

[205 ind.]

War Dept., S. G. O., December 18, 1917. To the Chief of Staff.

1. In compliance with paragraph 3, first indorsement, Adjutant General's Office, this letter is returned for your consideration.

2. Attention is invited to those letters from the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Navy Department, which is a reply to request from this office for information as to the availability of Navy hospital ships, referred to in paragraph 2 of memorandum from Chief of Embarkation Service, for transportation of Army patients to the United States. It will be seen that the Navy Department has no expectation of providing for Army patients on their hospital ships, which are needed for their own purposes.

3. In this connection attention is invited to the correspondence which has been carried on between this office and the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Navy Department, regarding the use of transports under Navy control for returning the disabled of the American Expeditionary Forces to the United States.

According to the estimates of the Navy Department, the number of beds available for hospital cases, deducting the number necessary for use of the Navy and the ship's personnel, would be insufficient for the transportation of Army hospital cases.

It is also thought necessary to again emphasize the necessity of providing comfort and safety for disabled soldiers on their return home.

4. If military personnel and supplies may be carried on hospital ships, this will greatly relieve the overseas tonnage.

5. It has been suggested that the ships *Trachena*, *Pastora*, and *Columaria*, each of 7,000 tons, gross, now controlled by the Quartermaster's Department as transports, would be suitable for conversion into hospital ships. While these ships have not been actually surveyed, with a view of such conversion, it is probable they would make ships of five or six hundred bed capacity.

Surgeon General, U. S. Army.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
 OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF,
 Washington, December 21, 1917.

Memorandum for the Chief of the Embarkation Service.

Subject: Transportation of sick and wounded of the American Expeditionary Forces.

The papers herewith on the above matter are again returned to you for further consideration and report in view of the statement of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery of the Navy that the transports *Saratoga* and *Bassano* will not be available for Army use, nor that the Navy Department has any expectation of providing for any patients on their hospital ships, which are needed for their own purposes.

(Signed) T. E. W. SLADEN,
Colonel, General Staff, Secretary.

[205 ind.]

Office of the Chief of Embarkation Service, December 26, 1917. To the Bureau of Operations, Navy.

For further remark and recommendation.

When this matter was previously taken up with the Bureau of Operations, Navy, it was understood by this office that the use of the Navy hospital ships *Saratoga* and *Bassano* as outlined in memorandum by this office to the Chief of Staff under date of November 24, 1917, was agreeable to the Navy.

(Signed) CHAUNCEY B. BAKER,
Brigadier-General, National Army, Chief of Embarkation Service.