

tents and began to get as comfortable as possible. Our hospital equipment did not get to us for several days, so we sat. About the fourth night a storm broke, the like of which I have never witnessed. The rains came and the winds blew. The wind blew with the ferocity of a whirlwind. It picked up pup tents like small scraps of paper. Some of them have never been seen since. I hung on to mine for a good two hours with the feeling that it was going to take off with the next blast. It seemed that the good Lord was determined that my tent should come down. It finally gave way but did not blow away as some did.

"The water just poured in. Everything I owned was soaked and I was not alone in my misery; nearly everyone had the same experience. Daylight the following morning was most welcomed. We were still able to laugh about it and no one was hurt and nothing of any great value was lost."

The day after the storm, with borrowed equipment,

they set up the hospital and began work. The first day they had about 250 patients and by noon of the following day the patient list had grown to more than 800. "That was a real mushroom growth," he observes, "and if you don't think that taking care of a small community of a thousand with food and water and hospital treatment is a job, you are wrong. But that is what we came for and that is what we did. The mud was reminiscent of last winter in Africa, but we waded thru with little thought of the discomfort. We were busy."

Hardly had they got housekeeping arrangements made and their own equipment on the ground, however, before the war moved away from them. Naples fell and the fighting line moved on to the Volturno River. "Up we jerked and moved again, and so it goes."

His letter, begun in Africa, had been continued in Italy through late September. It would be November before he would have an opportunity to write again.

## 17

While the 38th's mess officer was recording in his long letter home the experiences of the unit as he observed them during the movement from North Africa to Italy and the settlement there, which embraced virtually all of September, 1943, Captain Montgomery was adding entries in his diary that served to supplement the information provided by Captain Pickens.

On September 8 he had recorded his arrival at Oran and his realization that many changes had been made there since his leaving it in March. His entry that day had noted, too, that "Italy surrendered today."

One week later he wrote:

Left Goat Hill at 5:00 PM after being ready all day. It rained off and on all day. Drove in open truck to Mes-El-Kabir & got there in time to see our boat—*Otranto*—pull out. Drove back to Oran and after much waiting around were taken by tender to the *Otranto* which was anchored. 18 in our cabin.

The next day, September 16, he wrote:

Still at anchor. Meds just fair.

The following day he recorded:

Pulled out of harbor this morning. Convoy pulled out

about 5:30 PM. There are nine troopships. We have almost 5,000 aboard.

Four days later, on September 21, he recorded their arrival in Italy:

Arrived at our destination today, which is D 12. We are at Agropoli. Landed by LCI to Blue Beach & by duck from the LCI to the beach and up to one coordination field. Sat there amid much dust. Then by duck to our area, after going by the 16th. They are operating a few miles from us.

Three days later, he writes, they were still in tents. The date was September 24.

We are still living in our pup tents. There are many ingenious ways of putting them up. At noon today we had our first mess since landing. Up until now it has been C rations & tomatoes. Had a bath in the creek today.

Captain Montgomery's next entry dates the wind storm and heavy rain to which Captain Pickens referred to in his letter. The storm occurred on September 25, for Captain Montgomery's diary records on September 26:

Had a severe wind and rain storm last night. Blew down tents & the mess tent in which officers were quartered. Mine did not come down. The 16th Evac was leveled.

The last September entry, on the twenty-ninth, was terse:

Borrowing equipment from 56th. The hospital opened officially at 0800 today.

The 38th's Daily Bulletin, which had suspended publication on September 1, had resumed publishing the day before, Tuesday, September 28.

For that day, the Bulletin announced, Captain Snyder was officer of the day and Captain Pickens was alternate. The entire bulletin, written in capital letters, was devoted to a summary of the hospital's operations during the last five weeks:

HOSPITAL CLOSED IN TUNIS 24 AUGUST 1943  
LEFT TUNIS BY TRAIN 0100 HOURS 3 SEPTEMBER  
1943

ARRIVED ORAN 0300 HOURS 7 SEPTEMBER 1943  
BY TRUCK TO STAGING AREA #1 MBS 7 SEPTEMBER  
1943

LEFT STAGING AREA 15 SEPTEMBER 1943 AND  
BOARDED H.M.S. OTRANTO

LEFT ORAN HARBOR 1120 HOURS 17 SEPTEMBER  
1943

ARRIVED BLUE BEACH NORTH OF PAESTUM  
ITALY AT 0800 HOURS 21 SEPTEMBER

DISEMBARKED AT 1500 HOURS 21 SEPTEMBER  
1943

BIVOUAC AT N865-085 SHEET 198111 ITALY 1-50,  
000 FROM SEPTEMBER 21ST TO SEPTEMBER 28TH  
1943

HOSPITAL WILL BE OPENED AT 0800 HOURS 29  
SEPTEMBER 1943

THE DAILY BULLETIN RESUMES PUBLICATION.  
THE LAST EDITION WAS NUMBER 231 DATED 1  
SEPTEMBER 1943.

By order of Lieutenant Colonel WOOD:

F. B. Pedrick,  
WOJG, AUS.,  
Asst. Adjutant

The Bulletin that day was marked at the bottom of the sheet SECRET, and the SECRET was underscored.

The next day's Bulletin announced:

The Hospital officially opened at 0830 Hours 29 September 1943.

The Bulletin had one other announcement:

#### PROMOTION OF OFFICERS

Since the Hospital closed in Tunis on August 24th the following officers have been promoted:

##### TO MAJOR

	DATE OF RANK
Capt. HENRY S. MUNROE, JR., M.C.	25 August 1943

##### TO CAPTAIN

1st Lt. CHARLES B. PORTER, M.C.	17 August 1943
1st Lt. ROBERT H. SCHIRMER, M.C.	24 August 1943
1st Lt. MILO J. HOFFMAN, D.C.	24 August 1943
1st Lt. CLAUD W. PERRY, JR., M.C.	29 August 1943
1st Lt. JAMES E. KIRKPATRICK, ChC.	9 September 1943

#### TO 1ST LIEUTENANT

2nd Lt. ROSAMOND S. SHIPP, ANC 24 August 1943

On the last day of September the Daily Bulletin in its Status of the Hospital report lists 197 patients, 201 admissions, four dispositions and 24 wards in operation.

The next day, October 1, a veritable flood of new patients arrived. The admissions that day were 598, with no dispositions. This brought the total to 795. Twenty-six wards were in operation. It was reminiscent of the hospital's busy days in North Africa.

The following day the patient list had climbed to 816, with only five dispositions. But 48 dispositions the next day lowered the patient load to 781.

That day, October 3, Captain Montgomery's entry explained the flood of patients:

Receiving many patients, but to date very few battle casualties. All are medical, mostly malaria.

The October Bulletin carried a suggestion to the personnel:

It is an old Army custom that personnel will be clean-shaven, with the exception of the upper lip—a suggestion to the wise should be sufficient.

This same issue carried congratulatory messages from the American Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson addressed to the Allied Forces and from King George VI addressed to Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Mr. Churchill's reply to the King.

The Secretary of War wrote:

"To you and your men, I extend my hearty congratulations and my admiration for the skill and fortitude with which you have carried through the conquest of Sicily. The power of your Army and its magnificent spirit gives assurance that it is poised to drive through to even greater successes."

The message from the King to the Prime Minister said:

"The invasion of Sicily has proved a model of planning and execution. Its success is, of course, largely due to the gallantry and efficiency of the sailors, soldiers, and airmen engaged in the actual operation. I feel that a very special tribute should be paid to those who, with their American colleagues and comrades, were responsible for its organization. They, for months past, have laboured devotedly and with a skill, of which the fruits of their labour are the most conclusive proof, to ensure that every man, every ship, every aircraft, and every item of equipment arrived at the right place, in the right order, and at the right time.

"I should therefore be grateful if you, as Minister of Defence, would convey to all who were engaged,

directly or indirectly both at home and overseas on this immensely important task, my hearty congratulations on the manner in which they have discharged it and on the magnificent contribution that they have made towards the supreme end of winning the war.

"In saying this, I am, I feel, giving expression not only to my own gratitude, but to that of all in the British Empire."

To this message the Prime Minister replied:

"I shall be proud to convey Your Majesty's gracious message to all concerned both at home and overseas in the organization and planning of the invasion and conquest of Sicily.

"Your Majesty's congratulations will be received by those to whom they are addressed with the liveliest pleasure. They would, I know, wish me to convey to Your Majesty an expression of their gratitude for this gracious message and of their determination to undertake with all possible energy whatever tasks may lie ahead."

Soon other congratulatory messages would come to General Clark as commanding officer of the Fifth Army. The Daily Bulletin of October 9 carried the texts of the messages. The first was from Secretary of War Stimson:

"My dear General Clark:

"I have been following your Salerno operation with the keenest interest. I am delighted that you have now gotten your opponents pushed back into a position where they are no longer threatening, and I send to you and your brave men my heartiest congratulations on the successful accomplishment of one of the most difficult and hazardous operations in the history of warfare.

"I had intended to visit you at Oran on my recent trip to North Africa, but an emergency call shortened my stay and made it necessary for me to return to the United States earlier than I had expected. I shall always regret that I could not have seen you and given you in person my best wishes for the success of your Army in its coming adventure.

"With my most sincere good wishes for your continuing good fortune in the rest of this difficult Italian campaign, believe me

"Faithfully yours,  
Henry L. Stimson"

Prime Minister Churchill wrote General Clark:

"On the hard-won successes of the Fifth Army, which have already inflicted grievous and largely irreparable injury on the Armed Forces of the enemy and have so far yielded the magnificent harbor and city of Naples, I send my congratulations."

To Mr. Churchill's message General Clark replied:

"Many thanks for your kind congratulatory message on the occasion of the capture of Naples. With the continued effective cooperation between British and American land, sea, and air forces the Fifth Army is confident that this is only the first of many victories. We are deeply grateful to you for your unwavering confidence in us."

That same issue of the 38th's Daily Bulletin confirmed and gave emphasis to Captain Montgomery's entry in his diary on October 3 recording the prevalence of malaria cases in the hospital. The first notice in the Bulletin warned that atabrine must be administered to the personnel daily:

Due to the high incidence of malaria in this locality, it is imperative that each member of this command and each patient in the hospital, not under malaria therapy, be given one atabrine tablet a day, six days a week.

It is the responsibility of the Detachment Commander to see that every enlisted man be given atabrine as directed, under the supervision of a non-commissioned officer.

It is the responsibility of the Chief of Service to see that each hospital patient receives prophylactic atabrine, in all cases which are not under malaria therapy.

Atabrine is available at all times in the Officers' and Nurses' Mess.

All members of this command who are sensitive to atabrine will take quinine as directed by the Chief of the Medical Service.

Failure to comply with this order will result in disciplinary action on the part of the individual concerned.

The day before this Bulletin was issued Captain Montgomery with some others in the 38th had taken a drive along the coast. He recorded it in three lines:

A group of us went to Amalfi this afternoon. Beautiful drive & had a nice time.

Three days later, on October 11, he made another trip:

Went to Sorrento today. Bought all my Christmas presents. Rained all the way home.

On October 15 he wrote in his little journal:

Hospital closed today.

But the next day's entry filled a page:

We left at 10:25 this morning by truck. Are in second echelon. First came yesterday. Drove thru Salerno, Pompeii, Naples, and on to Caserta.

The ruins of Pompeii were little damaged, but Naples has really taken a beating. The harbor was full of Allied ships, which was a good sight. The last few miles to Caserta was along a straight double lined road with sycamores. Lovely scene leading to the Palace.

We are installed in a brand new military barracks—beautiful, with terrazzo floors, high ceilings. The water mains were destroyed by the Germans. We hope it will be repaired in a few days. It is the best place we have ever had.

Arrived here at Caserta at about four p.m. We are on the second floor. Bob, T D, P B, & I in one room. At 5:30 battle casualties arrived & by 7:30 had completed four debridements.

First patients received 24 hrs. after last pt. left other location at Agropoli.

The Daily Bulletin of that day—Saturday, October 16—announced:

The Hospital located five miles North of Paestum, Italy, officially closed at 2400 hours 15 October 1943.

Number of patients, said the Bulletin, was zero, admissions zero, dispositions 384, vacant beds zero.

The next day the Bulletin announced:

The Hospital in its new site at Caserta, Italy, officially opened at 1630 hours 16 October 1943. Eight battle casualties were admitted. The first operation was performed at 1700 hours.

In capital letters underlined the Bulletin warned:

#### 1. BLACKOUT

**THERE WILL BE AN ABSOLUTE BLACKOUT REPEAT ABSOLUTE WHICH WILL BE ADHERED TO BY ALL MEMBERS OF THIS COMMAND. NO FLASHLIGHTS WILL BE USED OUT OF DOORS DURING BLACKOUT HOURS AND THE LIGHTING OR SMOKING OF CIGARETTES OUT OF DOORS DURING BLACKOUT HOURS IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED.**

#### 2. AIR RAID

During an air raid all personnel will seek shelter on the ground floor in whatever building they may happen to be in. All lights will be extinguished by cutting off the generator.

On Monday, October 18, 1943, Captain Montgomery noted the continued influx of patients:

Patients have been coming in rapidly, all battle casualties. We can hear the sound of artillery fire & the windows rattle with the vibration from the larger explosions.

Again the Daily Bulletin supported the captain's brief report. In the issue of that day it reported a total of 113 admissions to bring the patient total to 136, with no dispositions and 24 wards in operation, and 512 vacant beds. On this day Captain Hoffman was administrative officer of the day and Captain Medearis his alternate; Captain Matthews was medical officer of the day and Lieutenant Munroe alternate; Major Imes was surgical officer of the day and Captain Jones alternate. Captain Hoffman was also dental officer of the day and Captain Walker alternate. Lieutenant Mizelle was the nurse officer of the day and Lieutenant Fliedner was alternate.

The most significant entry in the Daily Bulletin of October 18, however, was a summary of the hospital's operation at Paestum:

The hospital was officially opened at 0830 hours 29 September 1943, five miles North of Paestum and was closed at 2400 hours 15 October 1943. The following figures show

some of the experiences during the fifteen days of operation in the first phase of the Italian campaign:

<b>TOTAL ADMISSIONS</b>	<b>1544</b>
Disease .....	1371
Injury .....	129
Battle casualty .....	44

<b>DISPOSITIONS</b>	<b>1544</b>
Duty .....	693
Transfers .....	324
Zone of interior .....	426
AWOL .....	35
Died .....	2

<b>LABORATORY EXAMINATIONS</b>	<b>1305</b>
Malaria smears .....	680
Total positive .....	199
Tertian .....	194
Estivo Autumnal .....	5
Blood counts .....	428
Urinalysis .....	166
Stool .....	6
Cross matching .....	7
Sputum .....	2
Gonococcus .....	14
Chest fluid .....	2

#### PATIENTS' MESS

Total meals	27660
Ambulatory patients .....	13218
Bed patients .....	14442

From no patients listed for October 16 the patient load built up quickly during the approximately three weeks the hospital would be in operation at Caserta. The heaviest enrollment during the Caserta period was 604 on Sunday, October 24.

The Daily Bulletin of that day carried also the notice of promotion of four of the unit's officers, one of them a nurse. The announcement:

It is with pleasure the announcement is made of the promotion of the following named officers and nurse to the rank set opposite their name:

- 1st Lieutenant WILLIAM C. MATTHEWS, M.C.  
RANK—Captain, DATE OF RANK—24 August 1943
- 1st Lieutenant ROBERT P. MILLER, M.C.  
RANK—Captain, DATE OF RANK—24 August 1943
- 1st Lieutenant GEORGE A. SOTIRION, M.C.  
RANK—Captain, DATE OF RANK—24 August 1943
- 2nd Lieutenant MARTHA G. FLIEDNER, ANC  
RANK—1st Lt., DATE OF RANK—24 August 1943

From 604 patients on October 24 the total dropped the next day to 529, and from then on, as long as the hospital remained at Caserta, the total each day was less than five hundred.

On October 25 Captain Montgomery noted:

The push has slackened. It is the longest continuous busy time we ever had—from 5 AM until midnight the following day, with three hours (off) is my longest period.—40 hrs.—meals crowded in when possible. After that we made a new

arrangement, I on during daytime, LaChance and Stokes at night. This worked better but I needed assistance from the Med service.

This same day, October 25, although Captain Montgomery did not record it in his diary, the 38th had two distinguished guests. They were Lieutenant Gen-

eral Mark W. Clark, commanding general of the Fifth Army, and Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau.

The two were photographed together standing beside the railway tracks at Caserta with a tangled mass of wrecked rail equipment in the background.

## 18

The official business of the 38th Evacuation Hospital day by day was reported by the Daily Bulletin and these reports, supplemented by the occasional and generally terse diary entries of Captain Montgomery, provide a factual chronology of the unit's service in Africa and Europe, but letters of Captain Pickens from Italy, as those he wrote from Africa had done, provide illuminating detail and frequently important additional data.

The first letter he wrote after landing in Italy, for example, provides color and evokes interest that the completely factual recording fails to achieve. In that way it brings home to Charlotte and North Carolina the phase of the war in which the 38th was involved. This letter followed by two months the last one he had written from North Africa. It was dated "2 November 1943" and the only identification of the place from which it was being written was simply "Italy."

He began:

"It has been said that all roads lead to Rome, but from our experience they are small and narrow when you get this close. What roads are here are well built and well marked, but it is impossible to have them running over some of the mountains that spread down this peninsula. Consequently, our progress must of necessity be slow. As I told you in one of my earlier letters from Africa, wars are fought on roads and for the control of roads. It is more true in this war than in any previous one since it moves, normally, very swiftly when it moves, and the roads are necessary for the moving of troops and their supplies.

"These roads remind me very much of the trip from Blowing Rock to Linville or from Clayton to Highlands. The Germans have placed their defense in strategic spots and it takes time to blast them out without making the cost too high. The cost in men and material so far has been most reasonable as far as I can see and

we are in a position to see the cost in wounded men. You folks may become impatient, as we do over here, about the slowness of our progress, but it is better that way if the means justify the ends.

"The roads run along the valleys and each valley is dotted with small villages and small farms. The farms are highly cultivated and extensively irrigated. The villages are crowded and dirty but not as dirty as Africa. When the war has moved by, the villages are pockmarked and in a lot of cases are almost totally demolished. If there happens to be a railroad line thru the town, the town has been wiped out and the rail connections are ruined for great distances up and down the line. When I say ruined, I mean the rails are twisted and scattered and large holes mark the right of way, and boxcars are scattered up and down the tracks and the electric wiring is spread over the countryside. All of the trains are operated, or, I should say, were operated, by electricity. It will be many months before rail connections are made again in this section. This was all done by our Air Force to cut off the German supply line. The bridges across the streams and irrigation canals are all out. This might have been done by us or by the enemy as he moved up the peninsula, but in any case we move over temporary structures at slow speed. The engineers have done a remarkable job on this work and they work swiftly. Some of the bridges are forty or fifty feet high over the water."

More interestingly, he wrote also of the people in this war-torn region from below Salerno to Caserta:

"Where towns are demolished, the townspeople have been slow in coming back and trying to make any repairs. Occasionally you will see the natives cleaning up the rubbish and repairing the doors and putting on a temporary roof. Some of them open their shops for business. The barbers are all busy cutting soldiers' hair. The grocers have apples, nuts, small oranges and