



S. P. Andrew photograph

MISS MARGUERITE WEBB

Men aren't much different from children

"FOURTEEN months on a hospital ship may have its hair-raising moments, but it is an experience that I will never regret and never forget," said Miss Marguerite Webb, who has recently returned to New Zealand. Miss Webb was appointed by the joint

## HANDWORK ON A HOSPITAL SHIP

### Soldiers Make Toys And Do Embroidery—And Like It

Council of St. John Ambulance Association and the Red Cross to teach handcrafts to the wounded during their voyage home.

"I was very lucky to get the appointment," said Miss Webb. "I had had 12 years of teaching handwork and arts and crafts in schools, but I had not had the hospital training that goes with therapeutic handwork. Perhaps those in charge felt that the long experience in teaching and in all sorts of handwork might make it easier for me to interest the men and to think of the necessary variety of things for them to do. If you want a man to use the muscles of his hands, it's not much use to give him mechanical exercises and work that he isn't going to be interested in. The first thing is to get him to want to use his hands and his brains and then he will use the muscles without thinking about it."

"Were you the only instructor of this sort on your ship?" we asked.

"As far as I know I am the only New Zealand handwork instructor, though others may have been appointed more recently. Australian ships carry occupational therapists, and I have no doubt

English and American ships do, too. Handwork is, of course, only a very small part of the elaborate therapeutic work that is being developed at present to prevent the muscles of sick and wounded men from deteriorating through inaction.

#### Good Results With Neurosis

"If you had no one to help you with your handcrafts, how did you manage to get round the men on the ship?"

"At first I issued handwork to all the men who came for it, and this alone kept me very busy. Then I found that it was not the ones who most needed it who were being supplied. You see there is plenty to do on board ship for those who are up. They have all sorts of games, and they arrange concerts and have bands and orchestras. It is pleasant for them to have the additional interest of handwork, but it isn't strictly necessary. So I soon found that I could do the most useful work by concentrating on the patients in bed, those who could not get about. I always worked under the direction of the ward sister and the doctor. There were also patients who needed work to exercise specific muscles.

The other wards in which I worked particularly were the mental neurosis wards. It is important to awaken a new interest in those patients suffering from an anxiety neurosis, for example, and we had some satisfactory results from such patients. A good many of them made toys, and very nice ones, too, and they got a lot of pleasure from the thought that these were to go to their children or to small brothers and sisters."

#### "A Bit of a Joke at First"

We asked what sort of handwork the men liked to learn.

"Actually they would do almost anything. At first the idea of doing embroidery was considered a bit of a joke, but after one or two had made a start, it was surprising how popular cushion covers and cloths became. They were pleased to think of the surprise it would give their mothers and wives and sweethearts when they could show just how well they could embroider — and they did it well, too. Then, of course, rug-making was popular, and it was good from my point of view, because a rug takes a long time to make. Some of the

(Continued on next page)

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