



This picture, made at Anzio, shows a member of the 38th emerging from the dugout shelter against the enemy shelling and bombing raids.

strengthening their defenses against the murderous fire being poured down upon them.

"At first we were down on the beach not far from the water," Dr. Milo Hoffman remembers. "When we got off the ship at Anzio, I'll never forget, regular Army men were there telling us to 'Step lively! Step lively. Shells landed right here yesterday morning and killed four men, and right over there a bomb fell and killed ten people. Step lively!' So we were pretty nervous right at the beginning.

"We were, too, and that's a fact," Dr. Hoffman adds. "We were taking over this hospital filled with equipment and they were taking over ours we had left farther back from the fighting. Now we were right close to the water. George Snyder, I recall, and Bill Matthews were tentmates. The first night it was ack-ack all night, everything coming over. So the next morning early, George and Bill start digging their hole—there were foxholes all around the area and one was right beside George's and Bill's tent, and they were digging it deeper—when, so help me, they struck water. It wasn't much of a place to jump into for protection. It was pretty rough around there about that time, probably the roughest time we had."

The day after the arrival at Anzio Major Montgomery added an entry. It was dated April 10, 1944:

Artillery fire awoke me last night many times. None near us though.

The Daily Bulletin of that same date, April 10, announced:

"THE HOSPITAL OFFICIALLY OPENED AT 1200 HOURS 9 APRIL 1944."

It announced further that Captain James W. Dunn,

QMC, had been appointed unit supply officer and First Lieutenant Eugene M. Snell, MAC, had been named adjutant.

On this date the hospital listed 193 patients, all of whom were that day's admissions, and it counted 723 vacant beds, with 16 wards in operation. Captain Hoffman was administrative officer of the day and Captain Pickens alternate. Captain Crawford was medical officer of the day and Captain Munroe alternate. Surgical officer of the day was Major Leonard, with Captain Sotirion alternate. Major Walker and Captain Mitchell were dental officer of the day and alternate. Lieutenant Fruth and Lieutenant Dierker were nurse officer of the day and alternate.

"General Notices to Personnel" that day indicated the fact that the 38th in its new location was not far from the fighting:

"All personnel are reminded that helmets will be worn at all times.

"During an air raid, all personnel, not on duty in wards, will take cover. Personnel on duty in wards will remain in their respective wards.

"Our 'APO' number remains '464.'

"'Anzio Beachhead' will not be mentioned in any correspondence.

"All personnel are restricted to the Area of the 38th Evacuation Hospital."

It warned the "Blackout must be strictly enforced. Every individual will be held responsible for his quarters. Flashlights will not be used outdoors by any member of this command."

The next day's Bulletin gave more explicit warning against lights during blackout hours, which were set from "1930 to 0630," and gave instructions to personnel on what to do in case of air raids and the suffering of casualties.

"Strict blackout will be maintained at all times during blackout hours," the Bulletin declared. "Each individual will check the blackout of his or her own quarters. Flashlights will not be used outdoors at any time. Smoking outdoors is prohibited during blackout hours. During an air raid, each individual is held responsible for having the lights out in his or her quarters. Violations of blackout regulations by any member of this command will be followed by rigid disciplinary action."

Under "AIR RAID" the Bulletin posted these instructions:

"ALARMS: Air raids will be announced by 3 sharp blasts on whistles or horns or by three blinkings of the electric lights.

"Every member of the command will take cover.

"Personnel on duty with patients will remain at

their stations and use every means to protect the patients and themselves from falling flak or bombs. All unnecessary lights in wards and operating rooms will be extinguished.

"Disciplinary action will be taken against any member of this command who is reported as having been outdoors during an air raid.

"The ALL CLEAR will be announced by long blasts on whistles or horns and turning on of the lights."

The Bulletin of April 13 gave the information that the Award of the Legion of Merit had been made to Colonel Rollin L. Bauchspies, the 36th's former commander, "for meritorious service rendered during the period September 9 to 26 in the Salerno area."

The number of patients in the hospital swelled that day to 352 from 231 the day before. And on the next day the total climbed to 532. That was the day—April 15—that Colonel Wood welcomed to the unit Chaplain Cecil P. Sansom, who assumed the duties of the 38th's Protestant chaplain.

That, too, was the day that Captain Pickens sat

down at his typewriter to write a letter home, his first since March 10. Because the announcement had been made on April 11 that the words "Anzio Beachhead" might be used as a headline in personal correspondence, the captain datelined the letter "15th April 1944, Anzio Beachhead."

He begins with a description of the place near Carinola which Captain Montgomery had called "the best location we have had in Italy. Green field with trees." But Captain Pickens elaborates:

"It was such a beautiful camp. We had spent plenty of time planning it and moved rather leisurely. The Engineers had been there ahead of us and put in the roads and water lines. The place looked like a well-manicured country club when we finally put the finishing touches on. The tents were properly spaced, there were fine gravel walks, the grass was green and flourishing and almond trees were just beginning to bloom. We sat on a hill facing north and a beautiful range of mountains, and to the back and southwest was the sea. Of course, we might have been eaten by mosquitoes



At Anzio the tents were set above dugouts to provide more protection from enemy shelling than they would have offered if they had been entirely above the surface. This is an enlargement of a small snapshot of the enlisted men's sector of the camp.

during the summer, but that did not concern us too much at the time. The last of the main projects had been completed and we were beginning to take things a little easier on some of the comforts, when, presto, came the order to move up here.

"We were sad and glad at the same time, sad at the thought of leaving our best setup just when it was beginning to be lived in and glad of the chance to keep up with the war and do our part where we were obviously needed most. Back to the south things were running very slowly and we had developed a bit of complacency. Up here things are never certain and the war is very personal."

He continues with a description of the actual moving:

"We were exchanging with another unit which saved the packing of all equipment. It was a question of getting personnel moved. We packed our few personal belongings and loaded into trucks and trundled for what seemed like hours thru the densest dust to get to the port. Everyone turned a sort of jaundice color. Very orderly, and more swiftly than ever before, we moved on to one of the small Navy craft, two of them, in fact. This was in case something happened to one boat there were enough people in the other to carry on. Cheerful little idea this, but the Army has a way.

"The boats were not too uncomfortable for an overnight run. I certainly wouldn't care to cross the Atlantic in one of them, as some people have had to do. Sleep was at a premium because of our crowded conditions and the general excitement. We were up early to see the most famous beach since Dunkirk. It was a drab looking sight. The town was in ruins, the comfortable villas enjoyed by the Romans during the summer season were just so much rubble. The Engineers were hauling the place off systematically to have rock for their roads along the marshy plain. I have never seen a more orderly or swift disembarkation. The enemy has a habit of shelling the town more often than somewhat. It took less than twenty minutes to get everything we owned and ourselves into trucks and out of the place. It was a ghost city with only MPs to hurry the traffic along. Fortunately, everything was quiet during the move. It stayed that way for several hours and we thought this whole business was no worse than our experiences in Beja, Oran, Paestum, Caserta, and some other stands. But we were wrong. During our first afternoon and the first night it seemed that all hell had broken loose. We had moved up the beach and inland a little where all of the hospitals are located. As you know, there is not a great deal of room on the so-called bridgehead. We are not too far from the enemy in any direction except toward the sea. Our own guns and those of the enemy seemed to move right into the next hole from me and the ground shook most of the

time from the explosions. The noise was terrific and steady nerves were a necessity."

He goes on to relate the 38th's experiences as the unit took up its new position:

"Again the Engineers had been here ahead of us and dug in and countersunk our tents, so that my little tent is about five feet below the ground and around the edge outside are piles of sandbags. All in all, I can stand up and have a thick layer of protection all around me. They went a step further and over each cot they have placed a corrugated tin roof supported by 2 by 4s on top of which is an additional layer of sandbags. Now when everything starts, we just retreat to our cots and stretch out. That is the safest place. The whole place looks just like the pictures of the last war when trenches were in vogue."

Captain Pickens speaks of the 38th's present greater hazard from enemy air raids and the anti-aircraft fire of the Americans:

"An air raid is no fun, as we know from past experience from England thru Africa and into Italy, unless it is far enough away so that you can get out and watch the show. Here it is entirely too close for any comfort and the din created by the anti-aircraft guns is something for Hollywood. The hazard is much greater, apparently, from falling flak than from anything the enemy may drop. There must be a million guns and they all fire at once. What a Fourth of July celebration it would make at a county fair. The people wouldn't believe it until they heard it. Sometimes it goes on for hours and gets very tiresome. Nearly always it comes at night and sleep is just about impossible. I am thankful for my one deaf ear, for at least I can eliminate some of it.

"You wear your helmet all of the time except in bed and sometimes there if a system is worked out whereby it is comfortable. It gets heavy and bundle-some and hot, but it has saved people, so we keep it on. No one wastes time in open spaces. Any time wasted is in tents under good cover. Fortunately, the ground is sandy, but you can't dig too deep without running into water. Sea level is not too far down. I have dug a little farther down in my own tent in order to gain head room. Then we pick up a few scrap pieces of lumber or parts of ration boxes and put in a bit of flooring. When there is no air raid we have electric lights. I brought my little oil stove along, so it stays warm under ground. It's not a bad existence if it would not get so noisy all of the time. We are reasonably busy with patients and that keeps the whole crowd in a better frame of mind."

He and his tentmate back in Vairano had been unable to take along their Italian man of all work when they moved to Anzio. He tells of it:

"We lost our strikers and the added burden of getting my own water and making my own bed (when I get around to it) and filling the oil stove and taking out the trash is tiresome. We have been spoiled and I most of all. My striker cried when we left, partially because my tentmate was going to the States and partly because we were all leaving. He said he would make his way up here within a short time, and I wouldn't be surprised, but the hazard of traveling between two lines is great. I hope nothing happens to him. He was a good servant and did his work well. The civilians have moved out of this area en masse, so there is no hope of finding another. I will have to get back to washing my own clothes again, too, and that is still worse. I never did a very good job of it in Africa and I'm less inclined to it now. *C'est la guerre.*"

During the last two weeks of April the hospital remained busy. The Daily Bulletin showed for that period an average of more than 600 patients each day, ranging up to 703 on April 23. Daily admissions continued high also. On April 22, the report discloses, admissions totaled 128 and number of patients 681.

Brigadier General Blesse paid his last visit to the 38th before leaving for the United States to be Army Ground Forces Surgeon, War College, Washington, the Bulletin of April 18 announced. "He expressed his appreciation for the work done by the personnel of this Unit," the Bulletin added, "and regretted that he could not say good-bye to each of you personally."

On that same date the Bulletin announced also the promotion of Major William H. Pennington to the rank of lieutenant colonel as of April 11.

Blackout regulations and censoring of mail continued rigid. Interestingly, the Daily Bulletin of April 20 observed that "United States troops in this theatre may relate in letters to their homes that they have witnessed the eruption of Vesuvius." But, it went on to warn, "Personal accounts will contain no direct statement or inference as to dates of observation, relative distance of writer's or any other military unit. For example, statements such as 'near to,' 'far from,' 'last week,' or 'day before yesterday' are prohibited."

But when on April 24, 1944, Captain Pickens wrote a long letter to a Charlotte friend, the Reverend C. Alfred Cole, rector of St. Martin's Episcopal Church, from Anzio Beachhead, as he had datelined the letter of April 15, he gave no further identification of the 38th's location. He wrote, however, of the frequent air raids and of the measures they had taken for defense against enemy bombings and the flak from their own weapons, as he had revealed to the homefolk in the earlier letter.

The primary value of his letter, however, is its revealing what its writer insists is a representative feeling

of an American World War II soldier about religion as his own beliefs are tested in the rigorous experiences of war. It provides, therefore, an intimate close-up of a soldier's inmost thoughts as far from his homeland he looks ahead with faith to the victory of his cherished way of living.

"Dear Al," he began the letter to his clergyman friend. "Your letter of March 14th reached me only a few days ago because we seem never to be static. Being the son of a Methodist minister has stood me in good stead in the Army because I am used to moving at regular intervals. In spite of the fact that the Italian front seems to the general public to be standing still, there is considerable movement going on and plenty of hard fighting.

"The article by the Reverend Bernard Bell which you wrote about was most thought provoking. Although I am not a member of St. Martin's, I want to reply because I can claim at least pseudo relationship, since my wife is a loyal member. What might apply to St. Martin's would be the same in any church. I am tired of too much denominational feeling. It appears that we waste time in quibbling about minor creeds. But I must not get into that now. It is so easy to throw rocks at the church for one reason or another. I had the feeling that Dr. Bell was doing that without offering too much of a plan in answer. Self-criticism is always healthy if it is backed by a personal reformation. But I get a little weary of the constant calling of wolf when the danger is not too real. There is no great change apparent from my point of view in the men in the armed services unless it is for the better. Anyone who says that men in foxholes don't get nearer God without begging is totally misinformed. The author of your article seems to back the contention of some chaplains who intimate that we beg for life when the going gets rough. That may be true to some extent, but I vouchsafe that the majority of our supplications ask for strength to face whatever is before us, and strength alone. We fight for the dignity and sanctity of the individual and we ask no quarter. Our strength must come from above. Where else can we turn?"

To the minister he describes his Anzio Beachhead tent home:

"I write now from a hole dug six feet underground and almost daily we are subjected to air raids and artillery fire and the nights are a continuous nightmare. We never know where the next shell or bomb will land. The hospitals appear to be no exception in this war. We are afraid, yes," he concedes, "but I don't think we beg God for life alone. In spite of our fear I don't think we are groveling or crawling. The faith of our fathers is truly living still."

He tells Reverend Mr. Cole that he disagrees further

"with the assertion of the writer that whatever we were before coming into the Army is the way we will come out, just exaggerated.

"I have seen men," he goes on, "who were selfish and self-centered learn with intimate living and mutual hardships to give and share. That is the rule rather than the exception. Further, in spite of the fact that chaplains, so far as my experience has been, have not been too profound and too inspiring, the interest in religion as exemplified by interest in religious services has been on the increase."

This has been true, he testifies, in the 38th Evacuation Hospital unit certainly, and he has heard discussions concerning it in other groups. "Last night at our Sunday evening service a most interesting example of this occurred. We had teased our chaplain about not having any 'terminal facilities.' His services sometimes stretched out a little long as all ministers' are prone to do. He had announced that this was to be a very short service because of the hazard of having too many people congregated in one spot. After an unusually good songfest, when he was about to conclude, he asked if some of the group (there were well over a hundred) would stand up and recite their favorite verse from the Bible. Without a moment's delay they started, soldiers from the front who were back a few miles for a few days' rest, long-bearded men who man the nearby anti-aircraft guns, ambulance drivers who would be off in a few minutes to bring back more wounded, patients who were able to walk or whose buddies carried them to the service, our own personnel. It went like a forest fire and it was thirty minutes later before the chaplain could give his benediction. There was no indication of interest in religion dying. On the other hand, it appeared to be a thirsty crowd getting their fill of an abiding substance."

Further to support his contention, the captain points to the types of periodicals and books he has observed the men and women of the 38th reading.

"The reading material, outside of our Army newspaper and a few of the weekly magazines from home, is interesting to observe," Captain Pickens writes. "In nearly every dugout you can find an 'Upper Room' or 'Forward' or one of the many church publications. 'The Robe,' that most interesting novel about the cloak which Christ wore at the crucifixion, has prompted no end of discussion. I have had two or three of my friends, to whom I had loaned my copy, come and talk about it with me, and, to a man, they said the arguments in favor of 'the faith' were most convincing. I don't know of any book which has provoked as much interest as that one since I have been overseas.

"Sholem Asch's 'The Apostle' has been a widely read

sequel. I saw it first on the desk of a corporal in the Finance section of the Army; then my father sent me a copy. That story of Paul and his own struggle and the struggle of the early church has made a profound dent on our thinking. We have had many discussions on it and it has helped us to answer the question of 'From whence cometh *this* help?' Cronin's 'Keys of the Kingdom' has also made the rounds. More soldiers have read these books than you would imagine. Is that a trend away from religion?"

His letter thus far, he continues, brings him to a consideration of "what we may want upon return. I am not interested in returning to the camp meeting days of twenty-five years ago, although there was plenty of religion felt and seen in those gatherings," he concedes. "We do want an inspiration from our leadership. I would like to come back to join a mighty surge, a reaffirmation of faith, a rededication all moving, so strong and swift that no small eddy would stop the current. I am frank to say that the spark must come from the pulpit. We must be led, we must be inspired, we must be taught. . . . I want sermons like my father preached, like Bishop Gribbin preached at St. Philips, like Bishop Mouzon gave in his day. When you heard them, you welled up inside and went out knowing that you had been nearer God. You had heard His disciple speak and you wanted to follow his teachings, knowing that you had found the truth."

He goes on in an attempt, which he says may not be successful, to explain his feeling that "In our religious education, to me, there has always been something lacking. There is a stiltedness about it; we have always been dressed up too much," he writes. "Why should it be any different from our secular schools? There seems to be a hush-hush about it that is not healthy. It's moldy. It's always been too churchy. I don't know whether I get my idea across or not, but it's too routine. I wish I were able to write some of the texts or guides for study. In any case, I think more laymen should be used in preparing these studies in order to get a new point of view. The study of the Bible is one of the most interesting in all literature, but the average layman, from the early ages on up to maturity, does it with an apologetic tone. I know that is true because of my own shyness in discussing it with friends even here in the Army when inhibitions are at a premium. I sometimes think it would be best to study the life of Jesus purely from the historical angle as we would the life of Napoleon or Lee or Benjamin Franklin or Leonardo da Vinci. Then let the power of the story grow, see the effect one man's life has left in the world over the centuries. The question of faith or the things that are sometimes beyond the mind of the

average would not necessarily be argued. The facts would see the truth. Then we could go beyond and see the value of a Christian soul.

"Just before coming into the Army," his letter to the minister continues, "I taught a small Sunday school class. My tenure of office was short, but I remember one day asking this question of my associates: What difference would it have made if Jesus had been able to use the radio? After some weeks of discussion on this subject I threw at them the same question using Paul. What would Paul have done with his personality, sincerity, and logic had he been able to broadcast to his fast-growing following? These sorts of ideas might be foolish, but I thought they brought the questions up to date. Of course, we had to go back and find out what each of these men propounded. We studied in a cursory sort of way, but I think we learned something and without the old bugaboo. Call it unorthodox if you like, but it created interest and the results were satisfactory. We need some sort of change in our approach. You and the other leaders must find it if the appeal is to be attractive. We can continue to go to Sunday school because mama makes us, but that is not the answer when the control is gone. I don't know the answer, but there is one.

"I hope I haven't tired you with too much talk," he concludes the unusual letter from the war front in Italy. "I just wanted to visit a while in answer to your gracious letter."

When the 38th Evacuation Hospital unit sailed from the United States for England in midsummer of 1942, the members had specific and rigid instructions about what they could and could not take with them. One thing they could not carry, for example, was a camera. They had to remove the unit number, too, from every record and every piece of correspondence. No one in England was to know who or what they were.

But now, less than two years later, the situation had changed greatly. Captain Pickens in his letter home, written April 28, 1944, speaks of the change:

"Now, of course, the 38th is almost everywhere, on every piece of mail, in a lot of magazines, in the newspapers and sometimes over the radio. In addition, we hurry out as soon as we set up our camp and put up road signs directing traffic to us. At every crossroads you will find a big Red Cross and a 38th Evac painted on an arrow pointing toward our setup. We advertise to the world that we are here."

Another item they were forbidden to bring along to England was a radio.

"Now, as the war progresses, there are many radios

in our camp," Captain Pickens writes. "I don't have one myself but I hear those put out by the Special Service section of the Army or those of my friends. They are on all sides of me and one which bellows loudly at the mess. We tell our time and set our watches when BBC comes on with Double British Summer Time. We hear the broadcasts from the States when they are relayed from London, rarely when they come direct. We even have a broadcasting station here on the beachhead. Just the other day they broadcast from here to the States. One of my friends, Carey Dowd, with the Signal Corps, helped in setting it up. He was amused, after having heard conversation with New York all morning, to hear the announcer there say that 'Now, if we are able, we will take you to Anzio.' No shells landed during the broadcast, so it was not as real as it could have been."

It was in the spring of 1944, too, that Axis Sally was being widely heard and written about in the Allied press. In his April 28 letter Captain Pickens gives an overseas view of the Axis propagandist, a picture of Axis Sally as she was envisioned by the American soldiers in the battle regions:

"One of the more amusing broadcasts to which we listen is one put on by the Germans. They are still putting out propaganda and to the average American soldier it sometimes measures up to Bob Hope. The particular program which interests us is put on by one who calls herself Sally. Sally has a nice, sweet voice, rather intimate sounding, typically American. She has a collection of the latest dance records from the States and intersperses her conversation with snappy tunes. She also has a small orchestra which is slightly better than mediocre. I think the program comes from Rome, the reception is so good here. She tells stories, puts on little dramas, gives the names and messages of prisoners.

"A typical prisoner report sounds like this: 'Private Joe Doakes, service number 35592784, whose mother lives at 921 Maple Street, Oakville, Michigan, sends this message to her: "I am well and happy as a prisoner of war. Don't worry about me. Hope to see you soon. Love." Then Sally will say, 'Now, boys, some of you take that down and send the message on to Joe's mother, some of you in his old outfit.' She is very chummy and chatty. Then will come a hot tune from Glenn Miller's orchestra. When that is finished, she will say in her most visiting manner, 'Boys, wouldn't it be nice to be home again and hear some good music like that and go to a dance again?' Her two associates, two men, obviously read their script. It couldn't be that ragged otherwise. One speaks with a decided accent and very guttural. They add the fun to the programs with their attempt to sound like the soap operas. By

the way, do they still have soap operas back home? No one ever mentions those sorts of things."

The Daily Bulletin of April 20 discloses that Captain Pickens was administrative officer of the day on that date. In his letter he refers to Axis Sally's broadcasts early the next morning:

"The other morning at six, after a very harassing night as OD, I listened to one of Sally's Little Dramas. We had three air raids, which took up the greater part of the night, and I had not bothered to go to bed. Sally said she was going to interview an American general from the Engineer Corps. The general was imported, since he didn't sound like her usual associates. He had a voice which reminded me of Andy in Amos and Andy when he used to say 'hol' de phone.' Sally said she had heard he was working on a new project and would he tell her about it. In his big bass voice he said he was designing a bridge that would reach from the beachhead to Staten Island.

"What is the purpose of the bridge?" asked Sally.

"So the boys can walk home on their furloughs," said the general.

"You know that won't work," said Sally. And the general, in a surprised tone, said, "You think not?"

"Well," said he, "men, just cancel that order I just gave you for the bridge."

In another broadcast, he related, Sally announced that she was celebrating the first quarter of a year spent by the American forces on the beachhead.

"She had a cake which she cut and then said she would save the remaining three-fourths for us and we could have a quarter each time she celebrated. She has often said that the beachhead was the largest German prison camp in the world. It was self-supporting, got its own food and gasoline, ran its own hospitals and generally took care of itself. All they had to do was keep a small patrol around the outer edge and occasionally smack us once in awhile with a few shells to keep us quiet.

"If she keeps that sort of junk up she will make this crowd mad and they will cut loose and run on up to Rome. I hope she keeps it up. She gives us the news and continuously cautions us against taking the Russian reports too seriously. She says they have dropped back, yes, and the Russians have come forward, but when they get ready to stop, it will be just like they stopped at Cassino and at the beachhead. She says they have to get ready for the boys coming across the channel. It is all very entertaining and amusing. I'm sorry you can't hear it. And to think, no one puts in an advertising plug each fifteen minutes. What a good spot going to waste."

He explained that the din around him had contributed to the poor typing of the letter. "The artillery duel

is on and the typewriter shakes with each shell that takes off or lands. Too, it is not conducive to regular thinking. Our big boys are at it heavy and they make an awful noise and the earth rocks with each explosion. It has a certain amount of comfort with it, however," he concludes his report, "in spite of the shakes it produces."

The day the letter was written, April 28, the Daily Bulletin announced the welcoming to the 38th of Lieutenant Colonel Granberry D. Boyd, Jr., to the organization. That day the hospital had 666 patients. The Bulletin listed 67 admissions and 63 dispositions, with 334 vacant beds. Two days later, as April ended, the hospital roll numbered 536. Sixty-two patients were admitted, but 207 dispositions were recorded, so that May began with 571 patients—85 admitted, 50 dispositions.

The Daily Bulletin of Wednesday, May 17, announced that the Standard Operating Procedure of the 38th Evacuation Hospital "has been completed and will be distributed today. All key personnel are held responsible for reading, absorbing its instructions, and compliance with same. Section Chiefs and Section Leaders are expected to make personnel in their departments familiar with the contents of this SOP."

The Bulletin that day repeated the warning often made before, particularly since the unit's arrival in Italy, against lights at night:

It is again called to the attention of all personnel that each individual is responsible for the blackout of his or her quarters. There have been repeated violations, and in the future drastic action will be taken against offenders.

The use of flashlights in the area is a flagrant violation of blackout regulations. Violators will be subject to disciplinary action.

How stringent these blackout regulations were and how blacked-out the hospital was during this period at Anzio is revealed in a letter written the Sunday after the Bulletin notice was carried. The date was May 21, 1944, and the letter, written by Captain Pickens, located the unit at "Anzio Beachhead."

"It has been a long time since I remember being in the complete black" he began. "Even in Cornelius, I remember we had oil lamps and electricity from there on. That was before the second war, I mean. Since leaving the States there has been little light shown at night around where I have been living. I recall the bright lights of Tangiers when we passed thru the Straits of Gibraltar. That was the last time I saw any lights outdoors. In England they have small green lights to move traffic and an occasional blue light to show the entrance to a building, but nothing else. All thru Africa we were kept in the dark. Even in Tunis



Movement from one camp site to the next was made easier for the hospital's pharmacy by transporting the drugs and medicines in packing cases that could be set up to serve as shelves. "I'd throw a blanket in the case to serve as packing during the moving," Pharmacist Joe Neil reveals, "and when we set up in the new place I'd take out the blanket and be in business."

after the defeat of the Axis, all lights were out at night. In Italy, everything has been kept dark."

He goes on to explain:

"But the blackest place on earth is the beachhead. Here there is no question because the enemy can see any light that shows if the smoke screen has been blown away by a shifting wind. The guards challenge you if you inadvertently go out of a tent with a cigarette lighted. They sometimes shoot to make their warning more emphatic. Trucks and jeeps and tanks move along the road with a wee single light in front and a red tail light, neither visible for more than a hundred yards. We have built blackout entrances to our tents and hung canvas or blankets to hide the light. We patch up the holes made from the small flak every morning after an air raid so the light won't shine thru at night.

"When the moon is out and it is clear, it is fairly easy to move around the camp without stumbling over a tent rope or falling into a drain ditch. But when the moon is gone and the smoke screen heavy, there is not even the small silhouette of a tent or a trash can or anything to guide you. We walk slowly or from memory or just feel our way along inch by inch.

"In the middle of our camp there is a wide road in the sand and we walk there with ease. The other night I was walking along with the corporal of the guard just after midnight. A group of our enlisted men was coming from the operating room and making their way to their midnight supper at the mess. They could hear us talking and we could hear them, but neither of us could see the other. There was not a shadow of a shadow. It was pitch black. Then out of the inky blackness came a resounding shout from the other group, 'FORE!' We headed to one side and passed without bumping, like the proverbial ships in the night."

Sometimes during artillery bombardments members of the 38th were able to get about by moving in the flashes from the firing. "The other night," his letter went on, "I climbed out of my hole to watch a thirty-minute barrage by our guns at a forward position. They flashed around the whole perimeter of the beachhead, a huge semicircle of white and reddish flares, a terrifying sight when combined with the rumblings and sounds of heavy doors slamming. Fortunately, they were headed the other way. You don't watch it when it's headed this way, and you can tell by the sound which way it's going. There is a sickening whine or whistle to those headed toward the sea and the explosions are like a thousand blastings.

"There is a story about two Negroes, working down at the ration depot, who talked at great length about the shells headed in this direction. One of them said

to the other, 'Joe, eve' time I hears one of them shells comin' in my direction, it jes' talks to me.'

"Zat so?" Joe said. "What does she say?"

"She says, 'Joe, youc^{oooooooooooo} ain't goin' to git to Ala-BAM!'"

"That is about as graphic a description of the sound as you could get, and it leaves you tight inside," he adds. "Fortunately, it doesn't go on all the time, otherwise it might result in more psychopathic cases. We have a number of them pass thru our hospital. There were some among the personnel of the hospital we relieved here. The shelling has been a little too close for comfort."

He tells of one of the men who after a heavy shelling got out his clarinet and proceeded to go through the motions of a concert rendition, except that no sound came from his instrument. The next day he did the same thing, and the next. When on the third day his buddies were about to tie him up in a strait jacket, he explained to them that he didn't have a reed in his clarinet and while he was waiting to receive one from home was simply practicing his fingering.

The Daily Bulletin the next day after the captain wrote his letter home—Monday, May 22, 1944—announced that the commanding officer "takes pleasure in welcoming Captain Francis G. Genin to the organization. Captain Genin has been assigned to the EENT Clinic of the Surgical Service."

This day marked the end of a four-month period evaluated by another member of the 38th on his return home. Major Munroe in summarizing the work of the American evacuation hospitals in the area northeast of Nettuno from January 22 to May 22, 1944, revealed that despite the difficulties of the situation, they participated in the successful evacuation by sea of 23,860 American casualties and 9,203 British casualties.

Major Munroe's account of the Anzio beachhead experiences of the Charlotte unit provides an interesting and important view paralleling those offered by other members of the 38th.

"Due to the tremendous difficulties of the Fifth Army against a wiry, strong enemy force in the face of such difficult terrain and inclement weather, its northward progress in the Italy campaign was slow," he observed. The launching of the Anzio Beachhead Operation Shingle was planned to coincide with the attack on the Winter Line, but the proposed progress toward the Winter Line had not reached anticipated plans. This area, in fact, would be one of the most bitterly contested sectors of the Italian campaign. Operation

Shingle had reached an eventual strength of over 100,000 men when at 0500, 22 January, 1944, on a black night the Allied assault convoy of 50,000 men dropped anchor."

He went on to describe the subsequent action:

"The assault crafts headed toward the beach. Promptly at 11 hours, 0200, the first crafts reached the beach and collected themselves for battle. The beachhead landing surprised the enemy and there was no enemy to meet them. Much air support was supplied. Though the enemy had completely failed to foresee our landing at Anzio and had apparently expected it either at Gaeta or Leghorn, he quickly recovered and directed to Anzio larger portions of the reserve he was moving from the Rome area, the Adriatic, and North Italy to bolster the sagging Gustav Line. By 24 January the pattern of enemy reaction had taken powerful shape about the Anzio beachhead. Instead of removing any of the enemy troops from the Gustav Line, the enemy fortified his Anzio forces by troops from the north. The failure of the main Fifth Army to pierce the Gustav Line," the major continues his appraisal, "quickly reduced the prospect of early linking of the southern front with the beachhead and of thus forcing a general retreat of the enemy toward Rome.

"It was immediately apparent that the Anzio beachhead was a small island surrounded by sea and a determined enemy force, that used every attempt to force the beachhead into the sea. The beachhead was the largest that could be held with the limited number of troops, but it was so small that any part could be easily reached by enemy artillery and there was little room for defense in depth. A breakthrough at any point would bring the Germans almost to the sea. Mines and other defensive preparations were immediately taken by the Allied forces."

Major Munroe's account continues the narrative of the Anzio fighting:

"The attacks and counterattacks of Allied forces and of German forces soon became remindful of the trench warfare of World War I. It was soon apparent that the Allies were unable to broaden the beachhead and the German troops were unable to push us into the sea. It was a slugging effort of shells and bombs.

"It was a new experience for the Fifth Army to play the defensive role that the VI Corps was forced to assume at Anzio beachhead," says Major Munroe's appraisal. "The Fifth Army had always been in the offensive role. The flat level land of the beachhead was under the constant observation of the surrounding enemy-held hills.

"The confined area of the beachhead and the lack of distinction between the front line and rear areas

were nowhere more evident than in the district northeast of the Nettuno air strip where the American evacuation hospitals were located. This was the area where for almost seventeen weeks medical personnel gave aid and comfort to the sick and wounded in an area only a few miles from the enemy's artillery and so close to the harbor and other military targets that it was constantly subject to air bombardment as well as to shelling. At the end of March, when the ground began to dry out, the hospitals were placed three and one-half feet below the surface to protect the patients. As far as possible the wounded were evacuated to the Naples area. Air evacuation, however, could not be used until our breakthrough in May because the dust raised by the planes in landing or taking off from the air strips invited German shelling. Evacuation by sea was complicated by shallow beaches, stormy weather, and constant enemy shelling. Since the hospital ships could not dock at the wharf, they received casualties from the shore by means of L.C.T's. Storms and high seas frequently interrupted this method of evacuation, and L.S.T's were necessarily often used, despite the resultant 30-hour trip to the base hospitals." Nevertheless, Major Munroe records, the 33,063 casualties—23,860 Americans and 9,203 British—were evacuated by sea.

The obstacles that had slowed progress of the campaign in Italy, of which Major Munroe would write in some detail, were referred to by General Clark in a letter directed in May to the officers and men of the Fifth Army. But the General, nevertheless, expressed his optimism as well as his appreciation of the Fifth Army's accomplishments since it invaded Italy, and forecast an early resumption of a strong and determined offensive.

"During the eight months that have passed since your invasion of the Italian mainland you have accomplished results of major strategic and tactical importance to the United Nations," General Clark wrote. "The entire world, including the Axis, knows the success and significance of your Salerno landing against bitter opposition, and of your subsequent capture of Naples in the face of the enemy's determination to deny to us the port which was indispensable to support our further operations in Italy. After the fall of Naples you pressed your attack relentlessly and without delay, forcing the Germans to continue their retreat until they had reached carefully prepared lines, where the exceedingly difficult mountainous terrain provided extreme advantages to the defender. Notwithstanding the obstacles of mountains, lack of roads, bitter weather and concrete defensive fortifications, you have in your various well-executed attacks forced the enemy to