



A JOURNAL WOMAN ON THE BATTLEFIELD IN GREECE.

Harriet Boyd, the Only Woman War Correspondent at the Front, Sends a Vivid Picture of Stirring Battle Episodes and Scenes in the Hospitals.

BY MISS HARRIET BOYD, SPECIAL WAR CORRESPONDENT OF THE JOURNAL, WITH THE GREEK ARMY.

VOLO, May 5.—Accompanied by eleven Greek nurses, I left the Piræus on the transport Thraee eight days ago, bound for the front, in accordance with the Journal's instructions. I am the first woman correspondent in the field.

I came away from Athens hurriedly as a volunteer without being accepted by the Red Cross Society as a member and without wearing any insignia of my business other than a general air of curiosity and a rough tweed gown.

As we steamed out of the Piræus the people cheered us forward with flowers, kind wishes and a general hurrah such as only Greeks can give.

Our quarters on the upper deck were pleasant enough, but the twelve hundred soldiers down in the grimy and gloomy lower regions were rather too closely crowded for comfort. There was not one of them, however, who did not want to fight, and die, if need be, for his country.

We leaned over the large square hole in the deck and watched them piled together so densely in the semi gloom that you could scarcely tell head from feet. It was a long time after our departure before they settled down to silence. They began with a racket of gun firing that caused us to put our hands to our ears. Then they ceased their martial spirits with trumpet calls, songs and a general uproar that gradually quieted down to comparative silence.

Under the fitful flare of the Bengal lights most of the troops looked like mere boys. The greater part of them were thin faced, thin legged and rather narrow shouldered, but there was no question about their willingness to meet the Turks.

The scenery on the voyage up the Gulf of Volo was magnificent, but nobody thought of it. Our minds were on the hurrying troops and the roll of war drums away off beyond Parnassus.

We paused for a brief time at Chalkis on the following day. The people crowded the quay cheering and wild with enthusiasm. The bugles blared and the soldiers thronged the side of the transport.

An hour after leaving Chalkis we passed seven Greek war ships off Aidipsos. The sight of them again brought the soldiers in crowds to the bulwarks. There were more cheers, until a gray-bearded soldier happened to ask what the ships were doing there and why they were not fighting.

This seemed to knock the head right out of the Greek barrel of enthusiasm. As a matter of fact the Greeks are very angry over the slow inefficiency of the navy. According to the consensus of opinion in the army the fleet has done absolutely nothing worthy of note beyond the bombardment of Prevesa.

The soldiers soon forgot the ships and started a dance. There was a company of Evzones among them, and very picturesque they looked in their white kilts, red fetzes and tasseled shoes. They whirled about the deck singing a curious monotonous song that had something of the savage in the swing of it.

At dinner, which was eaten shortly before sundown, the soldiers offered toasts to Greater Greece, to the army, to the King, and lastly to the nurses, adding, "Heaven bless them!" to the latter toast.

We came within sight of Volo on Monday afternoon. It is a curious white-walled town, set slantingly against the dark green mountains at its back. It looked peaceful enough until we landed! Then we had our hands full.

The eleven Red Cross nurses were heartily welcomed by the hospital staff, and before daylight were hard at work among the wounded. Although I expressed my willingness to go right to work, the physician in charge of the hospital said he would provide work for me on the following day. All night my sleep was disturbed by wild cries, wailing songs, the tramp of men, the rattle of ambulances and the occasional sound of rifle shots. Wounded soldiers appeared to be continually arriving from the front. I could look from my window in the little inn where I stopped and see long lines of stretchers passing in silent procession through the darkness.

On the following morning the military physicians asked for nurses to go to the girls' school, which had been turned into a hospital. I at once volunteered my services.

And what a hospital it was! A small one-story building with five rooms had been fitted up with fifty-five beds. These beds were made of two iron supports, upon which were two planks and a sack of straw.

The citizens of Volo, many of them poor and needy themselves, brought coverings and suits of clothing and night clothes. Altogether the hospitals were rather pig-sty in their make up, but the doctors made the most of the circumstances, and so did the wounded soldiers.

As fast as the wounded arrived they were put to bed. The girls' school hospital had just been fitted out when I arrived, with fifty-two beds in five rooms. It shook my nerves a bit at first, but I soon got used to it. The doctors did not have time for elaborate operations. Everything was done in a hurry, but as far as possible it was done thoroughly. The ground was terrible, as anaesthetics ran out, and the operations had to be performed without their aid.



"There was another alarm at midnight. From the hilltops to the north there was a fusillade of rifle shots and then a wild scampering through the streets. Then a courier, breathless and excited, came and told us that we were to go on board the English man-of-war in the harbor immediately."

I think the Evzones were the bravest. Even when they saw the doctor approaching with his deadly instruments they would find voice to curse the Turks and to sing their wild war songs.

I was in attendance on the hospital doctor all day long, and at nightfall I was tired enough to drop in my tracks. I could not eat, I could not sleep. I simply drank a cup of tea and lay down with my eyes wide open and my nerves tingling. The sight of the poor men in the hospitals was still with me.

Long before daylight I was up again and at the hospital. They were just bringing in another train of wounded from the front. There were about one hundred of them in all, and two dozen fell to our share.

I saw on my arrival that the people of Volo were not made of the same stuff as the Peloponnesians and Boeotians. The fear of the Turks is something altogether unlike that of civilized people, as the villages hereabout are unprotected.

It is not strange that hundreds of families have fled panic-stricken to this place first, and then passed on to Athens, often making difficult embarkment of the wounded on the transport boats, a fact which I have on the word of an English nurse.

These wounded Greeks certainly know how to bear pain. The candles and torches flared on their powder-grimed faces as they were joined hither and thither, from litter to cot and from cot to litter, but never a complaint did they utter. They would only follow you with dumb, pleading eyes that asked for everything where nothing could be given.

The number of wounded on our roster gradually increased until every cot was occupied. This made no difference. An other squad of ten poor, mangled fellows were taken in and placed on sacks of straw along the aisles. At six we stopped.

At first we had three nurses to the sixty men. Two of these were afterward withdrawn to another hospital, and the entire care of the sixty wounded men outside the doctors devolved on a noble Cretan woman and myself.

As the wounded men improved, however, some of them were made to do nurse duty. They were a great help to us.

I cannot speak too highly of the bravery, self-respect and patience of the wounded Greek soldiers. All their wounds—at least the wounds of those in our hospital—were gunshot.

I shall never forget one brawny fellow who was brought in late on the second night after my arrival. He gave no sign of suffering as they lifted him with hasty roughness on the operating board. His once white kilts were battle-soiled, his face was grimed and his hands were clinched until his nails were white.

"Where are you hurt, my boy?" asked the doctor.

"In the left foot," was the reply.

"Well, that won't hurt you much; you will be out in a few days," replied the doctor.

"I am shot elsewhere," said the Greek, "but if you can patch up my foot so I can walk I'll go to the front again."

Then the doctor made an examination. The bones of the man's left foot had been shattered by a Martini ball. A second bullet had passed through his hips, another had struck him in the arm and a fourth had traversed his body from shoulder to shoulder. And yet he wanted his foot patched up that he might fight again.

I saw this man later after the surgeon had left. He was lying white and still with a smell of ether about him. "Will he live?" I asked the doctor.

"He is already dead," was the reply. The only case in our hospital other than those of the regularly wounded was that

of a man with a fever. Previous to the breaking out of the war he had been in the hospital in Larissa with a low-intensity fever.

When fighting began he got up from his bed and went to battle. In the attack on Melouna Pass he was slightly wounded, and lay all night on the damp ground. This brought on another severe attack of fever, which his constant chafing against uncleaned inaction aggravated.

Even in his semi-delirium he begged the doctors for just one more shot at the Turks.

As a general thing the wounded soldiers were considerate and uncomplaining. In spite of the great difficulty in getting food, dressings or bandages for this suddenly organized hospital.

As it was holy week with the Greeks, it was extremely hard to persuade the soldiers to eat what was necessary to strengthen them. Fasting is especially severe among the soldiers, as this is looked upon as a holy war.

During my entire experience in this hospital, strange as it may seem, I have heard no profanity.

"Come and help hold this man while I probe for a bullet," said the hospital doctor one day as a train of wounded were being brought in. "The soldier, a muscular-looking young man, was lying on the operating boards. He was savage with pain, and there was a look in his eyes I did not like. He kept grating his teeth continually. The ball had entered his side.

The doctor did his work quickly, and yet the man did not make a scene. As the probe struck the bullet he groaned. As the doctor drew it from the wound he cried, "Mother, little mother," and "Christ help me." That was all.

I have heard these words repeated every day since I have been here. Nine out of

ten of the wounded soldiers call for their mothers.

Many correspondents from their ignorance of the language got their knowledge second hand. It is well known here that almost all the English sources of information in Volo are notoriously corrupt.

The British consul here is very much disliked even by his own people. He is greatly blamed for his treatment of the English nurses, who, when they applied to him for protection, were given a bare floor to sleep on.

On last Thursday night four English nurses sent by the Pelæus of Wales arrived, but left for Piræus on the following day.

Our wounded soldiers spoke freely of being practically deserted by their officers and left without orders on the field of battle.

Panics have been of daily occurrence since my arrival. It is very annoying just when one is fixing a bandage nicely to have the cry raised that the Turks are coming. This intermittent fever at 5 o'clock every afternoon there is a hue and cry.

On Monday the authorities decided to send all the wounded to Athens. Many of them protested, believing that in a few days they would be able to fight again. Descriptions of various kinds were practised in order to induce them to go quietly without us.

Last night a wounded man, mad from his wounds, left his cot, dressed himself in his uniform, seized his gun and insisted on going back to Pharsala to fight the Turks. He was dismissed and put to bed by force.

Generally speaking the men's wounds heal quickly owing to the temperate lives they lead. On Monday night the Girls' School Hospital was closed. We were sent to another hospital under the care of the Red Cross.

Here we had to prepare for immen-

date shipment, as the Turks were only five hours' march from this place.

There was another dreadful alarm at midnight last night. From the hilltops to the north there was a fusillade of rifle shots and then a wild scampering through the streets. Then a courier, breathless and excited, came and told us that we were to go on board the English man-of-war in the harbor immediately.

Only one wounded man is left us now, but rumors of a great battle are constantly coming in. We are sure to have our hands full before many hours have passed.

There are now at the Red Cross Hospital Mrs. Itall, matron; Miss Kaiopthalis, lady doctor, sent by the Greek women; two English nurses, nine Greek nurses and myself.

I saw on my arrival here that the people of Volo are not made of the stern pattern of their forefathers. Their fear of the Turks is something dreadful. The villages hereabout are totally unprotected, and

thousands of families have fled panic-stricken, first to this place and then to Athens.

It is hard to believe some of the stories of the atrocities practised by the Turks. An English nurse from Larissa told me to-day that the Turks pile rubbish on the bodies of the wounded Greeks and burn them. They also showed me some knives with which the Turks cut the throats of the wounded.

We expect the hospital ship *Thessaly* to-morrow. It has been fitted up by Mrs. Negreponte to carry the wounded between here and the Piræus. In view of the serious outlook here it is possible that all the nurses will leave on the hospital ship.

If possible, however, we will try and arrange to have the ship kept in the bay as a floating hospital, where the wounded can be received and taken care of.

HARRIET BOYD, Special War Correspondent to the Journal.