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THE ROUEN POST

A PAPER DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF ROUEN POST No. 242

WILLIAM STACK
Editor

THE INSTALLATION OF A CAID

By MAJOR HENRY SCHWARTZ, M. C.
21st General Hospital

Somewhere in North Africa, February 21, 1943 — I wish you could have been with me a few days ago as a spectator in a most interesting performance. Sam Harbison and I accompanied Lee Cady to a nearby small city to attend an official function in a semi-official capacity. The occasion was the "crowning" of a new Caid by the French authorities. We arrived somewhat early at the town hall and spent the waiting interval in the home of the Administrateur, a jolly, stout, roly-poly Frenchman about 50, with a most attractive wife about his own age. Language was a considerable barrier but we got along all right drinking wine and being very polite. Little by little various and assorted men and women representing the French gentry arrived and the party became more jolly. Shortly before noon we finally got started. Drove a few kilometers out into the country to the farm of the Caid to be. His name was unpronounceable Arabic, but sounded like Aghaili. There in the fields were gathered a large number of Arabs and many French Army and civil dignitaries. A beautiful rug lay on the ground, surrounded on three sides by tents. The central one was for the visiting ladies; the one on the right served a useful purpose. I might add that everyone was dressed in their best, and the colorful garb of the ranking Arabs was something to behold.

After much shaking of hands, the simple, but most impressive ceremony began. The candidate and his aged sponsor stood before the Administrateur, who presented his qualifications to the Prefect in a rapid French speech. The Prefect then proceeded to tell the new Caid about his sacred and profane duties, even bringing in the fact that he was assuming his new tribal responsibilities in the presence of the "distinguished officers of the American Army." I could not catch everything he said but once in a while some of the French phrases were understandable. At the conclusion of the speech, the Prefect put the red Burnoose of office over the new Caid's head. This was the signal for much shouting, cheering, congratulations, to the accompaniment of the weirdest music coming from two ancient Arab instruments — one was a curious, double-cylindroid drum, and the other was a double-reed wind instrument. That ended the official ceremony but by no means brought to an end the celebration.

Before I go on, I might say that the ceremony itself, out in the open, was most impressive — it seemed as if time stood still in a way — and here we were participating in a ritual that had been performed in desert and field for thousands of years by Nomadic tribes. The new Caid was the third in direct line in his family to assume the post of

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honor. Since the French conquest of Algeria in the early 1800’s, they have continued to approve the Caidship, but have acted as a control, so that although it is meant to be an hereditary job, if the inheritor is unworthy, the French will not approve his assumption of the position.

Parenthetically, I should add that the burnoose is a large flowing cape-like robe which is put on over the head (like our academic hoods, but far more sweeping — it might be considered a combined hood and gown). The Caids wear brilliant red ones of most lovely wool, embossed with gold metal braid in intricate design. I would love to get one for you for an evening wrap, but that is almost impossible (unless I get to be palsy-walsy with a Caid).

After the ceremony, the French and we walked over to the farmhouse of the new Caid. The Arabs ate in the court. We sat down to a very long table inside, after finding our places (officialdom even used place cards!). The banquet began at 12:30 — we finished at 4. I don’t know if I can recall all the courses, which were liberally interspaced with wine. First, there was soup. Second, was the piece de resistance — believe it or not, 6 (six) whole rams were brought into the room and taken off spits and set on tremendous trays down the center of the table. The proper technique with this morsel seems to be to reach out with your fingers and tear the meat off the carcass — it was excellent tasting stuff. The third course was hearts of artichoke stuffed with mutton. Then came delicious chicken, stewed with onions. The fifth course was a magnificent concoction of ground almonds, held together with honey and topped with whipped white of egg. It was too sweet, but I managed. Sixth, came one of the national Arab sweets “kous-kous” (or kus-kus) which consists of whole wheat grits, with raisins and sugar (it is something like hominy grits). Then came two kinds of native pastry, made of almonds, honey, and egg. I gathered my forces and wound up in a blaze of glory when the meal ended with oranges, tangerines, coffee, and another kind of wine.

It was really something and I thoroughly enjoyed it. On the way back our driver got lost only once, so we reached the post just in time for mess! Needless to say we were not very hungry.

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**SPAM**

By SERGEANT G. A. ALLEN, JR.,
21st General Hospital

The fellow here, the fellows there
Know the meaning of despair.
They dream of sirloin steak and ham
But all they ever get is Spam.
Oh, we are not the kind to kick
When shells and bombs are flying thick,
But tell us, is it horse or ram,
Or burro meat that makes up Spam?
When Christmas came the other day
We got a package from U. S. A.
We’d hoped for boneless chicken, jam
And chocolate cake — we just got Spam.
The committee formed to send a note
To Congress. “Gentlemen,” we wrote
“Please help us. Send us beef or lamb
Or pork and beans, but no more SPAM.”
We’ll do our part with might and main;
We’d really rather not complain,
But lungs and heart and diaphragm
Shout loudly, “Dear God, no more Spam.”
Dear Bill Stack:

I want to thank you for the splendid job you are doing in editing the ROUEN POST. We, who are away from St. Louis probably enjoy it more than the veterans of Unit 21 who live there and are accustomed to getting together. So here's hoping you keep it going.

There is a slight possibility that I may get to St. Louis sometime in June. If so, I hope to be able to attend a Post meeting. Will let you know if the trip can be made.

DUANE HUTCHISON.

Hutchinson, a former resident of Salina, Kansas, is the owner of the Hutchinson Hat Company in downtown Los Angeles.

STRONG MAN OF THE NORTH

Thomas Toby Dunville, writing from Minneapolis, tells of vigorous week-end trips with Mrs. Dunville to the North Woods in weather that would keep the average Eskimo confined to his igloo. According to the former piano-sergeant, the ground has been covered with snow for the past month and ten degrees below zero is regarded with complacency by the hardy natives of the northwest. "Everyone up here is hitting the ball these days," said Toby. "I am on a 48-hour week which doesn't give me much time for recreation. I get lonesome for the old gang in St. Louis and look forward to the time when I can be with them again."

We showed Dunville's letter to Bill Engel. "Weaving Willie" pulled his chair a few inches closer to the hissing steam radiator and chuckled scornfully. "The thought of Dunville holding communion with Nature at ten below is as fantastic as the claims he used to make about the perfection of his alleged flower garden in Carondelet," he sneered. "It's my opinion that nothing short of tear gas could drive him out of doors in such weather as he describes."

RECOLLECTIONS of a WORLD WAR NURSE

by RETTA SNYDER

April 2, 1918 — Rouen was bombed from the air last night for the first time since our arrival. We were almost asleep when we heard an explosion far away. A moment later another explosion nearer, then another still closer, and then about thirty followed in rapid succession. No one said a word in our hut for a few minutes; then someone shouted "Bombs" but we did not move. I doubt if we could had we wanted to. When the noise ceased we hopped to the windows and peered out. Some men were coming up the path and as our hut was the first in the row we called out, "Is it an air raid?" A major assured us that there was nothing to be afraid of but he was so excited he could hardly get the words out. He hurried to Matron's hut, told her to tell the Sisters not to be afraid and not to put out their lights. We really weren't afraid; it had all happened so quickly we hadn't had time to realize the danger.

Bud Mitchell has his M.D. degree now and soon the other medical students will get their commissions and we intend to celebrate with one big dance. The M. D.s get "fachey" when we say how glad we will be when the boys join the crowd for we need more men. We have had a very good time at the last two dances. The Kentuckians seem to have put new life into us. We have parties almost every night. There has been less work to do this last week but things are looking up.

(Continued on next page)
RECOLLECTIONS OF A WORLD WAR NURSE

April 10, 1918 — We had a wonderful reception last night. The nurses wore their white uniform with their blue and red capes, majors, captains, lieutenants in full regalia, the matron and C. O. from Cleveland, two officers of the Philadelphia Unit, a band of five pieces and "a good time was enjoyed by all." Three of the majors went for the honored guests and escorted them in to the rat-tat-tat of the drum and we all clapped and cheered while they lined up to be congratulated. Two of the majors, Captain Post and Lieutenant Gilbert lined up along side the receiving line and shook hands too; we all laughed and talked at once and made a tremendous clatter.

The three honored guests, Miss Stimson who is leaving, Miss Taylor who is now chief and Miss Claiborne who is the new demi, carried American Beauty roses and were most festive. After congratulations Lieutenant Gilbert sang, Byrd Boehringer sang and we all sang Swanee River, Auld Lang Syne and Pack Up Your Troubles.

When we have parties in the mess we have to take the tables out and after the party carry them back and set the tables for breakfast. Everyone was on a tear last night and handed chairs along fire bucket style. Then they rushed the folded tables in and rammed the chairs. When the tables were up they put benches across and ran back and forth under them. We were in hysterics by the time we shooed them out. We had to say Good-night Captain, Good-night Major, Good-night Lieutenant and push them out bodily. Five nights in succession are too much for me. We have been up until 1 A.M. each night and are having a party in our hut this evening.

We are having a meeting of the clan in our hut tonight to plan a party for Miss Taylor. We want to make it an Ellis Island party and do all our stunts. There are about ten in our clan and we have a picnic together. We will have food, plain but plentiful and forget there is a war on. Hopkins is in here and she is so funny. She was in town and had her hair washed today. The woman we go to, lives in an apartment on the main thoroughfare, Rue Grand Pont. Hop said she looked into Madam’s bedroom and exclaimed how pretty it was. Said Madame, "Yes, but all alone."

Friday and no letters written this week. I am in a very busy hut where we cut off arms and legs like nothing. We have thirty patients and of those fourteen are D. I. S (Dangerously Ill) four S. I. S (Seriously Ill) and the rest perfectly wretched. It is the most depressing place I have been in, but a few are better and can sing and talk a little so perhaps it will cheer up soon. I have been doing dressings for two weeks and would prefer to keep on but Estelle Burch went on night duty tonight and I am in charge. I love to do dressings even when they are heavy.

Yesterday I dressed from 8 A.M. until three-thirty, stopping only a half hour for lunch. Then at five o'clock Captain Fuson and I began again and did three more. It gives one a very satisfying feeling to have the M. O. come in and say, "Go ahead and I will look in as soon as I can." At first I thought it impossible to dress some of the knees that are so full of carrel tubes, but now I wade in and out without a qualm.

Now that I am Head-nurse I shall do flunky work. There is a great deal of running to do, to the Red Cross room, the office, dispensary, diet kitchen, etc. The Head-Nurse attends the Major on his rounds, makes beds, rubs backs, does tubes, takes temperatures, serves nourishments and many other little jobs no one else has time for. One thing I like we can sleep until 7 A.M. We go down to the line at 7:30 and come up to 8 o'clock breakfast. Ordinarily I get up at ten minutes to seven — what a gain!

Hurray! I have lost eleven pounds. Every one is thinner, especially through the hips. I may come home hipless, hopeless and shapeless. I have asked my family to be careful about having my letters printed, for we hear we can be courtmartialed for that. The officers censor their own mail, and write what they please.