Transcription of the letter shown in Photograph UNC\_001a

Gift food distribution from Australia at Le Court Nursing Home, Liss, Hampshire

22nd November, 1949

Overlooking the hills of Hampshire, stands Le Court Nursing Home founded by Group Captain G.L. Cheshire, V.C., D.S.O., with two bars, D.F.C. The patients vary from a 16 year old youth to an old lady of 96. Imbued with a spirit which knows no creed, race or religion, they are bound together by a common tie of goodwill based on a sincere desire to help their fellow man.

To the sick and homeless, G/Capt. Cheshire is offering sanctuary. The only test for admission, is the need of the applicant. The greater the need, the greater the effort made to receive him/or her. The 37 patients are mostly chronics, many of whom have been discharged from hospital to make room for more acute cases. There is a T.B. section which has its own dining room and the remainder, while largely neurological-disseminated sclerosis, paraplegia etc. are mixed and include Cancer, Asthma and Diabetes. A large portion are aged and infirm.

Brightening a cold November day was the arrival of gift food parcels from the Government of South Australia for the grateful patients of the Nursing Home, on 22nd November 1949. All those who could walk, or be wheeled in their chairs, congregated in the main hall to receive their parcels from G/Capt. Cheshire. The Government of South Australia have been more than generous in sending parcels to this country through the Express Gift Parcels Scheme and this particular allocation was part of a Christmas present of 100,000 parcels, and 100,000 tins of fruit, sent to this country to mark the delivery of the two millionth gift parcel.

As the official British observer with the Americans when they dropped the atom bomb on Hiroshima, G/Capt. Cheshire has devoted his whole life to the care and sustenance of the needy. Bought originally in 1946, Le Court was intended as a community for the resettlement of ex-service men and women. The project failed and, in its place, grew the idea of the Le Court Nursing Home.

From one untrained nurse looking after one very ill patient, in an empty and unfurnished house, Le Court has now become a registered nursing home with a small staff of trained nurses and untrained helpers. The official charge for patients is three pounds a week but this is waived in the majority of cases and the amount made up by the National Assistance Board. The Nursing Home, therefore has to rely a great deal upon private resources and voluntary help as “the kind of patients we get cannot make the place self-supporting” G/Capt. Cheshire has said. Medical attention is provided by the State and G/Capt. Cheshire could shelve his personal responsibility and financial problems if the home were turned over to the State. But he wants to choose the people who come. He wants the homeless, the hopeless, and the people with no resources who cannot get anywhere else.

Both staff and patients eat together, and try to live as a complete unit, each one relying upon the other for something, and proving something for him or herself in return. Those that are able to, help the home in whatever way they can, and in this way help themselves. There are cases of patients recovering and then remaining on the permanent staff. The matron is, herself, a patient and discharges her duties from her bed.

The patients and staff have free access to the grounds and gardens which are colourful and well planned. They provide flowers for the house and wards and a few for sale outside, while the house is well stocked with vegetables from the hot-houses and kitchen gardens. A few chickens are kept by the convalescents which manage to provide a few eggs.

Le Court offers a haven for the weak, through the selfless example of this 32 year old war hero who, to quote his own words, was “an unbeliever until the end of war”.

End of Transcription