

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD
EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 985.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 1907.

Vol. XXXVIII

Editorial.

THE ROYAL NAVAL AUXILIARY SICK BERTH RESERVE.

Probably few persons know of the existence of the Royal Naval Auxiliary Sick Berth Reserve, and yet it forms a very useful adjunct to the provisions made by the Admiralty for the care of the sick and wounded in time of naval warfare.

It was in 1902 that the Admiralty wisely decided to organise a Reserve, in time of peace, for the purpose of supplementing the Royal Naval Sick Berth Staff in hospitals and afloat in time of national emergency and maritime war, this Reserve being controlled by an Inspecting Medical Officer appointed by the Admiralty.

Volunteers are enrolled from the St. John's Ambulance Brigade, and the St. Andrew's Ambulance Association Corps, and the Volunteer, on enrolment, selects the class in which he will serve when called out. These classes are:—

(A) Ships of war or armed mercantile auxiliaries.

(B) Hospital ships, and non-fighting auxiliary ships.

(C) Royal Naval Hospitals, and Harbour and Store Establishments abroad.

(D) Similar establishments at home.

Volunteers for this Reserve must possess a "First Aid Certificate" and a "Nursing Certificate," and must be certified of exemplary character and temperate habits by their superior officers. They are then eligible to rank as Junior Reserve Attendants. When on duty these attendants are required to wear the Badge of the Reserve, in addition to that of their Brigade or Corps, the former Badge, which is tastefully embroidered in silver on a black ground, being worn on the left arm. Once a year an inspection is held by the Inspecting Medical Officer appointed by the Admiralty, when all the

Reserve men in a given district are expected to attend, free passes to the place of inspection, and certain allowances, are made to the men, subject to their being found efficient. To rank as a Senior Reserve Attendant, it is necessary to take an advanced course of First Aid and Nursing. Upon gaining a certificate the holder is eligible to go through a "Man of War" course, if he has volunteered for Class A or B, or a "Hospital" course if he has volunteered for class C or D. The hospital course is carried out if possible at a Royal Naval Hospital, or at the nearest civil hospital willing to give the instruction, and consists of a week's continuous service or fourteen attendances of two hours each.

The teaching in civil hospitals is given by the house-surgeon, a senior student, or a senior nurse; in a naval hospital by a sick berth steward and the Sisters. It is intended to give ambulance men who have never had the opportunity of seeing wards, seriously sick persons, or operations, some idea of the duties they will have to fulfil. Similar instruction is given to Reservists attending on a man-of-war.

Ambulance detachments will also be formed at selected towns on the coast for the purpose of giving assistance to His Majesty's ships in time of war in landing sick and wounded. They must belong to classes A or B, or be accustomed to the use of boats if belonging to C or D. They will be instructed in embarking or disembarking cot or stretcher and other cases, and conveying them to hospital, and giving any further first aid that may be required.

While these Reservists cannot be regarded as nurses, and we are glad to observe are not called so, it is clearly advantageous that the Admiralty should be able to call up in case of need, a body of reliable and well disciplined men, trained to render a variety of useful services.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)