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MOBILE 4 NIGHT

Members of Mobile Hospital 4, those rollicking, self-styled "veterans of front line service," were hosts to their former comrades of Base Hospital Unit 21, at the Rouen Post monthly meeting, January 14, at Garavelli's restaurant. The meeting was conspicuous by the unexplained absence of Horace (Judge) Neely, the jovial pharmacist of Marion, Ill., and the unexpected presence of Holland (Chappy) Chalfant, Springfield, Mo., tablet magnate. Arshavere Karaseferian Nushan, vociferous drum-major was on hand for the first time in many months and his threats to put a Turkish curse on Earl Hursey kept the latter in a state of apprehension throughout the evening.

The highlight of the program was a sound movie, showing past and present activities of the United States Coast Guard and an outline of the preparatory training for future Guard officers. The subject was of special interest to the audience owing to the fact that Alvin Jordan, son of Past Commander George H. B. Jordan, is training for a commission at the Coast Guard School in New London, Conn. Jordan received his appointment last summer after a competitive examination. The film was shown by Chief Petty Officer Johnson.

The Mobile 4 group, numerically weak but vocally devastating, was composed of Jim Sallee, Arthur Melville, Frank Depke, Carl Taylor, Jules Silberberg, Forney Dixon and Holland Chalfant—all carrying the torch for the alleged exploits of Mobile 4. Pat Byrns, the perennial broadcaster, astonished his army companions by blushingly declining Commander Hamilton's invitation to address the rabble.

Jeannette Parish, the only Mobile 4 nurse living in St. Louis was present with her English protege, David Dawkins of Whitstable, Kent. Other nurses present were Mae Auerbach Gluck, Margaret Conochie, Esther Cousley, Margaret Pollock and her daughter, Margaret.

Your Editor, scheduled to deliver a chalk talk, optimistically arrived at Garavelli's without an easel and was forced to carry on with a make-shift arrangement dependent upon four highly capricious thumb-tacks and the assistance of Chairman Philip Conrath.

Holland Chalfant and Arthur Melville enjoyed a reminiscent huddle that started in the dining room and ended at the service bar. "I got a kick out of talking over old times with Chalfant," said Melville as he drove homeward with your Editor. 'Chap' was highly allergic to hard work and discomfort and no one in the A. E. F. had greater talent for avoiding these two scourges of mankind. We had many adventures together during our service with Mobile 4."

JANUARY, 1941 (Continued on page 2)
Chalfant, secretary and treasurer of the Springfield Tablet Company, is a former well-known St. Louis athlete. He was an outstanding baseball and football star at Soldan High School and later played professional baseball until an injury to his arm forced him to retire from the game. Chalfant moved to Springfield shortly after his discharge from the army in 1919. He is married and has two children.

A RARE COINCIDENT

William Dawkings, of Whitstable, Kent, riding on a bus through Holborn a few weeks ago, was telling a friend about his son, David Dawkings, who left England in August to make his home with Miss Jeannette Parish in St. Louis for the duration of the war. At the mention of St. Louis a fellow passenger sitting across the aisle cut in on Dawking's monologue. "I beg your pardon," smiled the stranger. "But I couldn't help overhearing your conversation and it interested me very much. My name is Charles Clegg and I happen to have a brother living in St. Louis. Dr. Ernest Clegg—a dentist. Served with the Royal Flying Corps during the World War."

As a result of this chance meeting of two strangers on a London bus, David Dawkings recently dined with Dr. Clegg at the latter's home in University City. Following the dinner David and his host attended a meeting of Sea Scouts at St. Michael and St. George's Church. Today David is a member of the Scouts—and his new uniform was a present from Dr. Clegg.

Members of Base Hospital Unit 21 who attended the Rouen Post Armistice Day dinner at the Melbourne Hotel three years ago will remember Dr. Clegg as the guest speaker of the evening. The highlight of his talk was an eye-witness account of the death of Baron Von Richthofen, famous German ace.

We hold no brief for overworked aphorisms but after considerable groping we can think of no more fitting comment for the foregoing story than the time-worn adage, "It's a small world, after all."

AN OLD WOMAN: IN WAR-TIME

She is too old to look upon such days;
   It may be best that she is nearly blind;
   Her life has been all gentle words and ways,
   The care of children, and things wise and kind.

   Summers she spent in tending bush and bloom
      Of quaint old-fashioned plants about the place,
   And winters in her dim, high-ceilinged room,
      Dreams and the firelight mingling in her face.

   She has known naught, in all her quiet life,
      Of passions clashing at tremendous grips,
   The hate and blood and lust of mortal strife,
      And men who die with curses on their lips . . . .
   Of all that she has seen, all that life gave,
      Must she take this, fresh with her, to the grave?

—David Morton.

Dear Bill:

It has been a long time since I have seen you. I think it must have been about 1928 or 1929 at Fort Snelling. I wish to thank you for the copy of the Rouen Post and I am almost jealous that I was not fortunate enough to have served in the original Base Hospital 21. I hope its successor, General Hospital 21, will be able to keep up the standards set by your organization. With best wishes,

Commander General Hospital 21

Lee D. Cady, M. D.
Justin Jackson likes to talk of the days when he was chauffeur for Col. Borden Veeder, commander of the American Unit operating British General Hospital 12 at Rouen, France. Unlike his comrades on duty in the hospital, Jackson's existence was relieved from monotony by frequent motor trips to Norman villages and towns along the coast. "The Colonel's activities included a lot of territory in those days," recalled Jackson during a recent chat in Garavelli's restaurant. "I remember the time we drove to Dieppe—and the excellent luncheon in a quaint brick-paved garden. Later we visited an old castle with its moat and drawbridge—a lonely, gray survivor of the Crusade days. On another occasion we spent a sleepless night in Abbeville as German raiders hurled destruction from the moonlit sky. Bombs cut a swath the width of a street through two blocks of houses in the vicinity of our hotel. For once I envied the boys carrying stretchers in the comparative security of the Base. But the stay in Abbeville was my only trying experience. Most of the trips were pleasant interludes in the dull routine of the General Hospital.

"I often recall the boats clustered in the harbor at Treport... and my mouth waters when I think of a duck dinner in a rustic inn on a bluff overlooking the Seine about twenty miles south of Rouen. The duck, young and plump, was roasted over an open fire where it turned slowly on a gadget resembling the mechanism of a grandfather clock. From the windows of the cozy dining room one could see the river winding between hills patched with snow... And one perfect day in June I drove the Colonel to the ancient castle of Robert the Devil. There, among the ruins of a Benedictine Abbey we wandered through a garden where roses have bloomed for centuries. It was a great life."

"How did you happen to get the job?" we queried.

Jackson took a sip of beer, lighted a cigarette and settled back in his chair. "I had enlisted as a mechanic and when I learned that the Red Cross in St. Louis was sending us a truck and a touring car I applied to Sergeant Hester for the job of taking care of them. Hester, up to his neck in paper work, asked me a few questions and ended the interview with a curt 'If you can put the cars together, the job is yours.'

"A few weeks later the cars arrived, packed in the smallest possible boxes. When I called for them at the depot the British R. T. O. wanted to know if I had been sent to France to assemble cars for the Ford Company. I set him back on his heels by the announcement that every American could assemble a Ford. It took eight hours to put the first car together. Sergeant Puckett and two other chaps helped me but we had only the tools that came with the cars. I would place the parts and the others would bolt them in place. A gang from Cleveland Hospital Unit 4 worked eight hours that day just to start a car that arrived already assembled from Paris. Boy! Were we tired that night. Even the despised canned mutton stew tasted good when we reached the mess hall."

We observed: "Well, it sounds as though you really earned the job on your merit."

Jackson emptied his glass and reached for his hat and overcoat. "I'll say I did," he agreed. "It was the only way I could get the assignment I wanted. There were other ways of getting pleasant jobs, of course—but I couldn't play the piano, my father hadn't known Major Murphy in St. Louis, and I had no francs to lend Sergeant Perkins. It was up to me to prove my ability."
THE ROUEN POST

RECOLLECTIONS OF A RED CROSS NURSE

By Retta Snyder

Olive Meyer and I have moved into our hut at last. Edith Ferguson will join us in a day or two. We are confronted with the problem of evolving a home for four, so arranged that we need not intrude on one another’s belongings nor two much on one another’s privacy. The coal stove stands in the center of the hut so we cannot have permanent partitions—just curtains. On our half day Olive and I bought burlap and this afternoon I purchased screws, wire, and small rings to put the curtains on. It is going to be difficult to seclude ourselves but by hook or crook we intend to do it.

• • •

The weather has been unusually pleasant. The skies at all times are exquisite; bluest blue or grayest gray. The sunrises and sunsets are wonderful for there are always clouds to catch the reflections. The stars are unusually clear and Jupiter and Venus seem much nearer than at home. I feel that I am within hailing distance of Jupiter some nights.

To see ice an inch thick on the water pails, grass greener than our own in summer and flowers blooming out-of-doors, seems remarkable. Over in the Australian Hospital there are beds of lavender pansies in full bloom. Kate Murphy says the tents on our grounds were surrounded by flowers all summer long. The patients were carried out on their cots in the sunshine and it was just like a garden party. Even now, in the latter part of November, on pleasant days they are out. Yesterday I had four or five of mine in the open air all afternoon and a pneumonia boy has spent his days out of doors for the past week.

Thanksgiving brought cold weather—and a big dinner. The turkey did not come in time so we dined on roast beef. We had creamed celery-root, mashed potatoes, string beans, apple and nut salad, with a generous portion of nuts, pumpkin pie, doughnuts, coffee, huge pears and apples. The turkey was served the following night and was delicious. Our dance was postponed from Thursday to Friday night because the band was taking part in a celebration in the men’s quarters. They had a big time that night and closed the party by marching hands-on-shoulders through “No Man’s Land,” our quarters. We all hung out of our windows like so many Juliets.

* * *

I was too tired to go to the dance. I get so weary I could just die but fortunately a few hours rest restores my youthful vigor. Living so much in the open air induces sleep. When the batman “bats” at six-thirty I am so dead to the world that I can hardly come to. We almost missed waking on time Saturday morning for Edith and Estelle were worn out from dancing, the room was freezing cold and I simply had to force myself to leave my cozy bed and rouse them. It is not so hard once we hit the floor. We wash in water that is icy-cold but the washing is not prolonged.

Olive Meyer is ill and at Sick Sisters Hospital. Yesterday was my half day and I went over to see her. It is a long ride to the other side of town but very interesting. I wish we had more time to explore Rouen, but we scarcely have time to get our shopping done when we go to town. We have our burlap partitions up but cannot tack them to the floor until the linoleum is down and heaven knows when that will be.

(To be continued)