Former members of Mobile Hospital No. 4 and Base Hospital No. 21 met at dinner in Garavelli's on January 22 to observe the twenty-third anniversary of the Mobile unit’s return to Rouen after service with the Fifth Army Corps.

The modest veterans of Col. Malvern Clopton’s fast-moving outfit, still basking in the dim glow of a citation by Gen. Summerall, arrived early in anticipation of an evening of fantastic reminiscences—but they reckoned without Commander Jablonsky. At the conclusion of the dinner and a talk by guest speaker Frank X. Meehan, the Commander, contrary to expectations, proceeded with the monthly business meeting of Rouen Post and the Mobile 4 group squirmed in their chairs as the former top sergeant listened gravely to an appalling number of dull lengthy reports. At eleven o’clock Jablonsky brought the ordeal to a close but the evening had been ruined for the self-styled heroes of the Bar le Duc sector. Tamed by years of domestic thralldom, they noted the hour with alarm and hurriedly departed for their respective firesides without having had an opportunity to inflict the oft-told stories of their value to the A. E. F.

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Mobile Hospital No. 4, comprised of officers, nurses, and men from Base Hospital No. 21, left Rouen in the late summer of 1918 for service with the American Army. The selection of the enlisted personnel has been a controversial topic since the afternoon their names appeared in the orders of the day on the camp bulletin board. Joe Lennon, "Chappy" Chalfant, Art Melville, and others who served with the Mobile unit have always maintained that the members were chosen for their sterling qualities; those who remained in Rouen still claim that the need for men in the A. E. F. gave Col. Borden Veeder a long-sought opportunity to purge the Base Hospital of a slothful minority.

Frank X. Meehan, “ex-mayor of South St. Louis,” well-known after-dinner speaker, punctuated a talk on Americanism with fitting quotations from speeches of great American leaders of the past.

FEBRUARY, 1942
A DEMOCRATIC OUTFIT

Pictures of Red Cross workers appearing in the St. Louis papers recently have almost without exception featured socially prominent women dressed in complete, and in some cases expensive, uniforms. Noting this trend, E. G. Steger, director of the Social Planning Council, commented in a recent speech that the Red Cross, like the army, should know neither class nor race. The Red Cross, he pointed out, is not a society organization nor an organization of uniforms.

P. H. (Pat) Byrns, executive secretary of the local Red Cross Chapter denies that his organization is dominated by dowagers and debs. “The Red Cross is the most democratic organization there is,” asserted the veteran secretary. “It represents a complete cross-section of the community. We have groups from Baden to Lemay and from the river to Valley Park. We have church groups, lodge groups, Greeks, Poles, and members of the St. Louis Country Club. All our programs are open to anyone who can meet the physical requirements. Except in the food or nursing services or other places where sanitation requires it, uniforms are not necessary. They are simply a badge of service which we are glad to have our workers wear, but they are not essential.”

SERGEANT McCUDDY

Edwin D. McCuddy, Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. Edwin D. McCuddy, of 2714 Hanley road, is serving with Battery A as a sergeant in the 79th Coast Artillery now in training at Fort Bliss, Texas. Edwin McCuddy, senior, a foreman at the Wagner Electric Company, is past commander of Central Memorial Post 154, American Legion and formerly served as squadron commander of the Wellston Sons of the Legion Drum and Bugle Corps, three-time State champions.

The elder McCuddy was one of the few married men among the enlisted personnel of Base Hospital Unit 21. Mac left a wife and two babies in St. Louis when he departed for France in 1917. Quite a contrast to your then carefree Editor who left a trunk of clothes—including two new spring suits—and an unpaid balance on a set of Harvard Classics.

“IT IS YOUR HOUR”

The following is an excerpt from a recent message sent to the nurses of General Hospital Unit 21 by Major Julia C. Stimson, who was Chief Nurse of Base Hospital Unit 21 in 1917-1918:

“You are indeed fortunate to be called out so soon. For this time the issues are so clear. Not only are you to help other peoples whose freedoms are in danger, but now all the things that we ourselves hold most dear are threatened and actually attacked. I am sure that all the members of your unit feel that this is the time for which your previous lives have been preparing and now it is your day—your hour—and you are ready and all who go with you will be glad and proud all the rest of their lives. Tell those who may be hesitating that if they miss this chance they will never forgive themselves.”
TOUGH ON UNTRAINED VOICES

Now that the “Star Spangled Banner” is being sung nightly by audiences in the larger motion picture theatres, we hope our feeble efforts to carry the tune will not be interpreted as lack of national spirit. The forefathers who adopted the music of an old English song, “To Anacreon in Heaven,” as the melody for our national anthem, must have been blest with splendid voices. Persons with a carbon-knock in their vocal chords would have recognized the folly of handing posterity a song which, according to Irvin Cobb, can be rendered only by a professional singer or a young boy whose voice is changing.

Handicapped by a baritone that requires alcoholic priming to reach middle “C,” we are invariably reduced to sheepish silence by the ascending finale beginning “And the rocket’s red glare.” But in this we are not alone. It is comforting to note that whenever an audience launches into the national anthem the majority gradually fall by the wayside leaving a stout-lunged minority to struggle on to the close.

Mrs. May File Harned, former Unit 21 nurse, now living in Mattoon, Ill., writes of an embarrassing experience in London during a performance at the old Alhambra Theatre in May, 1917. The officers and nurses of the St. Louis, Chicago, and Philadelphia hospital units attended the theatre in a body and, as a courtesy to the overseas visitors the orchestra preceded “God Save the King” with “The Star Spangled Banner.” The Americans, taken by surprise, were making a brave but pitiful attempt to accompany the music when a quick-witted officer came to their rescue by requesting an usher to display the Stars and Stripes on the stage. The sight of Old Glory waving behind the footlights gave the discomfited Americans an excuse to abandon the song and burst into cheers.

The next day the London Daily Mail carried an editorial expressing British disappointment over the fact that the Americans could not sing their national anthem.

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We still remember the first Armistice celebration in the Brasserie Omnia at Rouen when Pat Byrns and the late George Delany, responding to a request for the American national anthem, led a group of befuddled sergeants in singing the old favorite by George Cohan: “She’s a Grand Old Flag.”

JAMES WOOLCOX DIES

James S. Woolcox, 49 years old, of Butte, Mont., died in the Veterans Administration Facility, Fort Harrison, Mont., where he had been a patient for nearly a year. Death was due to acute cardiac rheumatism. He was buried with military honors on Nov. 6, in the soldiers lot in Forestvale Cemetery at Helena.

Woolcox arrived in France as a casual during the summer of 1918 and was assigned to Base Hospital No. 21 where he served as a cook in the company kitchen. He was a member of the cast of “C’est la Guerre,” the comedy by P. H. Byrns and Edwin Dakin, which gave seven performances in Normandy.

CADET TOWNSEND

James Townsend, 18-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. James B. Townsend of Lincoln, Neb., is a reserve cadet in the air corps and expects to receive a commission in a few months. Mrs. Townsend and her son called on Arthur and Mrs. Mary Melville during a recent visit to St. Louis. According to Mrs. Townsend, James, senior, has gone in for horticulture on a major scale. The former “incinerator engineer” in General Hospital 12 recently added 200 Chinese elms to his collection. Townsend, a native of Festus, Mo., has been an attorney with the Veterans Facility at Lincoln for many years.
Today I left my beloved D line where I have been since I came to the Surgical Hut. I know I shall like it there but I was on duty until 4:30 and tonight I am dead tired. It is a very interesting place, Dr. Allison’s hobby when he was here. Dr. Allison is now Consulting Orthopedist of the U. S. Army—a very high honor. And with Dr. Blair the Chief of Brain Surgery I think St. Louis is well represented in the A. E. F. I have tried to draw a slight likeness of the surgical hut bed. There are big frames over each bed to which all the ropes, pulleys, splints and so on are attached. It is a good place to learn about bones, tractions, infections and the sequella of war. We have many patients who have portions of bone blown away entirely. That arm or leg is put into a Thomas splint with all sorts of tractions and bandages for weeks and weeks and weeks. The serious wounds and fractures are strung up to facilitate movement about the bed.

Olive Meyer’s brother is one of the orderlies and everyone says he is the best in camp. He takes an interest in his work and does not let the fact that he is fed up keep him from doing his best. I don't believe he is as fed up as some.

I have been very busy tonight and will soon be busier for I hear a convoy in. I have only seventy-eight patients tonight so I am due for a host this time. But the Sergeant said he would ask Sergeant Lueking not to send many to my line as I have a very sick man to watch. But no doubt he has forgotten it and I shall soon see them rolling in.

Sunday we had six hours off and before two, Casey, Aspel and I started for an airing. We walked through our forest, kilometres and kilometres, and finally came to a village where we could get a car back, for which we were thankful. Sunday is the day to visit the villages for all the natives are out in full dress. Some of the children are lovely and some certainly are not. One and all run up and say, “Penny-penny” but we have no pennies. Or they ask for chocolate or fruit. They must think we carry Aladdin’s lamp.

Today we had our half-days and had to make ourselves go out. It is very cold again and our hut was comfortable and warm and we wanted to sit by the fire and read. I went out of doors and saw the brilliant sunshine and decided we must go. Sister Shouse called to us and asked if we wanted to go to town in the Ford. Of course we did. We went to Sotenville, a village immediately adjoining Rouen, and brought a carload of parcels to the cleaners. From there we went through Rouen to Sick Sisters. We have two nurses there now, both of them up and about ready to come back. After returning to the city we wandered around the streets, went into the Cathedral for a few minutes, bought post cards and came home. We found the loveliest post cards illustrating nursery rhymes. I wanted to buy dozens but decided on five.

(To be continued)