3

When the sun rose Saturday morning, August 1, 1942, the 38th Evacuation Hospital unit's members were nearing Philadelphia, and soon they were doing what they and countless others of the nation's military forces would do throughout the duration of the war, calling for coffee. Fortunately, the railway's representative on the train had wired ahead and when the train reached Philadelphia several large milk cans of steaming coffee were awaiting its arrival.

"These were loaded on the train after considerable discussion over the return or salvage of the cans," Dr. Munroe recalled. "The hot drink, sandwiches and cold fruit revived our spirits before our arrival at what appeared to us to be a most dismal place, Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, a dull spot, but nestled between beautiful hills."

Upon arriving at the staging area the members of the hospital unit were taken in Army trucks to barracks in Section 13 of the reservation, where they were soon busy completing their supplies and equipment and practicing the order in which they were to board ship. And during the nights at Indiantown Gap the men were awakened in the late hours for inspection, inoculations, and vaccinations.

Movement orders, providing detailed instructions for embarking, were issued August 3 from the New York Port of Embarkation.

"Units of the above shipments named in the attached 'Transportation and Embarkation Table' will move August 5, 1942, as scheduled therein, from their present stations to the designated points of embarkation, by means of the transportation specified," one section of the orders provided.

The 38th Evacuation Hospital unit was one of the units named.

Captain Munroe vividly recalled the departure from the Indiantown Gap staging area:

"At two A.M. on the morning of August 6 we were given coffee containing salt, by mistake, we hoped, and were loaded into a train, still not completely knowing where we were going. By daylight we were in New Jersey, finally disembarking at Jersey City. Ferries took us across to the 59th Street Pier and after a series of long marches and waits we boarded the fabulous 33,000-ton British passenger ship, the H.M.S. *Andes*. During our shiploading we first saw a line of nurses and were delighted to learn that they were joining forces with the 38th Evacuation Hospital Unit after leaving the nurses' pool stationed near New York City. In too short a number of hours we were giving the Statue of Liberty farewell waves. We moved out in broad daylight, in violation of all known security rules, past the Narrows, past quarantine, and with a Navy blimp hovering overhead, we put out to sea."

When they awakened the next morning, the ship had dropped anchor.

"We soon discovered that we were in the harbor of Halifax, Nova Scotia," Captain Munroe's reminiscences continue. "Late that afternoon we put to sea again and quickly moved to our ship position in a gigantic convoy, the biggest convoy up to that period of war. The next morning we spotted numerous destroyers, two very formidable looking heavy cruisers and a battleship, which we afterward learned was the *Arkansas*.

"Fortunately, the crossing was uneventful. None of us knew at the time that during our crossing enemy submarine activity in the Atlantic was at its wartime peak. We zigged and zagged from cold climate to hot, and on August 17, having left part of the convoy, our ship moved up the River Mersey to Liverpool, England. For the first time we saw active evidence of war. Mile after mile, docks and warehouses lay in total ruins and sunken ships with only their masts showing were our beacons as we approached the old historical city.

"The *Andes* was too large a ship to be docked at Liverpool, so we anchored in the river. After the usual hurry and then waits we boarded tenders or ferries with all our belongings and were taken ashore. Here for the first time we witnessed a complete blackout. Make-believe preparations of war were things of the past and at last we knew that we were faced with a reality of which we were woefully but blessedly ignorant. In the long months to come, crowded with difficult adjustments and stark realities, the American mind clung tenaciously to its blind belief that only in its homeland was there such a thing as reality. War was

Eleven of the 38th's nurses are shown here in their dress uniforms soon after the unit's arrival in England. On settee, left to right, Bertha Hough, Beatrice Johnson and Hazel Simmons. Rear, left to right, Martha Pegram, Nellie Shields, Mary Blandford, Christine Wills, Clementine Mills, Winnie Martin, Elva Wells, and Sara Moran. The picture was made in a Red Cross club for service women in London.

pure unreality, a belief which denoted one of the basic differences between the European and the American way of thinking."

But though to Captain Munroe and others of the officers and nurses contingent of the 38th the Atlantic crossing had been uneventful, it had indeed been memorable to one of the unit's most popular and experienced nurses.

"She was Miss Lela Russell, who two decades after the war's ending is still at the Presbyterian Hospital in Charlotte," Dr. O. Hunter Jones reveals in recalling those days aboard the *Andes* on the way to England. "Miss Russell, a wonderful person and one of our finest nurses, had been in excellent health during the training period, but she had been seasick almost from the moment she went aboard the *Andes*. She had been put in the infirmary and was terribly sick, not dangerously ill, of course, but so nauseated she couldn't retain a bite of food. She was pitiful, and we were all distressed about her.

"So one night a bunch of us—I remember there were Buck Medearis, Stan Pickens, the chaplain, and I, and maybe another one or two—were talking about Miss Russell and what a tough time she was having. We decided we might be able to do something for her. 'We'll get Miss Russell down here before dinner and give her something to drink,' one of the fellows suggested. 'We'll get some English schnapps and some saltines and we'll get her to take that, and pretty soon she'll be feeling better, and able to eat a meal.' She just hadn't been able to retain a thing. Well, the chaplain—he was pretty strait-laced on the subject of liquor, the one we had then—and he said he'd better be going. He wouldn't have any part in what we were planning. But I was all for it. 'Well, if you can do it,' I said, 'the more power to you.' I doubt if Miss Russell had ever had a drink before in her whole life, and I wondered how we'd come out with her.

"But about five o'clock one of the fellows goes for her and brings her in. We tell her what we are planning

to do, and she doesn't much want to try it, but she knows she needs something. So Stan and Buck fix her a drink of some kind. 'Now, Miss Russell,' one of them says, 'this is mostly carbonated water.'

"So she took the drink. And then they gave her another. And pretty soon she was feeling better; she was no longer nauseated. And in a little while we took her down to dinner. And was that crowd down there surprised. Here they were expecting to see us reprobates coming in together and feeling pretty good and we walk in with Miss Lela Russell, their pride and joy, and she seems to be feeling fine. And she was. She ate a good dinner, and if I remember correctly, she wasn't nauseated any more. I don't think she had any trouble the rest of the trip over."

On their arrival in England, the nurses boarded a train and after a long all-night ride arrived at the First Medical Laboratory in Salisbury. The officers and men traveled in double-deck trains to Huyton, about ten miles from Liverpool. In the nighttime they scrambled about to find sleeping quarters, and after getting settled they were soon aroused and told to report to the officers' mess for a briefing in the facts of war in Britain.

"The following morning Colonel Whittier called a formation of the enlisted personnel to give them the same information," Captain Munroe's account of that eventful early period in England continues. "While he was talking, standing on top of an air raid shelter, our first air raid warning was heard. In the twinkling of an eye three hundred men disappeared, no one knew where. The formation and briefing were never completed."

After a three-day stay at Huyton, the 38th marched the mile and a half to the Huyton railway station and boarded a train. After being shuttled back and forth across England—they thought, at any rate—the officers and enlisted men of the unit found themselves in what they afterward learned was Tidworth Park staging area at Tidworth, Wilts County.

From the train they marched for what seemed miles in complete darkness and then, still in darkness, were told that they had arrived at the staging area. Then after they had been led in chain fashion by one of the British officers they found quarters in tents that the next morning they found were wigwam-shaped. The mattresses, strawfilled and uncomfortable, were triangular in shape, they discovered, with tapering apexes for the feet. That morning, to add to the general gloom, brought rain that continued almost without interruption throughout their stay at Tidworth Park.

"At that time England seemed a dark, dismal country. Many tents leaked, and the bedding was constantly wet and cold," Captain Munroe's account goes on. "The only living creature that seemed happy over our English food seemed to be the English bee. . . . The tasteless English sausages, being almost ninety per cent meal, provided us a protein intake consisting in the main of those inadvertently eaten bees in that dark, damp mess tent. Our stomachs most probably contained many painless bee welts during that stay. Being low in spirit and feeling that we were so useless, we sought to interrupt our training as often as we could by getting leaves to visit London and other English spots in the hope of finding warmth, a bed, edible food and a homelike bath. In addition to being introduced to the English queues that lined up for everything, we were being introduced to England and English ways.

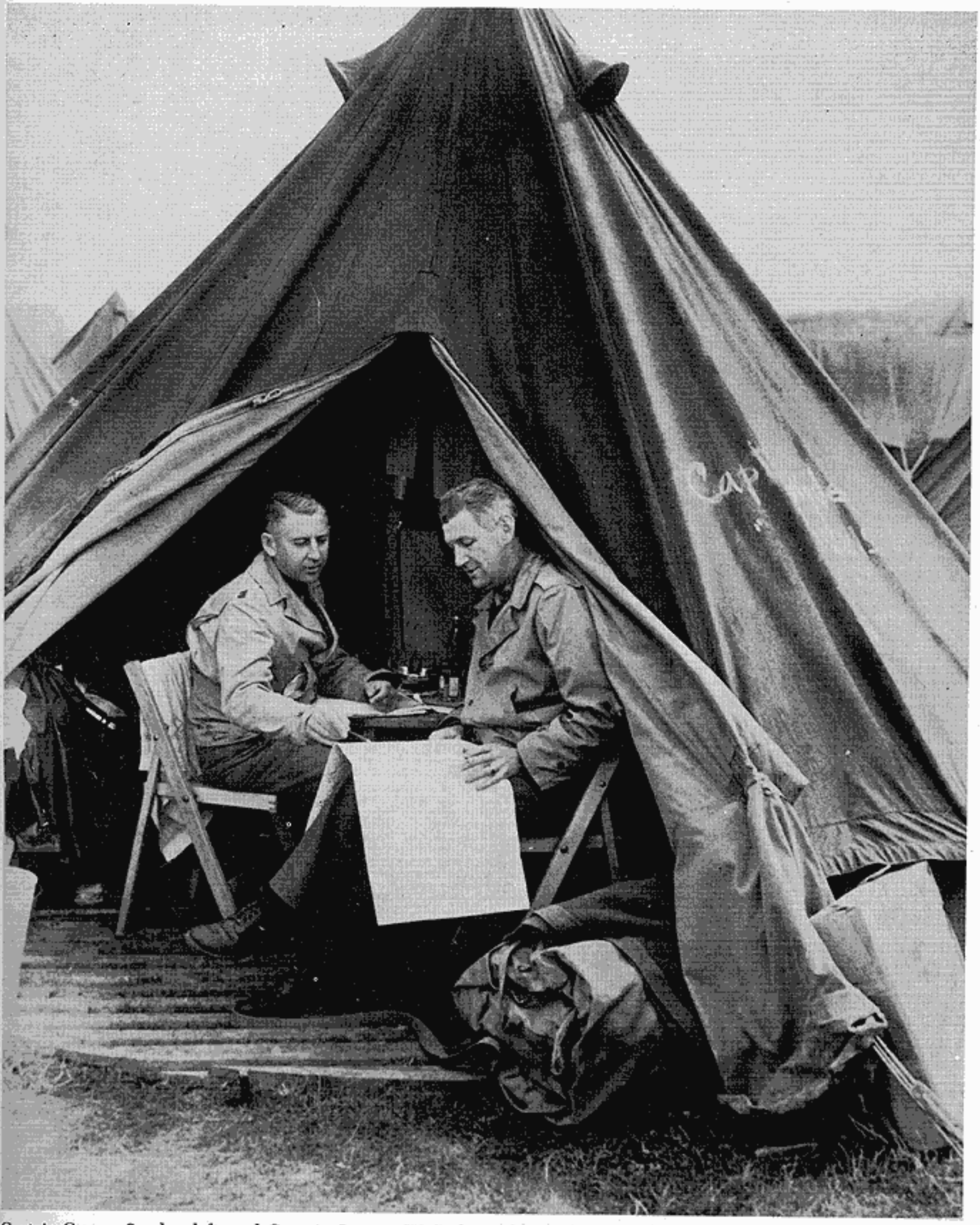
"It is hardly fair to relate our impression of wartorn England when with jaundiced eyes we were seeing a country still being ravaged by war. There was a scarcity of food and all needed items. Our country never knew such rationing as these people had endured so cheerfully and patriotically during the years before we had entered the war. And so many things seemed so expensively out of reach. I remember, for instance, that a peach sold for two dollars. The expense of an evening in London's blackout would make a New York evening seem like a bargain basement in contrast."

But even in the starkness of life during its battle for survival this war-ravaged England had for the newly arrived Americans a charm and quaintness they would never forget, Captain Munroe's reminiscences confess.

"The English countryside with its rolling hills and well tended farms seemingly divided into squares by hedges, the narrow, winding highways lined by vine-covered and flowered embankments that scraped the buses, the quaint neat little villages with their many small flower-fronted nestling houses that seemed to appear around each curve, the pubs where the off-duty late afternoon crowd gathers to leisurely sip their beer while talking of family, war trends, politics and things in general, the tiny British cabs and automobiles, the tea shops and the ever-present tobacco shops—all these," observes Captain Munroe in this flow of descriptive prose, "add to the beauty and quaintness of England."

With these delights of pastoral England he contrasts less desirable aspects of English life:

"We don't enjoy our thoughts of the disagreeable weather, the poorly heated houses with their inferior plumbing, the absence of our spic and span kitchens, the absolute blackouts every evening, those inevitable sausages that were at least ninety per cent meal and ten per cent meat, the difficulty in getting transportation on the overcrowded trains and buses, the strict rationing, the electric current that was too strong for our electric gadgets, the shops opening too late, staying closed for lunch and tea time, and then closing too early in the evening, the British officers driving American



Captain George Snyder, left, and Captain Stanton W. Pickens, shortly after the 38th reached England, discuss their day's duties.

jeeps while American soldiers were thumbing rides, the many unglamorous British girls with bad teeth and legs splotched from open fireplaces (dermatitis ab igne), the men in their never pressed English tweeds, the London cabs always occupied, the hotels always crowded, *et al.* London during wartime was much different from what many remembered it to be."

For example:

"When walking at night in total blackout, and while bumping into unseen pedestrians in the midst of the fog-dampened voices of the unseen, the small, specially built headlights of the little London cabs gave an eerie appearance of subdued lightening bugs. The monotony of the voices with the occasional 'beep' of the cab horns was occasionally interrupted by air raid warnings, but everyone and everything seemed to go uninterrupted. Upon finally finding a night spot or our hotel and after going through several screens of blackout, the suddenness of the bright lights was blinding until visual accommodation returned. For some reason, we'd never ceased feeling that an English pound note was not akin to an American dollar bill until later we began finding that our resources were just about depleted. Most of us were having our military pay sent to families at home and directly to insurance companies, which left little for us overseas. We soon found that a London visit was not 'chicken feed,' and again we were back to the straw mattress and wigwam of Tidworth Park."

Further impressions of wartime England during the first few weeks of the 38th's stay in that embattled island were thus recorded by Dr. Munroe:

"Everywhere in England one saw the tremendous barrage balloons so placed to prevent German planes from low flying for more accuracy in target hitting. The often heard expression that the purpose of the balloon was to prevent the British island from submerging into the sea seemed very apt to us on many occasions. Strangely enough, unless one looked carefully, it was difficult to see the damage of Hitler's bombs in London, for the British quickly repaired such marks. Here and there pock marks were discernible on the buildings and the more recently patched spots on the street nearby could be found. Behind St. Paul's Cathedral with its prominent skyline dome could be found block after block of complete destruction of what was London's poorest section. We were never able to understand why this erstwhile poorest area of London received the brunt of German bombs unless the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral was the air mark of Goering's men. There was only small damage at one end of the Cathedral. The Houses of Parliament and London Bridge, both outstanding targets, were practically unscarred."

It was during the unit's stay at Tidworth Park that Captain Montgomery had his first memorable lesson in war-time letter-writing home.

"One morning while we were at Tidworth Park they had an officers' group meeting," he recalls. "They hadn't been amounting to much, anyway, and I decided not to go; I figured I'd stay in bed a while longer. But pretty soon one of the officers came in and said, 'Colonel Whittier wants to see you right now.' So I got up and dressed and went down. When I walked in, he was holding up a letter for me to see. It was one I had written home and I saw that the censor had cut it all to pieces. It was full of holes where words and sentences and paragraphs had been cut out.

" 'Captain Montgomery, I have your letter here; the censors sent it to me. Captain, this letter's a disgrace! You should know better than to write a letter like this, with all this information you have revealed.' He looked me in the eyes. 'Captain, what if this letter had fallen into the hands of the enemy!'

"I looked at the mutilated letter he was fluttering at me. 'Colonel,' I said, 'I think it did.' "

The unit had arrived at Tidworth Park staging area on August 20. Three weeks later, on September 10, the 38th left Tidworth Park and that same day arrived at Musgrove Military Park Hospital at Taunton, Somerset, England, where it took charge of the Musgrove Park hospital facility, a newly constructed and until then unused British hospital turned over to the 38th for the use of American troops. Facilities were available for the care of relatively few patients, it was found, and the time the unit was based there—from September 10 to October 5—was spent largely in the training of enlisted men in the care of the ill and in outfitting the new hospital.

The 38th's nurses rejoined the unit at Musgrove Park. One of the first and few casualties treated at Musgrove Hospital, Captain Munroe recalled, was an enlisted man who in cleaning his rifle inadvertently pulled the trigger with the result that a bullet went through his toe.

The three weeks at Musgrove had compensations but also presented problems, the Munroe reminiscences reveal:

"We were indoors where we enjoyed our small but new private rooms and again partook of American food. Many bought English bicycles with special gears for uphill riding, which was one step ahead of walking. The want of transportation was ever present with the members of our unit and we did enough walking during our overseas stay to last a lifetime. Our future hospital medical equipment had never been seen and the supply officers were going back and forth to Bristol to check on our table of equipment for an evacuation hospital unit."

News from home was always welcome. Here seven of the 38:h's officers in England have been having a look at a copy of *The Charlotte News*, held by Captain Pickens. The others, left to right, are Medearis, Stith, Walker, Kendrick, Calder, and Snyder.

The move on October 5, 1942, was a transfer to Norton Manor Camp staging area, where the process of calisthenics, drilling and lectures was revived. Ten days after the 38th's arrival at Norton Manor Camp staging area it had a new commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Rollin L. Bauchspies, M.C., Regular Army. Colonel Raymond W. Whittier, who had taken command of the unit at Fort Bragg, was relieved because of ill health. He died soon afterward of heart disease.

During the 38th's stay at the Norton Camp Staging Area in England, from October 5 to October 23, 1942, the following assignment of the unit's nurses was made:

First Lieutenant Bessie V. Fullbright, chief nurse.

All the other members of the corps were second lieutenants. They were:

Hallie E. Almond, assistant chief nurse; Elva E. Wells and Ruth O. Logan, receiving section assistants; Katherine Contourso and Mildred Hustac, evacuation section assistants; Rosamond S. Shipp, surgical service operating room supervisor; Lcla O. Russell, mess section dietitian; Lola J. LaChance, maxillo-facial team anesthetist; Clementine A. Mills, surgical service neuro-surgical team; Elizabeth E. Killeen, surgical service maxillo-facial team; Hazel A. Simmons, surgical service orth-team No. 1; Mary A. Culley, surgical service orth-team No. 2; Bertha E. Hough, surgical service shock team No. 1; Martha Pegram, surgical service shock team No. 2; Ruth I. Barbee, Helen A. Gaynor, and Sara M. Moran, surgical service general surgical team No. 1; Mary F. Blandford, Helen J. Camenisch, and Ruby E. McCain, surgical service general surgical team No. 2; Violet O. Burgess, Martha G. Fliedner, and Cathaleen V. Radigan, surgical service general surgical team No. 3; Winnie R. Martin, surgical service thoracic-surgical team.

Others assigned to the surgical service of the unit were:

Lorraine M. Benante, Nina V. Brice, Marion J. Cox, Deborah R. Doskow, Josephine L. Harman, Rosalie D. Hirtz, Beatrice E. Johnson, Margaret B. Mizelle, Vera M. Neely, Gladys P. Pilger, Pauline P. Pisinsky, Frances L. Robbins, and Charlotte J. Webber.

Nurses assigned to the medical service were:

Margaret P. Bachoka, Ida P. Bell, Audrey J. Burnham, Bernice Carroll, Vera H. Dexheimer, Edith E. Guyett, Carolyn T. Haltiwanger, Annette M. Heaton, Claire S. Myers, Nellie C. Shields, Christine Wills, and Barbara L. Wingo.

The summary of the unit's service during the year 1942, as prepared by Colonel Bauchspies under the title "Medical History—Year Ending 31 December 1942," summarizes the experience of the 38th in England under "Duty in England." There is a slight divergence in dates between this account and other records, due perhaps to the date of orders to move from one area to another being different from the actual time of removal.

The Bauchspies summary:

"DUTY IN ENGLAND: Upon arrival in Liverpool, the nurses were sent by train to the American Hospital at Salisbury, Wilts. The Officers and Enlisted Men bivouaced at Transit Camp No. 3, Huyton, near Liverpool, until 20 August when they entrained for Tidworth, Wilts, and there bivouaced in a tent camp in Tidworth Park. On 10 September 1942, all personnel were moved to Taunton, Somerset, for the purpose of operating the Musgrove Military Hospital at that place. On 7 October 1942 the unit moved from the Musgrove Hospital to Norton-Manor Camp, about five miles northwest of Taunton. On 15 October Colonel Raymond W. Whittier was relieved from command, per instructions contained in Letter, Headquarters II Corps, October 14, 1942, and was succeeded by Lt. Col. Rollin L. Bauchspies, M.C. At 0500 hours 23 October 1942, the unit entrained at Taunton for Avonmouth where it boarded the 'D.S.S. Nieuw Zeeland' (P-2) the same day. . . ."

The terse history of the unit's movement from one staging area and assignment to another, however, tells little of the lively and unforgettable experience of the various members of the 38th during this short stay in England. Fortunately, the surviving letters of Captain Pickens, the reminiscences of Captain Munroe and others in the 38th provide a wealth of details in recording their experiences, the impressions so vividly received and remembered, and particularly, their sharing with the indomitable British people the desperate dangers under which they were living.

Pertinent paragraphs from letters to relatives and friends at home provide color and feeling and atmosphere, as well as factual information, that formal histories can never provide.

From England's Tidworth Park area a week before the unit left it to move to Musgrove Park Military Hospital, for example, Captain Pickens wrote on September 3, 1942:

". . . So far I have been doing well although there is plenty of rain in England and I am learning to eat beef and cabbage and cheese. . . . Find Coca-Cola available for the troops and you can search it out in London and Edinburgh. We have plenty of American cigarettes. The British have been unusually cordial and friendly. I'm getting so I can drink tea any time."

Ten days later he wrote from "Somewhere in England," though actually by this time the 38th had been for three days at Musgrove Park.

". . . I had a hurried trip to Edinburgh some weeks ago. Had time to get some first-hand information of John Knox—saw the cathedral where he preached, St. Giles, saw his house. Sometime again I might possibly get to stay longer. It appears that we can get seven days leave every three months, so I will try to get around as much as that time allows with the small bit of money I get. I was paid yesterday and drew 31 £ 165 shillings 9 pence. The pound is worth almost $4, and the shilling is 20¢ and the pence is 2¢. I got $128. The rest of my salary goes to Mary. My laundry and cleaning is fairly expensive and slow and I have had to buy some additional clothes, plus my travel costs; however, I have never been flat broke since I've been here.

"I try to get to church every Sunday. Most of the time I go to the English church, which is quite high church. Have not found but one Methodist church."

By October 1, when his next letter was written, also from "Somewhere in England," which was Musgrove Park Military Hospital, Taunton, Somerset, Captain Pickens and others of the 38th had been able to obtain leaves to visit London and other places in England. The letter relating some of these experiences gives a more detailed view of their activities as the fall of 1942 saw the 38th in its last weeks in England:

"The mail has really been coming in and I have been getting my share. Upon my return from London on September 30 I found letters from Mary, Marshall, Jane, Stowe Moody, Vinton, and a cable from Mary. It appears that all the mail finally caught up with me. It was grand to get all the news and hear all is well. I might suggest that in the future when you write you put specific dates down instead of saying that last Thursday I went to so and so. When the mail finally catches me the time doesn't fit because some of the

letters are older than others that I have received. I have borrowed this typewriter for a little while and am extremely out of practice, so overlook the mistakes.

"I was sent up to London to do some work, but found time to get about the city a little on my own. I went up with Col. Whittier, Preston White, Paul Sanger, Bill Pitts, and Buck Medearis. Preston White and I took a room together at the Cumberland Hotel where Bob is staying." (Robert Pickens, his brother, was in the service and stationed at that time in England.) "I was particularly glad to stay where Bob was in order to see him as much as possible, although he was extremely busy during my short visit. It is impossible to describe his work to you with the restrictions in vogue, but rest assured that it is important and he is doing it well. I think that I went into some detail about it in one of my letters to Father. It may have been cut out. He reports he writes regularly to his family and doesn't understand why the letters don't come thru. It has happened to others, so if you don't get the mail it is no fault of his."

He turns from the frustrations of censorship to tell of the Charlotte men's experiences in London:

"While in London I got time to get to the theatre twice. Preston and I saw 'The Doctor's Dilemma.' Vivien Leigh played the leading role. You remember her as the heroine in 'Gone With the Wind.' I also saw 'Blithe Spirit,' Noel Coward's fool play. As you probably know, the theatre starts at 6:30 P.M. in order to get thru early. Even though they start early, it is dark as pitch when you get out and unless you carry your own 'torch' you will break your neck. Bob took an awful spill when he first got here and had a bad leg from it for a long time. He is now fully recovered. The shows starting so early, you must eat afterwards. One night we went to Maison Prunier's and had the second steak I have seen in England. The other night we went to the Savoy and really put on the spread. I had lobster thermidor with all the trimmings. However, with all the talk the food is still limited but we get plenty. Bob could not join me either of the evenings. One night he was in his office and the other he had dinner with Stanley Richardson, head of the National Broadcasting here. It was funny about Richardson. Buck Medearis joined us for dinner and Bob brought Stanley by our table after eating and it turned out that Stanley was from Winston-Salem and had grown up with Buck. . . .

"Again on this trip I made the rounds of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, St. Martin-in-the-Fields, the National Gallery, St. James Palace, Buckingham, Wallace Collection, Threadneedle Street and the Bank of England, the British Museum, St. Paul's, Tower of London and London Bridge, and Preston and I even went to Hyde Park and listened to many soap box orators. They are still here and as violent and vitriolic as ever. The hecklers are still numerous and make the show worth while."

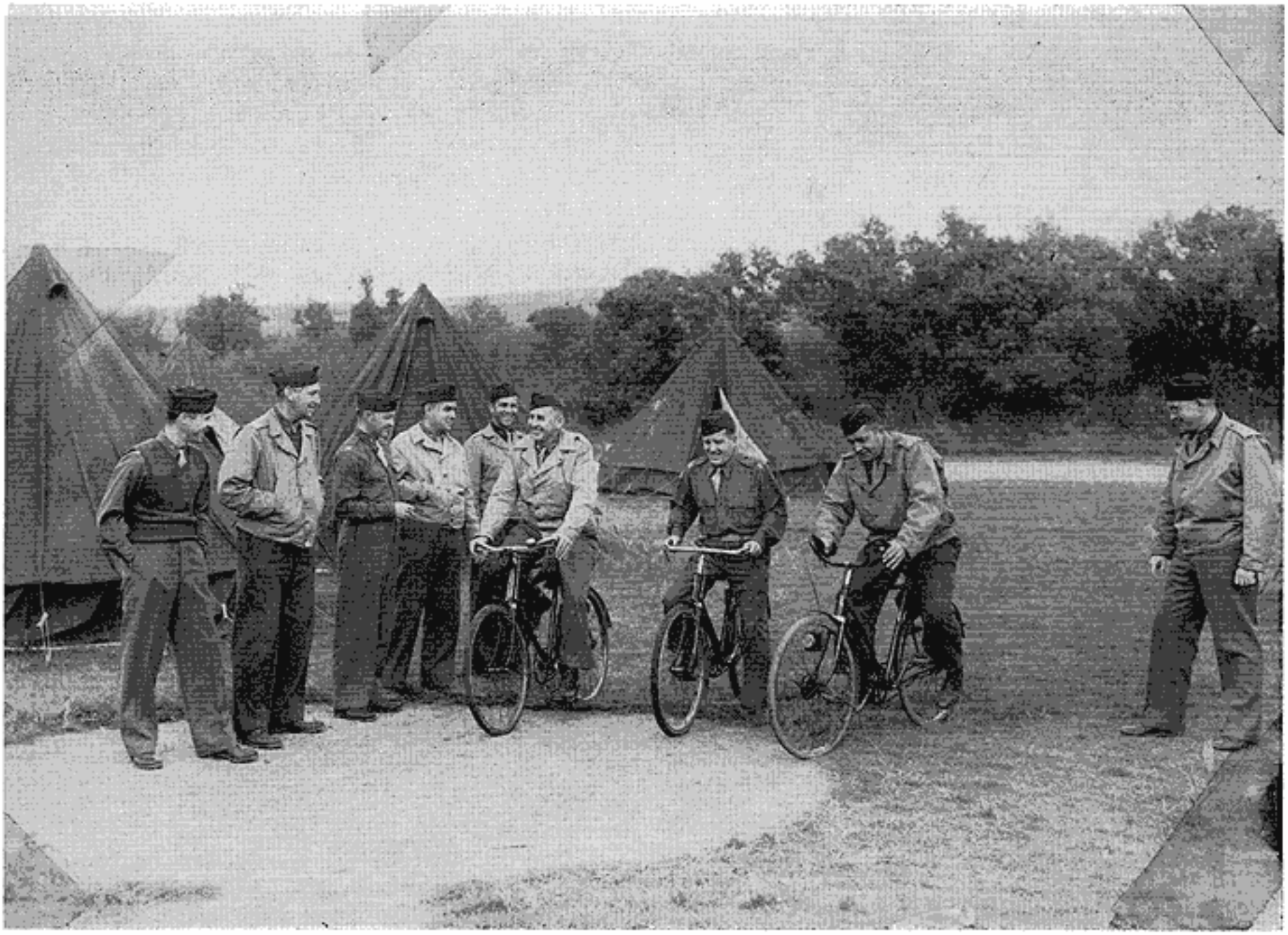
Of transportation and other travel conditions in England during the period of the 38th's stay there he observed:

"Our hotel, as you probably remember, is just opposite the Marble Arch, put up, I think, to commemorate one of Victoria's birthdays or anniversaries. All it does now is hinder traffic, which is not too heavy these times. It is difficult to get a taxi during the day and almost an impossibility at night. The subways still run on time. The trains coming into London also run right on the dot—such an improvement over our system. I came into Waterloo Station and on another to Paddington, always on the exact time we were due. The trains are crowded and very often you must stand for the majority of the trip. Your fellow travelers, the English, will join you in conversation, if you start it yourself. They are still very reserved but cordial enough if you make the first move. Back to the hotel—it is modern, fireproof and the service is good, considering the constant crowds. You have to reserve your space at least a week in advance. Of course, we enjoyed having breakfast in bed. I like the custom and am only sorry that the Army can't get around to it. When I get home, after sleeping for six months, I want to wake up and have breakfast in bed, with good coffee and plenty of sugar and eggs that come out of shells."

He spoke of his relatives and friends at home having written him to ask what things they might send him. "My needs are slight," he told them in this same letter. "I have plenty of clothes and toilet articles, plenty of food, and since we have to travel often and light, I have little room for carrying a supply. I think the one thing that you might start on the way is some more paper like this I am writing on and some more of air mail envelopes. I still have a supply but it is gradually dwindling down and may run out before your shipment catches me. However, I still anticipate the box Miss Mary is sending from Atlanta and the one Marshall has on the way from Charlotte."

He went on to tell more of London under war conditions. "At the National Gallery and the Wallace Collection there is little to be seen. Practically all of the old masters have been stored. It is really of little use to visit them except for displays of some modern things showing the war and some of its results and this I see enough of without looking at oil paintings. The changing of the guard at Buckingham is not the show it used to be. The color is lacking."

A day's routine during the 38th's stay in Britain is



A group of the 38th's officers, off duty in England, do a little experimenting with English bicycles. Left to right, Kendrick, Pickens, Medearis, Felts, Stith, Snyder, Walker, Calder, and Matthews.

tersely revealed in the last paragraph of the October 1, 1942, letter:

"Today has been a fairly trying one for me. I got to calisthenics at 7 A.M. and then to breakfast where the Col. assigned me to take some of our officers who had been slightly late for the exercise, on a five-mile march. These officers were Fleming, Perry, Gay, Schirmer, Powers and Rowe. At nine we started out with full pack and got into the country. We studied camouflage and defilade, marched with our gas masks on for a time, practiced dispersing and other things, then ran for a short half mile. When I got back I was tired, but after lunch I had to do some tent pitching with my men and then exercise again at five with supper at six. Now I am ready for bed, with tired muscles, twisted back and falling arches. Tomorrow I shall be back in shape and on the job, but now I will end this bit of a letter. Let me hear from all of you when you get time to write. Nothing cheers a man up more than mail from home."

On the day that Captain Pickens was writing this letter home, General Mark Clark through Lieutenant Colonel F. W. Zies, the assistant adjutant general, was issuing an order for the 38th Evacuation Hospital to "move from Musgrove Hospital, Taunton, to Norton Manor, Taunton, on or about October 3, 1942."

The order provided:

"a. Movement will be made by organic motor transportation.

"b. Exact time and details of movement will be coordinated with local SOS and British authorities.

"2. Arrangements will be made to continue in telephonic communication with this headquarters."

The unit departed from Musgrove Park Military Hospital at Taunton, Somerset, on October 5 and arrived the same day at Norton Manor Camp staging area. It remained there only eighteen days and on October 23 left that staging area and arrived the same day at Bristol, from which after a few hours it sailed aboard H.M.S. *Malta* in a convoy destined for overseas duty.

From Norton Manor Camp on October 21, two days before the 38th left that staging area for Bristol and embarkation at Bristol, Captain Pickens wrote his last

letter from England. It, too, was datelined "Somewhere in England." The letter, he said at the beginning, was being written with varying emotions. It provides a further intimate look at England and the British people with whom for more than two months the members of the 38th had been living and at the same time another close-up of this group of professional men suddenly and intricately involved in the rigors and dangers of a world war.

"I had the idea I might try to review the slightly over two months that I have been in England, but with the various restrictions that control our descriptions, it seems like an impossible job to accomplish. I know that my letters to you, whether individually written or where I have used this carbon copy method, have appeared stupid in the main and certainly not up to the standard I made in the states nor the standards set by my writing brothers. But the difference is there where even the typewriter might have ears and looking a smart enemy in the eye directly is no time for careless words. But in spite of the pent-up feeling at present, I am going to set forth as far as possible.

"Just yesterday I was in London again for the day. I was able to get a 24-hour pass, beginning at midnight and ending at midnight, so I set forth at 2 A.M. on one of England's cold trains and rode into Paddington station and wandered out into the night at about 5:30 A.M. After considerable maneuvering around, I hailed a taxi, one of the almost extinct animals in England, and got to the Cumberland Hotel. There the sleepy clerk told me they had no room so I went into Bob's room and waked him up long enough to get two blankets and stretched out on the floor. When the maid came at 7:15 to bring Bob's breakfast, she almost fell out of the room when she discovered me there. Anything that appears out of the ordinary routine just scares these English out of their wits. Everything must be done just like it has been done for so many centuries in the past. I managed to get an hour's sleep after Bob went to work. Then he phoned me that he had General Davis for the day of sightseeing and did I want to go along. Of course I did. General Davis is our only colored General. Bob and I chuckled over two Carolina men carrying one of our colored friends around and watching our Ps and Qs at every turn. When the question of the photographers came up I reported that I had a small amount of work to do and slipped out on Bob for an hour. They picked me up later and we looked at more tombstones in Westminster and horticulture in Kew Gardens than I had ever seen before and more than I want to witness again for some time. All in all, it was a pleasant tour but I failed to have any time with Bob alone during the whole day. I caught the same cold train at 6:30 P.M. and was back in my station at 11:00 P.M. It was worth it even under the circumstances to see Bob one more time. We made a date to march down Fifth Ave. together when this mess is finished."

He turned to a discussion of the English people:

"These people over here have gone 'all out' to make us welcome. Where they won't start a conversation among themselves in a railway carriage, they will talk to the Yanks. They are anxious for us to like them and they are really interested in how the average person lives in America. They have judged us so far by the movies, so I have had a grand time getting those I have talked with back in line. One of the most impressive things that I got here is how much they are doing and have done to win this war. By this I mean people like us who have had a fairly easy time in the last few years. The comparable people here now have no servants, do all of their own work in the house and in the gardens, pedal on their bikes if they want to get to town, carry their rationed groceries home in a basket, have their spare rooms filled with evacuated children or have some branch of the Army or the female Army billeted on them and then have time to work in the canteens cheering the soldiers that pass thru on the trains. They do all of their canning and act as air raid wardens so many nights a month and take their turns with the Red Cross when there is a raid either in their town or neighboring towns around them. They know how to dress a wound, put out an incendiary bomb, dig a ditch, pump a water hose, wash their own clothes and when the day is over, feel like they have really had a part in winning this war. The evidences of their sacrifices are manifest on every face. They have no time for beauty parlors, as a matter of fact, those institutions are nearly as extinct as the taxicabs. Their hands show that they have been used for something besides playing bridge. Don't misunderstand me; I'm not trying to paint a picture that might drive you to foolish acts when they are entirely unnecessary in your case. But too much has been said about the British not doing their part. I know different now and what I say goes for the whole blessed little island. They know how to take it and how to dish it out. There isn't any indication of weakness that I can see among the average people over here. They are slow and know nothing about mass production but what they turn out is usually very thorough. And they are plenty mad about this war and plenty grateful for anything we are doing to help the situation. Even the kids are doing their share, as I see where ours are doing. Only today they called up the toy soldiers for the Toy Town Salvage Corps. They are to give up their toys for waste metal to be made into tanks and guns. It will be somewhat of a heartache to dump that red-coated drum-major and kilted bagpiper into the salvage can, but these children will take to it and do it."

The 38th's encampment at Tidworth Park, England, near Salisbury. The arrow doubtless points to the tent occupied by the now unknown photographer.

He digressed for a long paragraph to discuss the ways of the British barber as compared with those of the American and to outline other personal experiences representative of those of the 38th's members on brief leave in London. They further reveal even better than more formal histories of the period the ordinary day-to-day activities of a nation whose very existence is being threatened by a powerful and relentless enemy almost at its borders.

"Today I got into town for a bit of shopping," Captain Pickens' letter continues. "I had my hair cut at the 'Gentlemen's Hairdressing' place up over the haberdashery. The barber finished in the time it takes the average American barber to get all the towels and clothes arranged around the neck. It is the one thing they do quicker than we. There are no fancy chairs that can be pumped up to the right height. You just sit down in the ordinary chair with a small mirror in front of you and he starts to work. There is no conversation, just a haircut.

"From there I went to purchase a can opener, a tin opener, as they call it. It cost me ten pence or about 20¢ in our money. From there I went to Lloyd's Bank to get some travelers checks. I had about 25 £ which I transferred into checks. It is easier to carry money that way and less chance of losing it. This was done at about four o'clock in the afternoon. They were slow about it and I am sure they took time to have a cup of tea while I waited, but at least the bank was open for even slow business at 4 PM. From the bank I purchased some maps that I had been wanting to get covering the war fronts all over the world. In addition, I picked up a consolidated history of Europe. I find that I need to brush up on what has been going on over here for the past three or four centuries. It will help me understand why certain things are done or not done."

Captain Pickens in the closing paragraph of this letter gives a vague hint that a change in the 38th's location is imminent:

"It will probably be some time before I will get another chance to write you. Don't worry if you do not hear from me. Worry is an enemy. We've got enough without adding that to the list. Worry clouds the vision so that we become blind to the beauty around us, the goodness of human nature and the hopeful factors in any situation. The cure for worry is faith. I've got my share. You keep yours."