

"So we walked out."

But these were not the only occasions when Captain Montgomery's plans had failed to materialize. And Colonel Sanger was also involved with him in another such incident. Captain Montgomery tells about it:

"This happened back when we were in North Africa. One day Paul said to me 'Would you like to go to Algiers?'

"Yes, I'll go,' I said. So we went to Algiers and to that big, old, fancy hotel, where everybody stayed—we thought. It was the Majestic, and was then being operated by the government. Paul said to me as we

went in, 'I'll take care of this; I'll do the talking.' So we walked up to the desk, where there was a sergeant in charge whose creases in his pants would have cut your throat. 'We'd like to have a double room,' Paul said to the sergeant.

"This sergeant must have worked at the Waldorf or somewhere like that, because he just looked Paul up and down—and Paul was a lieutenant-colonel then—like he might have been the scum off the bottom of some ship, and he said, icily, 'Nobody below admirals and generals stay in this hotel.'

"We just crawled away."

## 22

The four high ranking generals had visited the 38th Evacuation Hospital on December 11. Two days later General Mark Clark wrote to Colonel J. I. Martin, the Fifth Army surgeon, commending the medical service for the excellent work its men and women had been accomplishing. Members of the 38th wondered if, and hoped that General Clark's visit to their hospital had occasioned the writing so quickly after his visit of the general letter of commendation.

General Clark's letter was transmitted to "all Fifth Army medical personnel, British and American," by Colonel Martin, and was published on Saturday, December 18, in the 38th's Daily Bulletin:

13 December 1943

Colonel J. I. Martin, M.C.,  
Surgeon, Fifth Army,  
Headquarters Fifth Army

Dear Colonel Martin:

Since our landing in Salerno Bay I have been continually impressed with the excellence of the medical service throughout the Fifth Army. Conditions in this campaign have, from the beginning, taxed all the services to the limit of their capacity, but none more than the Medical Department.

The removal of the wounded from the battlefields has required more than the ordinary amount of skill, fortitude and endurance on the part of the litter bearers, who carry their comrades by hand, over miles of treacherous mountain trails, through artillery and mortar fire, and in all kinds of weather. Truly they have earned their place among the unsung heroes of this campaign.

The skillful medical attention rendered each patient so willingly is indicative of a superior degree of singleness of

purpose—to achieve the Medical Department's mission of conserving the fighting strength of the Army.

The many long hours spent each day, often in the face of danger, by enlisted men, nurses and officers in caring for the sick and wounded have not only contributed to the military achievements of the Fifth Army but have had a splendid effect on the morale of the entire force.

For this most willing sacrifice and outstanding service I wish to commend all ranks of both the British and the U.S. medical contingents of the Fifth Army. It is my desire that you convey to them all my appreciation of their fine work and my confidence that the future will never present a problem that they will not meet with the same willing energy and skill that has been so evident to all.

Sincerely,

/s/ Mark W. Clark

/t/ MARK W. CLARK

Lieutenant General, USA  
Commanding

To General Clark's letter Colonel Martin appended the message:

I wish to add, at this time, my personal appreciation of the splendid service rendered by all medical units of this command.

But a letter in further praise of the medical services, this one specifically in commendation of the 38th Evacuation Hospital, would be received within another few days from another general in the Medical Corps. This doctor, a personal friend of several of the officers in the 38th and first cousin of Charlotte's Dr. W. S. Rankin, was Brigadier General Fred W. Rankin of Lexington, Kentucky, a native North Carolinian and then attached to the Surgeon General's office in Washington. Dr.

Rankin had written Colonel Wood in high praise of the work of the hospital, which he had visited in North Africa.

In the Daily Bulletin of December 23 an excerpt of the letter was published:

The Commanding Officer takes pleasure in publishing an extract from a letter received yesterday from Brigadier General Fred W. Rankin, Surgeon General's Office, Washington:

"I was delighted to have your letter from 'Somewhere in Italy' and to know that the outfit is getting back into harness and is being kept busy. I think the greatest thing that can happen to our professional men is plenty of work and certainly nothing else keeps their morale at such a pitch. When I saw your hospital in Africa I was enormously pleased with all of you and with the things I had heard about you. I know that now that you have settled down and gotten some of the irritating factors ironed out that you will continue to do the splendid work that all of you are capable of. I think it should be a source of great satisfaction to the whole outfit that, despite unfavorable circumstances, you earned the commendation of two Surgeons General by the type of professional work you were putting out when they visited you. Certainly I found myself much elated at being an honorary member of your organization when I looked over your wards and interviewed your professional personnel.

That day's issue of the Bulletin carried three announcements in which members of the 38th were concerned. The first declared that "It is regretted that Captain William Evans and 2nd Lieutenant Martha Pegram have been separated from the organization, but we all share their pleasure in their return to the States." The second revealed that "word has just been received that Major Pat R. Imes was elected to the Southern Surgical Association at its last meeting." The other announcement was that "At the meeting of all Fifth Army medical officers, to be held at Caserta today, Major Pitts will present a paper on 'Penetrating Head Injuries.'"

On Christmas Day 1943 the Daily Bulletin was even more festive than it had been on Thanksgiving Day. Half the first sheet was given to a drawing of Santa Claus being pulled in his sleigh by two antlered reindeer above the rooftops of a village below. A tag attached to his sack of gifts had the notation: All for 38th Evac. Hosp.

The remainder of the first page carried the Christmas messages from President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The first was titled:

#### TO OUR ILL OR WOUNDED FIGHTERS

The President wrote:

"On behalf of a grateful nation, I welcome the privilege of sending you Christmas good wishes. The uncomplaining gallantry of our American soldier and sailor in his quiet, patient battle against illness and

aching wound is no less epic than his uncompromising gallantry in his more widely heralded fight against the Axis. We cannot wish you a Merry Christmas. We can salute you—and we do. We can pray—and we do: May God speed your recovery."

The other message was directed:

#### TO THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE ARMED FORCES

It said:

"Two years ago Americans observed Christmas in the first dark hours of a global war. By sacrifice and courage and stern devotion to duty, you accepted the challenge boldly. You have met and overcome a determined enemy on the land, on the sea, and in the air. Fighting with skill and bravery, you have already destroyed his dream of conquest. This Christmas, I feel a sense of deep humility before the great courage of the men and women of our Armed Forces. As your Commander-in-Chief, I send my greetings with pride in your heroic accomplishments. To you the Nation's prayers will be raised on Christmas Day. Through you at last the peace of Christmas will be restored to this land in our certain victory.

"(Signed) Franklin D. Roosevelt"

The remainder of the Bulletin was given almost entirely to Christmas messages from General Clark and Colonel Wood.

General Clark wrote:

"To an army in combat overseas, it is inevitable that Christmas is a very different occasion from the festival at home. We are deprived of the special happiness and inspiration which are found each year in the reunions of beloved families and friends during the holiday season. The loss of this phase of the great annual institution is part of the price paid for war.

"Nevertheless, during Christmas in the field we may derive encouragement and spiritual comfort in realizing that the principles, virtues and values which Christmas symbolizes still stand unshaken and that the preservation of freedom to cultivate them is the essence of our war aim.

"This Christmas of 1943 is in many ways the brightest one for us all since the beginning of the war. It marks the end of a year in which consistent progress has been made on land, on sea and in the air in the process of closing in on our determined but gradually weakening foe. We are determined that this process shall continue with such acceleration and crushing force that once victory is achieved there will be no more Christmases spent in overseas combat.

"It is my sincere hope that despite the circumstances of war each member of the Fifth Army will be able to

feel the presence of Christmas and, inspired by the righteousness of our cause and the unity of this Allied team, will know that with God's help we shall make 1944 a decisively victorious year.

"/s/ Mark W. Clark  
MARK W. CLARK  
Lieutenant General, USA,  
Commanding."

Colonel Wood's greeting was:

"Personally, and on behalf of my staff, I wish every member of our unit, all attached personnel, each hospital patient, and visitor—a very happy Christmas Day! Be as merry as you can, under the circumstances. And, God being willing, may you all be at home next year to celebrate Christmas by the fireside of your beloved ones.

"G. T. Wood, Jr.  
Lt. Col., M. C.,  
Commanding."

On Christmas Day 1943 the hospital listed 646 patients, 116 of whom were admissions; twenty-two wards were in operation, 90 beds were vacant, and 105 dispositions were listed. The administrative officer of the day was Captain Walker and Major Snyder was alternate; medical officer of the day was Captain McGrath and Major Query was alternate; Major Pitts was surgical officer of the day and his alternate was Captain Calder; and dental officer of the day was Captain Hoffman and Captain Walker was alternate.

The observance of Christmas by the personnel of the 38th Evacuation Hospital is revealed in part and in a less formal way than the Bulletin reports it, however, in portions of the letter Captain Pickens wrote home three days after Christmas.

"The celebration of the birthday of Christ in our camp followed the routine as much as possible under the circumstances," he wrote. "We went to church, sang carols, listened to recordings of the Dickens story of old Scrooge, had guests by our tents for as much feasting as we could offer, and ate the best meal the Army has provided since we have been overseas. We all had many gifts from home and many delightful cards from friends. The Army did a grand job in getting these things over to us in plenty of time. It was all so much better than last year in Africa, but there is one thing that expresses the full feelings of us all and that was an expression of one of our number, 'It is difficult to be in two places at once, Charlotte and Italy.' There was another expression that tickled me, by one of the Scotch wags, to wit, 'Isn't it nice to have Christmas without the inevitable bills that come due at

the first of the following month?' Probably the highlight of the celebration came with the playing of a recording from home in which several of the wives from Charlotte gave greetings."

There was one soldier in the 38th, however, for whom the Christmas season brought no happy thoughts of home, no looking with high hopes to the ending of the war and the returning to the States and resuming the life the fierce conflict had so dramatically interrupted. And this soldier's experience doubtless was being paralleled in many another American military unit overseas. Captain Pickens told about it in his December 28 letter:

"I have mentioned some of the things that I have inherited with the new job, such as seeing that three hundred young Americans get fed, clothed and have sufficient shelter and that they get properly paid at the beginning of each month no matter the amount allotted to each. I have told you that I must look after the maintenance of the hospital, a sort of glorified janitor. I write the letters of the illiterate.

"But recently I had my first assignment in domestic relations. One of our men reported that his wife had been unfaithful at home and he wanted to get a divorce and have the allotment of the pay being sent to her stopped. He was a pitiful sight as he talked, heart-broken about his plight and caught in a whirlpool over which he seemed to have no control. He had a letter from his wife back in Constantine in which she said that she no longer cared for him and was in love with another man. Constantine was last February or March. He said he just couldn't believe it and held on to hope against hope. Then the mail began to envelop him and he discovered that his wife had moved to a neighboring town with his best friend. She wrote him the facts. Still, he said, he could not believe it and drove the idea from his mind. Then just before Christmas he had a letter from her saying she was to become a mother in the early spring. That, he said, combined with Christmas, was just too much and he came to tell the whole story and ask how he could get relief. He said he had denied the facts and the truth from his mind as long as he could.

"I thought he was entitled to legal separation and set about to find what could be done. It is a long story that has just begun, but a tragic one for a good American soldier. I shall tell you the outcome when, as, and if we get it worked out. Such are the things that arise each day in an Army overseas that you don't think about at home."

During the Christmas season, Captain Pickens revealed, he had been reading a novel that would be one of the mostly widely read books of that decade.

"I am in the midst of reading the delightful book

called 'The Robe,' by Lloyd Douglas. The beginning of the story is based in this section in which I am living. It is the story of the robe that Christ wore at the time of His crucifixion. The Roman soldiers played dice for it, and the story follows the experience of the winner. With Douglas I have wandered over the Mediterranean from Rome to Naples to Capri, thru the Straits and into Athens and Joppa and then to Jerusalem and all over Galilee. What an effect one man has had on human living, but the lack of following His teachings has brought me here. It might be well that the soldiers at the front can sing Christmas carols to each other and across the line with the enemy, but the answer has not been found for the resumption of the artillery fire the following morning and the deadly earnestness with which they try to kill each other."

As 1943 was almost at its end he offered some trenchant observations, likely shared by most of the American service men and women serving overseas at that time, about the vast American aid program in the areas in which the 38th had been stationed and its effect upon the natives of those regions. His remarks, said he, had been provoked by his reading of newspaper clippings and magazines "about how people are starving over here or will be starving during this winter." He went on to elaborate:

"I read with a great deal of interest about the 400,000 yards of diaper material sent to North Africa. I have seen where thousands will die of hunger here in Italy before the winter is out. For the diaper deal, I never saw a diaper on an Arab the whole length of North Africa and I traveled from Ain-el-Turck, which is west of Oran, all the way to Tunis, a matter of nearly a thousand miles. I saw a lot of young Arabs during that tour which lasted just about a year. I saw them in the winter, spring, and fall, and in the summer, too. There must have been several thousand of them, but not one diaper was apparent. Now the French, who were in the minority, might use them, but they seemed to be as well clothed as our average folk at home. Possibly the need was there and I will be the first to say let's share with our needy neighbors, but from my observation, we could do more for those folks than try to inflict our sense of modesty on them in such a wasteful fashion.

"They would do a lot better with some good doctors, some teachers, and a lot of gasoline pumps for irrigation purposes and a few tractors and first-class plows," he suggested. "There was no shortage of food as far as I could see, of the vital necessities. Here in Italy they have been short of some things like salt and beef and flour, but as yet I have not seen anyone who was starving and I don't think there will be any. They still have enough flour for their beloved spaghetti, and there are

plenty of fresh vegetables, fruits, nuts, and now, fish. If they are left alone, they will provide for themselves without becoming public charges.

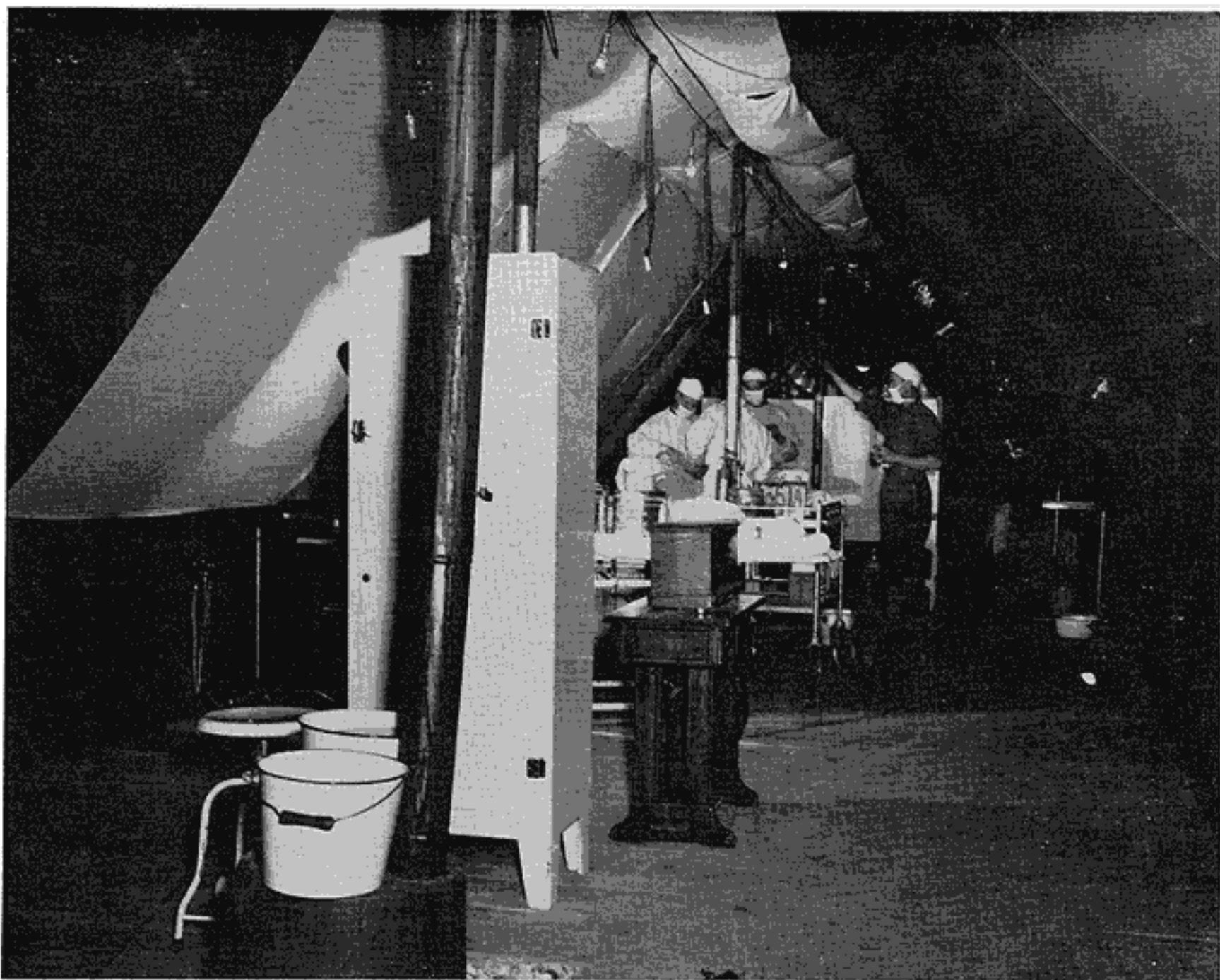
"Over here when they get hungry they begin working rather than going to the government. Right here in our camp they plow right up to the edge of the tent and plant grain. They try to graze their cattle throughout our hospital area if we don't run them out. Back of our officers' row of tents there is a little shepherdess minding her small flock of sheep each day. She stays there in the driving rain each day and takes the mutton home with her at night. I hope we don't make another WPA out of these folks, but if we do, let's get the full credit for it ourselves. I can't see but a little of what goes on, but from Salerno on up I have had a chance to get a fair picture and it is not as bad as you are led to believe by those people who write long articles without having been here."

He continued to reveal his views in a paragraph commenting upon the news members of the unit had been receiving about strikes and industrial unrest in the United States:

"I don't know what to think of the strikes over there, but it is hard to fit them with our way of living and the sacrifices we make over here. I am reasonably sure I could be making more money at home than I am making here, and there are thousands of soldiers who could be better off financially if they were there. I realize our restriction is not entirely voluntary, but on the 30th of this month we do not plan to quit. We may not be doing so well, but we are not planning to walk out. It makes us wonder, as we sit in the rain and the mud, thousands of miles from home, living in the crudest fashion and subject to sudden annihilation, whether it is worth it when people at home squabble about their wages and hours. I thought for a while that the country was getting started so we could get this business over with, but I doubt if they realize fully just what is going on and what the price must be. The North African diapers should be kept at home."

The next year, 1944, would be a Presidential election year and in the spring the American people would be voting in the primaries. American soldiers abroad would be interested in the various political contests and hoped and expected to cast their ballots, as Captain Pickens observed in this last letter written home in 1943:

"The chance to vote in next year's election must be given to us. We are citizens worthy of the ballot. The issues should be given to us from both sides. I hope proper care will be taken to see that every man overseas gets his chance to express his opinion. This is particularly true in the local and state elections. I don't think many men over here will be interested in dema-



The operating room was lined on the inside of the tent's roof with sheets to help make it more sterile but also to increase the light from the overhead electric bulbs. In foreground is small space heater that provided some warmth.

goguery. The majority favor the bonus as it has been outlined, but the principal reason for this favor is because they feel they have not had a chance to earn that additional money during the time they have been in the Army. They are more interested in it and there is more talk of it when there are threatened strikes at home. . . .”

And as the year ran out rapidly toward its end he was still using all the ingenuity he could command to obtain for himself and his fellow members of the 38th what he had been trying to arrange with varying degrees of success since their arrival in North Africa more than a year before, adequate bathing facilities with ample supplies of hot water. He had written during the year many times of his efforts to get baths and to help provide the necessary facilities. In this last letter of the year his concluding paragraph would be a report on his most recent effort:

“In addition to other duties I spent a part of this day trying to wheedle a canvas water tank out of the Engineers. We have inherited a sterilizer and a hot water heater on wheels. It is of no use to us without water and water cannot be had without a tank. It is the first chance we have had to have hot water in the field for over a year now. The thought of a hot bath even in a cold tent spurred me on, but to no avail. I must have fifteen requisitions with at least six copies of each and a certificate of what the tank will be used for and a promise to take good care of it, as if I were going to run out and punch holes in it the first day, and all of this must ‘go thru channels’ to no telling where, possibly to the War Department. By next summer we may get the tank, if at that time the Engineers have any on hand which they are not using for their own benefit, which is highly unlikely. It was a noble try at least and altho I may not get any stars on my



Colonel Preston White takes to the open air for his morning's shave.

uniform for my efforts, I may get some stars in heaven on my crown, since cleanliness is said to be next to godliness. . . ."

The last few issues of the Daily Bulletin after Christmas were devoted largely to the publication of belated Christmas greetings that had failed to reach the 38th in time for publication on Christmas Day. The message from the Fifth Army's surgeon, Colonel J. I. Martin, was published the day after Christmas. Colonel Martin wrote:

"Although our holidays cannot be merry under these conditions, I want each one of you to get such consolation as you can in the knowledge that I am most deeply appreciative of your sterling work and loyalty. To me this knowledge is a real source of happiness.

"The record of the Medical Department to date in this campaign has been favorably commented upon by our Commanding General and in the press of the United States on numerous occasions.

"The credit for this belongs largely to you and your organization which from the beginning has shown a degree of fidelity to duty that is unsurpassed. We face the new year assured that we will not fail our responsibility.

"I pray that God may bless you all in the coming year and that we may all come through this trial safely to enjoy our next Christmas holidays with our dear ones at home.

"Will you please communicate these sentiments to every member of your organization.

"Sincerely yours,  
/s/ J. I. Martin  
Colonel, Medical Corps,  
Surgeon."

Two days later, in its December 28 edition, the Daily Bulletin carried Christmas greetings from General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff, whose visit to Charlotte two years earlier had signaled the organization of the 38th, and Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson.

General Marshall's was brief:

"In its training, in its landings against great odds, and in its fighting over the most difficult terrain in the worst possible fighting weather, the Fifth Army has exemplified the best traditions of our country's fighting forces. To you personally and to all members of your command I extend my highest admiration, my best wishes for Christmas and my firm confidence in even greater successes during 1944."

Secretary Stimson wrote:

"In the midst of war the coming of Christmas has a deep significance. Christmas becomes the symbol of our hope for peace and good will for our nation and throughout the world. Our thoughts turn to the men and women who will spend this Christmas day far from their home, many on the field of battle itself, striving to bring about the victories which will realize this Christmas hope of future peace. Those thoughts are in my mind as I send my greetings not only to our troops but to the thousands of civilians who are serving in the military establishments which provide arms and equipment for the front. Whatever and wherever your station, I know that you are performing with a soldierly devotion the duties to which you have been assigned and at this Christmas season I wish to express to you my deep appreciation. In the Theater of War our troops have accepted hardships and sacrifices with a fortitude which recognizes that these are the necessary prices of victory. Your deeds on the battlefield have been an inspiration to millions of your countrymen. To the love which your families and friends hold for you has been added the gratitude of the nation. On this day I send you my greetings. Throughout America the light of Christmas burns brightly in remembrance of you and in prayer for your return. God grant that your hand may be strengthened to hasten the day of final victory. Upon you and your comrades in arms, the world depends for the restoration of Christmas day as a symbol of peace on earth."

On that same day the Bulletin announced the promotion of Second Lieutenant Eugene M. Snell to the rank of first lieutenant.

The Daily Bulletin for the remaining days of December had no notices of general interest, except for one,

from headquarters of the Fifth Army, and it was startling:

"1. Epidemic typhus fever has made its appearance in the population of the City of Naples. Existing conditions in the city are ideal for the development of a large scale epidemic of this serious disease. The occurrence of this disease in Army troops will have a very serious effect on our combat strength which must be maintained at all costs at its present high standard. Therefore until the effectiveness of measures now operative and others contemplated for the control of this disease in the Naples area is demonstrated, the City of Naples is, effective 0800 hours 26 December 1943, placed 'Off Limits' temporarily to Fifth Army troops, except for those units now situated in the metropolitan area of Naples and for individuals entering the area on official business of absolute necessity that cannot be transacted by any means other than their physical presence.

"2. All individuals having authority to visit Naples on official business will be required to have in their possession at all times a special pass, signed by the unit commander, stating the reason therefor.

"3. All organizations will immediately impress upon every member of their organizations the extreme seriousness of this situation and the severity of punishment to be given violators."

The warning, in substantially the same words but more detailed, was repeated in the Daily Bulletin of December 31. On this last day of 1943 Captain Pickens was administrative officer of the day and Captain Medearis was alternate. Captain Wright was medical officer of the day and Captain Nowacki alternate. Surgical officer of the day was Major Munroe and alternate was Major Betts. The dental officer of the day, Captain Mitchell, had as his alternate Captain Walker.

Number of patients in the hospital December 31 was 582, of which 165 were admissions. Seventy-nine dismissals were recorded, and there were 154 vacant beds, with 22 wards in operation.

Although the Daily Bulletin did not record it until the following day, the year ended with a furious blizzard that caused considerable damage and great inconvenience. Captain Montgomery in his entry of January 1, 1944, reported it:

A blizzard last night wrecked 34 ward tents & a few of officers & nurses small wall tents. Bob & I got up at five & repaired some broken ropes on ours. Evacuated 594 patients today. Hospital closed.

The Daily Bulletin of January 1, likewise, referred to the storm:

"The Surgeon, Fifth Army, is fully expecting the members of the 38th Evacuation Hospital to live

up to their past reputation in being able to resume work without delay as a result of the storm last night. Your cooperation is expected and desired."

The year began clear and cold, with 596 patients in the hospital, 115 of which were admissions, the Daily Bulletin records, and Captain Montgomery noted in his diary of January 2, 1944:

Clear & cold. Wind has lessened. Wreckage being cleared.

The Bulletin of January 2 also referred to the storm:

"Various items of personal property were left in the wards by patients, due to the emergency evacuation yesterday. It is requested that every possible care be given this property. Collect it, keeping it separated; mark it, if possible; and turn same in to the Registrar for proper disposition.

The number of patients listed that day was but 29. A total of 595 had been evacuated because of the storm. But the hospital was reopened the next day, January 3, as recorded in Captain Montgomery's diary:

Hospital reopened last night. Half full now.

That day the hospital list, as shown in the Bulletin, numbered 187 patients and the next day it had climbed to 243. On January 5 it had 245 listed and 72 dispositions. And on that day the Bulletin published a letter written December 12 to the commanding officer of the 38th Evacuation Hospital by Major General Geoffrey Keyes of the II Corps and forwarded to the unit through General Mark Clark, who in sending it on to Colonel Wood wrote:

"It is with considerable pride that I forward this letter of commendation from the Commanding General, II Corps, as I am well aware of the fine work which prompted it."

General Keyes wrote:

"As a result of my personal visits combined with reports of visits of officers of my staff, I wish to commend you, your officers, nurses and enlisted men for the efficient manner in which you are caring for the sick and wounded soldiers, not only of the II Corps Command but of the entire Fifth Army Command. The wounded to whom I spoke were outspoken with praise for the attention they are receiving.

"In particular do I wish to extend my commendation to the nurses for their cheerfulness and attention to duty as they go about caring for the wounded under the most adverse conditions of weather.

"I am confident that your hospital is doing everything possible for the sick and wounded in such a manner that reflects credit to the high standards of the Medical Corps of the United States Army. Equally confident am I that this high standard will be upheld by each member of your organization in the battles to come!"

That same issue of the Daily Bulletin announced the promotion of Captain Duncan G. Calder, Jr., to the rank of major and Second Lieutenant Bertha Hough to the rank of first lieutenant.

On January 5, 1944, the Fifth Army marked its first anniversary. And in recognition of the day, General Clark sent a long message "To the Officers and Men of the Fifth Army," which was carried that day in the Daily Bulletin.

General Clark wrote:

"One year ago, on January 5, 1943, the Fifth Army was formed, and on this anniversary it seems fitting to look back over its first year. All of us can take personal pride in the achievements of our great Army.

"Most of you remember the long months of training which many of our units went through in Africa, months when our prospect of service in battle as an army seemed remote, and when our friends elsewhere were distinguishing themselves in action against the enemy. Through those months it was hard work and persistence in training which brought the Fifth Army to the splendid condition in which it landed at Salerno.

"The anxious weeks of preparation for invading the Italian mainland and the stirring events since September 9 are still so recent in memory that they call for no reminder. I can only say how proud I was of every member of my staff, and of all our units, British and American, at every moment of the critical Salerno landing operation and the operations subsequent thereto. I welcome our gallant French comrades in arms who have recently joined us.

"It is no more than just, at this time, that we reflect on the help in our operations which we have received from our comrades of the air and of the sea. Modern warfare demands that all forces work in a coordinated whole, and this has been splendidly achieved during our Italian campaign.

"On this occasion we pay warm tribute to those of us who have fallen, those gallant soldiers whose spirit will never die, whose will was to rid the world of the aggressor, whose indomitable spirit the Fifth Army will continue to hallow until, and after, victory.

"Ahead of us are critical days. They will call for all our fortitude, all our resolution, all our strength. We have a rough road to tread, but not one of us will hesitate until a lasting peace has been secured.

"To every officer and man in the Fifth Army I send my personal greetings, my thanks for work well done, and my wishes for every good thing during the coming year. And the best of these is a beaten enemy and a lasting peace.

"The peoples of the United Nations know what you have done. They know that you are the faithful heirs of the noble, brave and self-sacrificing traditions of

their armies and of the soldiers who carried their standards through to victories in past years. You are the best soldiers in the world and no enemy can stand in your way. The Fifth Army can carry out any mission it is given. As Army Commander I salute you."

In this same issue of the Daily Bulletin Colonel Wood announced the promotion of Second Lieutenants A. Clementine Mills, ANC, and Margaret P. Bachoka, ANC, to the rank of first lieutenant.

That first full week in the new Year ended with 281 patients on the hospital rolls. The next day, Sunday, January 9, the number, with 222 admissions, jumped to 468. The following day the patient list was down to 374. Dispositions totaled 122.

That same day, January 10, Captain Pickens resumed his letter-writing. It was the first he had written in 1944, the first since December 28. His letter in large part would be a report on the terrific storm that struck the 38th's base as the year 1943 was ending. He wrote this time from "Cold, Muddy Italy." His letter provides a detailed account of the evacuation of the patients during this memorable experience.

His recital begins with New Year's Eve, 1943, and New Year's Day with, as he terms it, "an unforgettable experience." He was officer of the day on the last day of December, as the Daily Bulletin records, with Captain Medearis as alternate, and during the day he had to make a trip to the finance office to pick up the payroll for the 38th. He goes on with his account of that day:

"I made arrangements for the alternate to take over during my absence and started out. We had moved from one source of money to another. This last location was over across a ridge from us, a matter of ten miles as the crow flies, but a 35-mile trip by road. In a jeep or weapons carrier it takes about two hours to run 35 miles in a warring area, with one-way bridges, convoys, MPs and protests from the enemy of any movement.

"That particular trip was not important because nothing happened of great interest, except two stops, made hurriedly, and a quick search for cover. The four hours passed and with it came a driving rain, sometimes turning into snow as we crossed the ridge. As we returned, the weather got worse and by the time we were back in camp with our numb feet and wet clothes, the rain was coming in torrents and the wind had risen to a small gale. During the afternoon I paid the enlisted personnel and after supper I paid the nurses and officers. It was eight o'clock by the time the job was complete and we had counted our left over money and found we checked out exactly correct. The matter of dishing out something over \$20,000 and not making a mistake is one for the books. It is the first time it has happened to me and I am particularly concerned about





This photograph, another in the Margaret Bourke-White series made at the 38th Evac, shows X-ray machines built with racks to accommodate the patients' litters so that X-rays can be made without moving the patients from the litters in which they have been brought in. At the machine in foreground is Technician George Grant. In background Sergeant Randall K. Davis, right, has arm uplifted as he adjusts machine. The other soldier is Nick Ierulli.

it, since I have to sign a statement accepting pecuniary responsibility when I take the money from the finance office. I was feeling quite good about the whole business of finishing up the year with everything straight. The only thing I had to worry about was an investigation they were having about a water tank I had taken back in Tunis where some Frenchman had put in a claim saying the tank had been full of alcohol. He stated that I had overcome the protests of his guard and he wanted about \$400 from my government. This had been answered properly, and even this did not worry me very much since I had gone thru the proper channels to get the equipment."

Captain Pickens goes on with his story:

"As the night began to wear on, the wind increased in velocity. The rains poured down. It developed into a night that was not too good for man or beast. I had to be out to see that the whole place was operating properly and that the guards were on their posts. By midnight the wind had gone too far and concern was felt about whether the tents would stand the pressure.

Here I was, on New Year's Eve, the time for celebration, wandering around tightening tent ropes and getting them to put on tent flies where the water was quitting the Methodists for the Baptists. At two o'clock in the morning I thought the worst of the blow had passed and we were safe and decided to get in my little trundle bed for forty winks. I checked my own tent and drove the pins in a little farther and tightened the ropes of the guys to keep the wind from blowing it down and then undressed and crawled in. About three-thirty I was almost pushed out of my flimsy cot by the wind and it seemed to me that the tent would come down on me any minute. The rain was pouring down. The lights had failed. I dressed hurriedly and waked up my tentmate and told him to try to save our tent, that I was going up in the hospital area. I had a feeling that we would not have a hospital for long.

"On the way out, and incidentally, I just put my uniform on over my pajamas, I saw one officer's tent blow down, but I did not stop and try to help. I was thinking about the patients who were helpless. When



Lieutenant Lorraine Benante, who died at Montecatini, was the only member of the 38th's nursing corps to die during its period of service.

I arrived in the area, none of the big ward tents had come down, but the wind had reached such gale proportions that it was merely a matter of minutes before they had to give somewhere. The night ward men were on duty along with the night nurses and as one tent gave away and began to fall, they hurriedly moved the patients to another tent that was more stable."

He continues with his account of this trying, challenging night:

"This went on for the better part of an hour and in the meantime the rain had changed to sleet, the most devastating, cutting ice I have ever felt. We had about six hundred patients"—the Daily Bulletin of December 31 listed 582—"and in the course of that hour about a third of them had been moved. Fortunately, only about a third of the total number were helpless; the others could at least walk the short distances between tents. But as time went on other tents gave way and there was no room to huddle together. The mess tents were down and there was no hot coffee or chocolate to be had. Then the latrine tents disappeared. It was pitch black. At about five o'clock in the morning the Commanding Officer got an ambulance company on the telephone and they sent us twenty vehicles. An Army ambulance will hold four litter patients and with the motor going will keep them warm. We hurriedly took the very sick patients and moved them into the ambulances. Some of them had just been operated on that day and ordinarily it is very bad for them to be moved that soon, but better to be in a warm spot than

sitting out in the black with a cutting sleet beating you in the face and a bitter, cold wind whipping around your blankets.

"With these 75 or 80, some conscious and some unconscious, patients tucked away, we sent the ambulatory patients to a two-tent combination we had rigged up for a movie theatre. It is funny that the monstrosity that we thought would never weather any sort of storm stood thru the whole thing. We had a stove going in there and it was not too bad. Our emergency lighting equipment gave light for that section. There were about 200 in that group, sad looking, some in uniform, but most in pajamas with a couple of blankets held tightly around them. That left us with an equal number still in the wards that had not come down, but it looked like they would fall any minute."

About five-thirty in the morning—January 1, 1944—Captain Pickens continues his dramatic account of this memorable night, he telephoned Colonel John Trescott, who was set up down the road two or three miles from the 38th's base.

"I apologized for waking him up at that awful hour on New Year's Day, but begged for some trucks to evacuate our patients. He said they would be up in less than thirty minutes, and in that time exactly a young lieutenant reported that they were ready to help. I remember asking him if he had had any breakfast and he replied, no, that his kitchen had been blown down. I told him there was no chance getting any with us, but he said that did not matter.

"We loaded the remaining walking patients on the trucks and with the ambulances started the total evacuation of our patients to a permanent building some thirty miles to the rear, to a big general hospital. We could not get them on the telephone to warn them of this tremendous influx, but sent another officer along with the first vehicle to tell them. By the time it got light we had moved all of our patients to a safe place. The wind kept blowing and we just huddled in the tents that were still standing and waited, hoping the storm would abate. The morning wore on and there was little sign of any relief. We then began to talk of evacuating our personnel because some of the men's tents had come down and several of the nurses had been rained out and their personal belongings were catching the rain and sleet. About four or five of the officers' tents went down out of the twenty and it looked like there was no way of keeping anything up. Wherever there was a fire there was some individual cooking. In the headquarters tents we brewed up a little hot tea, which kept us warm for a little while. My clothes were soaking wet. Every time we got out to check a tent or help in moving a patient, the rain and sleet just beat so hard against us that everything

got wet. My galoshes were holding water. I was foolish enough to keep my pants legs inside and the water just ran down the trousers into the boots. It was a mess. Everyone was wet by this time and there was little chance of drying, since the rain and sleet kept coming down. During the night I prayed as I have never prayed before. I had visions of those helpless soldiers on cots with no cover and that hammering sleet and that cutting wind tossing them about. I thought about the disciples who waked Him on the little Sea of Galilee to save their waterlogged fishing boat and how He came to their rescue in that storm. I asked Him to help us and I know He did, since no one was injured in the muddling and none of the patients was lost, as a later checkup showed. I was amazed at the gentle care shown by our men in the moving of sick men in that driving storm. I was thankful for the nurses on duty who stood out like solid rocks in that storm. They went about their duties as wet and afraid as I was with never a sign of a complaint. I will ever be an admirer of Army nurses because they came thru when the blue chips were down."

About noon that day, January 1, he continues his narrative of that frightful experience, the storm began to slacken.

"And we began to take stock of our damage," he goes on. "For the first time we were hungry. The army had provided turkey for New Year's Day. They had been cooked the night before, but now they were scattered over a two-acre field under canvas, in ditches, behind boxes and stoves. We gathered up as many as were salvagable and toward two o'clock in the afternoon the cooks had some turkey sandwiches with soggy bread and some hot coffee. This we took to our tents to eat, since we had no mess tents standing. Then we started to rebuild, since we had word that other patients were due in and we had to take care of them. By four o'clock we had beds for 300."

But their tremendous trial by weather was not yet ended, he goes on to relate:

"Just at nightfall the winds started again. The one redeeming feature was that the rain and sleet had stopped; but it was bitter cold. The patients from the front had begun to trickle in and we wondered if we were in for a duplication of the night before. All during the night I kept checking thru our area and keeping a watchful eye on our own little tent. By four o'clock it looked as if we would ride this one out without the loss of a tent, but on occasions the lights would fail when a line would break and every now and then a stovepipe would blow away and we would have to put the fire out hurriedly.

"It was a dreadful night. I dropped off to sleep at about four and got up at eight to keep up the vigilance.

During the second day the wind died down and the sun came out. That night I took off my clothes for the first time in three nights and discovered my pajamas still there.

"I never want that experience again. I'll take bombing or strafing or the constant artillery fire any time instead. There may be some help for these, but there was no help for that wind and that driving rain and sleet. At no time during the entire experience was there anything funny to relieve the situation. There was no relief."

He ends his report of the 38th's harrowing experience with a modest observation. "So much," his last line comments, "for an unusual few days in Army life overseas."

These same few days at the end of 1943 and the beginning of 1944 were dramatically recorded, too, by Major Stokes Munroe, Jr., who would write of that period:

"It was Christmas season, but wars don't stop for Christmas celebrations. The winter rains that followed the fall rains in late September were in full force. Creeks were transferred into raging torrents, and everything in our mountainous area of the Winter Line was deeply buried in mud. The fighting forces, after capturing one mountainous ridge, were always faced with another and another until each newly appearing one seemed more and more impossible. The enemy was always well fortified on his peaks that overlooked our advancing troops. The heavy casualties poured into our hospital. Christmas or no Christmas, the 38th Evacuation Hospital had a job to do, and it did it unsparingly.

"The New Year opened with disaster to our hospital. When the storm came on the evening of 31 December 1943, Captain Stanton W. Pickens was administrative officer of the day, Captain Harold S. Wright was medical officer of the day, Major Henry Stokes Munroe, Jr., was surgical officer of the day, and Captain Charles F. Mitchell was dental officer of the day. The cold, powerful sleet-carrying wind from the northwest began to shake the tents with its angry gusts. As tent pins began to pull from the mud-softened ground, everyone was running about driving tent pins and making every attempt to save our hospital. The wind seemed to be angered by our efforts. As tents began to collapse and large tent poles crash and splinter, Lieutenant Colonel George Wood and Executive Officer Major William Pennington, along with the rest of us were running about evaluating damage and impending damage. Communications to Fifth Army headquarters were impossible, due to destruction of telephone lines. It was finally decided that the safety of our wounded demanded immediate evacuation to the rear. The falling sharp-splintered tent poles with canvas filled with



Shown in the 38th's laboratory studying a slide under the microscope is Sergeant Robert W. (Skin Head) Dahm.

the powerful gale drove far into the ground among the cots of the wounded patients. Before dawn, and with many hands on deck, over six hundred patients were loaded into ambulances for their travel to housed hospital units in the rear. How so many patients in the fury of the sleet and rainstorm were quickly and efficiently ambulated and taken to rear hospitals still seems miraculous to us. The powerful wind and sleet continued almost to New Year's midday. Our tent hospital and personnel tents were in a wreck. Equipment, canvas, papers and tents were so strewn about the area that our hospital appeared beyond repair. Many of our ready cooked turkeys lay in the mud about the mess tents and kitchens.

"New Year's Day was spent in rapidly repairing our damage and readying our hospital for resumption of hospital duties. . . . The hospital was repaired sufficiently for admission of patients by New Year's night. We all enjoyed our 'turkey with trimmings' dinner New

Year's evening and were glad to learn that, after washing, the mud had done little damage to the turkeys. We shared the pleasure of the promotions of Second Lieutenants Lela O. Russell, Hazel A. Simmons, Ruth I. Barbee, and Lorraine M. Benante to first lieutenants."

Colonel Wood in the January 1, 1944, issue of the Daily Bulletin, illustrated in recognition of the day with a drawing of bearded Father Time and cherubic 1944, in wishing everybody a happy New Year referred to the storm recalled by Major Munroe and described in detail by Captain Pickens.

"The Surgeon, Fifth Army, is fully expecting the members of the 38th Evacuation Hospital," said Colonel Wood, "to live up to their past reputation in being able to resume work without delay as a result of the storm last night. Your cooperation is expected and desired."

The Bulletin during January was devoted mainly to routine reports and announcements, including the

daily recording of the status of the hospital, but it continued to list an unusual number of promotions, principally of nurses. After announcing the promotions of Captain Calder to major and Second Lieutenants Hough, Mills, and Bachoka to first lieutenant, the Bulletin in the last half of January recorded:

On January 15: Katherine Conturso, Sara Moran, and Violet Burgess from second lieutenant to first lieutenant.

On January 16: Deborah Doskow and Edith Guyett from second lieutenant to first lieutenant.

On January 21: Mary Blandford and Christine Wills, from second lieutenant to first lieutenant.

On January 22: Carolyn Haltiwanger, from second lieutenant to first lieutenant.

On January 24: First Lieutenant James R. Felts, Jr., to captain, effective January 16.

On January 25: Vera H. Dexheimer and Nelia C. Shields, from second lieutenant to first lieutenant.

On January 28: Margaret B. Mizelle, Charlotte J. Webber and Ruby E. McCain, from second lieutenant to first lieutenant.

On January 30: Gladys Pilger from second lieutenant to first lieutenant.

On the last day of January the Bulletin extended the congratulations of Colonel Wood and the 38th to Colonel J. I. Martin, Surgeon of the Fifth Army, on his promotion to brigadier general.

Two transfers to the 38th of officers from other units were announced during January. On the nineteenth the Bulletin recorded:

"Major Kenneth B. Boyd, recently commanding officer of the 93rd Station Hospital in West Africa, has reported for duty with the 38th Evacuation Hospital and is assigned to the Medical Service. Major Boyd's home is in Baltimore, Maryland. The Commanding Officer takes this opportunity of welcoming Major Boyd to the unit."

The January 22 Bulletin reveals that "The Commanding Officer takes pleasure in announcing the assignment to duty with this hospital of Captain John M. Crawford, M.C., formerly of the 36th Infantry Division. Captain Crawford is a graduate of the University of Texas, Class of 1928."

During this first month of 1944, however, several of the officers had an opportunity to enjoy short leaves in an Italian region that for more than two thousand years had been a famous playground of the wealthy and privileged, including the Roman emperors from the days of Augustus and Tiberius. Among those of the 38th who spent some time at a tourist hotel at Sorrento taken over for officers were Colonel Wood and Captain Pickens.

The captain in a letter home, written on January

30 from what he identifies as "Same Place" as the one from which he had written on January 10, tells in considerable detail of their experiences at Sorrento.

"The Army finally got wise enough to find what the headquarters like to call a rest camp for officers," he begins his letter. "They established one last summer on the shores of the Mediterranean in Tunisia for officers and men combined. It consisted of some barracks and the beach. I never went because the first to go reported that it was no different from being in our own camp. But, here in Italy, the Fifth Army does it a little differently. For the officers they have taken over a tourist hotel in Sorrento with all accommodations. The only difficulty is the fact that the place will hold about a hundred people and fifty places must be held open for brass hats, so about fifty of the working class can get there for three or four days out of thousands in this theatre.

"Each unit is allotted space. Ours was about four officers per month. My chance of getting there on the regular schedule was slim and that would have been next August at the present rate. By that time I hope to be too far away from this part of Italy to be interested.

"The CO and I decided to take the bull by the horns and go right to the head man and ask for the favor of using one of the sacred rooms being saved for the chance visitor from the upper crust. This we did, and to our surprise the permission came back immediately. We could go and it would not interfere with the regular schedule for the others of our command."

He describes the ancient, still famous playground of international society:

"Sorrento, as you know, sits on the opposite side of the Bay of Naples and overlooks the sea. The hotel taken over by the Army sits on a commanding bluff and from my balcony I could look down two hundred feet into the sea. The fishermen were at work with their nets in the waters just off shore. I don't know what they were catching, but the native population was happy that the sea food was coming in again. We ate only GI food supplemented with just a few of the local products, such as oranges and cauliflower, but no sea food. It was a grand place to rest and I got the most from it. It was most remarkable to me how quickly we returned to the civilized state. Only the second sitting got me back into pulling the chain and my second bath found me staying in the tub only ten minutes. The third day I began putting my cigarette ashes in the ash trays and the third meal I discovered the napkins and found what they were used for. The beds were long and the first night I found how nice it feels to sleep between sheets. I don't believe it will