it and to be kept up

in spirits by what they hear. My sister says that everybody of all classes and all shades of political opinion is of the same mind about Vichy and England, and that the French people now love us as they never have before."

**La France Libre.**—This monthly review (published at 2s. 6d. by Hamish Hamilton) aspires to serve as a link between English readers and the Free French (inside and outside France) and English writers and French readers in exile. English contributions are rendered into French. The Editors would welcome support from Royaumontites. The June number opens with an article entitled "Amour sacré de la patrie". Here are two extracts from it culled at random (describing the débacle of a year ago): *Une armée victorieuse contre une armée nouvelle, le dogme contre l'imagination.* ". . . j'ai rencontré deux jeunes Français venus en Angleterre avec un avion volé sur un aérodrome militaire allemand. Deux petits gars de vingt ans, sortis de l'aviation populaire, qui me recontaient leur extraordinaire aventure avec simplicité, comme inconscients du risque couru et de l'héroïsme. Ils avaient l'accent du pays. C'étaient deux ouvriers, deux soldats, et je croyais entendre les milliers de Français, prêts à suivre leur exemple. Ils me disaient la complicité de tout un peuple, les Français mis en faction par milliers à côté des poteaux télégraphiques parce que les saboteurs s'obstinent à couper les fils, les ouvriers fusillés à l'aube, les amendes s'abattant sur les villes, Paris privé de viande pendant quarante jours parce qu'un boucher a pendu au crochet un officier allemand qui venait réquisitionner toute la viande. Et je vous dirai un jour l'histoire de ce Français, mon ami, qui s'est coupé la gorge dans un de leurs cachots, parce qu'il ne voulait pas trahir, et de cet écrivain qui est plongeur à Marseille, parce qu'il ne veut pas écrire dans leurs journaux, et de tous ces autres, innombrables anonymes, qui narguent la Kommandantur, défient la Gestapo, veulent ignorer la présence de l'occupant, et même de ceux qui n'ont pas réussi et qui pourrissent dans les prisons et qui sont morts. . . . La France restera, parce qu'il y a un peuple français. . . ."

**A London Free French Newspaper.**—*France* (4 pp., 1d.) is the daily newspaper of the French in Great Britain, published by Practical Press, Ltd., Dorset Buildings, Salisbury Square, and edited from 85 Fleet Street. The publishers sent us the issue for July 21st, and we note an interesting leader pointing out how in the first phase of Franco-German "collaboration" the

Nazis tried to secure as their agents men of some standing or at least notoriety. In the second phase now beginning Darlan is replaced at the Ministry of the Interior by M. Pucheu—just an ordinary "commis aux écritures" unknown to Frenchmen but very well known to Germany. "Pucheu fut de ces industriels qui préconisèrent ou pratiquèrent la collaboration avant la lettre. . . . Hitler impose comme ministres 'français' ses propres agents. Il est sûr de leur obéissance totale. . . . A Vichy, le maréchal Pétain règne et c'est le Führer qui gouverne." And the moral? The French can no longer be held responsible for the doings of their so-called government under orders from Germany. There are several interesting letters from Occupied France. One, from Brest, describes how four British pilots drew in smoke on the sky twin Lorraine crosses, joined by a straight line and another sign that the writer could not make out. (Doubtless the three shorts and a long!) Altogether a good pennyworth for those who would like to keep *au fait* with the "V" movement across the Channel.

**All Gaul is Divided.**—This is the title of a small volume (3s. 6d.) of necessarily anonymous letters from her friends in Occupied France written to Elizabeth Morrow in New Jersey, sent to us by Gollancz, who publishes it here. (It is possible to get letters smuggled out but highly dangerous to receive replies.) Nothing we have read strikes such an authentic note and the letters provide the answer to many questions we have all been asking ourselves. The writers dare not even have in their possession radio sets capable of receiving the B.B.C. They do not know what is going on outside Occupied France. They mention the general belief in Pétain. He is "the inspiration of the new spirit in education. . . . Over the radio . . . he preaches the military qualities of tenacity, steadfastness and duty". "The débacle is traced to a degeneration of character." "The meagre supply of information is beginning to show in bleached-out ideas upon every matter that made the nation we once knew as France. . . . Germany is modifying the stream of thought that circulates through the French mind." The Germans "wish to kill the faith of the French in themselves, in their leaders, in their mode of life, in whatever has been particularly their own. They wish to sow the seeds of defeatism and despair. . . ." But there is another side to all this in ". . . the prodigious amount of pro-English spy work that is going on. And as the invaders are well aware, pro-British espionage is everywhere". "The young men of General de Gaulle's force stir admiration and

secret pride among all classes in France: it is a comfort to know that someone still carries the flag—although the realists condemn them for prolonging the death anguish of a hopeless cause." Over 800 English people are detained in prison, three to a cell. "Why are these inoffensive older men and women held?" The answer is, "To prevent information leaking out to the enemy." "The coal ration is one good shovelful, 28 lbs., a head a month." "My family has tried a number of makeshifts to overcome the absence of fats. I had a barrel of winter grade motor oil, which we tried in the kitchen . . . we also experimented with candles. Worse." "To-day 90 per cent. of the people of Occupied France are feverishly partisan to Great Britain." "Profound as was their grief at the nation's collapse, they were nevertheless glad to be rid of a parliament and a cabinet which had forfeited the respect of its constituents." "The entry of full American aid into the war is the supreme nightmare. . . . I overhear German soldiers talking quietly among themselves in café corners . . . Lieber Gott in Himmel, if America should do it again!" "Sub rosa, a contra-Hitler machine is active. Whether it derives from France, or Britain, or anti-Nazi sources in Germany, we have no means of ascertaining." Mysterious circulars are found in odd places—and are immediately destroyed after perusal as it is death to be found with one. "They have a single theme: Hold out—and Britain will rescue you."

Shall not Royaumont bear an active part in this rescue from more than merely physical internment and starvation?

### To their indestructible Memory

"Carry on, London!"

For years past a Chelsea florist has given her services to the British Legion Poppy Day by making wreaths without charge for the benefit of the local fund, including our Royaumont chaplet of laurel with its bunch of Haig poppies, its rosemary and its thistles, and has despatched it for us direct to M. Delacoste, who has placed it for us at the foot of our memorial at the Asnières cross-roads. Last autumn communication between us and Asnières no longer existed, and the little florist shop had been destroyed by a bomb, but the Acting-Editor got the usual wreath made by another local florist, working in the same good cause, and on

Armistice Day Cicely Hamilton took it to Victoria and placed it at the foot of Foch's statue—where there was not, at that morning hour, a single other tribute. A large card, written for us by a Peaslake artist, bore the words:

A la glorieuse et inébranlable mémoire de nos braves blessés de Royaumont (Hôpital auxiliaire d'Armée) morts pour la République et pour l'Empire, 1915-1918. De la part de l'Association des Anciennes Camarades des "Scottish Women's Hospitals" à Royaumont et à Villers Cotterets. 11.11.1940. Le Jour de l'Armistice.

"Aux armes citoyens, fermez vos bataillons!"

12 Woodchurch Road, N.W.6.

### Lament for Democracy

Royaumontites could not but be interested in Cicely Hamilton's pungent *Lament for Democracy* (Dent, 3s. 6d.) which follows on her series of journalistic reports on "modern" European countries, in which those on Germany, France and Russia might usefully be re-read. In it she takes as proven the thesis that "the community, whatever its nature, is born of necessity or self-interest". If this be true in the sense in which she accepts it—that a community is necessarily exclusive—the conception of the universe and mankind as a "Manifold Unity" (the title of the Acting-Editor's latest book, in John Murray's *Wisdom of the East* Series) is illusion. Miss Hamilton marshals the many failures of civilized men and women to live up to the popular ideal of government "by the people" and deduces an innate incapacity in human beings (in the plural) for responsible representative government, and regretfully opines that some sort of tyranny is bound to come even in Britain. Since this is the mood, perfectly sincere, in which defeat comes to be accepted and AUTHORITY acquiesced in, may your Acting-Editor be forgiven for reminding readers that she herself has defended the opposite thesis—with much less skill—in the essay above mentioned, which is not a political commentary but a study of ancient religion.

N.B.—The following twenty and a half pages alone are being sent to non-member subscribers to the Canteens.—EDITOR.

## Scottish Women's Hospitals Royaumont Canteen Unit: Record of Work.

When War finally came in September, 1939, the thoughts of many members of the Royaumont Association of the Scottish Women's Hospitals, veterans of 1914-19, turned towards realization of the scheme for the organization of a Royaumont Veterans' Unit, tentatively discussed during the Reunion gatherings of 1938. As the Annual Meeting and Reunion Dinner arranged for the Saturday nearest to St. Andrew's Day were cancelled, no general discussion about war work by the Association could take place.

In these circumstances Mackay, Honorary Editor of the *News-Letter*, Morgan, and Etta Inglis, the former Chairman of Committee (who had given up that office since leaving London the year before, but who was now back there working with the W.V.S.) independently took action at an informal meeting at Mackay's flat on Friday, December 15th, and these three, together with Cicely Hamilton and Tollit, Hon. Treasurer of the Association, officially brought into being the Scottish Women's Hospitals Royaumont Canteen Unit, with the Association's President, Mrs. Ivens-Knowles, former Surgeon-in-Charge of the Royaumont and Villers-Cotterets Unit in the last War, as Chairman of Committee, Cicely Hamilton as Vice-Chairman, Grandage as Honorary Treasurer, and Mackay as Honorary Secretary. It was decided to invite the President of the British Committee of the Croix Rouge Française during the last War, Madame la Vicomtesse de la Panouse, wife of the then Military Attaché in London, who still retained her office, to be Présidente d'honneur. The meeting sent for approval to Mrs. Ivens-Knowles the draft of an appeal to members of the Royaumont Association for their support, which was duly signed by Mrs. Ivens-Knowles, and sent out to all those Royaumontites whose addresses were known. It was in the following terms:—

A BRITISH CANTEEN FOR THE FRENCH ARMY.

There are many calls to-day on our dwindling incomes but we venture to hope that an appeal we make in the name of our chief Ally will loosen a few more purse-strings.

As the French Army on guard against the German at present far outnumbers our own, the task of providing it with such comforts as war-time conditions allow is correspondingly heavier; and that being so, some of us who were privileged to work for the French soldier twenty-odd years ago (as members of the Scottish Women's Hospitals of Royaumont and Villers-Cotterets), have offered to run a canteen behind the French lines. The British Committee for the French Red Cross and other war charities has gladly accepted our offer and the Unit—to be known as the Royaumont Canteen—will be leaving England in a week or two to take up its quarters in an important military centre in the rear of the Maginot Line. The canteen will be in charge of Etta Inglis, niece of Dr. Elsie Inglis, founder of the Scottish Women's Hospitals. Work in the canteen will be on a voluntary basis; we have more volunteers than we need at the moment, all of them formerly members of our Royaumont staff, and among us we have already subscribed a sum approaching £200. We shall, however, need more than that—£500 if possible—if we are to carry on for any length of time and make provision against the sudden emergencies of war-time. For that reason we appeal to the public for help.

The help we need is in kind as well as in money. A canteen is a club-room as well as a refreshment bar, and we have been asked to give special attention to the recreational side. Darts, gramophone records (the tuneful kind preferred), draughts, jigsaw puzzles, ping-pong, etc.; these, as well as cheques and postal orders, will be gratefully received and duly acknowledged by the Honorary Secretary, Miss N. Mackay, 31 Markham Square, Chelsea, S.W.3.

FRANCES IVENS-KNOWLES,  
Formerly Surgeon-in-Charge, Scottish Women's  
Hospitals, Royaumont and Villers-Cotterets.

CICELY HAMILTON,  
Formerly Secretary, Scottish Women's Hospital,  
Royaumont.

January, 1940.

A further meeting, with Mackay in the Chair, was held on January 5th, to consider the response to this appeal. It was decided that volunteers must sign on for a minimum period of four months, be expected to pay £1 per week for their



board, and be accepted only on production of a medical certificate of fitness for foreign service. Tollit, who had in the interval been in touch with the Présidente d'honneur, was able to report that she, on behalf of the Committee, had authorized the Vicomtesse to telegraph that a staff of ten volunteers would be available in a month's time, and two of their number would be ready earlier (to arrange about equipment), in response to a wire received by the *présidente* from her cousin, Madame Andrée de Wendel, President of the Lorraine branch of the Association des dames de France, which had asked: "*Ont elles moyens financiers pour équipes foyers? Combien sont elles? Quel jour peuvent elles arriver Metz?*" The Committee decided to send Inglis and Morgan as the advance party, and to appoint Inglis titular head of the Canteen, a post which she accepted on the understanding that Morgan should be joint manager with herself. All felt that the Canteen was now really under way.

Committee meetings, at first more frequent, were subsequently held monthly, the Vice-Chairman, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer jointly dealing with important business that could not wait. Other Royaumont Association members who accepted invitations to serve on the Committee, at different times, to fill the gaps left when Inglis and Morgan went to France, were Young, Main (Mrs. Breakey), Dr. Martland, Banks (Mrs. Simmonds), and Smieton (Mrs. Sanderson), the Honorary Secretary of the Royaumont Association. Fourteen meetings of the Committee were held in all. Bright spots in the course of their routine work were provided by a donation of £250 from Lord Nuffield, sent through Mrs. Robinson, and a grant of £100 from funds made available to the Présidente d'honneur, who advised acceptance of this gift rather than that an appeal should be made for financial help to the fund, created, for the purpose of supporting British assistance for the French Forces, by Lord Crewe and Mrs. Spears ("Mary Borden", the authoress). Altogether more than £1,000 was collected by the Canteen Committee, and Mrs. Ivens-Knowles received more than sixty letters, which came from all over the world, in response to the following advertisement in the Personal column of *The Times* of January 18th, 1940:—

Royaumont Canteen to work behind Maginot Line. Will friends interested write Frances Ivens-Knowles, Killagordon, Truro, formerly Surgeon-in-Charge, Scottish Women's Hospitals, Royaumont and Villers-Cotterets, 1914-1919. Scottish, French, Dominion papers please copy.

It was two days after the seventh meeting of the Committee, held on February 14th (when the credit balance totalled just under £300), that the vanguard, in the persons of Inglis and Morgan, reached Paris and the home of the Présidente d'honneur, where they were given hospitality for the night. On the 17th they met Madame de Wendel, wife of the proprietor of the largest iron works in Lorraine, who informed them that the Royaumont Committee would be expected to equip, staff, and control their Canteen, that their staff would be responsible to her own organization, the Dames de France, whose Lorraine branch would take canteen profits if any were made, but, in the event of loss, would itself finance the Canteen. With Madame de Wendel to advise them they procured the necessary equipment with funds she kindly advanced—since they, of course, had been unable to take more than £10 each out of the country.

Two days later they were in the neighbourhood of Metz, enjoying Madame de Wendel's hospitality for the night, and on the following day, after exploring many villages in the *Zone fortifiée*, they selected the upper floor of an empty girls' school at the coal-mining settlement of Mouzaia, at Faulquemont, one kilometre distant from the nearest Maginot Line fort, which was actually in the mine. An evacuated house was commandeered for them by the French Army, and, until the Army should have furnished it for them from other evacuated homes, they were accommodated for ten days at an hotel belonging to the mine and then in use as a mess for the mine's mobilized staff.

Despite the enthusiastic welcome given to the two pioneers by the Army, the usual delays, due to official red tape, supervened before the canteen was ready to open, with three further volunteers of their future staff, Percival (ambulance driver in 1915), Mrs. Bruce (better known to members as "Betty" Macpherson), and Mrs. Robinson, as reinforcements. When the five "Scottish women" finally did open their doors on a Sunday morning, one thousand French soldiers besieged the premises. The Army subsequently provided them with eight orderlies, all volunteers, to help them serve this huge clientele, which proved to be a daily one. Besides the canteen and *foyer*, the staff ran a shop, which became Mrs. Robinson's special care, where the men could buy razors, writing paper, braces, and such-like comforts. It proved a most popular, and successful, venture. By the end of March the Committee in London, with a bank balance that had swelled to £590, had under discussion the authorization for a second canteen, at Créhanges. Meanwhile, Macfie—

known to the late Dr. Eleanor Hodson's many friends as "the V.A.D." who had worked with her at the French hospital which she left in 1915 to come to us at Royaumont—had arrived, bringing out with her, in her very welcome car, Howard Smith, who had a special dispensation to come out for only three months. The car greatly facilitated marketing, for the staff had been completely marooned at Mouzaia, in the midst of an evacuated fortified zone of the Line, and no supplies existed nearer than Metz. It should be stated that no other women at all were allowed as far forward as our Dames écossaises. Indeed, the time soon came when even the little village maid who looked after the staff was evacuated with the last of the local women from the area. This, however, was after the Créhanges canteen had been started, with Percival and "Betty" in charge. At Mouzaia a games room was also opened, where the men could play billiards, darts, ping-pong and table board games. The new canteen likewise needed transport, providentially provided by the arrival of France with her two-seater. When, however, the main party were left without their maid, France went back to Mouzaia to act as housekeeper and cook, for with the canteen so busy the staff had no time to see to their own meals.

Both staffs were too fully occupied to bother their heads about the detailed course of the war. French Army morale was excellent. The French press was heavily censored; the English radio news jammed. Still, "no news is good news". The fighting was going on far away on the Belgian frontier. The orderlies, required for sterner work, were gradually withdrawn. French heavy guns behind the canteen began firing across the Maginot Line forts in front. The Dames de France closed all their other canteens. It certainly seemed as though an attack on the Maginot Line was imminent. All that our people worried about was the likelihood of having to start afresh a little further behind the Line.

At home, the Canteen Committee, at their eleventh meeting, on May 1st, had arranged to equip and send out still another canteen—to the Alps, it was said, but the French Red Cross subsequently corrected this to the Belgian frontier. "Big Andy" had accepted the Committee's invitation to go out in charge of it, with two friends of the Vice-Chairman's, not Royaumontites, Miss Lorna Lewis, and Miss Vereker, as assistants. Rolt, who was in Paris with a sick brother, hoped to be able to join them later and actually set forth on June 10th. Other volunteers in reserve, to follow, were Kennedy (Mrs. Clements), Ramsay

Smith, and three non-Royaumont people, while a fourth was held in reserve for the next vacancy in Lorraine. There was discussion about a trailer for Mouzaia, as a substitute for the van for which Inglis was asking. Quoting from the Minute Book: "Other matters discussed were overalls. . . ." So little did any of them anticipate the tragedy, already looming on the horizon and successfully curtailed from view by the drastic French censorship, which hid the truth from even the Maginot Line Army.

In fact the Committee unsuspectingly despatched Anderson and her two helpers on May 29th, routed via the Channel Islands as the Southern Railway had no more sailings direct to France, although it could not promise that the party would be able to get on from Jersey to France. On the boat at Southampton the party was informed that if they went to Jersey they must stay there, so they hastily retrieved their baggage, disembarked and appealed for guidance to the R.T.O. Eventually they were allowed on board a troopship, which unexpectedly went to Portsmouth, and thence was ordered back to Southampton to take on board French combatants rescued from the Belgian front, and more British troops, and crossed eventually to Cherbourg. When the party reached Paris it was only to hear that the Belgian Army had capitulated. A Canteen on the Belgian frontier being out of the question, the party managed to get into touch with Madame la Vicomtesse Gaston de la Rochefoucauld, through a daughter of the Présidente d'honneur, who invited them to tea at Colombin's; and, later, with Madame de Wendel, who had received none of the letters or telegrams announcing their impending arrival, and who could offer them no opening for the present, though, eventually, she thought there might be one for a canteen in Alsace. The three then offered their services to the Société des Services Sociaux whose *directrice* asked them to help individually as drivers in evacuating refugees. Anderson meanwhile had ascertained that there was practically no hope of securing a place in any boat taking people back to England. This transporting of refugees took them to Charente.

At Mouzaia and Créhanges our people hourly expected an order to fall further back once the French troops from No-Man's-Land had been withdrawn into the Maginot forts and the artillery duel over their heads had begun. Each one packed a handbag in readiness, and their liquid funds, augmented by the canteen takings, which they wisely refrained from banking (and subsequently handed over to the Présidente d'honneur in London), were divided up amongst them, ready for this call.

It came at tea-time on June 13th, with an order from French G.H.Q. to evacuate back to Metz before 7 p.m. They still had no suspicion that anything was seriously amiss. The morale of the French troops was as high as ever. While they were packing the two cars, the order was changed to 6 p.m. The first doubts assailed them in Metz when a chance encounter with a British R.T.O. brought the warning that if they were not gone from there by nightfall they would not get through—the bridges would be blown up—and were deepened, when they met Madame de Wendel, by her crushed demeanour as she gave them a new rendezvous in Neufchateau. Doubts changed to horror as they heard, over the radio, at dinner in a Metz hotel, Paul Reynaud's almost hysterical "final appeal" for help to America. So, before midnight, they were off once more on the congested, aeroplane-menaced road to Nancy, jammed in, in utter darkness, among retreating British-Indian mule transport, French Army camions, and endless streams of refugees in cars and carts. The story of the nightmare retreat of the two cars, which became separated at Dijon, is told in the classic brief diary of Prance and in Morgan's informal detailed description on pp. 14 to 20 of the *News-Letter*. Macfie's Vauxhall 14, with Inglis, Morgan, Howard Smith and Mrs. Robinson up, reached Bordeaux after a 750 miles drive, on the 16th. Abandoning the car on the quayside, they secured passage in a small collier, the *Rhineland*, along with 150 other refugees, including thirty British soldiers and a wounded airman, whose injuries Inglis and Howard Smith dressed daily, and which brought them safely to Falmouth. It was a five days' voyage, without lifebelts or convoy, which began with a bombing attack that sank the refugee ship ahead of theirs. At Falmouth they found themselves within a few miles of the Cornish home of Mrs. Ivens-Knowles, who took them back there for most welcome food, baths, and beds. Prance's Standard Nine, being one night behind (they had had to stop owing to a bad malarial attack which struck Percival down at Dijon) was obliged to go on from Bordeaux to Bayonne, which this party reached on June 19th, to find a British Consulate still open, and a Dutch ship that brought them into Plymouth by June 21st, where they were detained on board for two days.

Meanwhile, the first rumours of a separate peace having reached Anderson and Lewis on June 15th, they decided, on the 17th, to make an effort to reach England, and, by dint of firmness and patience, secured papers at La Rochelle and persuaded a British military party to allow them on

board a small collier that the B.E.F. had commandeered at La Palisse. Four nights later they put in at Newport, Monmouth. The following passage, quoted from Lorna Lewis's moving account in *Life and Letters To-Day* (August, 1940), gives a *camera obscura* picture of the French civilian reaction to the Armistice:—

"A. and I, after a morning spent fruitlessly searching for our Consul, and transporting sick refugees in various directions, went into the main street to find some food. Suddenly, people rushed out from shops and houses, tears on the faces of men and women alike. Pétain has asked for an armistice! . . . The army is to cease fire. It cannot be true. . . . They will be here soon . . . what will become of us and of our children. . . . And our poor soldiers. . . . At first they gathered in groups, some sobbing, others silent, numbed with despair. Then within half an hour the crowds of soldiers, sailors, refugees, inhabitants, seemed to have completely disappeared. An awful, pitiful hush fell over the noisy town. Our footsteps echoed as though we walked in a city of the dead. . . ."

An account of the journey of Rolt, who reported to Madame de Wendel's house in Paris on June 10th to be taken to Metz to join the Mouzaia Canteen in a car that was to travel to Metz that day, supplies first-hand testimony to the bewilderment and shame with which the French people heard the unexpected news, as also to the warm feelings of refugees and common soldiers alike for their British allies.

On July 10th, 1940, the full Committee held their thirteenth meeting, when Inglis and Morgan were invited to be present. The resignation of the Honorary Treasurer, Grandage, who was leaving London, was accepted. Morgan reported the visit that she and Inglis had paid to M. le Barthe, at General de Gaulle's Free French headquarters, and the interview that followed with Mrs. Spears, who, as head at that period of the General's organization for using the services of British women volunteers (she subsequently went to Africa), informed them that further offers of help must be made officially through the executive officers of an organized body, and who, in response to their inquiry, suggested a date when it would be convenient to receive the Honorary Secretary of Royaumont Canteens and discuss with her the question of transferring the canteen and its staff to General de Gaulle's Army. The Chairman, meanwhile, reminded the Committee by telegram that no such step could be taken without the sanction of the Présidente d'honneur (under whose name, as présidente, Royaumont Canteen funds had been collected). The Committee formed the opinion that a Royaumont S.W.H. Canteen, serving as such and controlled by themselves,

would not be welcomed by Mrs. Spears, and the suggested interview did not take place. Disappointed at what appeared to themselves, fresh home from Lorraine and ignorant of the situation in London, as an opportunity for service with the Free French Forces lost (since M. le Barthe had asked them if they could start work at once), Inglis and Morgan resigned their position as heads of the canteen in order that they might be free to accept any other immediate war work that offered. The Free French representatives in London have since felt the need for some central organization, and the Association des Amis des Volontaires Français, under the presidency of Lord Tyrrell, and with Lord de la Warr as Chairman of the Executive Committee, Lord Ivor Spencer Churchill and Capitaine Hesse as joint Honorary Secretaries, "exclusively authorised by General de Gaulle, has now been set up in London to co-ordinate all offers of help and to centralize all gifts emanating from Great Britain and from abroad sent to him for the welfare of the volunteers". This Association's object—to quote again from its leaflet—"is to establish a link between organizations and individuals, whatever their nationality, who wish to extend moral and material help to the French Volunteers and their families". (Further particulars will be found on p. 3 of the *News-Letter*.)

The last meeting of the Committee to be held took place on August 7th, 1940. Cicely Hamilton was in the chair, and there were present Smieton, Tollit and Mackay. The Vice-Chairman agreed to act as Hon. Treasurer *pro tem*. Suggestions for work among French naval ratings were discussed.

Members of the Royaumont Association and subscribers to the canteen will know that the aerial Battle of Britain, on the issue of which hung the German plan for a September invasion of England, followed. The Honorary Secretary of the Canteen Committee accepted a clerkship in the Ministry of Information and was sent to Inverness; Smieton had to leave her house in Sussex, taken over by the Army, and go with her husband to his post in Wales. Only Cicely Hamilton, and Tollit, of the Committee, were left in London, and members will be aware of the practical difficulties in getting to and from the capital, up to time, and also of the authorities' discouragement of all non-essential travelling. The object of the Committee had been to render help to our old allies, the French. There still remained funds in the bank. Miss Hamilton, therefore, carried on, single-handed, doing her best to place the available volunteers where help was still needed, no easy task in view of the absence

of any central organization for the co-ordination of offers of help from the various private bodies anxious to support the Free French after the French collapse.

However, at Oulton Park, Cheshire, there were encamped French naval ratings, whose ships had been prevented from falling into the hands of the enemy by the British Navy. These men, having opted against remaining with their former allies and serving in the Free French Naval Forces, were detained until such time as they could be sent back safely to unoccupied France. The importance of any canteen, staffed by members of the Royaumont Unit of 1914-19, who had gone back to serve with the French Army, twenty-five years later, operating among these home-sick, bewildered men who were a prey to anxiety about their relatives, needs no elaboration. "Betty" Macpherson was given charge of a canteen at Oulton Park, with Percival and Howard Smith as helpers. This started at the beginning of September, 1940, and closed down only when the men—mere boys, most of them, and mainly from Brittany—returned home convinced that the future freedom of Occupied France, which includes their own *pays*, depended on a British victory, and, as they averred, determined to do all that lay in their power to further the good cause. These lads, to-day, are probably among those re-enlisted by Admiral Darlan for service in the French war-ships based on the African and Indo-China ports, whose officers are presumed to favour the Montoire policy of co-operating economically with their former enemy, Germany, still engaged in a life and death struggle with their former ally Britain, and the Free French naval units. The Breton fishermen and peasants, from whom the French naval ratings are predominantly drawn, are lovers of liberty who still recall with bitterness the Roman occupation of more than five centuries ago, and are likely to rate the cause of France above the cause of the ambitious politicians of Vichy and their Gascon "leader". The work accomplished at Oulton Park may prove to have been quite as important for the Entente as that of the Lorraine canteens.

At Portsmouth, Macfie was given the management of the Allied Sailors' Club in which Lady James, wife of the Commander-in-Chief, Portsmouth, was especially interested. Macfie wrote that she considered this work, for men cut off from their homes and country, a trust. She is enthusiastic about the Free French sailors themselves, whom she described as "loyal, spirited, brave, intelligent, conscious of having made a vital choice for the right". She had the help of

Vereker and Howard Smith in this work. The staff of the club was personally thanked by General de Gaulle and by Admiral Muselier, on behalf of their men. The first home of the club, unhappily, was burned out in one of the fierce air-raids on the port, but it was re-opened in new quarters, and carried on there. Fresh damage has since been sustained, and as the attendances dwindled, Macfie found that there was no further need for her services. With her departure from Portsmouth the last of the Royaumont Canteens staff has ceased to do work officially in the name of the Canteen Committee.

As we go to press a new suggestion by Commandant Simon, of the Free French Headquarters Staff, made to Mrs. Ivens-Knowles during his official visit to Cornwall, when he was her guest, is under consideration. This is that something should be done for the French fishermen who came over in their boats, with their families, to Penzance, when the enemy occupied Brittany. The games equipment from the Oulton Park Canteen is being sent to Penzance by Miss Hamilton as a beginning.

This record of the Royamont Canteens, whose deficiencies and gaps are due to its having been pieced together by the acting-editor of the *News-Letter* (who was not a member of the Committee), in the absence of the Honorary Secretary, from the Minutes, and from material supplied by the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and members of the canteens staffs, will give subscribers some idea of the really big achievement of those pioneer members of the Royaumont Association who organized the Committee, and of those who were able to help them with active service or with money. It has been accomplished as the fruit of a very small sowing, and despite the catastrophies of defeat and the difficulties arising out of political schism in the country of the ally whose people Royamont came into being to support and to whom it still is faithful to-day. Members of the Association of Royaumont's "old comrades" will be glad to have the assurance of this record that Royaumont has not failed to hold out a friendly hand to the sons of the generation whose comrades they were in the World War of 1914. Thus, some of our number have been privileged to carry out the Royaumont Association's purpose, expressed in the *News-Letter's* motto, "to maintain and strengthen our war-time comradeship", in a sense even wider than that which was originally envisaged. May that sense of comradeship grow in depth and amplitude till the Franco-British Entente lives again, wholly supported on both sides of the Channel, that

should link and not divide the two great freedom-loving nations of North-West Europe.

FRANCES IVENS-KNOWLES,  
Chairman of Committee.

#### Note to Subscribers to the Royaumont S.W.H. Canteen Unit

This record of the work done by the Royaumont Canteen Committee and its staff, together with a statement of accounts and a list of subscribers, has been published in the Royaumont Association's *News-Letter* because the Honorary Treasurer *pro tem.* was unable to sanction payment for a full printed report from the Canteen Committee's funds without first obtaining the authorization of the Committee, and this Committee has not met since August, 1940. The Honorary Treasurer of the Royaumont Association gave the acting-editor a limit which she was not to exceed for the production of a double number of the *News-Letter*. The record, with the stories of individual members of the staffs, has cost £20 for sufficient copies to circulate to all subscribers, whether or not members of the Association (these last receive it as an extract from our *News-Letter*). There is therefore a charge of £20 to be met. Will those subscribers who approve of the acting-editor's action in incurring this expense kindly send a donation to Tollit, the Association's Honorary Treasurer, at 12, Woodchurch Road, London, N.W.6, as a practical expression of their approval? Otherwise the total expense will fall on a private guarantor who will be seriously inconvenienced and who is already among the most generous supporters of the canteens. Subscribers who are not members of our Association and who feel that a report is a legitimate expense should so inform the acting Hon. Treasurer Canteens Committee, c/o the Editor, who will forward their authorization to Miss Hamilton.

#### Four Crowded Months

##### Morgan's Story of the Royaumont Canteens in Lorraine and the Escape of their Staffs from the Germans

On February 15th, 1940, Inglis and I were seen off at Victoria by the Canteen Committee and Merrylees. They said our uniform of dark blue (rather like the A.F.S.), with "S.W.H." letters on the shoulders and a thistle brooch on our caps, looked very smart. We

#### Scottish Women's Hospital (Royaumont) Canteen

Statement of Receipts and Payments from January 1st, 1940, to March 31st, 1941

Dr.	£ s. d.	Cr.	£ s. d.
TO SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS ETC. ...	1,118 11 2		
		BY GENERAL EXPENSES:	
		Uniforms, Brooches etc. ...	£42 9 6
		LESS Refunds etc. ...	2 10 3
			39 13 3
		Printing, Stationery, Postages etc. ...	21 11 3
			61 4 6
		.. CANTEENS IN FRANCE:	
		Amounts remitted from Headquarters for Equipment and Expenses ...	£305 3 0
		LESS—Refunds £61 4 7	
		Canteen Sales 58 18 0	
			120 2 7
		Workers' Expenses, Travelling etc. ...	£71 2 9
		LESS Refunds ...	31 2 4
			40 0 5
		Compensation to Workers for Loss of Personal Equipment and Cars ...	260 0 0
			485 0 10
		.. OULTON CANTEEN:	
		Furnishing, Equipment etc. ...	£59 9 10
		LESS Sales ...	4 0 0
			55 9 10
		General Expenses, Travelling, Postages etc. ...	19 4 0
		Workers' Expenses ...	£75 15 10
		LESS Refunds ...	42 0 0
			33 15 10
		Goods purchased for re-sale ...	32 12 3
			141 1 11
		LESS Sales of Provisions etc. ...	49 4 6
			91 17 5
		.. PORTSMOUTH CANTEEN:	
		Grant for Equipment (Lady James) ...	10 0 0
		Workers' Expenses ...	12 18 0
			22 18 0
		.. BALANCES 31st MARCH 1941:	
		At Bank ...	456 11 1
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carried hand luggage containing indoor uniform of light blue gingham—like our Royaumont indoor uniform—with veils of the same colour to wear in the canteen. We got to Paris late that night and put up at the "Terminus Nord" so familiar to all old Royaumontites. Snow fell heavily and it was bitterly cold. In the morning we met Madame de Wendel for lunch, who arranged for us to go to her chateau near Briey in Lorraine, whence she could show us the surrounding villages for us to choose the most suitable site for our canteen. We decided to get our equipment in Paris. The Dames de France—of whose Lorraine Branch

Madame de Wendel was President—advised us what to buy and we spent two strenuous days shopping, and being entertained between whiles, as when a luncheon was given for us at the Auto Club de France to enable us to meet influential people interested in our venture, among whom was the Duchesse de Noailles, who was delighted to recall memories of Royaumont. It is with pride that I record that not one single purchase—30-litre marmites, miles of *toile cirée*, tape measures, packets of pins, ash trays, coffee bowls, curtain rings and what not—proved to be unnecessary.

We had been guests at the comfortable house of our



Présidente d'honneur, the Vicomtesse de la Panouse, opposite the Invalides, during this orgy of shopping. We were met when we reached Metz and taken to Madame de Wendel's chateau for the night. The next day she took us to Metz, where we had business to arrange at the Crédit Lyonnais, and then, due east from the city, in the Zone des Armées, through the Zone interdite, and fifty kilometres into the Zone fortifiée. It was lovely country, deep under snow, and the villages had heavenly names, always ending in "anges": Elvanges, Flétranges, Morhanges, Créhanges, and at each one of them we wanted to have a canteen! Everywhere there were soldiers, guns, horses, ammunition carts, but never a place for the men to go to write their letters or be at peace. At the end of the day we came to a queer mushroom growth of a place on the rolling plains. It was a coal mine, constructed by the Germans as part of war reparations. There was a magnificent building, boasting the highest chimney in Europe: it showed up for miles. One kilometre distant, at Mouzaia, were the workmen's quarters: Hansel-and-Gretel-like houses with deeply overhanging eaves and shutters painted in the brightest shades of green, blue, pink and orange. Here there was a girls' school of which the upper storey of the right wing of a large E-shaped building, consisting of three very large rooms and a small kitchen opening on to a wide corridor, had been commandeered for a *foyer*, and then abandoned before the arrangements had been completed. It was perfect for our purpose and we decided on it directly we went over it. We were promised the use of an empty house nearby, which the Army undertook to furnish for us at once with things from the evacuated countryside forming the No-Man's-Land between the Maginot and Siegfried Lines. The nearest point of the Maginot Line was the coal mine itself, a kilometre distant, in which there was a fort. So we were easily the most advanced canteen, or, as a Church of England padre was to put it, later, the most forward ladies in France!

There we were, then, with our site chosen. All we had to do now was to wait for our house to be furnished, our purchases to come by lorry from Paris, our funds to arrive from London, and—most urgent of all—for a car and more staff to come out to us. Meanwhile we stayed at the hotel belonging to the mine, now used as a mess by the mobilized mine staff, about a mile away. We walked over to the canteen daily and had endless interviews. We found the Military prepared to welcome us; promises of co-operation and help were showered on us. Everything was rosy, and intensely exciting. Our clientèle was to be drawn from various units, about 3,000 strong, including men from the Line itself. We were to serve beer, wine (red and white), coffee, chocolate, and, in summer, *sirops*. Also gigantic sandwiches: a yard of bread cut into seven portions, sliced, with pieces of sausage, ham, paté, galantine, or cheese, inserted. Prices, according to the cost for the entire ham, cheese, or galantine, had to be estimated before we could work out a scale of charges. We had no slicing machine, and it was difficult to be sure of cutting identical thicknesses, so it was a tricky business! We were also to provide cakes and madeleines, which

would be obtainable on Fridays and Sundays. (These proved very popular!) We were given the right to ask for orderlies from the Army as need might arise. We began, modestly, by asking for one. Actually, we soon had to have eight!

It was ten days before we got into our house. But before our furniture came, our Paris purchases arrived, and we checked them there at our leisure. The furniture arrived in two lorries. What an assortment! Six bedsteads, three spring mattresses, one feather bed, four pillows, a jumble lot of odd jugs and basins and dressing-tables—and an endless procession of *tables de nuit*. Nine to be exact; all empty. We had to fit up four upstairs, and one downstairs, bedrooms, a large sitting-room and a kitchen. Only three bed-springs fitted their frames. I had the downstairs room and was lucky to have a huge, new bed, too large to go up the stairs. Inglis, upstairs, had to sleep till the day we left on a spring with no bedstead at all. Installed in our own house, we set to work to make black-out curtains, dusters and dish cloths, and to cover our canteen tables with the gay *toile ciré* in blue, red, yellow and green. The next excitement was the arrival of Percival, Betty Macpherson (Mrs. Bruce) and Mrs. Robinson, and glad we were to see them! They were caught up at once in the maelstrom of cleaning and arranging. The kitchen walls were being pierced for stove-pipes, and a sink was being fixed. We hoped that—some day—water and electricity might also materialise. By lorry-hopping we had contrived to visit Metz to arrange for a weekly delivery of wine and beer, and to procure a zinc-covered bar with the necessary taps and appliances for *bière à la pression* with ice. We made a storeroom at the end of the passage for our sacks of coffee and sugar, and the various barrels, hams and cheeses. But the Army did not produce the water and electricity! In despair we announced that we should open on Easter Sunday with or without them. The threat worked. On Sunday morning water began to flow, lights to burn, and stoves to smoke—albeit in rather half-hearted fashion! The "Foyer de Royaumont" was open.

Had we waited for the officially suggested opening ceremony we might have gone on waiting and hoping. So we just put up a notice outside with "Foyer ouvert" on it. The result surpassed anything we had ever imagined in our wildest flights of fancy. At times the pandemonium was a blend of Mafeking and Boatrice nights in Piccadilly! We were inundated. The whole French Army seemed to be there with one gigantic thirst. We were all rather shattered by the experience, but as the novelty wore off the men settled into their stride, and we ourselves learned how to cope with the situation, and all went with a swing. Our daily clientèle averaged 1,000. We worked in relays, never less than two at a time, usually three, and at rush hours we were all there. We also ran a little shop, presided over by Robinson; this was much appreciated, as the nearest shops were five kilometres away, and out of bounds. Here the men could buy razors, writing paper, chocolate, braces and the hundred and one little things men need. We had our work cut out to keep up our stock. We were greatly

handicapped by the lack of a car, but spirits rose when news came that Macfie had arrived in France with her car, bringing with her Howard Smith. She and her car proved to be invaluable. Transport had been entirely lacking. Distances were great. Now, however, we were able to get a daily delivery of bread from Faulquemont and of cakes from Morhanges, and we were able to get our stores out from Metz. We were also able to arrange a concert one Sunday, through the kindness of a well-known Paris opera singer and a party of friends. And we, in turn, were enabled to go to a marionette show given by the 39th Artilleurs in the Maginot Line, at the mine, where, by request, we made a collection for charity.

The canteen was now a going concern, paying well, and very popular. Madame de Wendel asked us to take over another at Créhanges, two kilometres distant, that had been run by the men themselves but had proved quite inadequate to their needs. So Percival and Macpherson got billets in a nice house and some fresh equipment was ordered from Paris, and we got down to the job of refurbishing the large dark stable in which the canteen had been housed. A colour-wash of pale yellow on the walls, bright *toile ciré* on the counter that ran along the platform at the far end, and gay curtains, did wonders. Tables were repainted, and others covered with oil-cloth. Posters covered defects in the walls. Papers and books and games were spread about. One corner of the room was set apart for writing. At Mouzaia we had a big writing room with blue-covered tables with red and orange blotting paper, and writing pads—given by Tollit, and immensely popular—and we supplied blocks to the men at Créhanges also. The Games room at Mouzaia had billiards, darts, ping-pong, draughts, jigsaw puzzles, and a kind of table football that was very popular. Percival presented Créhanges with a ping-pong table and we supplied them with table games. After the second canteen had duly opened, France arrived with her car, and then our staff was complete. She joined the Créhanges party and thus they became self-supporting with their own transport.

All this time we had been living in great comfort at Mouzaia with a little maidservant coming in daily to cook for us, and very well she did cook, too. Now, suddenly, one night, an order came that all women, children and civilians were to be evacuated into the interior, and with the others went our Ermine. It was a major disaster for us who were working at high pressure and quite unable to add household chores to our canteen duties. France stepped nobly into the breach and undertook our housekeeping and cooking. It had already become difficult to obtain any orderlies. A big battle was on at Forbach, and troops were moving north to help in the Battle of France. All the men from no-man's-land were withdrawn into the Maginot Line. Then one day, when we were in our villa, there came without warning an ear-splitting uproar; every window rattled and the walls shook. It was not an air-raid, we knew, because the siren was just up the road (one day it went twenty-one times) and made a deafening noise. We soon learned that it was one of our own guns, firing,

from behind us, on a mass of Germans in no-man's-land. And it was the beginning of a period of shattering noise, night and day. The guns behind us were so close that we could hear the command to fire being given. This was no joke. The blast forced open our locked back-door at night, and we had to sleep with cottonwool in our ears. Then one day a German shell whizzed into the woods behind us. All the other Association des Dames de France Canteens had been closed for a fortnight past and the women sent back, and we feared this was the beginning of the end for us as well. How we hated the word "evacuation"! However, we knew it would be wise to be prepared so we each packed into a handbag the essentials for a journey, and anything else we did not want to lose we hopefully packed into a suitcase which we locked, labelled, and addressed to 31 Markham Square! We each carried a certain amount of money on us in case of need, and awaited events. We had no idea of how France was faring in the war, as latterly all English wireless news had been jammed, and the French broadcasts told us practically nothing. The men's morale was sky-high; only twice did I hear a soldier say "I am afraid". Looking back, now, I wonder that we were so obtuse. Perhaps our desire to stay blinded us to the march of events. When the order finally came to leave I still thought it was because we were being shelled.

The order to evacuate came while we were at tea on the afternoon of June 13th. An officer brought the news from G.H.Q. and told us we must be gone by 7 p.m. Two and a half hours seemed ample time. We sent Macfie to warn the Créhanges party, and set to work to leave the Villa d'Ecosse in a state likely to reflect credit on the memory of "les dames écossaises". As we were loading Macfie's car a fresh order came: we must be gone by 6 o'clock. I have been told, since—and hope it is true—that the French intended to blow up the coal mine buildings and machinery before the Germans arrived. We just had time to go to the canteen and say goodbye to our remaining two orderlies (volunteers) and to make over to them the foodstuffs in our larder and some personal souvenirs. We hated leaving. The men had always said: "As long as the dames écossaises are here we know that all is well!" A message had been received from Madame de Wendel that we were to report to the Vice-President of the A.D.F. in Metz, where we would receive instructions where to go to re-form and start another canteen in a place to be allotted to us. We determined to spend the night in Metz, have hot baths, visit the hairdresser, and do some sightseeing, which we had so far never had leisure to do. We five, squeezed into Macfie's Vauxhall 14, trysted to meet the Créhanges party, packed into Frances' Standard Nine, at the Hotel Royal, and have dinner together. On arrival there we found the hotel had put up its shutters and that the staff had gone. So we went to another—the Europe, I think—and with difficulty persuaded the proprietor, who was leaving next day, to take us in for the night. He could give us neither baths nor dinner and advised against unloading the car. We got some dinner at a restaurant opposite and, as we ate, heard Paul Reynaud's appeal for help, to America. Then,

leaving the others, Inglis and I set off to find the Vice-President, A.D.F., and eventually ran her to earth at her home. She was agitatedly packing up to leave at 3 a.m. and advised us to leave not later than the following afternoon. In a whisper she told us that the A.D.F. rendezvous was Neufchateau. By this time it was already 9 p.m. and we had to hurry to get back to our hotel before curfew.

In the street, outside, Howard Smith was waiting. The others had met a British R.T.O. who said that if we did not leave Metz immediately we should not get out as the bridges were being blown up. We did not manage to track down the Créhanges party, which had put up at another hotel on finding the Hotel Royal closed, till 10.30. They were in bed and very bored at being got up! However, by 11 p.m. both cars were slowly working their way out of the city on the Nancy road. The traffic was dense. We were held up by mule waggons, which, afterwards, we found out were our own Indian transport. The road was packed with vehicles of all kinds, civilian and military. We crawled, practically without lights. There were German aeroplanes overhead, so there were constant shouts of "lumières!". We reached Nancy at 4 a.m., knocked up an hotel and insisted on having beds, and ordered breakfast for 7.45. After a good, if short, sleep, Howard Smith and I sallied forth to buy food for the day, leaving the others to settle the bill and load up. The townsfolk were in a panicky state, many crying, others with the wind up, badly. Still, we had seen the same sort of thing in Metz after the Germans first started shelling the town with long-range guns (the shells used to pass over our heads, at Mouzaia), so did not take much notice. We set off at 10 a.m. The roads were again crowded with cars full of refugees, their luggage piled high, and always with a mattress tied on the roof. Every conceivable kind of vehicle was there, petrol-driven and horse-drawn, and the poorer refugees trudged along pushing handcarts, prams, bicycles, all laden with household goods of nondescript order, pathetic *lares* and *penates*, mingled with dogs, cats, goats, birds in cages and hens in coops. Overhead flew waves of German planes, and we passed many a bomb hole in the fields and on the road verges.

About noon we drew near to Neufchateau. It had been heavily and systematically bombed during the night and early morning hours, and the town was in a turmoil. Ambulances and Service de Santé vehicles were dashing about in all directions. I was told that I might find the Dames de France if I went to the *Place* where the Mairie had been. Inglis and I set off amongst the débris and broken glass, and, as we picked our way, suddenly saw a grey, anxious face, peering out of a shop door—the Vice-President. She was distraught after a terrible night spent in a cellar sheltering from bombs and machine gun bullets, and, indeed, the last of the raiders was still overhead. She frankly admitted that she did not know what to do. Her car was out of action, and they were helpless. As both our cars were packed, we could do nothing for her. I said we would return to England until the A.D.F. had reorganized, and that

we would make for Havre. She told us that the Germans were reported at Havre, and that the only port open to us would be Bordeaux. That piece of information was the first and last bit of help we got in making our journey. Rejoining the others, we consulted France's Carte Taride, and selected a route by way of Chaumont, Dijon and Périgueux. We sent the little car ahead, to set the pace, and arranged to stop at 1 o'clock for a picnic meal. We then met two British Tommies, who told us how they had spent the night in a ditch, sheltering from the raiders, how their car had been hit, and that the Chaumont road had been bombed out of existence. As it was the only one leading to Dijon, we decided to risk it. It was in a terrible mess, with burning cars and buses lying in heaps at all angles, and the banks on both sides pitted with bomb craters. Still, we always found just room to pass between the burning cars. Macfie, who was at the wheel from start to finish of this nightmarish drive, piloted us like an angel. That day was, indeed, one long nightmare. Always there were the unending streams of refugees. Sometimes their cars had broken down; sometimes their horse lay dead in the ditch, the distracted family grouped around the laden cart, looking vainly for help. Every village we passed had houses that were still burning fiercely, and more bomb craters. Once we were stopped by an officer and told to turn back to Neufchateau as the bridge ahead had been blown up. Then, indeed, our hearts sank. I doubt if we could have gone back and repassed those scenes. An Army lorry, passing at this moment, offered to give us a lead. We gladly followed and found the bridge still standing. We were lucky in finding a petrol pump along the road whose owner was just on the point of joining the never-ending stream of refugees, so he was glad to sell us a tank-full. During this delay we lost sight of the other car, but hoped to overtake it further on. We were forced to make constant détours, as the road was either being shelled, or was required by the military. At one cross-roads, 1½ kilometres from Langres, a soldier was holding up the stream of civilian refugees and endeavouring to let over a score of military cars full of officers pass. We, with the other civilians, were here obliged to make a loop of 50 kilometres. Next day we heard that the Germans were in Langres at the time, and had we held to the main road we should have driven straight into an advanced column of their motorized units and tanks. The numerous refugees on foot probably carried on and did walk into them. It was here that we were joined by the other car and were able to give them some much-needed food, which had to be eaten as we went along, as there was no possibility of getting out. We plodded on together, often at a foot's pace, and reached Dijon about 7 p.m.

We got some dinner, after a long wait, at a restaurant. Percival was completely exhausted, and looked very ill, and we feared was in for another bout of malaria. The town was packed to overflowing. It was hopeless to think of getting beds for us all, but a minor miracle provided a single room for the Créhanges party. It was hateful to leave them behind, but Percival could not go on. We gave them our route and promised to leave

messages with the British Consul at Bordeaux, and hoped they would get through. We divided up our Army petrol coupons before leaving. Each party had plenty of money, since, for the last two weeks, we had not banked our canteen takings, but had distributed the money between us. (We were able to hand it over to the Vicomtesse de la Panouse on our return to London.) We said goodbye and set off about 9 p.m. in the rain. We passed through Beaune and several other little villages, but not a bed was to be had. At one large hotel we were offered the use of one armchair! So when we could go on no further, we put the car into a side road, and huddled inside it to shelter from the wet for the remaining hours of darkness. I won't say we slept. At 4.30 a.m. we started again, and, at some station that must be nameless, as we never discovered where we were, we got a cup of coffee each at the A.D.F. *foyer*, and then carried on to Macon, where we breakfasted. All that day we drove through a lovely countryside still completely peaceful, and, in many places, still free from refugees. On we went all day, through the Puy de Dôme, Clermont Ferrand, Roanne, Cluny and Tulle into the Dordogne, and there, late that night, we lay down in a pine wood near the river in the moonlight and rising mist, and slept, with nightingales singing. Inglis and I huddled together under one military cloak, quite unable to get warm. We arose, stiff, at 5 a.m. and made for Périgueux and breakfast, and then on towards Bordeaux.

Bordeaux was a seething mass of refugees from every part of France. Every British Unit left in France was there, and the Consulate was packed out. We fought our way in and put our names down on the list for the next boat leaving for England. We had to report hourly for sailing orders. There seemed no hope of getting beds. The whole of France appeared to be in Bordeaux! Thanks, however, to the kind offices of a member of the Leave Club in Paris, we all got somewhere to stretch our weary lengths: two in a flat above the Consulate, one in the concierge's room, and Howard Smith and I shared a mattress on the floor in a passage. That night we were told that the boat would be leaving the next day (Monday) and that we must take with us provisions for five days. Not too easy on a Sunday night! We got some dinner at a nearby restaurant, and, while dining, ordered two chickens to be cooked and three dozen eggs to be hard boiled, and yards of bread and kilos of butter and cheese to be ready by the following morning. I think we all slept heavily that night, and in the morning we headed the queue for boat permits, and then, off we went, with our supplies of provender to the *Rhineland*, a small collier. It was a poignant moment when we turned our backs on the car that had brought us so gallantly through so many perils, and we all felt the utmost sympathy for Macfie for having to abandon her like that. They had together brought us 750 miles to safety, and it was a sad, if unavoidable, ending to the adventure.

The *Rhineland's* normal complement was twenty-six. To this we added an assortment of 150 refugees, so the congestion was great. We were lucky enough to be given

two cabins between us, and pleasant it was to have a place of refuge and a bed. Still, I hope I shall never have to share a ship's narrow bunk again with Howard Smith! She was as accommodating as possible, but her legs seemed to be unending! Doubtless mine did, too. After the news of the Armistice had been made public, we up-anchored. Many of the rough dockers were in tears, and so was our pilot. Our own hearts were heavy as we steamed to the mouth of the Gironde. Here we anchored just in time for an air raid, when a German plane, aiming at the oil tanks, bombed, as we learned later, the refugee boat ahead of ours. We slept so soundly that night that we failed to hear him come back about 1 a.m. to drop more bombs, and to be driven off by our own A.A. fire. We all slept late, waking only when the inner man demanded food. A visit to the cook's galley produced boiling water for our tea in a brown tea-pot loaned by the first engineer. I would like to take this opportunity of putting on record our gratitude for the unfailing kindness we received from all the officers and crew of this collier. The first officer and the first engineer each offered us their cabins, and did everything possible to make us comfortable. Their anxiety must have been acute. We were one of about twenty ships straggling their way to England not in convoy, without boats or lifebelts for their human cargo. Yet they were always gay and cheerful. The passengers were a motley crowd including every type of person. There were rich bankers, business folk of all kinds, and one well-known Paris dress designer, a precious young man, travelling with his valet. Amongst them were some thirty soldiers, rescued at the eleventh hour from an outlying camp a hundred kilometres from Bordeaux, and a wounded airman. The cabin shared by Inglis and Macfie became a kind of C.C.S. for these men, and they and Howard Smith had regular surgery hours, and did noble work in the best Royaumont tradition.

So ended what the entire Unit hopes may be the first chapter of the story of the Royaumont Canteens. I voice the thought of every member of it when I say that we ask nothing better than to have another chance of working for the Free French Forces at present in this country, and, later, to follow them to France to help in the rebirth of that lovely country. If ever there was a time when the value of Royaumont's professed friendship for her could be shown, it is NOW. France is in desperate need. May we prove her friend in deed.

### Metz to Bayonne

#### France's Diary of the Drive

June 13th.—Was my first "day off" after the midday meal. I had been cook to the eight since our small maid was evacuated. I was tired out. We had tea at 3.15 and the others said they would wake me when they got in at nine o'clock. I came in from the garden to get my book, to find Macfie with a message: the Etat Majeur

had sent word we were to be away by 6 p.m. Drove Percival to her military office to verify; they had no news and did not want us to go. Drove her up to see Morgan, who confirmed that we all had to go at once. Went home, packed car. Went up to get the house-keeping money from the Villa. The other car went off at 5.45. We followed at 6 p.m. Morgan told us to meet her at Hotel Royal, Metz. The hotel was shut. No message. I tried to find the Dames de France, but failed. Took them to Hotel Globe, which I knew, and which is close to my garage. Supped and went to bed. Morgan came: we were to go on at once. The British R.T.O. had told her our only chance was Bordeaux as fast as we could. She had to report to Dames de France at Chateaufort near Nancy. We drove through the night to Nancy, among Army convoys, all, like ourselves, leaving the Front. No lights allowed, and only inches between wheels. Two hours in bed.

14th.—On to Dijon. Neufchateau had been bombed one hour before we reached it. Houses were burning, and a convoy of ambulances close to the railway. It was anxious work getting our petrol tanks past: one driver lay dead, another standing guard over him. Reached Dijon about 7 p.m. and dined. Percival felt too ill to go on. Morgan was anxious at leaving us, but I agreed with her it was the only thing to do. She found one bed in a hotel for Percival.

15th.—Percival was all right in the morning to my relief. Unhappily hundreds of cars had passed us in the night, congesting roads and devouring petrol. I only could make forty miles in six hours closest driving. Slept Autun, Grand Place, I on ground, the other two in the car. An English driver in the night advised me to keep up via Chateaufort as the road was so much better, avoiding the mountains via Limoges, etc. I said it was too near the Germans. He said "they have got all they want with Paris and will work out East and down inside the Maginot Line". But I was sure they would continue towards Bordeaux to trap the Government. So took out South. The Germans were in Dijon on the 15th, Autun and Chateaufort on 16th. We should have met them at Chateaufort!

16th.—Off at 6 a.m. Passed an electric power station: no water power, so they must have a petrol store. They refused petrol but told me there was a military petrol station in G—a few miles on. Found the station, but they refused petrol all day. They kept coming to ask: "When are you going on?", to which I replied steadily—as soon as they gave me petrol, or enabled me to buy it. This went on from 9.30 till 6.30 p.m. At last an officer shouted at me: "Go up the street, first right, first left. Vanier, Wine Merchant, will sell you some." M. Vanier was an old dear. He said he would sell me two gallons. I spent five minutes talking. He gave way to four gallons, and told his son to give it me. He stopped at four gallons, and said that is all. I said she will just hold one more gallon, and it would halve my strain to have a tank full! His heart softened, and he gave it me. The old father then said he couldn't bear our getting no rest, and would give us two beds. I gratefully accepted and brought all up after dinner at

hotel. We got to bed at 10 p.m. At 11 p.m. he woke us. His son had news. The Germans were one hour behind us: the bridges over the Loire twenty-five miles ahead were due to be blown up in two hours. We went on at once. Here I was obliged to jettison my suitcase as I was too cluttered up as to controls to do such a drive in the dark with no lights and having to jump out and search names on sign posts with a torch. The old man gave me two village names to memorize. We met a French officer with convoy who had lost his way. He seized my torch to search his map. I told him Loire bridge and Moulins were behind him and he must turn his convoy (half a mile of camions) and follow me. We did not see him again. In due course made the bridge and were safe. The Loire delayed the Germans as they had to establish bridge heads. The black hour, 2.45 to 3.45 a.m., I took to sleep at wheel on grass verge.

17th.—About 9 a.m. I went to sleep, driving, so had to pull up for half an hour by roadside. On till 6.30 p.m. when I must have slept some seconds at the wheel, for the little car, when I woke, had put herself on left of road, where she was purring along as straight as a die. Time to stop! I found a farm with huge barn, and very kind folk. Put car and selves in barn; they fed us on eggs and huge bowls of milk, and we slept on golden straw.

18th.—On towards Bordeaux. Decided to sleep at farm again. Found one in the rain. Made arrangements, garaged car, went in to supper in big kitchen. The *patron* had just had official news "the Germans would be there that night and he was to keep all his people quiet and on the farm". We went on at once. Drove till about 2 a.m. when, at M—the sentry stopped us and said we were not to move further. Garaged car on a *place*, and slept, all three, in her, as it poured. Was thankful to be forcibly stopped!

19th.—We could not find chief of military police till 10 o'clock. He refused permission. At last he told Percival: "Oh, go on then and be quick about it!" We were! Reached Bordeaux about midday to find British Consulate shut up and a notice on the door: "All British subjects advised to go to Bayonne." Running at thirty-five I could not keep awake. I accelerated to fifty-five and kept myself forcibly awake. Found food. Hotel very abusive to British. Heavy thunderstorms forced me to find garage. They let us sleep on floor, by car, two nights. Fight for passport business, and for boat. Captain at last stopped gangway, and insisted on "Women and children first". Impossible to destroy car in big town. Gave it to French Army. Marvellous Dutch boat, including zig-zagging, brought us to Plymouth in twenty-four hours, June 21st, 22nd. Kept on board till 23rd, then in station till 11 p.m. Fed by H.M. Navy and Y.M.C.A. Arrived London, 8.30, June 24th. "Betty" helped so much, and Percival kept us cheery with her jolly laugh.

### Big Andy's Inglorious Venture

(Her Own Description of the Canteen that Never Was)

In the spring of 1940 the Canteen Committee asked me to start a canteen "somewhere in the Alps". This sounded interesting and I agreed with enthusiasm. Later the "Alps" became the "Belgian frontier"; not quite so attractive.

After several false starts, and some good work put in by Lewis at Bedford Square and the Passport Office, Lewis and Vereker (neither of them Royaumont people) and I met at Waterloo Station on Wednesday, May 29th, more or less ready for anything. It was damping to be told by the railway officials that we could not book straight to Paris but must travel via Jersey, and would have to wait there till Sunday, or perhaps Sunday week, to get a boat to France. However, the members of the Committee who had come to speed us on our way thought we had better go while we could, so we said goodbye and started. At Southampton we were told that there was no communication of any kind between Jersey and the French coast and if we went to Jersey we would stay there. We got our luggage, including three huge parcels for the Metz canteen, off the Jersey boat just in time. It was by now too late to see the R.T.O., who was our only hope, so we went to an hotel for the night. Next morning we interviewed many officials. The result was that they "supposed we might as well go in the troopship that night—if she sailed!". She did: as far as Portsmouth, where she anchored for the night on Admiralty orders, as the Germans were busy minelaying. In the morning she sailed back to Southampton. She filled up with British Tommies and French sailors, and sailed that night "mines or no mines" as the second officer put it, arriving in Cherbourg early next day. We reached Paris at midnight, tired and hungry, and were fed by kind Croix Rouge Canteen workers who offered us beds in the station. We thought it better to go on to an hotel, and after a good night's rest we went to the Hotel Cecelia where Rolt was living. She was astounded to see us and asked what we had come for. By now the Belgians had capitulated and we found her question difficult to answer!

We telephoned to Madame de la Panouse's daughter at a hospital at Neuilly and she promised to put us in touch with the Vicomtesse Gaston de la Rochefoucauld. This lady rang us up later and fixed a meeting at Colombin's for tea next day. Early on Monday, June 3rd, we went to the H.Q. of the Association des Dames de France where we were again met with astonished dismay. "On ne vous attend pas!" was the greeting we got. The Vicomtesse was charming but explained that her sole connection with the affair was that she was a friend of the wife of the general who had wanted a canteen. This general was Huntziger!

We then went to see Madame de Wendel in Passy and were once more charmingly welcomed but asked why no warning of our coming had been given. Obviously letters and telegrams had been held up. The Assoc. D. F. had nothing to offer us at the time, but, if we would wait for a week or two, there might be an opening

for a canteen in Alsace. Madame said that now that "ces fleurs" (I wish you could have seen us!) had come to help they must find us something to do. We departed somewhat disillusioned, and had lunch during the big raid on the Citroën Works. It was Lewis, I think, who got hold of the address of the Société des Services Sociaux which was working among the refugees, and, as a last hope, we went there. The head of it was a most efficient woman who said she could give us work if we could drive a car, but that we would have to separate. We talked it over and decided to disband ourselves and take what offered since canteen work was out of the question at the moment. Lewis had had the forethought to bring her international driving licence so was sent to fetch a car at once from some suburb. Vereker and I got ours without any trouble from the R.A.C., and I then went to the bank and drew out all the money that Grandage had paid in for the canteen. We kept a little for emergencies and gave the rest into Rolt's keeping. I also made enquiries at Cooks' about getting back to England in case no work turned up. They held out few hopes of room in any boat, even at that date.

The following day Lewis and I were sent to Fleury sur Andelle, near Rouen, to evacuate children from a Home. We started in the middle of an *alerte*, between 5 and 6 a.m., and all along the Rouen road saw evidence of the raid, although the machines had not reached Paris. There were several other vans, and we packed the children in and got them all to the Gare de Lyon by 1.30. It was lucky we did hurry as, that afternoon, the road, and Fleury itself, were heavily bombed. On our return to the Hotel Cecelia, where Vereker was staying, she told us that the Services Sociaux had given her a van and she was leaving the next day for Périgord or Limoges, we never learned which. Lewis got orders to go to La Rochelle, the H.Q. of the Society in Charente, where she was to work with their representatives in the surrounding districts. I was to go, too, to help with the driving, and either pick up another car in La Rochelle or return to Paris in a few days' time. The camionette was filled to the roof with bundles of clothing, layettes, etc., for the refugees, and we were given a few rather vague instructions. We started early in the hope of avoiding the worst of the rush out of Paris. The roads were crowded with vehicles of all descriptions, crammed with passengers and luggage, mattresses fixed on the roofs as protection from machine guns. There were pitiful groups trudging along in the dust and heat beside their carts, going anywhere—away from the Germans. It took hours to get clear of the procession. We left some of our bundles at depots on the way, spent the night at Amboise, and reached La Rochelle late next afternoon. All the hotels were filled to overflowing, and, after deciding that we could sleep in the van, we went to the Café Moderne for supper. The proprietress at once took us under her wing, and, after telephoning, in vain, to every hotel in the town, she went round the restaurant asking all her clients if they would put us up. Very soon she came back with the news that a M. and Mme. Boitreaud—"mais très gentils"—had a room we might have. They were a delightful couple,

and kindness itself. They had a hat shop with a flat above and we were made free of the whole place and even given a latch key.

We now got in touch with Mlle. Berran, the local Secretary of the S.S., a young creature full of misguided enthusiasms, who was delighted to have a whole van and two drivers at her disposal. We spent some time going round the outlying villages, which were packed with refugees, finding out what was wanted. Berran's zeal rather carried her away, and she promised all sorts of things which, unfortunately, were not in the end procurable. Then we three left La Rochelle for Saintes, and met Mlle. Debrit, another S.S. representative. Lewis went off with her and the van, while Berran and I stayed in a small village a few miles out of Saintes. I was put up by a delightful young couple, the man a mechanic and the girl helping her father with a tiny hairdressing business. Neither they nor the Boitreauds in La Rochelle would take any payment for their rooms. These two were most intelligent. The husband kept repeating what M. Boitreaud had said: that France was at the mercy of her politicians, who did not represent the real feeling of the country. It was in this village that I met the only defeatist I had come across in France, an old woman whose sons had been killed in the last war and who had her grandsons fighting in this one. All the others we talked to were confident until the crash suddenly came.

About this time Paris was declared an open city and I began to think that Lewis and I had better join up again. I was also worried about Vereker, who had vanished into the Blue; we had no means of getting hold of her. There was nothing to be done till Lewis returned with the van, and, in the meantime, Berran and I did a little work in Saintes, including one night spent in meeting refugees. Five train loads arrived, and the platforms were filled with sleeping children and weary parents not knowing, nor apparently much caring, where they were going. There was a bureau for milk for infants, run by some Society, but other arrangements were so inadequate as to be practically non-existent. The Croix Rouge Canteen was shut, and no workers expected till 6 a.m. Berran got the caretaker to let us in, and we managed to get dry bread and chocolate for the poor creatures, who, of course, wanted coffee above everything else. When the Croix Rouge officials did appear, they were not at all pleased to find us there, and Berran had some high words with them. Apparently the S.S. was a bitter rival, and, as I was obviously an outsider, I thought it best to slip away and leave them to it!

We had arranged to meet Lewis and Debrit in Saintes on Sunday, all to go on to a general meeting of the S.S. secretaries at a small place about sixty miles inland. I thought that Lewis and I ought to get to La Rochelle and see the Consul and try to get in touch with Vereker through him, but Berran considered this unnecessary. I insisted, however, on discussing it with Lewis. There was a misunderstanding about the rendezvous, involving so much delay that we were all too late to attempt the S.S. meeting. Lewis and I decided to

go at once to La Rochelle. Debrit saw our point and agreed that if we were all going to be turned into Germans, we had better be in our own countries! Berran scoffed at the idea. I think she was vexed at losing our van.

So that afternoon Lewis and I drove straight off to La Rochelle. It was now a very different town, even after those few days' absence. British soldiers were much in evidence; refugee cars were parked in every possible space, and hotels and restaurants were even more packed than before. We went at once to our kind friend the proprietress of the Café Moderne, and found her very sad, and worried about her daughter in Paris. She got us a meal although they had almost nothing left, and, while there, we spoke to some English soldiers who were also trying to get a meal. They were refreshingly calm in that tense atmosphere, in which wild rumours were flying round. Suddenly a shriek of recognition from one of the other tables announced the presence of our late hostess, Mme. Boitreaud, who greeted us warmly, and said our room was waiting for us. We were more than grateful and went with her, to find M. Boitreaud very gloomy. He thought we were wise to come back to La Rochelle and said he feared the news that might come next day. In the morning—Monday—we went straight to the Consulate, and finally succeeded in running to earth one doddering old man, who was quite useless, saying that no one could get away and we'd better try Bordeaux, although the road was blocked. In any case we could not go from the port—La Palisse—as the channel was mined and there were no mine-sweepers. We stood over him and dictated a pass to La Palisse, which he wrote out under protest. We found there a South African and his sister, also trying to get away. They begged us to take them to Bordeaux. We told them that we meant to try La Palisse, and arranged to meet them later in the day. We filled in the morning taking refugees out of the town, and then, in search of lunch, we heard the radio announcing that Pétain had asked for a *cesse feu*. This was followed by the *Marseillaise*.

A hush fell on the whole town for a moment or two. Then horrified men and women poured out of the houses, asking each other incredulously if it could be true. They looked in despair, but were stunned and quiet. We went to the Post Office to try and send some telegrams, and, while waiting there, I saw a British military car, and asked the officer if he could give us any information. He said "Come to the British G.H.Q. at the Casino as soon as possible". We rushed back to the Boitreauds, packed a few necessities, discarding as much as we could, and made for the Casino. Our farewells to Mme. Boitreaud were most affecting, she and the shop girls in tears, and blessings flying around. M. Boitreaud kindly offered to show us the way, and sat in front of our van with Lewis, tears in his eyes and misery in his heart, and, when he left us at the Casino he said: "You English won't desert us, will you? Else it is the end. It isn't the real France that has done this."

We picked up the South Africans on the way, but had to leave them at the gate. We were received very

coldly at the Casino, told that it was impossible to take us as there wasn't a boat, or if there was it was only a collier which would be packed to overflowing. We just sat, tried to look pathetic, and said we were British and must get home. Finally, being sick of the sight of us, they told us to wait. We sat on the steps, and the proprietor of the café brought us glasses of beer, most welcome in the heat and press. Our toast was *Vive la France!* The poor man broke down, and wrung our hands. After about two hours an officer came along and asked if we had a car. We said we had, and were then told to fall in with the convoy. So we trundled along at the end of a long line of lorries towards la Palisse. The crowds mostly waved to us, and held up their thumbs, and one man threw some flowers into the lorry ahead of us. There were some scowling faces, but very few.

After another wait of about an hour we were sent to the mole, a mile or so further on, where the cars were abandoned. There was no time to dismantle anything, so the men smashed the petrol tanks with picks and slashed the tyres. We boarded a half-unloaded collier, and stood watching men stumbling on board with what kit they could carry. Most of them were dead beat and fell asleep on the deck at once. Quite near was the overturned hull of the *Champlain* which had been mined the day before. The steward very kindly gave Lewis and me his cabin, a tiny one-berthed affair, but most welcome cover. It was beginning to get dark and an Air Vice-Marshal comforted us by remarking: "It will be quite dark in another hour and then it won't be so easy to bomb us." Alongside was another, smaller, collier, which took on board about eighty civilians, our South African friends among them.

We got under way about 3 a.m., and at once heard planes overhead. The steward came in, told us they were Jerries, and that we must not shut our door as it was liable to jam. One's chief thought was what a target we made with 2,000 men lying asleep on the decks and hatches! Once I heard a furious voice shout: "Put out that cigarette!" We slipped out cautiously, stopping now and again, and managed to clear any mines that were there. The next morning the Naval, Army and Air Force officers had a conference and decided that it was better to go well out into the Atlantic and risk submarines that were said to be in the vicinity than to hug the coast and be bombed. We were on that coal boat for four nights, but Heaven was kind, and we had perfect weather all the way. On Thursday, 21st June, about midnight, we got to Newport, Mon., and went ashore about 3.30 a.m. Coal dust was over everything and everybody, but no one cared. Lewis and I were regarded as civilians, and doubtful ones at that, and were taken in a police car, with a plain clothes detective, to a mission hall, where we were fed and looked after by hospitable Welsh people. The hall was filled with refugees from the other boat, all much more tired than we were, and all suffering from sunburn, having been on deck night and day since leaving France. One poor woman had gone off her head.

We were given a royal breakfast, and, after seeing the passport officials, were allowed to go. We made for the

bank and changed our French money, then for the station. I got home to Cornwall the same night at 10.30, tired and dirty, but very thankful.

## The German Leaflet dropped by 'Plane at Mouzaia during the Battle of France

(Communicated by Mrs. Robinson)

### FRENCHMEN!

Why do you let this war drag on and on?

Just that England may rule the world? Just that her Money Magnates may profit by armaments and squeeze the colonies dry?

What do you get out of war-aims such as these?

The Englishman, Lord Derby, one of the biggest arms traders of all time, hailed in these words the Canadian troops, who, like yourselves, also have the privilege of doing the British Empire's fighting:

Hello! Boys! Congratulations!

You are going to have a lovely war!

How lovely this war is, in which you Frenchmen are taking part, against us, is not easy for you to realise, because

FOR YOU, THIS "LOVELY WAR" MEANS NOTHING BUT HARDSHIP AND DEATH, AND FOR YOUR COUNTRY DISTRESS AND RUIN!

But for the English arms huckster, Derby, this "Lovely" War spells huge profits.

His Excellency, Lord Derby, has not got to fight, and his sons keep watch, at home in England, to see that no German parachutists jump out of aeroplanes.

A highly important military duty!

That is why there are, now, really only these two slogans:

Ours, which is:

Put an end to the War, and the sooner the better! Let Reason and Co-operation between the Peoples return.

And their's:—

The War must go on for three years at least—if not five, because the English lords have sunk all their capital in munitions factories, and can't get it back in profits under three, or may be, even, five years.

AND YOU ARE TO GO ON FIGHTING AND BRINGING RUIN ON YOUR COUNTRY FOR DIRTY DOGS LIKE THESE!

(Translation by the Acting-Editor.)