the new scheme. In 1927, Mrs. Boycott became Hon. Commandant, and Miss Peake an original member, who had served in military hospitals during the whole of the war, took over the active work of running the detachment.

Mrs. Dunham is the new Lady Superintendent and Dr. Kenneth Bates, Medical Officer.

The first War Office inspection was made on October 30, 1926, when the County Controller, Brigadier-General R. H. Hare, C.B., C.M.G., was present. The detachment was again inspected on October 29, 1927, by Colonel Rutherford, D.S.O., A.D.M.S., E.A.A., and Major Phillips, D.S.O., M.C., R.A.M.C., when Miss Acland was present as Acting County Controller in the absence of General Hare.

Lectures are given each month, and all necessary equipment for inspections is borrowed as required, as the hospital stores were given away when the hospital was closed.

A team from the detachment won the Hertfordshire Inter-Detachment Round of the Stanley Shield Competition in the spring of 1927, and was only defeated in the eastern area competition by one mark, by Essex.

The detachment is at present well up to strength under its excellent Commandant, Miss Gertrude Peake, and is fortunate in having in its ranks a fully qualified London hospital nurse as well as its own lady superintendent.

Miss Wix (sometime Lady Mayor of St. Albans) still acts as quartermaster, with Miss Green as A.Q.M., and there are at the present time nine mobile members (four of whom have done their week’s training at a military hospital, whose reports have been universally satisfactory) and thirty-three immobile members, including the commandant’s secretary, one dispenser and three cooks.

The keenness and efficiency of the detachment, and its ability to attract more recruits, are most hopeful signs of the progress of the new scheme for V.A.D. work in the county of Hertfordshire.

V.—INSPECTING A VOLUNTARY AID DETACHMENT.

By Major M. B. H. Ritchie, D.S.O.

Royal Army Medical Corps.

In a charming village nestling in the valley ten miles from nowhere, bustling market town, popular seaside resort, or one of England’s stately homes that still harbours butlers bland of visage and footmen fleet of foot—somewhere within the broad shires of the A.D.M.S.’s area, a voluntary aid detachment awaits your inspection. You, let me say, have been reversing round the market square among the sheep pens trying to find the map reference until the school children came to put you wise. In hut or hall dedicated to every form of uplifting institution for which rural England is
renowned; or in the Territorial headquarters, shoulder to shoulder with
eighteen-pounder and landscape target; or upon a smoothen lawn—two
score of damsels in the trim uniform of the British Red Cross Society or
the Order of St. John of Jerusalem are drawn up for review, all agog to
display their knowledge of first aid.

The gracious commandant receives you. You shake hands with her and
her officers. Probably the county director and the county controller are
there to support you, but they are more interested, of course, in matters of
uniformity of uniform. Skirts so many (not too many) inches off the
ground; apron bands right over left; invisible pins. You walk along two
ranks of be-medalled and charming personnel. Among them you may find
some friends. Certainly some one has a near or far relation in the Corps,
or knows some one that you know. The ice breaks.

I think most inspecting officers prefer to set their own tasks and test
efficiency by their own standards. If left to itself, however, the detachment
will pre-suppose a catastrophe sufficient to satisfy the most inveterate
first-aider. A motor 'bus has overturned. Out of it come Boy Scouts or
Girl Guides in order of severity—fractures, fibula or femur, carpus or
clavicle; burns, to the umpteenth degree (the old 'bus blew up before she
took the water); drowning "fares" demanding the immediate attention of
friends Schafer, Sylvester and Howard, as per manual; and a rearguard of
tenderfoot scouts labelled collectively as shock. Gruesome grist comes
readily to the merciful mill of first aid.

The detachment bustles. Splints and bandages soon conceal the persons
of the victims. You walk around and see how it is done. One patient,
already an acute pneumonia, has been thrust into bed. So you ply
attendants with question after question on home nursing. The work of
nursing in a hospital may be of more importance than first aid, but this
depends upon your personal ideas of the duties of voluntary aid detach­
ments in the next great war. So you can find ample scope. Then the
quartermaster's department has to be inspected. The commandant is
au fait with the Geneva Convention and Army medical administration.
You should probe her profound knowledge of these important matters.
But do it tenderly. The cooks have prepared inviting invalid diets. Be
careful to praise the culinary effort loudly; for the cooks may be real and
you know how precious they are.

The personnel sometimes suffer from shyness. A trifle slow off the
mark with their answers, but recovering from bashfulness rapidly. You
find that they know quite a lot about the uses of bandage, triangular, and
"splint, wood, arm, right or left, bacon boxes from." Question and answer
have taken longer than expected, time has passed rapidly but pleasantly.
The personnel is personable.

So you draw near to the close of your inspection. You are shown a
maze of figures and forms (paper), and presented with no fewer than five
copies of an inspection report. You beg to be excused, having inadvertently
left your clerk, Class III, behind, compiling third reminders in red ink on the touch-line of the football ground. What a lovely Saturday afternoon he has missed—rendition in untypicale, pro forma in excelsis! You can tell him all about it on Monday morning, after you sign the nineteenth copy of the morning states. Meanwhile the detachment has fallen in and you ask why. "Oh," you are told sweetly, "we are waiting for your speech."

Something has to be said, and you have something prepared. A gentle touch of high falutin' and a good strong dash of encouragement, perhaps a chide at some glaring example of ignorance, innocent and undismayed. If you are given to expressing approbation, and the detachment deserves it, lay it on good and hearty. These individuals are giving up their time to duty undertaken for the good of the country and community; they are working unselfishly and deserve every encouragement. Apropos of speeches, how well many of our senior officers speak in public! I have heard the best orations at Red Cross Rallies delivered by them. Cheers for the Colonels—late R.A.M.C., and removed from the Corps! Bravo! the brevets!

The last impassioned words of your oratory die down and the inspection ends. Then may come tea, and perhaps question and answer, but not on first aid. Finally, you bid farewell. A pleasant afternoon, you think, and nice people. Perhaps you hope you may meet some of them before the next inspection.

And so to the starting handle.