

# Sister Kate

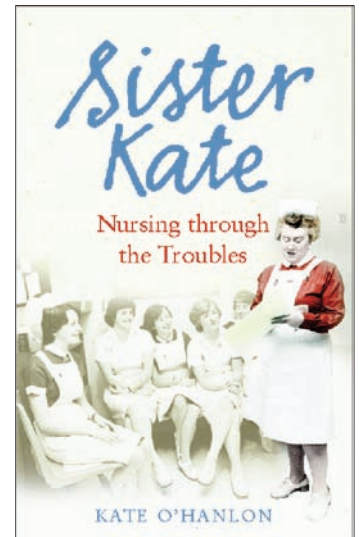
## Nursing through the Troubles

Kate O'Hanlon

The Royal Victoria in Belfast cared for more victims of the Troubles than any other hospital. Civilians caught in city centre bombs, British soldiers shot while on patrol, IRA members injured by their own explosions – they all arrived into the Accident and Emergency department where Sister Kate O'Hanlon worked from 1966 until 1988, spending sixteen years as sister-in-charge.

Kate started nursing in an era now long gone: when matrons could chastise wayward nurses with no more than a glance, and sisters took the utmost pride in caring for patients on their immaculate wards. The people who were brought into casualty were victims of road traffic accidents, Saturday night scuffles outside the pub or medical emergencies. So when the telephone rang on 26 June 1966, with the news that there had been a shooting in Malvern Street, no one in the department believed it. Soon such incidents became daily occurrences and the Royal's A & E department became one of the most famous in the world.

From treating British soldiers and IRA members in adjoining cubicles, to coping with gun battles in the hospital grounds, Kate never lost her trademark blend of compassion, warmth and humour. Fascinating, unique and absorbing, this is her extraordinary story of nursing on the front line.



### KEY SELLING POINTS

- Unique story of nursing during the worst days of the Troubles
- Covers contemporary issues such as the NHS, hospital cleanliness, standards of nursing care
  - Author is a very well known figure in medical circles
- Kate has appeared on numerous radio and television programmes, discussing her experiences
  - Black and white photographs throughout

**KATE O'HANLON (MBE)** was born in the Markets area of Belfast. She worked in business for fourteen years before training to become a nurse. She worked at the Royal Victoria Hospital from 1966–1988, and was sister-in-charge of the casualty department for sixteen years. Described on her retirement as 'the United Kingdom's best known casualty nurse' (*Belfast Telegraph*), Kate was chairperson of the Royal College of Nursing's A&E Forum for nine years and secretary for three. She has travelled the world, attending conferences to talk about her experiences, and formed part of a UN delegation that visited Gaza and the West Bank to assess the emergency facilities available to the Palestinian victims of the Intafada. She is a Dame of the Order of Malta.

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