

31 March 62

D. J. McKenzie

I am interested in your query regarding the army hospital 1914-18 at the Fovant Camp.

I remember being taken into this hospital when I was a small boy. My grandfather was the tenant of the manor farm in Compton Chamberlayne from about 1890 to 1920. During the 1914-18 war he supplied milk to part of the camp, including the hospital. My eldest uncle delivering the milk. I have a rather dull photocopy of a photograph taken of him outside the hospital with horse and milk float. On one occasion, when we were visiting my grandparents, he took me on his milk round. When we arrived at the hospital one of the nurses took me into the kitchen to show me a cat with its kittens in a basket under a small table. I still have a very clear picture of the young nurse who picked up one of the kittens and gave it to me to hold. I cannot remember that I actually went into the wards.

The hospital was just inside the Compton boundary on the left side as one approaches from Fovant. I believe it is still known as Hospital Field. On the opposite side of the A30 road were the goods sidings of the railway. The station itself was just in Fovant parish about where the Emblems is now. The hospital was shielded from the road by a six-foot fence made of corrugated iron sheets standing on end. They were painted green.

I remember receiving a letter from a lady who had been a nurse at the hospital. I was treasurer of the Fovant Badges Society at that time. She told me that when they got up one morning they saw a red cross badge on the down. It had not been cut out of the chalk, but had been made of red tiles, or something similar. Matron, she said, was furious and accused the nurses of being involved in it, or knowing about it previously. The nurse told me in the letter that they knew nothing about it. The badge had been made by soldiers about to leave from the Front in appreciation of the work of the Red Cross at the hospital.

I do not know if there was a separate hospital in the