

212 (Yorkshire) Field Hospital

(Merged with 201 (Northern) Field Hospital to form
214 (North East) Multi-Role Medical Regiment in 2023)

Introduction

212 (Yorkshire) 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). Its Regimental Headquarters was at Endcliffe Hall, Sheffield, a Victorian Manor House three miles from the centre of Sheffield.¹ The unit has historically raised detachments within the South Yorkshire and Humberside areas, with a large detachment in the East Midlands (in Nottingham). The unit consists of around 200 personnel.

The unit traces its lineage, through various amalgamations and reorganisations, to the **3rd West Riding Field Ambulance** and the **3rd Northern General Hospital** raised in Sheffield after the formation of the Territorial Force in 1908. Captain William Barnsley Allen, a member of the 3rd West Riding Field Ambulance, was awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions on the Somme in September 1916.

In recent years the unit, as **212 (Yorkshire) Field Hospital (V)**, has proudly deployed twice as a formed unit. It was the first TA field hospital to deploy into Afghanistan, in 2007 on Op HERRICK 6A, and four years later it became the first TA hospital to deploy a second time in this campaign, in 2011 on Op HERRICK 13B, each time forming the lead element within Camp Bastion Hospital in Helmand Province.



The prefix (Yorkshire) replaced (Sheffield) in 1988. The (V) was dropped from the title in 2013.

¹ It was announced on 8 October 2024 that the Army plans to sell off Endcliffe Hall, thereby bringing to an end over 100 years of its association with the Army, and 25 years of association with 212 Field Hospital and its successor, see: *The Star*, 8 October 2024. https://www.thestar.co.uk/news/politics/endcliffe-hall-giant-former-sheffield-home-victorian-steel-baron-to-be-sold-army-plans-to-leave-4814178?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR1ZKV1YrbFAk3ANMA1XabucHd_c4Sv0iVmgAHK6bYArtX94pprP1rZe9S8_aem_BO2OzE1bD-hNXdkD4oXD7w#m20rqz7d5vtkiowxbw (accessed 10 October 2024)

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.² Four Reserve Field Hospitals were merged,³ and nine Multi-Role Medical Regiments (MMR) were created in the Army Reserve, with Field Hospitals merging with Medical Regiments to form single units under a unified command.⁴

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

The Nottingham detachment was transferred to 202 MMR to become 147 (B) Squadron HQ. Simultaneously, 250 Medical Squadron (Hull) was re-subordinated from 254 Medical Regiment to form **250 Support Squadron** within 214 MMR, and 251 Medical Squadron (Sunderland) was similarly re-subordinated from 225 Medical Regiment, to form the single Medical Squadron (**251 Medical Squadron**) alongside the two Hospital Squadrons in the new unit.⁵

Unit History⁶

212 (Yorkshire) Field Hospital (now **212 Hospital Squadron**) traces its lineage to the **3rd West Riding Field Ambulance** and the **3rd Northern General Hospital** raised in Sheffield after the formation of the Territorial Force in 1908.

3rd West Riding Field Ambulance

The 3rd West Riding Field Ambulance was the first RAMC unit in Sheffield. It was formed in 1909 under the command of Lieutenant Colonel TS Adair, who had served as a Surgeon-Major with the 1st West Riding Royal Engineers (TF). By 1914 the strength of the unit stood at eight officers and 167 other ranks.

3rd Northern General Hospital

The 3rd Northern General Hospital was formed in Sheffield in 1913 under the command of Lt Col J Sinclair White. By the outbreak of war the strength had grown to three officers and 43 other ranks.

² 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)

³ The four merged Reserve Field Hospitals were 201 with 212, and 207 with 208. See separate histories.

⁴ The nine Reserve MMRs are numbered 202, 203, 206, 210, 214, 215, 243, 254 and 256 MMRs respectively.

⁵ 214 (North East) Multi-Role Medical Regiment <https://www.army.mod.uk/learn-and-explore/about-the-army/corps-regiments-and-units/army-medical-services/214-north-east-multi-role-medical-regiment/> (accessed 11 October 2024)

⁶ Some of the unit's history has been obtained from: 212 (Sheffield) Field Hospital RAMC (V), in: *Synopsis of Histories – TAVR Medical Units* (unpublished history collated from individual units, circa 1975).

First World War

On the outbreak of war the **3rd Northern General Hospital** became a Base Hospital in Sheffield dealing with casualties from the Front, the first wounded arriving in August 1914 after the Battle of Mons. It was initially formed at Brook House, Gell Street, and later took over the Sheffield Teachers Training College in Eccleshall Road.

Meanwhile, the **3rd West Riding Field Ambulance** had mobilised at Sandbeck Park, near Rotherham. It was formed into three companies – ‘A’ and ‘B’ were despatched to Aldershot for more specialised training, while C Company went to Grimsby to form part of the East Coast Defence System.

Owing to rapid recruitment, further second-line units were formed in Sheffield based on the 3rd West Riding Field Ambulance. These were the 2nd and 3rd (Reserve) West Riding Field Ambulances, soon re-designated as the 2nd/3rd and the 3rd/3rd WR Field Ambulances, with the original unit becoming the 1st/3rd WR Field Ambulance.

In 1915 the three West Riding Field Ambulances all went to France as part of the 49th (West Riding) Division and in 1916 took part in the Battle of the Somme.⁷ The 3rd West Riding Field Ambulance remained in Belgium and France until the end of the war, during which time it produced a journal, ‘*The Lead-Swinger*’, recording its experiences.⁸

Honours

The following members of the 3rd Field Ambulance were awarded honours in the First World War:

Lieutenant Colonel J Mackinnon	DSO
Captain WB Allen	VC, DSO, MC and Bar
Captain RA Stark	MC
Sergeant HE Crofts	MM and Bar
Sergeant W Brookes	Médaille Militaire (French)
Private GH Needham	DCM

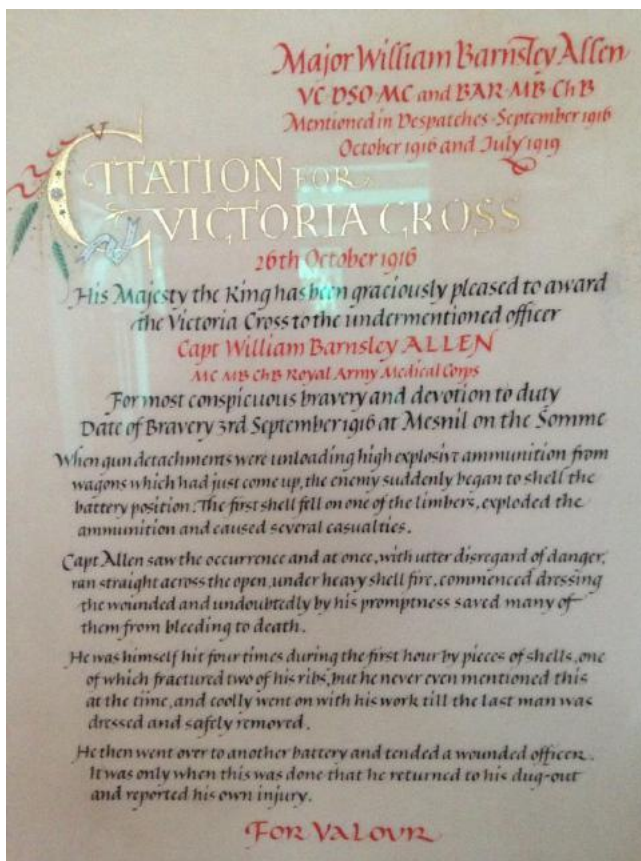
The award of the Victoria Cross

Captain Barnsley Allen was awarded his Victoria Cross for his actions at Mesnil on the Somme on 3 September 1916 while attached to the 246 (West Riding) Brigade, Royal Field Artillery, going to the assistance of the wounded when his battery was hit by enemy shelling while unloading High Explosive ammunition. He was 24 years old. A calligraphic copy of his citation is proudly displayed in the RHQ of 212 Field Hospital and reads in part:

⁷ The 49th (West Riding) Division in 1914-1918, in: The Long, Long Trail <http://www.1914-1918.net/49div.htm> (first accessed 29 December 2014)

⁸ Volumes 1-3 of ‘*The Lead-Swinger*’ are held by 212 (Yorkshire) Field Hospital on behalf of the Sheffield RAMC Association, and another set is held by Sheffield Central Library.

*'Captain Allen saw the occurrence and at once, with utter disregard of danger, ran straight across the open, under heavy shell fire, commenced dressing the wounded, and undoubtedly by his promptness saved many of them from bleeding to death. He was himself hit four times during the first hour by pieces of shells, one of which fractured two of his ribs, but he never even mentioned this at the time, and coolly went on with his work till the last man was dressed and safely removed. He then went over to another battery and tended a wounded officer. It was only when this was done that he returned to his dug-out and reported his own injury.'*⁹



Inter-war years

The Territorial Force was disbanded immediately after the First World War but was re-constituted in October 1921 as the Territorial Army. The **1/3rd (WR) Field Ambulance** was reformed under the command of Lieutenant Colonel J Mackinnon DSO.

In 1922 all Field Ambulances in the West Riding were amalgamated to form a single Field Ambulance, **146 West Riding Field Ambulance**, whose headquarters would be in Leeds. The units concerned were the 1st WR Field Ambulance from Leeds, the 2nd WR Field Ambulance from Wakefield, and the 3rd WR Field Ambulance (which would now form **B Company** of the new unit and remain in Sheffield).

⁹ Major William Barnsley Allen VC DSO MC and Bar MB ChB, Mentioned in Despatches September and October 1916, in: *The Medical Victoria Crosses* (Col W E I Forsythe-Jauch, Impressions Litho Printers:1988).

See also <https://www.ramcassociation.org.uk/medical-vc-recipient-categories/47-ww1/226-1916-lieutenant-william-barnsley-allen> (The portrait of Major Allen is taken from this website)

Second World War

147 (West Riding) Field Ambulance

B Company 146 (WR) Field Ambulance reformed in 1939 to become **147 (WR) Field Ambulance**. On mobilisation the unit went to Boroughbridge, Yorkshire where it received the first militia and formed a second-line field ambulance which went to the Middle East. 147 (WR) Field Ambulance itself became part of 49 Division and sailed with the NW Expeditionary Force to participate in the Norwegian campaign of 1940. With the fall of Norway it returned to the UK, leaving 49 Division and taking up station in Northern Ireland from 1941-42. It later formed part of 42 Armoured Division, and in June 1944, as part of 53 Welsh Division, sailed to France, landing at Arromanches on D-Day+8. It served at the Battle of Caen, handling nearly 2000 casualties in one week, and later at the battles of Arnhem and the Nijmegen Bridges, before being brought back to the Battle of the Bulge. The unit eventually crossed the Rhine and moved to Hamburg, then to the Ruhr where it opened up a series of field dressing stations in the period immediately following the end of hostilities.

225 Parachute Field Ambulance

In 1943 a cadre of 147 (WR) Field Ambulance was detached to form **225 Parachute Field Ambulance**,¹⁰ with Lieutenant Colonel Edward Harvey from 147 becoming the new unit's first commanding officer.¹¹ This unit dropped into Normandy on D-Day around the River Orne and Caen Canal, where Lieutenant Colonel Harvey established a surgical aid post at the Café Gondrée, next to Bénouville Bridge, and cared for the wounded. For his actions here, during the first days of the operation, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order. The unit later served at the Battle of the Bulge before dropping over the Rhine in the march to the Baltic. In the last year of the war the unit moved with 5 Parachute Brigade to the Far East, serving in Java, Indonesia until early 1946. 225 PFA returned to 6th Airborne Division in Palestine during June 1946 and was disbanded shortly afterwards.

The Hospital in the Second World War

In 1938 the **1/4th General Hospital** was formed in Leeds. This unit went to France with the British Expeditionary Force in February 1940 as the **18th General Hospital**, returning to UK from Dunkirk in May. The 18th General Hospital subsequently went to Egypt in 1941, served in India from 1942-44, and was demobilised following the end of hostilities, returning to its home base in Leeds.

¹⁰ 225 Parachute Field Ambulance RAMC <http://www.paradata.org.uk/units/225-parachute-field-ambulance-ramc> (accessed 29 December 2014)

¹¹ Colonel Edward Ian Bruce Harvey <http://www.paradata.org.uk/people/e-i-bruce-harvey> (accessed 29 December 2014)

Post-War Years

The Field Ambulance

At the end of the war, 146 (WR) Field Ambulance was re-established in Leeds, while 147 (WR) Field Ambulance continued in Sheffield.

In 1947, 146 (WR) Field Ambulance was re-designated **8 Field Ambulance**, supporting 49 (West Riding and Midland) Armoured Division. In 1956 this Division was re-roled as an Infantry Division, and 8 Field Ambulance became, once more, 146 (WR) Field Ambulance.

The Hospital

In May 1947, **4 (Northern) Casualty Clearing Station** was formed in Leeds as the successor to 18 (Northern) General Hospital. In January 1949 it was renamed **18 (Northern) Casualty Clearing Station**.

The amalgamation

March 1961 saw the designation of 146 (WR) Field Ambulance conferred upon 147 (WR) Field Ambulance in Sheffield, while the original 146 (WR) Field Ambulance amalgamated with 18 (Northern) General Hospital to become **50 Field Dressing Station** at Leeds.

The major re-organisation of the Territorial Army in 1967 resulted in the re-designation of 146 (WR) Field Ambulance as **212 (Sheffield) Casualty Clearing Station**,¹² and the disbandment of **50 Field Dressing Station**, with the personnel from the latter becoming the Leeds detachment of the new unit.

On 1 March 1970, all RAMC Casualty Clearing Stations were re-designated as field hospitals with a 200-bed capacity.¹³ As a result, 212 (Sheffield) Casualty Clearing Station was re-designated **212 (Sheffield) Field Hospital (V)**. In 1985 it was re-roled as a 400-bed hospital.¹⁴

On 31 March 1988 **212 (Sheffield) Field Hospital (V)** was re-designated **212 (Yorkshire) Field Hospital (V)**.

1995 saw the creation of a detachment in Nottingham, becoming B Squadron in due course. The 1998 Strategic Defence Review resulted in the creation of a detachment in Bradford, and the RHQ moving to the grand Endcliffe Hall in Sheffield, built in 1865 as the home of a Victorian steel baron, John Brown.

¹² General Staff Order - Authority: B to A/20/Misc/5164(ASD5c) dated 9 March 1967.

¹³ General Staff Order: Authority for Re-designation, MOD(AMD 1) Enclosure 5 to 20/Med/1097(ASD 2) dated 23 February 1970

¹⁴ 'Authority is given for the re-organisation of 211 Field Hospital RAMC (V) and 212 Field Hospital RAMC (V) from a 200 bed to a 400 bed role. Effective date is 1 Apr 1985.' (Ministry of Defence, General Staff Order: D/SG(Ops)468/2/24/3 (ASD 3a) dated 13 Mar 1985)

Freedom of the City



Honorary Freedom of the City of Sheffield (conferred 7 December 2001)

Operational deployments

Op TELIC 1 (Iraq, 2003)

Forty members of the unit were mobilised as individual augmentees to 22, 33, 34 and 202 Field Hospitals on Op TELIC. They comprised surgeons, anaesthetists, nurses, combat engineer RLC and REME personnel.¹⁵

'I was first out and served with all these hospitals starting with 22 who were the first to set up in theatre. I moved through each hospital and finished at 34.' (Simon Murfin, personal communication, October 2024)

Op HERRICK (Afghanistan)

The hospital, as **212 (Sheffield) Field Hospital (V)**, deployed twice as a formed unit to Camp Bastion in Helmand Province, Afghanistan in 2007 and 2011, on Ops HERRICK 6A and 13B.

Op HERRICK 6A (April – June 2007)

Following experience with the first, 6-slice, CT scanner to be deployed with a British field hospital (at BMH Shaibah, Iraq in March 2005), a multi-detector CT scanner was installed at the hospital in Camp Bastion in June 2007, towards the end of 212's deployment.¹⁶

The CT suite was part of the purpose-built Tier 2 facility which was being constructed nearby, and until February 2008 (when the new facility became operational) patients arriving at the tented Role 2(Enhanced) Medical Treatment Facility would have to be moved by Battlefield Ambulance to the CT suite for scans, accompanied as necessary by emergency department staff.

This was only the second time the British Army had deployed a CT scanner in the field, and it soon proved its worth in the management of critically injured personnel.

Op HERRICK 13B (January – April 2011)

Commanding Officer – Colonel Mark Pemberton
Deployed Medical Director – Colonel Jeremy Henning
Senior Nursing Officer – Colonel Jane Davis QARANC

The flavour of the hospital's experience on this tour is perhaps best conveyed in the words of its own staff.

'The unit took control of running the military field hospital at Camp Bastion, Helmand between January and April [2011], treating up to 30 casualties a day. In one month alone, 2,300 pints of blood

¹⁵ Unit Historical Record, 1 April 2002 – 31 March 2003

¹⁶ Ramasamy A, Hinsley DE, Brooks AJ The use of improvised bullet markers with 3D CT reconstruction in the evaluation of penetrating trauma *JR Army Med Corps* 2008; 154(4): 239-241

were used on casualties, some of whom needed as much as 100 pints each. The total number of patients treated - 2,700 - was almost double the number of patients treated when the Unit was previously deployed to run the hospital in 2007. It was the busiest three months ever experienced at the hospital outside of the summer fighting season since the start of the British deployment to Helmand in 2006.¹⁷

An account by the unit's paediatrician on Op HERRICK 13B - 'I thought they were kidding.'

***"Tell us about something you have done of which you are proud"*¹⁸**

'Experience from previous deployments ensured 212 felt there was sufficient work for a paediatrician to justify my seat on the plane ... The opinions surrounding my usefulness to the unit had varied widely prior to my arrival in Bastion. Some saying there were very few children and some saying I would be seeing a lot of children. Despite all the preparation I still started with a shock. Whilst queuing for pillows in the Bastion shop, filling the three hours till my hospital induction I was literally grabbed. "6 x Cat A paediatrics 5 minutes out, ED want you". I thought they were kidding. They weren't!

Over the weeks we saw a variety of paediatric cases, trauma and medical, related to conflict and not, from six weeks of age to adolescence. They came in one's or two's, or groups, sometimes we had half a dozen children on the ward at a time. I learnt that Disney's Fantasia is a great DVD with very little spoken language so can be watched and enjoyed by children with no understanding of English, also that Afghan children don't complain of pain so PRN analgesia is a waste of time, they feel pain, and were suffering some really painful conditions, so instead bump up the regular medications...

I returned from my deployment 10 months ago and although the fitness regime has faded, the lessons I learnt have not. I am grateful for the opportunity I received and would recommend it to anyone. I have already seen the effect deployment has had on my CV, when my recent job interview opener was "Tell us about something you have done of which you are proud". Needless to say, I got the job!

Captain Abi Hoyle, trainee paediatrician, 212 Field Hospital

Army 2020 Changes

The unit dropped the suffix (V) in 2013, to become **212 (Yorkshire) Field Hospital**.

The Leeds and Bradford detachments were consolidated at Leeds and a new detachment was opened in Hull. The regimental HQ remained in Endcliffe Hall, Sheffield, and the main detachment in Nottingham (with sub detachments in York and Lincoln) remained as before.

¹⁷ 'Operational News – 212 Field Hospital' *The Medic* 2012 (June); Vol 2 (1): p.8

¹⁸ Question put at job interview to Captain Abi Hoyle, paediatrics trainee, after serving for 13 weeks with 212 Field Hospital as the unit's paediatrician on Op HERRICK 13B (January – April 2011). 'Being a Baby Doctor in Bastion' *The Medic*, 2012 (June); Vol 2 (1), pp.25-26.



Regimental HQ, Endcliffe Hall, Sheffield



Endcliffe Hall, pictured in 1999 when 212 Field Hospital officially took over the keys to move into the building. | Sheffield Newspapers Ltd (The Star, 8 October 2024, op cit).



Entrance to Endcliffe Hall



Unit memorabilia at RHQ (Pre-2013)



B Squadron, 212 Field Hospital (V), Nottingham

Command Appointment Boards



(Courtesy of Captain Gene Jolley, Adjutant, April 2021)



(Courtesy of Captain Gene Jolley, Adjutant, April 2021)



Annual Camp and superseded Command Appointment Boards



Sources

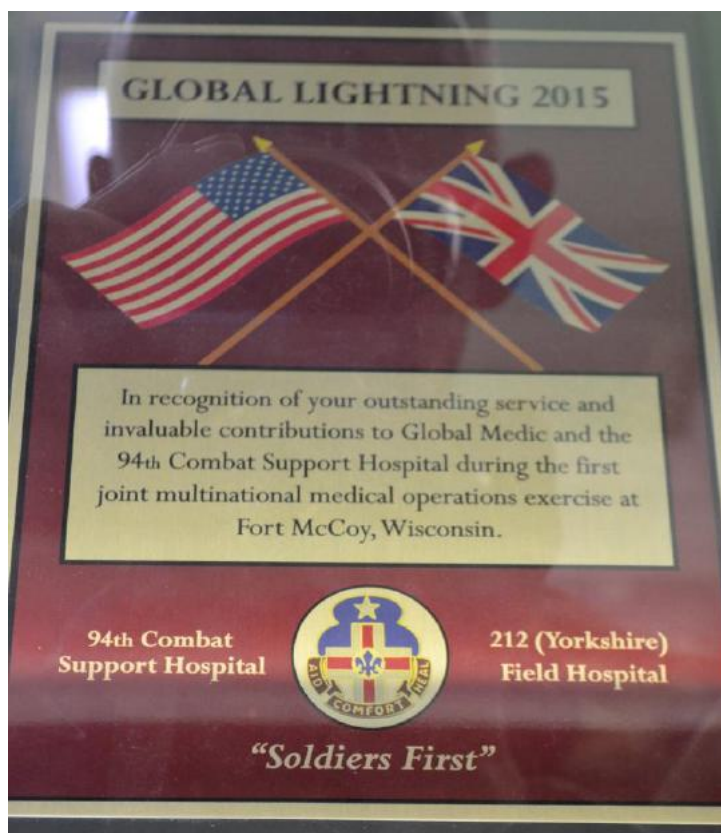
'212 (Sheffield) Field Hospital RAMC (V)', in: *Synopsis of Histories – TAVR Medical Units* (unpublished history collated from individual units, circa 1975). Copy kindly provided to the author by Major Tony Holland, 2014 (a copy is held in the Museum of Military Medicine)

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This history and those of other units in the UK's Defence Medical Services are available to download via the Unit Histories section on the Friends of Millbank website: <https://www.friendsofmillbank.org/current-units> and <https://www.friendsofmillbank.org/previous-units>.

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



Multinational co-operation (Exercise Global Lightning, 2015) (RHQ, Unit memorabilia)