A VISIT TO THE NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT

Being an Account of a Visit to Mexico, U.S.A. and Canada by the
Director-General Army Medical Services

BY

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My trip to America was primarily made to attend the Twelfth Congress
of the International Committee of Military Medicine and Pharmacy. These
congresses are held biannually and nearly 30 nations are members of the
organization.

At the invitation of the Mexican Government the meeting was held this
year in Mexico City and I made my way there by air after arrival in New
York on the Queen Elizabeth.

We left Washington Air Port by M.A.T.S. plane and our load was an
international one. There were on board two United States Directors-General,
Surgeon-General Bliss of the Army, and Rear-Admiral Swanson of the Navy,
also Major-General Armstrong of the newly constituted Medical Corps of the
American Air Force, the Air Force has been instituted with personnel provided
from both the Medical Corps of the Army and of the Navy. It has as yet no
military hospitals of its own. Then there was Surgeon Captain Graaf of the
Royal Navy and Wing Commander J. H. Neal of the Royal Air Force Medical
Services, as well as Lieutenant-Colonel Meeces, the Reader in Tropical
Medicine at the R.A.M. College and Lieutenant-Colonel Matheson, our liaison
officer in the States. Brigadier Coke, Director-General of the Army Medical
Services of Canada, was in the plane with his liaison officer, Lieutenant-Colonel
Costin, who many of us will remember was our Canadian liaison officer in
London about two years ago. We had several other European delegates—
Brigadier-General Meule, the D.G. of the Swiss Army, Major-General Lindsjo,
the D.G. of the Swedish Army, Major-General Hienonen, the D.G. of the Finnish
Army and others.

We flew south and west over the States of Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia
and Alabama and along the southern edge of the great Smoky Mountains.
From the air it struck me how much of the country was wooded. At length
we reached the Gulf of Mexico, turned westwards, and soon saw the hazy
outline of New Orleans in the distance, crossed the Mississippi River, and the
flat coastline of Louisiana, and came at last to Texas, the biggest and some
say the most progressive state in the Union. My idea of Texas was rudely shattered when we flew over flat irrigated land which was growing rice. There were oil derricks to be seen as one would expect but the rolling hills and ranges of the Lone Star State of my imagination were certainly invisible from the air.

We landed at Randolph air field, near San Antonio, and although it was a hot and sticky Saturday evening we were met by Brigadier-General Otis Benson, Medical Corps U.S.A.F., who led us immediately in a fleet of waiting cars to the School of Aviation Medicine. Within a few minutes we were seated at small desks and were being initiated into the work of the School. What interested me most were the extensive research problems being undertaken. We were taken on a tour of these research establishments, and in spite of the fact that it was five o’clock on a Saturday afternoon the staff of research workers, including several Germans, were there to show us the different problems which were being studied. The ones I remember included landing on air fields in fog, and visual landing signs. The scope of research and the first-class equipment which was available was very striking. There was a Royal Air Force liaison medical officer here.

The scope of research, both in the Army, Navy and Air Force was brought to my notice very forcibly during my tour. Each Service had many civilian research workers who were fully occupied on many different projects. The amount of money spent in this way was obviously considerable.

By the time we had finished it was getting dark, and we were taken to the Officers’ Club and received our first introduction to American hospitality at a cocktail party which was held in one of the well-furnished guest houses. The buildings here are in the Spanish style with tiled roofs and verandahs with attractive lawns and shrubs, and there appeared to be no lack of married quarters for officers.

We sat down to dinner in due course at the Officers’ Club—about 50 strong—and we had a dinner which I shall long remember, chiefly because of the enormous steak which we were asked to eat. It was without exaggeration a month’s ration, and although I tackled it with gusto I found that its size defeated me. I believe only two out of the diners finished it. As is the custom in the States during dinner we drank iced water. It was a cheerful and memorable evening, and our first introduction to many such occasions. I met for the first time Admiral Joel T. Boone who became a firm friend before I left the States. Admiral Boone had been for seven years the Medical Officer to five different Presidents of the United States, and had lived in the White House for that time. Admiral Boone was now holding the appointment of Medical Adviser to the Medical Department of the Secretary of Defence and I will have a good deal to say about him later on. We were a merry party when we broke up and went to see the dance which was going on, but it was not long before we were whisked away in cars and driven to San Antonio where we were put up for the night at the Officers’ Club. I then discovered...
my bag had been left at a different hotel and so went pyjamaless to bed and next morning the Red Cross came to my rescue with razor and toothbrush.

Soon after taking the air we crossed the Mexican border at the Rio Grande river. The centre of Mexico is a plateau which rises to a height of 7,500 feet, and we passed over rocky ranges with a good deal of parched-looking country, with small cultivated fields in the ravines. As we landed at Mexico City we saw snow-capped mountains in the distance of which one is the well-known Popocatepetl and another called the Sleeping Lady.

We were met on arrival by the first Secretary of the British Embassy and were quickly taken in charge by Major Garcia, a Mexican medical officer, who was deputed to look after us and act as our guide, philosopher and friend.

I was accommodated with other members of the British Delegation in a very modern hotel for which the charge for my room alone was 45s. a day (until I changed it), so it will be seen that Mexican hotels are not cheap, and in fact since the motor road has been opened from the States, the prices in the hotels have risen until they correspond with those in the United States.

Mexico City itself is largely modern and one might be in any western city, with 15 fine shady avenues and parks. The early town was surrounded by a marsh which perhaps those who have read the conquest of Mexico may remember, because Cortez, the Spanish conquistador, had to fight his way out of the city to escape from the Indians, and in so doing forced his way along a causeway which at that time joined the city to the surrounding country. That the marsh did exist is proved by the fact that the Palace of Fine Arts has sunk 3 metres into the ground. Luckily it has sunk evenly so that it is still intact, and was the setting for the opening and closing sessions of the congress.

On the afternoon of our arrival we were entertained to an alfresco luncheon, which was held at a millionaire’s house with a lovely garden with many flowers and shrubs. I was told that his fortune had been made from patent medicines and that he was a great supporter of the Mexican Medical Corps, to which he had presented many articles of medical equipment. As we sat at table in this delightful garden I met many more of our fellow delegates and amongst them Major-General Thapa of India who is D.D.M.S. Southern Command at Poona and known to many officers of the Corps. There were Mexicans and their wives and it was pleasant to pass a couple of hours in the sunny garden eating and drinking. We had Mexican food and one course consisted of chupatties wrapped round pork crackling and flavoured with chillies. This and the next dish of highly flavoured dried fish was not nearly as good as the good roast turkey which came after.

Our next port of call was at the bull fight. Bull fighting is very popular and I was told that the bull ring in Mexico City is the biggest in the world. Be that as it may, we found our way, under Major Garcia’s direction, to the entrance where luckily the Director-General of the Mexican Army Medical Corps, Brigadier-General Ramero, was just going in. We bowed to each other
but as his only language was Spanish our conversation was, I am afraid, limited to “buono” and “grazia.” I managed to find a seat, however, and with Captain Graaf spent the next two hours watching my first bull fight. I will not go into details but I found when the fifth bull had been killed it tended to become monotonous, and as the matadors were novices, many only managed to kill their bulls after several gory attempts. The clumsy matadors were greeted with whistles and a cascade of cushions and hats flung into the bull ring, whereas those who pleased the crowd were cheered with shouts of “ollé.” We came away before the end and thereby missed quite a usual fracas, so I was told, when one of the onlookers pulled out a revolver and stunned a neighbour by hitting him on the head.

The opening session of the Congress was held in the Palace of Fine Arts and was presided over by the Minister for Defence. The heads of delegations sat on the stage and there was a succession of welcoming speeches made by this Minister, the Director-General of the Mexican Medical Services and Brigadier Meule, the retiring President of the Eleventh Congress, the charming and popular Director-General of the Swiss Medical Services. These harmonious proceedings and the reading of the various speeches were seriously interfered with by a habit which, although common to Mexico, was unusual to most of us. This was the attendance of a swarm of photographers who proceeded to photograph all and sundry. They had stalwart assistants who bore aloft vast electric lights to blind everyone to the best of their ability and the flashing of bulbs and the clicking of cameras proceeded uninterruptedly throughout the whole session.

An official luncheon followed and as it was timed for one o’clock the delegates assembled just before that hour and proceeded to satisfy the thirst which the bright sunshine and the dust of Mexico City had caused. There is a local custom which is inclined to pay little attention to such matters as punctuality. Therefore to those who were unacquainted with this it was a little surprising when the official who was to be our host made his appearance at twenty minutes past two. We had a most excellent lunch and made our way very belatedly to the first session at the military hospital, where of course those unlucky members who had not been summoned to luncheon had been waiting for the best part of an hour. However, we finally got under way.

All the meetings were held in the military hospital, which is the largest and most modern hospital in Mexico City. The military medical service has its own medical school where cadets graduate as doctors, and are then commissioned in the medical service.

The hospital accommodates about 1,000 patients and is the only military hospital in the whole of Mexico. All serious cases in the country are therefore sent here for operation and treatment, and selected cases from civilian hospitals are transferred on demand and are used for teaching purposes. Medical officers are allowed private practice and spend only about 50 per cent of their time
on military duties. Their pay from Army sources was, I was told, only about one-third of what their standard of living demanded.

The sessions of the Congress were inclined to be lengthy because it was necessary to have all the papers and discussions in three languages—English, French and Spanish. The chairman of the various sessions had at times a very difficult task to stop the full flow of Latin volubility at the height of its course in order to demand a translation for the benefit of the listeners.

The best paper was undoubtedly that which was devoted to the study of air evacuation of casualties. This subject was presented by Great Britain and the United States and on our side the speakers were Lieutenant-Colonel Meneces, who gave an excellent paper illustrated with lantern slides, and Wing Commander Neal of the R.A.F. Medical Services. This was also the best attended session of the Congress.

One day we were honoured by being received by the President of Mexico, President Aleman, and before being ushered into his presence, we had ample opportunity of a study of the comings and goings of all classes who seemed to have access to the President or his satellites.

One of the most memorable occasions was a reception by the Mayor of Mexico City. The Mayor himself was absent because he was that morning attending the funeral of some firemen who had been killed in a street accident on their way to a fire. I was interested as to why the Mayor should go personally to the funeral of the firemen and I was told the reason was that everyone admired firemen because they had a high reputation for integrity and that any tragic or other occasion was attended by the mayor in person. In his place we had the deputy mayor.

We assembled for this function in an attractive old chamber in what had been the Spanish Governor’s palace. There were fine portraits, beautiful carved chairs and furnishings. An orchestra played lively airs and at intervals there were songs rendered by some magnificent opera singers. The heads of delegations were called forward in turn and presented with a medal and a scroll appointing them a “Visitante Distinguido” of Mexico City.

As I was emerging after the ceremony the harmony of these proceedings was abruptly broken by the Secretary-General who earnestly asked me for my assistance, and going back I found one of the heads of the delegations of one of the Latin countries much incensed because his name had not been included in the recipients for a medal and scroll, he looked upon this as an insult to his country and threatened to leave the Congress. I did my best to soothe matters by telling him there would be a further presentation of medals on a later date and he eventually calmed down.

I remember a charming reception which was given for us at the Ministry of External Affairs in a very handsome salon with green marble pillars. The Deputy Minister told me that the green pillars were of malachite and had been presented by the Emperor of Russia to the Emperor Maximilian. After Maximilian had been shot during the revolution the pillars were brought to
the Ministry and re-erected. We met here many members of the Diplomatic
Corps, and of particular interest to the British delegation was our introduction
to the British Ambassador and Mrs. Rapp and the Canadian Ambassador and
Mrs. Hebert.

On another afternoon we were taken to a rodeo, and most of us enjoyed
it much more than the bull fight. Here we saw steers thrown by riders on
horse-back, riders on bucking broncos, lassoing, and Mexican dancing. The
whole display was given by amateurs and was excellent. It must be remembered
that the Mexican horsemen are among the best in the world, and won the chief
events on horseback at the Olympic Games in 1948.

One day for luncheon we were taken out about 15 miles on an excursion
to the temples of the sun and the moon built by the Aztecs. Luncheon was
served in a huge underground grotto and we sampled native dishes of food
and wine. We had tortillas, which are really chupatties. We had lamb (or
was it goat?) which had been cooked on hot stones covered with earth, and we
had dark purple bean hash. For drink we had pulque, which is brewed from
the stem of the cactus plant, and a kind of brandy, taquila, which is by account
the morning drink of the Mexican peasant! Another evening before dinner
a reception for us was held at the Officers' Club where we sat out in a patio and
saw an exhibition of old tribal Mexican costumes and dancing to the accom­
paniment of much music from several different guitar bands and many rounds
of drinks. The ladies came to this in large numbers although they generally
sat at different tables to the men. The colour and variety of the costumes, the
music and dancing made this one of the most attractive and memorable of
all our evenings.

So the week passed with morning and afternoon sessions at the hospital
and a pleasant variety of entertainment. There was a closing banquet attended
by many medical officers and many officials headed by the Minister of Defence.

There were speeches by General Jame, the Director-General of the French
Army who is the President elect for the XIV Congress in Paris in 1951, and
by Brigadier-General Meule, the President of the XII Congress held in
Switzerland in 1947.

I was also asked to speak on behalf of the British, American and Canadian
dellegations. A dance followed and our pleasant evening ended by a visit to
the very hospitable American delegation which continued until a late hour.

President Aleman himself presided at the closing session of the Congress
and again we had fine music and many speeches, the Presidential Guard on
parade in blue uniforms and the inevitable photographers lurking this time
more in the background.

I must mention the luncheon given by the British Ambassador for the
British, Canadian and Indian delegations and the cocktail party given by the
Canadian Ambassador. These were delightful occasions tempered with our
embarrassment in arriving for the luncheons true to local fashion nearly an
hour and a half late, because we were being received by the President.
So we came away the victims of Mexican goodwill and generous hospitality with a feeling that the meeting of so many nations and the papers and discussions had made our visit to the Congress and to Mexico instructive and enjoyable.

President Aleman had very kindly put his own plane at the disposal of any of the delegates who wanted to visit Acapulco, one of the pleasure resorts on the Pacific coast, and several had taken advantage of this wonderful offer, so we were fewer in number as we flew back next morning to Washington. At San Antonio where we landed to refuel, Lieutenant-Colonel Meneces and Matheson left the plane to visit the U.S. Medical Corps Depot at Fort Sam Houston, and thence to embark on a lecture and visiting tour to the universities at New Orleans, Memphis, Tennessee.

On November 1, with Brigadier Coke, Director-General of the Canadian Medical Services, my wife and I left for Canada. Travelling over-night from Washington by train we arrived at Montreal at 7 o’clock on a very cold morning. As I had only left Mexico City forty-eight hours before and had on good advice (as I thought) left my great coat behind me in Washington, I felt the change of climate.

We were met at the station by reporters and photographers, and we had hardly arrived at our hotel when I was again interviewed, and my views on the use of the atomic bomb duly accorded. After a night in the train and without breakfast one’s views at this hour were inclined to be especially gloomy.

In Montreal I had my first contacts with the Canadian R.A.M.C., and after a visit to the G.O.C. Quebec District I was shown over the Veterans’ Hospital. This is a large hospital chiefly for ex-service men who by military service are entitled to free medical treatment for the rest of their lives. The hospital staff included a quota of the regular C.R.A.M.C., and the medical and nursing officers and other ranks worked in with the civil staff. I was impressed by the excellent training and wide experience which the C.R.A.M.C. officers were able to obtain by this scheme, because of course they were sharing in the treatment of patients of all ages. A special feature I was shown was the treatment of poliomyelitis cases by balneotherapy and the most up-to-date equipment had been installed.

I lunched at the Mount Royal Club with Dr. James, the principal of McGill, Dr. Fraser, professor of obstetrics, and Dr. Duff, the dean. It is the most famous club in Montreal and amongst its founders were Lord Strathcona and Lord Mount Stephen.

I went to McGill University on a courtesy visit and was interested in the Osler Library where Sir William Osler’s private collection of books is kept. It contained every copy of Browne’s Religio Medici which Osler could acquire. I was also flattered by the librarian producing the copy of a book which I had once written and asking me to sign it. Talking of books, I met Lord Wavell during my visit, and watched him autograph “Other Men’s Flowers.”

A visit to the French Canadian University, the University of Montreal, was
also interesting because of its contrast to McGill. It is a new building of the most modern design and I remember its great hall, where the graduation ceremonies occur struck me because of its vast size and shape.

The principal of the university was an abbé and the chancellor was the Archbishop of Montreal. It emphasized the control which the Roman Catholic Church exercises over the life and education of the young French Canadian, and one notices the French Canadian influence everywhere in Montreal by the bilingual character of the city, where all shop signs, advertisements and regulations are in both English and French.

My wife and I attended an enjoyable cocktail party at the C.R.A.M.C. Armoury that evening when a pipe band enlivened the proceedings. I met a great many friends, amongst them Major-General Fenwick, a late director-general, and others, well known to many of the Corps. The desire to talk about old times and the many friendly inquiries which were made about our own officers showed the great interest and affection which they feel. I talked to so many that it is impossible for me to remember their names.

My next port of call was at Ottawa and here next day I was entertained to luncheon by the Honourable Mr. Claxton, Canadian Minister of Defence. This luncheon was held in the Bideau Club, and about 20 officers were present. They included Major-General McCusker, whom many will remember, Brigadier Snow, acting adjutant-general, Surgeon-Captain MacAllum, director-general of the Canadian Naval Medical Service, the director-general of the Royal Canadian Air Force Medical Service, officers from Brigadier Coke's Headquarters, amongst them Lieutenant-Colonel Crawford whom I had met previously at the Red Cross Conference at Stockholm in 1948. I remember we had an excellent luncheon which began with oysters and finished up with a very pleasant speech by the Minister of Defence extending me a warm welcome to Canada. In my reply I thanked him on behalf of the Corps and indicated in a few words our problems and expectations.

After luncheon I was taken in hand by Brigadier Thubron, the senior British Liaison Officer, and we called upon the Governor-General. Field-Marshal Alexander himself was away. A tour round the city included the Ottawa River where I saw huge rafts of logs floating down the river and being towed away to the pulp mills. The vast forests on the northern bank of the river which is in the province of Quebec stretched away into the distance, and one realised suddenly how huge is Canada and how small the cultivated area.

I visited the Canadian Medical Stores, which is equivalent to our depot at Ludgershall and found it excellently organized and staffed by keen and competent officers.

That evening I was entertained to dinner by Brigadier and Mrs. Coke in their flat, and we had a most enjoyable knife and fork supper of turkey, ice cream and other good things. I met all the officers in the Canadian Army Medical Directorate as well as British officers stationed in Ottawa. I slept in the Chateau Laurier Hotel, surely one of the largest and finest in the Commonwealth.
The next day we motored to Hamilton situated on the shores of Lake Ontario. Hamilton was originally chosen as the capital of Canada, but this was changed when, following the fighting between ourselves and the Americans, it was decided to move the capital to Ottawa.

At Hamilton I visited the Canadian Defence College, the Staff College and the Royal Military College; all of them the equivalent of the similar institutions in this country. In the Royal Military College the cadets spend four years, as compared with less than two years at Sandhurst. The first two years is taken up by a general education in physics, chemistry and the basic sciences.

Hamilton is interesting historically because on the site of the Staff College, Fort Frontenac, one of the first forts of upper Canada, was originally constructed. In the dockyards ships were built and then fought in battles on the lake. One of the ships built here was larger than Nelson's Victory.

I attended at the Staff College a demonstration which was being given by a team from the Combined Ops School at Fremington. There were two C.R.A.M.C. officers attending the Staff College Course, and one of them, Lieutenant-Colonel McCannell, came over later to our Medical Britannia Exercise in December. I had a busy day here which included a visit to the local hospital and finished up with watching an ice hockey match, graced by the first snow of the winter.

By next morning the snow was quite thick as we left for Toronto and motored along the northern shores of Lake Ontario. The country is closely cultivated and there are many good farms and villages. Near Toronto fruit farms predominate growing peaches, apricots, grapes and apples. The Canadian apples we eat in this country come largely from this part.

We reached Toronto about midday and put up at the Royal York Hotel, which is, I am told, the biggest hotel in the British Commonwealth. It was crowded, because it was the day of the football match between McGill and Toronto Universities, and in the bright cold clear air my wife and I enjoyed watching our first game of Canadian football. It is played by the padded and helmeted players we are familiar with. The ball is taken forward in a series of rushes which attempt to cover 10 yards of ground, and in this way the team works itself up the field until a score can take place, rather similar to a Rugby try. The game was enlivened by the opposing bands and the cheer leaders. There were two student bands which played at the same time and all the time at opposite ends of the field. There were cheer leaders with their megaphones, girl students who turned somersaults, and the songs of the different supporters. Added to all this were the cheers from the spectators, the whole making a din which at the finish left us quite exhausted. McGill beat Toronto and the McGill students' band draped in red cloaks marched off the ground led by a drum majorette, a pretty girl in Hussar uniform who gave an exhibition of one-handed somersaults along the main street as she led the victorious team away. After this din, the clatter of teacups, the clinking of glasses and the hum of conversation at the party, which followed at the C.R.A.M.C.
Armoury was really restful. Here again we were introduced to many medical officers and their wives. We dined that night at the Military Hospital, which occupies the imposing home of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Ontario. The officers' mess is handsomely furnished in these fine surroundings and we had an enjoyable dinner with Lieutenant-Colonel Andrew and the officers and nursing officers. One officer present, whom many may remember, was Brigadier Macfarlane, the Consulting Surgeon to the Canadian Army during the War. He it was, I discovered, whom we had to thank for the tickets for the football match, a none too easy task when every seat could have been sold twice over. Brigadier Coke made an after-dinner speech to which I replied, and we finished up by dancing to the strains of a gramophone after a delightful evening.

The next day was Sunday and it was unfortunate for my hosts that I was visiting the Depot of the C.R.A.M.C. at Camp Borden. This lies about 30 miles north of Toronto, in country studded with fine forests and lakes. The depot is hatted and is most excellently organized and administered. Lieutenant-Colonel Slack is a keen and energetic C.O. and I thought he had reason to be proud of his unit as he showed me round. I remember especially the fine hygiene museum. The training task is small compared with ours as only volunteers are dealt with, and the class of recruits I saw under instruction was ten in number, while the medical officers and nursing officers' class which were being taught together was about the same size. There is, of course, no conscription in Canada and all are regulars.

We had a luncheon with all the officers and their wives who had come to meet us and we must have sat down 50 or 60 in number. Camp Borden is a military community about ten miles from the nearest town, so that the officers and their families, like many other military stations, are largely dependent upon their own amusements.

On the next day we motored from Toronto to Niagara along the western and southern shores of Lake Ontario with its orchards and farms. We paid a long visit to the Falls and we had sunshine to make the spectacle a magnificent one. Some visitors, I believe, are disappointed at the height of the Falls. We paid a visit to the American side amongst the islands there. While on the Canadian side we went under the Falls and saw the stupendous rush and roar of the water as it slid down in a solid wall before us. We soon appreciated the reason for wearing oilskins and gum boots. Going down the Niagara river in the afternoon we visited the General Brock monument. Brock was a British general who fell at the height of the battle between the British and the Americans who were invading Canada from across the Niagara river. There were heavy losses on both sides and the Americans finally withdrew. It was, I think, during this war that the Americans burned down what was then called Yorktown and is now Toronto, and we retaliated by burning the White House in Washington, an incident of which I was reminded by General Bliss. That night we stayed in the General Brock Hotel and watched the coloured search-
lights playing upon the Falls; a colourful spectacle which we shall long remember.

We took leave the next day of our kind hosts Brigadier and Mrs. Coke and we went by train through attractive hilly and wooded country, crossed the Susquehanna River at Harrisburg and returned to Washington. I can remember how uncomfortably hot we were in the air-conditioned train and the inability to open the windows and let in a breath of air made us condemn air-conditioned trains forever. We again found the meals in the Pullman cars very expensive and lunch cost us about £1 a head.

Our stay in Washington lasted for the next fortnight and I had many varied and interesting experiences visiting both military and civil institutions.

The U.S. Medical Corps has about eight very large Army hospitals throughout the States, all of them over 1,000 beds. These hospitals are nearly all quite modern in comparison to the military hospitals in this country. This would hardly be difficult when we remember that the last permanent military hospital is the Q.A. Hospital at Millbank, built in 1904. The American hospitals were mostly built during the economic depression of the 1930's. Government policy at that time was to use the unemployed on Government work and all these fine modern military hospitals resulted.

The military hospital at the Army Medical Center at Washington is known as the Walter Reed Hospital in memory of Colonel Walter Reed of the Medical Corps who was the great worker on yellow fever.

I was very envious of the buildings, the furnishings and the equipment of this fine hospital. There are 8 operating theatres and about 100 operations are performed each week. Certain beds are set aside for veterans, but generally speaking the Veterans Administration in the States is a powerful organization which has its own hospitals and is run by its own director-general and staff. A suite is maintained for the President of the United States when he is ill, and it is also customary to treat other senior government officers. I visited the barracks of the staff, very similar to our own. All had sheets but pyjamas, I understood, were not issued. The canteens, dining halls and recreation rooms were finer and better furnished than ours. I came across no officers' mess, but there was an officers' club in the extensive grounds where all officers went for meals and where, I believe, the chef is paid a salary of 700 dollars a month.

The Armed Forces Institute of Pathology is housed in one of the older buildings in Washington, and when I visited it Brigadier General Drew, the Commandant, told me of the vast field for research. There are almost a dozen experts in different branches of pathology, many of them civilians, and the material available for research is very extensive. For example, I was told there were 35,000 enucleated eyeballs. The museum itself is well stocked and the whole institute impresses one by its magnitude and the scope of the work which is being done.

I was privileged to address the Surgeon-General's Monthly Medical Meeting in the Sternberg Auditorium of the Walter Reed Hospital on the evening of
November 9 and the subject I chose for my talk was Health Discipline. The address is to be published in the United States Armed Forces Medical Journal and officers may be interested in what I said to our American colleagues.

For the next three days I attended the annual meeting of the Association of Military Surgeons at the Statler Hotel. This is an annual meeting of medical officers who have at any time served in the Army, Navy, and Air Force, so it can be understood that the organization is large and powerful. Papers were given by military and civilian doctors on the advance in medicine and surgery which had taken place in their particular specialties in the last year. These annual congresses are the opportunity for a number of American business firms to advertise the latest advances in drugs and equipment, and displays ranged from highly scientific medical apparatus to a coca-kola bar, where free drinks were dispersed to all and sundry.

A great deal of importance was attached to the opening of the Congress and the Presidential Address was delivered by Rear-Admiral Joel T. Boone, who was a most popular and delightful president.

We had a large dinner in the Statler Hotel at the end of the congress. There were many delegates from the International Congress at Mexico present, and during the evening we were presented with due ceremonial with medals.
of the Association of Military Surgeons and the certificate which is now my valued possession.

A military orchestra, which happened to be playing six feet behind me made conversation with my neighbours none too easy. I had Admiral Swanson, the Director-General of the Navy on one side and Major-General Grow, the Surgeon-General of the Air Force, on the other. Lieut.-Colonel and Mrs. Matheson and Lieut.-Colonel Meneces were at the dinner.

The principal after-dinner speaker was Mr. Matthews, the Secretary of the Navy, who made our flesh creep with the destructive power of atomic warfare.

This association of military surgeons emphasizes one of the great customs of American life which goes in for meetings of this nature in a big way and which we could often follow with advantage.

The hospitality offered at the stag smoker which occupied one evening at the Shoreham Hotel where we all consumed vast quantities of beer and hot dogs—the hospitality I say was so great that it was with an effort I took my seat the next day.

On November 13, being a Sunday, I had no engagements, so we were free to do as we pleased and we went to see some friends who were living in Virginia, about 20 miles from Washington. With them we visited the Falls on the Potomac River which is a favourite and picturesque Sunday afternoon picnic resort. The river plunges down in a series of rocky falls and is surrounded by woods which stretch away on every side. The woods seemed to be full of shooting parties, and there is no law in America which preserves ground for shooting in the same way as we understand it. It's a free for all. Anyone can "hunt" (as it is called) and everyone seems to. There are numbers of fatalities every year when a human target is mistaken for game and that is why all "hunters" wear red clothes. There were several shots nearby as we drove along and the main bag here I was told consisted of squirrels and opossums, both of which I believe are good eating.

Our friends had a log house built of old timber, and looked anything but new, but the kitchen was adorned with every modern electrical gadget, and there was central heating and a deep freeze. Our host was engaged in building a garage himself, and when I asked why he didn't hire a bricklayer he told me that the wages of a bricklayer was 30 dollars (£10) a day and that few people could afford to pay such wages.

The country in this part of Virginia is wooded, and is not good agricultural land, although we saw crops of Indian corn. The forests are mainly second growth wood, this is poorish timber which has grown up after the felling of the primary forest and a great part of the Eastern States is in this condition.

On November 14 the meeting of the U.S. Armed Services Field Medical Materiel Group took place at the U.S. Naval Medical Center at Bethesda. This is an Inter-Service meeting in order to obtain uniformity in the equipment of the Medical Corps of the American Army, Navy and Air Force. There were at least a dozen panels on various products and Lieut.-Colonel Martin Rae
Meeting of the Inter-Services Field Medical Materiel group at the U.S. Naval Medical Center at Bethesda.
(A.M.D.3) came over especially to attend the meeting. We saw a great deal of interesting items which were being standardized, and we took our own part in discussion in the various panels. The meeting opened with a session in the very fine hall of the Naval Medical Center, and the Chairman of the U.S. Naval Medical Corps was kind enough to extend a welcome to the British delegates, to which I replied.

The meeting was conducted on very friendly lines and our discussions were frank and free. The more we saw of our Army and Navy colleagues the more we liked them. Admiral Wilcutts took me round the Naval Medical Center which includes the Naval Hospital and a large Research Institute. The hospital was completed only a few years ago and has a central skyscraper which goes up to about 20 storeys. It was a case again of a very modern hospital with the latest equipment, and made me feel inclined to break the tenth commandment. The Naval doctors were very proud of their maternity wing and I was told that over 3,000 normal births had taken place without a maternal death. The various dining halls gave one the impression of shining metal, polished floors and plastic table tops, all scrupulously clean. The officers' luncheon room was on the cafeteria system, where we lined up in the usual way. Soup, meat and vegetables and ice cream or other sweet, together with coffee was the fare.

In the evening I dined with the Society of Army Consultants of World War II at the Officers' Club at the Army Medical Center. The Consultants have an annual meeting in the Army Medical Center and papers are given by different doctors on the advances in medicine and surgery which have taken place during the year. Then members of the Surgeon-General's staff give a picture from the Medical Department's angle. This symposium struck me as an idea we might copy. I was glad to meet some old friends of North African days, amongst them Colonel H. Perrin Long. We sat down to dinner about 60 strong, and the chairman, Dr. Thomas, had Mr. Gordon Gray, the Secretary for the Army, on his right, and I sat on his left. We had the usual good dinner of three courses and all my experience showed that we eat as much in this country as they do in the States. It is true that we eat less meat, but the number of courses at dinner never exceeded three. The first course was usually a prawn or shrimp cocktail, which in the States is always known as seafood. The second course is usually a fairly large steak or chicken or turkey. The third course is a sweet which is usually ice cream and pie, such as apple pie, banana pie or pumpkin pie, and all these I thought delicious. The drink is always iced water.

The chairman had warned me that in his after-dinner speech he was going to pull my leg, and the method he adopted was to talk about a visit which he had paid to England as a member of the Philadelphia Cricket Team. His amusing references to his experiences in England were, however, in the friendliest vein, and when I got up to reply I had little difficulty in returning the leg-pulling compliment. Everyone had dined and wined well so that serious speeches were not expected, and I noticed that it was the custom for the principal speaker to speak last. So Mr. Gordon Gray's speech brought a very
pleasant evening to a close and before the end I had made the acquaintance of all the best brains in American medicine.

On November 25 General Bliss entertained me at luncheon at the Officers Club in the Army Medical Center and a party of about fifty sat down to an enjoyable meal, which included that speciality of American dishes, chicken à la Maryland. It was an informal gathering and included Dr. Meiling, Medical Adviser to the Secretary of Defence, the three Director-Generals and Admiral Boone.

I was asked to say a few words on my impressions of the United States, and I was glad to have the opportunity on this occasion to thank all my hosts for their wonderful hospitality and friendliness. I was able to say how much I was impressed with the high standard of their military hospitals and their professional skill.

On this day I visited the George Washington Hospital, which is one of the newer civilian hospitals in the city. I was taken round by the Dean, Dr. Bloedorn, and I met amongst others a U.S. Medical Corps Officer who acted as the commanding officer of the Officers' Training Corps in the University of Washington, of which the George Washington Hospital is a part. The scheme is that a selected medical officer who is doing his post-graduate work for his speciality in the hospital has the status of a lecturer and is known as the Professor of Military Science and Tactics. He gives lectures on this subject to all students and acts as O.C. of the O.T.C. It appeared to me to be an excellent idea. The cost for a patient at this hospital is 20 dollars (nearly £7) a day apart from doctors' fees, X-rays or laboratory investigations. The cost of treatment in the States for private patients is very high and there are a good many insurance schemes in force which the general public subscribe to. A novel feature here were private suites where doctors who are attending maternity cases in the hospital could spend the night while waiting for labour to commence.

On November 17 I spent the day at Edgewood and Baltimore. I was accompanied by Colonel Wilson and Brigadier Coke and we drove first of all to Edgewood along a fine road through wooded country with farms which seemed to have poorish soil. Edgewood is the Army Chemical Center, and I was shown by Colonels Cox and Wood the research work which was being carried out on various projects in chemical warfare and industrial hygiene. The Medical Corps is responsible for industrial hazards occurring in all the civilians who work in army factories. Here, too, there are experiments going on on wound ballistics.

We lunched at the Officers' Club with our host Brigadier-General Pullene, and I can remember that we ate the most delicious ham.

We drove afterwards to Baltimore and visited the Institute of Public Health. Here Dr. Turner, who is the Professor of Bacteriology, showed us research work which is being carried out on the common cold and on poliomyelitis and syphilis. Students come from many countries to attend this institute and take their public health diploma.