The Rouen Post, December 1940

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.wustl.edu/rouen_post

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.wustl.edu/rouen_post/57
ARMISTICE PARTY

For the second successive year Dr. Edwin C. Ernst was host to former members of Base Hospital Unit 21 at an Armistice party on the grounds of his home in Kirkwood, Saturday afternoon and evening, November 9. A sharp drop in temperature followed by heavy rain had no visible effect on the spirits of the veterans who gathered in an attractive recreation lodge offering a crackling log fire and a well-stocked bar. Ribs, broiled at an adjacent barbecue pit, were the plat du jour.

Dr. Malvern C. Clopton, commander of Mobile Hospital 4 in France, suddenly recalled a previous dinner engagement upon learning that Jim Sallee, a former Mobile 4 cook was in action at the barbecue pit. Dr. James A. Brown was a visitor in the afternoon and Drs. Walter Fischel, Charles Eyerman, Raymond Spivy and Joe Magidson were on hand for the evening frolic.

Jeanette Parish presented her youthful guest David Edward Dawkins of Whitstable, Kent, who recently arrived from England to make his home with Miss Parish for the duration of the war. Duncan McClintock of New York, a guest of Marvin Hamilton, spoke briefly of conditions in England as he found them during a business trip to London last September. McClintock, a native of Scotland, served with the 51st Highland Division during the World War.

Horace (Judge) Neely drove in from Marion, Illinois, and Earl Hursey, Floyd (Fat) McKinney and Fred Stroback reported for their first Unit party in several years. The women present were: Jeanette Parish, Mae Auerbach Gluck, Flora M. Cleland, Margaret Polloch and daughter Margaret, Marie Schoenherr and Mary E. Stephenson. Margaret Conochie who seldom misses a reunion was confined to Bethesda hospital with an infected leg.

Dr. Ernst diverted attention from the bar during the latter part of the evening by showing colored motion pictures taken during an extensive hunting trip in Montana last September.

Your Editor and Jim Sallee, toiling over the fire at the barbecue pit, were the recipients of much unsolicited and utterly worthless advice from such drooling onlookers as Pat Byrns, Arthur Melville and Dick Sabath. Alonzo Kelly, Jules Silberberg and Gordon Kimbrel alternated as refreshments dispensers under the benevolent eye of Willard McQuoid, chairman of the entertainment committee.

Frank Depke’s failure to appear proved a windfall to Dr. Ernst’s huge shepherd dog “Bingo” who fell heir to a pile of ribs set aside for the voracious chiropodist.

Toby Dunville, auditor and veteran pianist, was deeply stirred by the recent farewell services to St. Louis’ draft volunteers in the Opera House of the Municipal Auditorium. “The sight of these boys, about to don khaki in the service of their country, brings back a lot of memories,” said the patriotic Auditor. “My fingers are not as agile as they were, but if I could find an outfit boasting a new piano I’d be tempted to join the colors again myself.”

DECEMBER, 1940
Shoes are the ever present problem just now. The soles we thought so mannish seem made for dancing slippers here. The nurses are wearing men’s army shoes with hobnails! And puttees! I’m having mine done over in British army style and hope to be dry if not beautiful. I shall have to have heavier woolens. It has been quite warm this week and no rain. Even so I am wearing wool unions, wool stockings, wool bloomers and a sweater at times. The originals are having new uniforms issued for white uniforms are pathetic after an hours wear. The American Red Cross in London is sending new gray dresses of chambray with Johns Hopkins aprons. The gray dresses and butchers aprons given us in New York are a fizzle and eventually we will have gray chambray too. And they will be shockingly short—twelve inches from the ground.

I am in D line, a row of nine tents; four double tents and a single tent at the top. All rows of tents are called lines. I have the odd tent and the first double one. My patients are the in-betweens, not walking nor the very severely wounded. Kathryn Slaten has the other side of the double tent and her patients are severely wounded. The dressings are done by senior medical students and a dressing nurse and they do the work in five tents. With fourteen beds in a tent we have plenty to do. We do not treat the men like St. Luke’s patients, but I think we do very well considering the number we have. In the morning we go on duty at 7:40. The men have their a. m. face washing and the blue boys (up-patients) serve the breakfast which is usually porridge, tea and bread. One day I may have two or three, the next day a dozen for there is a constant coming and going. After the breakfast is finished I rub backs, brush out crumbs, straighten sheets—change the most soiled—and brush teeth when I have time. Kathryn Slaten and I are called the tooth-brush queens for we insist upon more tooth-brushing than the V. A. D.'s did. To be sure, many of the Tommies have few enough teeth to clean. They should have started the brushing generations ago.

Each patient has a bath when he comes in and once or twice a week as we have time. There are usually sixteen or eighteen patients to fix up in the morning. At ten and four the temperatures are taken and we try to serve nourishment between meals to the most anaemic. In the afternoon we wash all faces and hands, rub backs and fix the beds again. Of course there are endless fomentations and turning and returnings of the sick ones. We must watch their backs and try to prevent pressure sores.

To visit and laugh with the men is as much a part of the work as the dressings and baths. On my half day last week I fixed up seventeen and gave three full baths before one o'clock. And a bath here means a cleansing bath, not a refreshing sponge, though it must be refreshing to the men to be free of Flanders mud. One usually takes three changes of water at least.

When the men come in they are taken into two large tents on the “Point” where there are benches for the walking wounded and the stretcher cases are put on the floor. Each one receives a bowl of hot soup before he is touched. Then the officers take the name, regiment, rank and number, assign the patients to the wards and the stretcher bearers carry them out. It makes ones heart ache to see them, but they don’t want sympathy. Saddest of all is to see men you have grown to know leave for Convalescent Camp where they are gradually hardened for further duty in the front line.

(To be continued)
A BUSY OUTFIT

During his recent visit to Florida, Marvin Hamilton, was impressed by the influence of West Palm Beach Post No. 12, commanded this year by our old friend Charles Fox. Post No. 12, with over 500 members, is an important factor in the social and civic life of the town. Its present activities include the promotion of boxing bouts, the operation of a farmers market and the handling of draft registration. The Post’s budget for the coming year calls for the disbursement of $95,000.

Dear Bill:
I was deeply moved by your “Book Review” in the August Rouen Post. The men mentioned were all friends of mine—and I am proud to call you that too.

Sincerely,
GEORGE H. B. JORDAN

Dear Mr. Jablonsky:
Please accept our sincere thanks for the August copy of the Rouen Post. Although the story “Book Review” brought a heartache it was consoling to know that Fremont’s memory is still cherished by his buddies through these many years. To you, the officers and members of Rouen Post No. 242, we express our heartfelt appreciation and a hope that the coming year will be a happy one. Will you please use the enclosed check as our subscription for future issues of your paper.

In grateful acknowledgment of the kindly reference to my departed brother, I am,
Yours sincerely,
ELSIE LUEKING STEIN

RELINQUISHING

Sure, ’twas like the Angel’s footsteps when your baby feet went racin’,
And—see the funny toothmarks on your battered little cup—
’Twill be a different metal bit my lad’ll soon be facin’—
But—dearie—though my heart’s half broke—
I’m proud to give ye up!
Good-bye, lad—I’ll not cry, lad!
Stoop lower, whilst I kiss ye—
But—as the days slip by, lad—
Will ye guess how much I miss ye?

Then sometimes with ye rollickin’ and rompin’ all about me,
I’d ask myself how I could ever pay for so much bliss—
And I’d wonder how I’d ever lived so many years without ye
But—laddie—now I see it all—I bore ye just for this!
Good-bye, lad—I’ll not cry, lad—
Stoop low—that I may kiss ye—
And as the days slip by, lad,
God will know how much I miss ye!

—Theda Kenyon

Wishing you a double ration of happiness and good fellowship this Holiday Season and throughout the coming year.

—Bill Stack
AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS IN BLACKPOOL

Blackpool, England, is making great strides in the building of air raid shelters. The Borough Surveyor, Mr. J. Drake, recently announced that when the present work is completed there will be accommodation for 42,000. The Tower and Winter Gardens have about 180 fire-fighters and roof watchers ready to assist in air raid emergencies. The majority of the staff are fully trained in fire fighting and casualty service and the others are receiving daily instruction.

The songs that bolstered British morale during the World War have been relegated to the side lines in the present conflict. Such one-time favorites as "Keep The Home Fires Burning," "Long, Long Trail," Tipperary," and "Blighty" are just a memory in bomb-scarred London today. The present generation is carrying on with such numbers as "Kiss The Sergeant Major Goodbye" and the colorful "A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square."

"The streets of town were paved with stars
'Twas such a romantic affair.
And as we kissed and said goodnight
A nightingale sang in Berkeley Square."

Another favorite, "There'll Always Be An England," is a stirring laudation set to music possessing the emotional qualities of a national anthem.

"There'll always be an England
While there's a country lane;
Wherever there's a cottage small
Beside a field of grain.
There'll always be an England
While there's a busy street
Wherever there's a turning wheel,
A million marching feet.

There'll always be an England
And England shall be free,
If England means as much to you
As England means to me."

Dear Bill:

Costen's careless remarks about me arise to confound him when he sees them in print. His guilty conscience gives him the jitters. This fact is proven by his sending me air-mail specials denying that he made such comments. Such denials of course are amusing since it is traditional that you never misquote anyone.

More potent than any other evidence of his trembling fear of me is the fact that, although he reads his dry, technical papers before practically every State Medical Society in the Union, Costen manages somehow to avoid California. He knows only too well that I would meet him at the border and there, by sheer force, compel him to eat every one of his boastful assertions.

Los Angeles, Cal.  
Nov. 26, 1940  
CALVIN TILTON