DUTIES OF A QUARTERMASTER’S DEPARTMENT IN PEACE.

By Captain (Quartermaster) J. G. EVES, M.B.E.,
Royal Army Medical Corps.

(Continued from p. 37.)

(3) DIETS, EXTRAS, AND RATIONS.

This heading deals with diets and extras for patients and the rationing of R.A.M.C. personnel.

The system of feeding patients is briefly as follows:—

A patient comes into the hospital and is sent to a ward. A diet sheet (Army Form I.1202) is made out for him. The medical officer sees him and orders the diet and extras that he considers the patient should have.

The sister in charge of the ward collects all the diet sheets and from the particulars given thereon compiles what is called a Diet and Extra Sheet Summary, Army Form F.734. On this she orders the diets and extras, and perishable articles required for next day and such unperishable articles as are now wanted.

When these are received by the steward he prepares his provision ticket (Army Form I.1218) in duplicate, the component parts of each diet and extra are entered on this form, one copy goes to the superintending cook and one copy is retained by the steward who attaches to it all Army Forms F.734 received for the day. This provision ticket shows all diets and extras for issue to each ward on the day given on the form.

The ingredients required in the hospital kitchen for making up the various diets are worked out by the steward in accordance with the scales laid down in Allowance Regulations and issued daily to the superintending cook.

The steward has then to prepare requisitions on Army Book 188, for the daily supplies required to feed the patients in accordance with the diets and extras ordered. These are sent to the Officer i/c Supplies and to the various contractors concerned. The Officer i/c Supplies generally provides a list each half-year of the names of the contractors and the items which they contract to supply.

Perishable articles such as meat, fish, chickens, fresh fruit and fresh vegetables, are delivered daily, and they are inspected on arrival by the Quartermaster or his representative to see that the quantities as ordered have been received and by the orderly medical officer to ensure that they are up to standard.

In effect the Quartermaster is responsible as regards quantity and the medical officer as regards quality.

The whole of the transactions in the steward’s store are accounted for in Army Form F.730 which is the stock book of supplies, and the entries are made each day throughout the month.

This Army Form consists of several sheets, the left-hand side sheet...
showing supplies received each day and the right-hand side the issues each day. The receipts are taken from the items delivered by the Officer i/c Supplies or contractors in accordance with the daily indents and the issues are taken from the items shown on the daily provision ticket, Army Form I. 1218.

At the end of each monthly period the stock book of supplies (A.F. F.730) is closed and balanced, and on the following morning the stock in the steward’s store as shown on this form is verified by an officer who signs a certificate to the effect that this has been done and that the stock agrees with the balance shown.

Also at the end of each period Army Form F. 731—account of receipts and issues—has to be prepared. This form is similar to the stock book of supplies except that it does not record daily receipts and issues. It shows the sources from which the supplies have been received and how issued, and the totals should agree with those given in the Stock Book. On the front page of this Army Form (that is A.F. F.731), particulars have to be given as to the cost of feeding officer, soldier, and family patients. This costing is shown under two headings, one of which is food and the other wines, spirits, etc.

This form after completion in all respects is forwarded to the Officer i/c Supplies.

Rations for R.A.M.C. Personnel.

Persons entitled to rations are briefly as follows:

Home and abroad: Officers and soldiers, full ration.
Stations abroad only: Wife of soldier on married establishment, half ration. Children eligible in respect of family allowance, quarter ration.

The full scale for home stations is laid down in Allowance Regulations, but at the discretion of the Army Council certain items need not be drawn. Usually only such items as bread, meat, flour, sugar, and salt, are drawn in kind. For the other items making up the standard ration a cash allowance is admissible in lieu. In addition a messing cash allowance for the purchase of necessary additional articles of messing is issuable.

The standard ration for each station abroad is in the first place submitted for the approval of the Army Council, and if approved is laid down in the Local Allowance Regulations of the Command.

Indent are submitted as required (usually daily) to the Officer i/c Supplies on Army Book 55A.

Groceries and non-perishable articles are drawn once a week from the supply depot, but perishable articles such as meat and bread are generally delivered daily for consumption on that day.

Under the present-day system it is not necessary to adhere strictly to the scale laid down, but in cases where a unit overdraws the amount of overdrawal is debited by the Paymaster.

The procedure is that at the end of each monthly period the Officer i/c
Supplies forwards to the unit A.F. F. 3179 (in duplicate) in which he shows the quantities and prices of the supplies he has issued during the month. The unit then completes the form by entering: (1) The stock in hand at the end of the preceding month; (2) the amounts of the items actually consumed during the month; and (3) the balance still in hand. The cost of the items consumed is then worked out and entered on the form, the original is returned to the Officer i/c Supplies, and the duplicate is forwarded to the Regimental Paymaster.

The Regimental Paymaster then checks the details on Army Form F. 3179, and compares the cost of the items consumed with the value of the total rations admissible as given in Form 2(C) of the Company Account (A.F.N. 1504A).

If the value of the provisions consumed is less than the entitlement, the unit is credited with the amount; on the other hand should it be greater, the amount is debited by the Regimental Paymaster against the C.O.R. Allowance.

At stations where the whole ration is drawn in kind, the Regulations allow certain equivalents which may be drawn, such as oatmeal in lieu of bread or biscuits, cocoa in lieu of tea, flour in lieu of bread, dried fruit in lieu of jam, sausages in lieu of bacon.

In connexion with the improvements in the soldiers' messing generally throughout the Army instituted during 1937, considerable changes were made as regards issue of rations in kind and allowances in lieu (A.O. 65/1937).

(4) FUEL, LIGHT, DISINFECTANTS, ETC., AND ACCOUNTING FOR THESE.

Indents for such items as coal, wood, oil, cresol, methylated spirit, etc., are made on Army Book 30 to the Officer i/c Barracks.

The supply of coal and kindling wood for military hospitals is based on an approved estimate of the amount it is considered will be required for the fuel year.

The O.C. Hospital is requested to submit estimated requirements in coal and wood for the coming fuel year, and, provided Headquarters agrees, the amount estimated is authorized as the allowance for the year under review.

When coal is received from the contractor, the hospital steward and a representative of the Officer i/c Barracks (generally the local E.S.A.) inspect it as to quality and check in the loads. In some Commands the coal is received in sacks and in one-ton loads. At least two sacks from each load are weighed.

Records of receipts of coal are kept in Army Book 65; we show also in this book how the coal has been issued. In addition, for the sake of convenience and as a record for reference when compiling the return for each fuel period, particulars are entered in A.B. 65 in regard to receipts and issues of wood, oil, methylated spirit, etc.

Indents for wood, oil, methylated spirit, etc., are submitted as and when required, but in the case of coal a month or two months' reserve at the winter scale of issue has ordinarily to be maintained.
In the case of hospitals, a return showing receipts and issues of coal and kindling wood, together with the stock in hand, is rendered every fourth month on Army Form F. 727, and for paraffin oil, methylated spirit and candles on Army Form F. 771. Regulations do not call for such items as cresol, lime, naphthalene, and formaldehyde to be accounted for in any return submitted by the O.C. Hospital.

As stated above, the Fuel and Light Return is rendered (to the Officer i/c Barracks) every four months. The account rendered at the end of each fuel year has to be balanced. Any saving on the amount allowed as compared with the actual consumption is given up, that is it cannot be carried forward to the next fuel year as a credit. On the other hand, should the hospital burn more than its allowance, then Headquarters require an explanation in support of the application for the amount to be written off as a charge against the public.

In effect, a hospital fuel and light account definitely closes each year at the end of each fuel year and an entirely fresh account is started for the next fuel year.

The other fuel and light account is that for the R.A.M.C. Company. This is rather different from that for the hospital.

Issues in this case are governed by scales as laid down in Allowance Regulations. A definite scale of coal is allowed weekly for each type of quarter, cookhouse, mess, library, reading room, school, and so forth.

Scales of fuel in the various Commands abroad differ from those allowed for home, and are fixed according to seasons by each Command. These rates, after approval by the Army Council, are embodied in the Local Allowance Regulations for the Command.

A record is kept, in this case S.O. Book 129, in which are shown in detail issues to individuals and buildings of the Company, throughout each fuel period, that is each four months, and from this book, together with the record of receipts, the company fuel and light account is compiled.

The fuel and light account for the Company is rather more complicated than the hospital one, but provided an accurate record of the issues is maintained one cannot go far wrong, and the actual stock in hand is a check.

As already stated, the hospital fuel and light account definitely finishes at the end of each fuel year, but in the case of the Company the account is a running one, i.e. the balance debit or entitled credit is carried forward to the next year's account. In cases where the account shows a debit balance, an application for the "write-off" of issues in excess has to be made at the end of the fuel year.

At the end of the fuel year, credit balances of kindling wood are surrendered when the fuel account is closed, but credit balances of coal or coke may be converted to kindling wood to reduce debit balances. For scales of conversion see Allowance Regulations, 1938, para. 153.

The scale of fuel for quarters, messes, reading rooms, schools, libraries, etc., varies according to the season, one rate for summer and one for winter;
for example the winter season at home is from October to May inclusive and the summer season from June to September.

(5) Hospital Charges.

At the end of each month the Quartermaster is responsible for the preparation of any charges which should be made under regulations for the treatment of officer and soldier patients in hospital.

Army Form O.1643 being used for military personnel (officers, other ranks and families), and Army Form O.5135 for other Government Departments, i.e. Navy, R.A.F., Colonial and Dominion Forces, Indian Army, etc.

In the case of in-patient treatment no charge is made for the day of admission.

Officers on full pay are charged 2s. 6d. a day unless their incapacity is due to service in the field, in which case they pay nothing.

Officers on half-pay have three different daily rates:

(1) If admitted on account of wounds or illness contracted in the field they pay the sum fixed as the higher rate of ration allowance, without meat element.

(2) If the illness was not contracted in the field, but is otherwise due to military service, they pay 2s. 6d. in addition to the above rate of ration allowance.

(3) If admitted for ordinary illness the charge is usually 12s. per day.

This rate of 12s. a day is the usual charge for any officer admitted to a military hospital who is not normally eligible for treatment from military sources. In the case of non-entitled officers admitted to the Q.A. Military Hospital, Millbank, a special charge of 23s. per diem is made.

Soldiers are normally entitled to free treatment, but if admitted suffering from sickness due to their own fault or certified by a medical officer to be caused by an offence under the Army Act committed by them, they then are charged 1s. 6d. a day, or 9d. in the case of boys, or in the case of local troops, i.e. the Royal Malta Artillery and the King’s Own Malta Regiment, 10½d. and 8d. respectively.

Soldiers detained in hospital after discharge from the Army or after transfer to the Army Reserve are treated as free patients.

Soldiers’ wives admitted to Military Families’ Hospitals are also charged. Those on the married establishment if admitted on account of illness pay nothing, but when admitted for confinement a charge of 1s. a day is made up to a maximum of £1. This charge for confinement is made because they are receiving treatment at the cost of the State at the same time as they receive full maternity benefit.

Wives of soldiers not on the married establishment are charged at the rate of 1s. a day for ordinary illness and when admitted for confinement they are charged in addition the 1s. a day on that account subject to a maximum of £1.
Members of the Q.A.I.M.N.S. and Queen's Army Schoolmistresses are treated free.

No charge is made for the children of soldiers on the married establishment and for whom married allowance is issuable, when admitted to hospital, but for those not on the married establishment 1s. a day is charged unless admitted suffering from infectious disease and for the safety of the troops, when they are treated free.

Children over age of both classes are also treated free when admission is necessary for the safety of the troops.

In the case of officers and men of the Royal Navy, Royal Air Force, Dominion Forces, Indian Army, or British Forces in India when chargeable to Indian Funds, charges are preferred against the Departments concerned at the rate of 12s. a day for officers and 10s. for others.

Similarly, any of those just mentioned who are afforded any of the special forms of out-patient treatment such as opaque meals, normal radiography, X-ray treatment, massage, are charged at the various rates laid down in Allowance Regulations.

Before concluding this article, there is one small Department which might be mentioned, and that is the pack store.

Briefly what happens in a normal case is this: A patient after admission to a ward is instructed to go first of all to the linen store for his hospital kit, i.e. his blue clothing, underclothing, crockery and cutlery, for which he signs in Army Book 42. The original copy is retained by the linen storekeeper and the duplicate by the ward.

After having changed from regimental to hospital clothing he takes his regimental clothing and kit to the pack store (except certain items of small kit which he is required to keep in the ward with him). The articles handed into the pack store are entered into Army Book 182 (Pack Store Inventory), and this is signed by the pack storekeeper and the patient. The original copy of the inventory is taken to the Quartermaster’s office and retained there until the patient is discharged, when it is re-issued to the patient to allow him to draw his personal belongings out of store.

If a patient has any valuables on admission they are taken over by the Quartermaster, who prepares a receipt in triplicate in Army Book 191. The original copy is sent to the patient’s commanding officer with the valuables, the duplicate goes to the patient, and the triplicate copy is filed.

After a patient has handed his clothing into the pack store, his soiled linen is taken from his kit and sent to the laundry. This washing is carried out at the public expense and the laundry account is passed once a month to the Command Paymaster for settlement.

On discharge the patient obtains his kit from store and signs Army Book 182 in acknowledgment and afterwards hands his hospital clothing into the linen store. If there are any deficiencies he pays for them by signing a personal charge in Army Book 51.
Duties of a Quartermaster’s Department in Peace

Handing and Taking Over—Military Hospital and Company, R.A.M.C.

Military Hospital.

(i) Regulations for the Medical Services of the Army, 1938:
- Para. 65. Military hospitals where there is no Quartermaster.
- Para. 69. Books and regulations—see also para. 101.
- Para. 100. Write to Garrison Engineer and Officer i/c Barracks and ask if they will detail a representative to be present. Draw up programme of inspection of: (a) Barrack Equipment and (b) Engineer fixtures. Stocktaking of articles in Linen Store comes under (a), and report showing result of stocktaking should be made out on A.F.I. 1227. The Quartermaster (where there is one on the staff of the hospital) does the above with Barrack or R.E. Representative.

Para. 101. Transfer documents. Action to be taken after handing and taking over.
- Paras. 102 to 104. Read for guidance.
- Paras. 325 to 327. Note for guidance.
- Para. 385. Test accuracy of stock of medical equipment. Should be done personally by officer taking over. Forward certificate as required by this paragraph.

(ii) Regulations for Supply, Transport, and Barrack Services, 1930:
- Para. 652. Re signing Long Roll (A.B. 126a), hospital copy of which is kept by the Quartermaster.
- Para. 656. Re representative of Officer i/c Barracks being present at handing over charge from one officer to another.

Company R.A.M.C.

(i) Regulations for the Clothing of the Army, 1936.
- Paras. 12 and 373. Re stocktaking board on clothing and necessaries, and report on A.F. H. 1164 also certificate vide para. 373. Statement signed by Company Officer giving number of Great coats actually in possession of personnel has to be attached to H. 1164.

(ii) Regulations for the Equipment of the Army, 1932:
- Paras. 18 and 19. Re holding Stocktaking Board.
- App. 1, para. 5. Gives form of certificate to be signed by President and Members of Board, also Officers handing and taking over.

Military Hospital and Company.

(i) Financial Instructions, 1931:
- Para. 480. As an Officer taking over charge may have to sign certified claims for payment in connexion with supplies, stores, etc., a specimen of his signature (in duplicate) should be sent to the Command Paymaster.

(ii) Clothing Regulations, 1936, para. 383 and Equipment Regulations Part I, 1932, Appendix I, paras. 4 and 15. Requires that ledgers should be balanced to date on: (1) Change of Command; (2) change of Quartermasters.