THE JUKE BOX THAT WENT ASTRAY

General Hospital No. 70, stationed in North Africa, is enjoying a windfall. A juke box, intended to lighten the leisure hours of the officer personnel of the 21st General Hospital in Italy, is now on duty in No. 70 and the members of the St. Louis University Unit are wondering whom to thank for the lively donation.

The following story from the March Rouen Post, with letters from Col. Lee D. Cady, commander of 21st General, and field representatives of the American Red Cross, tell the sad tale of the music box that went astray. In as much as the canned orchestra failed to reach its intended destination we are glad it eventually found a haven with a St. Louis outfit. However, it is doubtful whether that thought will lighten the chagrin of the men and women of the Washington University Unit whose hopes of nocturnal rug cutting have been blasted by the hazards of transportation.

From the Rouen Post March, 1944

Thanks to Col. Borden Veeder, Marvin Hamilton and P. H. Byrns, a juke box is en-route to the 21st General Hospital in Italy. A few months ago Erma Frobieter, 2nd. Lieut. A.N.C., in a letter to Miss Helen Gracie Schroeder, of St. Louis, stressed the need of music for occasional dances and wondered if it would be possible to obtain a juke box. Miss Schroeder, secretary to Drs. Royston and Krebs, showed the letter to Marvin Hamilton, past-commander of Rouen Post, 242, and the latter promptly wrote to Washington for information regarding the procedure necessary for such a shipment. Informed that it would have to be approved by the Red Cross and consigned to the commanding officer of the hospital unit, Hamilton called at the local Red Cross offices and introduced the subject of canned music for the 21st General to Col. Borden Veeder, Chairman of the St. Louis Chapter. The Colonel thought it a good idea; Secretary Byrns obtained a juke box, and when shipping arrangements were completed, the box consigned to Col. Lee D. Cady, was started on its way with 48 records carefully selected by Miss Schroeder. If all goes well the hospital personnel will soon be able to engage in a bit of fancy footwork with appropriate music.

Col. Lee D. Cady to Dr. Borden Veeder:

Dear Dr. Veeder:

Your letter of February 15, 1944 has arrived saying you are sending by the ARC a juke-box with 48 records.

The Officers' and Nurses' Mess will be very grateful for its use. They have been "shorted" on this sort of recreation because patients and men come first. We do have a Medical Center Officers' Club which serves a good recreational purpose but this especially designed piece of apparatus will fill a place in particular.

Sincerely,

Lee D. Cady,

ITALY, APRIL 12th

JULY, 1944
"Dear Dr. Veeder:

It is a long time between letters. About a year ago I wrote about band instruments or something when I was in Africa. Shortly after we arrived in Italy you wrote that you were sending us a juke box. I also saw the story in the March issue of Rouen Post. So far it has not arrived. I wonder if a tracer would be the thing to send this time. We would certainly like to have it."

Lee D. Cady  
Col. M.C.  
21st General Hospital

Mrs. Marguerite Grolton Nordman  
Home Service Section  
American Red Cross  
St. Louis, Mo.  
Dear Mrs. Nordman:

The 21st General Hospital Red Cross was notified by the director of supplies of this theatre that a juke box had been sent to this hospital by a group of St. Louis people through Red Cross Channels. Unfortunately, we do not know who is responsible and cannot write a letter to them direct. Perhaps this was cleared through your office and you can express our deep appreciation to the St. Louis people. Unfortunately, the machine arrived at another port in such terrible condition that, when it was repaired, it was not movable. However, the Red Cross in that theatre placed the machine at the 70th General Hospital which is another St. Louis unit. They would also like to express their appreciation.

We are very distressed because this machine arrived in such a condition as we certainly have a very great need for such equipment.

Very truly yours,  
Polly A. Billington  
Asst. Field Director  
21st General Hospital

American Red Cross  
Mid-Western Area  
St. Louis, Mo.  
Dear Sir:

We are writing to ask that you express our appreciation of the group in St. Louis who were responsible for sending the juke box. As you know it was originally sent to the 21st General Hospital but was unable to weather the trip.

We wish the group to know that the patients of the 70th General Hospital, a St. Louis unit, are deriving much pleasure from the juke box and it plays from morning to night.

Thank you for conveying our message to the group responsible for this gift.

Sincerely yours,  
Mary E. Brown  
Asst. Field Director

So ends the tale of the juke box; a story of great expectations, shattered hopes, and pleased surprise. In North Africa the battered box is filling the nights with music, while, somewhere in Italy, the officer personnel of the 21st General sigh for their lost orchestra as they stumble around the floor of the Medical Center Club to the strains of Col. Cady's concertina interpretation of "O Sol Mio." And we in St. Louis, who still step to the music of big name bands, extend our heartfelt sympathy.
THE MAY REUNION

The Unit 21 anniversary party which was held on Saturday afternoon and evening, May 28, was one of the best, but a detailed account of the merry-making would simply be repetition of the reunion stories that have appeared on numerous occasions in these columns. In the main, the semi-annual frolics, directed by Rouen Post No. 242, follow the same pattern. Everyone seems to get a lot of laughs, there’s plenty of food and drink, spiced with good-natured ribbing, and the Post gourmands, Hamilton, Depke and Jordan, seldom fail to eat themselves into a state of coma. A certain group are always on hand but every party invariably attracts at least one or two veterans who seldom report. For instance, at the recent shin-dig, Louis Robertson bobbed up for the first time in several years.

The reunion was staged at Orchard Valley, a private grounds in Kirkwood, offering a huge swimming pool, barbecue pit and screened dining room. The veterans were so favorably impressed by the setting that they voted to hold another party at the same place on Sat., Aug. 19. Make a note of that date and join us. You’ll have some fun.

Those present were: Williard McQuoid, Dr. Edwin Ernst, Forney Dixon, George Jordan, Bill Engel, P. H. Byrns, Philip Conrath, Lewis Garner, Charles Jablonsky, Frank Depke, Ritchey Williams, Jules Silberberg, Jeannette Parish, May Auerbach Gluck, Olive Serafini Flynn, Margaret Conochie, Louis Robertson, Charles Koch, Wrennie Steele, Bill Stack, Jim Sallee, Justin Jackson, Alonzo Kelly and Dick Sabath.

MYSTERIOUS BUSINESS

Early in July Marvin Hamilton received the following telegram from Sir Rogger Puckett of Natchez:

Dear Ham:

Please wire me at once collect your home telephone number and stand by for a call from me at 10:30 this night July 10, 1944. Your old buddy R. J. Puckett

Hamilton, always prompt to oblige, wired his number to Puckett and remained at home that evening for the promised call. Ten thirty arrived but brought no word from Natchez and the stroke of midnight found Ham still waiting. At one o’clock, having exhausted his supply of cold cuts and beer, he gave up and went to bed. An hour later the telephone bell brought him abruptly back from Dreamland. It was Western Union calling with another telegram which read:

Dear Ham: Unable to call you tonight. Will write letter tomorrow.

Your pal, “Doc” Puckett

PRIVATE PIT Reports

Dear Bill:

Please accept my apologies for not writing before, but I want you to know I enjoy the Rouen Post and the reminiscent years. How time does pass. Some of the names are familiar to me, but some I can not recall.

If you have seen Carl (Bud) Taylor lately, he will tell you he was down here last Christmas to visit his sister. We had a swell visit and talked quite a bit about our experiences in France with the fighting 21st and Mobile 4.

Well, Bill, I have a son in the Army now; he is an aviation cadet and has been classified for bombardier and expects to get his wings in November. Little did I think back in 1917-1918 that I would have a son that would be upholding the same principles as we were in World War I.

Please accept enclosed check to defray postage expense for the Rouen Post.

Yours, Frank (Private) Pitt
MEMOIRS OF A WORLD WAR NURSE

BY RETTA SNYDER

June 3, 1918

Have I told you about trying to get to St. George's the first Sunday of our stay in Paris? I had gone with Olive Meyer to mass and then started for St. George's alone. I got into a sea-going hack and said to the gassoon, "Americaine L'Eglaise." He drove on a bit, turned around and shook his head. "Americaine L'Eglaise." He shook his head again so I said, "Allez so." He "Alleyed" and when I wanted him to turn I poked him and he "alleyed" some more. When he turned into the right street, the great idea dawned, he turned around and with a sweet, pitying, comprehending smile said, "Oh—L'Eglise Americaine."

Now comes the "Ou la la" part of the trip. In the afternoon of Decoration Day we went to Colombes to the Field Sports. We were looking for the ticket window at the station and asked a Yank where it was. He said something and ran off in a hurry. I saw him ahead of me in the line and just as I stepped up Harlan said, "Wait, I have the tickets." The boy had bought four tickets, thrust them into Harlan's hand and had scurried off without a word.

While we were looking for seats in a crowded train we saw three in one compartment and we said to Harlan and Casey "Get in there." As Olive and I started on, a soft South Carolina voice called "Oh, come on, we can crowd up," and we needed no second invitation. Three American officers, two French officers and four hefty Sisters in seats for six! We had all the officers' family history before we started. One was a Pediatrician from St. Louis, former intern at City, one from Texas and the great, tall South Carolinian. We stayed together all afternoon, of course.

There were at least fifteen thousand Americans at Colombes and, except for the number, it could have been a Knox meet. I think we enjoyed the repartee from the sidelines more than anything. St. Louis and Texas came back in a Y.M.C.A. car but Dr. Ross drawled, "Oh, I'll stay and see that you all get home safely." Coming back we rode upstairs on a double decker. Coming in town we passed the Statue of Liberty (you know there is a small sister in Paris) and all the Yanks cheered and cheered. Dr. Ross told us how the French girls pursue the men and he would be a delectable tidbit. He was sitting on the terrace in front of his hotel reading his paper one evening when three mademoiselles suddenly landed in his lap. "What did you do?" we asked.

Said he, "Oh, I just stood up and they slid off." He is about six feet four and the small misses must have had quite an unexpected drop.

We went to hear William Tell that night. But as we waited for Miss Stimson who did not come (she had gone to Beauvais) we missed the overture and the rest was napoo. We were tired too, and slept part of the time.

Friday, Harlan and Casey went to Fontainebleau while Olive and I rambled. As we returned from dinner, here came our two doctors to apologize for leaving us so shortly the day before. Anything for an excuse, you know. Of course they stayed until after the raid. What could we ask more unusual than "Air raid parties in the Jardin de Tuileries?" The garden was across the street from the hotel and a box seat for the raids.

There was a raid every night we were there except one and two nights the fighting was stupendous. Each time the French were in the basement, the English on the first floor with one foot on the stairway going down, and the nosey Americans in the street! We would walk over to the garden as soon as the barrage started and watch the shrapnel burst and the search-lights play. When the shrapnel got almost over our heads we would go back to the portico and look out. The men stayed until one and we got to bed at two, to be wakened by Fritz's alarm clock at four, but that did not bother us.