

reinforce heavily his advantageous positions at the expense of other commitments and have harassed him continuously."

He referred to the area in which the 38th Evacuation Hospital was at that time operating:

"At the same time you have established firmly a strong beachhead in the Anzio-Nettuno area, where you have provided a serious threat on his lines of communication which he is attempting to meet by the diversion of a large force from other operations.

"It may appear to you, since the Fifth Army's progress in terms of territory gained during the past few months has been slow, that our campaign is no longer a major one or that it is not having significant success in the war as a whole. Nothing could be further from the truth. You have made a conspicuously successful invasion of the continental fortress which the Germans boasted was impregnable. You have required the Germans to devote more than twenty divisions to the costly and losing task of retarding the Allied progress to the north. You have inflicted heavy losses upon their troops and have taken more than 13,000 prisoners. You have placed the enemy in his present distressing position of trying hopelessly to hold back the Allied forces, which he knows will eventually overrun him from two directions.

"I have direct personal knowledge that the accomplishments of the Fifth Army are understood and appreciated by the governments and peoples of the United Nations. They appreciate not only that you have accomplished as much as was possible with the strength of your force, but also that you have contained in this campaign many thousands of German soldiers whom the Nazis have needed desperately in their attempts to stem the Russian advance and to prepare themselves against invasion in other parts of Europe."

In the offensive that would be resumed soon, the General predicted the Fifth Army would have "what you need to strike smashing blows and to follow them through to completion: thorough training, superior equipment, heroic courage and the knowledge that we can and will destroy the German armies.

"I have full confidence," he concluded the message, "that, as in the past, the men of the Fifth Army will meet the tests to come as true soldiers and that with God's guidance and help you will press on to great and decisive victories."

General H. R. Alexander, Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies in Italy, writing also in May to "Soldiers of the Allied Armies in Italy," expressed confidence, too, that "the bad times are behind us" and that the Allied forces "now assembling for the final battles" will "crush the enemy once and for all."

The Commander-in-Chief wrote:

"Throughout the past winter you have fought hard and valiantly and killed many Germans. Perhaps you are disappointed that we have not been able to advance faster and farther, but I and those who know realize full well how magnificently you have fought amongst these almost insurmountable obstacles of rocky, trackless mountains, deep in snow, and in valleys blocked by rivers and mud, against a stubborn foe.

"The results of these past months may not appear spectacular, but you have drawn into Italy and mauled many of the enemy's best divisions which he badly needed to stem the advance of the Russian Armies in the East. Hitler has admitted that his defeats in the East were largely due to the bitterness of the fighting and his losses in Italy. This, in itself, is a great achievement and you may well be as proud of yourselves as I am of you. You have gained the admiration of the world and the gratitude of our Russian Allies.

"Today the bad times are behind us and tomorrow we can see victory ahead," the optimistic message continued. "Under the ever increasing blows of the air forces of the United Nations, which are mounting every day in intensity, the German war machine is beginning to crumble. The Allied armed forces are now assembling for the final battles on sea, on land, and in the air to crush the enemy once and for all. . . blows are about to fall which will result in the final destruction of the Nazis and bring freedom once again to Europe, and hasten peace for us all. To us in Italy has been given the honour to strike the first blow.

"We are going to destroy the German Armies in Italy," General Alexander assured his forces. "The fighting will be hard, bitter, and perhaps long, but you are warriors and soldiers of the highest order, who for more than a year have known only victory. You have courage, determination and skill. You will be supported by overwhelming air forces, and in guns and tanks we far outnumber the Germans. No Armies have ever entered battle before with a more just and righteous cause.

"So with God's help and blessing, we take the field—confident of victory."

The members of the 38th, reading the letters of General Clark and General Alexander, had no comprehension at the time of how quickly the general's promises of impending bitter action would begin to materialize. It was still a week from the end of the May in which the letters were written that the 38th's faithfully kept Daily Bulletin attached to its file the Daily News sheet from the headquarters of the Third Infantry Division, dated Thursday, May 25, 1944, and marked Italy Edition Vol. III No. 124, at the head of which was the warning: "This news bulletin contains information valuable to the enemy and should not be

circulated outside military channels. It will be read to front-line units as soon as possible after distribution and then destroyed by burning." Under these instructions, in bold letters, was the further injunction: **READ AND BURN.**

Then under the heading **TODAY'S SITUATION**, the sheet revealed:

"The Anzio beachhead ceased to be a beachhead at daylight this morning, according to a British liaison plane pilot, who reported landing and talking to a British recon force as it joined hands with a Fifth Army Southern Front patrol that had headed up the coast from Terracina even before that town was rid of German troops.

"Meanwhile, the Third Division continued to battle fiercely for Cisterna while the Armored troops cut Highway 7 northwest of the town, and were reported at least a quarter of the way to Velletri. While the 'Frisicans' moved around Cisterna from the left to reach the Cori-Cisterna road, the 'Dragons' battled north from the railroad to circle the town from the right.

"The Germans were holding Cisterna with everything they had, making every house a pillbox. The 'Cotton Balers,' whose task it was to occupy the town, were moving in from the northwest and south; and one company was reported in the center of the town late this morning.

"Close to 700 prisoners have been taken since H hour by the Third, and the Armored troops have captured that many or more. Units of the Specialists reached Highway 7 where it crosses the Mussolini Canal, and the 'Thunderbirds' last night repulsed the only German counterattack of considerable size."

The principal news story of that day, however, as reported from Third Infantry Division headquarters, carried a page-wide two-line headline:

ANZIO BEACHHEAD BECOMES HISTORY AS CONTACT IS MADE WITH FIFTH ARMY FORCES DRIVING NORTH FROM TERRACINA; CANADIAN TANKS SMASH CENTER OF HITLER LINE

The story began:

"We are no longer a beachhead!"

"With these dramatic words, Allied headquarters on the Anzio front announced today the juncture made at 0900 hours this morning between British reconnaissance patrols and American forces driving up the west coast.

"The juncture took place midway between Anzio and Terracina, 25 miles to the south.

"A sizable German force is believed trapped between the joining Allied forces and the coast.

"Thus the entire western hinge of the Adolf Hitler Line has been rolled back from the west coast like a rug.

"Meanwhile, Canadian tanks north of Pontecorvo, most southern stronghold of the Hitler Line, have torn large gaps in the German defenses."

Canadian infantry, the article continued, had reached the Melfa River, north of Pico. Other Canadian forces, together with French troops, had closed in on Pontecorvo and were battling for possession of the town.

"The Americans to the west, who have completely retaken Terracina," it went on, "are pouring more troops inland over the mountains to drive deeper the wedge which has contacted the Anzio forces.

"With most of the Liri Valley in Allied hands, the Hitler Line has disintegrated into a series of nearly isolated strong points."

The day before, the Daily News says in still another story, Prime Minister Churchill said to Parliament: "The Germans will be completely driven out of Italy."

Captain Montgomery made but one short entry in his diary during May. On May 1, 1944, he wrote:

The bombings at night continue. The noise of the ack-ack is the worst part of it. The 90 mm guns shake the tents.

But his tempo of recording, like the tempo of the war, would gain speed in June, though his entries would continue terse. On June 1 he wrote:

The push continues. It has been going day & night in the OR. The casualties continue.

Then on June 4 his three-word entry would be even for him a classic in understatement, rivaling, indeed, Julius Caesar's "Veni, vidi, vici." Captain Montgomery recorded:

Rome has fallen.

The Stars and Stripes, however, had much more to say of that historic event. In its issue of June 5, 1944, labeled "Vol. 1 - No. 1 Published in Rome" and dated "Rome, June 5 1944," it emblazoned the news under a screaming top line in one-inch high black letters:

WE'RE IN ROME

The story was written by Sgt. Paul Green of the service newspaper's staff. A subhead proclaimed: **NO LETUP AS ALLIED FORCES CHASE FLEEING GERMANS NORTHWARD.** Sergeant Green wrote:

Rome, June 5 —The kraut was fleeing today along the roads that lead north from Rome as 5th Army troops poured through the Italian capital in relentless pursuit of the decimated enemy forces. Exactly 24 days after the first guns boomed from Minturno to Cassino, the Eternal City was completely in Allied hands.

There was no letup in the crushing offensive as American, British and French soldiers—taking in stride their magnificent victory in liberating Rome—kept on going with a good chance of cutting off and annihilating many thousands

of Jerries before they could reach some stable line of defense.

The world rang with praises of the campaign that has been climaxed with the capture of the city. Rome has fallen many times to military conquerors, but this is the first time that it has been taken from the south. That was something for the GI to talk about at his next bull session.

But GI Joe was a little too tired today to realize the full importance of what he had done. It's been a tough fight all along the line, and the dogfaces are plenty weary. You could see it as they walked through the streets of Rome. You could feel it from the tired nods as they answered the cheering of the people.

The GI's who passed through the city could relax their trigger fingers for a while. The city was theirs—completely. It was especially the pretty signorinas who caught the eye of appreciative Yanks. Ear-seeing ones scrawled down a few addresses for reference later on when they come back to Rome on leave. Others took a little time out to get a quick look at the famous ruins.

But to most of them, Rome is just another stop—although a main one—on the road that leads home. The GI who saw Africa last year or Sicily has marched on a long trail since then. Others have joined him. The trek that led through the toughest, most grueling days of the Mediterranean campaign opened up for its last chapter at Salerno and went from Naples up the never-to-be-forgotten hills of Italy. Now the trail is nearing its end in a burst of welcome from the people of Rome.

Sergeant Green's report of the fall of Rome continued to relate details of the Fifth Army's entrance, its reactions and the reactions of the welcoming Italians. Other articles developed the many phases of the capture of the ancient city. The entire edition of June 5, in fact, was devoted to the great victory announced in Captain Montgomery's three-word entry.

The next day, June 6, would be recorded in history as one of the most significant dates during World War II. The Stars and Stripes had a single word, this one in letters two inches high, headlining the story:

INVASION

And in smaller letters, but spread in a streamer across the page, the subhead proclaimed:

SECOND FRONT IN FRANCE

The news story, datelined London, June 6, revealed:

Allied forces landed this morning on the northern coast of France, it was announced at 0945 hours from General Dwight Eisenhower's Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Force in England. The German official news agency said that Allied airborne and seaborne troops which landed on the coast of the Seine Bay early this morning had been reinforced. The agency added that Allied airborne landings in Normandy were made in great depth. Allied naval forces, supported by strong air forces, began landing armies early this morning and reinforcements followed the initial sea and airborne assault waves. It was announced that General Sir Bernard Law Montgomery, former chief of the Eighth Army, is in command of the com-

bined American, British and Canadian army group carrying out the assault.

Giving the latest news of the landings, Prime Minister Winston Churchill disclosed this afternoon that 4,000 ships crossed the Channel and that up to 11,000 aircraft are taking part in the operation.

It continued for several columns to give sensational details of the mighty assault, and interviews with GI's in Rome and other stories supplemented it.

The 38th's Captain Montgomery recorded it, too, and in his characteristic manner:

June 6th. D-day. We heard at 8:30 that the invasion had begun by assaults on the Cherbourg peninsula.

In this first week of June, 1944, the 38th's Daily Bulletin, too, was making entries—both denying receipt of information concerning possible movement of the unit and posting instructions in preparation for such a movement. On June 5, the day the Fifth Army entered Rome, the Bulletin, under the heading IDLE RUMORS, declared:

"Information has *not* been received concerning unit movement. Any rumors pertaining thereto *will be stopped immediately.*"

Yet the Bulletin continued:

"POLICE OF AREA. A letter from the Army Surgeon pertaining to the condition of bivouac areas calls attention to the fact that it is the responsibility of each unit to leave occupied areas in good condition, when departing. Each section and each individual will immediately dispose of all non-transportable, unnecessary equipment that would constitute trash, and place at a disposal point.

"PREPARATIONS FOR MOVEMENT. Each section chief will be responsible for making an immediate survey of equipment in the possession of his section and will complete arrangements for proper packing so that, in case of movement, there will be no delay."

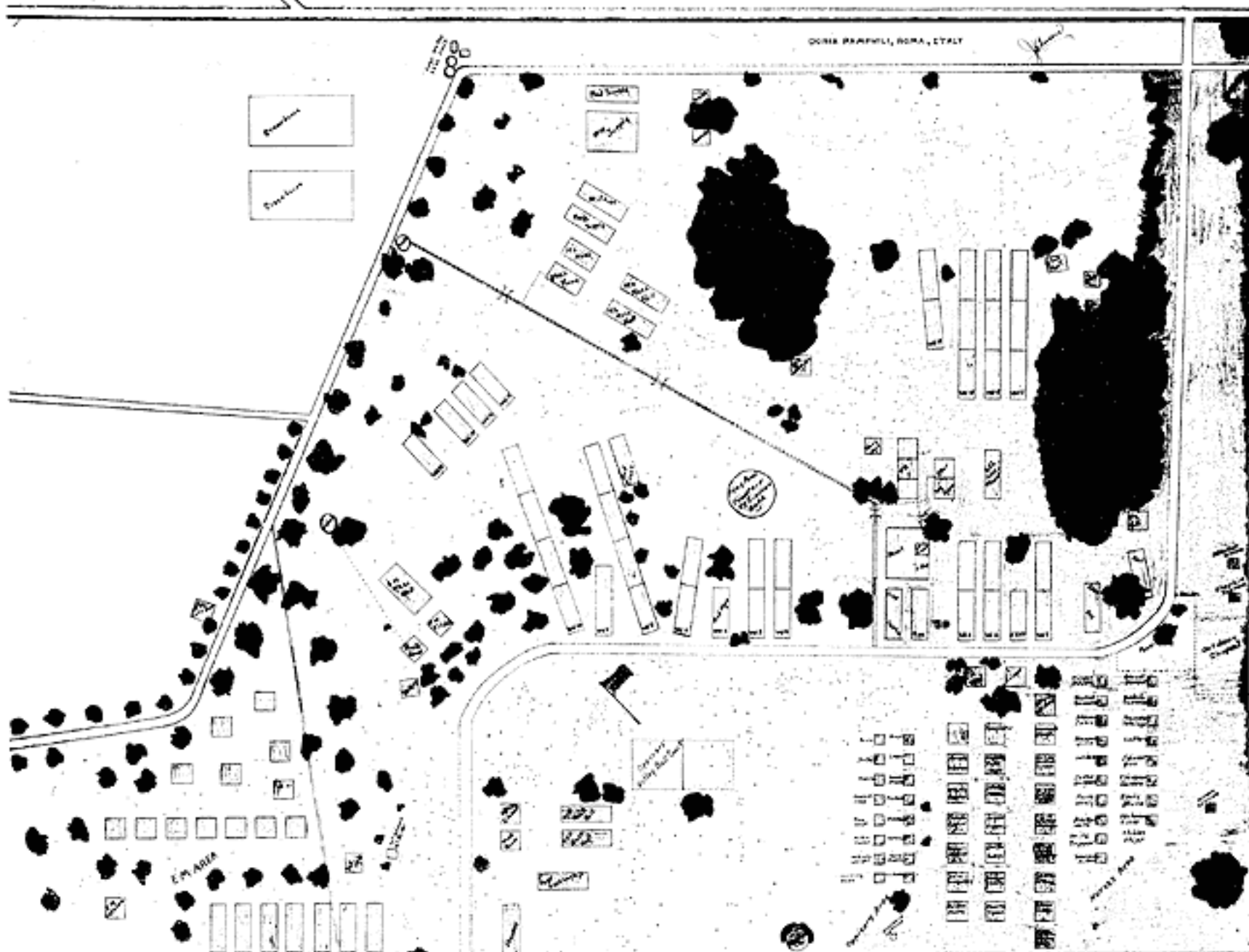
The next day, June 6, the Bulletin made no mention of a projected movement of the unit. The following day there was no Bulletin. But Major Montgomery recorded in his diary:

June 7th. Hospital closed today

And June 8 he wrote:

Arrived in Rome. Are setting up in a beautiful park—"Pamphilli."

Publication of the 38's Daily Bulletin was resumed on Saturday, June 10. Captain Pickens was administrative officer of the day and Warrant Officer Pedrick was alternate. Medical officer of the day was Captain Gay and Captain Schirmer was alternate. Major Calder and Captain Denning were surgical officers of the day



The layout of the encampment in Rome's suburban Doria Pamphilli is shown in this drawing. The 38th's stay there, however, was short. The hospital opened on June 9, 1944, and closed on June 30 to move to Massa Marittima.

and alternate, respectively. Major Walker was dental officer of the day and Captain Hoffman was alternate. Nurse officer of the day and alternate, respectively, were Lieutenants Webber and Wells.

The first announcement in the day's Bulletin was:

"THE HOSPITAL WAS CLOSED AT NETTUNO AT 1200 HOURS, 7 JUNE 1944.

"THE HOSPITAL OPENED AT DORIA PAMPHILLI, ROME, AT 1100 HOURS, 9 JUNE, 1944."

On the opening day the number of patients was 292 and 368 beds were vacant.

The June 12 Bulletin listed 700 patients and no vacant beds. It published a directive from Fifth Army headquarters:

"This headquarters has been advised that troops may mention in private correspondence that they have visited Rome, provided that:

"(a) The writers' units or headquarters are not linked

in any way with their personal accounts other than by the correct use of proper return address. For example, it is forbidden for a writer to state that his unit or headquarters is in or near Rome.

"(b) No dates will be mentioned."

The 38th was hardly settled down and operating at Doria Pamphilli, however, before at the end of June it was closed. The next day's Bulletin announced:

"THE HOSPITAL OFFICIALLY CLOSED AT 1630 HOURS, 30 JUNE 1944.

"HOSPITAL MOVED FROM DORIA PAMPHILLI, ROME, ITALY, TO A SITE FOUR KILOMETERS NORTH OF MASSA MARITTIMA, ITALY."

Next day's Bulletin announced the opening of the hospital at Massa Marittima "at 0900 hours, this date."

The Bulletin carried, too, Colonel Wood's commendation of the unit:

"The work accomplished by members of the unit

in the movement from Rome to the present site has exceeded all expectations. The Commanding Officer wishes to express his sincere appreciation to each individual for his and her commendable performance of duty."

The July 3 Daily Bulletin announced the promotion of Captain John K. Nattinger to major.

On the day the hospital opened at Doria Pamphilli, June 9, Captain Montgomery recorded in his diary that he had had an audience that day with the Pope. He made no further entry until June 30 when he recorded:

Hospital closed today.

The next day, July 1, he wrote in his little journal:

Left Rome at 8:30 A.M. Came up Highway No. 1 to Massa Marittima. Arrived at 5:30 P.M. A large alfalfa field in the mountains.

July 2 he wrote that the hospital opened at nine that morning.

"Casualties are slowing down since the rush of the first night," he recorded on July 7.

Three days later the unit's chief anesthetist noted "Lt. Doskow added to anes. service," and observed with evident satisfaction:

I have a real dept. now.

He listed his department's personnel:

Capt. John C. Montgomery, chief
Capt. Stanley Nowacki, asst. chief
1st Lt. Lola LaChance
1st Lt. Deborah Doskow
2nd Lt. Clarke
2nd Lt. Helen Johnson

Captain Montgomery's diary and the Daily Bulletin issues during the last three weeks in June and the first two weeks in July when the 38th was arriving and getting established in the Rome area provide little information about the day-to-day activities of the unit's personnel. Fortunately, however, a letter written home in mid July by Captain Pickens provides an intimate and illuminating picture of the Italian capital in the days immediately after it was cleared of the German invaders. The principal value of the long letter is its revelation of Rome in this significant period as seen by an American soldier in World War II. On July 15, 1944, Captain Pickens wrote from Italy:

"For two thousand years people have been trying to describe Rome. So far as I know, no one has done it adequately. I have hesitated for too long now to try, but I must give you some of my impressions. Before getting into my visits to the Eternal City, I want to give you one picture of our setup before seeing the Roman capital.

"From the news, our battles on this front have been

relegated to second-class, which is as it should be with the opening of the new front. But the original breakthrough and the starting from the beachhead was a major engagement if I know anything about war, and we have seen our share. The enemy was on the hills looking down at us with perfect observation and the price we had to pay for those early days was high. Our hospital was running over; everyone was working at fever pitch. The job done by all the hospitals in that area will go down in history, so far as the Medical Corps is concerned, as simply magnificent. But a lot of our boys never got back to the hospitals; they never had a chance. It was a part of the price. When we left that area, to follow behind the advancing army, I had the occasion to pass the American cemetery. There, neatly set out, were the inevitable white crosses, thousands of them. But the battle had been so furious that the bodies of American soldiers were still coming in and the efficient graves registration section had long gotten behind in their work."

His description of what he saw there, after more than a score of years since his visit, is shocking:

"There were huge piles of our dead awaiting identification and proper burial. Some of them had been dead for days and days and had been caught in the see-saw of the battle raging around them. They did not know the sacrifices made to try and rescue them, but their sacrifices had been the most. Here they were in all stages of decomposition, some swelled so large as to break out of their uniforms, some turned a midnight blue, some with only parts of a body left. As you neared the scene, there was a buzz in the air that rose to a crescendo as the big bluebottle flies swarmed in and out of the section. Death was in the air. The faint, sweet odor of death permeated the countryside. Here was the picture of the price of glory. Of course, that section of the Army quickly caught up with their work and followed behind us. They do a grand job with identification and there can be no error. Of all the Americans they had there, there was only one who could not be identified. He will be one unknown soldier for the politicians to lay wreaths at his feet. Of course there were Germans there and many of the Allies, all getting the same treatment. I pray this time that our soldiers will not have died in vain."

Having offered this arresting introduction, he went on to provide a detailed account of the Eternal City as seen by a member of the Charlotte hospital unit in midsummer of 1944:

"But, on to Rome, and all roads in Italy still lead to Rome. What a magnificent city! What a paradox! Here was the combination of the old and the new. Modern doubledeck buses moving along well paved streets and passing the prodding oxen bringing produce to



Much effort was directed toward keeping the surgery tents sterile. This sign—SURGERY—CLEAN—OPERATING—was moved with the tent from one hospital campsite to the next.

the city. Here were ultra-modern apartment houses overlooking the ruins of the pre-Christian era. Here was the home of the Christian religion and the foster father of paganism. I went one Sunday afternoon to St. Peter's for the vesper services. What a picture with the entrance of the Cardinal in his flaming red and the colorfully attired assistants. It was the celebration of St. Peter's Day, a feast day for all Rome, and the people were there by the thousands. The magnificent choirs sang to each other and then combined in a grand finale. It was inspiring. But alongside this display was a line of people, twelve wide and reaching back outside beyond the Egyptian obelisk called Cleopatra's Needle, all lined up to kiss the toe of the statue of St. Peter.

"St. Peter's statue is in bronze. On this particular day they had dressed him with fine, regal clothes and on his head was a crown with many priceless jewels. Around his neck hung other jewels, beautiful stones

gathered from the four corners of the world. And people stood in line to kiss his toe."

"Here was one of the first cities where the plebeians contested with the aristocracy and eventually gained citizenship. That was the strength of early Rome. And in the modern times they had fallen again upon evil days and followed Il Duce to an ignominious state. He may have made the trains run on time and cleaned up the city and cleared some slum areas and paved some streets, but he has left the minds of the people in a muddle that two generations will not clear. They are wrangling among themselves even now about the temporary government.

"I stood in the Piazza Venezia and looked at the balcony where Mussolini used to carry on his tirades against the decadent democracies and wondered what might have happened had he used his talents in the right direction. I had a friend, a priest from America,

who lived on the square just opposite. He told me of the spectacles produced there. We stood at the window at a simple American Army retreat when Secretary Stimson was here and we spoke of the contrast. I almost found myself being ashamed because we did not put on a better show, but I guess it was enough."

He spoke of his visit with his friend the priest to the famous Colosseum:

"From the Piazza Venezia it is an easy walk to the Flavian Amphitheatre, commonly called the Colosseum. It was the Madison Square Garden from 80 A.D. on for several centuries. The circuses were brought in by Caesar's legions or the gladiators fought or the Christians were fed to the beasts. Fifty thousand could push in for a show. Sometimes they flooded the arena and the navy took over to show their wares. Now it is used for a sort of latrine for those Romans who are not housebroken and the upper tiers show couples courting for lack of other rooms in the crowded city. Benito had cut a street thru from his quarters to the Colosseum, right thru the old Roman Forum. They uncovered many things of interest and preserved them for future tourists. I asked why all the structures were below street level and Monsignor Hemmick gave me this answer: in the old days they pitched their garbage out of the windows; there was no other way to dispose of it. Then when the street was filled up they either left the house and built another or they added another story. It sounded plausible to me after looking at some of the excavations. Many of the Romans still dispose of their garbage in the same way even in these modern times and if you are not careful when you are walking down a street, you may be buried with debris."

Rome, members of the 38th found, had been little damaged by the Allies' bombing, Captain Pickens revealed, except for the marshaling yards. "There has been no damage by the war in Rome save the marshaling yards, where the Allies literally tore the place up. It is a good example of precision bombing. The stray bombs hit a cemetery nearby. I say there has been no damage; I mean to any of the old relics. The Germans systematically blew up all of the substations and the power plants and gas works. It would not be good to leave electricity or gas for the Allies. That helped keep the place blacked out until they had moved a comfortable distance to the north."

He further pictures the modern Rome almost three thousand years after its legendary founding in 753 B.C. as seen by personnel of Charlotte's evacuation hospital group:

"The old Tiber meanders along thru the city about the same as it did a thousand years ago. I was surprised at its small size. The many bridges, almost one at the end of every street, with their statues and ornate

decorations, and the small boats and swimming beaches in the river make the scene picturesque. The wide streets that flank the river on each side with their large elm trees interspersed with oleanders give room for Romans to walk and they love to get out with all the family and wander up and down. They block military traffic and run the chance of being run down at every turn, but they don't seem to mind. They are obviously not accustomed to the fast moving traffic of American G.I's.

"St. Peter's and the Vatican across the river from the main part of the city are a sight never to be forgotten. The Vatican was closed to the public except for audience with the Pope and a hurried visit to the Sistine Chapel. I went to see the Pope and carried some rosaries and a crucifix to be blessed. . . . The Pope spoke to us in English and appeared to be in a hurry . . . he hurried away to do the same thing with a group of French in the next hall. But just outside the hall of the meeting and next to it was the Sistine Chapel. That is worth a visit to Rome if nothing else is seen. I wouldn't attempt to describe it. St. Peter's is the same. The size of the place is most impressive, including the markers in the floor showing that it is larger than St. Paul's in London and Notre Dame in Paris. Monsignor Hemmick had a most healthy attitude in his descriptions and placed emphasis where it was due and laughed at the funny things. We had a good time looking at the statue of some Queen of Sweden who had ridden horseback over all Europe and ended up in Rome to die. Because she was generous with her worldly possessions, she gained a marked place in the church. Veronica's Veil came in for her share of interest. She was the one who covered the face of Christ on his way to Calvary and left the imprint of his countenance on her veil. She rated a tremendous statue and once a year they bring out the veil from a high balcony in the church and show it to the people with proper pomp and display. Of course, many of the Popes rate prominent spots, and there have been 260 of them.

"The constant mixture of church and state is in evidence. Until 1929, when Mussolini signed an agreement giving the church 100 acres of free land and a free state, there apparently were those who thought the Pope should be the temporal ruler of Rome and Italy and most of the world as well as looking after our spiritual well being. I was impressed with a lot of the things which had been taken from other countries and other peoples and brought to Rome as a result of conquest. We cannot criticize Hitler too much for carting off the spoils when it has been a practice of warring nations for centuries. We Americans are the only suckers who capture territory and things and then glibly give them back to their owners. If it were possible, I would crate



Lieutenant Lela Russell, the hospital's dietitian, kept an alert eye on the kitchen and the cooks. Here she is about to put soup into a container for delivery to the patients in the wards. Left is Sergeant William Vaughn; right, Leonard Weinheimer.

up one of these monoliths from ancient Egypt and put it in my back yard and a marker showing my tour with the Army thru Italy. I might be the low man on the totem pole but at least I'd have more than gray hair and flat feet for my conquests and my two years overseas."

The 38th's members visiting Rome found the city after four years of war "with only bare necessities and very few of these," the letter revealed. "No manufacturing has been done except for the war. There is nothing in the shops except the fabulous things for the collectors, or junk. Shoes are made of wood with a small canvas binding; there are little textiles to be seen and food is just wherever you can find it. The black market controls most of it. I almost made a trade for some draperies with a marchesa for a few pounds of butter. Butter is priced at \$20 per kilo at present. My hurried

departure kept me from disobeying all rules and working it out."

One of the places of principal interest to visiting members of the 38th was the famous Catacombs. Captain Pickens referred to an atrocity committed in the St. Agnes catacomb by the occupying Germans. "During their occupation of the city one of their soldiers was killed by some civilians. In retribution, they took all of the political prisoners out of the city, some 350 of them, and escorted them to the Catacombs and finished them with machine guns and left the bodies without any other burial. They denied the families the opportunity of collecting their loved ones. There was an awful stench at the place, and the atrocity was the principal subject of conversation among the Romans. Their former allies had not treated them right."

Perhaps the most memorable occasion for the per-

sonnel of the 38th during these weeks in the vicinity of Rome was a dance arranged, as others had been at various bases on the movement across northern Africa into southern Italy, primarily for the enlisted men of the unit. Captain Pickens, who had promoted the previous dances, wrote of the one at Rome:

"We wanted to have a dance for our enlisted men while in that vicinity. The Red Cross worker who is connected with our hospital went with me to find a spot. We had the orchestra from John Trescot's Engineers; all we needed was suitable space. We combed the section near us asking the help of the local padre. He was no help at all, but some ladies at the church heard our questions and offered to help. We went then to the American Academy, but it was closed to such frivolity. The manager told us of four villas that might be available. We tried them all and it was the last one that turned out to be available. The Villa Abamalik overlooks St. Peter's, with beautiful gardens and what was once a nice house. The owner, an Arab, was living in Florence. Out and away from the main house was a ballroom complete in every detail, a large dining room, which could seat forty people easily, a powder room on the second floor, and a kitchen in the basement. The place was built for just such purpose as we had in mind. The caretaker was delighted to have us use it.

"The Germans had been there and broken some of the statuary and had stolen some of the magnificent draperies and oil paintings. They had used the spot for a mess. There were no lights, so our electrician rigged up one of the small generators and gave light thru the beautiful chandeliers. The ballroom was a dream, just the right size and none better to be found anywhere either in Italy or the U. S. With all the necessary equipment on hand, all we needed was females. Here we enlisted the aid of some American women who had married Italians and who lived in Rome. They invited their friends' daughters and we bundled them all in our big two-ton trucks with their mamas and carted them out to the villa. Most of them had never seen the inside of one of Rome's grand houses. They came in droves, more girls than men for the first time since we had been overseas.

"The party started at 6:30 and finished at 9:30. The Romans have to be off the streets by 10 o'clock at night. At 8:30 we announced that food and other refreshments were available and the ladies would be served first. By the time the men started to get cheese or chicken or spam sandwiches, all the food had disappeared. The young Romans had made away with it in fast style. They stuffed sandwiches in their pocket-books, they put cheese in their handkerchiefs, they even put slices of bread down their bosoms and con-

tinued to dance in a most buxom manner. The party was a huge success, particularly for the young ladies. Where neither could speak the other's language, they made up one of their own."

His letter spoke of other experiences in Rome he and comrades of the 38th shared and historic places visited, most of them, it added, "on foot, and the city spreads out considerably."

But now the jaunts in and about Rome were behind them, "and there are other spots of interest. It is a changing scene and with the rapid progress of the Army, I have little time other than for work. Possibly the opportunity will come to see the Leaning Tower or some of the beauties of Florence. Time will tell. There should be some compensation for the drudgery that comes with these many months following an Army."

Two days after he wrote the letter, the 38th was closing its operations at Massa Marittima to set up its base at St. Luce. The next day, July 18, 1944, the Daily Bulletin recorded:

"THE HOSPITAL CLOSED AT MASSA MARITTIMA, ITALY, AT 1000 HOURS 17 JULY 1944.

"THE HOSPITAL RE-OPENED AT 1300 HOURS 17 JULY 1944, WHEN NO. 1 DETAIL ASSUMED CHARGE OF 18 PATIENTS FROM 15th EVACUATION HOSPITAL AT CECINA, ITALY.

"THE HOSPITAL PROPER WAS MOVED FROM MASSA MARITTIMA, ITALY, TO A SITE APPROXIMATELY 1½ KM NORTHEAST OF ST. LUCE, ITALY."

The Daily Bulletin of Wednesday, July 19, recorded further:

"THE HOSPITAL OFFICIALLY OPENED IN THIS LOCATION AT 1200 HOURS, 19 JULY 1944."

Blackout warning declared that "This area is under direct observation of the enemy, and strict Blackout will be maintained. For the time being, only those tents which are essential for hospital operation will be wired for electricity." Number of patients that day totaled 14.

Captain Montgomery's diary also refers to the 38th's detail assigned to take charge of a group of patients from the 15th Evacuation Hospital. On July 16 he wrote:

Today Bill Pennington & I went to Pomerance, Saline & Cecina. Bill Leonard, Hunter & I are to take over the setup of the 15th Evac at Cecina tomorrow.

The following day he added the entry:

We arrived at noon. Made a property exchange with the 15th. We have 15 patients.

Two days later, July 19, he noted:

The unit opened 9 miles north of here today. We are having a nice rest. Went swimming today.

On the twenty-first he wrote that they "Discharged all out-patients today." The next day he recorded:

Closed our little unit. Arrived at 38th at noon. We are near Santa Luce. This is a barren hot place.

Meanwhile, two personnel changes were being noted in the Daily Bulletin. In the issue of July 20 it was announced that Captain Robert P. Miller left that day for temporary duty in the United States and congratulations were "extended to Howard J. Seesel, 550th Ambulance Company, attached, on his promotion to First Lieutenant."

Three days later the Bulletin noted other personnel changes:

"Major Duncan G. Calder, Jr., Team Captain, with the following members of his team have been placed on temporary duty with the 33rd Field Hospital as an auxiliary surgical unit: Captain George A. Hawes, Captain Stanley M. Nowacki, 1st Lieutenant A. Clementine Mills, T/5 Harold R. Carter and Pfc Carl V. Neff.

"An auxiliary surgical unit of the 300th General Hospital is welcomed to this organization on temporary duty. Team Captain is Captain Wilbur K. Brubaker. Other team members are: Captain Robert C. Benson, Captain John P. Hand, Jr., 2nd Lieutenant Margaret I. Davies, T/4 Wick V. Ballettine, and T/4 Joseph C. Shaeffer."

One week after the hospital opened at its new base the patient load had grown to 463.

The Bulletin of July 30 recorded the welcoming by Colonel Wood of Captain Carlo Natalini to the 38th as replacement for Captain Medearis and his assignment as assistant unit supply officer.

In the United States the Presidential race between President Roosevelt, seeking a third term, and Thomas E. Dewey, the Republican nominee, was nearing the home stretch, and the excitement at home was being reflected in varying degrees among the men and women in the service overseas. The Daily Bulletin, taking notice of the campaign, on July 31 inserted this notice:

"Any personnel who are interested in voting in the November elections and who have not as yet forwarded their ballot requests, contact Captain Pickens in detachment headquarters, tomorrow, 1 August."

The Fifth Army held a swimming meet in Rome on July 30. The August 1 Bulletin announced the 38th's representatives and the results of their competing:

"T/5 Sigismund Patronik, Pfc. Kenneth Ackerman, Pfc. John Melnyk, Pvt. Ian MacLean, Pvt. Michael Angarano, and Pvt. Mike Pollo.

"Private MacLean placed third in the one-meter board dive, and fourth in the three-meter board dive. Private Angarano placed second in the 100-meter swim. Both these enlisted men will remain in Rome, training

for the Theater finals to be held on August 18 or 19, and will participate as members of the Fifth Army team."

Captain Montgomery that same day recorded:

No work much. Everyone is getting a rest.

The Bulletin for August 1, however, reported 392 patients being treated in fourteen wards, with 608 vacant beds. The patient load continued to decrease through the first week in August. On August 7 the commanding officer welcomed Lieutenant Colonel Robert O. Y. Warren, MC, into the 38th as chief of medical service. His home, Colonel Wood revealed, was in Wilmington, Delaware. The new chief of medical service was a graduate of Johns Hopkins medical school. From August 19, 1942, until his transfer to the 38th he was chief of medical service of the 32nd Station Hospital.

The Daily Bulletin called attention to a significant anniversary:

"Today we begin our third year in overseas service. Since the hospital opened in Africa, approximately 40,000 patients have been treated by you," Colonel Wood revealed, "and I wish to commend each member of the unit for his and her efforts in the excellent care which these patients received. The termination of the European campaign is in sight, but we must not relax and become passively interested. During future operations, in all that you do, a high degree of efficiency will be required. It is desired, that by performance of duty, better discipline, and a higher standard of military courtesy on the part of each individual, the organization be in a position to receive the recognition for the work it will perform in the future."

During the weeks the 38th was based in the vicinity of Rome the members of the unit visited the capital whenever they had opportunities. Captain Montgomery recorded on August 12 that he had returned that day from a four-day leave in Rome. He used only a line and a half.

But when Captain Pickens twelve days later wrote another letter home, he again reported in considerable detail. On this visit to Rome he had been accompanied by three fellow officers, including Colonel Wood, the 38th's commander. He wrote:

"A Roman holiday, modern war style, is different from any other. But it is worth it after weeks and months of the same grind and the same boredom of wait. This was the first time I had been away overnight from our camp since last January, when I spent three days in Sorrento. Bernard Walker, Pat Imes, George Wood and I took off from camp at five in the morning. It takes about six hours to drive to Rome and we wanted to miss as much of the heavy military traffic as possible.



With the 38th, as with the other units of the military service, wash day wasn't limited to Mondays. For the nurses it came, as a usual thing, every day. Here Lieutenants Madeline Jensen and Margaret Bachoka are hanging up clothing they have just done.

"We stopped about midway at a general hospital for breakfast. We took our own eggs, which are fairly plentiful at this time of year in Tuscany. That made us a little more welcome. We arrived in Rome and got settled in our hotel, the Excelsior, at a little before noon. The Fifth Army had taken the hotel over for a rest camp for Army troops. Of course, it is now located back in the supply area and so-called Army troops are never very welcome back where they are strictly GI. There is always a friendly rivalry between the service troops and those who work in the forward areas. They all want to get up in the battle and all those in the forward area want to get back and forget about it. The hotel is one of the modern ones of Rome, plenty of room and excellent service. There are many conveniences, Turkish baths, ping pong and pool tables, barber shops,

photograph shops, gift shops but with nothing in them, snack bars, finance office where you can get paid in advance if you run short of money, post office for regular mail and for wrapping packages, theatre tickets and sightseeing tours, and many others. The Army has done a good job in getting it set up properly. The food is GI but with enough of the local produce added to give it flavor. Even dehydrated eggs had a spot of garlic in them and tasted good. The bakers knew how to handle our flour and the rolls and pastries were excellent."

He and Bernard Walker had a room together with a sitting room adjoining. "We felt like kings," he said. "The beds were long enough for me and the bath room was just right. I think we washed three times a day because of the luxury. The maid service was good and

there was a valet on call at all times to get your clothes pressed or to get ice or to help in any way possible. We just had to press a button. The cost for all this was \$1.50 per day, real American Plan. It was hot and we were supposed to keep the place blacked out at night but that did not matter. It was too good to complain about a few inconveniences."

On this trip to Rome Major Imes wanted to visit St. Peter's. Captain Pickens accompanied him. "I witnessed another audience," he reported. "This time the Pope was carried in in his great chair and down the long corridor he put his hands on people and their rosaries and charms. There were about a thousand people there, mostly French and British, with a sprinkling of Brazilians and Poles. The Pope spoke first in English, then in French and then in Italian. It was about the same speech I had heard before . . . We hurried up to the Sistine Chapel and looked around, then spent the rest of the morning going thru the museum and a part of the Vatican gardens . . .

"One morning we went out to the Villa D'Este to see the gardens. The villa is located some fifteen miles from the city at Tivoli. The story goes that the father divine told three of the cardinals that the one who could construct the most beautiful summer residence within riding distance of Rome would be given a prize. Cardinal D'Este won the prize. I did not see the other two villas and gardens but I can readily understand how this one in its prime could win a prize. At present the old villa has been shot all to pieces. Shells landed in many parts of the building, including the attached church. They landed in all parts of the garden, but with all the destruction, it is one of the garden spots on the earth. The fountains were not playing, but it was still a spot of beauty. The D'Este family died off and the place was left to the state as a sort of park and the state has been busy waging war and has left the beautiful things to grow in weeds. Now that the war is over in this part of Italy, I hope they get to work and repair this lovely spot. On the way back from Tivoli we stopped at the sulphur pools and had a swim. The water is cold and surprisingly invigorating in spite of the awful smell. We were there on Sunday and many Romans had come out for the holiday. They came the five or six miles on their bicycles and brought their lunch and a bottle of wine."

Once again he enjoyed an evening of music. "There was a special arrangement for the opera, a sort of combination, one evening. We heard the second act of *Madame Butterfly*, then followed a concert with full orchestra. After this there was a ballet. It was the piece de resistance. The opera house was built by Mussolini and it is magnificent. I don't know whether it was the surroundings or what, but I enjoyed the performance

so much better than I did last winter down at Caserta. There, of course, we had ridden in the rain and cold and we had to go back to those cold tents. Here we were comfortable and went back to a grand hotel. *One Fine Day* is one of my favorite arias and it was well done. The scenery was better than it had been last winter, too. The concert was equally good. They played a series depicting the fountains of Rome and, as you know, there are plenty of them. It was modern, but not like we hear in the states. The strings were predominant all thru and I favor them. We had to leave before the ballet was finished, since we had to get back to our hotel in time for supper. The opera starts at 6 p.m. and our dining room closed at 9 p.m. We had been out all day and it was necessary to get back. I hated to miss the ballet."

The group from the 38th had the good fortune, too, of seeing the finals of the swimming competition in Rome in which Private Ian MacLean and Private Michael Angarano competed after having scored in the preliminary meet on July 30. He reported:

"In this theatre of war they have sponsored a series of sports, the finals of which took place while we were here. They made use of the stadium and pools and track sets built by Mussolini for the Olympic Games in '39 and '40. The games never took place, but the Allies made use of the equipment to run a series of games that were as good as the Olympics. We had two of our men in the swimming meet. One man is a diver and the other is a hundred-meter swimmer. Both men came to the finals, did not win, but placed creditably. The Hawaiians from Fifth Army took most of the swimming medals. The Fifth, in competition with the Air Corps, and the service sections and the Eighth Army and the French and other allies took off the majority of the places. We watched the finals of the swimming in addition to all the other running around we did. You can see that we kept busy all the time."

During the quartet's visit to Rome in August, 1944, Captain Pickens further revealed, he and Major Walker entertained in their rooms at a party attended by about thirty persons, including friends from the 38th and some they had met in Rome, among them Charlie Wasden of Macon and Monsignor Hemmick, the American priest. "In all there were some thirty people," he wrote. "We had brought some eggs and Mary had sent me some sandwich spread. The chef combined these, added some local color and touches, and our food was excellent. He had fresh lemons for juice and lemonade and we combined to produce a fair martini. I think the folks had a good time. I did."

One night, he said, he visited Monsignor Hemmick for supper. "I furnished the bread and butter and he had everything else. He had a British friend and a

count in to join the gathering. I can never think of the count's name. He was a nice young fellow, about thirty, who talked about 'my people.' The British captain, named Utley, had lived in Rome for eighteen years before the war and knew most of the people there. He and the monsignor had known each other before the war. I enjoyed this get-together as much as anything I did while in Rome. I hope to see them all again after the war."

Shopping in Rome continued unsatisfactory, he reported. "There is nothing available within a reasonable price. Inflation has really hit this part of the world. Leather shoes, like the type made in Florence, sell for \$30 to \$40. There are no textiles except for some cheap rayon. I bought two pieces of Sevres china, two vases for Mary. That was the sum total of my purchases except for some Christmas cards."

They had the good fortune as they were returning to the base to have a lavish meal at the home of an American woman who had married an Italian. She had a farm half way between Rome and the 38th's base and they had given her a ride from Rome home. She was trying to get to the farm to get some food, Captain Pickens wrote. "She was a friend of Pat's. She asked us to be her guests for supper and we agreed. We stopped on the way at a general hospital and picked up some bread, coffee, salt and pepper, and some sugar. She said she had everything else. We asked her if we could have fried chicken for supper and she replied that if we could catch the chickens, we could have all we wanted. The farm turned out to be 3,000 acres with plenty of chickens, guineas and turkeys. Pat caught the chickens and cut them southern style. The peasants cooked them, under his directions, with olive oil. It was just plain good eating. We had fresh corn on the cob, too. After that good meal and visit on an Italian farm, we hurried back to camp. The Roman holiday was a success."

Late in August of 1944 a group of medical personnel of the Brazilian Expeditionary Forces was attached to the 38th Evacuation Hospital to aid in caring for the Brazilian personnel of the Fifth Army.

In the Daily Bulletin of August 27 announcement was made of the arrival of the Brazilians and their names were listed. "The Commanding Officer takes pleasure in welcoming the following members of the Brazilian Expeditionary Forces to this organization," the notice began. The 21 men and women named were:

Major Ernestino G. de Oliveira
Major Ari D. Nunes
Captain Mirandolino J. de Caldas
First Lieut. Djalma C. Contreiras
First Lieut. Renato D. Batista
First Lieut. Waldemar D. dos Santos
Second Lieut. Ari A. Soares

Second Lieut. Jose C. Amado
Nurse Virginia N. Portocarrero
Nurse Antonieta Ferreira
Nurse Carmen Bebiano
Nurse Lucia Osorio
Nurse Maria de Carmo e Castro
Nurse Berta Morais
Nurse Olga Mendes
Nurse Altanira Valadares
Sgt. Alfredo A. de Farias
Sgt. Osvaldo M. Farias
Sgt. Dimas S. de Silva
Sgt. Renato S. Bahia
Sgt. Sebastiao R. dos Santos

On August 28, 1944, the day after the Brazilians were welcomed, Captain Cecil P. Sansom, the Protestant chaplain of the 38th, received orders from Fifth Army headquarters placing him on temporary duty in Palestine. "Thus was realized another of my lifelong dreams," the chaplain would write on his return to duty with the hospital unit. His report, dated September 27 and filed with the papers of the 38th, provides a 2,000-word summary of his visit by air to the Holy Land.

Chaplain Sansom left while the unit was at St. Luce; when he rejoined the organization it had moved to Pisa.

On August 1, 1944, the official report listed 392 patients under the care of the 38th's doctors and nurses; on the last day of the month the total was 324. On August 9, the total dropped to 229. September began with 301 patients; by September 14, when the unit moved its base again, but 59 were on the rolls. The Daily Bulletin of that date recorded:

"The hospital moved from the location at 1½ Km NE St. Luce Station, Italy, to a point approximately 1 Km N of Pisa, Italy."

The next day, September 15, the Bulletin carried this notice:

THE HOSPITAL IN ITS PRESENT LOCATION OFFICIALLY OPENED AT 0930 HOURS.

Fifty-three patients were on the rolls the day the hospital opened at Pisa. There were no admissions that day and but six dispositions. Vacant beds numbered 244.

Blackout hours were posted: 1945 to 0615 and a notice in the Daily Bulletin that day—September 15, 1944—warned:

"Blackout will be rigidly enforced in this area, in accordance with the schedule of blackout hours as published daily. All personnel are cautioned against the indiscriminate use of lights."

The Bulletin warned also that "Until further notice, the city of Pisa is off limits to all enlisted personnel. Any enlisted man entering Pisa without proper authority will be subject to disciplinary action."

Two days later, however, the Bulletin announced that "Pisa is now 'On Limits'. Enlisted men not on duty

may obtain passes at detachment headquarters." Officers and nurses were required to have permission of their section chiefs and to sign out and in to leave the camp area.

One week after the base was set up at Pisa the patient load had increased to 315. Officers of the day—September 22—were: Administrative, Captain Felts; medical, Captain Crawford; surgical, Captain Sotirion, day, and Captain Doubilet, night; dental, Captain Hoffman.

Ballots for voting in the November Presidential election became available October 3 for distribution to all military personnel and attached civilians eligible in their home states for voting under absentee ballot acts. North Carolina was one of the twenty states permitting such voting.

On the day that distribution of the ballots began, Captain Pickens wrote home. "There is little to write about from the front, because things have settled to such a dull stage for us," he observed, and his appraisal is confirmed by the official record as reflected in the issues of the Daily Bulletin of that period. "We are holding the bag. I wish it were possible to describe it properly, but for security reasons and fear of the censor, I pass it by."

He had been to Rome twice since his last letter home, he disclosed. "The first trip to Rome I went with Bill Leonard from Talbotton, Georgia. We went down in a weapons carrier. A weapons carrier is a creation of the devil, capable of carrying one and a quarter tons of discomfort. We sat in the back under a flapping bit of canvas which wore all the braid off my cap and, I think, most of my fast graying hair. There is no way to get comfortable in the back end of a weapons carrier and whoever made the outrage never heard of shock absorbers. My behind was as bad off as my head. But we got there, and that was the main thing. Our rooms were comfortable and we washed every few hours just to stretch in a big tub of hot water. I had some flowers sent to my room, gladioli and tuberoses. They made it feel more homelike."

They went to the opera and this time *Il Trovatore* was performed. But most of the time, he said, they "just wandered around the city from the Pantheon to the Forum and rubbernecked at the new and the old."

On the return trip he flew in a little artillery observation plane piloted by a friend, Stanley Williamson of Aiken, South Carolina. "Where it had taken us six hours of back-breaking riding to get there, I returned in an hour and a half," he related. "Stanley put his little ship down just across the road from our camp, within easy walking distance. We landed between two rows of grape vines. Leaving Rome, we went down to the Lido to see who was swimming. We swooped down the beach and saw no bathing beauties, so we took off up

the coast. After moving along for about half an hour, we went inland to find a less bumpy lane. I covered up with my field jacket because it got cold at about 5,000 feet. With the hum of the motor I dozed off to sleep and must have inadvertently put my feet on some of the dual controls, because I awoke with a start as we started to drop very rapidly. Stanley called back to me not to touch any of the protruding things less we land too hard. From then on I spent my time examining the countryside. We saw where gun emplacements had been and looked at the anti-aircraft installations, saw how thoroughly the Germans had knocked out each bridge in their retreat. Village after village was just one mass of rubbish. You have no idea how completely Italy has been destroyed. I suppose it looks the same over on the east side where the Eighth Army has been slowly following up."

The second trip to Rome in these weeks was made after the 38th had moved up to Pisa. "I got back in camp in time to take part in a move farther up," he revealed, though apparently because of censorship regulations he did not mention the Pisa location. "With that completed and very little else to do for some days, I had another chance to get back to the city. This time there was no transportation available, but I had the leave and I would make the most of it. I thumbed my way down. It is supposed to be beneath the dignity of an officer in the United States Army to get out on the road and thumb a ride, but with that precedent also came plenty of Army transportation. Here we had none, so I rode in eight different vehicles, but I got there. This one was to rest and do nothing. I seldom left the hotel, just slept, read and went to meals. I did get out once to see *Aida* at the opera house, a grand performance. I went one day and spent a morning at the Keats-Shelley house, the house where Keats died. I just browsed around and had a good time by myself. Incidentally, the trip down was alone. I returned in a jeep, seven hours, all in the one vehicle. I finished reading *A Yankee from Olympus*, reread *The Robe* and worked thru the latest Omnibook."

The most famous landmark in the 38th's new location, of course, was the Leaning Tower. One day after his return from Rome, Captain Pickens went to see it. His description reveals the famous tower as it was seen by thousands of service men during World War II. He wrote:

"It has not been damaged; one shell hit it but made little imprint. I walked up the 160 feet and looked out over the great Arno River valley. There is no doubt but that it really leans. . . . The south side of Pisa is as much rubble as any Italian city but the north side is fairly well preserved. At present the city is a ghost city. The people have not returned in any number and the

place is heavily mined. We lost one of our enlisted men when he went into a shop and picked up a musical instrument and with that the whole building exploded. We fished him out the following day. The Germans are past masters at booby traps and mines. So we have been very careful about where we walk and have stayed away from vacant buildings. No doubt our experience with this one man will discourage the remaining from attempting any looting or souvenir gathering again. This was our first casualty with about as long a period of combat zone as any unit in any Army. I sometimes have the feeling that we are now living on borrowed time. I thought that particularly the other night when some of the German 280 mm. shells were coming in over our heads. This is the same gun which harassed us so long at Anzio. They have left us alone now for several nights, so we have hopes that they have been forced to move back out of range."

The soldier killed that day was Private Stanley C. Surowitz. In the 38th's roster of personnel he is listed as having joined the 38th on April 15, 1942, at Fort Bragg, and "Date departure, Sep. 18/44, killed in action, 1800 hrs. Pisa, Italy."

Dr. Charles H. Gay remembers well Private Surowitz and the account given him of the soldier's tragic death.

"Surowitz had prided himself on being the first fellow in our unit into any new town we came to. When we got outside Pisa we were told that a lot of mines had been laid in the town and we were warned not to attempt to enter the place until it had been cleared by the engineers. But either the night or the next day before we had been given clearance, Surowitz and two of his buddies, according to the story I was told, saw this music store. Surowitz played the piano; in fact, he was quite a musician. So he walked boldly into the store and when he saw a piano, he went over and sat down to play, even though there were warning signs MINED all over the place, put there by our engineers.

"And the first time he touched a key, the whole place blew up. He was killed, of course, one of his buddies

standing in the doorway was blown out into the street, and the other, still in the street, was knocked down.

"Surowitz was the only enlisted man in our unit who was lost during our entire service. We had one nurse, Lieutenant Benante, to die overseas. She was a victim of hepatitis."

But at least one surviving member of the 38th was on the scene that day in Pisa.

Pharmacist Joe Neil, now of Huntersville, North Carolina, who was then in charge of the 38th's pharmacy, after more than a score of years remembers vividly the death of Private Surowitz.

"We were moving into Pisa in a convoy. When we got into the middle of the town, the Germans up at the head of these big streets started shooting right straight down the streets with 88s. We stopped there and these boys got off the truck and ran into this store; the door was open, and it was a music store, had instruments hanging up. One of them picked up something, and WOOM! That building was leveled! We had been warned not even to get off the trucks. I was two or three trucks behind; I saw the whole thing. The store just caved in. It was just about dark. The only thing I saw come out of there was Surowitz's little dog. Surowitz was killed right then; we didn't know what had happened to the others, but later we heard he was the only one killed. He was the one, they said, who picked up a musical instrument that the Jerries had mined."

Afterward the trucks moved through Pisa and stopped in a field, where the enemy continued to fire upon them, the unit's pharmacist recalls. "After we knocked out those guns at the heads of the streets," he continues his recital of their reception that day, "we moved on through Pisa beyond the Leaning Tower and pulled into this field, and, boys, the Jerries were throwing that stuff into us. We didn't know where it was coming from; we stayed under our trucks over in this field until daylight; we couldn't work out there that night."