HOMEWARD BOUND!

“We’re goin’ ʻome, we’re goin’ ʻome,
Our ship is at the shore,
An’ you must pack your ʻaversack,
For we won’t come back no more”
—Kipling

Snowflakes whirling through the dusk of a February evening. The command of Base Hospital Unit 21 standing roll call for the last time on the Champs de Course at Rouen. “All present or accounted for”... “Squads right”... “Forward — March.” Hobnailed boots crunching the snow as the column of squads moves toward the Route D’Elbeuf on the first lap of the long journey home.

There’s a long, long trail a-winding
Into the land of my dreams
Where the nightingale is singing
And a white moon beams.

A final backward glance at the shadowy grandstands—gray and lonely against the leaden sky. Farewell forever to the village of tents and huts but recently known as General Hospital No. 12. “General 12”—tabernacle of pain; laughter and tears; what memories are in your name! The veterans of the Rouen sector depart—but you are not alone. There will be many ghosts in your wind-swept shelters tonight; the ghosts of the men of the British Army who passed through your humble wards for four mad years.

There’s a long, long night of waiting
Until my dreams all come true
Till the day when I’ll be going down
That long, long trail with you.

Feet slushing in route step through the snow-covered Route D’Elbeuf... peasants, bearing fagots from the forest, waving goodbye... Parting quips from shopkeepers silhouetted in lighted doorways... girls calling softly from the roadside, “Goodby-ee, Americains.”

Good-bye-ee! Good-bye-ee!
Wipe the tear, baby dear, from your eye-ee
Though it’s hard to part, I know
I’ll be tickled to death to go.
Don’t cry-ee! Don’t sigh-ee!
There’s a silver lining in the sky-ee
Bon soir, old thing! Cheerio! Chin-chin
Nah-pee! Toodle-oo! Good-bye-ee!

(Continued on page 2)
There are smiles that make us happy
There are smiles that make us blue
There are smiles that steal away the teardrop
Like the sunshine dries away the dew.

Elation tinged with sadness at parting. Goodbye to the Cathedral spires frosted with moonlight... khaki and sky-blue uniforms in the Rue Grand Pont... camouflaged ships towering above cocky tugboats—"The ships that sailed for Blighty." No more veal dinners on "the cuff" by the cheery log fire in the "Captain's" restaurant... no heaping trays of hors-d'oeuvres and tender sole with Chablis amidst the heavy woodwork and tapestries of the Brasserie Omnia. Bon soir shrill-voiced female conductors of tiny trams; be-whiskered billiardists of the Brasserie Paul, and apertif sippers at the tables on the terrace of Cafe Victor. Bon appetit, mesdames et messieurs! Bon appetit et bon sante!

There are smiles that have a tender meaning
That the eyes of love alone can see
But the smiles that fill my heart with gladness
Are the smiles that you give to me.

Farewell, a long farewell, comrades Evatt, Murray and Simpson. You too, had looked forward to this parting hour, but tonight the snow lies deep on your graves in the British cemetery.

* * *

The rhythmic tramp of marching feet... copious swigs of vin rouge from canteens intended for water... the Unit's theme song ringing through the night:

Oh horsey keep your tail up,
Keep your tail up, keep your tail up.
Oh horsey keep your tail up,
Keep the sun out of my eyes.

Street lamps shining dimly along the Quay; the hazy silhouette of the Cathedral rising beyond the river... the clang of tram cars... a steam boat whistle moaning through the mists. "Column, right—March!"

French box cars huddled in the snow-flecked gloom of the railroad yards... "40 Hommes 8 Chevaux." The luxury of straw bedding dragged in bales from a nearby flatcar... chocolate bars and cigarettes from an American "Y" secretary... the gradual spread of heat from charcoal fires in battered tins... beaucoup vin rouge, cognac, bully beef.

Sergeants checking their respective squads... lanterns twinkling through the darkness. The feminine wail of a French engine whistle, a jolting and jerking of cars... the creaking of reluctant wheels—and the lights of the city dwindling slowly from the sight. Onward to the port—and home! Back to the raw adolescence of the Middle West and the mockery of the Volstead Act. Goodbye, days in the S. O. S. Adieu, comrades of the British Expeditionary Forces. Farewell, Rouen, gray old city by the Seine. Despite your rouged cheeks and outstretched palm you were a friendly hostess. Often in fancy, through the years to come, we shall wander through your familiar streets and relive the days of our youth in Normandy.

What's the use of worrying?
It never was worth while, so
Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag,
And smile, smile, smile.
RECOLLECTIONS OF A WORLD WAR NURSE
By Retta Snyder

We are going to have a beautiful Christmas if we can carry out our plans and are not so busy that we are tired out. The nurses and doctors have contributed one thousand francs (each group) making about four hundred dollars. With that we have bought tartleton for stockings which we are making ourselves. White with red yarn, blue and white, pink and green, etc. In each stocking will be a pear, an apple, candy and nuts. The rest of the money is to be used for food for the dinner—roast pork, apple sauce, and boiled cabbage being the Tommies' idea of a Christmas feast. We wanted turkey or chicken but it was far too expensive.

On Christmas Eve the Sisters (being the nurses), the officers (being the doctors) and the enlisted men will carry lanterns and march up and down the lines (the rows of tents) and sing carols. We are practising, "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear," "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing," "Oh Little Town of Bethlehem" and "Silent Night." Last night we practised out of doors and it was beautiful. I'm sure the troops will love it. I have trimmings for a tree for each of our three tents and tiny cheap toys for each patient. I am so afraid I shall be old house, Rouen moved before the 25th and not have the patients I know. Of course, I can get as well acquainted with the new ones in a very short time, but I am very fond of my old ones. They are so funny, I just laugh all the time. One chap said one day that the man next to him reminded him of a Ford. He has a wire cradle over his legs and he does look funny. One day as I was putting a clean top sheet on his bed a small hole came right over the cradle. "Oh, Sister" he said. "I can't use that sheet, I will get my radiator rusty." Then he will say in the most patronizing tone to a blue boy, "And what is the time now, my good man." I get that off on Olive all the time. I say, "Do this, my good woman," until she threatens my life.

We four are planning a good time in our hut. We hope to have a tree and hang up our stockings. So far I have received all of one package, a box of candy. I kept it quite awhile, but yesterday I opened it, gave the girls each one piece and took the rest down the line. The men are so anxious for sweets and have so little. I intend to give them all about I get. We get hungry for candy too, but we can go to town and have chocolate and pastry and satisfy our hunger that way.

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The beds are always messy because of the Carrel tubes. You have read of the Carrel-Dakin solution that does such wonderful work. It is an antiseptic that is syringed into the dressings every three or four hours. Small rubber tubes about ten to fifteen inches long are bandaged in with the dressings, leaving the ends free. We use a glass syringe with a rubber bulb and put a syringeful of Dakin into each tube. There are from one to ten tubes according to the wound. And the solution runs into the tube, through the tube into the dressings and through the dressings into the bed. No amount of rubber sheeting keeps it in. We simply change sheets as often as we can. But it surely is remarkable how those wounds heal.

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We made allotments the other night. My Liberty Loan takes five dollars a month and I have arranged for thirty to be paid at home. That leaves me the munificent sum of twenty-five dollars a month. But the British Government sends a certain amount called a field allowance; that goes toward our laundry and mess and the re-
remainder is divided among the nurses. The others received about twenty dollars this month. With that much I hope to save to go on leave. The nurses begin to go to Paris soon. Four at a time for two weeks. At that rate our turn may come in a year.

Oh, yes, I want something. On Sunday nights the nurses gather in the mess hut to sing hymns and we have no two books alike. We had a good time tonight even if we did have to look and look for similar songs. I am going to write home for three or four dozen hymnals.

Just stopped for dinner. I am always hungry and constantly thinking of food. We had roast pork, apple sauce, mashed potatoes, gravy, sweet potatoes, tea, war-bread and butter. The apple sauce was the dessert. Sometimes we do not have dessert but usually we have stewed fruit or tapioca.

(To be continued)

BASE HOSPITAL No. 21—1916-1919
By Col. Borden S. Veeder

Many stories have been told of Unit 21. The history was published in a pamphlet by the Red Cross and may be found in the Medical School library. More interesting are the stories which appear in the "Rouen Post," a monthly magazine started in 1936 by Rouen Post 242, of the American Legion, a post with a membership made up of those who served with Unit 21 in France.

From its inception, throughout the months of preparation, and during the final period when it spent nearly two years on active service, the spirit that dominated Unit 21 was one of service. There were many dreary discouraging times, the natural result of the precipitate tearing out of a group from their normal grooves in life and depositing them in a situation that called for rapid adjustment in work and ways of living. Unit 21 survived it better than most. It is not generally known that Unit 21 was selected to represent the hospitals in a planned "Victory Parade" in Washington in 1919, in which one unit of every type of organization in the A. E. F. was to take part, a plan given up as a result of the difficulty of bringing back these selected units at the same time.

The time has come when a new Unit 21 is being formed at the medical school—a generation twenty years younger is taking over the name and traditions of the old Unit. Should conditions develop which will call them to active service, those of the "Old Guard" know they will carry on with the same ideals of service which will make them truly representative of the Washington University School of Medicine, and pledge them their help and aid in every way. They might even teach them to drink to the health of "Cardinal Puff."

—Washington U. Medical School Alumni Quarterly

WELCOME, MISS STEBBINS

Comrades:
For some time I have been wanting to be connected with the Rouen Post and wonder whether I should wait for an invitation or just make my desires known. I was formerly a member of the Quentin Roosevelt Post, but let that membership lapse some years ago. I will be glad to send dues if you will let me know what they are.

My interest in membership is re-aroused every time I receive a copy of the Rouen Post.

With very good wishes to each and all of former Unit 21, I am,

Sincerely,

Mary E. Stebbins, R. N.