

SECOND INTERIM REPORT OF NO. 1 NEUROLOGICAL HOSPITAL, RCAMC., CASB.

Since the first interim report of No. 1 Neurological Hospital was made, several letters have been received from the Officer personnel by members of the Staff of the Montreal Neurological Institute. The information in these letters forms the material from which this report is made, and it is suggested that those who receive letters from members of the Unit communicate any appropriate contents to Dr. Norman Petersen or Dr. Wildor Penfield at the Montreal Neurological Institute.

Until recently, the Unit has been stationed at Thursley, near Bramshot, where it was under canvas.

A letter from Col. C.E. Cross, Officer Commanding, forms the chief item of this report and is quoted below in full.

"From somewhere in Transoecania comes the June dossier to bene-volents and bene-facients at home.

"Beginning the month, on Sunday, June 2nd, the No. 1 Neurological Hospital unit had a full parade to divine services. The minority, Roman Catholics, marched to St. Theresa Church and the remainder to All Saint's Church. At both services military chaplains officiated.

"From this date until departure which was slated for the evening of the seventh, arrangements re documentation, restitution of Barrack stores, final outfitting of personnel, etc., occupied the various branches of pay, Quartermaster, and Orderly Room. Several men demanded transfers at the last moment due to illness in the home and new recruits were drafted in to replace same. The unit left Ottawa with every rank filled even to a 3rd Chaplain, a United Church padre.

"Departmental delays in promotion of officers to qualified ranks, regrettably subjected Captains Hanson, Humphreys, McCormick, Richardson, and Stewart to leave with their Captain's rank unconfirmed in Routine Orders, although about 2 months overdue. They are, however, wearing the insignia of their rank with impunity.

"A dreadful circumstance became revealed on the eve of our departure when it was found that of our equipment long ordered, sanctioned by the D.G.M.S. and Treasury board, the most important items of operative apparatus, had never been actually ordered for the unit. These included Electric generator set, (which is the actuation of all our appliances), the manometers, the suction machines, cauteries and stimulators.

"In tracing out the defalcation it was found that the operative of the war supply board through whom all these orders must pass had neglected or otherwise failed in his official duties. A full and desperate report was made to the D.G.M.S. and the matter probed with the above findings, and measures to expedite these orders were instituted.

"The futility of a hospital under the circumstances is evident and of one on the eve of reporting for duty, absurd. No fault can be ascribed to any officer of the unit nor of the purchasing personnel of the medical headquarters. They had all been repeatedly assured of achievement of orders for requisitions long before.

"Promises of 'rush' execution were made and will, I believe, be fulfilled. As it has turned out available quarters for hospital functioning have not as yet been secured here.

"At a farewell noon lunch on the 7th in the Chateau, - all the unit officers and their ladies met and had General McDonald and Dr. Gliddon of the D.P.N.H. as guests. In the evening of the same day, the No. 1 N.H. paraded from its late barracks to the troop train which left Ottawa at 11.30 p.m. for Halifax. The Officer commanding the unit was appointed O.C. the Troop train - in charge of all arrangements and over some different units. Arrival after an uneventful trip was made at Halifax on Sunday a.m., June 9th, and embarkation immediately effected on the Duchess of Bedford. After 24 hours, however, our unit disembarked from that Transport and re-embarked on the Cunarder 'Samaria' - because of overcrowding on the former, condemned by myself who was senior medical officer on the Transport. Appointments and associations were far superior on the latter vessel so there was cause for self-congratulation.

"Sailing occurred on the 11th June in the early morning and an ample convoy guard supplied - of one British warship and several Canadian destroyers. The destroyers left us after 2 days at sea and a greater number came to meet us off the Irish coast on June 19th. We landed at Liverpool about noon of the 20th June, taken by train to our present site.

"Lt. Col. Russel met us at the landing and welcomed us, Lt. Col. Conc was employed in London - but Major Botterell was on the scene at our train destination and had prepared, in large part, our camp-site and ration requirements.

"The recent week has passed in contacting our headquarters for administration, food and stores, and laying out of camp essentials, sanitation, air-raid protection, messes and men's sport requirements.

"While on the boat transport, news of France's capitulation came to us by radio, and Premier Churchill's resolute speech of carrying on. The sea was calm throughout and with the exception of protective fog at intervals, the weather was beautiful.

"Two of our officers were detailed to act as Surgeons for troops, Capt. S.P. Humphreys on the Duchess of Atholl and Capt. C.P. McCornick on the Bedford. The former had occasion to perform operations for appendicitis on 2 members of the troops, one at the quay in Halifax and the second one at sea. Both were eminent successes.

"On the Samaria, I was senior Medical Officer and my remaining officers serviced the sick parades in daily rotation. There were, however, no major illnesses, nor travel discomforts amongst the personnel of our Unit.

"On the 26th inst, Lt. Col. Russel visited camp and reported that he is in constant conference with Canadian Military Headquarters, in seeking a location for occupation as a functioning hospital unit. Several tentative locations are under consideration and it is hopeful that one may be early available.

"Lt. Col. Cone and Major Botterell have been studying the tolerance of brain tissue to Dagenan with a view to its supplanting sulphapyridine in sterile powder form in brain wounds for bactericidal action. Sulphapyridine has definite virtue in this regard but the germicidal efficiency does not cover all types of Septic organisms. It seems evident, however, that Dagenan is not absorbable and is irritant, therefore probably not applicable.

"Several officers have availed themselves of landing leave to visit London or friends in other centres.

"Daily early mass is said for our Roman Catholic contingent by Capt. A. J. O'Neil, Chaplain. We have Sunday devotional services conducted by our Church of England and United Church padres, in unison. We have drawn sparingly from our fund for several men's sport accessories and messing-comforts.

"This completes outstanding data for the month of June.

"With most respectful sentiments in which every officer joins to the President and members of our first column".

In a letter dated June 23rd, 1940, Lt. Col. Cone stated, "The emergency medical schedule in force here is in practically complete control, and perhaps it should be. They have all the Hospitals and potential Hospitals allocated for civilians and staffed by men who have been drafted as civilians to do the work. And so they are taking care of the wounded army men as well. Medical officers from the Army are assigned to the Hospitals with a small staff of orderlies to see that proper records are kept.... The Royal Army Medical Corps' work, therefore, is largely in the field. I believe they are running only one or two Hospitals in England. The R.C.A.M.C. is to have two Hospitals, one at Branshot, staffed by the Toronto group, and one at Taplow (Clivedon) staffed by the men from the west.... The Hospital at Taplow will be lovely. It was built by the Red Cross, and will be very well equipped.... Changes have taken place so quickly in this war that it has been hard to keep up with them. Certainly the organization of the Army Medical Service in the field must be different from anything we have ever had before. Yet, the U.S. Army, with its light trucks equipped for operating, may be the answer. Mobility is all-important. Do you remember Cushing's War Diary? He tells of the Casualty Clearing Station which had worked at the same place behind

the lines for over 16 months. It seems unbelievable now, with the mechanized attacks, that such stations will ever be able to settle down again for more than a few hours".

In a letter dated June 29th, 1940, Capt. O. W. Stewart described the crossing of the Unit and its arrival in England. Referring to the latter, he stated, "As we slid into the quay, we were anxious to set foot on land again, but were told that we would not disembark until 7 that evening. Looking out over the landing site, we soon spotted Col. Russel. He came on board and had tea with us that afternoon, and did his best to answer all the questions that were fired at him. After his departure we prepared to leave the ship. We had our dinner on board, and at each place there was a cardboard box, containing our lunch which was to sustain us for eighteen hours. I will itemize the contents to amplify a very amusing incident that happened later in the same day. There was the usual quota of hard-boiled eggs, two large slices of bread, one orange, one apple, a slice of fruit cake and last but not least, a can of 'Bully Beef'. As our Unit stood on the quay, surrounded on all sides by other Units, one of our more serious members lost the entire contents of his lunch box, as one end of the box came open. Amid the usual laughs and side remarks, he stooped to gather up the spilled items, which had dispersed within a radius of some three or four feet. This was a feat in itself, hampered, as he was, by the kit bag, respirator, etc., slung over his shoulder. After the box had been repacked, and grasped firmly by the end that had come open, our member stood smartly at attention with a grin look on his face, intended to dispose of the awkward situation at once. Suddenly the other end of the box gave way and the entire contents were again spilling over the ground. At this, no semblance of order could be maintained. After this incident, I produced a roll of 1 inch adhesive tape that I had in my coat, and we speedily fortified all lunch boxes against similar mishaps...."

"We have had frequent visits by bombers at night. We hear the planes overhead and the warnings in nearby villages. As yet we have no definite information as to when we may get into permanent quarters. We hope soon, for the 'Main Event' may begin any time now".

A letter received from Capt. A. E. Childs, and dated July 3rd, 1940, states, "All of our Officers are here, apart from Lt. Cols. Russel and Cone and Major Botterell, who are in London for the present.... We are even fixed up with hot and cold showers, thanks to a little wire-pulling by Col. Russel. We are, of course, hoping to be established in a permanent quarter of a Hospital in the near future, but the date and site have not been established up to the present. In the meantime we are all getting wonderfully healthy, what with sunshine, fresh air, lots of food, and cycling. To date, seven of our members have purchased bikes and, strange to say, there have been no serious mishaps. For the first two days we were here, we messed with a nearby unit, but since then we have had our own mess. Col. Cross has paid for various miscellaneous

equipment including cups, saucers, flat ware, oil stove, etc., from the Montreal Fund. This has been a great help, as we are trying to keep our dues down to 1 shilling per day, and are consequently rather poverty-stricken. We are hoping that this amount will suffice, but as extra food comes rather expensive, it will be necessary to watch ourselves. However, as ---- ---- has just paid the first fine for using profanity (the rules were just drawn up last night), perhaps our financial situation will soon look up".

"Capt. A. B. J. O'Neil is president of the mess, and Capt. A. E. Childs Secretary-Treasurer. At the first regular meeting, in addition to those Officers, there were present Lt. Col. C. E. Cross, Major Hyland, Capts. Bentun, Boddington, Boulden, Davis, Hanson, Humphreys, and McCormick. The Sec. Treas. was instructed to write a letter of thanks to the Manager of H. and G. Simonds, Ltd., Reading, for the donation of furniture to the mess. He was also instructed to communicate with Dr. Wilder Penfield of Montreal, to acquaint him with the activities of the mess, and thank him for the purchasing of necessary equipment through the Montreal fund".

In a letter dated July 8th, 1940, Lt. Col. C. K. Russel indicated that a site had been found for No. 1 Neurological Hospital, and authorization was being awaited from Canada to move in. He did not name the location.

On June 28th, 1940, the nurses of No. 1 Neurological Hospital received notice to report to Ottawa. Their present location is unknown, but it is likely that in the next Interim Report further information about them will be included.

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