

B.E.F., France,

16-11-1917

The Officer in Charge,
New Zealand War Records Section,
Public Record Office,
Chancery Lane,
LONDON W.C.-2.

War Diaries.

With reference to your letter of 7th instant, I have to advise having this day forwarded to you the diaries of this unit, from which you will doubtless be able to gether what information you require.

I would point out that the history of the unit prior to October, 1915, or in other words, the period from the inception of the unit until the torpedoing of the troopship "Marquette", was lost in the sinking of that vessel. So far as possible, however, this was written up at a subsequent date, and pages 3 to 9 of book one may be taken as a reliable record of the period from the commencement of unit in April, 1915, its work at Port Said, and up to the time mentioned. Pages 13 to 16 deal with the torpedoing of the troopship which was taking this unit and the 29th Divisional Ammunition Column at Salonika. Pages 17 to 44 contain a record of the work done at Salonika, and a summary of this is found on pages 44 to 47. The New Zealand ^{Stationary} Hospital was the first hospital to be established in Salonika, and during the first part of the winter of 1915 it acted as a clearing hospital for two Divisions (the 26th and 27th) besides taking the whole of the sick parades for Lembet camp.

The winter of 1915 was exceptionally severe. On three occasions snow fell, once to a depth of a foot, and heavy frosts ensued. The stream which supplied ablution water for the camp was frozen over, and inconvenience caused thereby. For a period of about five weeks heavy fogs hung round, and these were followed by a blizzard from the Vardar valley which lasted several days. It

was during this period that the work was heaviest, and as fast as beds could be created they were filled up with patients.

Owing to the fact that at this time no road to the camp had been built the evacuation of patients was difficult. The hospital was located on the top of a hill and lying patients had to be carried a considerable distance, and across a bridgeless stream to the ambulances. The patients admitted were mostly sick, On one occasion (during the retreat from Doiran) about 130 cases of frostbite were admitted. This unit was the first hospital in Macedonia to note the occurrence of a peculiar disease, which was afterwards diagnosed as identical with "trench fever".

Consequent on the unsettled state of affairs which obtained at that time, leave to Salonika (about three miles distant from the camp) was only granted in exceptional circumstances. Various recreational clubs were formed, and the Hospital Glee Club, the Debating Society and others provided entertainment much appreciated by patients and staff alike. Association football and rugby teams were selected, and played many matches. The former held an unbeaten record at the time of leaving, and the rugby team was only once beaten - by a Welsh Divisional team. The Company paper "The Masseydonian Stretcher" was commenced at Salonika, the first issue being set up by printers who did not understand a word of our language.

Thanks to the aid of the Patriotic Societies in New Zealand the unit was kept well supplied with comforts, and Christmas Day, 1915, when the Spinsters Club of Wellington provided the means of entertainment will ever be remembered as one of the days in its history.

The time spent in Salonika was instructive in the extreme. At the time of the arrival of the unit, the mobilisation of the Greek Army was in progress, boatloads of soldiers from the outlying islands coming in daily, and the armies of the allies were arriving. In a few weeks, what had been a quiet countryside was converted into a great military camp. Roads sprung up as if by magic, telephone lines radiated in all directions, and the best of order & discipline prevailed.

The Unit handed over to the 1st Canadian Stationary Hospital on the 5th of March, 1916, and embarked on the H.S. "Lanfranc"

the same day, arriving at Port Said on the 9th idem. Equipment was unloaded on 10th and 11th March, and the unit entrained for Moascar on 12th idem. The history of the work of the unit is contained on pages 49-61 of Book No. 1.

The hospital left Egypt on the 3rd of June, 1916, by the H.S. "Dover Castle", arriving at Southampton on the 12th, and Le Havre on 13th idem. The first three weeks were spent in a Rest Camp at Havre, and much work which tended to make all ranks fit for future work was done. Consequent on the rush of casualties following the Somme offensive, the staff was almost wholly attached to No. 2 General Hospital, where they were kept fully occupied until the departure of the unit for Amiens.

The latter town was reached on the 13th of July, and the buildings occupied by the 1/1 South Midland Casualty Clearing Station were taken over - particulars of these are contained on page 72. An officers hospital was opened as an annex to the hospital on 20th January, 1917, an increased establishment being authorised to cope with the extra work involved. A general summary of the work of the unit between July and December, 1917, is contained between pages 138 and 142. The Unit was administered by the Fourth Army up to the 9th of May, 1917, when Amiens passed into the Lines of Communication. Lt. Col. O'Neill, Officer Commanding was appointed S.M.O. of the area.

The hospital at Amiens was handed over to the 59th General on 20-5-1917, and the unit proceeded to Hazebrouck by special train on 23rd idem.

No. 12 Casualty Clearing Station was taken over on 24th May, and No. 50 on 28th idem. Two large detached buildings, and a tent compound were occupied for other ranks, and a building in another part of the town was used as an officers' hospital. During the whole of the stay of the unit at Hazebrouck it was kept exceptionally busy, particularly after the Messines offensive. The Unit was the special "Head Wound" hospital of the army, besides which a great number of dangerous cases, who could not be sent to the base, were brought in to us. As many as 130 patients were on the "dangerously ill" list at one time. After Messines patients

were in bed in hospital within two hours of their being wounded.

On the 31st of July, Hazebrouck was shelled by the enemy and as this continued intermittently during the month of August it was decided to transfer the hospital to Wisques, near St. Omer. The site chosen was at the top of a hill in a forest clearing and much initial work in the way of clearing the ground etc. had to be done before the erection of the hospital could be proceeded with. On the commencement of the British offensive on the Ypres front, the hospital was opened and set aside for as the special "N.Y.D.M." unit of the army. The details of the work in this respect are contained in book II.

With reference to the diaries, I would draw your attention to the various summaries for each month which appear after the entry for the last day in each month. These give details of the work, operations performed, and further particulars of outstanding features for the period under review. Prior to January, 1917, a detailed diary was not kept, hence the particulars since that date are fuller than for the preceding period.

The following are particulars of British and overseas soldiers admitted since this hospital opened in June, 1915:-

At Port Said	1400
At Salonika.....	3989
At Moascar	1489
At Amiens	17003
At Hazebrouck.....	4352

These figures are exclusive of many hundreds of patients who received dental treatment, eye treatment, and who attended sick parades, as well as soldiers of other nationalities and prisoners of war. Soldiers from the British Isles, Canada, Ceylon, Newfoundland, West India, Australia, New Zealand, India, South Africa, as well as French soldiers & civilians, Belgian soldiers and civilians, Americans, Servians, Greeks, Armenians, Chinese, and Portuguese have been treated. Some hundreds of prisoners of war have also passed through this hospital.

At Salonika No. Mobile Bacteriological Laboratory, and No. Mobile Hygiene Laboratory were attached to the unit. In Moascar No. 10 N.Z. Dental section was attached and has remained so ever since. In Amiens No. 12 Mobile Bacteriological Section, and the Fourth Army Ophthalmic Centre were attached.

The Unit has served under the following administrations:-

At Port Said under the D.D.M.S., Canal Defences
At Salonika under D.M.S., Salonika Army
At Moascar under D.M.S., Egypt
At Amiens under D.M.S., Second Army, and for
some weeks under D.M.S., L. of G.
At Hazebrouck under D.M.S., Second Army
At Wisques under D.M.S., Second Army

The following Officers have commanded the unit:-

Lt.Col.D.J.McGavin,D.S.O.,F.R.C.S., from April,1915
H.D. to June Oct.19,1916
Lt.Col/Acland, F.R.C.S. from 20th Oct,1916 to
3rd Nov., 1916
Lt.Col.E.J.O'Neill,D.S.O.F.R.C.S. from 6th Nov.,1916
to this date

The unit was mentioned in despatches for work done at Salonika,
and Major Stout was awarded the D.S.O. for work in France.

The selection of suitable men has been of incalculable
assistance to the unit. For the most part the services of
Engineers have not been called on. At Port Said the camp was
built, lighting laid on, X-Ray plant installed and operated
entirely by the hospital staff, and practically the same work
was done at Salonika. In other places also the knowledge
possessed by our own men has enabled work to be completed which
would otherwise have had to be done by the Royal Engineers.

The details of personnel, reinforcements, and casualties
are contained in the diaries.

I attach hereto book of cartoons of members of this unit
and copy of the latest Company Magazine, which was issued a few
days ago. With reference to the latter I will endeavour to
let you have a complete file for record, but meantime we are unable
to do this.

Should you require further data I will endeavour to supply
you with it. We have in our possession photographic blocks
of the hospital at Port Said, at Salonika, and at Moascar. Should
these be desired I will send them on to you.

Lieut.Col.M.Z.M.C.
G.C.H.Z.Staty.Hospital

Dear Prunty.

Many thanks for your letter of 10-10-17. What I have
been such a long time in answering. I enclose the
documents which you ask for. I am sure that
the diary sent by you to the War Records section
will supply all the information required. It is
sure to be written up in the thorough manner
which characterises all his work of course.
I hope. I have some details about but

They are not at present available to me.
Please put my kind regards to all the ladies
I mean who were with the Unit in my time.
I regret the personnel has changed very
considerably since my time.

M. Sgt. G. P. Smith
W. J. Martin
Bl. 7. France.
D. M. Smith