

[Page 6 - World War One Continues: Nursing-Sisters in England and France](#)

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Operating room, Canadian General Hospital, Orpington, England. Helen Kendall, Anesthetist, at the head of the table. Helen Kendall, Sydney: I was an anesthetist. I put people to sleep. I had trained in Montreal--I belonged to the Royal Victoria Hospital--they gave me my education. Then I was very handy. Because when you went overseas, there weren't doctors available to give anesthetics. They just were too busy looking after them, and operating on them. And they were very glad to have people giving anesthetics. We were well trained, and we were valuable. Our hospital was on the coast, where they brought the people down from the field where they were wounded. They didn't send them on to England until they'd been treated a bit. Any hospitals we had were for casualties. Or there'd be a ward for the medicals--they weren't casualties, but they had what they got--pneumonia or things. But they had to be looked after. Sick. Casualties we looked after, we'd send them as soon as we could, back to England. We were right on the water. We were on the French side. We looked across to England. (You were close to the war.) We were in among it. (And how did you feel about that?) Oh, great excitement. We weren't scared to death. We were just enjoying. But you know, we were very social. We had a great time. That's the truth of the matter. We were working, but we were also playing. They built a tennis court for us. We could play there. And there was always marvellous saltwater swimming. And we had some boats, because we were right on the Channel there. It was a wonderful life. But we were nurses. Just when we weren't nursing, we were having a good time. It was just a great adventure. A very interesting life it was, for all of us. (Yes, I suppose it was. And a terrible responsibility.) Well, I don't think that killed us--your responsibility. Because when you're young, you know, you don't let it get you too down too much. You enjoy yourself. And you can do what you have to, but you can also be confident.

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