

## VISIT TO THE PALACE

In a letter dated November 16, 1944, to her friend, Miss O. K. Bixley, a nursing sister at the Hastings Memorial Hospital, Miss Murray tells her experience of being summoned to Buckingham Palace to receive her award from the King. She received notice in 1943 that she was being awarded the cross.

Miss Murray, in her letter reveals a warm affection for England, its charming old country houses and its country lanes. The letter, too, expresses a longing for the simple and homely things of life. She writes: "For the whole time I've been away I think I have only been in a private house once, and that was for tea one afternoon about a week ago. It probably is a very small thing, but occasionally it becomes the one thing on earth you want to do." The letter continues:

"I was summoned to Buckingham Palace last week to receive my decoration; it really was a thrill, but it managed to get me in a positive dither for a few hours. Fortunately several of our boys were there to receive their military crosses, and other decorations, and were terribly good to me. I had to make two curtseys to the King, before and after. I manipulated the first all right, but the second was a tricky business as my knees started to shake so much I wondered if one would hold me long enough to get the other down. Still I managed. I had to appear in my indoor uniform, consequently was besieged with reporters and photographers as soon as I stepped outside the door. They wanted 'my story'. I regretted I hadn't one."

Miss Murray, who received her training at Masterton Hospital, was at the time of her enlistment for overseas in 1940, on the staff of the Hastings Memorial Hospital. She left New Zealand with the fifth reinforcements, and saw service throughout the desert campaigns.

The cross, enamelled red and edged with gold, bears the words, Faith, Hope and Charity. It was instituted in 1883 for nurses who tended the sick and wounded of the Army and Navy.