

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

Hard on the heels of the Interim Report for the month of November comes the Report for December. This includes a description of the Christmas celebration by Colonel Cross which is a literary masterpiece and testifies eloquently to the ability of the O.C. of No. 1 Neurological Hospital. The report is accompanied by a careful and scientifically valuable analysis of "Effect of Bombing on Hospitals, Casualties", by Major E. H. Botterell.

Major Botterell has gone into the details of the situation that has arisen in a number of different hospitals during their times of great emergency as a result of air raids. His report is too long to include in the Interim Report. He ends with a summary note of conclusions in regard to the problems arising from reception and treatment of cases arriving en masse at outlying E.M.S. Hospitals.

"So quickly do patients arrive that admission has to be in rotation and regardless of the nature of the injury. It follows that under such circumstances in a hutted hospital each hut needs a classification team highly qualified. Many cases will require urgent operation, and if this is to be done within a reasonable time after injury and admission, several teams must be at work. The crying needs are to re-inforce with mobile teams, medical and nursing staffs and porters, also operating room tables, instruments, sterilizers and sterile supplies. Only in such a way can be avoided the state of affairs whereby groups of nurses, doctors and orderlies work steadily for 48 to 72 hours with decreasing efficiency and exposing patients to the dangers of undue delay".

The following is a letter received from Lt.-Col. Cross.

Hackwood Park,
Basingstoke Hants.
December 31st, 1940.

"Sincere and appropriate compliments from your clinicents abroad, on this, the threshold of a New Year.

"Having informed you in past issues of the general set-up and the routine here, the monthly outline seems each month to discover less to impart.

"There is technical material sufficient to detail, but it would interest chiefly those of the professional cult.

"The short days pass in industry and the nights in comparative respite from emergency cases and from any very proximate danger overhead. Planes pass and siren warnings are very frequently heard, but seemingly the excursions have other objectives and with few exceptions we have been ignored. These exceptions cover a day-time single H.E. bomb in the town - 1 mile away, - a wholesale sewing of Molotov incendiaries near us, many of which fell in our open park and burned for some time futilely. Finally a few 'time' missiles dropped

within 1 1/2 mile, closing a main highway almost at our front gate. Mercifully we seem to have enjoyed immunity.

"This location appears to be an angle point where infesting planes that have travelled N.E. alter their itinerary towards the due North, presumably towards the Midlands and London. We have their typical, desynchronized, droning passage both ways.

"The Nursing Sisters and the staff keep very well and very enthusiastic and industrious. Medical patients are offering to present capacity and some have to be refused or postponed.

"Surgical cases are of greater rarity. This has possibly a providential aspect as, up to date, only comparatively imperfect facilities are available. Lt.-Col. Cone rightly shies from the risks in any but desperate cases. With such as have presented, however, excellent results have been had.

"In one case where infected skin surface precluded immediate intervention an aérocele developed and emergency operation was done. In this case other physical complications insinuated to bring about a fatal issue. Our first death. This was reported in Captain Humphreys' short critique last month.

"Several have presented foreign bodies in brain with abscess formation and have been restored by operation.

"A number of cases of low back pain and associated thigh discomforts have shown slipped intervertebral discs and removal of the disc has been done by Lt.-Col. Cone without preliminary laminectomy. These admit complete relief. In 3 or more such cases of long-standing, complaints have been immediately relieved where malingering had been falsely considered as a probability.

"One operative procedure coincided with our Christmas dinner hour, and Lt.-Col. Cone and staff were absentees from the celebration.

"Foretaste of broader scope is heralded by a number of civilians and individuals of the British Forces having been admitted or seen at outlying hospitals. A seaman of the Dutch Navy is a bed-case here.

"Recently Sir Arthur McNulty visited us, was impressed and sympathetic to our appeal that the E.M.S. should aid materially - by the addition of 2 or 3 hut units, one particularly to accommodate female patients.

"There is great probability that a maxillo-facial centre will find its location with this Unit also. It is the logical site as so many maxillo-facial injuries involve the base of the skull and sinuses and communicate with the optic foramina. Even severe nasal wounds have proved fatal in other clinics where a C.S.F. leak has been unrecognized and meningitis has intervened. If we do achieve this centre the admissions will be augmented. Sir Harold Gillis and Lt.-Col. Cone and staff will work in co-operation. Sir Harold has his clinic at Park Prewett Hospital, a couple of miles away. In this

effort Captain Jekill is a prime factor. He has worked with Sir Harold since coming over and was our medium of contact as he is of negotiations now with that capable plastic specialist.

"Major Botterell has returned from associations at Manchester with Professor Geoffrey Jefferson. His work with raid victims at that centre and several others he visited has given him unique experience. He has written a report which is most comprehensive and has suggested solutions of the real problems that meet hospital services. If permitted I will enclose a copy of this excellent outline.

"One basis fact that has emerged from our dignified approach to the British Ministry of Health is that, from the middle of the month our Unit has been enrolled, along with the British hospitals, in the E.M.S. set-up, as a neurosurgical centre for all head injuries for all the forces, even the civilians. That is rare achievement - when the exclusiveness of the British professional cult is considered and when it is realized that the E.M.S. is essentially civilian and not under military compulsion.

"Our territory is the region of Hampshire excluding the clinics of Colonel Cairns, only. It has meant the forming of sympathetic contacts with all the principal hospitals in this area and gradually with all hospitals and regional officials under the E.M.S. Surely the avenue is widening and the dust-cloud settling. While it is an English surface we should make good progress, though whither it leads we have no assurance. Probably not, in the near future, to the national boundary.

"Another incipient encouragement is that a provisional increase in personnel establishment has been presented to us which will add a Registrar and an Ear, Eye and Nose-Throat specialist, 3 extra nurses, and 23 other ranks besides, to our present roll. This has been concurred in over here and has gone to N.D.H.Q. in Ottawa for initialling.

"We have felt the present inadequacy of our personnel and while we'd envisaged more amply, it will be a seasonable acquisition.

"Our Christmas was Canadian verisimilitude. Thanks to our Home Missionary Society the poor benighted expatriates were remembered and provisioned in unstinted abundance.

"To Miss Flanagan, fairy godmother, and her co-agents of providence, to Dr. and Mrs. Penfield, to Mrs. Cone, to Dr. and Mrs. Arthur Young, to several bountiful anonyms and indeed to every and myriad friends of family or sympathy, went out cornucopeons of gladulation and Xmas Xtasy.

"The men sat in banquet order in the newly-finished garden ward at a 50-foot table under bedecked ceilings and walls. On beribboned napery was spread a fruits-nuts-raisins-olives background for TURKEY with dressing and comestibles, plum-pudding, cake and beer. In one corner a genuine pine 'arbre de Noel' with tinsel, ornaments and

colored lights. Under the tree scores of parcels of varicolored wrapping, from the Montreal Neurological Army Service Corps. Children at a Christmas Party and true to type. The Sergeants were their servants for the feast and afterward entertained them at their Mess.

"Nurses and Officers dined from a similar menu in the latter's Mess and apart from the Turk, all goodies were from home in blessed Canada. Toasts to the King and to You Manna-factors were equally heartily drunk past the lump in the throats. Patriotism and Compatriotism.

"The Canadian Red Cross made a contribution of \$66.00 for the patients, and the C.A.S.F. Auxiliary Services a considerable donation to the men to purchase gifts.

"In addition the Canadian Red Cross Society gave each patient a pair of sox, each sock filled with comforts, fruit and candy, while the Auxiliary Services supplied decorations for the wards, messes and banquet rooms. Christmas Day and Boxing Day all parades were cancelled and late hours permitted for rising and bunking. Only the necessary duties were exacted. Patients, personnel and their apartments were gay, but thoughts of Home and love of dear ones, even benediction on friends, were not absent, - only camouflaged.

"We have been bereaved sorely by the translation from his clinic at Park Prewett of Professor Philip Wilson. He just left for home a few days ago as his term of service had expired. He will be replaced after a time by a Dr. Cole, at present in charge of a Shriners' Hospital somewhere in the Middle West, Chicago I think. Meanwhile his associates carry on. We shall miss him.

"Among items of Unit interest:

"The final touches are being put to the more aseptic set-up operating suite and we shall get into it in a few days. It is asphalted, piped for suction apparatus which is in an ante-room, specially ventilated just above floor level for anaesthetic gases, painted green, hoseable to a drain in floor and squeegeeable. A miniature plan is attached.

"The garden ward, which is temporarily to be X-ray Room, is also completed and Childe's apparatus is to be pushed there at once, so arranged as to allow passage along a side of wheel stretcher to O.R. at west end and wards at east end. Thus will increase of available beds be gained, present X-ray and O.R. being reclaimed as wards.

"The immediate undertaking of 'patients' huts' erection is being held up for the final sanction of Ottawa before it can be begun. The principle of this was always admitted since the location was accepted. The bed capacity is laid down in the establishment. The

lumber is on the site and the Minister of National Defence, when here recently, has recommended it but with consistency the authorities mark time. It is now feared that we will have to depend on civil contract as Military engineer units are being otherwise employed. This is bad news, as it means consideration of plans by several bodies, the tendering of contracts with the usual deliberation and finally the leisurely labour and the very much lessened available artisans. Anywhere up to 6 months is estimated. I am appending a miniature plan of their likely distribution.

"The 4 hut-units for the men's barracks are up. One is ready for use and about 35 are housed there now.

"One of our men who has been helping Major Childe was sent to No. 15 General Hospital for training as a radiographer. He made an honoured ranking and is qualified for trades' pay. It is Private Anderson.

"Our Nursing Sister Kendall had suffered a good deal with foot trouble. We sent her to No. 5 General Hospital and she has been treated there, subsequently having 3 weeks' rest. She is better, but the work is not easy for her.

"Finally, for another month of service, for all the very good and very kind support of our proven friends at the Montreal Neurological Institute and members of our Enabling Committee, we are profoundly grateful. We face another year with hope of much greater things if the cause and its course ask it.

For the Unit,

Lt.-Col. C. E. Cross.
