

WASC 2109

Sent. Medical
Officer's Report.
incl. Personnel
numbers
Mar 1917

WASC 2109
NA MUNS/129B
1-3-1917

ROYAL GUNPOWDER FACTORY.

13 1917

SENIOR MEDICAL OFFICER'S REPORT TO THE SUPERINTENDENT,
WALTHAM AND ENFIELD.

SMB

The pre-war strength of the R.G.P.F. was 919 and the present day strength is 4678; this figure includes the number of women workers taken on up to date. This total is slightly above five times the normal.

Staff : -

This comprises the Medical Officer, Sister - in - charge of Sandhurst Hospital, Nurse Probationer and Dispenser who is also Orderly. All clerical work was undertaken by the M. O. and Sister with occasional part time help from Enfield. Late in 1916 a female Writer was sanctioned; who has quickly accustomed herself to the working of the Department.

On the whole, the type of new entrants is of better physique, more amenable to discipline and less prone to Neurotic affections and are recruited from the Country districts around the Factory. This is in marked contrast to the R.S.A.F., men, of whom nine tenths are town dwellers and who require no coaching in obtaining the best available for themselves.

Hospital and Surgery : -

The Hospital has been fully utilised for every case of injury however severe as occurring at either of the two Factories. The cases admitted from the R.S.A.F. in 1915 and 1916 were 13 and 24 respectively and those from the R.G.P.F. 32 and 40 in similar years.

The absence of an operating room and the defective light, necessitating the performance of operations in the wards, under trying conditions, will be obviated as soon as the New Hospital is completed, which as previously mentioned should be within a month.

In addition to the cases admitted of Factory employees, accommodation was found either in the wards or by means of a

temporary/

(2).

temporary Annexes for the treatment of 85 Soldiers in 1914, 55 in 1915 and 55 in 1916. These men were performing duty either at the two Royal Factories or in the immediate vicinity as R.G.C., R.G.A. or L.S.E. Units.

Thirty-six operations requiring general anaesthetics have been performed and ninety-six minor operations were undertaken by means of local anaesthesia.

All wounds however trivial are dressed at Surgery or Hospital immediately on their occurrence to avoid Sepsis. From 1/8/14 to 31/12/14, 282 such cases were attended. From 1/1/15 to 31/12/15, 1101 and from 1/1/16 to 31/12/16, 1869. The aforementioned figures demonstrate that the Staff has not been idle and their duties increased greatly.

One death only was recorded in the period under review, a case of Perforating Gastric Ulcer occurring whilst on duty.

The extraordinary immunity enjoyed during the whole of the War period from accidents by Explosives is remarkable and is doubtless due to excellent discipline. Explosions have taken place in G/C., C., G/P and C/E, without serious injury to any employee.

C. E. D.

Acute inflammation of the skin affects many workers in the C/E Department. Many persons are immune, yet others become affected with the least contact with C/E dust. Special precautions are taken and the Medication employed is generally effective within seven days.

Gassing.

Is very common but varies much in degree. The practice is to report all cases at the Hospital and retain for 24 hours any person with marked bronchial irritation, by this means many cases of Pneumonia have been prevented and Pneumonia itself when present has been successfully averted.

Radiography.

The old and out of date "X" Ray Apparatus has been replaced by a Modern Trolley Installation by Messrs. Buck

with/

(3).

with up-to-date apparatuses for Stereoscopic pictures, Screening and localising. Plate records of all cases are kept and have already proved invaluable in sub-stantiating or refuting claims for Compensation. 70 such pictures are now available.

Difficulties : -

The chief trouble has been in waiting-room accommodations at the out-patient department and the impossibility of obtaining shelter for the overflow people. The clerical work inseparable from such a large increase of workers is most exacting and leaves little available time for the performance of Surgical and Medical work proper. There is a wide field in this Factory for research but such work is impossible.

Speaking generally the work has been most exacting and strenuous but this is "War time" and the Staff has "carried on" so far without any serious breakdown.

D. D. Priest
S.M.D. 11/16

ROYAL GUNPOWDER FACTORY.

13-1917

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WALTHAM AND ENFIELD.

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Daniel Priest
S.M.D. 11/16

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