Lecture.

A LECTURE ON MOBILIZATION.¹

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The mobilization and formation of medical units and all matters connected therewith is a very big subject. Our work at the Record Office is concerned entirely with men, and I hope you will excuse me if I devote the greater part of the time at my disposal to the provision of personnel and leave the consideration of the very important questions regarding transport and equipment, both medical and ordnance, till the end, thus keeping the two subjects of men and material separate.

In the first place, then, what are the duties which are, or should be, performed by the Record Office and the Officers Commanding Royal Army Medical Corps at home for the proper provision of Warrant and N.C.O.s and men on mobilization?

I do not think it will be necessary to travel outside the scope of those two little pamphlets, the "Regulations for Mobilization" and "Mobilization Instructions, A.M.S." Though small there is a good deal to be learnt from them, and if I mention some facts which are well known to you I hope you will forgive me because I find from correspondence, both official and unofficial, that other officers are not so well informed.

Perhaps, like a minister in a pulpit, I might discuss the subject under three heads, viz.: the Record Office, the Officers Commanding in times of peace (and in this description I beg respectfully to include all administra­tive medical officers as well as the Officer Commanding a company), that is in the words of the "Regulations for Mobilization," "an Officer Commanding a Regimental Depot or Company, Royal Army Medical Corps" (paras. 174-183), and the Officer Commanding the medical unit which is to be mobilized (paras. 186-220). Each of these might be divided into "pre­paration in peace time" and "action on mobilization"; and I will take the Record Office first, because though it affects me most, it is probably less interesting to you, and because after all the Record Office must be the basis or foundation on which mobilization, so far as it relates to personnel, is built.

Our duties in connection with mobilization are mainly three: (1) To keep in touch with all reservists, so as to make sure they will be available when mobilization is ordered; (2) to allot them to medical units in accordance with "Mobilization Instructions, A.M.S."; and (3) to

¹ Delivered at the School of Army Sanitation, Aldershot, December 7, 1911.

[Note.—The references are to the Mobilization Regulations, 1909.—Ed.]
prepare and issue as soon as possible a list of promotions of qualified men to complete the establishment of the units mobilized.

I do not think I need trouble you with the details of our work in time of peace, though I should be very pleased indeed to explain the routine of the office to any officer on any afternoon at the Record Office.

The reservists (there are 5,000 of them) notify every change of address, and envelopes properly addressed are kept ready for issue with railway warrants and instructions where to join. The men die, or are invalided, proceed to sea or to the Colonies, take their discharge, sometimes, like other people, get into prison, and as casualties occur their places are filled by others, the alterations being notified on Corps Form 19 to all Officers Commanding where reservists are required to join.

If there are any unallotted to medical units they would join the Depot as “reliefs and miscellaneous.”

Whenever the order to mobilize is issued those envelopes containing complete instructions to each reservist are posted and then we set to work to make as many promotions as are considered necessary, from our seniority rolls. When this has been completed our job so far as the provision of personnel is concerned is done, and I rather wish to emphasize this as I fancy there is a prevailing idea that when mobilization is ordered any deficiency in personnel in any unit can be made up by telegraphing to “the Records.”

This idea so far as it exists is no doubt due to the fact that in Table III of “Mobilization Instructions, A.M.S.”, you will find in nearly all units a certain number of Warrant and N.C.O.s and buglers shown in italics as “provided by Officer in Charge Records.”

These numbers total up to 294 Warrant and N.C.O.s and 55 buglers, and I am quite sure when officers come to think of it they will realize that we do not keep these men and boys locked up in a secret drawer to be issued on mobilization.

Every recruit as soon as his course at the Depot is finished, and every N.C.O. or man returning from foreign service, is posted to some station at home, and wherever they are, whenever mobilization is ordered, there they will be badly wanted, and it will be no use attempting in the few days which will elapse between mobilization and the embarkation of the first units, to shift N.C.O.s from Aldershot to Netley or from Chatham to York, robbing Peter to pay Paul.

The units will have to embark with the N.C.O.s they have got actually present at each station at the time, plus the number of N.C.O.s and privates qualified for higher rank pending the issue of promotion lists which will be prepared and printed as soon as possible. In order to make this procedure quite clear we obtained permission from the War Office to issue a circular to all Principal Medical Officers and Administrative Medical Officers to that effect.

The N.C.O.s “provided by Records” on mobilization are provided
solely by promotions, and if you will look at the last row of figures for each station in Table IV, "Mobilization Instructions, A.M.S." you will see that these N.C.O.s and men remaining after Units have been provided for, are for "promotions to Field Army, Principal Medical Officer's clerk, and duty at home."

As regards buglers any surplus will be posted from the Depot and probably qualified boys will be enlisted from the Royal Schools as was done in the South African War.

I do not think I need bother you further with the Record Office. Of course the documents of all reservists will be sent to the Officer Commanding the mobilized unit forthwith, and there will subsequently be a great deal of paper work in connection with Separation Allowance, Allotments, Remittances and Medals, to which I will briefly allude later.

Now what is the position of the Officer Commanding at a station where Medical Units are ordered to mobilize, in times of peace as regards preparation for mobilization? And perhaps it may not be amiss to say a word as to how these units are constructed.

All Medical Units, whether Field Ambulances, Stationary or General Hospitals, &c., have been most carefully built up at the War Office on the basis that there shall be in each: (1) a proportion of fully trained N.C.O.s and men, i.e., serving soldiers; (2) a proportion of those who were fully trained on passing to the Reserve, i.e., ordinary Regular Royal Army Medical Corps Reservists; and (3) a proportion of partially trained men including Special Reservists, Category "A" and "B" and Infantry and Royal Garrison Artillery Reservists transferred to Royal Army Medical Corps under Special Army Orders of 1909 and 1911.

If you will look at any unit you like in Table III, you will find that this is the method adopted.

The proportion of partially trained to fully trained men varies according to requirements, being larger in Field Ambulances where stretcher bearers are required and smaller in General and Stationary Hospitals.

Now as regards these reservists it seems to me that the only duty which is required of an Officer Commanding a station in times of peace (and it is a most important duty) is to see that the clothing and boots are ready and that they fit. We all know that there are few things more important to the soldier than the boots he marches in, and some years ago when magnitudes were introduced as well as sizes we sent special instructions to every reservist to get his feet measured, and the dimensions are now recorded on all Corps Forms 19. These forms contain all particulars of all measurements of clothing, &c., and are in the possession of all officers where reservists assemble, and corrections are sent out generally once a month as casualties occur. Perhaps I might suggest, though it is not official, that when indenting for garments and boots the Officer Commanding might make a fair allowance for growth.
The Infantry Reservists come up biennially and we have asked that in all cases they might be remeasured and the results sent to our Office. The Special Reservists (Category A) come up every year and I hope next year to ask all Officers Commanding concerned to give us fresh measurements; but as regards our own Royal Army Medical Corps Reservists we do not get the opportunity, and as it seems very probable that they have expanded in all directions since they went to the Reserve it might be a good idea to allow for this.

There are also stamps to be provided for marking equipment, &c., I would ask all Officers Commanding, "Is everything ready?"

Another point which occurs to me is the position of the mobilization stores and the means of access. Remember that in Aldershot alone when the time comes there will be 2,035 reservists arriving at once, 1,431 for the Depot, 291 for the Cambridge, and 213 for the Connaught. Imagine all these men clamouring for boots and clothing at once. I remember when I was Company Officer for 18 Company many years ago the clothing store was on the third storey of a building in St. George's Barracks, with only one door and one staircase. Picture to yourselves the position of a Quartermaster and his subordinates trying to clothe a large number of men under these conditions and the men trying to get into uniform—everyone in a desperate hurry. I think this is a point which is worth considering in peace time, and I venture to suggest that it might be useful to have a kind of rehearsal from time to time to see how the thing would work in actual practice.

So much for the Reservists. As regards the preparation for mobilization of N.C.O.s and men serving in the various districts, I do not think it would be becoming of me to offer any suggestions lest it should be thought that I was trying to teach my brother officers what they already know much better than I do. They are in daily touch with their men, they command them, they know their capabilities and they have already allotted them in Corps Form I (monthly return) to the positions they would fill on mobilization. I will only invite attention to the obvious fact that the more trained men there are at a station whenever mobilization is ordered the more efficient the Medical Units mobilized at that station will be.

Men trained in all capacities; first and foremost men qualified for promotion and advancement so as to be ready to step into higher positions in the unit directly the promotion lists are issued, because I can assure you that the number of additional N.C.O.s immediately required will be very large indeed. Our requirements also of trained nurses, cooks, and clerks will be very much greater than the ordinary peace establishment.

You must not expect that there will be a large proportion of trained men among the reservists. There are about sixty corporals and a few serjeants. There is also a steadily increasing number of trained nurses,
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and some clerks and cooks, but you must remember that in the great majority of cases they have ceased (except as regards some of the nurses) to exercise their special qualifications in the Reserve and at first they will be a bit rusty.

The best qualified men are, and must always be, serving with the Colours. Only a limited number are permitted to extend each year and therefore naturally the best are kept and those who have not qualified are passed to the Reserve.

On mobilization the duties of an Officer Commanding a company, Royal Army Medical Corps, are sufficiently arduous (paras. 174-185, "Regulations for Mobilization"). He recalls all soldiers on leave; he medically examines everybody, including reservists; he clothes the reservists, takes from them their Life, Identity, and Reserve Certificates which he sends to the Paymaster. He sends to the Record Office daily a nominal roll of the reservists who have joined, together with statements of remittances they wish sent to their families and charges against them for messing, &c. He takes into pay any reservists medically unfit, and with these and what is left of his Company, after the units mobilized at his station have been completed, he prepares to continue his daily work assisted by the St. John men sent by the War Office (para. 37). Practically it comes to this, the officer remaining in charge of a military hospital where units are mobilized, when he has finished his duties as an "Officer Commanding a Regimental Depot or Company, Royal Army Medical Corps" (paras. 174-185), takes over the duties of an "Officer Commanding Details of a Unit" (paras. 221-226).

In this connection I might draw attention to the register which is kept up at all headquarters of pensioners and ex-soldiers resident in the neighbourhood who are willing to serve at home when mobilization is ordered. There will necessarily be a great demand for ex-N.C.O.s capable of acting as dispensers, stewards, packstore keepers, cooks, and clerks, to work the military hospitals from which the serving soldiers have been withdrawn, and this can hardly be supplied except from men on these registers. I speak from a very vivid recollection of what happened in the hospitals at home during the South African War.

Now let us turn to the "Officer Commanding the Unit" which has been mobilized and which he is going to take abroad, and I confess I have always looked upon an officer in this position with a sort of envy. He has no responsibility in times of peace—he just strolls into barracks and takes command of the unit which has been carefully created for him by the War Office, nursed for him, as regards serving soldiers, by the Officer Commanding the Company, or the Officer Commanding the station, and provided with reservists and special reservists by the Records. Of course he may be appointed to a unit at his own station, and I cannot imagine anything pleasanter than to proceed on active service with
N.C.O.s and men whom one knows personally, but naturally this cannot always be the case. Now what are his duties with his new unit? Paras. 186-220 of the "Regulations for Mobilization" give him plenty of work, and I propose to refer briefly to the various items in the order of urgency, beginning with the men.

(1) He has everyone medically examined over again.

(2) If in consequence of this examination his establishment is not complete he must telegraph to the Record Office for additional reservists. These will be supplied, if possible, from reliefs and miscellaneous at the Depot.

(3) He must send Army Form D, 418 (Separation Allowance) to us at the Record Office, and Army Form O, 1796, allotments of pay to the Regimental Paymaster, No. 2, Aldershot, and this is a very big job, because unless it is done before the unit embarks it will be almost impossible to issue the separation allowances and allotments to the families at home, and great distress will be caused. I should like to suggest that all clerks should be thoroughly instructed in these forms in time of peace, and that at least one competent N.C.O. should be posted to each unit specially for this purpose. It will be a very arduous task for each unit, and it must be done in a very few days.

(4) With Army Form O, 1796, he sends the Life, Identity, and Reserve certificates of all reservists to the paymaster, if this has not already been done.

(5) He sends all the medals, and the wills of soldiers (if they so desire) to us at the Records, also any books or documents not required by the unit.

(6) Having started some trustworthy N.O.O. on these tasks I would suggest that as soon as possible he should examine the documents of his reservists, and take stock of what he has got. We have tried as far as possible to apportion qualified reservists among the various units, and if the Officer Commanding will look, he may find cooks, sanitary orderlies, and some nurses, also corporals and men who have passed for promotion, who would be most useful to him. He will not have a great deal of time to make these examinations, because as soon as he reaches the port of disembarkation he will have to hand in the duplicate attestations, &c., to the Base Record Office—all N.C.O.s resume their rank, and qualified men may be granted a temporary acting Lance stripe in view of the promotion lists which will be printed. As it is practically impossible that these could be issued before the force embarks, any N.C.O.s or men qualified for promotion among the reservists will be of the greatest value to the Officer Commanding; and let me impress upon him that this examination of documents must be made before embarkation or during the voyage, for he will have no chance afterwards.

Now let us leave the men and give the short time that remains to us to the very important subjects of transport and equipment; and you will
see why I have left this to the last, because it only concerns the Officer Commanding the unit on mobilization, and not until mobilization actually occurs.

As regards transport, the ambulance and general service wagons are stored for all units, but I have been asked by officers, both personally and by correspondence, official and private—where do we get our horses? and who is to fetch them? The horses are provided by the Remount Department at various centres in different Commands under General Officers Commanding-in-Chief (para. 39-41). I am quoting from "Regulations for Mobilization, 1909," and must be telegraphed for to the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, stating numbers (see para. 62).

The Officer Commanding a field ambulance will on receipt of instructions from General Officer Commanding-in-Chief send a party to fetch them. This party will take with them for this purpose head-collars, head-ropes, bits, &c. (para. 215). Very good, but who are you going to send? The Royal Army Medical Corps, as a rule, are not expert horsemasters. First, remember that the Officer Commanding will have 59 N.C.O.s and men of the Army Service Corps attached, 40 in the case of a cavalry field ambulance, and by para. 39 these Army Service Corps will be sent to the unit to which they are attached at its place of mobilization as soon as the men have passed the medical examination and have been clothed. You have not to apply for them, they will be sent to you and obviously as these men will have charge of the horses they should be detailed to fetch them. You have the head-collars, &c., in your equipment; but in case the Army Service Corps Detachment have not yet arrived and you are told to send for your horses, para. 44 provides that General Officers Commanding-in-Chief "will arrange for temporary assistance to be rendered from mounted corps in their Command to such units as may have difficulty in finding parties to take over these animals on mobilization." I think as regards field and cavalry field ambulance the procedure of the Officer Commanding is quite clear.

To move the heavy ordnance equipment of a general or stationary hospital is not so easy. I think it must be taken for granted that as it cannot be moved by the Staff, application must be made to the General Officer Commanding, though possibly if the horses of a field ambulance are available they may be lent (and in all probability would be ordered), to assist in the task. (See also para. 61). The equipment will be drawn under local mobilization orders (see para. 26). So much for the horses.

Equipment.—So far as medical and surgical equipment is concerned, the Officer Commanding will have no trouble. Para. 21, "Mobilization Instructions, A.M.S." lays down that it will be forwarded, no requisition being necessary, addressed to the Officer Commanding at the place of mobilization and the medical comfort panniers will be issued in like manner, para. 24.
As regards ordnance equipment this must be drawn in accordance with the time-table shown in local mobilization orders (paras. 210 and 26, "Regulations for Mobilization"). For this no doubt a party will be required to assist, which must be furnished from the unit mobilizing (see para. 211).

Examination of Table III, "Mobilization Instructions, A.M.S.," will show that every detail has been most carefully thought out.

In the field units; cavalry and field ambulance, in almost every case all the equipment is stored at the place of mobilization. In the Lines of Communication units, stationary and general hospitals, the unit mobilizes where the ordnance equipment is stored, and the medical equipment and comfort panniers are sent from Woolwich without requisition.

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Echoes from the Past.

THE SANITARY CARE OF THE SOLDIER BY HIS OFFICER.

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Army Medical Service.

In beginning the lecture I would say that it was not by my initiative that I was put forward to deal with this matter. I think myself that the wording of the notice to give a lecture implies that the lecturer should himself be a master of the subject. I would prefer rather to say that we are here having a conference, and if you will allow me to be the opener of the conference I think that would be the better expression.

We are met from different branches of the Army to contribute our various items of information to the one great question of how the soldier is to be pushed forward on the road towards health and fitness, so that the one great thing for which he exists, namely, his fighting power in the field, may be more and more developed. I propose, then, this evening to deal with the subject in three ways: First, to glance at the sanitary history of the Army briefly up to the present day; secondly, to speak of the sanitary ideals which we specialists in the medical service have before us for the

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1 A Lecture delivered at the Royal Artillery Institution, Woolwich, January 29, 1894.