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HISTORY OF MEDICAL DEPARTMENT ACTIVITIES AT AAF STATION 109 (CONTINUED)

For the Period 1 July 1944 to 31 December 1944 Inclusive.

Medical Department activities at AAF Station 109 during the last six (6) months of 1944 were very similar to those encountered during the first six (6) months of the year - rendering medical service to personnel at a station out of which a heavy bombardment group (B-17) was carrying on strategic bombing missions.

The majority of medical personnel on Station 109 were assigned to the 92nd Bomb Group. On 1 October 1944, a new 7/3 was put into effect for heavy groups; this allowed only three (3) instead of eight (8) medical soldiers in each of the four Bomb squadrons but increased the enlisted men in group headquarters from five (5) to thirteen (13). On 22 September 1944, the 100th Medical Department Squadron (based at Wright Field) was activated; the 7/3 called for one (1) medical officer, one (1) dental officer, and thirteen (13) enlisted men. Captain Joseph A. Verney, M.D., was transferred from the 100th Medical Department Squadron to the 100th Medical Department Squadron; 1st Lt George E. Verney was transferred from the 92nd Bomb Group and became the non-commissioned officer in charge. On 1 October 1944, medical personnel in the 92nd Bomb Group and the 100th Medical Department Squadron were reassigned to the Group or 100th Medical Department Squadron in accordance with the new 7/3. Gains or losses occurring in the medical personnel assigned to AAF Station 109 during the last six months of 1944 were as follows:

- 21 September 1944 - 1st Lt Clair E. Goodfield - transferred to casual pool prior to return to the 1 of 1.
- 3 November 1944 - 1st Lt George E. Verney - transferred from 100th Medical Department Squadron to 100th Medical Department Squadron at AAF Station 109.
- 22 November 1944 - Captain Thomas A. Braden, M.D. - transferred from 100th Medical Department Squadron to 100th Medical Department Squadron at large; remained at AAF Station 109 until 10 December 1944 when he was transferred to 100th Medical Department Squadron prior to return to the 1 of 1.
- 21 December 1944 - Captain Verney C. Bowen, 100th Medical Department Squadron, transferred to 100th Medical Department Squadron - to become a flight surgeon consultant at a U.S. General Hospital.
- 21 December 1944 - Captain John W. Jones, M.D., and 1st Lt Robert E. Jones - transferred from 100th Medical Department Squadron at large to 100th Medical Department Squadron. Both had previously been working at AAF Station 109 on U.S. status.

The Station sick quarters buildings underwent one significant change during the period covered; an extension to the main ward that accommodated an additional six beds was opened for use in July. The Hissen Hut type garage was also converted into a day room for the medical detachment - the entire floor space was concreted, perpendicular walls and a ceiling were put in, and a large fireplace was constructed at one end. Storage space was left in the loft and on each of the sides. All the work was done by medical personnel except the construction of the fireplace. This room helped make life more pleasant.

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in the 4th for the enlisted men - straight walls instead of curved ones, easy chairs, writing tables and reading lamps, and magazines to read by the nice open fireplace, ping pong and other games to play, etc. At Thanksgiving and Christmas the main meal (turkey and all the trimmings) was served in the day room for all medical personnel - Officers and enlisted men. A stag beer party was held on 20 December 1944.

On 22 October 1944, three and one-half truck loads of Medical 7th equipment were assigned to the 98th Bomb Group - part of the Air Base group did station equipment allowed. This should probably have been appreciated although it did arrive 27 months after the 98th Bomb Group arrived in the UK. However, the station sick quarters was fairly well equipped at the time this arrived and was functioning adequately - and this equipment was greatly needed during the first 12 months in the UK. It had a field X-ray unit in it that was set up for use. Specially medical supplies obtained from Medical Supply Depot were adequate as a whole; items that could not be drawn in sufficient quantities were benzyl benzoate and capsules.

A basketball team was organized among the cadres in November 1944. It participated in both the Station League and in the Northampton and Area League.

On 22-23 August inclusive, the 1st Army Landing Team No. 5 came to the sick quarters at AM Station 100 and worked; 125 pints of whole blood were taken. On 10-11 November inclusive, the 1st Army Landing Team No. 2 worked at Station 100 and collected 225 pints of whole blood. These teams were composed of one (1) medical officer and eight (8) medical enlisted men. This blood was carried by motor transport to the blood team's headquarters, processed (typed, serology checked), and flown to the battle front on the continent within forty-eight (48) hours. Only voluntary blood donors among non-combat personnel and with type "O" blood were taken.

Two notable changes in medical treatment occurred during November that are worth mentioning; both of these were instituted primarily for flying personnel but were used for some ground personnel likewise. An ear, nose, and throat specialist, Major Roy R. Smith, M.D., was assigned to 1st Division to visit the different stations to examine personnel who had trouble keeping their ears cleared while flying; equipment was carried on the trip and treatments with eardrops were given to all those whose examinations indicated it necessary. On 11 November the prophylactic administration of sulfadiazine to all flying personnel for the prevention of respiratory infections was instituted - one tablet (1/2 gram) daily being given per person; this was given out daily at roll call and taken at the time. Neither of these treatments interfered with operational missions or necessitated any removal from flying.

Airplane crashes attended by Medical Department at AM Station 100 during the last six (6) months of 1944 were as follows:

1. 7 July - An American glider crashed about 25 miles west of AM Station 100; both occupants were killed - bodies were brought to mortuary at Station sick quarters at AM Station 100 until picked up by parent organization.
2. 15 July - B-17 from 98th Bomb Group crashed about 5 miles south of Station - Lt. Officer, 98th Bomb Squadron, was pilot - three (3) were killed and three (3) parachuted out safely.

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1. 3 August - B-17 piloted by Lt Crafton, 125th Bomb Squadron caught fire on return from operational mission; four (4) parachuted out of plane and five (5) landed in burning plane; all survived.
2. 3 August - B-17 from 125th Bomb Group crashed and burned 4 miles north of air station 149; five (5) were killed, four (4) survived although they were seriously injured.
3. 26 September - B-17 piloted by Lt White, 125th Bomb Squadron crashed and burned on the station at start of an operational mission; explosion from five (5) bombs followed a few minutes after the fire began; crew members were picked up by ambulance and carried to safety.
4. 2 October - Two B-17's from 92nd Bomb Group had a mid-air collision near Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire. One plane was able to return to base; the other plane was piloted by Lt Scott, 127th Bomb Squadron and crew was ordered to bail out - navigator was injured in collision and three (3) others were injured in parachute jump.
5. 15 December - B-17 piloted by Lt Kane, 127th Bomb Squadron, crashed on approach at take-off; all crew members survived; plane burned and bombs exploded a few minutes later.
6. 16 December - B-17 from 127th Bomb Group crashed five (5) miles southwest of Hildesheim; eight (8) crew members parachuted out and one (1) was killed in crash and explosion.
7. 24 December - B-17 piloted by Lt Barber, 127th Bomb Squadron, crashed one (1) mile west of station immediately after take-off; plane burned and bombs exploded a few minutes afterwards. Six (6) were killed; three (3) escaped with flesh burns and injuries.
8. 24 December - B-17 piloted by Lt Mathews, 127th Bomb Squadron, crashed at Bury- t drums in Suffolk, while attempting to land on return from an operational mission; seven (7) were killed and two (2) were injured - one of whom died two days later.
9. 30 December - B-17 piloted by Lt Van Hatton, 127th Bomb Squadron, crashed at East Kirby in Lincolnshire after shorting from an operational mission because of engine trouble; all crew members were killed.
10. Several minor airplane accidents - such as running off end of runway on return from missions, etc.

During the last part of June and first part of July the Medical Department received training in nomenclature, field striping, and actual firing of small arms - information well worth knowing even if the Medics are still not issued arms.

On 20 July Mobile Detachment 1, Central Dental Laboratory No. 1, set up at A.S. at air station 149 and remained for nine (9) days; personnel of this unit were one Dental Officer - Capt. Michael J. Briscoll - and five (5) Dental Technicians. They took impressions for dental bridges on thirty-three (33) personnel.

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The Dental Prophylactic Team assigned to the 1st Bomb Division worked at AAF Station 1-9 during October 1944. The team consisted of three (3) Medical Enlisted Men; they carried their own equipment with them. They gave dental prophylactic treatments to 102 personnel during the month.

Flak continued to account for most of the cases of battle injuries with 20 mm cannon and machine gun fire from fighters causing the remainder. High altitude type of cold injury and amnesia cases ran at a low rate due to better equipment that was carried for better. After most of France and parts of Belgium and Holland came into Allied control planes returning from missions sometimes landed or were bailed out in these areas; the 1st Casualty section was moved from Belgium to Paris and it was very difficult to obtain information on any casualties on the continent of Europe.

A few miscellaneous events need to be mentioned. One (1) Medical Officer spent fifteen (15) days temporary duty at the 10th Army Station Hospital. Two (2) Medical Officers each attended a two (2) weeks course in Tropical Medicine at the Institute of Pathology and Tropical Medicine at Wilton near Dover, Bucks. Three (3) Medical Officers each spent a weeks tour of temporary duty as Medical Officer at one of the 10th Air Area Post Offices. Medical Officers attended weekly medical meetings at nearby Army Station Hospitals at times. Some training was carried on at intervals for medical statement personnel. All new combat crews arriving were given medical instruction as part of their ground school training. The handling of sick call and the care of patients in station sick quarters; the setting up to date on immunizations, the giving of physical examinations, and sanitary instruction, etc, were handled routinely. No epidemics occurred; gonorrhea cases were treated in station sick quarters with penicillin; syphilis cases were treated in nearby Army Station Hospitals with penicillin.

Statistics on a few of the activities contributed by the medical department of AAF Station 1-9 during the last six (6) months of 1944 are included in tables C and D.

Appendage - Illustrations with Index.