

WVS/WRVS Bulletin/Magazine

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V.I

ON the night of 13th June, bewildered Londoners heard that a "crashed plane" had fallen, and the following day the phrase was changed to "pilotless air-plane," and it was obvious that some new menace lay ahead, so W.V.S. once again prepared to face all the old problems of Post Raid work plus several new ones involving great expenditure of time and energy.

Perhaps the work at Incident Enquiry Points has given W.V.S. members more satisfaction than any that they have previously undertaken. Each I.E.P. has its own strongly marked individual characteristics, but in the main its functions are the same and it invariably becomes a temporary place of refuge and a source of solace to the shocked and sometimes distraught people involved in an Incident.

The W.V.S. Street Organisation has been playing its part in after-raid work, making house-to-house surveys after Incidents, recording casualties and checking up sleeping arrangements. Houses have been cleaned and tidied. Immediate aid has been given for minor wounds, cups of chocolate have been provided on the spot, in some cases mortuary duties have been undertaken and messengers and escorts have been forthcoming in large numbers.

The operational services, First-Aid personnel, Repair Squads, Heavy Rescue workers, volunteers from the N.F.S., the A.T.C., etc., have all been fed either by mobile canteens or by the Queen's Messengers. On one occasion two Q.M. canteens, with complete teams of workers, came down from Liverpool. The problem of taking hot food to people whose houses have been badly damaged has been tackled in various ways. In some cases containers have been sent to the site of the damage in mobile kitchens, V.C.P. cars and sometimes even on hand-carts. In other instances, Mobile Emergency Feeding Units have abundantly proved their worth by quickly providing, on the spot, a really substantial meal. These are particularly suitable for the type of Incident that is prevalent at which people shocked and distressed cannot be induced to go far from their wrecked homes. The effect of a really good hot meal—and the standard of cooking is now high—on the courage, the spirits and the physical well-being of the homeless cannot be overrated.

The London end of the evacuation has provided strenuous work for W.V.S. Urns of tea and boiled water, biscuits and refreshments in the care of four W.V.S. welfare escorts have gone out with every train load of evacuees. During the peak period 41,000 children in fifty-one trains went off in one day, and the work of preparing the urns, taking them to the stations, loading them on to the trains and making arrangements for their return needed careful organisation.

The 490 London Clothing Depots and Stores have worked hard. Clothing has had to be provided, not only for the bombed-out but also for evacuating mothers and children. On one occasion a hostel received a direct hit. The occupants were safe in the shelter, but having lost everything except what they stood up in, it was necessary to provide clothing for all the men, women and children in a few hours. Working feverishly in a waiting-room on a railway station, W.V.S. got the job done, and the whole batch caught their train with suitable outfits.

Without the staunch support of W.V.S. reinforcements from other Regions much of this emergency work would of necessity have been left undone. Volunteers from all over the country have worked at any and every job, and London is deeply grateful for their ungrudging co-operation.

1944 EVACUATION

W.V.S. members who like variety and change have often remarked with satisfaction that there is always something new to do in W.V.S., while heavily burdened Centre Organisers have sometimes felt that circulars about "something new" herbs, camouflage, vitamin distribution and the rest have arrived almost too often. Something different, and very far-reaching in its effects, has happened in July 1944. The wheels have made a complete circle, and one of the biggest pieces of W.V.S. work—evacuation—has had to be set in motion all over again.

Registration for flying-bomb evacuation started on 1st July with unaccompanied children from the London area, and was soon extended both to include mothers and children and to cover rather a wider area of Southern England. It was a case in this evacuation of north and west for safety, and owing to the strange developments of modern warfare, many trainloads of evacuees have been sent to large towns in the Midlands and Northern Counties which were themselves regarded as danger areas and evacuated to some extent in 1939, or during the blitz periods of 1940-44, and many evacuees have the kindest of treatment from those who themselves have suffered in the past.

Reception arrangements have differed in each evacuation. In 1939, parties arrived and were billeted as best they could be, and then since there was no bombing it became a race to see whether difficulties could be straightened out before the mothers returned to London. In 1940-41, mothers and children were evacuated mainly from bombed areas, and it was possible for many of them to spend a night or two in hospital where they could rest and clean themselves up. This year the hospitals have not been available, but widespread use has been made of the Rest Centres, and since these are almost universally manned by W.V.S., a large part of the task of initial reception, care and comfort has fallen on W.V.S., and in spite of the difficulties no more satisfying work could be found. The main problem has perhaps been to provide sufficient washing accommodation in the Rest Centres which are normally church halls or other old-established buildings which were never intended to be lived in, and reports tell of basins being borrowed, babies bathed for tired mothers, nappies and even children being taken home to be washed, and hundreds of other kindnesses being done to bridge the gap between the hurried leaving of a shattered home and the new life in a strange house and an unknown town.

Looking back and comparing the evacuation with 1939, the general conclusion is that billeting is more difficult, but that in some other ways reception is easier. Billeting is difficult, not in the main from unwillingness but from sheer lack of space. Many of the areas which have had to be used for reception are crowded industrial towns, and many women who would have been free to look after evacuees in 1939 are themselves working and also housing industrial workers. W.V.S. have in many places acted as billeting officers or as billeting assistants. They have done the sloggish work of making surveys and obtaining promises, and the much more intricate task of fitting in the families in the houses and with the kind of people with whom they are most likely to settle down happily, and moving round those who have not made a good start.

Reception arrangements, apart from billeting, have been made easier in 1944, partly because the evacuees have arrived in a so much better clad and cleaner state than previously—a great tribute to what has been accomplished during the years of war—and partly because reception areas have benefited by past experience and by the structure of war-time services which have developed since 1939, when there were no British restaurants, no war-time nurseries, and few nurseries to which Under Fives could be evacuated, and no central stores of Ministry of Health equipment, while W.V.S. had no network of clothing depots or arrangements with the Government departments for the issue of clothing.

One lesson which W.V.S. learned in 1939 was that settling the evacuee in the billet was only the beginning of reception, and that constant effort had to be made both to occupy the evacuees and to relieve the householder, in order to make the scheme a success. Clubs for evacuated women served the situation in many places in the early evacuations, and in one county the W.V.S., bearing this in mind, had a club ready in every village before the evacuees arrived. Many others have been opened up, and they are specially valued when they provide meals and facilities for the mothers to wash and iron their families' clothing.

SEEING THEM OFF

IN a mews near Victoria we collect our lorry. We drive—at 8 a.m.—to a bombed-out site where W.V.S. have established a large servicing kitchen. Here we load up with tea urns, water urns, supplies, etc. Then to the station. We say to a policeman,

"We were to find the evacuation trains," and he says with a grin, "All right, W.V.S., go ahead." We park the lorry alongside the platform and look for the L.C.C. officials. They are upon us with a rush. We unload on to a truck. The porters help us, tell comic stories and say we're "doing all right for beginners." Somebody says, "My windows went again last night." But it's scarcely news any more. We sort out supplies, tea, hot water, cold water, biscuits, milk, babies' bottles, ovaltine tablets, sweets, paper towels. . . . There are four trains going to the west, and we divide up our lorry load on to four trolleys, ready to be put on the trains. By now there are lots of us—W.V.S. station marshals, W.V.S. escorts, who are going on the trains, L.C.C. marshals, nurses. The children arrive, and if we had time we should feel our throats go tight. Hundreds of them with luggage labels tied on to their jackets, round their necks, everywhere, filing on to the platform, a little apprehensive, extremely excited. The siren goes. We curse quietly because it always seems to go when there are hundreds of children standing in orderly rows along the platform waiting for the train to draw in. A nurse goes to look after a tired woman who carries two tiny babies. "Ought to have their bottles," she says, and sends them along to us. On the platform we pour out boiling water to mix the babies' food, and the mother and twins perch on the end of a trolley. The train comes in. There is a rush. We see the supplies loaded into a roomy luggage-van, which soon becomes transformed into a canteen. The W.V.S. escorts climb aboard. The L.C.C. train marshal arranges with them how best to deal with feeding—shall he send them along in tens or twenties, and from both ends of the train at once or . . . or . . . They settle it somehow.

On the platform we see them go—the train slides out, we wave good-bye. Another train due out in an hour's time . . . and then another . . . and another. . . . We collect empty urns, relics of yesterday's trains, into our empty van, and say good-bye, and we feel a mixture of schoolgirl pride and adult humility at the tributes paid us by the L.C.C. officials.

REPORT ON A MOBILE I.E.P.

(Reports of this type, written by either the Post or District W.V.S. Leader, come in after every Incident.)

The bomb fell in a working-class district, and the Incident Enquiry Point was set up in a trailer in the middle of the scene of devastation within sight of the Civil Defence workers, who were digging with cranes, spades and their bare hands to rescue the many people who had been buried.)

"WE had our largest number of general enquiries during this Incident, but kept records only of those of real importance. We had enquiries about three people who were thought to have been passing by on their way home when the bomb fell, and by the closing of the day two of these were found, the other (wife of one of the men) being presumed to be among the remains found on the road. Mrs. M—— of A Post found out the work-place of one of these men from a very vague description given by the wife enquiring, and discovered exactly when he had clocked off work. From this it became clear that he must have been near when the bomb fell. His wife identified some of his clothing on being taken to the mortuary. The District Leader, who works almost next door to her house, comforted her and kept an eye on her throughout the morning. The description of the other two, a man and wife, thought to have been passing by at the time, was obtained from the enquirers (their son and daughter), and from this the man was identified late in the evening. These three casualties were especially tragic and cost everyone a great deal in the handling.

"Apart from those treated as out-patients, our list gave 40 patients kept in hospital at the end of the first day. We had eight fatal casualties identified and four missing at the end of the first day. One of these was discovered on the following day to have been wrongly identified (it happened at the beginning of the Incident), and it was found that one of our missing had been at the mortuary ever since that time.

"The I.E.P. re-opened at 09.00 the following day, Centre Staff reporting at 08.30 to the scene of the Incident to discover the new position. It was found that there were only two now missing, one old lady having been found and the missing man in the road having been identified late in the evening of the day before. One of the fatal casualties, about whom we had had no enquiries, was then checked up on, and it was found that he had been wrongly identified at the start, and had never been in the area. This turned out to be the other missing man and, from remains found to date, it was presumed that the wife of the passer-by (already identified by the son) must still be under the rubble in the road. All cases having therefore been cleared up, the Incident closed at 11.00, and the Incident Officer closed the I.E.P. at 11.30. Notice was put up on the site asking enquirers to come to the Town Hall."



The Midlands have a certain natural unity. Region 9 is the only region without a seacoast. And although it is in part the watershed of England, it boasts no mountains higher than the Clee Hills and the Malverns. Yet with its industrial core and its green countryside stretching north, south, east and west, it is typically English. Indeed, but for the lack of the sea, for which the rivers Trent, Severn and Wye (to say nothing of Shakespeare's Avon and Isaac Walton's Dove) in part compensate, it would be a perfect microcosm of English life.

All forms of industry are here, coal and steel, engineering and textiles, pottery and glass. Agriculture, too, is well represented: even Staffordshire, the most industrial of the five counties, was called Loamshire by George Eliot because of its rich soil, and Hereford's dairy cattle and Worcester's fruit farms are famous throughout the world.

So, in spite of Hilaire Belloc, the Midlands are neither sodden nor unkind. They are the heart of England, a vigorous and generous heart. Men from the Midlands are fighting on all the battle fronts of the world, using weapons forged in Midland factories, and sustained in part at least by food grown on Midland farms. Would there were a modern Shakespeare to write their story.

RECEPTION OF EVACUEES

WE have recently had an influx of evacuees from London in this Midland town. Three parties of mothers and children have arrived—about three hundred in all. About forty-five W.V.S. members were at the station: when the train arrived we went to work with a will, carrying babies and cases, extracting small children from the train, superintending luggage arrangements, collecting each party together and conducting them to the street where buses awaited to transport them to one of the ten billeting centres.

The heavy luggage had to be collected and sent to a centre for claiming later on, on production of an identity card. This centre was our recently closed camouflage depot and was manned by W.V.S. for several days. Prams caused us most worry, as many had not been dispatched from London, and many had later on to be found and rescued from their dumping-ground on other stations.

We repeated this procedure with each trainload, and became quite expert at sorting parties, soothing crying babies, rescuing straying children, and keeping track of odd gas masks, coats and small cases. A supply of napkins and warm water for the very hot and sticky babies was available on the platform on the very hot afternoon of the last arrival.

W.V.S. visited each centre with baby bottles and night clothes, which proved welcome, as much luggage had not arrived, and information was given to the newcomers as to emergency clothing, and the clothing depot later had some very busy days distributing much clothing to "bombed" and "blasted." Enquiries came in thick and fast, from lost luggage and prams to requests for bowls to wash in, saucepans and frying-pans, cots for babies, and husband's pay-cards lost in the wrecked house at home. We did our best to cope in each case, many prams and cots being borrowed and loaned in needy cases. The evacuees seemed very grateful for our help, and we felt that we had done something to brighten their arrival in a strange town.

SEWING AT AN AMERICAN HOSPITAL

EVERY Wednesday at 2 p.m. four of us meet at the sentry-box of an American hospital near our home town after the usual rush of getting cleared up after family dinner at home. We walk through the grounds to the Red Cross hall, and there a long table piled high with khaki sewing greets us. The soldiers pin a slip of paper on to their garments with their name written on and what they require done. Some put a "Thank you" on the paper and some say "Thanks, Ma'am." The sewing includes shortening or lengthening "pants" and sleeves of uniform jackets, stitching on stripes and insignias and buttons, putting braid round hats and also patching and darning. We have also made numerous pairs of curtains for the various huts.

About 4.30 p.m. a member of the American Red Cross brings us tea and cookies or chocolate and cookies, and about 6.30 p.m. we have finished the sewing for the day. We have been doing this work since the spring and are always welcomed with a smile and an expression of relief on the faces of several of the men who fear we may not turn up and that they may have to handle a needle and thread themselves, for invariably while we are in the midst of our sewing a shy face and voice will appear round the door saying, "Could you shorten my pants two inches, Ma'am?" Sometimes we are asked if there is anything to pay, so we explain what the W.V.S. badge on our overall stands for and make a joke about being part of Lease Lend. We four members work as a happy team together, and in our small way we feel we are forging a link in the chain of friendship between the American and British nations.

EMERGENCY LAND CORPS

ABOUT four years ago the Shropshire W.V.S. was asked to organise the Emergency Land Corps throughout the county by the War Agricultural Executive Committee, and W.V.S. Centres were asked to recruit volunteers.

So as organiser in this village of a population of under three hundred I made a canvass of all likely and unlikely people to be enrolled. Eventually on my register I had the vicar and his wife, two postwomen, mothers with children and without, young girls in service for afternoons; in fact, no one escaped my eye. The farmers to whom I gave the lists of people available for work often asked, "Will they be any good?" and I always answered "Yes," more bravely than I felt. The farmers and farm workers were soon very willing to show us how to hoe oats, stock corn, thresh, pull beet, top and tail mangolds and swedes and many other odd but useful jobs.

In the second year of the Emergency Land Corps we had thirty-eight members enrolled, but we have not such a large list now as some have had to go to work further afield; some are helping to repopulate the parish, but we still have a most efficient Corps and the demand for workers is always greater than the supply. The farmers are full of praise for the work done, and although our backs sometimes ache our hearts are light, knowing it is a worth-while job we are doing.

Many laughs we have during our work, very often against myself, and on one occasion I was mistaken for an Italian prisoner and that was a blow to my pride, because on that day I turned out to work in a brand-new brown boiler suit!

Not only has agriculture been helped by the Emergency Land Corps but also salvage, for we made a point of collecting up all scraps of iron lying in the hedgerows, and the workers in my district have helped by putting their earnings into War Savings and so doing a threefold job.

INDUSTRIAL WELFARE

IT'S such fun working for an organisation without a constitution because you never know what job waits for you around the corner. Take this work, for instance, that we were shanghaied into following a raid by a nice persuasive Ministry of Labour official, who said it was only for a week, but here we are still at it, and have been for the last four years.

1940. Destruction and desolation everywhere. S.O.S. from the Commissioner—1000 demolition workers arriving, can you feed them? They will work through the day, your mobiles can feed them while they are on the job, but we want a hot meal for them from ten o'clock till midnight. Well, you can imagine how difficult it was—the city was without light, gas or water—working in blitzed buildings, cold and cheerless with the rain, and wind blowing out the candles. Still, it's amazing how

cheerful a gang of women can be under adverse conditions. We used to finish washing up by 2 a.m. to the snores of the men huddled in the next room! Our shock-coopers did their stuff at that place for a fortnight until the Ministry sorted itself out and made the place into a first-class hostel (with our help). We then said Hurrah, that finishes that, we can relax, until a quiet voice said, "Good work; will you please report to the railway station, we have a large batch of workers arriving under the new factory scheme; give them a welcome, will you?"

The factories needed replacements, and who were we to argue, and anyway we soon found what a difference a cup of tea and a homely welcome will make to a tired traveller, and most of these young people were leaving home for the first time; they hadn't seen a bomb or heard many sirens in their part of the world, and they seemed so frightened and alone that it was a pleasure to make them smile. It's such a good job we can call on the older women for jobs of this kind, they have that motherly feeling which wins every time. Since then many many thousands have gone through our hands, and we have become much more efficient. We know, too, that our work is not only appreciated by the workers but by the Ministry, who have now let us have a house fully equipped with a lounge and offices and a cheerful canteen.

As the months went by a new aspect of the job met us—what did these lonely girls do in a strange city after they went through our hands. Some, we found, made a little niche of their own—others were still lonely. So we were approached by a local welfare officer to organise work to help to brighten them up. These girls are doing a grand job of work now, making toys for war nurseries, knitting comforts for troops, taking part in the Home Guard side of the factory and a hundred and one things, all helping to foster better understanding between peoples and making a greater war effort.

HAVE YOU A RECORD?

"THE Enigma Variations were grand and the Nutcracker was as lovely as only ballet music can be," wrote an Army private recently to W.V.S. Scottish Headquarters, and his is one of the many letters we have received which show that the tastes of the Services are not exclusively confined to jazz music.

Ever since the Scottish Headquarters Book Depot was started in 1940 there had always been a few gramophone records available and, even though these were of a somewhat ancient vintage, there was quite a demand for the loan of them.

ENSA had for some time, and still do, run an excellent lending library of classical records, but they did not cover the demands for non-classical music, so in November of last year we decided to start a real Gramophone Record Lending Library to be run on the same lines as the one for books. An appeal was made in the Press and as a result over 700 records were gifted. This was an excellent nucleus with which to start. The next step was to have strong cardboard boxes made (for 2s. each) in two sizes to hold 10-inch and 12-inch records. These were used not only when we posted records but when they were collected for local units, as they are a safeguard against breakages. We have boxes containing dance music only as well as miscellaneous collections with something to suit every musical taste, and in addition boxes containing classical music only, although when we distribute these we work in the closest co-operation with the ENSA service. Really good classical records are very popular. The borrowers come regularly to choose their own music, and we have a gramophone so that they can play anything over that is new to them.

Among our customers are A.T.S. girls who run flourishing music study circles and their supplies are changed regularly. The Army Education Corps staff are very keen musicians too, and lately they have been looking for suitable music for a Basic Education Centre where they hope to interest semi-illiterate soldiers in good music. Their method is to do this gradually by offering them first only simple music of good quality and later introducing works which are more difficult to follow. Girls in the Land Army and Timber Corps also clamour for the loan of records and we send many to their camps and hostels. Last week a soldier asked if he might have three different types of records as he had rigged up loud-speakers throughout his camp through which he intended to relay music and news bulletins. First of all he wanted cheerful music of the "Music While You Work" type, with which he proposed to introduce news programmes, then some of the latest jazz for dances and lastly highbrow music for a weekly serious concert held at the camp.

The lack of gramophones is a problem, but Army Entertainments are usually able to provide these when asked, and those given to us from time to time are immediately passed on to one of the units on our waiting list.

Through the Y.M.C.A. Mobile Canteens we have also been able to put our Gramophone Library on wheels. We keep some of the Canteens regularly supplied with

records which they take to isolated units. One of our branch Book Depots has taken up the scheme, as they have been asked to supply an R.A.F. unit with a box of classical records every fortnight. We sent them two boxes on loan to start them off well, and hope they will soon be self-supporting and be able to exchange records with us from time to time.

The demand for records is increasing as more people get to hear about the Library. Few of us have not suffered from the hideous monotony of a record being played over and over again, and if our library only did something to relieve sufferers of that nuisance it would be of value!

FOOD NEWS

DEHYDRATION

WHEN you read of the Forces being served with dehydrated vegetables, don't think of the unattractive dried vegetables of the last war. Those who remember might be excused for doubting the virtue of the modern product. Constant experiment, however, during recent years, first in the laboratory and later on a factory scale, has led to an almost perfect process which retains full flavour and vitamin value with great economy.

It is estimated that vegetables which in their fresh condition filled 1000 lorries were taken away after dehydration in 150. Therefore, with this valuable economy of transport in war-time, every kind of foodstuff which would lend itself to the process has been dehydrated.

Dehydration factories can only operate in counties and areas where there is a good supply of raw material. In the United Kingdom, vegetables are now being dehydrated on a commercial scale. Cabbage comes fresh from the fields, and when cooked the nutritional value is almost as great as fresh cabbage when well cooked, and considerably better than fresh cabbage badly cooked.

Housewives can look forward to a great saving in time and labour after the war. Specially popular will be the potato powder that, with the addition of hot water, produces soft mashed potatoes.

A further economy in space and tinplate, as well as other packing materials, is achieved by the new technique of compressing dried vegetable strips into small blocks. These are soaked in warm water and cooked in the same way as loose dehydrated vegetables. This technique can be extended to other dried foods besides vegetables, and experimental work is still going on.

Dehydrated meat is imported for the Services from countries where plentiful supplies of meat are available. This is analysed and sampled by the Ministry of Food before it is sent out to the troops.

Fish is being dehydrated by a factory in Scotland, herrings being the principal ingredient for investigation. Both meat and fish are dehydrated in a minced form; obviously they cannot be reconstituted into a joint or fillet. Dried herring is so good that any housewife would be pleased to have it in her larder for a snack meal or savoury.

Dehydrated foods will keep in perfect condition for two years.

PUDDINGS FOR THE CHILDREN

AMERICAN RAISIN PIE.—6 oz. short pastry. *Filling*: 4 oz. raisins or sultanas.

Put fruit in saucepan and cover with water. Stew gently for 10 minutes. Blend 1 teaspoonful of flour and cornflour with a little water and stir into mixture. Cook for a few moments, then turn on to a plate to cool. Line a greased tin or enamel plate with a thin layer of pastry and put in filling and cover with remainder of pastry. Mark across in portions. Bake in a quick oven 25-30 minutes.

Chopped dates, prunes and figs can be used in the same way for a mixed fruit pie.

PRUNE MOULD.— $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. cooked sieved prunes, $\frac{1}{2}$ gill cream (top of milk), $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. gelatine.

Measure prune pulp, add water to make up 1 pint. Dissolve gelatine in this liquid. Allow to cool and add cream. Set in a wetted fancy mould. Serve with digestive biscuits or fingers of sponge cake.

NEAPOLITAN CREAM.—Make a fruit pulp with stewed apples or gooseberries. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. gelatine to 1 pint fruit pulp. Add top of milk. Divide into 3 parts, colour and mould in layers. Crush some barley sugar with a rolling-pin and sprinkle on top.

DUTCH CARROT PIE.—2 large cooked carrots, $\frac{1}{2}$ pint milk, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. grated cheese, $\frac{1}{2}$ teacupful breadcrumbs, 1 egg, seasoning.

Grate carrots coarsely, put in greased pie-dish. Boil milk, add breadcrumbs, cheese, salt and beaten egg. Pour over carrots. Sprinkle a little cheese on top and bake for 20 minutes.

CENTRE FLASHES

BOMB racks are being wired as out-work by Lindsey Gainsborough, and seventy people are employed.

A Falconwood member, acting as train escort during the evacuation, took a Punch and Judy Show with her and gave entertainments during the journey.

Country dancing was started in Neilston village four years ago by way of keeping fit and recreation, and twenty-five members are regular attenders.

Okehampton shopkeepers have put notices in their windows asking for loans of prams and push-chairs for evacuees on behalf of W.V.S.

Poulton-le-Fylde supply knitting for the Forces to a surgery of one of the doctors, and are delighted with the amount done by the waiting patients.

An Acton member escorted three children to Wales and returned the same day. She said she had not been able to sit still for so long and hoped next time she would be asked to go to Scotland!

A Bromley canteen reports that they have had a stamp machine installed which has proved to be an enormous help to the workers and is much appreciated by the men.

W.A.A.F. welfare work is becoming an Elstree speciality: there have been two more weddings, both Colonial, so W.V.S. made all the necessary arrangements as there were no relatives available.

Gt. Yarmouth have a "wants" window display each month, in which they put the things they are asked for by the Services with excellent results so that they are able to satisfy most of the needs.

Sandy came to the rescue of a violinist whose E string broke just before an Army concert. There was no music shop in the town, so the W.V.S. Office was appealed to, and in ten minutes an E string was located.

One of the original Southampton members, now aged over eighty, regularly attends one of the hospitals two nights a week from midnight to 3 a.m. to lay tables, wait on the doctors in the Common Room, wash up, etc.

A military hospital is making toys for Birmingham day nurseries, and some of the men have visited one nursery, stayed for tea and repaired broken toys on the spot. A supply of extra nuts, bolts, wheels, etc., are now kept on the premises in readiness for these visits.

In one village in the Uckfield R.D. W.V.S. was asked to produce an eight-week-old baby girl so that an officer, who had just heard he had a daughter of that age, could see what she looked like. The baby was duly found and the officer introduced to her.

The son of one of the West Hartlepool members in a letter to his mother says that the W.V.S. in India brought their canteen into the jungle every fortnight no matter what their difficulties. It was the one bright spot in their lonely outposts.

About a year ago one of the children at a Perthshire Evacuation Hostel wrote to a donor of an Afghan quilt in Canada, and ever since the child has been receiving letters from the Canadian family. Now the father of the family, an airman, has arrived in Scotland and is to visit the hostel to see his family's pen-friend for himself.

AN APPRECIATION

MRS. FAIRBAIRN, W.V.S., wife of Mr. Ian Fairbairn, lost her life by enemy action this month. S. R. writes:

The death of Esmée Fairbairn has left her friends desolate at their loss, and this sense is not only shared by her colleagues but also by countless people who—without knowing her name—came to her at the W.V.S. Headquarters' Information Desk at Tothill Street, as to a trusted friend to ask for help and counsel. In her they always found a ready and understanding listener whose good advice and wise guidance helped them on their way. For us, her colleagues, the day's work was made that much easier by her daily personal welcome to each one, her practical sympathy and ever ready help in everything, however trivial. She remembered every one's troubles; she shared each individual's pleasure and pain. No task was too small for her, no effort was too great; her patience and readiness to serve were made perfect by the fact that they were always accompanied by her own intrinsic gaiety and her ever ready sense of humour. We mourn her going grievously, and we realise to how great a degree the richness she brought to our lives was of a substance that gave us of her own strength. She shared her happiness with us all, she bore her anxieties and sorrows alone, so gallantly, that we could not but learn from her example. Few people can have given as much to their fellow-workers, and while we think sadly of our loss we recognise how fortunate we have been in having had such a generous share in her contribution to life.