

FIRST INTERIM REPORT OF NO. 1 NEUROLOGICAL HOSPITAL, RCAMC., CASF.

After some months of mobilization in Ottawa, the Unit has sailed and has arrived safely at a port in England after an uneventful crossing. It seems best to send out now a report of the activities of the Unit to those who are interested and who have helped in one way or another with the organization of this hospital, and particularly to those generous citizens who, under the leadership of Dr. Charles F. Martin, have contributed or are willing to contribute to the extra-military comforts and needs of the personnel. Subsequent reports will be sent out at intervals as news is received, and the Commanding Officer of the Unit, Colonel Cross, has promised to send interim reports of their activities from time to time. It is requested that any information received with regard to the Hospital be sent to Dr. Norman Petersen at the Montreal Neurological Institute or to Dr. Wilder Penfield who is sending out this report.

Colonel Cross has taken with him certain funds which may be used for providing comforts for the men and arrangements have been made by Dr. Martin to supplement the funds which he is carrying with him from time to time as may be necessary.

The following letter was received from Colonel Cross in Ottawa under the date of May 1st, 1940:

"Greetings to you, Sir, and to Dr. C. F. Martin and members of our Neurological Hospital Auxiliary.

"The initial communication of this serial report from the Unit through you, the corresponding member, bears the abundant appreciation of the Unit's entire staff for the active interest and sympathy of the President and the individual members of the No. 1 Neurological Hospital Auxiliary.

"It goes without statement that every effort of Officers and other ranks will be made to merit this interest. Any achievements effected in beneficial service will be enthusiastically shared with its well-wishers by the Unit's personnel.

"In retrospect, the higher lights of our Unit's formation, after promulgation of mobilization order of date December 27th, 1939, are the commencement of recruiting on 5th January when the present O.C. reported for duty, the effective aid of Lt.-Col. Russel in the early days, the support of Major-General E.C. Ashton, and the close paternal oversight of Col. R.M. Gorssline, Director of Medical Services.

"To these may be added the immense contribution to the Officer personnel, through sacrifices of their respective staffs, by Drs. Penfield of the Montreal Neurological Institute and K.G. MacKenzie of the Toronto-General Hospital. High honour is due to these two, as well as to Lt.-Col. Colin K. Russel, for their capable counsels and unselfish co-operation.

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1. On the occasion of the funeral of our late lamented Governor General, Baron Tweedsmuir, five officers and fifty men were detailed as guards along the line of parade. A note of appreciation from Ottawa Headquarters was received relaying to the Unit the thanks of Lady Tweedsmuir and family.
2. Several days later the Commanding Officer of the No. 1 Neurological Hospital led, and the whole Unit paraded with, four others to a commemorative service for His Excellency, Lord Tweedsmuir. The parade was inspected by the Ottawa Area Commandant and his expression given.
3. Official inspection of the Hospital Unit was carried out on 9th April, 1940, estimating drill efficiency of officers and men as well as excellence in stores and quarters and status of records and documentation. Compliment and congratulation of the inspecting staff were unstinted in their report.
4. On 28th April, 1940, nine officers and sixty-seven other ranks took part in a general march-out of all troops in the Ottawa area. A subsequent note was received from District Headquarters at Kingston remarking favorably upon the precision and appearance of the No. 1 Neurological Hospital Detachment.
5. On the 30th April, 1940, an unofficial inspection of the men's efficiency and appearance on parade was held before Brig.-General H. F. McDonald, Chairman of the Canadian Pension Commission. General McDonald was lavish in his praise of the Unit.

"The thanks of the Unit personnel are tendered to Miss Eileen Flanagan, Superintendent of Nurses of the Montreal Neurological Institute and staff of that Institute for their devotion and co-operation in the training of N.C.O.'s and soldiers sent to them for instruction as orderlies.

"In all twenty-five other ranks have had the unique privilege of experience and teaching in the early care of casualties of the head and spine, so definitely appropriate to the duties they will be called upon to fulfill in action.

"Instruction programs have been carried out since the fifteenth of January, 1940 -- when the Unit was 10 days old. These have been continued without remission and expanded through all the branches of both military requirements and medico-surgical essentials.

"As of the 30th April, 1940, your and our Unit stands prepared in its total personnel, as established under Militia Orders, to proceed overseas, totally equipped physically and with a strong moral ambition to achieve and fulfill its potential high destiny".



On March 30th, 1940, in Montreal a Bon Voyage Dinner was tendered to the Officers of No. 1 Neurological Hospital by the staff of the Montreal Neurological Institute and well-wishers of the Unit. Among the speakers at the dinner were Lt.-Col. Cross, Lt.-Col. Russel, Lt.-Col. Cone, Principal F.C. James, and a message was read from Dr. Martin who was unfortunately unable to attend.

On April 2nd the following letter was received from Colonel Cross:

"A simple expression of gratitude to you, and through you to those broad-visioned gentlemen, members of our sustaining committee, seems so insufficient.

"The marvelous manifestation of last Saturday evening in Montreal has given us a most encouraging sense of sympathetic interest and support. Its contribution as a stimulus for fulfillment of duty and high ideals can scarcely be estimated.

"I shall very gladly keep you informed of general trends, special incidents and, too, any necessities that arise, for your transmission to the individual members of our Sustaining Board, of whom we are so keenly appreciative".

In the middle of May Lt.-Col. Russel, Lt.-Col. Cone, and Major Botterel preceded the Unit to England. We have heard that their crossing was quite pleasant and that apparently the tedium of the journey was relieved for Dr. Cone when a heavy plank fell down a hatchway on the head of one of the enlisted men. The accident resulted in a broken neck, which was treated by Dr. Cone with his usual care and with great success.

A letter from Dr. Cone from London under date of May 24th may be quoted in part as follows:

"In England because of the likelihood of injuries to the civilian population all hospitals are under the Minister of Health, and he has selected civilian doctors as either advisers or consultants or both. Gordon Holmes for example is carrying a very important and big load though he is carrying on with his teaching and practice. Jefferson is a consultant in Neurosurgery and carrying on as a civilian at Manchester. As far as I have been able to determine Cairns is serving in a triple capacity, adviser, consultant and is also connected with the army. I am not sure of this. The point I want to make is that the scheme seems to be working out well for the English, special military hospitals are not necessary, there is no upset in their usual organization except added work - lots of it, the wounded men being sent back from the base or even from a casualty clearing level directly to one of the civilian hospitals".

In a second letter dated June 6th he writes as follows:

"The Unit is to come shortly. Where it will be located is not yet decided. It will probably be placed under canvas and the equipment left packed until we move on over there. The nursing and medical staffs may be assigned to some other hospital in the meantime. (The nurses have not yet been mobilized).



"Since the emergency medical schedule (E.M.S.) has covered the situation so completely in England neither the Royal Army Medical Corps nor the R.C.A.M.C. has so very much to do here. The R.A.C. men assigned to the E.M.S. hospitals are concerned chiefly with discipline and documentation, while the civilian staffs carry on. This is an example of how it is working. At Lord Brownlow's old estate, bought sometime ago by Bonar Law and given to the Conservative Party for the establishment of a school of citizenship, the E.M.S. has taken over.

"The manor house is used for both personnel and patients, and there are about twelve large huts each holding from 36 to 40 patients. They can handle about 700 now, and it is to be enlarged.

"The staff of Charing Cross Hospital is in charge. They take care of both civilian and military patients, both the routine things and the wounds. They house the medical students of Charing Cross out there too, and carry on with the usual teaching. Pathological Lectures in a crypt built by the monks in 1400, the wine shelves holding museum specimens now taken out from London, and there are other just as strange situations - a women's ward in a huge ballroom with a brilliantly coloured mural on its thirty-foot high ceiling. Their equipment is really splendid. The students say that they are getting much more out of the work than they did in London. The staff seems to be enthusiastic about the set-up too. I have never seen such beautiful grounds. Even with the wounded coming in it is difficult to believe there is a war on and the tempo at which they work does not suggest it either. A major in the R.A.M.C. flutters about with his small staff of orderlies to see that the necessary papers are filled out for the army medical corps.

"This is not an unusual set-up. Every place I have gone is doing much the same way. St. Bartholomews Hospital is running a similar show. Cairns and others are doing the same thing, except that they are carrying on at their own stamping grounds and have taken over some of the newer colleges as well. There is certainly a great collection of talent there.

"Jefferson is adviser to the Ministry of Health. He is suggesting that licences to practice in England be granted to medical men from the Dominions so that they will be able to work in the E.M.S. hospitals for the duration too.

"The two Canadian hospitals, just being built and nearing completion (they should be ready about June 15th) are at ----- and ----- . I hear they are lovely. The 15th General, the Toronto Unit, is to take over one and the Winnipeg Unit the other. Both Units have been here since early in February and the staffs are very anxious to re-assemble and get busy at their own work.

"Henderson and Nichols (Martin Nichols, Fellow at the M.N.I. last year) took over a head team and special truck and though they have not returned are probably staying with their wounded. It is said that they did some splendid work - most of it general surgery - only 16 heads.

"The city is strangely quiet. It is clear, cloudless and not too warm. Old Ben says 4:30 through my office window and that is tea-time; imagine it when such an emergency exists".