1943

Overseas Duty Assignment

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OVERSEAS DUTY ASSIGNMENT

WHEN Johnny Doughboy is sent overseas he is accompanied by dietitians and other foods personnel to see that he gets the food he needs.

The dietitian who serves overseas fills a position comparable to the nurse in the armed forces. She is commissioned a second lieutenant upon completion of her required training and henceforth serves as an officer in the army.

Prior to her embarkation, the overseas dietitian must be prepared to leave her post and be ready to sail within a short time. She must keep her personal belongings in an easily-stored state and her overseas and shipboard uniforms always in readiness.

Many Iowa State dietetics graduates are serving overseas and with military hospital units in the United States. Typical of these women are Lt. Martha Kitchen, '38, who has served in North Africa since the first of December and Lt. Katherine Kratoska, '34, who is stationed on the Hawaiian Islands.

Lieutenant Kitchen writes that she never experienced real work until she arrived in Africa with the
Lt. Katherine Krataska, '34

first hospital unit. However, interesting and exciting experiences are never-ceasing in the desert country.

The Arabs particularly interest Lieutenant Kitchen. Several old Arab women come to the hospital every morning for coffee. They claim that cups are unclean and each brings an old tin can from which to drink.

She once witnessed the installation of an Arab leader and later attended the lavish banquet in celebration of the event. The 3½-hour banquet took place in huge tents with colorful oriental rugs covering the ground. One course of the many-course meal consisted of six whole sheep roasted and brought to the diners on huge platters. Lieutenant Kitchen was served a whole leg of lamb which she attempted to eat in the Arab manner of tearing with the hands without the use of knives and forks.

In the large base hospital, Lieutenant Kitchen has 25 cooks and a stenographer to assist her in feeding the men and staff who pass through the institution.

Before she entered the army, she worked in the City of Georgia Railway Hospital at Savannah, Ga., following the completion of her student dietetics work at the University Hospital, Duke University, Durham, N. C.

Equally colorful are the experiences of Lieutenant Krataska on the other side of the world in the Hawaiian Islands. She writes that the duties of an army dietitian vary little from those of a civilian hospital dietitian. However, service overseas presents difficulties rarely met previously.

Overseas, the dietitian plans the menus and supervises the preparation and service of all meals for both the wards and mess halls. Often the menus can be made up daily only after the return of the mess trucks with the food supplies for that day.

In one hospital in which Lieutenant Krataska worked, the staff for meal service included one mess officer who directed the work, one mess sergeant and one dietitian. All the cooks and KPs were soldiers. Although variety necessarily is lacking at times, the men receive enough to eat.

-Marian Loofe

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