



DURHAM
AT **WAR**



GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE FILE

**Transcript of correspondence concerning VAD hospitals in County
Durham**

Records held by the archives at the Museum of the Order of St John

OSJ 1/1/12/1

September 1914 – December 1915

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23 September 1914

The St John Ambulance Brigade
No. VI (Northern) District
Deputy Commissioner: CB Palmer Esq
District Headquarters
Cambridge Hall
Newcastle-on-Tyne

Lady Perrott
52 Onslow Gardens
London

Dear Lady Perrott,

I attach herewith the particulars of voluntary hospitals offered in this locality, which the Military Authorities do not appear to make use of.

I know that the officer commanding the 1st Northern General Hospital wishes to evacuate some of his cases, and some have been sent to civil hospitals, but as I have pointed out to the Military Authorities, there is a grave danger in evacuating in this manner, because most of the civil hospitals are entirely kept up by the classes, and if the civil hospitals are full, accidents in civil life will not be admitted, and as it is known that we have volunteered our temporary hospitals for military cases, there will be a reaction against the ways of the War Office.

The ladies who have formed these hospitals have gone to a great deal of trouble, and apparently all their efforts are in vain, and I fear that if once dismantled, as they will have to be very soon, there will be such indignation felt that they will never be available again.

I hope that you will be able to put these views before the War Office.



I believe that the Deputy Director of Medical Services, Northern Command, has submitted some of them to the War Office for sanction in connection with the 1st Northern General Hospital.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

CB Palmer

Deputy Commissioner

No.6 (Northern) District

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**1 October 1914**

[Letter is crossed through and noted as 'Replied 2 November 1914']

Part-y-Seal

Grosmont

Hereford

Colonel Sir Herbert C Perrott, Baronet, CB

The St John Ambulance Association

St John's Gate, Clerkenwell

Dear Sir,

I have some 500 garments (shirts, bedjackets, belt, socks, pillows, etc.,) made by the women in my village, which I am anxious to send to a base hospital. May I ask for your kind assistance to enable me to do this? If you will be so good as to let me know to whom, and where, the consignment should be addressed and through whom it should be despatched I shall feel extremely grateful.

I have also an empty house in a very salubrious situation in the village, standing amongst the hills at an altitude of about 600 feet, with a southern aspect, which I am anxious to furnish and prepare for the reception of 15 or 20 wounded soldiers. It occurs to me that there may be some printed instructions which would be very



valuable to anyone undertaking this work. If you could send me a copy, or kindly tell me where I can obtain the necessary information, I shall be still further obliged. I know you must be inundated with letters, and, therefore, apologise for troubling you.

Yours truly,  
Henry Partridge

PS I shall be glad to have a supply of St John Ambulance Circulars marked Ref. EC1, dated 8th August, and Ref. EC2 dated 10th August, for distribution.

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22 October 1914

The St John Ambulance Brigade.
No. VI (Northern) District
Deputy Commissioner: CB Palmer Esq
District Headquarters
Cambridge Hall
Newcastle on Tyne

To Lady Perrott
St John's Gate
Clerkenwell
London

Dear Lady Perrott,

With reference to your letter of the 19th October asking for return of garments made. I may point out to you that you have had a list only about a week ago and it entails an enormous amount of work preparing these lists. Mrs Palmer is in charge of the Depot and responsible for everything. Would you kindly write to her in future respecting the Depot.



I think I should inform you that the Lord Mayor of Newcastle has got together a very large committee of ladies as a working party. They have sent in a considerable quantity of garments to our Depot, but they object to these garments going outside of No. 6 District, as they think they should be used for general hospitals and for voluntary hospitals when required. Our first St John Voluntary Hospital is accepted at Whinny House, Gateshead, and wounded will be sent to it ~~this week~~ tomorrow without fail. This is an 80 bed hospital, and complete in itself.

Yours sincerely,

CB Palmer

Deputy Commissioner

~~~~~

**3 November 1914**

The St John Ambulance Brigade.

No. VI (Northern) District

Deputy Commissioner: CB Palmer Esq

District Headquarters

Cambridge Hall

Newcastle on Tyne

Mrs Oliver,

St John's Gate

Clerkenwell

London EC

Dear Mrs Oliver,

With reference to your letter about Brancepeth Castle the position is that Lord Boyne is providing 30 beds, and the County Durham VAD another 30 beds. Lord Boyne supplies all servants and feeds them and the Nursing Staff. We supply a St John, VAD as staff.



The First Northern General Hospital will pay at the rate of 2/- per day per head for patients.

The officer commanding the First Northern General Hospital is now not troubling to go to the War Office about places he has taken and is doing it all through me.

We have now the following St John Hospitals in use.

Whinny House, Gateshead – 80 beds

Jeffrey Memorial Hall Sunderland – 40 beds

German Seamen's Home, South Shields – 50 beds

17 South Bailey, Durham – 30 beds

I am, yours faithfully

CB Palmer

Deputy Commissioner

No. VI (Northern) District

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Saturday [no date]

The Union Club

Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Dear Lady Perrott,

It is not often I get time to write now, but I thought you would like to know that our first Durham VA Hospital was opened yesterday at Whinny House, Gateshead with 50 sick and wounded including Belgians. We shall increase up to 80. The commandant is my wife and the other staff are St John nurses.

I have had a motor ambulance

[from CB Palmer, second page not copied]

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**3 December 1914**

[copy of outgoing letter]

Dear Mr Palmer,

The Order of St John have sanctioned a grant of £10 to be paid to all auxiliary hospitals organised by the St John Voluntary Aid Detachments on their receiving patients. I therefore beg to enclose cheques to the value of £50 for the five hospitals in your district, namely, Whinny House Hospital, Gateshead; Auxiliary Hospital Durham City (Miss Cooper); German Seamen's Home, South Shields; St Johns Mission Hall, South Shields; Geoffrey Memorial Hall, Sunderland. I shall be grateful if you will forward the cheques to the treasurer of each hospital.

Yours truly

[unsigned]

~~~~~

10 December 1914

CB Palmer Esq.

Cambridge Hall

Newcastle-on-Tyne

Dear Mr. Palmer,

Mr. Edwards has handed me your letter of the 7th inst. informing us that the St John Mission Hall Hospital at South Shields has been abandoned. We are sending, as you suggested, a grant of £10 to Mrs. Bean and to Dr Strover. Should any more of your hospitals come into use, if they will inform us, the grant will be sent.

Yours sincerely,

[unsigned]

~~~~~

**10 December 1914**



[copy of outgoing letter]

Dr Strover

Masconic Hall

West Hartlepool

Dear Sir,

Mr. Palmer has informed us that your Rest Station is being used as an Auxiliary Hospital. Therefore, should you require it, the Order of St John are prepared to send you a fully qualified nurse, salary paid; all you would have to supply would be her board and lodging. I should be obliged if you would fill in the enclosed form, as we are anxious to file it with the other hospitals which are being run by St John Voluntary Aid Detachments.

Yours truly,

[unsigned]

~~~~~

10 December 1914

The St John Ambulance Brigade

No. VI (Northern) District

Deputy Commissioner: CB Palmer Esq

District Headquarters

Cambridge Hall

Newcastle on Tyne

Report on the VA Hospitals in the County of Durham

The following hospitals have been established and St John Detachments mobilised to staff six Hospitals in this county.

No. 1 Durham VA Hospital Whinney House, Gateshead



Consists of 55 beds. Has been established since October 23rd, and 142 patients have been under treatment at this hospital. 50 members of St John VAD have carried out the entire duties. These have been drawn from detachments at Felling, Heworth, Gateshead and Saltwell. The Matron is Lady District Superintendent, Mrs CB Palmer.

No. 2 Durham VA Hospital Mill Dam, South Shields

Consists of 50 beds. Has been established since August 31st. 70 patients have been treated at this hospital up to November 3rd. This does not include out-patients (ie wounded home on furlough). 22 members from VA Detachments of South Shields and Tynemouth have carried out entire duties. The matron in charge is Mrs JR Crease.

No. 4 Durham VA Hospital Jeffrey Memorial Hall, Sunderland

Consists of 32 beds. Has been established since August 10th. Total patients treated 55. No. of members 32 taken from Sunderland VAD. Commandant of the hospital is Dr IG Modlin.

No. 5 Durham VA Hospital 17 North Bailey, Durham

Consists of 30 beds. Established November 1st. Patients treated up to November 30th – 30. Number of members – 17 drawn from Durham City VAD. Matron in charge – Mrs Wykesmith.

No. 7 Durham VA Hospital Brancepeth Castle, Co. Durham

63 beds equipped. Patients – 23. Hospital commenced December 3rd. No. of members 8, drawn from Gosforth (Northumberland) Division, VAD. Matron in charge – Mrs Bean.

The Rest Station at the Central Station, Newcastle, which has been entirely under the charge of the nursing sisters of the St John Ambulance Brigade has treated 1674 cases. These members are constantly on duty to the extent of three at a time.



West Hartlepool Temporary Hospital

This is a hospital established at West Hartlepool to attend to the troops of the garrison, but is run in the same way as other hospitals in the county, with the exception that the sick and wounded from overseas are not sent into it. The West Hartlepool Division has entirely staffed this hospital. The number of cases has been considerable (no particulars yet).

Other St John Hospitals in the counties of Northumberland and Durham will be occupied when more sick and wounded are sent to the North of England, at the: 'Richard Murray' Hospital, Blackhill.

Shotley Hall, Shotley Bridge.

Eastcliffe, Gosforth, Newcastle.

'Pendower', Newcastle-on-Tyne

Hebburn Hall Infirmary, Hebburn

CB Palmer

Deputy Commissioner

No. VI (Northern) District

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### **13 December 1914**

The St John Ambulance Brigade

No. VI (Northern) District

District Brigade Headquarters

Wardley Hall

Pelaw-on-Tyne

Dear Lady Perrott,

Mrs Vasey, Lady Superintendent and Commander of Houghton le Spring Nursing Division and VAD is a perfect nuisance to me and to everyone else.



She may be visiting you about Houghton Hall being accepted as a hospital. If she does, I hope you will refer her to me.

The place is suitable but as County Director, I cannot recommend the place as Mrs Vasey is impossible. She has got the whole of the locality in arms against her. I got letters from all sorts of people complaining. She is doing us a lot of harm in consequence. I have had to [snub] her and reprimand her constantly. She put a committee together for collection of goods and quarrelled with them all. She wants to hoard goods up for a possible hospital and I ask that the goods should be put to some use. This the Committee want to do.

At present no more hospitals are wanted up here as existing ones are half empty.

[second page not copied]

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22 January 1915

The St John Ambulance Brigade
No. VI (Northern) District
Deputy Commissioner: CB Palmer Esq
District Headquarters
Cambridge Hall
Newcastle on Tyne

WR Edwards Esq
St John's Gate
Clerkenwell
London

Dear Sir,

Mobilisation of VAD



I have to inform you that the following St John VAD have been mobilised, and are running hospitals for the troops stationed in the locality; namely:

No. 56 Northumberland, Commandant – Mrs Catcheside, 51, Percy Gardens, Tynemouth.

No. 60 Durham, Dr WM Jennings, 16, Croft Terrace, Jarrow-on-Tyne.

No. 32 Durham, Miss K. Adamson, Hetton House, Hetton-le-Hole.

£10-0-0 is therefore due to each of these detachments and I shall be glad to know when you will send same. All are under control of Regimental Medical Officers.

Yours faithfully

CB Palmer

Deputy Commissioner

~~~~~

**26 January 1915**

[copy of outgoing letter]

CB Palmer Esq

Cambridge Hall

Newcastle-on-Tyne

Dear Mr Palmer,

Mr Edwards has handed to me your communication of the 22nd inst. notifying that VADs 56, 60, and 32, are mobilized, and have received patients in their Auxiliary Hospitals. A grant of £10 will be sent to each hospital when we have received details on the enclosed forms.

Yours faithfully

[unsigned]

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23 February 1915



The St John Ambulance Brigade
No. VI (Northern) District
Deputy Commissioner: CB Palmer Esq
District Headquarters
Cambridge Hall
Newcastle on Tyne

The Secretary
St John Ambulance Brigade
St John's Gate
Clerkenwell
London

Sir,

Mobilisation of VAD

I am instructed by the General Officer Commanding in Chief, Northern Command, to mobilize the following Detachments namely:

Durham No. 62, Social Centre Hospital Sunderland, and
Durham Nos. 20 and 26 Richard Murray Hospital, Blackhill.

Application is made therefore for grant of £10 to each of the first two. The grant £10 is not applicable to Durham No. 26, as this detachment is merely helping No. 20 at this hospital, but will have its own hospital shortly, as soon as more cases are sent to the North of England.

Yours faithfully

CB Palmer
Deputy Commissioner
No. 6 (Northern) District

[annotated] Keep the returns Hon Sec.

~~~~~



**12 March 1915**

The St John Ambulance Brigade  
No. VI (Northern) District  
Deputy Commissioner: CB Palmer Esq  
District Headquarters  
Cambridge Hall  
Newcastle on Tyne

P Darvil-Smith Esq  
St John Ambulance Brigade  
St John's Gate  
Clerkenwell  
London

Dear Sir,

At the request of the Lady Superintendent-in-Chief, I have been desired to send a report of the work of No. 6 District for incorporation in the report of the Order. I think it would probably be better to send these through the Brigade Office.

Yours faithfully

CB Palmer  
Deputy Commissioner  
No. 6 (Northern) District  
Work of No. 6 (Northern) District St JAB

Hospitals

St John VAD are staffing the following hospitals:

County of Durham:

No. 1 Durham VA Hospital



Whinney House, Gateshead, for sick and wounded overseas, and as auxiliary to the 1st Northern General Hospital. 85 beds, 282 patients treated since first occupied 23rd October 1914.

No. 2 Durham VA Hospital

Mill Dam South Shields, for Overseas and Garrison cases. 50 beds, 272 patients since first occupied, 31st August 1914.

No. 4 Durham VA Hospital

Jeffrey Memorial Hall Sunderland, for Overseas and Garrison cases. 32 beds, 161 patients since first occupied 10th August 1914.

No. 5 Durham VA Hospital

17 North Bailey Durham, for Overseas and Garrison cases. 30 beds, 67 patients since first occupied. 1st December 1914.

No. 7 Durham VA Hospital

Brancepeth Castle, for Overseas cases. 60 beds, 174 cases since first opened, December 3rd 1914.

No. 8 Durham VA Hospital

Masonic Hall, West Hartlepool for Garrison cases. 25, beds, 286 patients since first opened 11th. August 1914. On the occasion of the Bombardment of the Hartlepoons 35 bed cases, and 100 out patients were treated.

No. 9 Durham VA Hospital

Chilton Moor Fence Houses, for Garrison Cases. 18 beds, 38 patients have been treated since first occupied, January 23rd 1915.

No. 10 Durham VA Hospital

3 Clervaux Terrace, Jarrow for Garrison sick. 17 beds, 32 patients since first occupied 19th. January 1915.



#### No. 11. Durham VA Hospital

Social Centre Sunderland for Overseas and Garrison cases. 26 beds, 77 cases treated since first opened 19th November 1914.

#### No. 12 Durham VA Hospital

Richard Murray Hospital Blackhill for Overseas cases. 48, beds, 29 cases treated since first opened January 20th 1915.

#### No. 13 Durham VA Hospital

Vane House, Dawdon, Seaham Harbour for Garrison sick, 10 beds, 20 patients treated since first opened February 7th 1915.

#### Northumberland:

#### No. 5 Northumberland VA Hospital

Percy Gardens Tynemouth for Garrison cases, 36 beds, 72 cases treated since first opened January 20th 1915.

#### No. 7 Northumberland VA Hospital

Jesmond Road, Newcastle, for Territorial cases, 33 beds. First opened January 20th 1914.

#### Summary

Durham      401 beds      1438 patients

Northumberland      69      72\*

Total 470 Beds      1500 Patients

\*Does not include No. 7. Northumberland VA Hospital

#### Rest Station

The Rest Station at the Newcastle Railway Station which has been staffed by St John VAD since the commencement of the war, and where two or three members have been in constant attendance, was by order of the Assistant Director of Medical





Services closed on February 5th. The reason being that local hospitals and detention stations at all ports where troops are quartered have now been provided.

A total of 2223 have been treated in the Rest Station. A very large number of vaccination sores were dressed, minor accidents were attended to, one death took place and one birth took place in the Rest Station.

### Transport

The Hon. Sir Charles Parson KCB presented a motor ambulance to the St JAB. This is under charge of the Newcastle Division and is in constant use for military purposes.

At Sunderland the transport of all wounded men from hospital trains to the infirmary and Voluntary Aid Hospitals is carried out entirely by the St JAB.

### Depots

The Cambridge Hall Depot has sent out 15,060 articles up to March 1st 1915, and has received 24,065.

### Whitby Division (St JAB)

This division has done exceptionally meritorious work in connection with the rescue of the crew of the Hospital Ship 'Rohilla'. Although a new division the work of the men was beyond praise, and has received the warmest thanks from the Admiralty Authorities.

Again on the occasion of the bombardment of Whitby, the division rendered most valuable service to the town in rendering First Aid to wounded persons.

### West Hartlepool Nursing Division

This division which is working as a VAD rendered notable service on the occasion of the bombardment.



The detachment was under shell fire, the hospital being struck on several occasions. 35 serious cases were brought in and 100 out patients were treated. Great credit is due to the Commandant Mrs MA Strover.

~~~~~

18 March 1915

The St John Ambulance Association
St John's Gate
Clerkenwell
London

Madam,

St John VADs Durham 20 and 62 having been mobilised for duty in connection with the local hospital, please send the usual grant to the commandants as given below:

Durham 20

Miss C. Robson,
63, Sherburn Terrace, Consett.

Durham 62

J Chalmers Esq. MD
1, Claremont Terrace, Sunderland.

Yours faithfully

RC Temple
Controller in Chief
The Hon. Secretary
VAD Hospitals

[annotated] Grant sent some days ago

~~~~~



**10 November 1915**

The St John Ambulance Brigade  
No. VI (Northern) District  
Deputy Commissioner: CB Palmer Esq  
District Headquarters  
Cambridge Hall  
Newcastle on Tyne

The Brigade Secretary  
St John's Gate  
Clerkenwell  
London

Sir,

The following VAD have not yet received a £10 grant from the Order. I would be obliged if you would have this sent to them, namely:

No. 60 Durham for VAD Hospital at Jarrow

In this case I regret to inform you that the Commandant, Dr Jennings, died last week. The grant should therefore be sent to Mrs Jennings. [annotated] Commandant stated she has received grant.

No. 64 Durham      Mrs WR Stobart [annotated] 27 August 1915

No. 42[?] Durham      Mrs. Walker [annotated] 27 August 1915

No. 88 Northumberland      Mrs James [annotated] 23 November 1915

[shorthand annotation]

I am Sir,

Your obedient servant

CB Palmer

Deputy Commissioner

No. 6 (Northern) District

[annotated]



Ask all deputy commissioners if there are any mobilised VAD hospitals that have not received the £10 grant, who have organised auxiliary hospitals, if not to send in lists at once. They can be all submitted to F and GP [Finance and General Purposes] Committee at one time.

~~~~~

2 December 1915

[copy of outgoing letter]

CB Palmer Esq
Cambridge Hall
Newcastle-on-Tyne

With reference to your letter of the 10th ult. forwarding a list of St John Hospitals which have not yet received the grant, I beg to give you the following information:

Durham 60 The Commandant stated on her returns that she had received the grant.

Durham 42 Were applied for 27 August 1915

Durham 64 Were applied for 27 August 1915

Northumberland 88 Application was made 23 November 1915

I shall be pleased if you will kindly let me know whether the Commandants of Durham 42 and 64 have received their grants.

Brigade Secretary

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**6 December 1915**

The St John Ambulance Brigade  
No. VI (Northern) District  
Deputy Commissioner: CB Palmer Esq



District Headquarters  
Cambridge Hall  
Newcastle on Tyne

The Brigade Secretary  
St John Ambulance Brigade  
St John's Gate  
Clerkenwell  
London

With reference to your enquiry of the 2nd inst., relative to grants to St John Hospitals:

Durham 60 has not I believe obtained the grant. The Commandant received a county grant from me of £10 which she is probably confusing with that from the Order.

Durham 42 and 64 have not received grants. Does the secretary of the Order not give you information?

Northumberland 88. It is noted that the application has been made for this grant.

In addition to these the following VAD have now been mobilised and have equipped hospitals and should receive grants viz:

Northumberland 54 and Durham 84.

As regards the former. This VAD is completely equipping a large hospital for local sick soldiers. It is a working class detachment without large funds, and if it could be possible to receive the grant I think it should be done.

CB Palmer  
Deputy Commissioner  
No. 6 Northern District

~~~~~



22 December 1915

[copy of outgoing letter]

WR Edwards Esq. ACA

Dear Sir,

St John Voluntary Aid Detachment Durham 60 having been mobilised in connection with the No. 10 Durham VAD hospital, please forward to the Commandant whose name and address is given below, the usual grant of £10.

W Jennings Esq. MRCS

16 Croft Terrace

Jarrow-on-Tyne

Yours faithfully

Brigade Secretary

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**22 December 1915**

[copy of outgoing letter]

Brigade Secretary

Deputy Commissioner

With reference to the attached correspondence, I have informed the accountant of the Order, and no doubt the grant will be forwarded in due course.

Brigade Secretary

~~~~~

22 December 1915

[copy of outgoing letter]

Deputy Commissioner

No. 6 District



In reply to your letter of the 6th inst. relative to the grant for St John VAD hospitals, the remarks contained therein re: Durham 42, 64, and 84 has been forwarded to the accountant of the Order.

Application for a grant to be forwarded to Durham 60 has been made.

With reference to Northumberland 54, if the Commandant will kindly forward the particulars of her hospital on the enclosed form, application for the grant will be made.

Brigade Secretary

~~~~~

**10 December 1918**

Extract from letter from:

Lieutenant Colonel CB Palmer

County Director

Northumberland VAD

To:

JC Goff Esq.

Manager, Stores, and Transport Department

BRCS

### Closing of Hospitals

"I have to inform you that the following hospitals will be closed at the end of this year, although there is a little doubt with regard to Saltwell Towers, namely:

20th Durham VA Hospital, St. Gabriels, Sunderland

16th Durham VA Hospital, Shotley House, Shotley Bridge

SJAB Hospital, Saltwell Towers, Gateshead-on-Tyne

~~~~~



23 December 1915

[copy of outgoing letter]

WR Edwards Esq. ACA

Dear Sir,

With reference to my letter of the 27th August last, enclosing list of St John hospitals which had not received the £10 grant. I shall be pleased if you will be good enough to inform me whether the grant was forwarded to the following:

G Locke Esq. MD

47 Wellington Square

Hastings

Mrs Stobart

Etherby Lodge

Bishop Auckland

Dr AMS Walker

Glemarnock

Hebburn-on-Tyne

The Dowager Marchioness of Londonderry

No. 22 VAD Hospital

Seaham Hall

Seaham Harbour

Yours faithfully

Brigade Secretary

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