



201 (Northern) Field Hospital

***(Merged with 212 (Yorkshire) Field Hospital to form
214 (North East) Multi-Role Medical Regiment in 2023)***

Introduction

201 (Northern) Field Hospital was one of ten Army Reserve field hospitals before major mergers and restructuring occurred in 2023 under the Future Soldier programme (see below). It was based in Fenham Barracks, Newcastle Upon Tyne in the North East of England, and formed part of Hospital Group North, together with 34 Field Hospital (a Regular unit) and two other Reserve units, 205 and 212 Field Hospitals. It had been formally paired with 34 Field Hospital since 1 October 2013. The Regimental Headquarters and 'B' Squadron were in Fenham Barracks, with two sub-units elsewhere: 'A' Squadron (which drew its lineage from 223 (Durham) Field Ambulance) in Newton Aycliffe and 'C' Squadron in Stockton-on-Tees. The unit was under the operational command of 1 UK Division, delegated to Commander 2 Medical Brigade in Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Strensall, near York.

The unit deployed many individuals as volunteers to the First Gulf War (Op GRANBY, 1991), to the Balkans and to Op TELIC 1 and 2 (2003). It also deployed twice as a formed unit to Afghanistan on Op HERRICK 7A (2007 – 2008) and again on Op HERRICK 15B (2012).

The Army 2020 reforms reorganised the Army's ten Reserve field hospitals into a new Reserve field hospital structure, capable of delivering seven deployable units.¹ Thus, 201 Field Hospital was reorganised on 1 December 2014 to be capable of providing the workforce for a Role 2 light field hospital.² If augmented by another Reserve field hospital it could provide the core manning for a Role 2 enhanced (R2E) field hospital and, if combined with the full complement of a second Reserve field hospital, the unit could provide the workforce to establish a Role 3 field hospital.³

¹ [A2020 implementation Directive 4](#) dated 10 December 2013.

² Army Headquarters Implementation Order 'A2020 Measure 08-007A – Implementation Order: Reorganise Reserve Field Hospitals – 201 (Northern) Field Hospital' dated 18 November 2014

³ A Role 2E field hospital (light) is configured and also known as a 2/1/2/12 field hospital – providing 2 x accident and emergency (A&E) bays, 1 x operating theatre, 2 x intensive treatment unit (ITU) beds and 12 x low dependency beds

Future Soldier re-organisation (2023)

Major changes occurred from 28 February 2023 under the Future Soldier programme, with a reduction in the number of Close Support Regiments and the formation of Multi-Role Medical Regiments (MMRs), with field hospitals merging with medical regiments to form single units under a unified command.⁴ Four Reserve field hospitals were merged, and nine MMRs were created in the Army Reserve.⁵⁻⁶ The Army Medical Service now has two Regular and nine Reserve MMRs, in addition to four Regular Medical Regiments and three other Reserve units.⁷ 2 Medical Brigade has been re-designated as 2 Medical Group.

By October 2023, 201 (Northern) Field Hospital merged with **212 (Yorkshire) Field Hospital** and restructured to form **214 (North East) Multi-Role Medical Regiment**,⁸ with its RHQ in Coulby Newham, and two Hospital Squadrons (**201 Hospital Squadron**, in Newcastle, and **212 Hospital Squadron**, in Leeds).

Simultaneously, 250 Medical Squadron (Hull) was re-subordinated from 254 Medical Regiment to form **250 Support Squadron**, and 251 Medical Squadron (Sunderland) was re-subordinated from 225 Medical Regiment, to form a single Medical Squadron (**251 Medical Squadron**) alongside the two Hospital Squadrons, aligned to the Combat Aviation Brigade Combat Team (BCT).

The unit insignia

The unit insignia featured the iconic bridge over the River Tyne, and the serpent-entwined Rod of Asclepius.



with limited sustainability. A Role 2E field hospital is configured as a 4/2/4/48 field hospital and can operate on an enduring basis. Role 3 is generally configured as an 8/5/10/60 field hospital and can operate on an enduring basis.

⁴ Future Soldier (programme published 25 November 2021; British Army Website <https://www.army.mod.uk/learn-and-explore/army-of-the-future/readiness/future-soldier/> (accessed 11 October 2024). Future Soldier Guide https://www.army.mod.uk/media/15057/adr010310-futuresoldierguide_30nov.pdf)

⁵ The four Reserve Field Hospitals that merged were 201 with 212, and 207 with 208. See separate histories.

⁶ The nine Reserve MMRs are numbered 202, 203, 206, 210, 214, 215, 243, 254 and 256 MMRs respectively.

⁷ See Current Units, on Friends of Millbank website <https://www.friendsofmillbank.org/current-units>

⁸ MOD website. 214 (North-East) Multi-Role Medical Regiment <https://www.army.mod.uk/who-we-are/corps-regiments-and-units/army-medical-services/214-north-east-multi-role-medical-regiment/> (accessed 17 September 2024)

A Brief History of the Newcastle Territorial hospitals

The hospital traces its lineage through successive Territorial military hospitals based in Newcastle, following formation of the Territorial Force in 1908 with its proposed 23 General Hospitals nationwide. The unit was the first Territorial Force General Hospital to be established in the north,⁹ being proudly raised in March 1909 as the **1st (Northern) General Hospital**, with the commissioning of the first nine officers in Armstrong College (now Newcastle University). Lieutenant Colonel JVW Rutherford was the first Commanding Officer.

First World War

The 1st (Northern) General Hospital was mobilised in August 1914. Territorial Force records of September 1914 show an establishment of 21 officers and 109 other ranks, with an actual strength of 21 officers and 51 other ranks, all of whom had volunteered for overseas service. By 1916 it was established in Armstrong College with 2,166 beds ready to receive casualties from the Battle of the Somme.

Following re-organisation of the Territorial Force General Hospitals in 1917, 1st (Northern) General Hospital became **59 General Hospital**, and this hospital deployed to France on 29 April 1917. It initially established itself in Le Havre and then moved forward, first to Amiens on 6 May then finally to St Omer on 14 June, where it took over L'Hopital Militaire and other buildings. Female nursing staff joined on 14 July and the first convoy of wounded patients was admitted on 18 July. The hospital was bombed on 1 October 1917, resulting in the unit's only fatality during the war – the telephone orderly, Private Cyril Vincent Holden. The hospital moved once more, to Rouen on 26 May 1918.

It also provided staff for Hospital ships including the *Essesquido* and *Panama*. 59 General Hospital eventually returned to England and was disbanded on 25 May 1919.

1st (Northern) General Hospital reappeared in the Army Lists of October 1919 and was renamed **4th (Northern) General Hospital** in July 1939.

Second World War

The **4th Northern General Hospital** was mobilised at Crookham on 1 September 1939 and moved to France on 16 September, establishing itself at Dieppe. The unit covered the withdrawal from Dunkirk, until it was itself evacuated from the beaches.

On 18 May 1942 the 4th Northern General Hospital deployed once more, sailing from Greenock to Egypt via the Cape. It disembarked at Fort Tewfik in Sudan before moving to Egypt.¹⁰ The hospital (recorded as

⁹ In the north is correct. John Blair had stated that it was the very first TF Hospital to be set up. See: Blair, JSG. *Centenary History of the Royal Army Medical Corps* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1998), p. 117. (2nd edition produced by iynx, 2001). However, this honour actually goes to the **First Eastern General Hospital**, in Cambridge, which had its first annual camp in June 1908, and had reached its full peacetime establishment by September 1908. See: Guillebaud, Philomena. *From Bats to Beds to Books – The First Eastern General Hospital (Territorial Force) in Cambridge – and what came before and after it* (Fern House, 2014) 2nd edition, p.10.

¹⁰ Information supplied by Major Tony Holland, 2nd Medical Brigade to the author in 2014

20241014 – History of 201 (Northern) Field Hospital, by Colonel (retd) David Vassallo L/RAMC

4 General Hospital) is shown on the relevant Orders of Battle as being in Sudan (with Middle East Forces) on 19 August 1942, then attached to GHQ (British Troops Egypt) on 18 October 1942, attached to 8 Army on 23 December 1942 (presumably moving westwards in support of the advancing British Forces after the Battle of El Alamein), then Cyrenaica District on 22 February 1943, and British Troops Egypt on 28 December 1944. It was taken off the Order of Battle (presumably on return to England) on 4 July 1945 and was disbanded on 24 January 1946.¹¹

Post-1945

With the reconstitution of the Territorial Army on 13 July 1947, the hospital, as the **4th Northern General Hospital**, reformed under Colonel A. Angus and Colonel JBS Guy, with four or five officers and a similar number of other ranks.

On 1 April 1967 the hospital was re-designated **201 (Northern) General Hospital RAMC (V)**, and in 1995 as **201 (Northern) Field Hospital RAMC (V)**. The (V) was dropped in 2013 under the Army 2020 Reforms, when the Territorial Army was renamed the Army Reserves.

201 (Northern) Field Hospital – Its history at a glance

- 1909 Formation as 1st (Northern) General Hospital
- 1939 Re-designation as 4th (Northern) General Hospital, disbanded 1946
- 1947 Re-formation of 4th (Northern) General Hospital
- 1 April 1967 Re-designation as 201 (Northern) General Hospital RAMC (V)
- 1984 Awarded the Freedom of Newcastle
- 1990 – 1991 Op GRANBY (First Gulf War) (individual reinforcements)
- 1995 223 (Durham) Field Ambulance (V) subsumed into the Hospital
- 1995 Re-designation as field hospital (under Options for Change)
- 2003 Op TELIC 1 -2 (Iraq) (individual reinforcements)
- 2007 – 2008 Unit deployment on Op HERRICK 7A (Afghanistan)
- 2009 Centenary
- 2012 Unit deployment on Op HERRICK 15B (Afghanistan)
- 2014 Reorganised into Army 2020 structure
- 2023 Merger with 212 (Yorkshire) Field Hospital to form 214 MMR

¹¹ 'Orders of Battle 1939 - 1945 RAMC', War Office File 0534 / 3, dated 2 May 1946, in 'Second World War Orders of Battle RAMC', information provided by Historical Branch (Army)

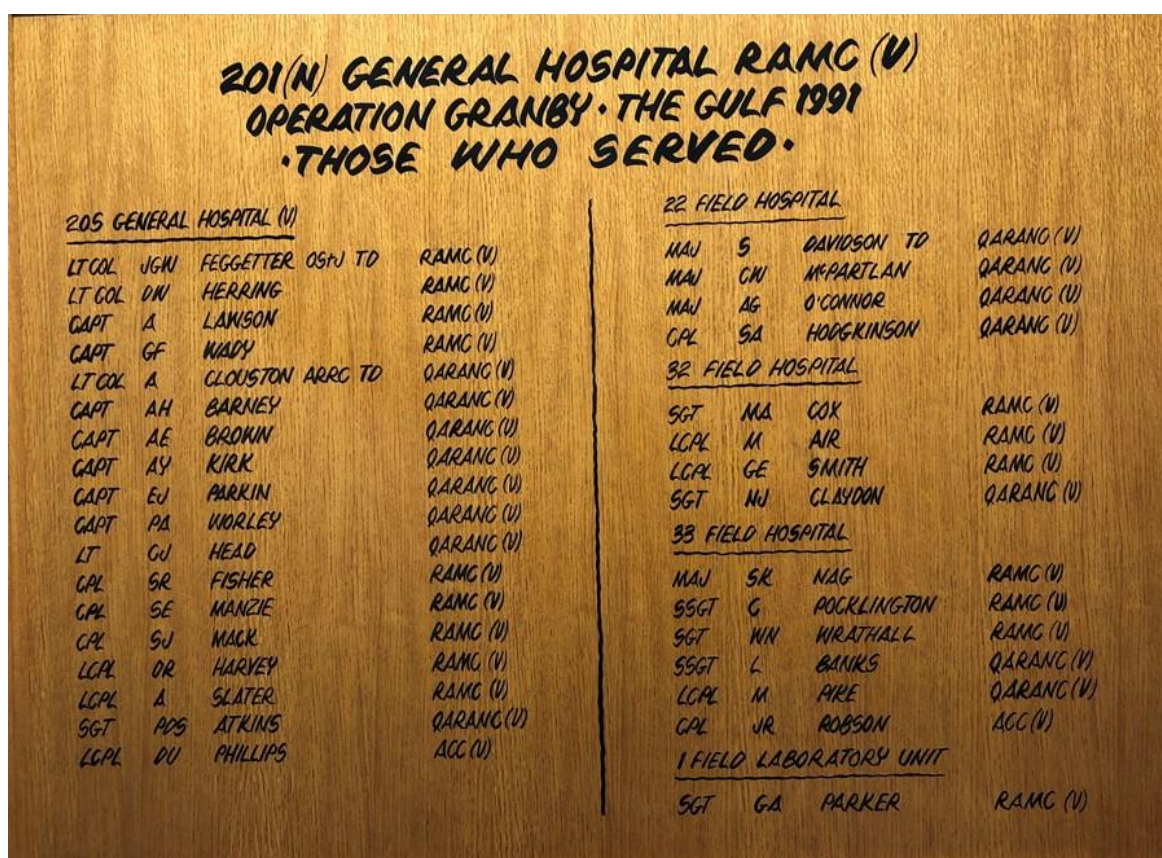
201 (Northern) Field Hospital – Its History in detail, 1967 – 2022

Formation

1 April 1967 Re-designation of 4th Northern General Hospital as 201 (Northern) General Hospital RAMC (V)

Op GRANBY (First Gulf War, 1990 - 1991)

The unit deployed 32 personnel as individual reinforcements on Operation GRANBY in 1990 – 1991. The majority served with 205 General Hospital RAMC (V) in Riyadh, the others serving with 22, 32 and 33 Field Hospitals, and with 1 Field Laboratory Unit.¹²



*'Those who served' – Members of the unit who deployed on Operation GRANBY
(photograph by Colonel Chris Johnson)*

1995 - Amalgamation with 223 (Durham) Field Ambulance (V)

223 (Durham) Field Ambulance (V) was subsumed into the Hospital in 1995, becoming 'A' Squadron, in Newton Aycliffe. A short history of this field ambulance unit,¹³ is attached as an annex, see below.

¹² Annex F: Op GRANBY Personnel. In: Clouston, Ann. Centenary History of 201 Field Hospital (The Memoir Club, 2018)

¹³ See: **A short history of 223 (Durham) Field Ambulance RAMC (Volunteers) (The Durham Combat Medics, 1967 – 1995)** at the end of this chapter.

2002 – Freedom of the City parade (23 March 2002)

It had been over 17 years since the unit was awarded the Freedom of the City and 2002 was chosen for this parade as it was the Jubilee year, the centenary of the QARANC, and to acknowledge the change of Commanding Officer.

Op TELIC 1 - 2 (Iraq, 2003)

2003 was a unique year for the unit. Almost 100 personnel were compulsorily mobilised for service with the Regular Army for operations in the Gulf and the Balkans. The majority (75) were deployed to Iraq in support of Op TELIC 1 (serving mainly with 202 Field Hospital RAMC (V) as well as 33 and 34 Field Hospitals), and a further 12 were mobilised for Op TELIC 2.¹⁴

Op HERRICK 7A (Afghanistan, 2007 - 2008)

The unit deployed 58 personnel, providing the core of the Camp Bastion Role 2 Enhanced Medical Facility in Helmand Province, Afghanistan on HERRICK 7A (October 2007 – January 2008) under the command of Colonel Ian Goulbourne, in support of 52 Infantry Brigade.

The campaign in Helmand was then in its early phase. The hospital was still in the tented (Tier 1) accommodation erected by the Royal Engineers for HERRICK 4 in early 2006, though an adjacent enhanced capability Tier 2 purpose-built facility was nearing completion, after months of delays. It would be taken over by 201's successors, 243 (Wessex) Field Hospital (V) in February 2008, barely two weeks into HERRICK 7B, and thereafter be re-designated as a Role 3 Medical Facility.¹⁵

Centenary (2009)

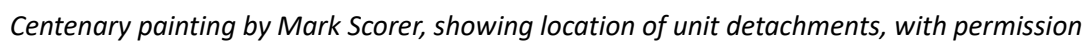
201 (Northern) Field Hospital celebrated its Centenary in 2009. A commemorative stone was laid in Leazes Park, Newcastle upon Tyne, to mark the event. This was followed by a centenary dinner in Durham Castle and a battlefield study trip to St Omer. The final part of the commemorations was a wreath laying ceremony at the grave of Private Holden on 1 October 2009.

A unit history group had been formed in 2007 under the leadership of Colonel (retd) Ann Clouston, who had commanded the unit from 1998 – 2002, thereby becoming the first nurse to command a British field hospital, with the aim of organising the centenary celebrations and collating a unit history from personal recollections and primary archival research. This group eventually published a centenary history in 2018.¹⁶

¹⁴ Unit Historical Record 1 April 2002 – 31 March 2003, report by Colonel RKJ Forber, Commanding Officer

¹⁵ Vassallo D. Organisation of the medical services in Iraq and Afghanistan. In: *'Military Medicine in Iraq and Afghanistan – a comprehensive review'* (Ed: Ian Greaves; CRC Press, 2019), pp.64-66.

¹⁶ Clouston, Ann. *Centenary History of 201 Field Hospital* (The Memoir Club, 2018)



The unit returned to Afghanistan from 16 January – 26 April 2012 on Operation HERRICK 15B, running the Role 3 Medical Facility at Camp Bastion under the command of Colonel Sharon McDowell in support of 20 Armoured Brigade. The 50 personnel from the unit who deployed to Bastion were supplemented by 57 individual augmentees from other British regular and reserve units, and 87 personnel from the US 10th Combat Support Hospital. During this tour, personnel from the unit helped mentor the Role 1 Afghan National Army Troops Medical Centre at nearby Camp Shorabak, developing its capability to deal directly with minor and not-so-minor wounded.¹⁸

¹⁸ Vassallo D. Organisation of the medical services in Iraq and Afghanistan. *Op cit.*, pp.73-74.

A chaplain's account from Camp Bastion

Being a TA chaplain who has worked with a Field Hospital Unit for some nine years, the opportunity to deploy to Afghanistan alongside members of my own unit had been an aspiration for many a year ... I arrived in Camp Bastion [in January 2012] to find my life as a priest would assume a vastly different appearance to the norm back home ... Compared to visiting NHS hospitals where a chaplain may sometimes feel outside of the whole care structure, this environment by contrast seems to draw the chaplain to the very core of its existence. Staff here actively and generously draw me in and seek me out. It would seem that the chaplain is very much an integral part of the hospital's care structure, and my presence here is largely respected and warmly received by colleagues and patients alike.

Often I have found myself in the thick of trauma which comes directly from the battlefield. Soldiers of all nationalities are a tough bunch and they sustain some of the worst and therefore some of the most life changing injuries from their hazardous profession. Yet they remain the most stoical and dedicated of individuals and live to serve and look out for one another; a blood tie of fraternal dependence.

As a chaplain to the sick, the wounded and the dying I have found in them and in the staff who care so carefully for them, a glimpse of the divine presence of God.¹⁹

The Reverend Paul McCourt CF (V), RC Chaplain 201 (N) Field Hospital (V)

Recent events

In May 2013, fourteen unit members took part in a trekking expedition to Morocco. In September 2013, the unit's Annual Camp was in Italy, with 86 personnel carrying out MATTs, Military training, Adventure Training and a Conceptual Study, based mainly in L'Aquila but also spending time in Rome and Cassino.

Six Reservists from the unit deployed on Op SHADER (Middle East) and Op NEWCOMBE (UN Mission to Mali) from 2020-2022 in the Light Surgical Group and Ground Manoeuvre Surgical Group respectively.

¹⁹ 'From Parish Priest to Camp Bastion' The Reverend Paul McCourt, in: *Royal Army Chaplains' Department Journal* 2012; Vol.51, p.25

Commanding Officers, Matrons and Regimental Sergeant Majors

<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>	<u>INCUMBENT</u>	<u>Unit Title</u>
1909	1912	Lt Col John Victor Walton RUTHERFORD CM	1 st Northern General Hospital
1912	19??	Lt Col Albert Morton MARTIN	1NGH
19??	1917	Lt Col Robert W. Alfred BOLAM OBE	1NGH
1917	1918	Col Sir William Errington HUME, CMG	1NGH
1917	1918	Lt Col Thomas GOWANS	59GH, B.E.F.
1918	1921	Lt Col Frederick Charles PYBUS	1NGH
1918	1918	Lt Col George HALL	A.O.C., 59GH, B.E.F.
1918	1919	(Major) Thomas Moffat ALLINSON	A.O.C., 59GH, B.E.F.
1919	1919	(Captain / QM) Drysdale STOUT	A.O.C., 59GH, B.E.F.
1918	19??	Lt Col Daniel Wells PATTERSON, OBE	CO, Special Mil. Surg. Hosp, Newcastle
1921	1923	Col Thomas GOWANS	1NGH
1923	1937	Administering Officer	1NGH
1937	1939	Col Valentine Hutchinson WARDLE MC, TD,	1NGH
1939	1941	Col Frederick WHALLEY CBE, DSO, TD	4th (1st Northern) General Hospital
1945	1947	Col Alan ANGUS TD	1NGH
1948	1951	Col John Baden Strickland GUY, CBE, TD, DL	1NGH
1951	1955	Col Robert MOWBRAY	1NGH
1954	1961	Col John Valentine TODD TD,DL	1NGH
1961	1964	Col Robin George SYKES TD	1NGH
1964	1967	Col Sir John Nicholas WALTON TD	1NGH
1967	1970	Col William Miller ROSS TD, DL	201 (N) Gen Hosp RAMC (V)
1970	1973	Col Hugh Goundry BROWNTD, QHS	201 (N) Gen Hosp (V)
1973	1976	Col Len CONSTABLE TD, QHP	201 (N) Gen Hosp (V)
1976	1979	Col Roland Aubrey GOODHEADTD, QHS	201 (N) Gen Hosp (V)
1979	1982	Col John SALKELD TD, QHS	201 (N) Gen Hosp (V)
1982	1985	Col Kathleen CLARKE TD, QHS	201 (N) Gen Hosp (V)
1985	1988	Col Keith Douglas CALDER TD, DL	201 (N) Gen Hosp (V)

1988	1991	Col Ram K. BANNERJEE <i>OBE, TD, ADC</i>	201 (N) Gen Hosp (V)
1991	1994	Col Jeremy G. W. FEGGETTER <i>TD, QHS, OstJ</i>	201 (N) Gen Hosp (V)
1994	1998	Col David W. HERRING <i>TD, QHS</i>	201 (N) Field Hospital (V)
1998	2002	Col Ann CLOUSTON <i>OBE, ARRC, TD, DL, QHNS, VR</i>	201 (N) Fd Hosp (V)
2002	2004	Col Robert K. J. FORBER	201 (N) Fd Hosp (V)
2004	2008	Col Ian A. GOULBORNE <i>TD</i>	201 (N) Fd Hosp (V)
2008	2011	Col Sharon MCDOWELL <i>TD</i>	201 (N) Fd Hosp (V)
2012	2015	Col Chris J TOWNEND	201 (Northern) Field Hospital
2015	2018	Col Ben BANERJEE	201 (N) Fd Hosp
2018	2022	Col Alasdair MACMILLAN	201 (N) Fd Hosp
2022		Col Andrew GILLIAM	201 (N) Fd Hosp

Commanding Officers of the Unit (Adapted from Table kindly provided by Colonel (retd) Ann Clouston)²⁰

²⁰ Annex C: Commanding Officers, in: Clouston, Ann. *Centenary History of 201 Field Hospital* (The Memoir Club, 2018), p.237



Matrons of the unit (Photograph supplied by Lt Col Alison Hulme TD VR, February 2021)



Commanding Officers up to 2012 (photograph by Colonel Chris Johnson)



Recent Commanding Officers (Photograph by Colonel Chris Johnson, December 2020)



Recent Regimental Sergeant Majors. The subsequent RSM was WO1 (RSM) Victoria Quigley (Photograph by Colonel Chris Johnson, December 2020)

Sources

1. Synopsis of Histories TAVR Medical Units (1975, anonymous) Copy provided to author by Major Tony Holland, 2nd Medical Brigade, April 2014
2. Clouston, Ann. *Centenary History of 201 Field Hospital* (The Memoir Club, 2018)

Honorary Colonels of 201 (Northern) Field Hospital



Honorary Colonels (up to 2006)
(Photograph supplied by Lt Col Alison Hulme TD VR, February 2021)

A short history of 223 (Durham) Field Ambulance RAMC (Volunteers)

(The Durham Combat Medics, 1967 – 1995)

(The predecessor unit of 'A' Squadron, 201 (Northern) Field Hospital)

The origins of a unit

During the re-organisation of the Territorial Army in 1967, Major Cedric Scott TD, then Regimental Medical Officer to the 6th Battalion Durham Light Infantry (6th Bn DLI), was asked to raise a medical unit 'out of whomsoever he could salvage'.

Major Scott - a graduate of Durham University and Newcastle Medical School - already had years of experience in the Forces and Territorial Army. He had spent his two years of National Service deployed "On Active Service to Trieste" as part of the British Element Trieste Force (BETFOR) protecting the city, which was then International Territory. On demobilisation in 1952 he had joined 201 (Northern) General Hospital before eventually joining the Durham Light Infantry.

It was through Major Scott's single minded determination that **223 (Durham) Field Dressing Station RAMC (V)** was then born in the Eden Armoury, Bishop Auckland, in County Durham, on 1 April 1967.

A determined RMO

Only three men in the Medical Inspection Room of Major Scott's infantry unit had any army medical training, namely Sergeant B Pickford, Corporal Jim Airey and Corporal Chris Spence, but he managed to persuade many of the men of the 6th Bn DLI – infantrymen one and all, in a volunteer unit facing amalgamation – to stay together as a medical TA unit. To do this many of the long-serving NCOs had to agree to lose their ranks as well as to learn new and unfamiliar skills, decisions that took a lot of grit. After a great deal of hard work and study over the next year, all qualified in their medical skills exams, enabling them to be re-instated to their previous ranks and become proud members of a new RAMC (V) unit. Their field-craft skills, learned as infantrymen, were an extra bonus.

223 (Durham) Field Dressing Station RAMC (V) formed up with 100 officers and men on 1 April 1967, marching into Eden Armoury with Major Scott as Officer Commanding. He had insisted, against much opposition, that 'Durham' should be in its title, reflecting pride in the origins of the new unit, and recognising the importance of tradition for recruiting and retention.

A year later the unit converted to become **223 (Durham) Field Ambulance RAMC (V)**,²¹ with now Lieutenant Colonel Scott becoming its first Commanding Officer, a role he would perform for six years, followed by ten years as Honorary Colonel to the unit. He was justifiably proud of the achievements and huge commitment

²¹ The retention of 'Durham' in its title also helped differentiate the unit from the Regular unit, 223 Field Ambulance, that had been formed at Watton-at-Stone in December 1940, as part of 223 Independent Brigade Group (Home), and that served with 3 Infantry Division until May 1945, being demobilised in 1946. (Information obtained from *Official History of the Medical Services in the War*, Vol 4, North West Europe)

of his men and he remained committed to the unit and the RAMC (which included being Trustee of the RAMC Association) for the rest of his life.

Cold War Developments

During the Cold War years 223 took part in many of the biggest post-war exercises in Europe, such as CRUSADER, LIONHEART, FOLDING BED, IRON GAUNTLET and others, preparing for a nuclear scenario that thankfully never materialised. During one of these exercises they were the first TA field ambulance to heli-lift their dressing station from one location to another.

In addition, there were many TA exercises and competitions within the UK, during which 223 acquitted itself honourably on many occasions – the interested reader is referred to Major Alan Brunskill's informal history of the unit for more details.²² Much of this history is drawn from his work. Major Brunskill had begun his Army service at 16 years of age as a Boy Bugler in the DLI, and he was the only member of 223 who served with it from its formation until it was subsumed into 201 (Northern) Field Hospital (V), a period of 28 years and eight months.

In 1984 the unit moved out of Eden Armoury (which it had shared with other TA units) to its own TA Centre at the Barnard Armoury in Newton Aycliffe, a spacious location still occupied by its successor 'A' Squadron of 201 (Northern) Field Hospital. In the meantime, two very successful detachments elsewhere have come and gone – at Barnard Castle (Stainton Grove Camp) from 1970 – 1995, and at Norton TA Centre from 1971 – 1992.

Overseas deployments

Many members of the unit volunteered for active service on Op GRANBY in 1990 – 1991. Four members were accepted and served with 33 (General Surgical) Field Hospital in Saudi Arabia – Lieutenant Colonel Herring (then the Commanding Officer of 223) and Captains Brunskill, Eaton and Wilkinson. Corporal Banks, the regular Permanent Staff Instructor, also deployed.

In addition, other individuals served elsewhere at other times, including West Germany, Cyprus, Norway, Italy, France, Canada, USA, Belgium, Berlin, Holland, Kenya, Northern Ireland and Bosnia, whether with the unit on exercise, on attachment to other units, or by joining the Regulars.

The secret of 223's success

223 was without doubt a family orientated unit. Participation in all unit social activities was strongly encouraged at all levels. Members' wives and families formed strong friendships and some became lifelong friends. Families mixed and helped each other. Many 223 families had sons and daughters who joined the unit. This is one of the main reasons why the unit was as efficient, functional and certainly fit for its active service role. Members knew they had the support and encouragement of their families behind them.²³

²² Major Alan Brunskill 'A Short History of 223 (Durham) Field Ambulance Royal Army Medical Corps (Volunteers)' (unpublished, 1995) (copy available at the Museum of Military Medicine, <https://museumofmilitarymedicine.org.uk/>)

²³ Major Alan Brunskill, *op cit*

Re-Formation as 'A' Squadron, 201 (Northern) Field Hospital (V)

Following the end of the Cold War there was an enforced reduction in the number of TA field ambulances. After much debate, it was decided that the well-recruited and successful 223 would be subsumed as a formed sub-unit into the Newcastle TA hospital. On Tuesday 31 October 1995 the last members of 223 (Durham) Field Ambulance (V) paraded at Barnard Armoury for the last time, marched out of the TA Centre for the final time, and then marched in as 'A' Squadron of 201 (Northern) Field Hospital (V).

And there begins another story...

Epilogue – National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas

Colonel Cedric Scott, TD, the founder of 223 (Durham) Field Ambulance RAMC (V), died on 16 March 2013, age 87 years. The surviving members of 223 formed a guard of honour at his hugely attended funeral service and cremation ceremony.

He loved his family, being immensely proud of all his boys, sons and grandsons. But he had another huge family – the Lads of his Units and most special of all were HIS LADS of 223 (Durham), 'The Combat Medics' as they were sometimes called. They and their families were his family. At the 40th Anniversary Reunion in 2007 he said to them 'It would be wrong of me to say you were the best, but without contradiction there were none better'. The regard was wholly mutual.²⁴

The following year, on RAMC Memorial Day, 14 May 2014, a tree was dedicated to him at the RAMC Memorial Grove at the National Memorial Arboretum. His widow Gwen Scott stated that it was a fitting end to Cedric's Army Life as he greatly enjoyed being "Out on Field Exercises" with his Lads. She had specifically asked if "his" tree could be near to that of their close friend Colonel John Salkeld, as the last time Cedric and Gwen had been at Alrewas (for a Summer Memorial Meeting of the RAMC Association) was also when John's family had a tree dedicated to him, and Cedric had found that most moving. Shortly before Cedric died Gwen asked him if he too would like to have a tree in the RAMC Grove: it was almost his last behest.

They had lockers next to each other in Medical School in Newcastle, they were both RMO's of DLI (Durham Light Infantry) (Cedric of the 6th Battalion & John of the 8th. Battalion). Cedric raised 223(D) Field Dressing Station/Field Ambulance & John commanded 225 Field Ambulance...

Alrewas is such a beautiful & deeply moving place. I am so pleased I have many memories of being there with Cedric... All of our family gave tremendous support to him & to me & continue so. All of them together with some of their friends who thought of Cedric as a Father figure helped me to care for him at home in the way he as a GP had cared for so many of his patients & others. We were & now I am---- truly blessed.²⁵

²⁴ Mrs Gwen Scott, 2013 (part of a history of Col Scott written for his family, and quoted with permission)

²⁵ Personal correspondence, quoted with permission of Mrs Gwen Scott



*Memorial to Colonel Cedric Scott TD, founder of 223 (Durham) Field Ambulance RAMC (V)
RAMC Memorial Grove, National Memorial Arboretum (Photograph by author, 2014)*



*Unit crest, 223 (Durham) Field Ambulance RAMC (V) – The Durham Combat Medics, 1967 – 1995
Provided by Terry Hissey*

Sources for this short history of 223 (Durham) Field Ambulance RAMC (Volunteers)

1. Major Alan Brunskill '**A Short History of 223 (Durham) Field Ambulance Royal Army Medical Corps (Volunteers)**' (unpublished, 1995) (copy available at the Museum of Military Medicine) (other copy kindly provided to author by Major Brunskill, 2014)
2. Mrs Gwen Scott (widow of Colonel Cedric Scott TD). Mrs Scott very kindly provided the author with information about Col Scott and the unit he had founded, and introduced him to Major Brunskill, after a serendipitous meeting at the National Memorial Arboretum on RAMC Memorial Day, 14 May 2014.
3. **The Dictated Story of Colonel Cedric Mathieson Scott TD, Late RAMC (V), MB.BS (Dunelm) MRCP.** Copy kindly provided to author by Mrs Scott, also available at the Museum of Military Medicine.
4. **223 (D) F.D.S. RAMC (V)** (Article on the occasion of the 1st anniversary of the new unit, in: Army Medical Services Magazine, July 1968, Vol 21: pp 19-20)

Acknowledgements for the history of 201 (Northern) Field Hospital

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If you notice any errors or wish to contribute to this history, please contact the author at djvassallo@aol.com .

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