together? Lectures and practices must be frequently organized to keep the V.A.D.'s efficient and enable the requisite number of attendances to be made. In districts near a hospital, where V.A.D.'s are allowed to help, or where there is a Red Cross child welfare centre or Red Cross medical supply depot, interest is easier to maintain; but when there is no practical work to be done ingenuity has to be used. Members (often the best) suddenly have to leave the district, and the distracted commandant has to hunt around to try and make up her numbers once more.

(3) War Office Inspections.—Then there hangs over the detachment the anxiety of that terrifying War Office inspection, at the thought of which many members threaten to resign! When, therefore, the annual inspection does take place, inspecting officers are begged to remember—

(a) The efforts that have been made to produce the requisite number of V.A.D.'s for their inspection.

(b) That probably only a small proportion of the detachment has ever seen the inside of a hospital.

(c) That nursing terms are difficult for village girls to master.

(d) That nearly all, however inefficient they appear, would do yeoman service, if the occasion should arise—as their predecessors did from 1914-18.

III.—A HOSPITAL UNIT AND CONVOY IN FRANCE.

By Miss ANN HOPE GAMWELL.

(By kind permission of Miss M. B. H. Franklin, M.B.E., Commandant, F.A.N.Y.)

The hospital of Lamarck in the Rue de la Rivière, Calais, was one of a hundred beds, and was run for the Belgian authorities by the First-Aid Nursing Yeomanry. It was housed in a convent school, the two three-storied buildings of which were in a somewhat dilapidated condition when taken over by the F.A.N.Y. on October 29, 1914. Patients had to be received before any of the equipment had arrived, and were accommodated on straw or palliasses. These first convoys consisted mainly of typhoid cases, a particularly virulent form of which was then raging in the Belgian army. Indeed, one whole building had to be devoted to typhoids for the first five months of the hospital's existence.

The English staff consisted of the O.C. or "Directrice," several sisters and the members of the corps, who acted as probationers in the wards or drivers for the corps motor ambulances. The Belgian staff included an adjutant, two doctors, and in later days a male orderly attached to each ward.

The corps was from the outset self-supporting, except for one or two supplementary Belgian rations, so that all monies collected in England for the work of the corps were devoted to the comfort and welfare of the patients. A frequent entry in typhoid diet sheets ran thus: "Eggs—two
by Miss and one by kitchen." The sisters, with two exceptions, were not Fanys, but were obtained and paid for by the corps.

It was pretty hard work arranging the equipment whilst nursing a full quota of men, and things were made no easier by the fact that the Fanys were obliged to move their own billets in the town every third day. There seems to have been some idea in the Calaisien mind that, if the English were allowed to settle, they would never leave after the war. Eventually, however, a permanent abode was obtained in the ground-floor of a shop—"Le Bon Génie"—at the far end of the town. This, when the windows had been pasted over with brown paper, provided room for beds which were always occupied; for, when the day staff stepped out, the night staff stepped in, and vice versa.

By this time the hospital was in full swing. Patients were received through the Hôpital de Passage at Calais Ville, and evacuated into ships which took them to Cherbourg. The Belgians were very short of all hospital material, buildings, nurses, equipment and orderlies, and were really grateful for the help afforded by the F.A.N.Y., and more especially for their nursing of the typhoid patients. These latter, previous to the arrival of the corps, had been nursed by nuns who, though charming and kind, had little or no idea of hygiene. The corps was now asked whether it could do anything for the convalescent typhoids. In consequence, a small convalescent home was opened at St. Inglevert near Calais. Two girls were on duty there: they fed and looked after their charges, took them for walks in crocodiles, and generally kept them out of mischief until they were strong enough to rejoin their regiments. That the Belgian soldier was really grateful is evidenced by the fact that these girls suffered from only one case of indiscipline during the Home's whole term of life.

Another offshoot of the hospital which came into being about this time, was a regimental aid post behind the line in Flanders. To quote the officer of this detachment: "Within three miles of Dixmude, with rough fâre consisting for the most part of coffee and black potatoes—sleeping on straw, having a cupful of water to wash in, treating wounded brought from the trenches by bearers—two or three of us had some unique experiences."

That "cupful of water to wash in" is the core of the situation; for the Fanys' favourite off-duty occupation was taking a bath. In Calais, to do this one went first to the Hôpital de Passage where one put in a request to the orderly officer for a "bon"; the request would often be met with—"But you have already had one bath this week, mademoiselle." Then one proceeded to the railway siding, where stood a luggage van containing four baths supplied with hot water from the boiler of a broken-down engine. Woe betide the one who undressed before ascertaining the heat of the bath; for there was no cold water, and one might call the orderly for long without being heard, as he was very deaf.

Zeppelin raids occurred at intervals, but little material damage was
done until one night in March, 1915, when a bomb hit the Cathedral which overlooked Lamarck yard. A probationer who was crossing the yard for her midnight meal was missed by inches by a coping stone which fell at her feet, and of course all the windows were broken. When the day staff arrived next morning the night staff was still engaged in trying to sort glass out of the men’s beds. For days the hospital was a dismal place; for the windows had to be covered with blankets until such time as they could be reglazed—no easy matter in those days. It was, of course, bitterly cold.

At the end of April the falling off in typhoid cases enabled both buildings to be used for blessés, but their old building was known to the end as “typhoids.” The English sisters found it difficult at times to accommodate themselves to Belgian ways—such a phrase as “Let sleep the sleeping men”—from a doctor always disconcerted them; but Sunday morning was their worst trial. The hospital chaplain held a service in one ward in each building regardless of what might be going on, and the procedure was as follows: The ward orderly and probationers arranged a suitable altar at one end of the ward; the probationer then went round the patients inquiring their religion, and the faces of those who were not Catholics were then covered with a newspaper. The priest then arrived and, assisted by the ward orderly, conducted his service, the doctor probably doing his dressings at the same time, and the non-Catholics breathing hard on their papers. For some reason or other it was considered etiquette for probationers to wash up in a devotional attitude, and preferably on their knees, after dressings were finished.

The hospital transport consisted of three ambulances and a motor kitchen. The former were hardly ever still. Apart from conveying patients to and from hospital, they had also to act as light lorries, and every bit of Belgian material of any sort whatsoever had to be fetched from Gravelines, fifteen kilometres north of Calais. Vehicles were very scarce (there were but seven other ambulances—six Belgian and one French—in Calais) so that the Lamarck cars were constantly borrowed by all and sundry. They, of course, helped the other seven cars to do the work of the hospitals, both Belgian and French; and later, the British too, until the arrival of a Red Cross convoy. They took the orderlies’ training school gear to be disinfected—most unpleasant; they took doctors to La Panne—Mecca of all Belgian M.O.’s—where they might quite possibly be re-borrowed for inspection work farther on and might end up in the oddest places; they also, on one occasion, loaded a train, drove 120 miles, unloaded it, and returned next day. That was for the French. The real triumph, however, was reserved for the kitchen. This had been brought out with the idea of providing soup for the blessés on their arrival at Calais Ville and whilst waiting to be passed through the Hôpital de Passage; and very good work it did there. But at the beginning of May it went with two of our Corps who were attached to the regimental aid-post
of a Belgian battery proceeding to the Ypres Salient, and thus it saw that historic first gas attack of the war. The two girls tried to improvise gas masks from first field dressings for the bewildered Belgians and British who stumbled into the aid-post, and when they eventually returned to the fold at Lamarck they were themselves a sorry looking couple.

During the month of May the Lamarck transport was increased by an ambulance and a motor bath. The latter added not only to the cleanliness, but also to the gaiety of nations, and had the honour to bathe the sitting cases of the first convoy taken in by the Lahore British General.

The Belgian authorities had now formed a vast concentration camp near Tours, and asked the F.A.N.Y. to supply help in the tubercular and other wards. The first contingent was sent down from Lamarck, but subsequently Camp de Ruchard was run as a separate unit.

Lamarck was, up to the day of its closing, a chief centre of social life in the town. When pressure of work permitted, a large room on the top floor of the main building was turned into a common room, and there gathered, particularly on Sunday evenings, Belgians, French and later British. The hospital also found time to run a concert party which gave many performances in Y.M.C.A. huts before the advent of Miss Lena Ashwell.

At the end of 1916 the Belgians built a large hutter hospital in which they concentrated all their cases in Calais, and Lamarck consequently came to an end just two years from the date of its inception, the staff passing on to a hospital opened for the French at Prieuré de Binson, Epernay.

In the autumn of 1915 the suggestion that women might relieve more men by supplying the personnel for base ambulance convoys was first seriously considered; and in the event the Calais convoy was taken over by the F.A.N.Y. on January 1, 1916. The vehicles to be supplied with drivers were twelve ambulances, two fifteen-hundredweight lorries, one thirty-hundredweight lorry and one motor bicycle: a personnel of twenty-two was allowed—this to include O.C., cook, mess orderly and one male mechanic. The officers of the Corps were naturally anxious that the convoy, which was in the nature of an experiment, should be open to as little criticism as possible; consequently the first draft contained as many old hands from Lamarck as could be spared. In spite of many months’ experience, most of these troops had “the wind up” badly on that cold January morning, when they exchanged the comparative security of their billet at Lamarck for the bleak hilltop on which were perched the tents which constituted their new abode. “Driving for the English” was a terrible responsibility.

The F.A.N.Y. took over in time to carry out the 9 a.m. evacuation; therefore as soon as the cars could be got going they left camp; the last that was seen of the “relieved” men being Major Paget of the B.R.C.S. doing “Eéna, meéna, meéna, mo,” to select the one to be left behind with us. This poor lad dissolved into tears.
The E.M.O. was the officer from whom Miss Franklin—hereinafter called the “Boss”—obtained her orders; but they were not easy to come by, for there was no telephone in the camp and everything had to come up by order from the Lahore British General. In the daytime this worked fairly well; but on a windy night, with the sand blowing in his eyes, the man’s well meaning effort to wake but one tent usually resulted in a pitch over tent ropes, accompanied by loud groans. Tent pegs were a great trial in the loose sand, more particularly those of the old store tent used as a mess. There seemed always to be half a gale blowing on that hilltop: it was an almost daily occurrence to see the cookhouse staff chasing the breakfast bacon round the tents on their way to the mess. The really sensible people were those who dug themselves into some old bathing huts standing round the camp. They made most admirable bedrooms, and one was employed as a workshop. For the first few months the F.A.N.Y. rationed themselves, but later they were given Army rations, drawn at first through the Lahore British General, and afterwards direct from the D.I.S.

The work at first consisted mainly of unloading trains, and evacuating the hospitals into hospital ships, for there were few local troops; but by degrees the work increased and barges came into existence. These latter came down the St. Omer canal and were used only for very bad cases. Unloading them was a real strain on the drivers.

The boss invariably accompanied the cars on any convoy job, assisting the E.M.O. to calculate the number of cars required and issuing the necessary orders to the drivers. Her laconic “Come back” could be very distressing hearing. The most difficult, and therefore the most entertaining, evolution performed by the convoy was the evacuation of hospitals to ships. The difficulty lay in that the Calais quay was infested with bollards, iron railings, electric cranes, coal trucks lying off the minesweepers, etc., and was, in addition, wide enough to admit of turning a car in one spot only. All was well when one could get the use of the quay itself; but when one was restricted to the platform, a fraction of an inch either way meant a nasty drop, and the only means of egress was across the main line rails and down the frequently crowded station platform. On one occasion, after depositing her patients, a new hand made a fractional miscalculation, and paid for her error with a nose dive of about thirty feet into the harbour. Car and driver were recovered in good condition.

In April the convoy moved into huts which had been built for them, containing cubicles, a telephone and two bathrooms; the marquee being retained as mess hut. This was a marvellous advance for, with the clearing away of the tents, a garden could be planted and the camp made ship-shape with whitewashed ropes and stones. The numbers of the convoy increased, as did the need for ambulances, and there were now, besides the boss and a section leader, one serjeant, one corporal and two lance-corporals. All members were on duty until 5 p.m., taking turns on an alphabetical roster for local calls, and all turning out for trains, barges...
and evacuations. From 5 to 9 p.m. two members did local calls, and from 9 p.m. to 8 a.m. a special night roster was in force. This arrangement, of course, was the ideal. In practice it was seldom that the convoy got off before 6.30 or 7 p.m., and frequently not till 11 or 12. On any of the seventy nights on which Calais received air raids, they only retired intermittently. The two fifteen-hundredweight lorries were employed in supplying the needs of the hospitals, but this work was later done by horse transport and the lorries withdrawn. The thirty-hundredweight lorry carted stretchers and blankets and rationed trains and barges.

The convoy prided itself on its punctuality, and everything humanly possible was done to ensure calls being answered promptly. In the severe frosts a night guard was maintained whose duty it was to wind up all the cars every half hour throughout the night, so that they might be ready for immediate use. Even then, some of them would freeze up between “winds” and have to be thawed out and towed to get started. On one of these occasions a sleepy night guard forgot that a towed car requires a driver, and did not remember until her tow took the section leader’s cubicle head on.

A big camp sprang up at Audruicq, fifteen kilometres from Calais, and two cars were stationed there, the drivers being relieved monthly. These latter were able to be of real assistance on the night in July, 1916 when the ammunition dump went up, shaking all Calais. One girl got the boiler fire to work, while the other helped the S.M.O. and orderlies. The whole convoy was ordered out, and arrived to find dumps of shells going off in all directions. Another really bad night was that on which the Bosche made a mistake and bombed the German prisoners at work in the quarries twenty kilometres from Calais. Terrible damage was done and the convoy had its hands full. Normally, cars carrying prisoners of war were provided with armed guards; but on one occasion, when these gave out, a driver, carrying three influenza Bosche and a delirious Britisher, heard a fearful scrapping in the back. Struggling for a few words of German, she at length achieved “Nicht spücken und nicht hinauslehnen.” Immediate silence reigned.

Another “outpost” was that at the aerodrome at Marquise, where two cars and three drivers were kept, the third driver helping in the small hospital. On one occasion the three Fanys stationed there received the M.M. for their services. These outposts were never very popular, as it meant being away from the convoy for a month. Two other jobs besides outposts were unpopular; retrieving drowned men from the canals—often a very ticklish job—and taking lunatics to Boulogne. This latter was unpleasant for the reason that, if one had a puncture and was obliged to stop, the patients were all too apt to discard their clothing in the road. On one occasion also a driver only just escaped being throttled.

“Accident from the ordnance to the civil hospital.” This sounds a simple enough job, but in reality it called for tact and ingenuity. The civil
hospital, so far as members of the convoy were able to discover, was run entirely by an elderly charwoman, and she was not often there. On arrival with a case, one had first to search the wards for a suitable bed, then to prepare it, and get a hot-water bottle, and then to go out into the highway, and enlist stretcher-bearers. After one experience one learnt to dismiss the stretcher-bearers before putting the case to bed, as this was the signal for the other patients to rise and help; and since they were clad elegantly, but inadequately, in a night cap, it was better to have the place to oneself. It was a miserable business, for if the case were at all bad it stood little chance of recovery.

Life in the camp could never be called dull. Apart from the fun indigenous in a mess of about forty high-spirited individuals, something amusing was always turning up. One driver fell into the canal and was rescued by "Chinks"; a new hand turned her car, and incidentally the boss, over and over down an embankment; and one night the Bosche engineered a joke. They dropped six aerial torpedoes in a circle round the camp, but next morning only five holes were to be found. Search as the Fanys would, they could not find the sixth, until the lorry driver noticed a little displaced sand by her front wheel. The British authorities, duly informed, sent up an inspector; but he unkindly inquired whether the convoy had ever heard of rats. However, next morning a French serjeant, three men, and two large crowbars retrieved from that small hole a seven-foot aerial torpedo, whose nose was eleven feet from the surface. This was, of course, a treasured souvenir in the mess for the rest of the war. In the autumn of 1917, a dug-out was built for the Fanys where, with a telephone, a gramophone, and a cigarette, one could be quite comfortable until it was one's turn to go out. Up till then it had been a bit depressing waiting about in the dark.

When work was slack a system of "half days off" was instituted, and on these occasions one did what one liked, consonantly with the Rules of the Geneva Convention and the dignity of one's uniform. Everyone had to be in camp by 10 p.m. unless on duty, or with special permission. Riding was a favourite "off-day" pursuit with the Fanys, and great was the pleasure given by the many officers who lent them horses. The F.A.N.Y laid down no rules of conduct for its members: this matter was left to their own good sense to adjust as circumstances arose. Internally, however, there were innumerable byelaws, written and unwritten, infringement of any one of which swiftly earned fatigues.

On one occasion the stretcher-bearer party was reduced from sickness and other causes to two men; whereupon, there being no other help available, the Fanys themselves unloaded a hospital train into a ship, 300 stretchers in two hours being their contribution to this branch of industry.

It is impossible to instance all the outstanding incidents of the convoy's life. There was the night of the second Audruicq explosion, when the convoy had difficulty in getting out of Calais owing to débris in the streets;
the night of the bombardment from the sea, when the shells whizzed over the camp—some of them so low as to make the gravel on the parking-ground fly round—and many others. On each and every one the cars were out either as a convoy or in ones and twos, and it remains a miracle that none of them was ever injured. There was but one accident, when a lorry was knocked over by a train, the unfortunate driver losing her leg.

On May 6, 1919, the Calais convoy was relieved by the R.A.M.C. convoy; and the former returned to England, bringing most of its ambulances with it in the Channel ferry. Thus the convoy's last drive together was from Richborough to London.

IV.—A TOWN VOLUNTARY AID DETACHMENT.

By Miss Katherine Acland.

Acting County Controller, Hertfordshire.

Formation.—The St. Albans detachment was originally formed in 1911, by the two Vice-Presidents of the St. Albans Division of the Hertfordshire Branch of the British Red Cross Society, the late Countess of Verulam, and Lady Thomson, together with Mrs. A. N. Boycott, under the auspices of the Territorial Force Association.

A committee was formed, and the Secretary and Assistant County Director of the Herts B.R.C.S. came from Headquarters to explain the work of a voluntary detachment with the result that Mrs. Boycott, herself a trained nurse, was appointed commandant, and Dr. S. Clarke, M.O., with Miss Irene Phillips as the first quartermaster.

Lectures in First Aid and Home Nursing were given according to the St. John Ambulance Association syllabus, and the first War Office inspection was made on May 31, 1913, the late Colonel S. C. Robinson, C.B., County Director, being present.

The first inspection was held at Townsend House, the stables being used to provide a temporary ward.

The following year the detachment made more ambitious efforts. The inspection was held in the Drill Hall, where the detachment proceeded to provide a quartermaster's store, and from that equipped wards, dressing station, kitchen, etc. The Gas Company lent gas-stoves for the occasion, and the cooking demonstration proved a draw for the whole neighbourhood.

Colonel Poynder, R.A.M.C., expressed his entire satisfaction with the work of the detachment as exhibited in this demonstration.

Training.—Members of the detachment besides attending lectures and rehearsals worked at the St. Albans and Mid-Herts Hospital, and so gained practical experience.

Personnel.—The detachment was extremely fortunate in its original commandant, Mrs. Boycott, a very highly qualified trained nurse, to whose sense of discipline and organizing ability much of its success is due. She