

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

The sixth interim report consists of a letter received from Lt.-Col. C.E. Cross, Officer Commanding.

"HACKWOOD PARK, Basingstoke,
Hampshire, England, Nov. 2nd/40.

"The October Auto-Neurography.

"As with our friends at home undoubtedly, - days fly past with almost incredible tempo here at our locum operans. Dark begins before six and continues until 7:30 or 8 a.m. advanced time.

"At the beginning of October we had five patients, - on the 30th we had 55 and of course a considerable number have been admitted and discharged.

"During the night of 30th Sept. to 1st Oct. two rather bulky bombs fell about 1/3rd mile away and shook the building uncomfortably. They landed in the garden of a neighboring estate. The interesting sequence is that several pheasants had not sought cover and one which lived showed marked dys-equilibrium. Ever the inquiring scientist, Bill Stewart bargained for the bird with the finder, for its pathological findings. He could not obtain the whole specimen as the game-keeper is an epicure and gastronome, but secured the brain and lungs, of both of which he has made slides for study. The spinal cord was outside the negotiations however. In the brain specimens multiple, very delicate petechial hemorrhages were found in the cortical areas and in the para-ventricular layers as well. At the base some gross clots were present. More or less corresponding lesions were made out in the lung tissues. Herewith are macroscopic photographs of the two organs. The apognosis was that the individual would have recovered but for the ends of a pathologist and a gourmand.

"Early in the month 10 of our Nurses were loaned to the 5th General Hospital at Taplow as they had 550 patients and their staff was sorely overworked.

"There has been a difficulty in the apparatus which operates the coagulation knife (cautery). It had been foreseen that the instrument might give interference with broadcasting, more especially with that of the Air Force. Although forewarned and specifications given, when ordering, that it be adequately screened, - the War Office ignored this and Col. Cone has been to considerable trouble to amend the fault. To date no solution has appeared but it is thought it can be done.

"In Sept. and Oct., we entertained a number of Canadian Air Men in the Mess. It gave intervals of relief from their over-long assignment to fighter duty which was beginning to show in their 'nerve' integrity. They seemed to profit much from these parentheses in their sentences. These boys have done miraculous service, each with many enemy units to his credit. Very merited were the awards to 3 of the better known, of the Distinguished Flying Cross.

These were Squadron-Leader E. McNab of Regina and Flying-Officers Dall Russel (C.K.'s nephew) and McGregor of Montreal.

"There has been happy fraternization between our Officers and those of "The American Hospital in Britain" under the leadership of Dr. Philip Wilson. These gentlemen have been allotted a section of 300 beds in a British (Emergency Med. Service) hospital at Basingstoke. They have general Surgeons, plastic and orthopedic experts. They also brought a neuro-surgical team but, out of consideration for our earlier presence in the field, (they came in September), the members have moved to Birmingham where there is no such installation. Dr. Wilson has admired the "Cone" operating table, - has borrowed one and used it, - with the purpose of duplicating it. Mr. Geoffrey Jefferson and Col. Hugh Cairns have also been charmed with the table and will probably do likewise.

"Lt.-Col. Russel and Major Hyland have been called upon to serve on several Courts-Martial and, with Lt.-Col. Cone and Major Botterell, on boards on high officials. All these four have been called upon too at various times for consultative work in their several lines.

"Interesting visitors to see our set-up and to discuss the much-needed acknowledgement of this unit as a neurological and neurosurgical center acceptable to the E.M.S. and British A.M.C. have been Dr. Gordon Holmes, Mr. Jefferson and Col. Cairns. Also Surgeon-Captain Critchley, neurologist in chief to the British Navy. The first two stayed with us over night on the 12th and were apparently impressed. Col. Cairns stayed most of the day on the 19th and was very complimentary. The decisive word has not been said but it is fairly probably to transpire eventually. Lord Dawson of Penn has also made a very friendly fraternal visit and his happy memories of Dr. Martin, Professor Meakins and Colonel Archibald were very flattering to them.

"On October the 15th, Col. Cone was called to see a very severe head injury (motorcycle). The frontal bone unilaterally, the frontal ethmoidal and sphenoidal sinuses and the right frontal lobe back to the anterior clinoid were all involved. Col. Cone, with Stewart assisting, and Botterell (who unselfishly offered to give assistant's place to a junior surgeon) washing up as nurse, (since the O.R. Nurse hadn't the experience), - operated on the case at Bramshott Hospital. So that this was our first neurosurgical feat in the field. The case has done splendidly.

"Since that date Col. Cone has done a graft intervention to close a large post-operative frontal bone defect on a soldier here. That too has made excellent recovery - with dressings off the healed wound in seven days.

"Officers Cone, Russel and Botterell have attended each of the special committee sessions of the Head Injuries section of the Brit. Neurological Society.

"At the special invitation of Mr. Geoffrey Jefferson, Major Botterell was allowed to go to Manchester to take on some of that surgeon's work which had piled up during his recent light illness and several trips away. Botterell will be there for a month.

"On the 28th Oct., the lumber for the huts began to arrive in convoys of 20 to 50 truckloads per day. It will take 2 weeks to complete the transport.

"Patients in residence are largely of the neurological type and Col. Russel and staff are coping with them splendidly although it means a devotion of 12 to 18 hours per day.

"In the surgical service, amongst others, there are:-
(a) a civilian, (female) patient who fell from a horse near the estate gates and was brought in with a long linear fracture paralleling the sagittal suture and passing from lower occiput upwards through the right parietal bone. Col. Cone and Capt. Humphreys did debridement and repair of an extensive scalp wound and from X-ray and puncture evidences, saw fit to make no further intervention. She is doing well after 10 days. (b) a road accident case with fracture of the occiput downward through the torcula and seemingly ending in the foramen magnum. He has been 3 weeks achieving consciousness which is still incomplete. (c) The bone transplant case from pelvic bone to cover a frontal bone defect mentioned above. (d) A case of fracture of the 4th dorsal vertebra with transverse lesion of the cord and paralysis. A most unhappy case. Lt. Col. Russel has a case of ascending paralysis which he calls, I believe, neuro-radiculitis, rather rare. It is the young wife of a British Army officer and he hopes by vitamin D 1 to get some improvement. We are getting a Drinker Respirator through the Lord Nuffield fund in case of progressive respiratory impotence. Another of Col. Russel's cases is one of myotonia congenita, again rather rare. At first it was looked on as malingering. With quinine he improves, with physostigmine his symptoms can be exaggerated.

"Here is a miscellany of items:
We have received our suction apparatus and it is being set up. One of the generator sets has also arrived. A case of reference books of great help has come for our library. Amongst acknowledgements for courtesies of various kinds:- we have had loans from owners, (who have found storage elsewhere precarious), of many articles of furniture. These have gone towards attractively and comfortably furnishing Nurses' and Officers' messes and rooms and so have led to economy in purchases for these purposes.

"Weekly concerts have been provided by variety artists under the auspices of the several auxilliary services. Patients, men, nurses and officers have been attentive amusees. The same source has given to our Other Ranks a full complement of orchestral instruments - with which they quite capably perform.

"Lord Camrose recently made the officers' Mess a gift of sufficient newly-shot pheasants for a "Mess Night" feast.

"Some illness among the officers has to be admitted. Botterell, Boddington, Stewart and Jekill have all had C.B. sentences (confined to Bed), due to the prevalence of much upper respiratory infection. Indeed only and gloriously, have the O.C. and Col. Russel escaped the virus to date. We're humbly grateful.

"Record of a Russelistic adventure should be entered for posterity. Returning from London recently in company with Col. Cone, Col. Russel, either in absentmindedness or under elation of his psyche, ordered his driver to proceed through the Marble Arch at Park Lane and Bayswater, instead of the usual route. This distinction is reserved for Royalty solely. The effect was phenomenal. People saluted the car. The several London Bobbies on duty were stunned into statues with gaping jaws. All traffic stopped at its peak congestion. The police finally came over and peered in, at the salute. Finding mere Colonels, they were at first rather reprimandatory and said "Sir, do you not know that only the king passes through this Arch?" Col. R. replied "God bless His Majesty, I did not" and after a tense moment British sense of humor prevailed. But it took some time and dismay to traffic to right the matter. Acres of vehicles were held up while the would-be royalists were routed through another forbidden passage onto plebian thoroughfares.

"Of course there have occurred many visitations of Headquarters' personnel and the detailed study of plans, both re the dispositions of the hutment annexes and concerning the lay-outs of the apartments within same. Lt.-Col. J.C. Mackenzie has re-vamped the relative positions of the buildings after much study. Each head of service has edited the plans for the infrastructure of his own department. The result has been incorporated into plans which have not as yet been placed in my hands. I will take pleasure in forwarding you copies when I get them. They are pretty interesting and intriguing to us.

"We have a great many Mess visitors of military personnel. Hardly a noon or dinner meal but sees some guest, usually guests. We welcome them warmly. Invitations elsewhere to military and socio-military gatherings are frequent also.

"Whispers of possible service in Egypt a few weeks ago are giving place to hints of Greece or the nearer continent more lately. Choice would be the status quo. No basis for any theatre for our translation is obvious. A policy of base depot duty here with a flying column, mobile section, would seem to be the ambition to work for.

"Loyal and enthusiastic greetings to every one of our 'foundation members' at home from every officer of No. 1 N.H. in the field. C.E. Cross."

Copy of letter from O.C. to other Ranks.

"To THE
Warrant Officers,
Non-Commissioned Officers, &
Men of
No.1 Neurological Hospital.

"As this day completes four months since our arrival as a unit in England, your Commanding Officer and Officer Staff take this opportunity of extending their most sincere congratulations and appreciation to each one of the Other Rank personnel for his initiative and co-operation, his loyalty and good discipline through long weeks and months of awaiting developments which so often breaks up moral support to a Commanding Officer.

"It is desired to say that your officers have always been convinced of the superiority of this Unit's Warrant Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Men over those in any other Command and are delighted to find this has been proven in impatient waiting as well as on duty.

"It is with great pleasure and satisfaction that they and I now express our most heartfelt commendation.

"I pray each man to continue as faithfully in his high opportunity as a soldier on responsible duty just as each one has contributed to make the No.1 Neurological Hospital one of select and specialized individuals.

"Your Officers pledge themselves to give you their support to the limit.

"Very Sincerely Yours - for the Nursing Sisters and
Officers of No.1 Neurological Hospital.

C.E.Cross."