



DURHAM
AT **WAR**



Normanhurst, West Hartlepool

Transcript of correspondence concerning its use as 8th Durham Voluntary Aid Detachment Hospital

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

OSJ 1/1/12/8

December 1914 – March 1915

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14 December 1914

Mrs Oliver
Lady Superintendent-in-Chief AC
St John's Ambulance Brigade
Dudley House
West Hartlepool

Dear Madam

Many thanks for your letters and cheque (value £10). I am enclosing form you wish duly filled in. We have two fully trained nurses (Mrs Strover, Commandant, and Nurse Corner) both are giving their services free, the others are St John Ambulance Brigade nurses and are doing their work well. We do not need any more nurses at present and if we do require one later on we will let you know.

Yours faithfully

HWM Strover
Medical Officer in Command
West Hartlepool Auxiliary Hospital

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**28 December 1914 [date is not consistent]**

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

Lady Perrott  
St John's Gate  
Clerkenwell  
London



Dear Lady Perrott,

I have pleasure in enclosing you particulars of the St John VAD No. 14 Durham at West Hartlepool.

Although the commandant does not mention the fact, this detachment was actually under shell fire. The hospital was several times struck by pieces of shell. The nurses, however continued their work without any panic.

I cannot too highly speak of the conduct of Mrs Strover and her husband and all members of this detachment for the magnificent work.

It is some satisfaction to know that a St John VAD was the first in England to be in action.

Yours faithfully,

CB Palmer

Deputy Commissioner

[annotated by CB Palmer] I visited the Hospital during the course of the day.

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22 December 1914

The St John Ambulance Brigade

No. 6. (Northern) District

West Hartlepool Nursing Division

VAD

Masonic Hall

To CB Palmer Esq.



Dear Sir,

In reply to your inquiry about the work of our Division on Wednesday the 16th during the Bombardment. As far as possible to state about 100 cases were treated - 40 serious cases - the remainder out patients amongst those 10 military the rest civil. The most serious were treated for haemorrhage and shock, then transferred by motor ambulance to the Cameron Hospital for operation. Three cases were too serious to be removed - one died two days after.

When the bombardment first started two of our Brigade nurses were on night duty with 14 military patients we had in hospital. Not being seriously ill, they were at once turned out of bed, and the beds prepared for wounded. Wounded were brought in within half an hour of the bombardment and within an hour we had 12 of our Brigade members on the spot and two fully trained nurses besides myself. Dr Strover was on the spot, and helped by three civil doctors and two military. All worked very hard and considering the dreadful sights, I think our Brigade nurses did admirably. I may mention that four or five men from the men's Division gave valuable help.

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully

MA Strover

Lady Superintendent VAD 14 Durham

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**28 December 1914**

The St John Ambulance Brigade

No. VI (Northern) District

Deputy Commissioner: CB Palmer Esq

District Headquarters

Cambridge Hall

Newcastle-on-Tyne

Lady Perrott



St John's Gate  
Clerkenwell  
London

Dear Lady Parrott

In answer to your letter of the 21st inst. from your secretary, I should very much prefer collecting books to boxes. I think that books would have a better result. If you care, however, to send me a couple of dozen boxes I will endeavour to have them placed in the various shops. At present the town is inundated with Red Cross boxes sent by the British Red Cross Society, and on which there is a joint appeal for St John and BRCS.

I shall be very glad if you will send me some literature, as I am absolutely without anything to make any appeal, and whereas at one time I had every reason to expect a most satisfactory response to our appeal, the matter has been so much delayed and so many difficulties have been put in the way of collecting that I very much fear whether I shall be able to get much.

Yours faithfully,

CB Palmer

Deputy Commissioner

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26 March 1915

[copy of outgoing letter]

Mrs Strover

No. 8 Durham

VAD Hospital

West Hartlepool

Dear Madam,



I understand that you are anxious to have the salary of the trained nurse who has been giving her services in your hospital up to this time paid for by the Order of St John. I am directed to say that this will be quite possible if her qualifications will pass the Board of Matrons to be registered on the books here. Will you kindly get her to fill in the enclosed form and return it to me here. I also understand that you have a second nurse who comes to your assistance when required and that you are anxious to have her salary also paid by the Order. Will you get her also to fill in a form and I will endeavour to arrange this matter.

Yours faithfully,

Hon. Secretary,

Convalescent Homes and Hospitals

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**[no date]**

The St John Ambulance Brigade

No. 6 (Northern) District

West Hartlepool Nursing Division

Dudley House

West Hartlepool

To the Lady Commandant in Chief

Dear Madam,

I understand from Miss Bowser that trained nurses are supplied to the different St John Ambulance Units where required. Our Division has now been working as a VA Hospital since August and the trained nurse who has kindly give her services free up to the present, is not strong enough to take the work on, and it is necessary owing to the increased amount of work, and serious nature of the cases to have trained help. We have managed so far to do without permanent trained help at night, but I fear that this cannot be continued. We ought to have a night-nurse.



Nurse Corner whom I have now is willing after a rest to give me a little help so that I would do my best to manage during the day for the present if it is difficult to supply two nurses.

I would be glad to hear of particulars as to what arrangements are made for nurses supplied, if they are provided with funds for lodgings and etc. or if that is left to voluntary effort.

I am, Madam,

Yours faithfully

MA Strover

Lady Commandant VAD

Durham 14

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30 March 1915

[copy of outgoing letter]

Mrs Strover

Dudley House

West Hartlepool

Dear Madam,

You are entitled to one nurse, free of charge, from here. You will be responsible for her travelling expenses, board, lodging and laundry. You could have a second nurse at a fee of £1.1.0 a week.

Yours truly,

Hon. Secretary,

Convalescent Homes and Hospitals

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**28 March 1915**

Dudley House  
West Hartlepool

To the  
Hon. Secretary Convalescent Homes and Hospitals

Dear Madam,

In reply to yours of 26th, re: trained nurse. I had just posted a letter to Lady Perrott explaining my position and asking for help. Unfortunately the trained nurse (Nurse Corner) who has helped me voluntary up to the present does not feel strong enough to undertake the work permanently. Can you therefore supply me with a trained nurse for night duty? I am also afraid I shall have to ask for a trained nurse for day duty later on as we rely at present on being able to get help from the Nursing Home. This is not very satisfactory as we cannot call for any particular nurse and sometimes cannot get one at all.

For the month of April a friend (a fully trained nurse) has offered to give a month's service free.

If it would be of any help to you I might be able to get a trained nurse later on for day duty if you could guarantee the salary.

Awaiting your reply

I am

Yours faithfully

Margaret A Strover

Lady Commandant VAD Durham 14

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31 March 1915

[copy of outgoing letter]

Mrs Strover

Dudley House

West Hartlepool

Dear Madam,

As I wrote yesterday, I regret to say that you are only entitled to one trained nurse, free of charge, from here, as you will see from the enclosed paper. Will you wire if you wish the nurse sent down immediately.

Yours truly,

Hon. Secretary,

Convalescent Homes and Hospitals

