

*Use of Asylums as Military Hospitals.* By Lieut.-Col. WILLIAM VINCENT, M.D., R.A.M.C., Wharnccliffe War Hospital.

THE South Yorkshire Asylum, Wadsley, near Sheffield, was offered to the War Office by the West Riding Asylums Board under the scheme prepared by the Board of Control.

The transferring of the inmates—nearly 1,700—was commenced on March 16th, 1915, and completed on March 30th. The institution was thus cleared in a fortnight. The great majority of the patients (some 1,400) were transferred to the sister asylums—Menston, Storthes Hall, and Wakefield—by motor char-à-bancs. The remainder were sent to various out-county asylums—Hull, Leicester, Nottingham, Lincoln, etc. The private class of male and female patients was transferred to Scalebor Park and Menston Asylums respectively. All the patients were transferred without mishap. Twelve patients only were retained at the farm residence.

With the approval of the War Office the institution was named the Wharnccliffe War Hospital.

It was at first assumed that the hospital would afford accommodation for some 2,000 sick and wounded soldiers. This was found impossible. Not only would there have been undue overcrowding, but part of the building had to be set aside in order to provide accommodation for the large staff of sisters and staff-nurses, and for the R.A.M.C. *personnel*.

The number of beds available at present is 1,500, but it is not improbable that this number will eventually be exceeded.

The structural and other alterations necessary in order to adapt the institution for the purpose of nursing sick and wounded soldiers were considered by the Committee of Visitors, and the architect of the Asylums Board and the clerk of works were instructed to carry them out. The work is now practically complete.

An "Emergency and Consultative" Committee was formed, in addition to the General Committee, before the chairman and members of which all recommendations and suggestions made by the administrator or inspecting officers are placed.

Authority was given by the War Office, through the Board of Control, for the committee to carry out such structural alterations as were deemed necessary.

The difficulties associated with the difference of level of the various buildings have been overcome as far as possible. A temporary wooden bridge in the male division has proved very useful. A small electric service lift has been placed in position. If lifts for conveying patients, supplies, etc., to the upper floors had been approved, a smaller staff of orderlies would have been required than is at present the case. A very considerable amount of work was necessary in order to adapt the various wards and dormitories. In the upper floor dormitories extra baths and sculleries, with an adequate water supply, were added, and additional lighting in all dormitories and side-rooms was quickly carried out. Gas for heating purposes, for boiling water, and for sterilising instruments, etc., was introduced where required on all floors.

A small dormitory and a day-room were fitted up, and two excellent operating theatres were thus obtained. A commodious "X-ray" department is in close proximity to one of the operating theatres, so that patients can readily and safely be subjected to X-ray examination when under the anæsthetic, if necessary. The want of electric light was met by having a special cable laid from the nearest point available on the Sheffield city boundary. Electricity was thus obtained from the Sheffield supply for the operating theatres and offices, the X-ray department, and for lighting the stage and hall during entertainments—thus eliminating a possible source of danger from fire. Additional precautions against fire have also been taken, and hand fire extinguishers have been placed where deemed necessary.

All day-rooms and corridors are occupied as wards—the corridors leading to the operation rooms excepted—and one large day-room has been fitted up as a billiard-room for convalescent patients.

Three blocks with 1,158 beds are reserved for surgical cases, and one block, with 342 beds, for medical cases. The total number of beds available for sick and wounded soldiers will probably remain at 1,500, but 220 additional beds could be placed in position should necessity arise.

Suitable accommodation for the matron, the sisters and staff-nurses, and R.A.M.C. orderlies was provided by the following arrangements. The whole asylum staff of attendants

and nurses was permitted to live out, the latter living with relatives or friends in close vicinity to the hospital. The nurses' residence, together with the patients' laundry residence, afford accommodation for the matron and nursing staff. These buildings, in which over 100 beds are available, are apart from the hospital, but connected by corridors. The dormitories of the laundry residence were divided up into cubicles containing one, two, and in some instances three, beds. A separate kitchen and offices, dining and recreation rooms have been found for the nursing staff appointed by the War Office. The whole is under control of a "home sister" appointed for this duty by the matron.

The asylum nurses are acting as "probationer nurses." All except ten live out, and come on duty at 7 a.m. A large day-room in the laundry residence is placed at their disposal as a recreation room when they are off duty during the day.

The asylum attendants are enlisted for "home and local" service, and are employed in the wards, offices, laundry, and gardens.

The R.A.M.C. *personnel*, N.C.Os. and men, are at present occupying the upper floor of one of the detached blocks. This floor, which accommodates 210 men, thus becomes a barracks for both the day and night staffs. This arrangement has saved the cost and trouble of erecting hutment barracks for these men, but has, naturally, restricted the accommodation which otherwise would have been available for sick and wounded. It, however, has met with approval from headquarters and may continue.

The loss of patients' labour in the kitchens, laundry, out-working parties, and gardens has been met by the appointment of a temporary staff who are employed under the housekeeper, second chief nurse, head gardener, farm bailiff, and other asylum officials. The retention of twelve patients at the farm has proved useful. Our chief nurse has taken charge of the sewing-room and mending department. A temporary staff of women is employed in the kitchens and laundry, and women are also employed as ward-cleaners. This enables us to employ a smaller staff of men. The entire staff of nursing sisters, probationers, R.A.M.C. and institution orderlies, and temporary workers in the kitchens, laundry, and gardens totals up to over 650. The greatly increased demand on workers in both

the kitchen and laundry departments has been met with credit to those in charge.

The Clerk of Works' Department remains unchanged. Work is carried out under the supervision of the architect to the Asylums Board, and clerk of works. None of the artizans has been required to enlist.

The clerk and steward (who has not been accorded military rank) has charge of, and is responsible for, all supplies, and also for the payment of salaries and wages of all the visiting and resident medical and other officers, and the asylum employees and temporary staff. A very great amount of work has thus fallen upon the clerk and steward's department, and under very different conditions and requirements. Two clerks are retained in his office in order to carry out necessary work relating to the patients, as under the Lunacy Act this institution is still an asylum.

The work of the stores department has been adequately met by an increased staff. Considerable change was necessary to meet the military requirements, and enormously increased output. This department has risen to the occasion in a manner that merits very great praise.

The R.A.M.C *personnel* and the masseurs are paid by the quartermaster appointed by the War Office, who is acting as company officer. The former tailors' shop, now the clothing department, and the shoemakers' shop, the "pack stores," are under his control.

The changes in the kitchen department have been very great. The whole system has been re-organised. For the nursing staff appointed by the War Office a separate kitchen is available under the supervision of the matron. All cooking for the remaining staff, R.A.M.C. *personnel*, and patients is done partly in the main kitchen, under the direction of the housekeeper, and partly in the smaller kitchen attached to the medical block.

The isolation hospital is kept prepared for the reception of any case of an infectious nature should such arise.

The clothing of all men coming from the Front is passed through the disinfector at the isolation hospital immediately on arrival, and before being received into the pack stores.

The medical staff consists of six operating surgeons, three visiting physicians, and an ophthalmic surgeon, while four

operating surgeons, with six medical and surgical assistants and a pathologist are resident.

An X-ray expert and a sufficient number of anæsthetists attend daily ; dental surgeons twice weekly. The local medical officer of health attends as sanitary expert when required, and all cases of an infectious nature are placed under his care. Excellent massage work is carried out by three ladies and two masseurs.

The War Office was considered in possession of the institution on April 1st, and the work of adapting it as a hospital was sufficiently complete in six weeks to enable sick and wounded to be received. The first convoy was received on May 21st. The number of convoys received to date has been 16, with a total number of 2,592 overseas men. The discharges have been 1,670. Of these 1,647 have been discharged fit for duty, 23 as unfit for further service, and 15 have died.

The transport of the wounded from the station to the hospital (a distance of four miles) is carried out most effectually. The whole of the transport arrangements originally organised by Col. Connell, of the 3rd Northern General Hospital, have been placed at our disposal. Over 80 stretchers are available.

The duties of the Registrar have been taken over by the Senior Assistant Medical Officer, Dr. D. Gillespie, to whom a temporary commission with rank of major has been accorded.

This hospital, in conjunction with the other hospitals in Sheffield, receives help from the "Soldiers' Personal Comforts Dépôt," organised and carried out by ladies of Sheffield and the surrounding districts. Breakfasts and teas, and various invalid dainties, hospital requisites, clothing, tobacco, etc., are distributed among the men. A "Soldiers' Comforts Fund," to which many people have kindly subscribed, has proved invaluable, as means are thus found to meet small requirements, the money for which would otherwise have been difficult to obtain.

The work of converting this asylum into a hospital for the reception of sick and wounded soldiers has necessarily involved much anxiety, but results have shown that it has in every way justified the expense and labour which have been incurred.



Statue of Sekhem-uatch-tai-Rā, King of Egypt, about B.C. 2000.

To illustrate paper by Dr. R. H. STEEN.

*British Museum.*

*Adlard & West Newman.*



Māhu, Director of Works, and his wife Tuat. XIXth Dynasty.

To illustrate paper by Dr. R. H. STEEN.

*W. A. Mansell & Co., photo.*

*Adlard & West Newman.*





Amenhetep III. XVIIIth Dynasty.

To illustrate paper by Dr. R. H. STEEN.

*W. A. Mansell & Co., photo.*

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*Adlard & West Newman.*