



Left: Lts. M. Rothstein and J. Allison mixing the salad. Right: Lt. J. Ficzeri at the oven.

Somewhere in Australia

By JOSEPHINE HOFF, R.N.

FOR MORE THAN TWO years, the nurses of our unit were particularly fortunate in the location of our hospital in one of the large cities of Australia which we think is the most beautiful too. The facilities for recreation were numerous in and around the city, yet our commanding officer, Col. William C. McCally, and chief nurse, Major Olga Benderoff, felt there was need for a home or club where the

nurses could relax in privacy and entertain their many friends. This plan proved again and again to be a positive factor in the morale of our group.

The Nurses Annex, as we called it, was loaned to us by a wealthy woman of the city who showed the true Australian hospitality by this gesture. The house was set in beautiful grounds with terraces, a sunken garden, pool, flowers, and shrubs in profusion. The house contained a large reception hall, a ballroom with French doors opening onto a flagged terrace leading into the garden, a living

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Summer Home. Lts. E. Zelm and O. King starting out for golf.

room with fireplace and bay window overlooking the grounds, and library.

The dining-room was large and impressive with floor-length windows and crystal wall lamps. But the favorite spot was a sunny little breakfast-room where the girls could have breakfast or brunch in their housecoats and dawdle over their coffee. Upstairs, there were six bedrooms and two baths, all beautifully decorated. And the luxury of sleeping on a non-G.I. mattress wasn't to be discounted.

Many of the nurses had the most fun cooking as they would at home. Any nurse could sign up for a dinner party for from four to twenty-four. Sunday was open house with buffet supper usually serving at least fifty people. On Christmas Day, we served a buffet supper on the lawn with brilliant sunshine and many flowers giving it a festive air.

Here, we entertained Lt. Col. Clement, Director of the ANC in the Southwest Pacific area and other representatives of the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps visiting in the area. About once a month, we had a dance with an orchestra; for informal parties there was a victrola with the latest "State-side" records. Outside, we had tennis on a clay court, sunbathing, and gardening. Two dogs, owned by nurses, furnished much fun.

Following illness or operations, the nurses were sent to the Annex for convalescence. Here they were completely away from the hospital atmosphere, could have the type of food they wished, and get plenty of rest and sunshine. Nurses on leave in our area, some down from New Guinea, always made the Annex their headquarters and enjoyed it as much as we did. Frequently, Army officers who had been fighting in the tropics for months or Naval officers, veterans of the Coral Sea and Mid-

way battles, were entertained here; invariably, they said it was the closest thing to home they had found since they left for foreign service.

The nurses themselves managed this home with the help of a few civilian maids. This gave them invaluable social experience as hostess, and firsthand knowledge of ordering, planning, and cooking meals for large numbers.

In our second year, a summer home was rented to us by an American family who have been in Australia for some twenty years. This was a five-acre estate, sixty miles from the city, overlooking the ocean.

Down the cliff, was a small bathhouse and beach for swimming and sunbathing. We had a small motor boat, loaned by the Navy, and the fishermen in the group had a glorious time; they even caught a few sharks and so many edible fish that the cry sometimes went up about the lack of variety in the menus! Rock climbing and shell hunting along the shore were favorite pastimes. There were bicycles which caused some skinned knees before we learned to manage the Australian hand-brake. Across the road was a golf course free to us, and, in the village, an old man rented horses by the hour.

Since this home was so far from the hospital, a bus drove down twice a week with a group of nurses. Many a Sunday saw the kitchen personnel working overtime to feed sixty to seventy guests. Yet the house never seemed crowded and sufficient varied entertainment was available to furnish freedom and independent amusement.

When our long-awaited orders came to move to New Guinea (something we all wanted), we closed our two homes with the knowledge that here we had had some of our happiest hours in Australia.



Summer home. Terraces sloping to the cliff.