

CANADIAN
CONVALESCENT HOME

FOR

British and Canadian Officers
in France

Officially Sanctioned by the War Office
Approved by British Red Cross Society



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MISS MARY V. BURNHAM

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HUDSPETH, MISS GAVILLER, MISS AGATHA CASSELS, MISS WISHART



NEW CANADIAN CONVALESCENT HOME FOR OFFICERS IN FRANCE
(In the Havre Area)



Seated, from left—Miss Mary V. Burnham, Capt. Pepper, M.O., Mrs. Christopher Robinson,
Miss Gertrude Tate
Standing, from left—Miss Sewart Galt, Miss Blanche Murphy, Miss Olive Gaviller, Miss Elsie Wishart,
Miss Agatha Cassels

The Canadian Convalescent Home for Officers in France has been in operation since the first year of the war and hundreds of men from all over the Empire (and lately some Americans) have passed through our hands. Patients pass into our hands from the trenches or hospitals at a stage where nursing, rest and quiet are needed to fit them for active service again, and the results that we achieve are very surprising and gratifying. Although we met with some official coolness at the outset, our work is now esteemed very highly by the military authorities and we have their hearty approval and support; in fact four of the staff have been "Mentioned in Despatches," namely, Mrs. Robinson, Miss Tate, Miss Murphy and Miss Galt.

We have lately secured a new home with forty per cent. more accommodation for patients and the ensuing year's work will tax all our resources. We have to look for not only a continuance, but an extension of the generous financial support that we have received in the past, and we make our appeal for it with confidence. The Canadian Red Cross Society is very friendly and helpful to us, but we do not want to lean on them unduly.

The most satisfactory form in which to support the Home is by a fixed monthly or quarterly contribution, but assistance in any form will be gratefully received.

The following pages contain the substance of reports made by three of the Staff, who were lately home on leave; and will no doubt prove very interesting reading. Ours is a purely Canadian enterprise, and the work of the Home is carried on by a Staff of Canadian women, whose services are given free (except two professional nurses who get a small honorarium); and through their work a new lustre is being shed on the fair name of Canada.

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NEW CANADIAN CONVALESCENT HOME FOR OFFICERS IN FRANCE
(In the Havre Area)

Canadian Convalescent Home for Officers in France

ON THURSDAY, February 7th, 1918, Mrs. H. D. Warren kindly gave a farewell party and a shower at her house in Wellesley Street for the three members of the Staff of the Canadian Convalescent Home for Officers—Miss Burnham, Miss Galt and Miss Gaviller—who came to Toronto on leave and were returning to resume their duties in France.

Mrs. J. F. W. Ross, the Chairman of the Committee, was away from home and Mr. J. B. O'Brien, the Treasurer, was unfortunately absent owing to illness. In this contingency Colonel Marshall most kindly consented to take the chair and spoke most enthusiastically of the work being done at the Canadian Convalescent Home which he personally had inspected in 1916, and where he hoped to call again on his next visit to France. He said that the Red Cross Society are so thoroughly convinced of the excellent work being done by the Home that they have voted a monthly grant to help in the support of the Home, and have ordered their Commissioner in France to do everything that he can in the way of supplying it with necessary equipment from the stores at his disposal.

The Rev. Gore Barrow, who had been a patient in the Home for some weeks, was present at the meeting, and his words of commendation were very gratifying to all those interested in the work. He said:

"I was a pretty sick man and rather 'blue,' when I left the hospital at Le Treport in an ambulance for the Convalescent Home for Officers at Dieppe, but I shall never forget the feeling of contentment that came over me as, soon after my arrival, I sat down to a delicious afternoon tea in a beautiful home. What a transformation—from a hospital where one is just 'a case' to a Home (with a capital H) where one is made to feel that the place is being run especially for oneself, where one is permitted to smoke wherever one wants to, to loll about and even to sleep undisturbed on the most luxurious couches, to sit by a lovely open grate and—just to make oneself at home.

"Is it any wonder that war-weary officers, sometimes straight from the mud and blood and horrors of the trenches, do all they can to prolong their time as inmates of this Home? Is it any wonder that as one shakes hands with the Staff on departing a kind of lump rises in one's throat and there is a certain dimness of the eyes: mere words will never convey to you the real appreciation that there is 'over there' for this Home.

"What can I say more? Yes, one thing. Thank God that He sent His Only Begotten Son into the world Who came to minister and not to be ministered unto, Who 'went about doing good' and taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth, and that the greatest thing in the world is Love, that 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least, ye have done it unto Me.'

"In this Home it is not just 'The cup of cold water' only but it is everything. It is always 'What more do you want?' 'Is there anything more that we can do to make you comfortable?' and the wounded or shell-shocked boy sinks back into the softness of a wonderful couch, and immediately from the bottom of his heart thanks the mothers and fathers in far away Toronto for their thoughtfulness and generosity.

"You won't close down, will you? Not until the last poor officer is once more back in his own old home and there is 'Peace on Earth.'

"Carry on,—Carry on."

ADDRESS BY MISS MARY V. BURNHAM

Three years ago this spring in this house, Mrs. Warren invited Mrs. Douglas to address a meeting in order to interest people in the proposed Home for Officers somewhere in France.

In April, 1915, Mrs. Douglas, Miss Tate and I crossed to Bordeaux. Plans were vague then, and offers on board ship of Chateaux in the country sounded very inviting, but we found that conditions were a little different from what we expected. The English hospital area was confined to a certain part of France and we were not free to go any where that we wished.

The Villa Louli in Dieppe was taken for a Convalescent Home for Officers in May, 1915, but that was the least part of the work; permission from various parts of the British Army had to be gained, and it took time. In June the rest of the staff crossed to France.

We knew that the work was needed, so we were patient and did what work we could. There were various inspections; Generals and Colonels visited us from time to time and said what a delightful villa we had. Colonel William Hendrie, of Hamilton, at that time in France, helped and encouraged us in many ways. Finally in July, 1915, permission was granted us by the Lines of Communication to have a Convalescent Home for Officers on the understanding that our Commandant should be the R.A.M.C. Colonel of a British hospital in that area.

The hospital helps us in a great many ways; for instance, all applications for admission come to the O.C.; they also dispense all our medicines; their ambulances when necessary are at our disposal. These and many other things which amount to a great deal are done without any expense to us. The O.C.'s of the hospital have changed from time to time, but they have always been extremely kind to us and have taken a keen interest in the work. They never interfere with the management of the house in any way, except in matters of discipline. Our rules are few, but those we have must be strictly observed. Officers from the Front are accustomed to discipline, and I am glad to say they help, rather than hinder us, in this respect. Last spring the Colonel in charge had been head of a large Convalescent Hospital in India, and understood the value of convalescent work.

In August, 1915, the Home was started, and Mrs. Christopher Robinson, representing the Toronto Committee, came over in that month to see the Home because she was greatly interested in it from the beginning before she took charge. There have been very few changes in the Staff since the Home opened. Mrs. McKee, of Montreal, was on the Staff at first and gave valuable assistance; Mrs. Joy, of Toronto, was for a short time Dietician at the Home. Miss Cassels replaced Miss Chadwick last spring and Miss Wishart has been added to the Staff. Miss Margaret Chadwick and Miss Frances Macdonald relieved Miss Tate on two occasions when on leave. Mrs. Turville Foster acted as Superintendent during Mrs. Robinson's illness in the latter part of 1916 and the early months of 1917. Since then Mrs. Robinson has resumed her position as Superintendent.

At first we had about fourteen patients; in a short time however the I.G.C. was so satisfied with our management that the Home was filled (twenty-six) and has been kept so ever since. During the last two and a half years over seven hundred patients have passed through our hands and the gratitude of the patients fully repays any effort on our part; nearly every officer writes to thank Mrs. Robinson.

The Villa Louli was indeed a home in the true sense of the word for many a weary man; we were always rejoiced to see what a difference took place in their appearance in four or five days. We often used to say to each other how tired they looked when they came; they would arrive covered with dust and dirt, and in many cases with only what they stood in. The hospitals do their best and when the patients' clothes are riddled and torn with shrapnel they provide something for them to travel in. When a man is wounded and picked up on the field it is impossible for him to look after his kit. A great many are just out of bed and are too utterly worn out to care anything about their clothes, so we find it necessary to have a supply cupboard of warm underwear and socks. When the officers are fortunate enough to have their kits we always allow them to open them in their rooms, and they used to say, "Well this is like home," as they covered the floor with their trench-worn clothes and blankets, and looked them over affectionately and decided what had to be cleaned.

One of my duties was the care of the equipment department. The Red Cross Society are extremely kind in keeping us supplied, and when we need things that they do not happen to have the Anglo-American Central Depot in London sends us sweaters, flannel khaki shirts, etc. On leaving the Home most of the patients go directly up the line, and I am glad to say that we have never allowed an officer to go back without warm socks and a few comforts.

Our patients come from the four corners of the Globe, from England, Ireland, Scotland, India, Australia, New Zealand, from South America and from all parts of our own Dominion,—British Columbia, Peace River and the Maritime Provinces, and last of all a few months ago, we had some wounded Americans of the United States Army.

Last autumn, owing to sanitary conditions, the British Sanitary Officer of the area sent a report that we must give up the Villa Louli and look elsewhere for a house. It was like a bolt from the blue and the house was evacuated at once. The Army moves quickly in France. The D.M.S. said he regretted that the Home was forced to move and asked us to tell the Committee in Canada what a splendid work the Home was doing, that he had never heard a word of complaint, but always heard the Canadian Home spoken of in the highest possible terms. He also said that he would assist us in every possible way in the new quarters wherever they might be situated and would keep the Home filled with patients.

Mrs. Robinson and Miss Tate had the responsibility of choosing another house, Miss Murphy being especially asked by Mrs. Robinson

to stay and help them. Through their efforts a larger and more suitable house has been secured further south in a different hospital area. We regret that we can give you no description of the new house, but we hear that it is well equipped and suitably situated for a Convalescent Home.

We hope that the work in the future will keep up to the standard of the past, because we all see the good which is being done and believe in the work and think that it ought to go on with renewed vigour. We are needed now to put fresh spirits and energy into the men who are giving their lives for our freedom, and when the War is over Canada's effort in keeping a Convalescent Home in France for officers from all over the world will stand unique.

ADDRESS BY MISS STEWART GALT

The Medical side of the Canadian Convalescent Home has been under the Senior Medical Officer of the Dieppe area. Being a small unit we have no medical officer in residence, as is necessary in a home accommodating a larger number of patients.

The routine of admissions may interest you. The hospitals send their applications to our Commanding Officer, and there is often a long waiting list. Every morning and evening Miss Murphy, our trained nurse, makes the "state," which is the term used to describe the form that she fills in for the hospital, notifying how many of the patients are sick and wounded, and the number of admissions or discharges during the day. This is the ordinary routine for all hospitals in France.

Every afternoon the Medical Officer arrives, after finishing his rounds in the Stationary Hospitals to which we are attached. Miss Murphy has the patients ready who are to be examined; those needing massage are handed over to me for treatment. A great many are suffering from shell-shock or from stiffened limbs, the result of shrapnel wounds and fractures, from gas-poisoning or from rheumatism, the result of standing in mud for hours. One very bad case was that of a patient who had sunk up to his waist, and it took three hours to dig him out; eventually he was sent to England for further treatment, three weeks—the time allowed at the Home—not being long enough for him to make a complete recovery.

As well as the patients in the Home I am occasionally asked to massage officers who have had some accident while on duty in Dieppe or in one of the camps in the vicinity; they come to the Home and we do all that we can for them. On one occasion I had our Commandant.

Miss Hudspeth who was trained as a convalescent nurse in New York has charge of one of the floors and has also assisted Miss Murphy in her duties.

When a push is expected all the hospitals are evacuated, and as it is not then possible for patients to remain there for long we got a number of very recent cases. Once we were given orders to evacuate and prepare for a convoy of wounded from the Front; one of those who arrived was practically blind, and he died shortly afterwards in his own home.

I am taking back a Mons light, which I hope will prove a great help toward relieving pain, also a Vibrator; this is useful in breaking up adhesions and treating many other things. Some friends are kindly donating a Violet Ray, which I expect to find useful. Many sad cases of shell shock have shown rapid improvement at the Home under our treatment. Not the least part of these benefits is due to Miss Gaviller's success in the house-keeping.

It may interest you to know a few of the privileges allowed to nurses in France. If a sister is ill and the M.O. decides that she must go into hospital and have a good rest, she is taken to a large British General Hospital in the vicinity and is placed in the wing allotted to sick sisters; after she has recovered sufficiently to travel arrangements are made for her to be sent to a most comfortable Nurses' Convalescent Home, organized, supported and run by Lady Gifford. She may remain for a few weeks. If it is during the winter she goes to the South of France to a Home under the Red Cross or to another branch of Lady Gifford's Home which is open during that season. As well as provision being made for the sick every care is taken of the Overseas sisters when on leave; if they choose they may avail themselves of Queen Mary's Hostel for Nurses at 40 Bedford Place in London, which is under Mrs. Kerr-Lawson, whose husband is an Honorary Major in the Canadian Army. He is an artist and does special work at the Front. It is a delightful house to stay in; it does not feel like an institution and may be described as a home in the true sense. On leaving France one is always given a note to Mrs. Kerr-Lawson from Headquarters, which is a form of introduction necessary to present on arriving. No one is allowed to pay anything beyond leaving tips in the servants' bag in the hall. As a rule one only remains a few days en route to wherever one is going to spend one's leave, but if it should happen that a Canadian, an Australian or a New Zealander has no friends in England she may spend a delightful leave at the Hostel or at some house in the country arranged by Mrs. Kerr-Lawson.

One of the chief advantages of being under the Red Cross is, that if a member of our Staff leaves hurriedly, as was the case when Miss Chadwick (to our deep regret) was recalled owing to private affairs, we were able to wire to Headquarters, and in the space of a day or so have her replaced by a V.A.D. or sister. Once or twice Mrs. Robinson has been glad to be able to apply to them when urgent affairs called her away, and it has always proved up to the present a most satisfactory arrangement.

ADDRESS BY MISS GAVILLER

Having been in charge of the housekeeping at the Home since September, 1915, I have been asked to tell you something about that department.

It is a very important part of the work that all the patients should have really good meals and be well nourished. The Diet List was submitted to Headquarters for approval. Of course there are always several special diets, but the common diet we have been told by our patients is very good, though simple. I have chosen two days' menus, which may be of some interest to you. The breakfast is always the same:—porridge, coffee or tea, boiled eggs, bread, butter, jam and marmalade.

LUNCHEON

Cauliflower and cheese.
Fish and fried potatoes.
Tapioca pudding and cream.

DINNER

Tomato soup.
Roast beef, potatoes and salsafy.
Chocolate pudding with cream.

The Home supplies Lime Juice.

In the dining-room, which was a long room facing the sea, there was a big table for eighteen officers, and also two small tables, one being kept for superior officers. There are always fresh flowers on the tables, and we try to have everything pretty and dainty, which is a joy to our patients after the rough life of the trenches. We have our own dining-room and our meals are rather disturbed, as while the officers are at mess and the rest of the house free, the Staff are busy tidying the sitting-rooms and the wards. Three sisters are at this time serving in the pantry.

Two sisters are on duty every afternoon from 2.00 to 6.00 p.m. This entails all preparation for tea, answering the telephone, taking messages, answering the door, etc. At this time and in the evenings we are expected to be on duty downstairs. All the patients are in their rooms at 10.30 p.m. and the lights are put out on the ground floor.

There are five orderlies detailed to us by Base Headquarters; these men have been in the trenches and are permanently unfitted for the front line so are put on light duty at the Base. They are generally old regulars who have seen many wars. They sleep and have meals at their own billets, except the Corporal who is always on duty at the Home. Fraser had thirty-two years of service to his credit. They are always busy cleaning the officers' boots, belts and

buttons; they brush their clothes, pack and unpack their kits, meet them at the station with the ambulance and see them off. When a number of patients are evacuated and new ones admitted the same day the orderlies find it difficult to get through their work.

The four French servants do the heavy work, such as waxing floors, scrubbing, preparing vegetables, etc. The wards are entirely looked after by the sisters in charge.

It is not easy at the present time to keep house in France. For instance we depend to a great extent on fresh fish for the diets, and often, on account of floating mines, the trawlers are not allowed to leave the harbor, and for several days it is impossible to get fish.

Normandy is a good part of the country for milk, butter and eggs, also for poultry. These we have been able to get at the market; it is sometimes amusing haggling with the old French women in their pretty open air market, and they too seem to enjoy it thoroughly.

Groceries are often delayed on the way, but we have the privilege of buying supplies from the Army, though it is often impossible to get what you want. Our ration of coal, sugar and bread comes from the A.S.C. at Army rates; our sugar allowance is one ounce per person per day.

The many kind gifts from the Red Cross Society, which have been very numerous, are much appreciated. Household supplies such as biscuits and jam have been very much enjoyed by the patients.

The fruit from Hamilton is worthy of special mention, being of excellent quality. It is remarkably well packed and we never find a bottle broken. Colonel Blaylock, Canadian Commissioner, Red Cross Society in France, takes a keen interest in our Home, and has helped us in many ways in emergencies when our expected supplies have been delayed.