

## **EPSOM HOSPITAL IS UNIQUE**

"On the road to Epsom." The phrase recalls the thousand times-pictured carnival of Derby Day, when the four-in-hand of the aristocrat jostles the light cart of the Lambeth tinsmith. A very different kind of traffic goes along the same road in these present months. Made up mostly of slate-colored ambulances, it leaves the route for the racecourse soon after the pleasant little red-tiled town is passed, and pulls up on one sweeping shoulder of the Downs, where the largest convalescent hospital in the United Kingdom has come into being.

There are approximately four thousand beds for sick and wounded soldiers in this hospital. Fifteen hundred are Canadians, who are housed in their own special division. A thousand or more patients are from the Imperial forces, and the rest of the population of invalids consist of Australians and New Zealanders. In its elements, therefore, the thousands in this city of wounded and sick soldiers are a replica of the millions in the battle-line.

Frankly, the proper title for this settlement is Woodcote Park. The surroundings thoroughly deserve such a pretty name. The huts of corrugated galvanized iron have brought the term "Tin City." To be honest, this is the name by which it has been dubbed for the moment, and is justified when a view is taken at close quarters. Not the least disparagement is intended. Rather the other way, for the name of "Tin City" is an indication that the Government which designed this big plant has been alive to its opportunities in gathering material the most easily convertible for the object, and putting it to use in an environment which of itself will do wonders in helping to make sick and wounded soldiers strong again.

Surgeon-General Kilkelly, C.M.G., M.V.O., surgeon of the Grenadier Guards, is in command of the entire hospital. The Canadian division is commanded by Major L. E. W. Irving D.S.O., of Toronto, and is divided into two sections known as Woodcote Park section, and Farm Camp section. Captain D.A. Murray, of Toronto, is in charge of the Woodcote Park section (500 beds), and Captain Goulden, of Winnipeg, of the Farm Camp section (1,000 beds). Other officers of the Canadian division are: Captain H. E. Thomas (Toronto), Adjutant and Transport Officer; Captain H. Bell (Collingwood), Registrar; Captain Duck (P.E.I.), Paymaster; Captain G. P. Howlett (Ottawa), Medical Officer; Captain Tait (Vancouver), Dental Officer; Captain the Rev. W. B. Carleton (Ottawa), Chaplain. Sergeant-Major A. Pegg (Ottawa) is regimental sergeant-major.

Whatever mistakes have been made in the British conduct of the war, nobody has yet brought any charges of neglect against medical forces established in the United Kingdom. Woodcote Park, like every other hospital here, English or Canadian, is — as we expect — perfect in resources and organization. No need, therefore, to dwell on these points. More interesting is it to review the special character of the treatment given to the patients, which reveals how the war has brought into play initiative and enterprise in the medical no less than in other branches of the service.

Woodcote Park is for patients who have been discharged from active treatment hospitals, and are convalescents, but who need a course of physical training, adjusted to each patient's

ability and physical condition, before they are fit to return to the fighting units. The wounded or sick soldier comes here for a stay of six weeks for treatment, discipline and physical training. Besides severe disabilities, there may be others which are slight in themselves, perhaps, but which make it impossible for a man to return to the ranks as an efficient fighter. In addition to a staff of trained sergeant-instructors in physical exercise, there is at Woodcote a staff of masseuses.

Massage is often a prime remedy for such disablements. Women workers, incidentally, are also found in several other departments. All the cooking, for example, is done by women, for whom a special line of huts has been built. Graduated route marching, to fit in with the condition of the patient, is another feature of the treatment — not the deadly slog in the sweltering sun which we associate with the training of a recruit, but a steady, gentle exercise which brings no exhaustion, and which will cause the man who partakes in it to feel that on each day's marching he sheds some little of his old hurt.

There is, too, a grand assistance of the surroundings of the hospital to be reckoned in the curriculum of the treatment. A look over the Downs from any point of Woodcote Park is in itself a first-rate tonic. With such a panorama to gaze upon, a patient would be justified in apostrophizing nature with the same ecstasy as did Mr. Pickwick at Dingley Dell. The patients are going to emulate the Dingley Dellers this summer in vanquishing All Muggleton at cricket. Football matches against local clubs have already provided great sport. Baseball is played regularly, and all forms of sport are encouraged to get the men back into "fit" condition. Every night there is a first-rate theatrical show or concert. Lord Killanin, who is resident in the hospital, takes great interest in the entertainments, and devotes his whole time to this for the benefit of the patients. The recreation hall comfortably holds an audience of 1,500, and is provided with theatrical and cinema equipment.

In the establishment of Woodcote Park one beholds an enterprise hitherto unattempted in the medical service of the Empire. The main object, it is seen, is to save hardened and experienced soldiers from being "scrapped" on account of obstinate ailments for which a remedy may be found in special treatment. When one considers the length of time and expense incurred in fitting a recruit for the firing line, it will be realized that the truly skilful management of resources lies in assisting him, should he be disabled, to regain his position in his battalion. This, of course, apart from the obvious benefit to the man himself in regaining his full strength. The Government and the officers connected with this institution, therefore, deserve our gratitude to the full.

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**CANADIAN CAMP ON EPSOM COURSE**  
**BY LACEY AMY.**

The pretty little English village of Epsom has always had fame thrust upon it. In this beautiful country the villages seem to be a part of a tremendous scheme of landscape gardening that makes a Canadian envious. Therefore, from its location and surroundings, Epsom could not claim a distinction that does not belong equally to hundreds of other hamlets and villages. And yet it has perhaps been the best known of them all.

One does not need to know a fetlock from a bookie to have heard of the Epsom races, no matter on which side of the ocean he may live. The traffic on the road to Epsom during the races has long been the limit of congestion conception, and it did not seem possible that even the war could interfere with such an institution. But it has. Now the huge grandstands loom up as relics of a day to which every Englishman is hoping for a speedy return. Even the incident of the suffragette who gave up her life for the perpetual fame of Epsom and other things is but a vague outline in popular memory.

But Epsom is not forgotten. To-day it is more closely associated with the spirit of the times than it ever was. As an expert in expediency it might be said to savor of political genius. In peace it revelled in the diversions of peace ; in war it turns its hands to the grim realities of strife — both, one might say, the sports of kings.

For Epsom is now the location of a great military camp, whose connection with the actual struggle is more intimate than that of any other camp in England. Thousands of Canadian soldiers will return to Canada with more vivid memories of Epsom than of any other spot in England.

NO ORDINARY CAMP

The Epsom Camp is not the ordinary military camp where raw recruits are put through their paces to the disgust of themselves and of their officers. It is a veterans' camp, the rallying point of those who have faced the Germans, retired for repairs, and are about ready to return to get even. A Canadian soldier comes to England, receives a severe drilling of some months at Shorncliffe or Bramshott, crosses the Channel, stops a German bullet with some unvital part of his anatomy, passes back through hospitals in France to hospitals in England, is shunted out to a convalescent home when his wound ceases to give trouble, and as a last stage before returning to the front he finds himself at Epsom.

Epsom is in reality a convalescent camp. You can't experience its joys and sorrows unless you have been hit by disease or by German shrapnel — you are not likely to see it without a gold stripe on your sleeve. Registering as it does the final step before the second round in the trenches, Epsom cannot be said to be popular. You are justified in coughing diplomatically when you hear of soldiers clamoring to get back at the Germans. It is more thrilling to tell and read it that way, but less reasonable. A soldier does not have to be a funkier to prefer England to the Ypres salient, for instance. He is not guilty of evading his duty because he

does not look forward to a second taste of France. Therefore Epsom is not a recreational stage.

Also, take a man with several months or weeks of hospital inertia and enervation behind him and put him at physical drill that nips him in the muscles he has allowed to go flabby, or in joints stiffened by careless German shooting, and the days will probably pass with a groan, even though their duties mean health and strength and vim. And that is what Epsom does for him.

#### IDEAL LOCATION.

The camp is located a couple of miles from Epsom Station, within the massive stone walls of one of the golf courses of the Royal Automobile Club. The original Canadian camp, now called the Farm Camp, was pitched in a grand grove of oaks about the old farm buildings of the property. Later the Imperial Army laid their hands on nine of the twenty-seven holes of the course and established an Imperial camp. Canadians began to dominate, and at last the Imperial authorities, while retaining possession of it, placed it under Canadian officers — not without some feeling on the part of the Imperial officers I am told. Now Major Irving, a Canadian with Toronto connections, is in charge, with Captain Roy Thomas, a College Street physician, as adjutant. The capacity of the camp is four thousand, of which twenty-five hundred are Canadian, one thousand Imperial and five hundred Australian. Over these are twenty-five Canadian officers, five Imperial and two Australian.

Entering the gate in the impressive stone wall one is struck first by the unexpected neatness of things. The paved central road extends for 'more than half a mile, angling across the field with two right-angle turns, with the huts facing it on both sides. The three divisions, of the service are distinct, the Canadians for the most part being nearest the gate, then the Imperials, and the Australians on a branch road of their own. Separating the Canadians and the Australians has been found everywhere conducive to the physical and mental well-being of both. I can give assurance of this, that the huts of the Canadians give evidence of a superior care and cleanliness of which I, as a Canadian, feel proud — although the entire camp is a model in those respects.

#### MANY DECORATIONS.

Before each hut stands a thirty-foot square of ground into which are crowded to overflowing the energy and ambitions of the occupants. Some have gone in for flowers and in the few months the camp has been open have produced a wonderful panorama that makes the place look like a huge market garden, an impression that is increased by the utilization of the spaces between the huts for the growing of vegetables. Others have allowed their artistic instincts free rein for the construction of elaborate designs of mottoes, phrases and patriotic symbols, and the effect is a revel of color. These latter works of art show on a surface graded so as to slope towards the road and are built up of bits of broken colored bottles, pieces of coal for black, of brick for red, and of whitewashed stone for white.

Just within the gates 'Toronto' flames at one in big letters, with sufficient other wording to prove that some patriotic Toronto battalions have limbered themselves into condition within the hut they front. Farther along a striking caricature of Satan announces a hut of 'Little Black Devils' from Winnipeg. There are flags and maple leaves galore, short sentences, memorials and designs that betray residents of more than ordinary artistic ability. And all show a

development of imagination and a capacity for work and devotion that give the visitor a singularly agreeable impression.

The most elaborate garden is halfway up the road. On the afternoon of my visit a half-dozen serious-looking Canadians in shirt sleeves were industriously working on it with a pile of glass and coal and brick, referring now and then to a detailed plan on a sheet of paper. During the previous night some jealous soldiers had trampled over the work of their hands, entailing another couple of back-straining days in its renewal. At the top of the grade, ranged in a curve, were the flags of the allied nations up to the time of Roumania's entry, the Union Jack being in the centre in splendid size. What troubled them now was that the addition of Roumania would throw the Union Jack out of the centre. They inquired anxiously of me if I thought it worth while waiting to see if Greece wouldn't come in to even up their design. Before the flags were the names of the Canadian Provinces with, their capitals, and in the centre, on a raised plaque, the words 'Our Home', and 'Lest We Forget'. Then came excellent designs of an Indian warrior, his squaw, a beaver and a moose; and down at the front was a list of the battles in which the Canadians have figured — Langemarck, St. Julien, Givenchy, Festubert, Hooge, Ypres and others. Courcellette was not yet added.

#### LOTS OF ENTERTAINMENT.

The camp is amply provided with entertainment. There is a concert hall seating a thousand, at which are presented two cinema shows a week and a number of concerts provided by public entertainers. To meet the current expenses the soldiers are charged an entry fee of a penny and the officers sixpence. A Queen Mary Tea Room gives the soldiers opportunity for entertaining their lady friends, and off it are a billiard room and a reading room. The Y.M.C.A. also has a tea and a writing room. There are a gymnasium, a miniature rifle range and a skittle alley. The bar is beyond the control of the Canadian authorities except as to hours. These are limited to three a day, two of them in the evening.

The rear of the camp overlooks the golf links, a typical English scene of rolling downs and luxuriant trees. It provides the necessary diversion for the officers, and gives a pleasing touch of life to the surroundings. But the war has interfered sadly with the clubs of England. Although it was a Saturday afternoon there were but two parties on the links. And that night, in the fine old clubhouse, once a monastery and always the crowning point of a scene of wondrous beauty, we had the dining-room to ourselves; the sitting-room grate had to be lighted specially for us.

In the Stygian darkness of Zeppelin-menaced England we trudged to the station after nine o'clock, the blackness so intense that only an outstretched umbrella warded off the thousands of returning soldiers who knew the route by instinct rather than by sight. In a railway compartment with tight blinds we reached London, and through the uncomfortable sightless streets of the city the journey was completed. England is surely at war just now.”

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