

O.M.F.C. MEDICAL UNITS.

Name.	From	Officer Commanding.	Date		Auth. or Reference.	Location	Date		Auth. or Reference.	Remarks.
			From	To			From	To		
Westcliffe Eye & Ear Hospital.	20/10/15.	Lt. Col. J.D. Courtenay.	20/10/15.		DMS. File 50-35-1. 19-10-15.	Folkestone.	20/10/15.		DMS. File 50-13-1. Vol. 1.	
			26/9/17.		CO. 1576/17.					
		Lt. Col. S.H. McKee.	26/9/17.		CO. 1490/17.					
			20-3-19.		CO. 36/19.					
							20.9.19		G.R. 5966 1920	

Early in 1915, it became apparent that for many reasons some form of concentration in England would have to be adopted for Canadian patients, suffering from wounds and diseases of the eye, ear, nose and throat. Hitherto, each of the General Hospitals had its own special department with a qualified officer in charge, but it was found that the number of special cases increased rapidly and infringed on the space of these General Hospitals. Moreover, there was a shortage of medical officers with special training in this branch of work and it was realized that if all eye, ear, nose and throat cases were concentrated in one Hospital, they could be handled by a smaller number of officers. Furthermore, it would become possible to assemble at such a centre the most thorough equipment of instruments and apparatus required by the latest methods of treatment and the patients themselves would receive more efficient care. Accordingly, Lt.-Col. J.D. Courtenay, C.A.M.C., was entrusted with the work of examining existent and available buildings with this end in view. His choice finally fell on the building then established as the Westcliffe Hotel, Folkestone. Situated on the top of the cliff within a stone's throw of the sea, this place had many points of advantage. It stands in its own grounds of about two acres, facing due south and looking out to sea. The station was within five minutes' walk and the harbour could be reached in ten minutes. The building itself has four floors and a basement. These floors comprise 168 rooms. Many of the rooms are steam heated, and practically all are equipped with open fireplaces. Actual taking over was effected on October 12th., 1915, Lt.-Colonel Courtenay assuming command.

The work of Westcliffe Special Hospital was divided into two departments, viz: the Eye Dept., and the Ear, Nose and Throat Dept. These again have to do with the treatment of patients admitted to Hospital and those transferred daily from surrounding and more distant areas for examination, treatment, and reports on their conditions. Regarding the Clinics: these rooms were specially set apart and equipped with all necessary instruments and apparatus for examination and treatment. The number of patients examined can be judged from the following figures: 1916-16,758; 1917-22,969; 1918-15,631. Grand total for three years -55,356. The operating theatre was so thoroughly equipped that any operation of a special nature could be performed. The majority of the surgical work was on the nose and throat. Of the casualty work, for some time this hospital was the centre of jaw work, both on the bony and soft parts. Later, this Dept. was removed to Orpington and then to Sidcup. There were 3487 operations performed in the operating room during the three years. This institution has seen in its wards a considerable number of blind casualties. The majority were admitted for some form of plastic work on the face, and, when the parts had been restored to as near normal as possible, they were sent on for instruction to St. Dunstan's Hostel for blinded soldiers.

The bombing raid on Folkestone on the evening of May 25th., 1917, was a big event in the history of the Hospital. All cases from the upper floors were removed to the ground floor and basement. The drawing room on the ground floor was prepared for a dressing station and three wards on the first floor to receive wound men and children. All cases brought in received first aid treatment and those requiring further surgical treatment were sent on to Moore Barracks Hospital, Shorncliffe Mil. Hosp., and the R. Victoria Hosp. 35 cases were admitted to Westcliffe, including a few special head injuries, and those not requiring general operations. Several large bombs dropped in the neighbourhood of the Hospital and it was providential that it escaped being hit.

As a result of the signing of the Armistice on November 11th., 1918, and the beginning of demobilization of Canadian Troops, especially those in England, it was decided to close Westcliffe and evacuate whatever patients then remained to No. 16 Canadian General Hospital, Orpington, and the officer patients to London. The latter were transferred, on January 11th., 1919, and the last of the patients on January 14th.

The Unit was disbanded with effect as from 20.9.19.