

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

October 4th, 1940.

Dear Friends and Associates:

This is the month of anniversaries of crises. 1st of September: of the German invasion of Poland. 3rd of September: the initiation of the Franco-British vs. German war. 30th of September: the Munich Agreement.

It has shown "belligenic" pregnancy again in the conception of a Sino-Italo-German treaty. What a war-oestrus and rhythm September has!

From the point of view of your unit in the field, there is not much to report as of September apart from the gradual transformation of our new home building into a hospital.

We were admitted to the mansion only on the 5th instant. Then began the gathering of equipment from tent stores into various apartments selected for the different contributing functions.

Cone, Humphreys, McCormick and Stewart presided over the unpacking and checking of instruments and special apparatus. These were laid out and note made of discrepancies. There were quite a few of these. No generators or transformers, no suction or stimulator units, no electric blanket, no Castle lights, no distribution system, no sterilizers.

Hyland superintended the preparation of a dispensary and the unfulfilled requisitions were noted there. No chloroform, or ether, no anaesthetics of any type and there lacked many of the staple drugs. Some few of these we have been able to get. Complete supplies have been indented for, but we have been unable to get delivery.

Hanson and Richardson developed the various laboratories - medical, clinical and physiochemical. Several essentials were not found here either. A freezer microtome without the freezer attachment, no burettes, no batteries for photo-electric, no media, no hemocytometers, no reagents for sulphapyridine determination.

Beds were placed with mattresses and linen. No want of supplies in that department.

Cone and Stewart superintended the operating room setup and found the special tables and furniture in good order.

Childe mounted his mobile x-ray unit and has already produced some excellent films.

.....



Owing to the delay in fitting of windows with black-out curtains, we officers could not move in for many days to our quarters in the West wing, upstairs. When we did we had only our beds and trunks. There was no other furniture. Linoleum had been laid throughout the three floors.

We heard of our Nursing Sisters' impending arrival on the 2nd inst. They did not arrive, however, until the night of the 4th, journeying on to London during the night. We were not allowed to go to the landing point. They were housed in London during four days of almost unceasing siren alarms and spent each night in mixed groups, on emergency bedding, in basements, without sleep. I went to London to urge their being sent to the unit at once, although we had only meagre convenience for them. They came within 24 hours and have been very grateful and comfortable in the comparative quiet and safety. Adequate furniture has come since. Ultimately we shall achieve what we lack. We have found two kerosene sterilizers. Each will take two large and one small drum, or one large and three small. We have begun working with them, getting a store of sterile supplies together, but pools of moisture condense on the drum covers in cooling and the drying is a long process.

The operating room tables etc., have been set up in one of the wards with a linoleum floor just in case we should be obliged to meet an emergent event. But lacking what you have read above, the hope of such a necessity is not entertained. You will see that the surgical status quo is most unhappy. It will be two or three weeks before this department can function.

On the other hand both Cone and Russel have answered a number of calls to see head casualties in consultation at different parts of the south country.

The Medical program is more pleasing. As from Saturday, the 28th, we have declared ourselves ready to receive patients and we have five to start. That makes a record, three weeks from occupation to admissions.

Alterations have proceeded in fashioning selected rooms into an operating suite, but asphaltting of floors has not yet begun. Many plumbing accessories have been assented to, but it will be weeks before they are erected.

There is the large question of additional huts to be built and the lumber has come from Canada. Again a delay for their building. Our first ones will be for housing the men, who are still in tents, and the nights are of a "fortyish" temperature. Following the men's quarters will come huts for O.R., administration, kitchen, x-ray, dental and wards. There should be about 12 or 14 in all. They will be placed so that further hut units may later be added. At the present we must depend on the main house capacity. That proves to be about 80 patients. Through the hard work there has been a bit of the intrigue element that the



child feels planning his play house in the vacant lot, in the adjusting of the ideal to what chance has put in his way.

Re the huts, I append a small drawing to show the approximate setup on the grounds and of the operating hut's subdivision. We expect delivery of the first hut-stuff next week.

Cone and Botterell are not continuing at present their experiments on animals. The building at which they worked was struck and the cats taken elsewhere. They will bring the brain contents down here and carry on. We will later have license to "experiment" here, and quarters for the animals are being prepared. Cone and Botterell are here but restless, though helping to co-ordinate details and get action. Botterell talks of going to Edinburgh for a time with Dott. Officers are tripping to the 5th and 15th General Hospitals for special contacts and to keep their interests active.

On Wednesday the 18th inst., all the staff, in a 3-ton tremendous truck, (our only transport then) went to Oxford to a meeting of the British Neurosurgical Society. Comparisons of the experiences of different clinics on treatment of head injuries was made in some detail. A good deal of discussion followed. I append a schematic digest of the different centers reporting. Cone may be writing to Dr. Penfield his reactions thereon.

The Dental Department is installed and Captain Jekill has reviewed the whole personnel. He is also doing much for dental relief and preservation for Nurses, Officers and men.

We are well, mostly. Hyland had five days in bed with tracheitis and "adnexitis". Cone stayed 2 days in bed with kindred affection. Humphreys has been fighting similar malaise but not badly. All are up again. Last Saturday evening we put on an informal small party as a sort of welcome to the Nurses, though some time after their arrival. Quiet, but very pleasant and we got acquainted.

I append also copies of reports, that were delayed, from Humphreys and McCormick re their visit to St. Hugh's in July.

It is possible that in next month's report there will be something to tell you of cases. Among those present one is an epileptic, one a psychosis though little affected mentally, and a third appears to have an increase in C.S.F.

As to funds for which I am responsible I still have five orders of 20 pounds intact and more than the equivalent of a sixth in funds. Besides this, loans to responsables, fully recoverable, represent the equivalent of a seventh.

As soon as the concentrated rush rallentandoes a bit I will send an itemized report of the investments made.



Cone asked me the other day whether I was sending these serial notes to Dr. Martin. Is it wise to feel that Dr. Penfield's relays to our President are adequate?

With enthusiastic and unflinching sincerity from every Officer and indeed from every individual man,

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) Col. C.E. Cross,

for the unit.

---

Editorial Note:

The answer to Dr. Cone's question is yes. This letter was written on October 4th and received on October 23rd. The previous letter was held up in transit and after arrival, but is being distributed also. The letters of Humphreys and McCormick are very interesting professionally and may be read by anyone in the official book of correspondence now in my office. They will be read to the Fellow's Society.

Wilder Penfield.

---

A letter dated September 22nd from Capt. O.W. Stewart contains the following information:-

"The nurses arrived in London about two weeks ago, and their arrival coincided with the first big scale air attacks on London. We feared that such an initiation would be extremely unpleasant



for them. We had been somewhat accustomed to it by the gradual build up in activity. However it turned out that the news they had been getting in Canada had sufficiently exaggerated the happenings that the real thing did not seem so severe. Hanson and I went to London two weeks ago today to greet them and were caught in the second raid that night...

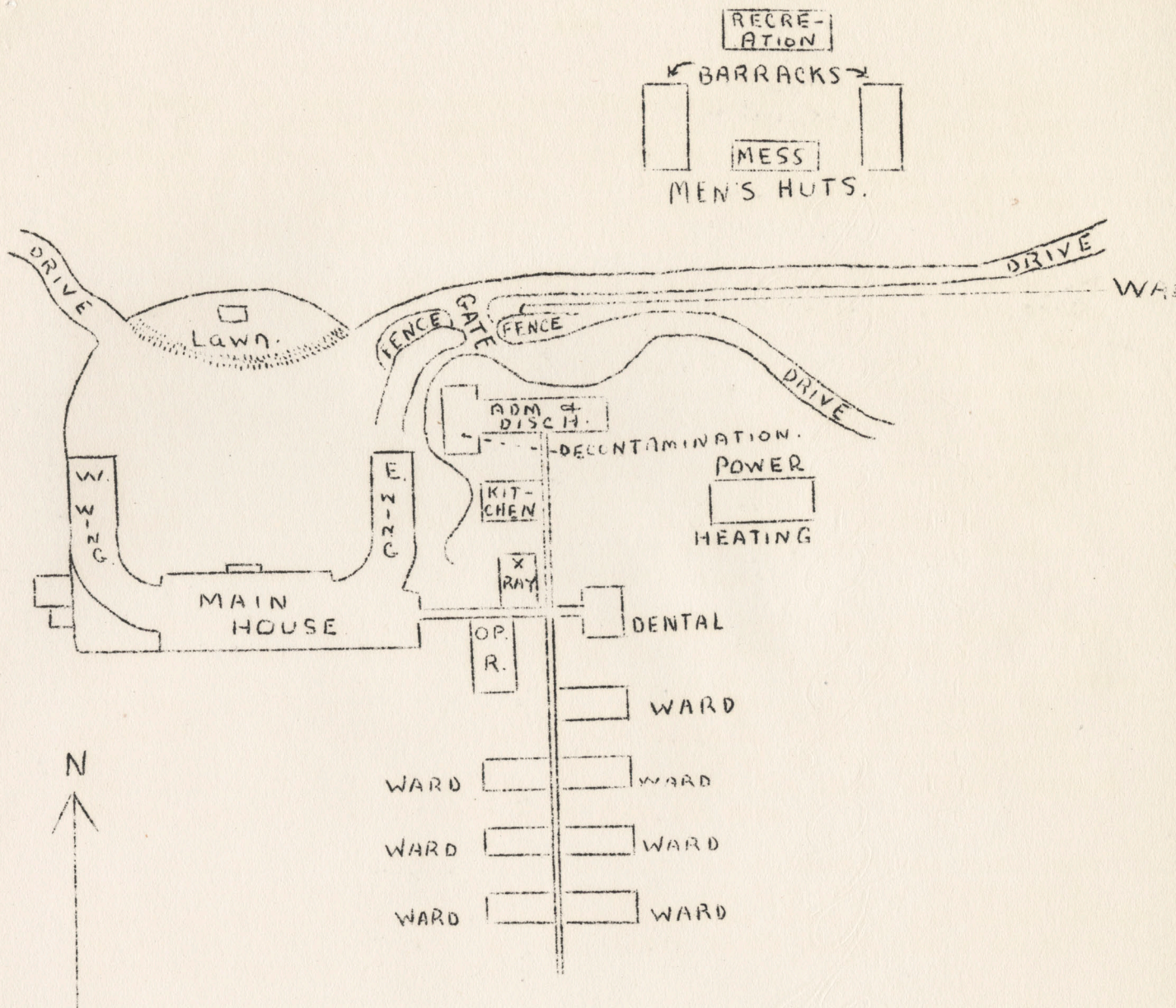
"On the whole our equipment has been well handled. There are of course items missing but steps are being taken to secure them. We have it all unpacked and the temporary operating room set up. The beds are up and we are now waiting for more sterilization facilities. We will probably begin taking neurological cases this week and perhaps surgical ones too. You can realize how much it means to all of us to be at work again. Yesterday Arthur Childe spent the whole day setting up x-ray equipment and this morning took his first films. His first case was Miss Scott, who fell yesterday from a bicycle and injured her wrist. There is a fracture of the radius but no displacement and it should heal quickly and not cause her any discomfort...

"Last Wednesday ten of us piled into the back of a three ton truck and went to Oxford to attend the meeting of British Neurosurgeons. Mr. Dott is president of the society. Prof. Cairns and Prof. Jefferson were both there. We thoroughly enjoyed the whole day. The morning session was taken up with discussion of gun shot wounds of the head. Quite a number of the case reports came from districts receiving wounded from the more heavily bombed areas. Some of the reports were from France.

"All of us are well and I am sure our dispositions have been greatly helped by the work now at hand and the preparations that have been under way. Our "mess" nights are always a pleasant affair and we all speak of home and our associations there and wish that you could drop in with us".

---





Approximate plan of  
disposition of huts -  
No. 1 Neurological Hospital, R.C.A.M.C.