A WESTERN COMMAND R.A.M.C. STAFF TOUR.

By Colonel H. ENSOR, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O.

(Continued from page 54.)

Task No. 1.

(1) The 1st Division is to march on Shrewsbury in two columns as detailed in Narrative No. 1. State as A.D.M.S., 1st Division, what recommendations you would make to the staff with regard to the march of the field ambulances and sanitary section. It is to be assumed that the advanced guard of each of the two columns of the 1st Division will comprise one infantry battalion.

(2) What recommendations, also, would you make as to the march of the motor transport of the field ambulances?

Task No. 2.

Supply Railhead is at Builth, and the refilling point for the 1st Division is at the road junction at C. 3411; time for refilling is 17.00 hours, January 7. State how Nos. 7, 8 and 142 Field Ambulances and 1st Divisional Sanitary Section will obtain their rations for January 8.

Task No. 3.

The 1st Division is on the night, January 8/9, billeted in the areas given in Narrative No. 2.

State what arrangements would be made for the evacuation of sick and casual wounded to the casualty clearing station at Knighton.

Task No. 4.

In Narrative No. 3 it is stated that as a result of the advanced guard of the right column meeting with opposition from enemy cavalry at Micklewood and Longnor it sustained the following casualties:

Killed ... 2  |  Wounded ... 8

State what action you would take with regard to the wounded.

Task No. 5.

At 18.00 hours, January 9, the A.D.M.S., 1st Division, receives a message from D.D.M.S., 1st Corps, to the effect that four cases of smallpox have been diagnosed among the troops (reservists) of the 1st Division. Two cases from "F" Battalion and two from "H" Battalion, 2nd Infantry Brigade. State what action should be taken.

Solution of Task No. 1.

(1) The A.D.M.S. should recommend that No. 7 Field Ambulance should be detailed for duty with the left column, and Nos. 8 and 142 Field Ambulances to the right column.
It is also recommended that one company of No. 7 Field Ambulance should march in rear of the advanced guard of the left column, and that the remainder of the Field Ambulance, less its motor transport, should march in rear of this column.

With regard to the right column:

It should be recommended that No. 8 Field Ambulance, less motor transport, should march in rear of the leading infantry brigade of this column with one of its companies in rear of the advanced guard.

No. 142 Field Ambulance, less motor transport, should march as a complete unit in rear of the troops of the right column. It should be impressed on the staff by the A.D.M.S. that the above arrangement is absolutely necessary if wounded from the advanced guards are to get prompt medical assistance. In the event of an advanced guard meeting with resistance and being forced to deploy to overcome it, the O.C. company of the Field Ambulance with it will be in a position to select and open an advanced dressing station at the earliest possible moment—a matter of the first importance so far as the welfare of the wounded is concerned. It should not be forgotten that the resistance met with by the advanced guard may be so serious that it may be necessary to deploy and to bring into action one or more of the remaining battalions of the leading infantry brigade.

The Divisional Sanitary Section is not required when a division is on the line of march and contact with the enemy is possible. The duties peculiar to it cannot be carried out under such circumstances. The A.D.M.S. should recommend that this unit should march with the Divisional Train; its motor transport with No. 1 M.T. Company, and its personnel with No. 3 H.T. Company.

In the event of the Divisional Staff agreeing to these recommendations, the A.D.M.S. should send orders for the field ambulances to march as follows:

No. 7 Field Ambulance to the Onibury—Clunugunford areas and No. 8 Field Ambulance to the Bromfield—Stanton Lacy areas. The Divisional Sanitary Section should at the same time proceed to the Divisional Train area at Brampton Bryan.

The O.C. Divisional Train must also be informed of the change of position of these units so that they may receive their supplies.

(2) It is impossible for the motor transport of the field ambulances to march with their units; their engines cannot stand the low rate of speed. The combined motor transport (less motor cycles) of the field ambulances of a division is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motor lorries, 3 ton</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor ambulance cars, light</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; heavy</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The A.D.M.S. should recommend that the motor transport of the field ambulances allotted to the right column, i.e., two 3-ton lorries, twelve light and four heavy motor ambulance cars should by day march as a convoy under the orders of an officer to be detailed by O.C., No. 142 Field Ambulance. This convoy should march in rear of the column, but in view of the fact that its services may be required at any time, it should be given by the staff precedence over all other mechanical transport. It should advance by "bounds," i.e., after the rearmost unit of the column has marched and two hours have elapsed, it should go forward, get into touch with the rear of the column, and again wait for two hours before making a second bound. When in motion it should move with wide distances between the vehicles, and when halted the vehicles should not be concentrated but should be extended and concealed from hostile aircraft.

At the end of the march, the motors should proceed to join the headquarters of their units for the night, and are, the next day, under orders of the A.D.M.S. to assemble at a place and time given by him. This place would usually be the billeting area of the most advanced of the field ambulances.

The motor transport of No. 7 Field Ambulance with the left column should also march as above detailed.

Solution of Task No. 2.

The divisional M.T. Company (a corps unit) will at some previous time have carried the rations for the 1st Division from the Supply Railhead to the refilling point.

The light supply lorries of the three field ambulances of the 1st Division, and the motor van of the Sanitary Section, march with No. 2 M.T. Company of the Divisional Train, and are in Brampton Bryan area. They will move with the rest of No. 2 M.T. Company in the afternoon to the refilling point where they will be loaded with the rations indented for the previous day on A.B. 55A by the Officers Commanding the Field Ambulances and the Sanitary Section.

The Supply Officer, Divisional Troops, knows in what areas these units are situated and will send their supply vehicle to them in company with the other supply vehicles belonging to units in the same area. Divisional Headquarters will, in the meantime, have selected places called "Meeting Points," in this case one for each of the three areas in which the 1st Division is billeted—Onibury—Blomfield—Ludlow. Officers Commanding Field Ambulances will detail a N.C.O. to proceed to these meeting points to meet the supply vehicle of their unit and to guide it to the place where the unit is billeted. The rations are then unloaded and the empty supply vehicles return to the Headquarters of the Divisional Train, taking
with them indents on A.B. 55A for the rations required to be drawn on the following day.

Solution of Task No. 3.

The A.D.M.S. should issue orders that O.C. No. 142 Field Ambulance at the Hall at Strefford (Y. 9685) should open a dressing station to which all the sick and casual wounded of the right column are to be sent as soon as they have been collected by the motor ambulance transport of Nos. 8 and 142 Field Ambulances after they have rejoined their units at the end of the day's march.

No. 7 Field Ambulance should similarly form a dressing station for the service of the left column.

As soon as Officers Commanding Nos. 7 and 142 Field Ambulances have some idea of the number of lying and sitting cases which will require removal, they should send messages by motor cycle to O.C. No. 1 Motor Ambulance Convoy at Knighton asking that the number of cars they consider will be required to evacuate the cases in their dressing stations to the casualty clearing stations should be sent to them.

No. 1 Motor Ambulance Convoy is a Corps unit and under the orders of the D.D.M.S., 1st Corps, but it may be assumed that he will have given orders to O.C. No. 1 M.A.C. to clear the dressing stations of the divisions in the Corps, and, in consequence, it will not be necessary to apply for motor ambulance cars to clear the dressing stations through D.D.M.S., 1st Corps. It should be a Standing Order that the rearmost field ambulance of a column should, when the division is on the line of march, be responsible for opening a dressing station for the reception of all sick and wounded from the column as soon as this field ambulance has halted for the night.

It must be remembered that inevitably a certain number of men will "go sick" in the early morning before the troops march off. They must be sent to the field ambulances which have opened dressing stations, and evacuated to the casualty clearing station. On this account it will be advantageous for O.C. No. 1 M.A.C. to detail a certain number of his cars to remain the night with the field ambulances to which sick will be transferred in the morning.

It is to be understood that the duty of evacuating sick and wounded from the dressing stations of field ambulances is laid down by Field Service Regulations on the Motor Ambulance Convoys.

Solution of Task No. 4.

The wounded should not be taken a yard further forward than is necessary. They should be accommodated in the nearest house on the main road and remain there with the minimum of R.A.M.C. personnel and
equipment required to look after them. The map location of the wounded should be sent at once to A.D.M.S., who will inform the O.C. Divisional Motor Ambulance Transport of the position of the wounded, and also state to which unit the R.A.M.C. personnel in charge of the wounded belong.

The wounded will then be evacuated to the dressing station, opened by the rearmost field ambulance when the march is over, by the motor ambulance transport of the unit to which the R.A.M.C. personnel belong when it goes forward at the end of the day's match to rejoin its headquarters. R.A.M.C. personnel and equipment are also to rejoin their unit by means of the motor ambulance transport of their unit.

Solution of Task No. 5.

The A.D.M.S., in view of the fact that contact with the enemy has been established, and that an action is almost inevitable on the following day, should inform the Divisional Staff of the message he has received, and recommend that no action be taken until the military situation is less urgent.

SECRET.
Copy No. 14.

1ST DIVISION, R.A.M.C., ORDER No. 1.

Reference O.S. Maps, 1 inch, Sheets 60 and 70.

January 9, 1926.

(1) (a) The Division has received orders to attack the enemy to-morrow, January 10. The enemy is holding the line: Longden Manor—Longden—Exfordsgreen—Condover.

(b) The 1st Infantry Brigade has orders to capture the line: Longden Manor—Longden—Exfordsgreen (exclusive). The 2nd Infantry Brigade is to capture the line: Exfordsgreen—Condover.

The 3rd Infantry Brigade has received orders to send two battalions to Frodesley to-morrow.

(c) The 1st and 2nd Infantry Brigades will advance to the attack at 07.00 hours to-morrow, January 10; the two battalions of the 3rd Infantry Brigade are to march to Frodesley at 04.00 hours to-morrow and are to advance from this place at 06.00 hours to outflank the enemy position at Condover from the East.

(2) (a) O.C. No. 7 Field Ambulance will be responsible for the collection of wounded from the Left Column. O.C. No. 8 Field Ambulance will be responsible for this duty with regard to the wounded in the 2nd Infantry Brigade area. O.C. No. 142 Field Ambulance will detail one of his Companies with its complete transport, and one light ambulance car, to accompany the two Battalions of the 3rd Infantry Brigade ordered to outflank Condover.
(b) O.C. No. 142 Field Ambulance will form the Main Dressing Station for the Right Column at Church Stretton with his Headquarters. This Main Dressing Station is to be opened for the reception of casualties by 06.00 hours to-morrow, January 10. O.C. No. 142 Field Ambulance will also form a Walking Wounded Collecting Station at All Stretton, and will detail one officer, the nursing personnel, and the cook of his remaining company, to form the Staff of this Collecting Station.

(c) O.C. No. 7 Field Ambulance will select a suitable site for the Main Dressing Station for the Left Column and will inform O.C. No. 1 M.A.C. at Horderley (Y. 68) of its position by motorcyclist, and by signal message to A.D.M.S.

3) The motor ambulance transport of Nos. 8 and 142 Field Ambulances (less three light cars of No. 8 Field Ambulance and one light car of No. 142 Field Ambulance) will be formed into a Divisional Motor Ambulance Convoy by 06.00 hours to-morrow, January 10, and will assemble at that time and date on the Shrewsbury—Church Stretton main road at a place half a mile south of Leebotwood (U. 39). This convoy when formed will come under the orders of an officer to be detailed by O.C. No. 8 Field Ambulance and this officer will be responsible for the clearing of such Advanced Dressing Stations of the Right Column as may be formed into the Main Dressing Station at Church Stretton. The motor ambulance transport of No. 7 Field Ambulance will be employed under arrangements to be made by the Officer Commanding that unit.

4) (a) O.C. No. 7 Field Ambulance will, as soon as he has selected a site for an Advanced Dressing Station for the Left Column, immediately inform A.D.M.S. of its location by signal message.

(b) O.C. No. 8 Field Ambulance, and O.C. Company of No. 142 Field Ambulance detailed to accompany the two battalions of the 3rd Infantry Brigade mentioned in para. 2 of these Orders, will inform A.D.M.S. of the location of their Advanced Dressing Stations immediately they have been formed. This information is to be sent by motorcyclist. O.C. Divisional Motor Ambulance Convoy, half a mile south of Leebotwood, is to be informed also by the same means.

5) D.D.M.S., 1st Corps has to-day forwarded by means of cars of No. 1 M.A.C. a reserve of stretchers and blankets to No. 7 Field Ambulance and No. 142 Field Ambulance. O.C. No. 142 Field Ambulance will forward 60 stretchers and 200 blankets to Headquarters, No. 8 Field Ambulance, making use of his motor ambulance transport for this purpose, when it goes forward to form the Divisional Motor Ambulance Convoy.

6) Headquarters No. 8 Field Ambulance will be held in reserve ready to move forward on receipt of orders to do so. The remaining Company of No. 142 Field Ambulance (less personnel detailed to form the Staff of
the Walking Wounded Collecting Station) will remain in reserve at All Stretton.

(7) Reports and messages to A.D.M.S. at Divisional Headquarters at Dudgeley House (U. 27).
(8) Acknowledge. (Signed) "X."

Colonel,

Issued at 21.00 hours O.C. R.A.M.C. 1st Division.
through 1st Div. Signals.

Copy No. 1. 1st Division "G."
2. 1st Division "A."
3. No. 7 Field Ambulance.
4. No. 8 Field Ambulance.
5. No. 142 Field Ambulance.
6. Headquarters, 1st Infantry Brigade.
7. "" 2nd Infantry Brigade.
8. "" 3rd Infantry Brigade.
9. C.R.A.
10. C.R.E.
11. 1st Divisional Train.
12. A.P.M.
14. )
15. - File.
16. )

Work done on January 10.

On the morning of January 10 the syndicates left Shrewsbury at 09.00 hours to reconnoitre the line taken up by the enemy, and to form an opinion as to the arrangements that would be made by the Officers Commanding Nos. 7 and 8 Field Ambulances for the service of the troops of the 1st Division engaged in the attack on the enemy's line, the dispositions for which are given in Narrative No. 5.

The syndicates were informed that the A.D.M.S., 1st Division, having had no opportunity of reconnoitring the ground, must leave the selection of advanced dressing stations entirely to the field ambulance commanders concerned, and, also, that of a main dressing station and walking wounded collecting station, so far as the left column was concerned.

Each syndicate was, also, required to write, as A.D.M.S. 1st Division, the R.A.M.C. operation order for the field ambulances.

All officers were given instructions to meet the Director at 13.00 hours
A Western Command R.A.M.C. Staff Tour

at the road junction at P. 3567 where they were to hand in the R.A.M.C. operation orders written by the syndicates.

This programme of work was carried out and shortly after 13.00 hours, all officers were assembled on the summit of the high ground east of Stapleton (Pt. 287) from which place a good view of the enemy line was obtained.

After the Director had pointed out the enemy positions at Longden Manor, Longden, Exfordsgreen, Lyth Hill and Condover, which were distinctly visible, a discussion took place as to the positions to be taken up as advanced dressing stations for Nos. 7 and 8 Field Ambulances.

The Director was of the opinion with regard to No. 8 Field Ambulance, the leading field ambulance of the right column, that, as the headquarters of the two battalions, and in consequence their regimental aid posts, would most certainly be somewhere in the Great Ryton, Little Ryton, and Wheathall areas, an advanced dressing station should be opened by O.C. No. 8 Field Ambulance in Longnor. Longnor is rather far to the rear for an advanced dressing station, but the “carry” of the bearers detailed to clear the regimental aid posts could be reduced to about 500 or 600 yards by establishing a car post on the road at the south end of Little Ryton. The road from Little Ryton to Longnor is a good one and is not under enemy observation. Dorrington was not considered suitable as a site for an advanced dressing station. It is screened from enemy observation from Lyth Hill (P. 28) by the high ground east of Stapleton, but the roads to it from Great Ryton are directly under observation from Lyth Hill. Also, it is certain that the great majority of casualties to be sustained by the 2nd Infantry Brigade will fall on the two battalions ordered to capture Condover, at any rate in the opening stages of the battle. If the advanced dressing station for the service of the 2nd Infantry Brigade were established in Dorrington, it would mean that the great majority of the wounded would have to be carried to a flank instead of directly away from the front.

It may be assumed that the regimental aid post of the battalion of the 2nd Infantry Brigade ordered to demonstrate in the direction of Exfordsgreen will be in some sheltered position in Stapleton. This battalion is not likely to have severe casualties. In consequence a car post should be formed on the road south of the high ground to the east of Stapleton, to which lying-down cases can be brought by the field ambulance bearers detailed to clear the regimental aid post of the battalion in question. The car when loaded should proceed to the advanced dressing station at Longnor by the main road, and, when unloaded, return to its former position in readiness for further service.

It is considered that two light cars would be required for the service of the car post south of Little Ryton and one for that near Stapleton. These
three light cars, together with the horsed ambulance wagons of the two companies of No. 8 Field Ambulance, should be ample for the transport of serious cases to the advanced dressing station at Longnor.

They should be boldly used so as to shorten the "carry" of the field ambulance bearers from the regimental aid posts. The advanced dressing station at Longnor should be staffed by two officers, one from each company, and the nursing personnel and cooks of both companies of No. 8 Field Ambulance. The bearer personnel of one company should be allotted to clear the regimental aid posts of the battalions engaged with the enemy, while that of the other company should, in the early stages of the action, be kept in reserve in Longnor. The battalion of the 2nd Infantry Brigade, in reserve near Longnor, should bring any casualties they might sustain to the advanced dressing station by means of their own regimental stretcher bearers.

The action to be taken by O.C., No. 7 Field Ambulance for the clearing of casualties from the left column was then considered. The country in which the 1st Infantry Brigade is to operate is a very difficult one, and the enemy has good observation over most of it from Lyth Hill. The main road leading to the rear has exceedingly steep gradients, and it is the only available road by means of which casualties can be taken to the casualty clearing station at Horderley. In the opinion of the Director it would be unwise for O.C., No. 7 Field Ambulance, to establish a main dressing station for the left column south of Cothercott Hill (O. 61), owing to the delay which would arise, caused by the steep gradients, in clearing an advanced dressing station to a main dressing station, formed south of Cothercott Hill. It is very doubtful if the motor ambulance transport could be worked continuously on such gradients.

On this account it is considered that risks must be taken, and that it would be best to form only one dressing station to serve the purposes of both an advanced and a main dressing station. This dressing station should be opened in Castle Pulverbatch, which village is not under observation of the enemy on the ground.

The objections to this procedure are many, but it is impossible to offer a better solution of the problem.

One objection is that it will be necessary for the heavy ambulance cars of the motor ambulance convoy to come up to clear this dressing station, thus bringing them further forward than is usual. However, in war, risks must be taken if wounded are to be collected and evacuated quickly.

Slight cases should be sent on foot to a walking wounded collecting station formed at the Vicarage on the main road at T. 5488.

The regimental aid posts of the battalions ordered to attack Longden Manor may be assumed as formed somewhere in square O. 88, and they should be cleared by field ambulance bearers to a car post situated off the
main road at Black Lion Farm (O. 8547). The battalion ordered to demonstrate against Longden may be assumed to have its regimental aid post in the neighbourhood of Castle Place (P. 05); it should be cleared to a car post situated on the second class road near the Gorse (P. 04).

O.C., No. 7 Field Ambulance should staff his dressing station in Castle Pulverbatch with the headquarters of his unit, and the walking wounded collecting station with one officer and the nursing personnel of one of his companies. The remainder of the personnel of this company should be detailed to clear the regimental aid posts of the three battalions ordered to attack. His second company should remain in reserve, together with all motor ambulance transport not required for duty at car posts at Cothercott (O. 72).

1st Division R.A.M.C. Order No. 1 was then read out by the Director, and the Staff Tour came to an end.