

and the dateline: VOLUME III NUMBER 350 MONDAY 25 DECEMBER 1944, it said:

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

"Merry Christmas" from one who is just as lonely for his home and family as you are, has a hollow sound, but I sincerely hope that this will be a happy day for each of you and that you know how deeply appreciated is every effort you have exerted during the year in performance of your duties, and particularly thank you for doing so much to provide our patients with the atmosphere of Christmas.

On behalf of my staff I extend greetings to everyone and may God grant your wish that next year you will be by your own fireside and "Peace on Earth" will be a reality.

G. T. WOOD, JR.
Colonel, M.C.,
Commanding.

At the bottom of the page an inked ribbon proclaimed:

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

For the men and women of the 38th Evacuation Hospital, with few exceptions, it would be the last Christmas overseas.

On Christmas Day 1944 at Montecatini, the Daily Bulletin of that date further discloses, the number of patients in the hospital was 424 and there were 487 vacant beds.

During the next six days the patient load increased daily—443; 613; 624; 722; and on December 30, to 810. On that day the Bulletin announced the welcoming to the 38th of two surgical teams to temporary duty from the 2nd Auxiliary Surgical Group. They were:

General Surgical Team No. 37-1:

Major Edward M. Phifer, M.C.; Captain David S. Feters, M.C.; 2nd Lieutenant Carol F. Sleezer, ANC; 2nd Lieutenant Sophie T. Cowin, ANC; Tec 4 Robert L. Myers, MD; and Tec 4 Richard J. Tysarczyk, MD.

Shock Team No. 105-1

Captain Hermann L. Hegner, MC; 2nd Lieutenant Elaine C. Hatchew, ANC; 2nd Lieutenant Winifred E. Cochran, ANC; Tec 4 Walter H. Cotner, MD; Tec 5 Anthony Serino, MD; and Pfc Elwood D. Heirominus, MD.

December 30 the Bulletin listed service newspapers approved for mailing home: Union Jack, Eighth Army News, Crusader, Parade, Stars and Stripes (Italy edition), Stars and Stripes (Sicily edition), Stars and Stripes (Mediterranean edition), Maple Leaf, NZEF Times, APW (Polish), Yank, and Basic News (compiled by PWB.)

On the last day of 1944 the patient roll dropped to 714.

25

As the year 1945 opened, with the 38th still based at Montecatini, Lieutenant General Joseph T. McNarney, from MTOUSA headquarters, sent to the service men and women a New Year's message urging them to exert superhuman effort to insure victory and peace within the forthcoming year.

The message was reproduced in the Daily Bulletin by order of Colonel Wood on January 2. General McNarney wrote:

"Never before has the vital importance of the Italian Front been so obvious as in this crisis of the great counter-offensive which the Germans have launched against our forces in Luxembourg and Belgium.

"The great number of men and vast amount of supply needed by the Germans to pursue the Italian campaign is costing him dearly now in his all-out, desperate counter-attack on the Western Front.

"Anything short of a superhuman effort on our part, any slackening in our effort, means a longer and more difficult war. It is not enough for us merely to hold and engage the enemy force. We must carry the fight to him and destroy him. We must force him to pour more and more men and supplies into Italy.

"As we enter the New Year I call on every one of you, in every branch of the Service, to drive yourselves to the utmost, to give your last ounce of courage and determination, and to destroy the enemy ruthlessly wherever you find him. Only by putting all that we have into this final battle for victory can we be assured that the New Year will bring us the peace and the reunion with our own that we all so much desire. May good fortune attend your efforts."

On Sunday, January 7, the Bulletin carried a congratulatory message from General Mark W. Clark, the



Surgeon Stokes Munroe is caught in his usual genial mood.

Fifth Army's former commander then commanding the Fifteenth Army Group:

"Heartiest congratulations to Fifth Army and yourself on second anniversary of Fifth Army today, January 5. By skill, courage and will to win, the Fifth Army will make a great contribution to the success of Allied arms in 1945, which we hope will be a year of complete victory against our German enemy. May God continue to guide and bless the Fifth Army and its teammate, the Eighth Army, in coming operations."

In the first week of 1945, Captain Pickens, who at intervals during the fall months had served as the unit's adjutant, was transferred from the 38th to the 170th Evacuation Hospital. The Daily Bulletin of January 9 carried Colonel Wood's announcement of the transfer:

"Captain Pickens has received orders transferring him to the 170th Evacuation Hospital, where he will serve as executive officer. I personally appreciate the recognition accorded Captain Pickens by the Army Surgeon, but regret very much that he will no longer be with this organization. I know each of you joins me in this regret, but too, wish him the greatest success in his new position, where fuller use can be made of his ability. Good luck, Stan, and be assured that the latch string will be hanging on the outside whenever you return."

That same Bulletin announced the promotion of Mary Alyce Culley from second lieutenant to first lieutenant. The following day the commanding officer welcomed First Lieutenant Harold J. Brelsford, transferred from the 94th Evacuation Hospital.

The Bulletin of January 21 revealed the promotion of Captain Milo J. Hoffman to major and Second Lieu-

tenants Elva E. Wells and Barbara L. Wingo to first lieutenant.

At the beginning of February two officers were welcomed to the 38th. The February 3 Bulletin made the announcement:

Major William B. Crawford, Jr., from the 15th Field Hospital, and Major Byford F. Heskett, a member of the 12th General Hospital, on a temporary duty exchange basis, in place of Major Pat R. Imes.

February 7 notice was given of the arrival at the 38th of First Lieutenant Charles Victorine, Dental Corps, as a replacement for Captain Blake. Three days later two promotions were announced: Second Lieutenants Madeline I. Jensen and Helen E. Johnson to be first lieutenants.

The new commander of the Fifth Army, as revealed in the Daily Bulletin of February 12, awarded commendations to a group of the personnel of the 38th for their services during the emergency resulting from the flooding in early November of the hospital at Pisa.

General Truscott's commendation declared:

"The above named personnel of the 38th Evacuation Hospital are commended for meritorious service near Pisa, Italy, on 2 and 3 November 1944. When the Arno River overflowed its banks, the hospital site was flooded with water three to six feet in depth. By displaying exceptional initiative, and with complete disregard for personal safety, these members of the hospital staff directed and aided in the safe and expeditious evacuation of all patients to a place of safety, recovered equipment and immediately established an emergency hospital in order to maintain the necessary treatment and care of the wounded. As a result of the quick thinking and able leadership displayed by these individuals, all treatments were continued without interruption and operations were performed with a minimum of discomfort to the patients. The actions of these officers and enlisted men are in accord with the highest traditions of the Medical Corps of the United States Army."

Those members of the 38th to whom the commendations were made "for outstanding services rendered during the flooding of the hospital on 2 November 1944" were:

Lieutenant Colonel William H. Pennington
 Lieutenant Colonel Paul W. Sanger
 Lieutenant Colonel Robert O. Y. Warren
 Captain Hallie E. Almond
 Captain James R. Felts, Jr.
 Captain Stanton W. Pickens
 Captain George E. Pugh
 Captain Rosamond S. Shipp
 First Lieutenant Martha G. Fliedner
 First Lieutenant Annette M. Heaton
 First Lieutenant Lela O. Russell
 Master Sergeant Herbert L. Johnson
 Staff Sergeant William F. MacDonough

Staff Sergeant James J. O'Donnell
 Staff Sergeant Adam J. Piperato
 Technician Third Grade Paul H. Kugler
 Technician Third Grade William E. Smith
 Sergeant John A. Boulier
 Sergeant Wilbur H. Knapp

Further honor came to the 38th in the award of the Bronze Star Medal to Private First Class George R. Porter, "for meritorious service in combat on 18 August 1944, in Italy. Entered the service from Hancock, New York." The award was announced in the Daily Bulletin of February 20, 1945.

One week later, on February 27, announcement was made of the promotion of Technical Sergeant William E. Vaughn to second lieutenant and his assignment to the 15th Field Hospital.

February ended with the visit to the hospital of Major General Stayer, Surgeon, MTOUSA, to inspect the facility. The next day Colonel Wood reported:

"To All Personnel:

"Major General Stayer, Surgeon, MTOUSA, seemed favorably impressed by the appearance of the hospital during his inspection yesterday, and gratified with the professional care the patients were receiving. Each member of the organization may feel a just pride in his or her contribution to the efficient operation of this small unit of the Army Medical Service."

On the day of the General's visit, the 38th listed 355 patients being cared for in 15 wards, with 555 beds vacant.

Interestingly reflecting the changing political situation in Italy at that time was the directive issued by the commanding general of the Fifth Army and published in the day's Bulletin:

"Personnel of the Fifth Army will refrain from direct, indirect or individual participation in Italian politics. Strict compliance with this principle will become even more important as the Italian Government assumes an increasing measure of political responsibility over a more extensive area of Italy. Casual attendance by Fifth Army personnel at political meetings, and even private conversation with Italians on political subjects, may lead to misunderstandings and will be avoided on all occasions."

First Lieutenant Eugene M. Snell, who had served frequently and at length as adjutant of the 38th, was promoted on February 27 to captain, and on that day Second Lieutenant Christine Fruth was advanced to first lieutenant. Notice of the promotions was carried in the Daily Bulletin of March 3. The Bulletin three days later announced that the 38th was extending its "welcome" to six of its members "who have just returned after an 'extended rest' in the states." The six were: Major George C. Snyder, Captain Robert B. Stith, Jr., Captain Charles H. Gay, Sr., Captain George E. Pugh,



Lieutenant Hallie Almond and Captain Robert Augustine are getting a little off-duty sunshine.

First Lieutenant Annette M. Heaton, and First Lieutenant Deborah R. Doskow.

Considerable change in the personnel marked the remaining weeks the 38th was based at Montecatini. Promotions, transfers, receptions from other units were frequently recorded. The most notable change was reported in the Daily Bulletin of March 11:

"Colonel George T. Wood, Jr., Commanding Officer, is being transferred to the United States to a new assignment, as yet unannounced. We are all happy to learn that his leadership, ability and wisdom are recognized by higher authorities and feel that our loss is a distinct gain to some other organization.

"The sincere good wishes of all members of the 38th Evacuation Hospital go with you, Colonel, and we hope you will be happy in your new assignment."

The same day announcement was made of the promotion of Pearl M. Satre from second lieutenant to first lieutenant.

Lieutenant Colonel William H. Pennington succeeded Colonel Wood as commanding officer of the 38th. On this last day of Colonel Wood's commanding the unit the hospital had 369 patients enrolled and 541 vacant beds.

On March 18 Miss Janet Seelye, Red Cross worker attached to the 17th General Hospital, was transferred to the 38th. Two days later the promotion of Second

Lieutenant Adrienne J. Ellison to first lieutenant, effective March 17, was revealed. On March 22 official announcement was made of the appointment of Colonel Pennington to command the unit, effective March 19.

Captain Spiros P. Sarris, who had been attached to the 38th from the Sixth General Hospital, was promoted to major. The announcement was made March 23.

A page of *News in Brief* in the March 27 Bulletin listed an item that reminded 38th members old enough to recall it that almost three decades earlier the world had ended another great holocaust that their fathers had hoped would bring a lasting era of peace. It noted the death of one of the great leaders of the Allied forces in World War I:

"Earl Lloyd George died last night at his home in Wales. He was 82."

On March 30 Lieutenant Charlotte McVeigh was welcomed into the 38th as a replacement for Lieutenant Leah Rodstein. Her home was Cleveland, Ohio. She came to the 38th from the 37th General Hospital.

The next day two other officers were received: Major Benjamin Rawles, Jr., and First Lieutenant David Speer. Major Rawles came from the 45th General Hospital; he was assigned to the 38th for six weeks as replacement for Major Calder. Lieutenant Speer, from Bronxville, New York, a graduate of Harvard Medical School, was assigned as replacement for Captain Crawley. The same day announcement was made of the promotion of three nurses, Ida P. Bell, Elizabeth E. Killeen, and Billie Wittler from second lieutenant to



The 38th's routine wasn't all work all the time. Occasionally the men—and the nurses—had time for sports. George Waide, left, shown with two buddies, judging by his shoes, had been in some sort of game at Montecatini. The others are William Minovich and Edmond Coviello.

first lieutenant. A week later four other second lieutenants received their silver bars. They were Vera M. Neely, Pauline B. Pisinsky, Frances L. Robbins, and Mary E. Townsend.

April 11 Colonel Pennington welcomed Captain Walter A. Russell of Somersworth, New Hampshire, to duty with the 38th. Two days later the commanding officer welcomed a group of officers, nurses, and enlisted men:

Captain Jean N. Le Clerc, from Manchester, New Hampshire, assigned to the 38th from the 329 Field Artillery Battalion for duty with the Surgical Service, replacing Captain Claud Perry.

First Lieutenant Robert A. Brower, of Cincinnati, Ohio, assigned to the 38th from the 171st Evacuation Hospital as replacement for First Lieutenant Brelsford, transferred to the 12th General Hospital.

From 182nd Station Hospital (Surgical Team)

Major James K. Gibson, MC

Captain Herbert B. Gaston, MC

First Lieutenant Carrie V. Exum, ANC

First Lieutenant Marguerite Ocheltree, ANC

First Lieutenant Loretta P. Spears, ANC

Tec 4 Leonard A. Canarile, MD

Tec 5 Merle E. Loux, MD

From 2nd Auxilliary Surgical Group (Surgical Team 45-2)

Captain Beverley B. Clary, MC

Captain Harvey W. Carter, MC

Second Lieutenant Gertrude L. Barbour, ANC

First Lieutenant Nellie R. Beagans, ANC

Tec 5 Gerard J. Robinson, MD

Pfc John Krane, MD

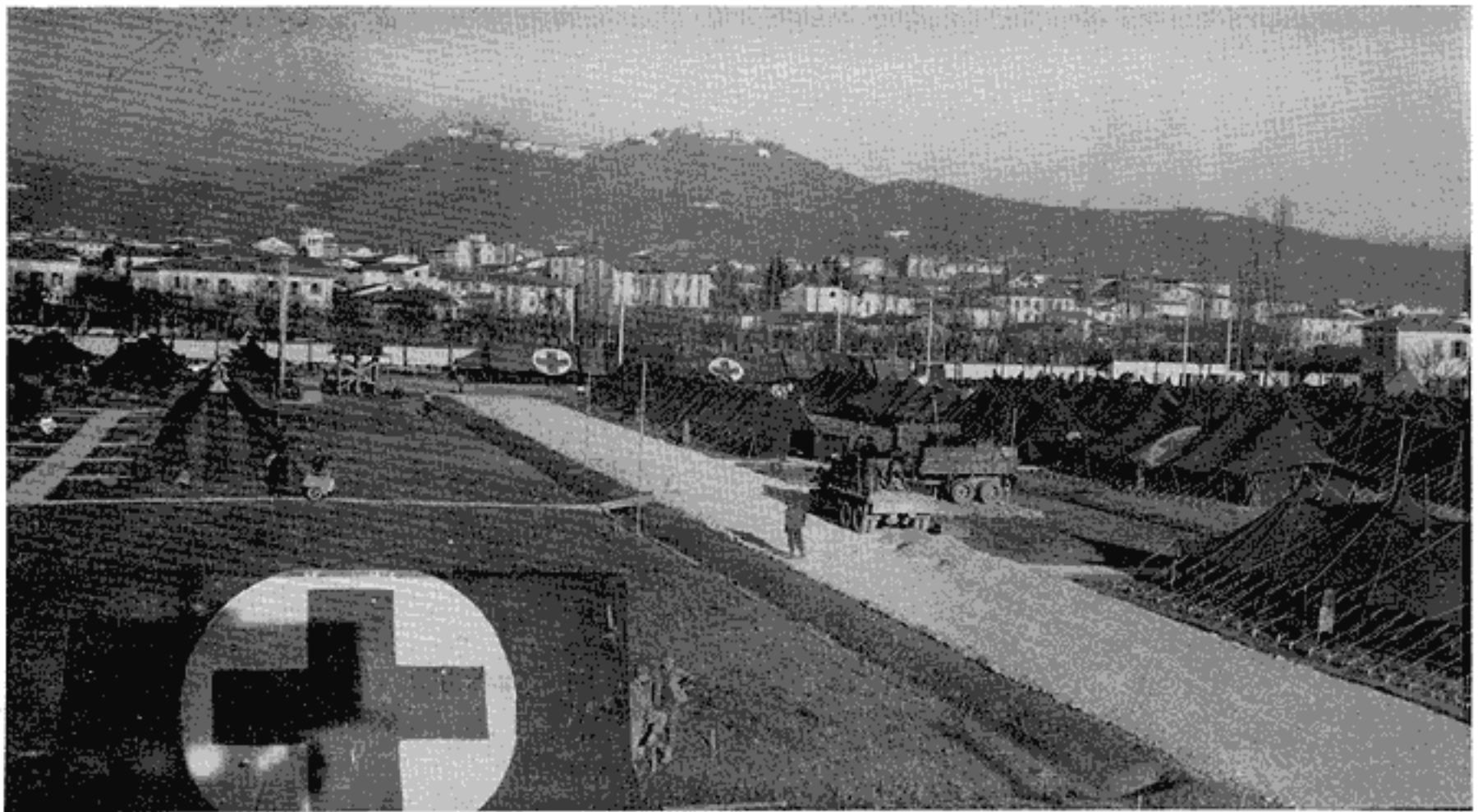
On the overleaf of this sheet under the heading *News in Brief*, set in a square of double-spaced type with a black border, was an announcement already heard around the world:

President Roosevelt died suddenly yesterday afternoon at his summer cottage in Warm Springs, Georgia, from cerebral hemorrhage. He was 63. The funeral services will be held in the White House tomorrow and the interment will be on Sunday at Hyde Park, the President's New York home. Vice-President Truman was yesterday sworn in as President for the remainder of Mr. Roosevelt's term. In a message of sympathy to Mrs. Roosevelt, Mr. Churchill says, "The President's death is a loss to the British Nation and the cause of freedom in every land." Marshal Stalin has also expressed his personal sorrow and the sympathy of his government.

But in the 38th Evacuation Hospital, as throughout the embattled area of the world, the business of war went on without pause. On the next day, April 14, two days after the President's death, another group was assigned for service with the 38th. In this group were:

Captain Martin Stein, MC, and Captain Joseph L. Pisani, MC, from the 161st Medical Battalion.

Major Newton C. Mead, MC; Captain Benjamin F. Lounsbury, MC; First Lieutenants Olive A. McCuen,



The rolling mountains of Italy that in Rome's golden era sheltered fabulous villas of the Empire's patrician families in this photograph can be seen beyond the 38th's encampment at Montecatini.

ANC, and Cora B. Kelso, ANC; Tec 5 John P. Jerling, MD, and Pfc William P. Sidell, MD, from the 2nd Auxiliary Surgical Group (Surgical Team 12-1).

Three promotions were announced April 20. Second Lieutenants Sara J. Green, HD, and Marie A. Tetzlaff, ANC, were given their silver bars, and Captain Stanton W. Pickens, transferred early in January from the 38th to the 170th Evacuation Hospital, was advanced to major.

Major Pickens had been serving in the new assignment a month when he wrote home on February 10 to tell about the new location and his latest responsibilities.

"It has been many weeks since I last wrote," he began. "The reasons have been fairly obvious. In this area things have been static while we watched with more than usual interest the developments in the east and west. I know now what a veteran is; he watches with interest what the young do. With the exception of the abortive push the Germans made down the Serchio valley a few weeks ago, nothing has happened here for many weeks. Our colored troops took the burden of that push until the Indians came to their rescue. The BRRR had a time of it, which proved more conclusively to those of us who have seen it first-hand that they had no business there in the first place. In addition, our Yankee friends here have concluded that

we know best how to handle the problem, that they are inexperienced. The Indians came in with their British officers, had a spot of tea, and then busied themselves tidying up the battlefield. Tidying up the battlefield consisted of gathering up equipment our troops had hurriedly left behind. After they had done this, they set about and took back most of the territory the Germans had taken from us. Then Eleanor's favorites were given the job of holding it again."

The comparative inactivity of recent weeks had caused them to develop "a softness that is not becoming," he wrote. "The social and rest periods have increased. We have thought more of entertainment and comfort than of winning the war quickly. We cannot take all the blame for this, since we do what we are told to do."

Then he revealed he had left the 38th:

"To offset this for my own part, I have accepted a transfer to another outfit. I don't know that I had any choice in the matter, but was led to believe that I did. The surgeon presented the matter in the most complimentary terms. Possibly this was his method of snaring me into more work. Anyway, it worked, and here I am the executive officer of a new hospital, set up about 20 miles from the old outfit."

He wrote of the new group:

"I have not yet decided whether this new organiza-

tion is an accumulation of a lot of excellent people or the castoffs from many units. Sometimes I think we might be good and then at other times I am sure we are the dregs. The fact is that most of the personnel came from a station hospital which remained in Africa until last fall. They still think and work from that angle, but it will not take long, when we get busy, to get away from the former methods and get down to rock bottom. The nearer you are to the front, the more corners are cut."

The Charlottean wrote of several of the staff:

"The Commanding Officer is from Atlanta, not regular Army. His name is Benjamin S. Read. His father was with the telephone company there for many years, as president, I believe. We have found many people and things in common, although he is a few years my junior. He went to Dartmouth, undergraduate, and studied medicine at Harvard. The chief of medicine is Major John O. McNeel from West Virginia. The chief of surgery, Lt. Col. Shakelford, studied at Princeton and took his medicine at Johns Hopkins. He is a Virginian, although he was teaching at Hopkins when the war started. He went to the Pacific for some 18 months in the Figi Islands and Bougainville. After recuperating in the States for three months, he asked foreign duty again and was headed for the China-Burma-India theatre, but for some reason was taken off the boat in this theatre. It happened about the time Uncle Joe Stillwell was leaving China to the Chinese. It strikes me as an unusually strong team. The other doctors stack up in the same manner. The medical administrative officers are all young, freshly commissioned officers. They appear to be well chosen and efficient."

He gave his view of the new assignment he had been given:

"The job of executive officer as expressed in the SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) reads like this: 'the

principal assistant of the commanding officer and supervises the workings of the remainder of the staff. He enjoys the confidence of the C.O. and possesses a thorough knowledge of his policies and plans. He performs such routine administration of the unit and the hospital as does not require the personal action of the C.O. In the absence of the C.O. he makes such decisions as he thinks the C.O. would have made in like circumstances and notifies him of such decisions at the earliest opportunity. In addition to his regular duties, the executive officer also acts as intelligence officer, summary court officer, and possibly president of the special court. He will have general supervision over headquarters.' It looks like a job of taking the dirty linen out to wash. The exec takes all the blame for the bad and makes the good look like the C.O. thought about it. So far, I have done very little, because I did not know the people with whom I was dealing. I thought it wise to move slowly. From point of overseas service, I am the oldest officer here, and from point of age I am among the oldest. I am outranked on all sides but that has promise of being equaled to some extent, and the grey hair and experience help. This month I draw what the Army calls a 'foggy.' For every three years service you get a five per cent increase in pay. Since I accepted my commission in February 1942, I am now eligible to draw the additional five per cent. This is on the base pay of a captain, which is \$200 per month, so the foggy will amount to \$10 per month."

The 170th Evacuation Hospital, he revealed further, had a capacity of 400 beds, smaller than the 38th but, said he, more mobile. "We have a few more trucks. In this way, when the war gets under way again, we should be able to move often and faster. This might bring us a little nearer the front, but I can't see how that will be, since we have more often than somewhat been sitting in front of the division artillery. Any moves further forward will put us in the battalion CPs or possibly alongside the frontline patrols. I am frankly a little weary of getting that far ahead without some sort of weapon in my hands."

He wrote again of the severity of the winter from which they had not yet emerged:

"The winter has been long and dull and cold. The snow has come and gone regularly, but we have been fortunate in getting flooring in our tents and since I have been in the new place, I have aided in constructing a Rube Goldberg type of oil heater. We have plenty of diesel oil and with a small valve or spigot taken from a wrecked jeep, and some copper tubing, we rigged up a creditable stove which warms the tent. Of course, we are covered with soot whenever the wind blows from the wrong direction, but being dirty is one of the prerequisites of war. We get our stovepipe



Major George Snyder hangs up his wash to dry. The place? Where else but Pisa!

by robbing the gutters and drain installations from fascist homes in the neighborhood. The owners usually disappear before the Army moves in. We have to be fast in our stealing before the native population returns because that is the first place they go for their pillaging. The bigshot racketeer has stolen from them for so long, they feel they are entitled to anything they

can find. Of course, we still feel a little like the conquering army and take what we need, although many people are getting soft about the Italians and think we should go easy on them. I don't forget that just a little over a year ago they were shooting at us with an aim to kill."

26

Five months after the 38th set up its tents at Montecatini the hospital was entering its final days at that location. It had arrived there November 10; it would close its operations officially, the Daily Bulletin of April 20, 1945, would record, "at 0930 hours." Major Snyder was administrative officer of the day and Captain Harney was medical officer of the day. Alternates were Lieutenant Brower and Captain Payne.

During the last day of operation, the Bulletin would further disclose, sixteen patients were admitted and 361 dispositions were made to clear completely the roster of patients.

The Bulletin that day was a short one. It listed only the promotions of three officers and summarized in one paragraph news of the action on the Eastern Front. Two nurses, Second Lieutenants Sara J. Green and Marie A. Tetzlaff, three days earlier had been promoted to first lieutenant. "Announcement is also made," said the Bulletin, "of the promotion to Major of Captain Stanton W. Pickens, 170th Evacuation Hospital, a former member of this command."

The *News in Brief* summary revealed:

"Moscow has finally announced the opening of the great Russian offensive across the Oder and reports that the Red Army are pushing the Germans back in a mighty drive toward Berlin. The Germans say that the Russians are advancing on a 40-mile front and have made a crossing of the river where they are getting non-stop reinforcements across the Oder. At several points the Russians are reported a little more than 18 miles from the outskirts of Berlin. The Russians who crossed the Neiser River have captured three towns, one about 50 miles from Dresden."

Next day's Bulletin—of Saturday, April 21, 1945—had but the one announcement:

"THE HOSPITAL WAS MOVED FROM ITS LO-

CATION AT MONTECATINI TERME, ITALY, TO A NEW SITE APPROXIMATELY 1 KILOMETER SOUTH OF MARZABOTTO, ITALY—COORDINATES, L772311.

"DISTANCE TRAVELED FROM OLD LOCATION: APPROXIMATELY 55 MILES.

"THE HOSPITAL WAS ERECTED IN THE NEW LOCATION AND READY TO RECEIVE PATIENTS BY 2400 HOURS."

The Bulletin of April 22 also was terse. It reported: "THE HOSPITAL OFFICIALLY OPENED AT 0100 HOURS.

One other announcement warned:

"All personnel are instructed to remain within the camp limits, as the areas immediately adjacent to the hospital have not been checked for mines. The area between the eastern border of the camp and the creek is expected to be heavily mined."

The warning was emphasized in the Bulletin of Monday, April 22:

"The surrounding area is heavily mined and information from G-2 is that there are many booby traps scattered about. All personnel are again warned!! Until further notice, the area east of the east water tower is out of bounds."

Lieutenant Colonel W. H. Pennington in that Bulletin declared that "it is very gratifying to see the results of hard work and interest on the part of all members of the command during the move and erection of the hospital. The Commanding Officer takes this means of thanking each and every one who has labored to make the rapid move possible."

Colonel Pennington announced that he had welcomed into the 38th the following officers, nurses, and enlisted men:

Captain John C. Todd, assigned to the 38th from the