

# “That Vile Train”

First World War Ambulance Train Travel

Alison Kay, Associate Archivist



The National Archives



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS



Royal College  
of Nursing

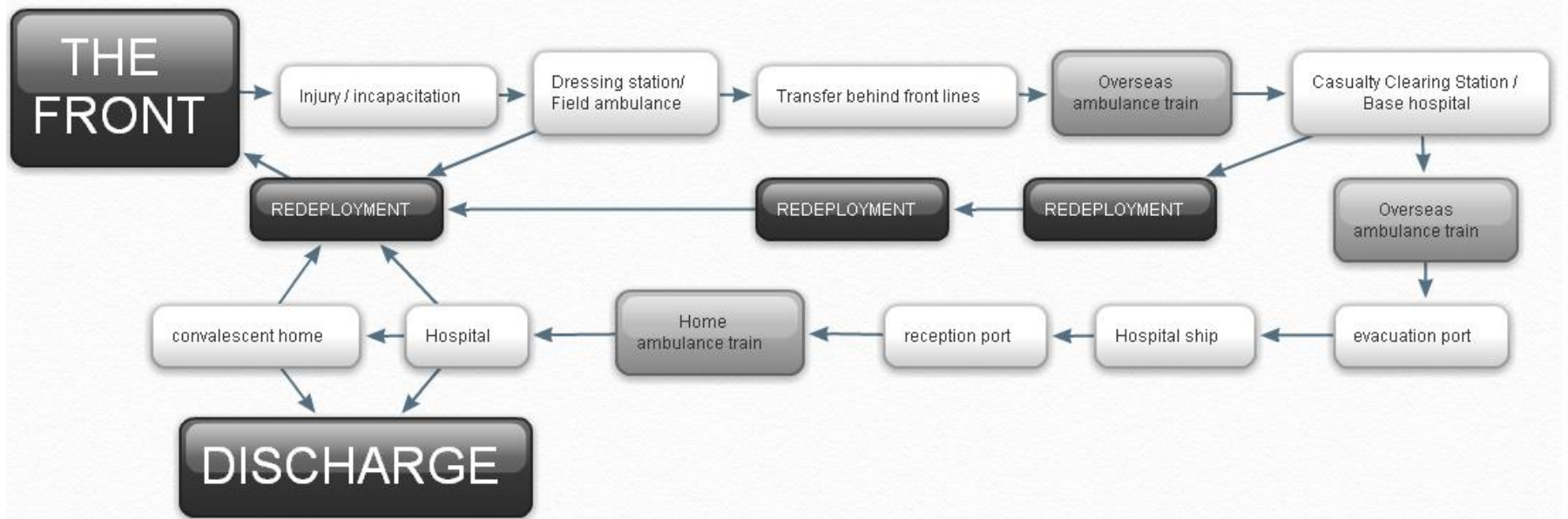
The voice of nursing in the UK



UNIVERSITY  
OF ABERDEEN

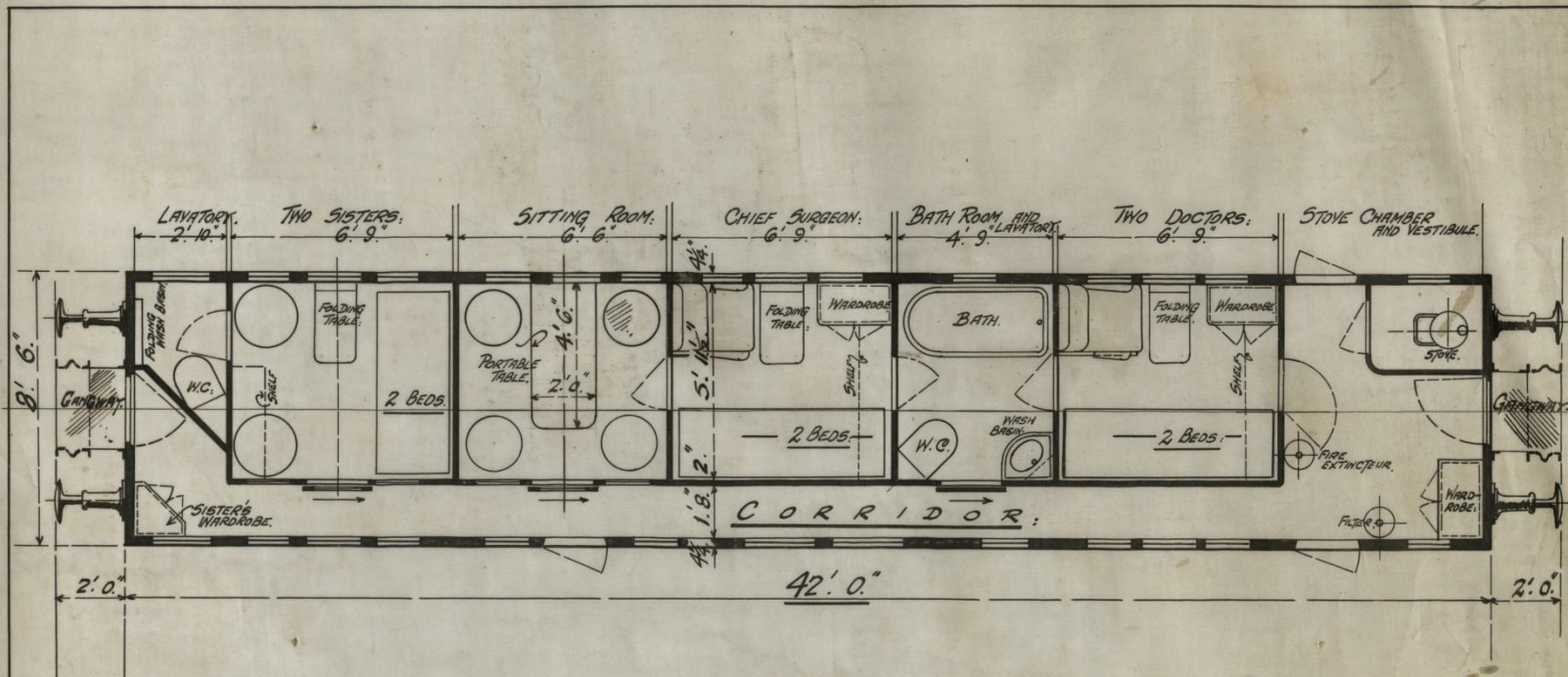








No. 2 Train leaving Dukinfield for Southampton, on August the 26th. 1914.



LONDON AND NORTH WESTERN RY CO.  
NAVAL AMBULANCE TRAIN NO 3.  
MEDICAL STAFF COACH.

WOLVERTON:                      17. 3. 1916.

SCALE  
 $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1 \text{ FOOT.}$

$\frac{6}{375}$

SEE DIAGRAM OF TRAIN:  $\frac{7}{324}$ .



**WARD CAR ARRANGED FOR LYING-DOWN CASES.**



Souvenir of Ambulance Train constructed by the  
Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway  
for use on the Continent, November, 1917.





## EXHIBITION AT YORK.

An opportunity was provided at York to-day of seeing the provision for the comfort of our wounded men on the journeys from the casualty clearing-station to the base hospitals, in the fine Red Cross ambulance train, just built by the North-Eastern Railway at the carriage shops, York, for service on the Continent. The train is about to make a tour of the N.E.R. system, stopping a day at each of the principal stations for public inspection. A small charge will be made in aid of the funds of the British Red Cross Society. Leeds New Station will be visited on Thursday, October 25th.

The train, which consists of sixteen vestibule coaches, is nearly 900 feet long, and weighs 400 tons. It is painted khaki-colour, with a red cross on a white ground on each side. It contains accommodation for 645 patients and staff, and by the conversion of some of the beds for sitting-up cases, can be increased to provide space for 635 cases. There is also provision for a staff of 45 to live on the train. There are eight ward cars, a pharmacy car (with dispensary, treatment room, office, linen room, and pantry for medical comforts), an infection sitting car (70 patients), two kitchen cars (with mess rooms for train staff), a staff car (with sleeping rooms for nurses and doctors); an infectious lying cases car; and a personnel car (for orderlies).

The arrangement and equipment are a triumph of convenience and comfort and adaptation to circumstances.

# EXHIBITION OF A NEW Ambulance Train.

The Midland Railway Co. beg to give notice that a new Red Cross Ambulance train, built by them for service on the Continent, will be on exhibition at

No. 1 PLATFORM,

# LEEDS,

Extract from Midland Station.

## ON SUNDAY,

November 25th,

From 11.0 a.m. to 2.0 p.m.

CHARGE FOR ADMISSION 1/-.

The whole of the money will be devoted to providing uniforms for Railwaymen with the Armies overseas, and towards the funds of the Red Cross Society, etc. Several Souvenir Booklets, containing interesting facts about the Train, will be on sale.



Sign in / Register

Search

About IWM

Collections and Research

Groups and Schools

Shop

First World War

IWM London  
London

IWM North  
Manchester

IWM Duxford  
Cambridgeshire

Churchill War Rooms  
London

HMS Belfast  
London

← Back

## Razzell, Alfred Charles (IWM interview)



Catalogue number	11952
Production date	1991
Subject period	First World War
Alternative Names	object category: IWM interview
Creator	IWM (Production company) de Lee, Nigel (recorder) Razzell, Alfred Charles (interviewee/speaker)
Category	sound

*This item is available to share and reuse under the terms of the IWM Non Commercial Licence.*

*If you are interested in the full range of licenses available for this material, please contact one of our collections sales and licensing teams.*

1/10



This website uses cookies. [Find out more about the cookies IWM sets and how to manage them](#)

OK











No. 17.  
View  
in A.  
Ward.  
on this  
train  
- No. 18.



MU. 52407

POST CARD

Printed  
in  
Britain

The Address only to be

Written Here

Notice how beds are numbered (at top right-hand corner) & also the ash-tray fixed by each bed.

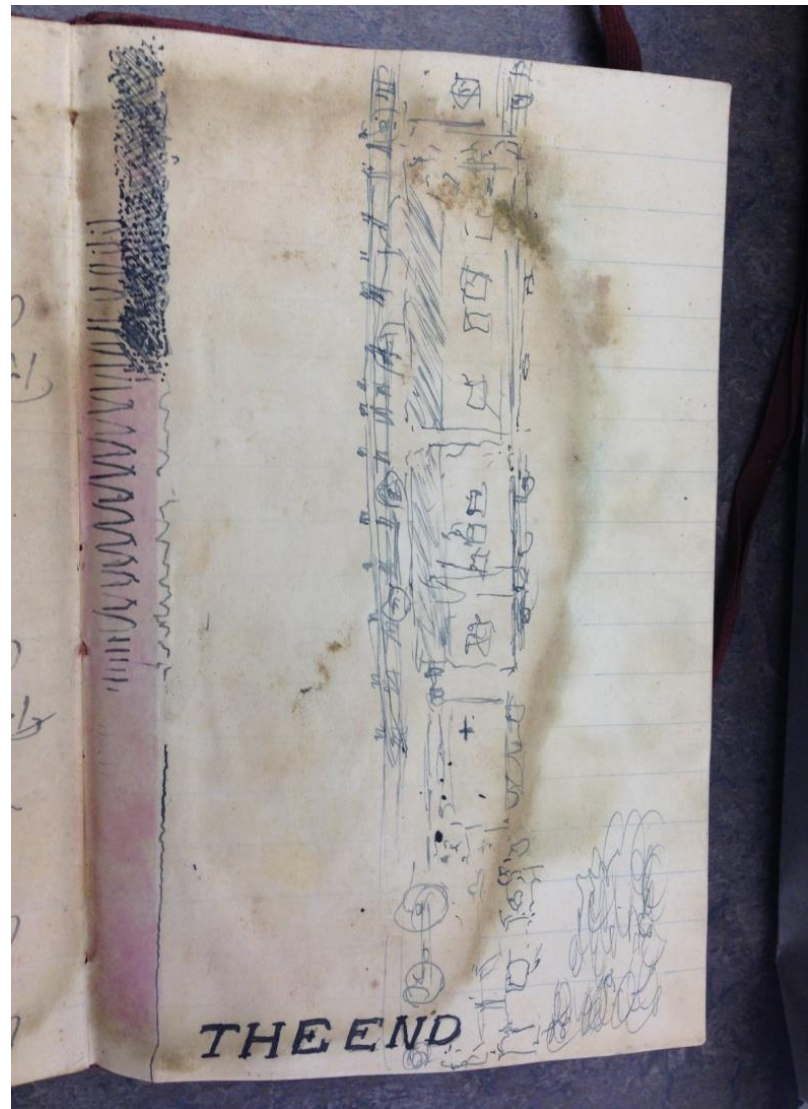
A handle attached to about a foot of rope (also top right-hand corner) is fastened ~~about~~ about each top cot for patient to help himself off & on stretchers. Things are provided for cases on bottom cots.

on with eight men  
on the floor served  
tea & dinner, a awful  
job never so fed up  
all my life.

Saturday 8th July  
arrived Boulogne 1 A.M.  
finished unloading 2 A.M.  
& so to bed.

made beds & scrubbed  
went to store & got a  
new hat.

Sunday 9th July









19-1-16

THE MICHELHAM  
CONVALESCENT HOME FOR BRITISH OFFICERS  
CIMIEZ  
NICE (A.M.)

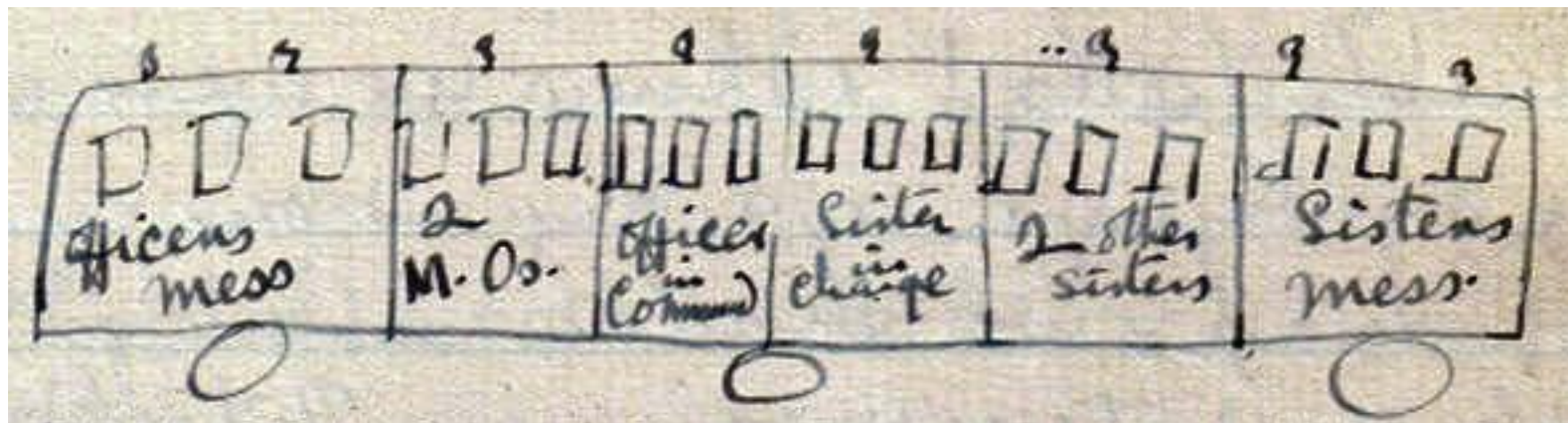
Dear Sister Wakelin,  
I was very  
pleased to get your  
letter, & to hear you  
are getting on so  
well. altho you  
are very stupid &  
ask me if you  
can return to the

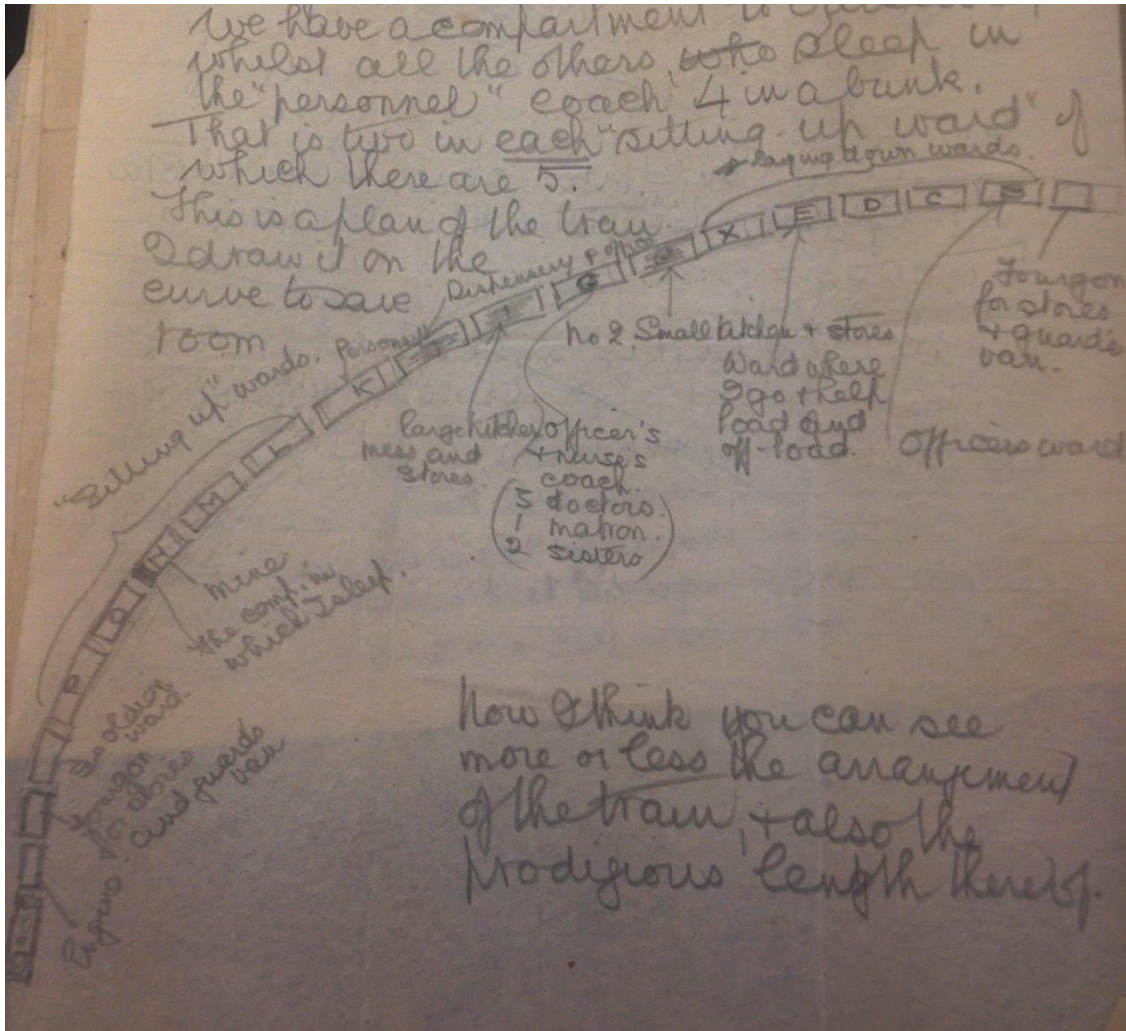
I was on "the Train"  
for New Year & she  
looked grand —  
God Bless you sister  
Yours Faithfully  
Geraldine Michelham

LMA/4253/A/002



National  
Railway  
Museum





THE 'QUERIES'



39 Ambulance Train W.D. 10  
France and Italy







B. 35.  
July. 1916. ✓  
Evacuating wounded  
by an improvised  
trolley line from  
No. 3. G.B.S. Rushville  
to an Amb. Train



46.8.  
"Sitting" cases, unable to walk,  
treated to a free ride.

[← Back](#)

## Terrell, John William (IWM interview)



1/8



Catalogue number	11044
Production date	1989-10
Subject period	First World War
Alternative Names	object category: IWM interview
Creator	IWM (Production company) de Lee, Nigel (recorder) Terrell, John William (interviewee/speaker)
Category	sound

*This item is available to share and reuse under the terms of the IWM Non Commercial Licence.*

*If you are interested in the full range of licenses available for this material, please contact one of our collections sales and licensing teams.*

▲  
◀ ◉ ▶ an ambulance train conveying 133 sick or  
▼ wounded soldiers—70 cot cases—arrived in Aber-  
⊕ den early yesterday morning. The transport  
⊖ arrangements were expeditiously carried out,  
◻ and the train was cleared in forty minutes. The  
cases were distributed as follows:—Oldmill  
Hospital, 71; Central, 65; Albyn Place, 2.  
Among the sick and wounded were the follow-  
ing members of Scottish regiments:—

31689 Private W. Walker, H.L.I.; 39020 Private W.  
Balfour, H.L.I.; 3024 Private H. Kennedy, K.O.S.B.;  
6592 Pte. J. Robertson, Royal Scots; 18654 Pte. F.  
M'Ternan, Royal Scots; 10037 Pte. J. Hamilton, Royal  
Scots Fusiliers; 2873 Pte. J. Black, Gordon High-  
landers; 273887 Pte. J. Watt, Argyll and Sutherland  
Highlanders; 20871 L-Corp. W. Cullan, Seaforths;  
49715 Pte. H. Hercker, Gordons

Where am I?



No. 13.

A typical  
Australian

- No. 19  
train.

# POST CARD

Printed  
in  
Britain

The Address only to be  
Written Here

44. 52404

Some of these chaps are fine fellows. — Many very wealthy men — but they often cause a lot of trouble because they think themselves better than our chaps.

In the seventeen months between March 19th, 1915 and August 13th, 1916 the train had covered 58,390 miles, conveyed 21,195 men in 167 journeys to 81 different places. The train continued to run until the end of the war and by that time it would have completed many more thousands of miles.

I was to have one more journey on the train, for after serving on a Hospital Ship and in a Field Ambulance as a stretcher bearer in France, I became a casualty myself 17 days before the Armistice.

On the voyage to England, I was thinking of the old train. It might not be running that day, I thought, or returning from a Scottish journey, so when the hospital ship docked at Southampton, and stretcher bearers came on board, I enquired if No. 15 train was running that day, and was delighted to hear that it was going to Birmingham. I sent a message to the train, and two of my former colleagues came on board to carry me off, and on to the train. As we entered the shed, there she stood, as if to welcome me home.





# Ward



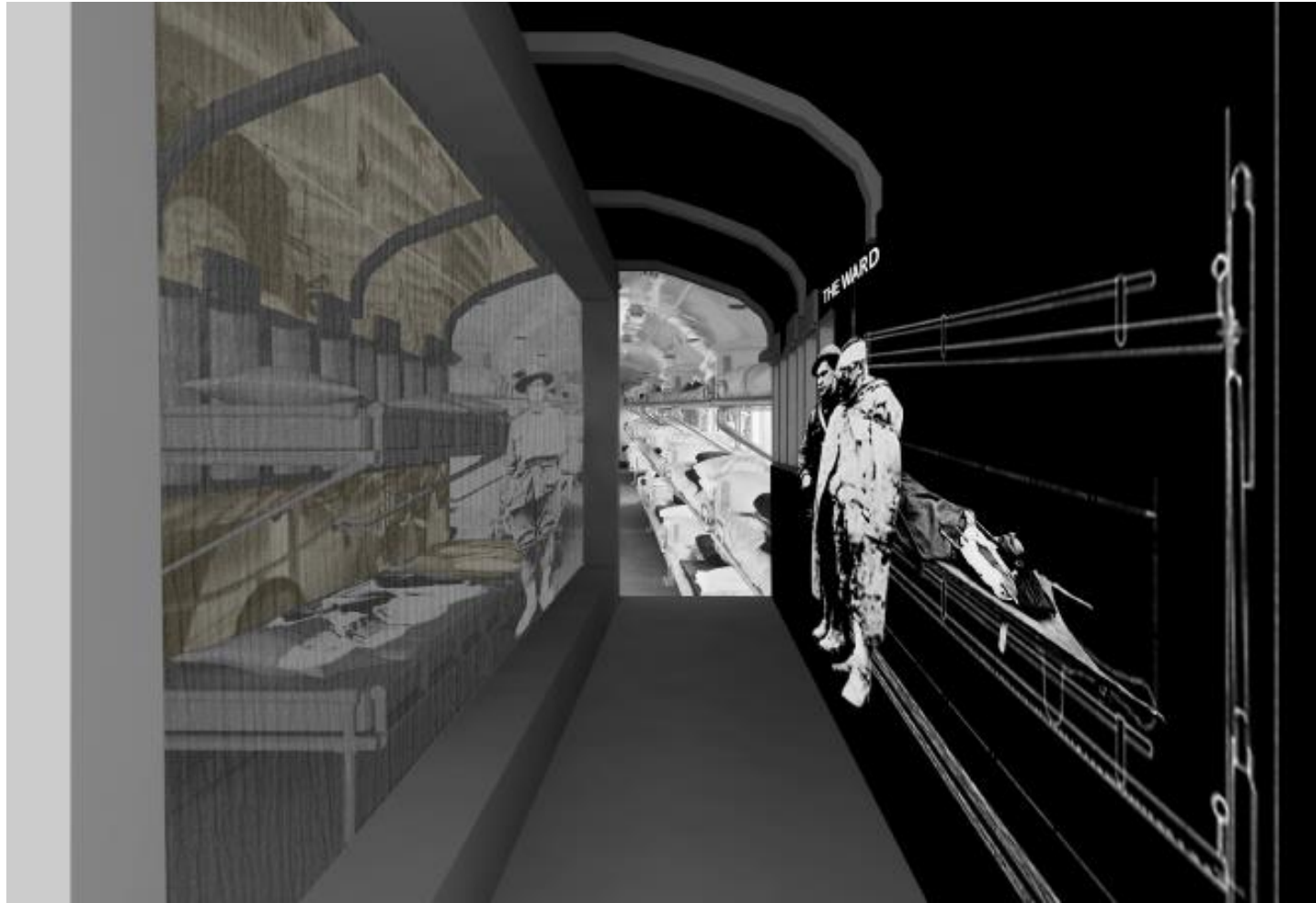
# Pharmacy



# Nurse's Mess









## CARRIAGE SECTIONS

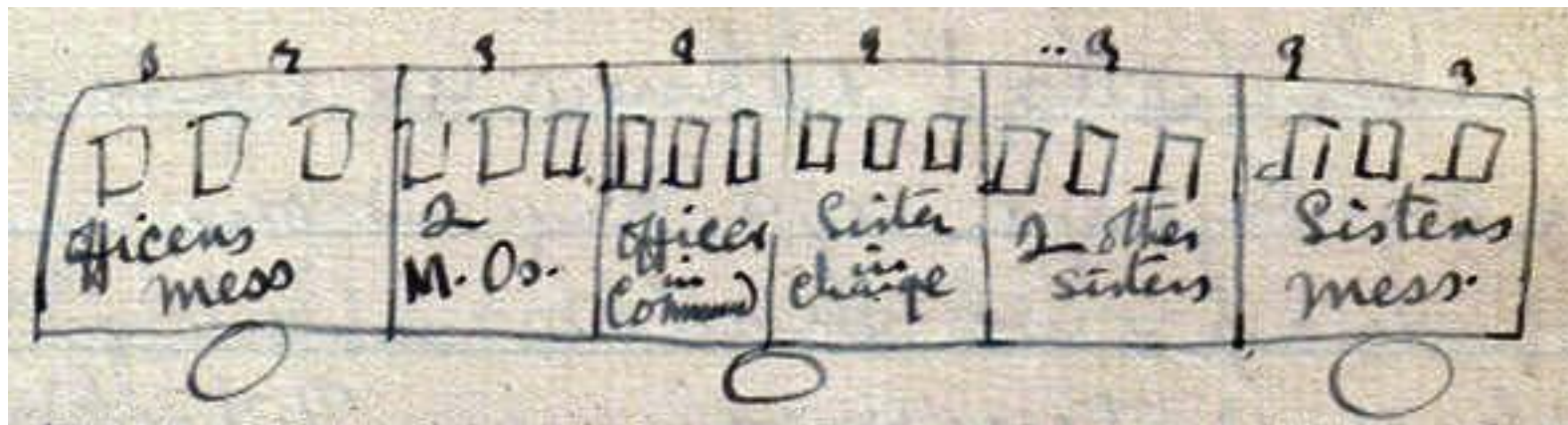
1. Ward

2. Pharmacy

3. Nurses' mess

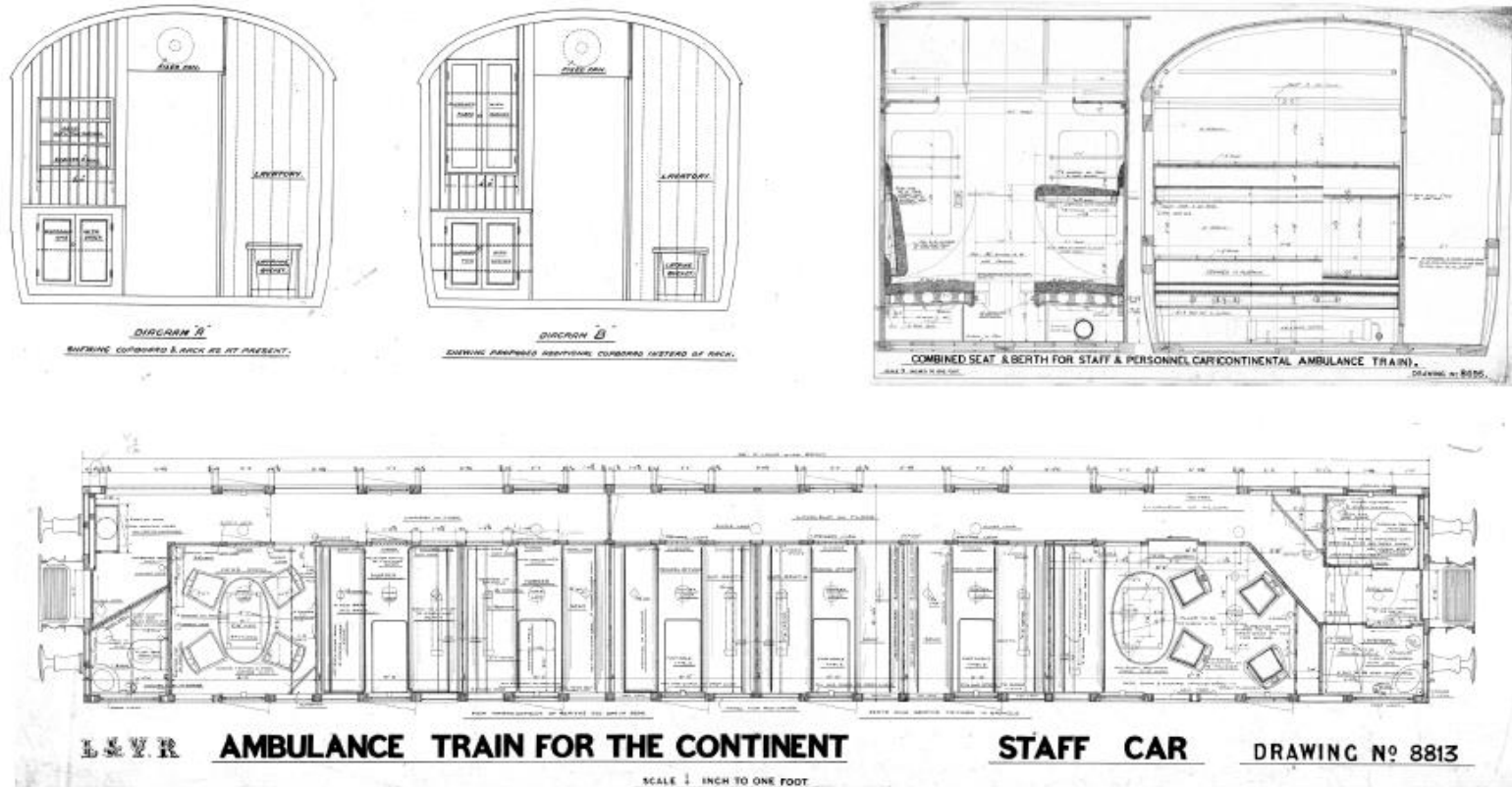


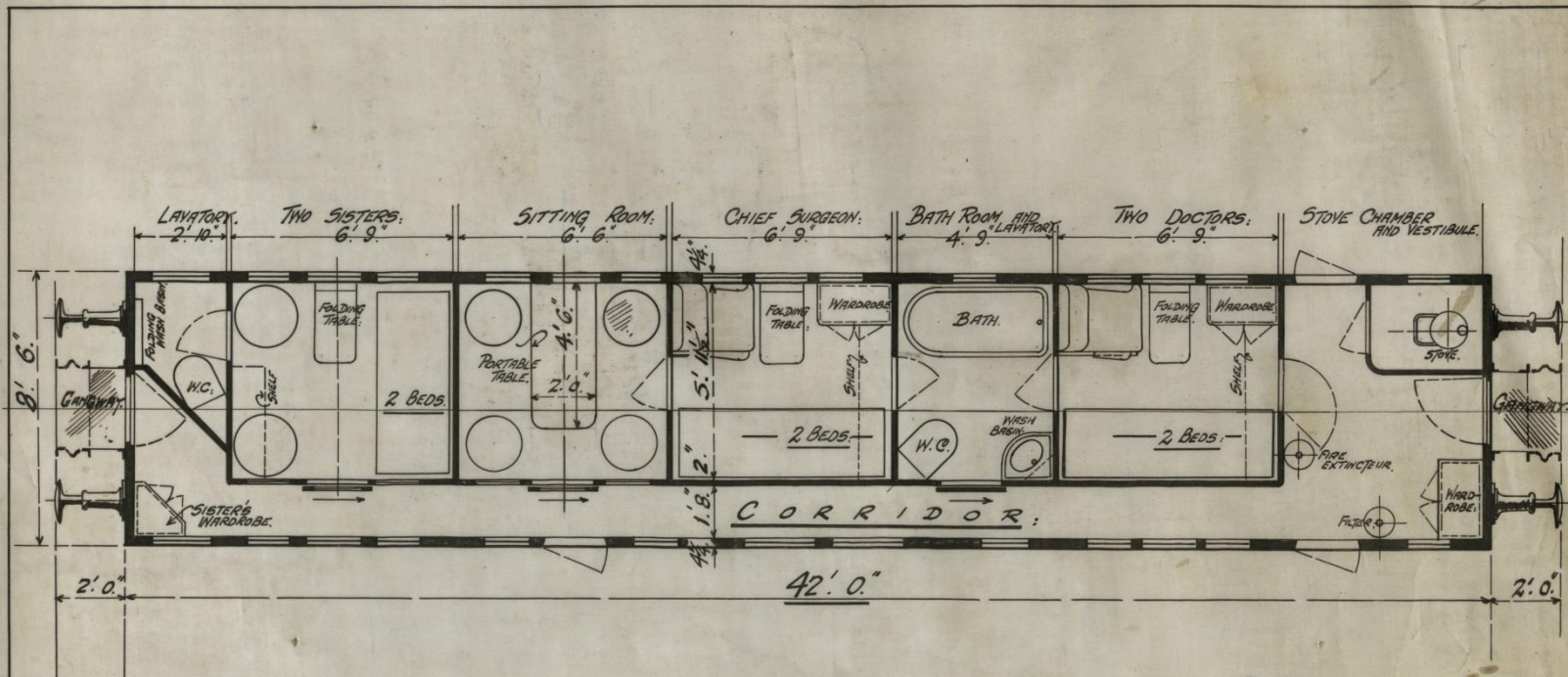




## THE WARD - NIGHTTIME SPACE

Original ambulance train 3D drawings





LONDON AND NORTH WESTERN RY CO.  
NAVAL AMBULANCE TRAIN NO 3.  
MEDICAL STAFF COACH.

WOLVERTON:                      17. 3. 1916.

SCALE  
 $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1 \text{ FOOT.}$

$\frac{6}{375}$

SEE DIAGRAM OF TRAIN 7/324.

<http://blog.nrm.org.uk>

[alison.kay@nrm.org.uk](mailto:alison.kay@nrm.org.uk)