

# **106<sup>th</sup>** **Evacuation Hospital**

## **Letters To Home**

**By The Commander  
of the 106th Evac.,**

Colonel William A. Hadly Jr.

4 July 2013

Sir,

Enclosed are my father's redacted letters written during WWII. Although much of it is trivial there are some interesting observations. As you know, he was medically evacuated just prior to crossing into Germany. Please let me know of any questions/comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "William McKell Hadly".

William McKell Hadly, USA retired

---



## WWII Letters from William A. Hadly, Col. USA

Shortly after my father, Colonel William A. Hadly, Jr. was medically retired from the army, the letters he wrote from Europe while he commanded the 106<sup>th</sup> Evacuation Hospital were transcribed for his family. They were sent by "v mail" (I believe) which were limited to the number of words, around 100, and subject to Army censure. The transcriptions have been redacted by eliminating family matters. Of interest are the redacted comments about receiving letters which were a constant concern. What remain are the comments about the hospital, weather and situation suitably censored. They start in the spring of 1944 and end when my father was medically evacuated in January 1945.

As a little background, my father was stationed at Walter Reed Army Hospital in early 1930s where I was born in 1933. At the direction of the Army Surgeon General he was tasked to establish allergy clinics in various army hospitals. We moved from Walter Reed to Letterman in San Francisco to Tripler in Hawaii and in 1939 to San Antonio TX. He was stationed there when WWII started in 1941. Shortly thereafter he was stationed at Camp Bowie in Brownwood TX to train and prepare for the war. He suffered from asthma and was in poor health causing concern about passing the physical for deployment overseas. A family rumor has it that his records were lost or altered so that he could serve overseas. After Brownwood his family moved to Chillicothe, OH and during maneuvers they spent a few weeks in the summer at Columbia, SC and at Beach Haven, NJ to be nearer to him during these times. My father passed away at Fitzsimons Army Hospital in 1962 at the age of 59.

---

There is much talk of the difficulty experienced, but it has been my experience that such things are always grossly exaggerated, so have no doubt that I will have no trouble.

The new Major has reported. He is 56 years old and makes me feel much less the weight of my two score. We expect the Regular Army Lt. Col. early in the week.

I am president and law member of a general court here and have a capital case on the docket which worries me considerably as I don't feel experienced enough. They brought him to trial last Wednesday. On opening trial I found that 2 days had elapsed between the serving of the charges and the trial. I adjourned immediately and continued the case as, of course, I considered the time entirely inadequate for the preparation of a defense in such a serious case. It comes up again Tuesday. Wish it were over.

---

Bill

Sunday, 1944

---

My last letter must have sounded awfully gloomy. I was really coming down with a cold and didn't know what was the matter. Stayed in bed most of one day and am fit as a fiddle now. The weekends are awfully long as I have little to do and allow myself to think too much of my darling and get lonesome. When I get the car back, I'm going to drive into Trenton or Philadelphia for a show or something. I might look up that Red Cross girl and take her to the theatre or something. What is her name? I destroyed the letter.

The Lt. Col. seems to be turning out all right and may be a big help in taking some of the details off my shoulders that Major Brown didn't seem able to do.

Well, we have our tests this week. Will probably go out into bivouac Wednesday and have them out there. I will let you know how we come out.

---

---

om...

I expect to go to XIII Corps Hqrs. tomorrow for a consultation in which I am going to present my plans for our next phase of training. I have to present them personally as they deviate markedly from the standard and will need my personal advocacy. Col. O'Brien here seemt to think them very good and I hope I can convince Col. Grant and the Corps G3.

General Kirk will be here next week and I am going to make it a point to see him. I am taking the hospital out on a fifteen-mile march and expect them to spend 2 nights and 2 days in the field, but I can get in if he comes at that time.

I have a thousand things to think of every day. Sometimes it seems to me that my officers conduct themselves like a bunch of carefree children, incapable of planning even a day ahead or of taking any personal initiative whatever. I try to put responsibility on them but can't seem to be able to stand by and see them doing things in a way I don't approve.

---

Bill

Sunday, 1944

Am enclosing the larger pictures, which do seem to convey my pleasure at the presentation of the eagles. We start on our new phase of training tomorrow with a bang. Everyone has to go through the infiltration course here.

Sunday, 1944

---

The weekend of the eleventh we will be on the move, so that's out. The 18th or 25th would be better but I can't be sure what the tactical situation will be at that time. Will let you know as soon as I can be sure. The maneuver will be over about the last of March. I don't know the exact date. Our readiness date is May first, but don't tell anyone but Mother and Dad.

It is still raining here. I don't believe I ever saw so much rain. It's been raining and raining hard for almost 2 weeks. Maybe, though, when it does clear up we will have a nice long spell of good weather. Of course the rain doesn't do me any good but I'm getting along all right. Have had to take adrenalin twice.

---

Wm.

March 13, 1944

---

I feel so much better today. Temperature and blood count down almost normal. Blood sulfadiazine still well maintained. Would like to get up, at least to go to the latrine, but they won't allow me to. They say they are afraid something will happen to keep me from going overseas with them at the last minute. It almost makes me cry, people are so good to me. My nurses won't let me move a hand. They bathe me and last night sneaked in some perfumed powder and powdered me. They had fun, so I didn't complain.

Today the sun is shining and I have one wall of my tent rolled up so it isn't so gloomy. Just got bawled out for getting out of bed to get this paper

---

There's not much to tell here. I requested replacement for the 56-year-old Major, although he is a very nice and, apparently, a very capable officer.

The Assistant Corps Surgeon doesn't know why we have 3 regular army officers, so I'm still in the dark on that score.

---

Wm.

Sunday, 1944

---

You will be gratified to hear that your husband is now a Colonel. I'm sorry it didn't come thru before you left. I was sitting in my office yesterday morning when the Sergeant Major said I was wanted at a formation of the company. I was puzzled. I went out and there was the whole hospital drawn up on the drill field. I went out in front and the Adjutant saluted and presented me with the War Department order and in behalf of the hospital, congratulated me and presented me with a pair of silver eagles and pinned them on. Then the company all saluted and I said a few words to them. It was a nice and thoughtful gesture and I appreciate it. I am going to give a dinner for the officers Friday night. A lot of the pleasure of the promotion was lost by not being able to show the eagles off to my darling.

It is getting quite chilly here but the weather is beautiful. We are going to spend another three nites in the field this week. I am going to give them as much field work as we can get in. I am quite proud of the organization--the spirit is fine and they are, in my opinion, getting good training.

---

Col.

while the nurse was absent a minute. Hospital functioning fine. I am really quite proud of it. Both new officers were told by Ch. Med. Sect. ground forces that they were going to a crack outfit.

Honey, I wrote you about the baby pictures the day I got them. Remember me saying that the picture of David didn't do him justice, even if he did look like Churchill.

Camp Forrest is at Tullahoma, Tennessee near Shelbyville--between Nashville and Chattanooga. Will write you more about that later.

---

Wm.

Tuesday, 1944

---

Just a note as I am off to Camp Forrest again. Have a great many worries and get discouraged at times.

---

Bill

Tuesday, March 21, 1944

---

The mud continues bad. No rain so far today although the sun hasn't shined for 3 days. Had a few flurries of snow yesterday. Had a change of address card from Jack Ivins, giving San Francisco as his A.P.O.

They are experimenting with our nurses in field clothing. They have a lot of fun. They take pictures of them dressed in the clothing--even in the

---

Bill

Friday, March 24, 1944

I hate to think of you being sick without my knowing of it. I sure hope you are really well by this time. Did they give you sulfadiazine? I suppose your weather there is as bad as it is here. You must be careful, dear, and be sure you're warm enough when you go out. I feel so helpless so far away from you.

Don't worry about coming down here. I will come home on leave and we can discuss it then. It won't be until the latter part of April.

I am so anxious to see you, I hate even to think about it this far away. I try not to think about it.

---

Bill

Wed., April 12, 1944

No further information. Our tests come this week and the outlook isn't too bright. We are also being inspected by the War Department--Gen. McNair and party. We are all trying hard. The rest of our nurses arrived yeaterday. They came out from the station, arriving at 4:45 a.m. and at 5 p.m. I had them on the drill field preparing them for retreat formation. They are all interested and try hard. The retreat went very well.

I won't rest well until everything is cleared up here. The strain is considerable on me as I have no executive officer and must think of everything myself.

---

Bill

Sat. April 15, 1944



27 May 1944  
New York, NY

Everything running smoothly so far. We are situated in a very beautiful section of England and the weather has been fine. There is a profusion of flowers here now and the countryside is so beautiful it's hard to believe. Looks almost tropical.

---

Bill

28 May 1944  
New York, NY

---

Came in yesterday afternoon with a bad cold. Was immediately put to bed with a hot bottle. Made to drink hot lemonade (with citrus so scarce here) and given a plate of hot oxtail soup. My breakfast was brought to me in bed after a spirited argument. I got up right after breakfast and feel 100% better. It's a beautiful day here. I have been out in the garden in a lawn chair. These people are so fine I feel uncomfortable about accepting their hospitality.

I took them to dinner at the George Inn in the village (500 years old). We could look out of the dining room windows and watch them bowling on a green which was in use long before the Drake bowling incident. You and I

I never tire of the beauty of the place.

---

14

There is a church here built in the 15th century. I haven't explored it yet but intend to at the first opportunity.

---

Bill

29 May 1944  
New York, NY

---

1

Bill

2 June 1944  
New York, NY

---

Have not had much time to get around the countryside here but have allowed personnel to make short trips to nearby points of interest.

---

There are lots of people here who I know but movement is restricted and I probably won't get to see anyone. Wish I could see Col. Kindall but don't believe I shall

---

Bill

4 June 1944  
New York, NY

Bill

6 June 1944  
New York, NY

I do have my ups and downs. Had to take a 160 mile trip yesterday and returned feeling poorly again. Went to bed at 7 p.m. and felt better this morning but not entirely O.K. Will go to bed early again tonight. Afraid this climate isn't too good for my sinuses, etc. Will probably become acclimated in time.

---

Important radio news this a.m., which will be old stuff by the time you receive this. Hope it signifies the beginning of the end.

---

Bill

7 June 1944  
New York, NY

---

Haven't had a chance to do any sightseeing yet but expect to make a short trip tomorrow. The countryside is beautiful still. The roses have come in bloom and Dad would certainly enjoy them. They are profuse--of unlimited variety and some are enormous, as big as our peonies at home. Many of them grow on rose trees rather than bushes.

I haven't been able to get a bicycle yet as I was so busy initially that I neglected it until they were all bought up. Think I may get one soon. The whole unit is still billeted in the village and, as yet, there have been no serious complications. The general attitude of the people here has been one of extreme hospitality and cordiality.

---

Bill

9 June 1944  
New York, NY

---

Your last letter, dated June 2, received on June 8 with no mention of having any letters from me, which is surprising as I mailed letters on the day of arrival here--May 21. Can't imagine what has delayed them.

---

Bill

9 June 1944  
New York, NY

10 June 1944

---

Things are really happening here, as you no doubt know from the press and radio. We are busily preparing ourselves for our part whenever and wherever we are to serve. I wish I could think it was the beginning of an imminent end.

---

My bicycle arrived yesterday and I am getting quite expert already. Riding on the left comes quite as a matter of course. Have been driving the jeep around the village and have no difficulty.

---

Bill

19

12 June 1944

---

Bill

13 June 1944

---

Raining and cold this morning. This is certainly not a very equable  
day quite

---

Sure hope we are on the last lap of this war and that the last lap is a  
short one.

---

Bill

20 June 1944

l  
v  
S

Have you received the extra \$50 allotment? You should have gotten it last month but there may have been a delay. I haven't any deposit slip from Ft. Dix. Maybe you won't get it till July.

Bill

22 June 1944

Visited a general hospital yesterday and was greatly surprised to find Lester Dyke in command. Had a nice visit with him. I suppose you know the Dykes have had twin boys. He was surprised to hear that we had twins, too. He sent his regards to you and also Margaret's. He doesn't look too well and we had a nice hypochondrical chat.

I am feeling much better and think I am getting accustomed to the climate. Still have considerable asthma but nothing I can't deal with.

Things are progressing here and we are busy. Lots of problems. Hope you are all well and happy.

Bill



26 June 1944

---

Haven't heard from you for several days so am sure you were making your trip. Poor baby! It seems years since I last saw you. You must tell me more about yourself in your letters. I am much interested in knowing what you do so I can form some kind of picture of your daily life. It was much easier while you were home because I could visualize you in familiar settings. Now that you are in a strange place, it is very disturbing to not be able to imagine what you are doing.

I hope all are well and that the children are being of some help to you and to Mother. Give everyone my love and tell them I think about them constantly.

---

Bill

27 June 1944

---

Very little of interest here. Equipment and training going on normally. We are giving a dance for the town people here Thursday. Ends at 10:00 as blackout also must be observed. Weather is rather cold and rainy. Am getting by but not in the pink.

---

Bill

30 June 1944

---

You will be very much surprised to hear that I am spending the night with Col. Kendall. I popped in on him today. He had a dinner engagement tonight so I am in his quarters writing to you. He plans to go part way with me on my trip tomorrow. He was surprised and pleased to see me, although he said he didn't recognize me when I came in. The first thing he said after he did recognize me was "What the hell are you doing over here?" Said if he had anything to do with it, he'd send me home on the next boat. I told him I was much better in the last few years. He has changed. Told me he had had a spell of mental depression, which is the illness Nell told us about. If they sent him home, though, I know he'd fuss and fret. He is certainly a grand person and will always be one of my best friends. Whenever they want to send me home, I will promise not to fuss and fret. He certainly got a great kick out of the twin's pictures (who wouldn't!). He remembered how you used to talk about their's. He sends his love, by the way! May not get a chance to write tomorrow but will try.

---

Bill

30 June 1944

---

Was on the road from 6 a.m. yesterday until 9 p.m.

---

Am hoping I may get to see Col. Kendall on my periginations in the next few days.

---

Bill

1 July 1944

Have covered a large portion of this island in the last few days and have more trips coming. The country is perfectly beautiful but long hours driving in a jeep are pretty tiring. Col. Kendall accompanied me on our trip yesterday morning. We had a nice time. I feel so sorry for him. He hasn't changed physically except he is thinner. He has a kind of haunted look in his eyes. I told him to get away from his damned hospital occasionally. He admitted I was right and I hope he does. They should let him go home on leave. It's a shame. I've been here less than 2 months and I know how I feel. I should be stark, raving if I had been here 2 years.

Bill

3 July 1944

Was gone all day yesterday again. Nasty trip in the rain. Saw Dan Clary. I'm seeing more of my friends over here than I ever did at home. Dan weighs over 200 pounds. He is enormous! He has a fine hospital and seems quite happy. He showed me a picture of his wife. She is a blonde and quite attractive. He was, naturally, very much intrigued with our family. I showed him the pictures and he was much surprised at the size of the older ones, not having seen them since 1938 in San Francisco. We had a good, long talk and he sent his regards to you.

He's going to try to come down and visit us here before I go away. I had a complete heart examination and they told me I had nothing to worry about, that all I needed was about a month's vacation! I wasn't really much worried but thought I ought to check it.

Bill

4 July 1944

---

This village is getting a lot of refugee children for a short stay. We are helping with their reception. We are quite busy every day trying to get ready in spite of many handicaps. Had some pictures taken and will send some along. One for each of you, if possible.

---

Bill

5 July 1944

---

Yesterday was the quietest Fourth of July that I've ever spent. We worked all day. I've been trying to take things easy and get a nap in the afternoon when possible. It has been effective in that I aborted another sinus-bronchitis spell. I am really trying to follow the doctor's advice.

---

Bill

6 July 1944

I

7 July 1944

D

Many  
pressing developments. Have left my nice billet for much more uncomfortable  
quarters, but at least I have my unit all together. I really prefer it this way  
and am much happier. The unit is rounding out well and I'm not worried  
about our future as much as I was.

I know England now almost as well as I do any of the states at home. I will be able to conduct you on a tour after the war without benefit of guide. Wouldn't we have a gay and happy time? I have been away from you so long and from our family that I can hardly visualize what it would be like to live at home again.

Bill

11 July 1944

The sun is out today--quite a novelty. We are nicely settled in a new area.

We are busily training still and completing our equipment.

he

Bill

15 July 1944

---

Heard a flying bomb last night not far away. Sounded peculiar. We worked until 3 a.m. this morning and was pretty much exhausted when I went to bed.

Am in a tent in deep woods. Much different from our English billett. There is a great deal of activity here.

---

Bill

16 July 1944

---

We are still in the woods and not too happy about it. Have nothing to do but sit. Quite damp and chilly here. Don't know what is going on in the world as I haven't seen a paper and there are no radios here. Have been quite well lately and hope to continue to. Have many worries about our equipment but can't help it now.

---

Bill

---

21 July 1944

Have had a hectic several days and a very trying experience. We landed in France three nights ago via landing craft on a beach. I was left behind with a small number of our people and did not reach the beach until 11 p.m. Had a 7½ mile march with pack and heavy overcoat, pitch dark over unfamiliar roads. My chest was acting up so I arrived pretty much done in. Slept in a field with no bedding or tents and, of course, came down with my old familiar bronchitis. Temperature 103° for 2 days and a night. Have come inland quite a way, via truck since then and am feeling pretty well by now, thanks to the old standby sulfadiazine. Am about ready to go into action, though we are still somewhat disorganized. Am taking as much rest as I can and everyone is very considerate of me so will be all right. Not too many signs of war here except casualties coming into other hospitals in operation nearby.

Am doing my best, which I hope will be good enough, though I sure felt like a weak vessel a few nights ago.

...ing Bill

23 July 1944

I wrote you yesterday and inadvertently mentioned the date as the 21st when it was actually the 22nd. Had lost all track of time. Am very much better and am up and about. Feel fine. Still taking sulfadiazine but mostly as a precautionary measure. Our preparations are rapidly approaching completion and I expect to report for assignment to begin operation tomorrow. We are all anxious to begin real work after all these months of getting ready. I believe we will have a hospital we will be proud of. Am much pleased with my staff professionally. We have fine equipment--the best in the world. Consequently, we should do well. I can't tell you as much as I would like to. I have traveled over a great deal of country here and seen a lot. It's the



same old story and the details best minimized. Have seen Carlton again and also George Prozak.

---

Bill

24 July 1944

Things are quiet here. Everyone in excellent spirits but anxious to get into operation. Don't know just how, where or when we will be utilized but am making a trip to Headquarters tomorrow and may learn something. We are very much out of touch with the world news here, so you are much better informed of developments and conditions than I am.

I have almost entirely recovered from my illness and feel well. Am still taking sulfadiazine, though

---

Bill

---

25 July 1944

Have been traveling all day and am tired, so will write just a note. Expect to go into operation in a couple of days. Believe we are ready for it and am sure everyone is anxious to begin.

Have seen stupendous things today. Hope all this can have an end soon. Have seen most of the towns and cities you have been reading about in the papers. The destruction is appalling. (I'm afraid I didn't spell that right.)

Sorry our mail is so badly balled up.

Bill

26 July 1944

Just another note. Have been traveling all day today again and have arranged for us to go into operation. Everyone excited. Can't tell you the location but we're right in there. Am so anxious to see how we shape up. Hope I'm not disappointed.

Must be off again tonight for more reconnaissance, so will have to close.

Bill

28 July 1944

Have had quite a time the past 48 hours. Narrowly missed by every artillery fire about one a.m. two nights ago. We scurried out of there fast. Set up our hospital and are receiving many casualties. Last night there was a heavy evening bombing attack in our area on all sides but nothing on us. They (the enemy) are quite meticulous about avoiding medical installations. We are

really functioning and doing what we have been training for the past year. We are going to be pushed hard but everyone is interested and really working.

7

I am well. Had a good night's sleep last night after the bombing and am some rested. Had had only 2 hours in 49 prior to that.

Sure hope that campaign and that in Italy, plus the Russian push will discourage the Germans and bring the war to an early close. Quite a large percentage of our patients are German prisoners but I haven't had time to gauge their attitude much.

Bill

29 July 1944

We have been through hell the past 24 hours. We filled our hospital (400) in less than 24 hours. It's beyond my powers to describe the picture and I doubt if it would make very enjoyable reading if I tried. During all this, under blackout conditions last night, we had a continuous barrage of AA flak over our heads with planes falling and bombs exploding. No one hurt in our personnel. We came through and I am pleased at how our staff tackled an almost impossible job. Haven't had my clothes off for 3 days. A bath would be glorious but I probably won't get one for a couple more days.

Bill

30 July 1944

Things are a little quieter here today. The advance of our troops has left us some miles to the rear. I expect we will be called on to move forward again soon so as to be able to function properly.

I am awarding some Purple Hearts this afternoon. The ceremony is limited in our situation and should properly be done further to the rear but these men are returning to their organizations.

I have had a good night's rest and feel better today. Not so much bombing last night--what there was came just at dusk and at dawn, so we all slept well.

I suppose you are all at church as I write this--allowing for the 5-hour difference in time. Am going to take time to wash some clothes and to take a sponge bath this p.m. I sure need it.

I do hope Germany will crack soon and we can all be together again. I feel that I live in a different world from you and find it hard to say the many things I have in my mind. I hope this unnatural life doesn't have to last too long. Every value is distorted.

We have fifty German prisoners working here in the hospital. They are, so far, docile and willing workers. We certainly need them.

---

Bill

31 July 1944

Hell broke loose again last night, so I am late with my letter. We bore the brunt of another push. 370 patients in seven hours! Things went smoother than on our first baptism but it took almost everybody working at top speed to do it. I was proud that one of my biggest troubles was getting people to quit and go to bed so that they would be fit for duty the next day. Our move forward will be postponed a bit now but not much. In the flack barrage night before last, one of our doctor's beds was pierced by a fragment. Went right through. He says he wants to keep right on night duty the rest of the war!

Every store I've  
seen lately has been a mass of rubble. The destruction in the towns here is  
sickening.

Bill

2 August 1944

Just a note to tell you I'm all right. Must be on my way to Headquarters  
to see about moving the hospital. Am feeling rather well, although this  
peninsula is not too salubrious for my chest. Get on all right with coffee and  
amodrine.

The war is going quite a pace. I hope it means a speedy termination.  
Our news is rather meager but we can tell things are moving rapidly.  
Hospital quiet as we are getting ready to move.

Bill

One of our hospitals had a sad experience moving into a mined area. No one you know, however. George Prozak is still right across the road from us. See him daily.

---

Bill

5 August 1944

Dearest Anne:

Hospital operating normally. Things pretty well stabilized at this spot but don't believe we will be here long.

It's hard for me to realize that only 2½ months have passed

---

Bill

6 August 1944

---

Hospital full but we are still in the same location. Should move when we clear our present patients.

Many wrinkles to be ironed out in our procedure which has to be adapted to circumstances. Have many personnel problems, especially as we run full blast 24 hours a day.

---

Bill

7 August 1944

---

Although the war progress is fine, it still takes far too long to suit me. I can't think of anything but getting home with you again. We received a notice to order Christmas cards, if we desired, from the Army Post Exchange Service! What an awful thought!

---

No more yet, but expect it in a few days when we get cleared of patients. Will probably make a long move judging from the way things are moving.

---

Bill

---

---

Nothing new here. We are closed to patients and will move as soon as we clear our non-transportable serious cases.

---

Bill

12 August 1944

Just a note to tell you I am O.K. after a very trying 72 hours during which I spent 29 consecutive hours riding in a jeep! Moved the hospital 175 miles and had a hell of a time. Moved at night in blackout with traffic conditions something you couldn't imagine.

We have established our new area and are receiving patients. It's been tough and I am growing old and querulous--losing my temper and becoming a fussy, old man. Have had a lot of asthma last 2 days and last nite. Sometimes I feel like chucking the whole thing, then I get feeling better and take a more rational view of things.

---

Bill



---

We have a German 88 mm gun and ammunition truck on the road right outside of our hospital. They have been hurriedly abandoned and the branches used for camouflage are still quite fresh.

Have had quite a few experiences which I hope to tell you about some day. My driver and I captured a German and turned him over to the M.P.s. Not as exciting as it sounds as he was apparently an impressed Russian and very enthusiastic about the Americans--really quite docile and cooperative.

---

Bill

14 August 1944

---

I'm off again on a forward reconnaissance so thought I'd drop you a note before going as there's no telling when I'll be back. Had a nice talk with the Army Surgeon last night. He had dinner with me. I'm glad I had the chance to talk with him as he's very nice. I knew him in Honolulu--don't know whether you remember him--Col. Hurley.

Many of our patients are now French and German, which is all right with me. Hard to handle, though, from a language standpoint and also because they really don't get on very well.

Can't tell you anything about the tactical situation, but you get the news probably more accurate than we do. I seldom get back to Army Headquarters to get the true picture and accounts from casuals are, to say the least, confusing because they conflict so, being one individual's narrow view.

Wm.

18 August 1944

night. Had a hundred and one things happen which kept me running from dawn to dusk. Lots of high-ranking officers here and was in conference a lot of the time. Expect General Patton again today. Hospital over full the past three days and everyone working full blast. Have many auxiliary surgical units attached and we are handling things well, as far as I know.

William

19 August 1944

---

Had another visit from General Patton yesterday--getting quite chummy!

Things are fairly quiet right now but expect them to pick up again soon. Spending the day in bed. Terribly hot here with lots of dust. Expect to be back on the job tomorrow.

---

Bill

21 August 1944

---

Don't be fooled by the date. This is the 24th. I am so road weary I hardly know what to write. You have probably read in the papers what we are doing. I have been living in a jeep for the last 4 days. Actually sleeping in one and eating in one. Have fried eggs on a small stove on the hood, when I can get them. Otherwise I eat K rations. Been driving blackout at night, which is an ordeal. Many alarms and excursions and other uncertainties which go with them. We have been right up with the infantry packing and moving on constantly. We've had wind and rain and heat and dust so that there is really little left to experience. Everyone is doing well, I suppose, though I am well aware of our many deficiencies. Hoping to get a bath today but don't know. Have no decent clothes left and don't know when I can get them washed.

---

Bill

---

26 August 1944

Things have quieted down some temporarily. Had a good night's rest last night. As I told you, I have been moving right along with the Infantry living, sleeping and eating in a jeep. We are receiving casualties and functioning all right in spite of setting up in a downpour of rain and a sea of mud. You would have wondered yesterday how we could ever get any order from the indescribable chaos attendant on establishment of the hospital under those conditions. It was a killing job. We make enormous moves, as you can tell by the war news. I hope things continue as they have been. My only hope is the end, when we can leave all this and get back.

---

Bill

27 August 1944

This paper came from a captured German supply train that I raided yesterday. Got a lot of valuable medical supplies and equipment for the hospital. The German equipment is beautiful and judging from the train--plentiful. It's probably transportation that is their greatest handicap. For once, I got in on the ground floor on the train and got some beautiful things before the Com. Zone people grabbed the train, which they have a habit of doing.

Things are rather quiet now as we are operating the hospital and not receiving too many casualties. Will be moving in a couple of days again and then the fun will begin. I'm glad of the chance to rest as moving a hospital is an enormous job

Have no speculation on the outcome of things but can only hope the end will be soon.

---

Bill

28 August 1944

---

Things are still quiet but I'm expecting a move soon. This will probably be our last move in France as things are going. The war news from other fronts is very encouraging, also.

---

Bill

---

1 September 1944

Haven't been able to write for several days because I've been on the road continuously. Picked a spot for the hospital and with Army and Corps continually changing their instructions, I had to reconnoiter three times for one move. Traveled over a thousand miles. Slept and ate on the road. We take canned bacon and buy eggs and bread from the French. Or rather, we barter for them, exchanging cigarettes, soap, chewing gum, etc. We were very close to the front lines.

We are busy setting up the hospital after a move of 120 miles. Have a very nice location but the way the war is going now, don't suppose we'll be here long.

Bill

3 September 1944

We are having a cold snap here, so much so that I am wondering about setting up stoves. I was so much in hope that we could all be home before winter set in but I guess it was wishful thinking on my part. I just go on from day to day here trying not to think too much about home. I lose all track of the date. As soon as I get the hospital set up in a new area, I have to start planning another move. In spite of the great progress of our armies, we, in our little niche, get a kind of hopeless outlook.

---

I am pretty well and stood the last move, with its exhausting conditions, quite well.

Things are quiet here and I suppose we will be making another move soon.

---

Bill

5 September 1944

---

There is a great deal of optimism here about the termination of hostilities

---

Bill

---

6 September 1944

---

I'm off to Army Headquarters this A.M. to see about our next move, which should be in a few days. This move will be quite a milestone, I expect. Have heard little news lately and feel dreadfully isolated. What news we do have, when separated from rumor, seems generally good. It can't be too good for me. The nights are getting quite chilly and I am beginning to think about fuel for our stoves. An unpleasant prospect! I have been feeling pretty well but expect more trouble as the weather gets colder.

---

Bill

8 September 1944

---

Arrived in our new area today. I am here with some men and a few officers as an advance party to erect tentage. Pushed as far forward as I could as we expect to be quite busy soon. Have a good location, well suited to our needs. The weather has been bad and I've had considerable chest trouble. It's getting quite cold at night.

---

Bill

---



9 September 1944

The rest of the personnel are gradually rejoining us from the rear area. We are trying to get ready for what I believe will be one of the most severe actions we have yet experienced. I have put my hospital within about 5 miles of the front line so that we can give the best medical service possible. I hate to think of what is coming.

The owner of the chateau where we have put the hospital is a French Ambassador and quite friendly. The Germans dispossessed him twice, using his beautiful home for carousing, etc. His car turned over last night and we patched him up--broken collar bone and wrist.

Bill

10 September 1944

I see by my calendar that it is Sunday. It certainly isn't a quiet one. There is a terrific aerial and artillery bombardment going on. The whole earth shakes. I have put the hospital up very close, having convinced the powers that there is where it should be so that we can get the wounded early.

Your Bill

11 September 1944

---

The battle has started here and we are getting many casualties. They are in much better shape on arrival as we are up so close they don't have such a long ambulance haul.

..

---

Bill

13 September 1944

---

The war has been somewhat stationary on our front for a few days, so we will probably be here a little while. I have had some asthma the past few days due to the rather cold weather. Of course we use coal stoves in the hospital and you know what coal smoke does to me. However, I feel O.K. today and am about ready to go on another trip.

---

Bill

---

14 September 1944

Had a pleasant day today. Met Bing Crosby. We shook hands and he said, "Oh, you are the Col. with the twins." We immediately and simultaneously dived into our pockets for our pictures and presented them to each other. It was almost as though it had been prearranged. They gave a nice show after Bing had gone around the hospital and talked to some of our patients. We have many very badly wounded.

I had tea later on with a friend in his castle. He is a Mons. Bonjeau who is in, or rather was in the diplomatic service and a quite influential man before Vichy. We are set up on his estate. The castle is wonderful. Originally built in the 13th Century, it had four towers. Richelieu had two of the towers removed when he was breaking the power of the nobles. It was reconstructed in 1640. During the French Revolution, it was damaged slightly, some of the sculptured coats of arms being damaged. It was redecorated 20 years ago and is beautiful. The Germans occupied it in 1940 and then again a few weeks ago, driving the family out. The owner was told by a German non-commissioned officer that the officers intended to steal some of the beautiful museum pieces and rare books and manuscripts but the Americans came so quickly they fled without taking anything of much value.

Dad would sure enjoy seeing it. There are some of the most beautiful illustrated manuscripts I have ever seen, books going back to the dawn of printing; a papal document granting the chapel rights and benefits; personal letters of Ferdinand and Isabella; books of every description, and binding printed on vellum and parchment and all the types of paper. I could spend a week there. It's the only extra military experience that I have had and it thrilled me.

---

Bill

---

16 September 1944

---

Rainy and cold today, consequently I am on the Amodrine. Still getting many bad casualties. Had three little French girls brought in; two were dead on admission and the other died just before we could get her to the operating table. They found a German mine and were playing with it. These things are hard to bear. I don't now how much more of it I can stand.

I forgot to tell you, Mons. Bonjeau has two small daughters who call on me daily. They are Denise and Marie. They come to my tent and demurely extend their hands, saying "Bonjour, Monsieur." I give them chocolate and life savers, after which they extend their hands again with a "Merci, Monsieur," and shyly retire. They are sweet.

---

Bill

17 September 1944

---

Haven't been very well the last few days. The weather has been bad and that, with the coal smoke from the hospital stoves, has had its usual effect on me. The hospital is full and everyone is working hard. It doesn't look like we would move too soon. They will probably move other hospitals ahead of us this time.

---

Bill

---

18 September 1944

---

Have to go on a trip today so will just write you a note. I feel a great deal better and the rain has stopped. They brought in 125 wounded Germans last night in their own ambulances and with their own drivers, having captured a German field hospital. Kind of swamped us but we handled them O.K.

---

Bill

19 September 1944

---

There is no let-up in the casualties here. We have been working at a high speed ever since we came to this location. We have been over our so-called 400 bed capacity repeatedly and are at the present.

---

Bill

20 September 1944

The grind continues. I'm beginning to notice signs of serious strain in the nurses and doctors. Don't know how long they can keep it up. Hope for some relief soon. The weather continues cloudy and cold and wet. A good sunshiny day would help the morale a lot.

---

Bill

22 September 1944

The pressure is off, at least temporarily, two hospitals having moved forward ahead of us. We had a tough seige of it. Suppose I'll get orders to move soon. I am glad for our personnel to get a little rest. They are pretty much worn down. The weather is beautiful today--sunny and warm, so that consequently I am feeling O.K.

---

Have had many inspectors from various places who found many deficiencies. Am trying to correct them. No criticism from the standpoint of medical care, however; we have an excellent reputation for that. Most of them are from a military angle and are the natural result of the high stress under which we have been working.

---

Bill

24 September 1944

Still in the same spot. Expect to move soon. I enjoyed my luncheon at the castle a great deal. The host and hostess were very gracious. Took several of our officers, the chief nurse and Red Cross worker--all those who had treated Mons. Bonjeau when he was injured, also a Lt. Col. from Army Headquarters and one who was inspecting us from Army Ground Forces in Washington. The luncheon was delicious, as you can see by the enclosed menu. I am quite fond of Mons. Bonjeau. He is so well read and intelligent. He can talk on almost any subject. Do you notice the mushrooms on the menu? He sent out for them especially for me as I had mentioned I was fond of them. I was just thinking that this was the first good meal I had had since last Christmas

Bill

25 September 1944

It's cold and rainy still. The mud is much like it was in Tennessee. This is a poor life at best, but in this weather it's miserable. However, when you consider the soldiers out fighting, our life is not so bad. Have had considerable asthma but have a little gasoline stove where I can make Nescafe when I want it. No news of moving yet and I dread getting the order because of the terrible mess it is to tear down the hospital and set it up again in the rain and mud. If we could only stay here till it clears and dries a bit, I would welcome a move.

Have settled into a routine here and one day is much like the last. The fighting is stubborn and the casualties steady, though not excessive. Getting quite a few German wounded.

Bill

Chef de Tullejus le 23 Septembre 1944

## MENU

Veal. Pie à la Lorraine

Mushrooms creamy sauce

Roast Ducklings à la jardinière

Green salad

Sponge Cake with cream vanilla

Whipped cream with Kirschwasser

Fruit

---

Wines

---

Tullejus gris 1911

Bulligny red wine 1921

Champagne Meccier - brut

Café - Siquereux



26 September 1944

The weather is still bad. How I wish it would dry up before we move! You have no idea the difficulties of movement in the wind and rain. Heavy artillery firing most of the night last night. Sounded like 240's. I do wish the Germans would realize the hopelessness of their further resistance. It all seems so senseless, this killing and maiming young soldiers and civilians of all ages. I wonder if the German race will ever be free of it. If our historians would tell of the casualties and cruelty and degradation of war instead of the so-called victories and campaigns, it might do much toward that end.

Bill

27 September 1944

The sun has come out today and I feel 100% better. Hope it stays out. It is quite cold, however, and I have my coal stove going full blast. Expect to go to Headquarters today to see about our impending move.

Must make a trip out to a neighboring village to get some eggs to fry on my little stove. I do it rather often as I am very fond of eggs, as you know, and don't have much appetite for the mess at times.

Bill

29 September 1944

---

Bill

30 September 1944

---

Patient load very heavy right now and we have had almost 500 patients the past two days. No prospects of moving as yet.

Yesterday evening, little Irene and Denise from the chateau came to see me with a large basket of pears and peaches. They are such sweet, demure little things. I love to see them. Our conversations are, naturally, very limited but they always shake hands on arrival with "Bon jour, Monsieur" and again with their "au revoirs."

Was invited again to the chateau for luncheon today but had to decline, of course.

---

Bill

1 October 1944

---

Am up today and feeling fine but staying in my tent because it is cold and rainy out. We are still heavily laden with patients due to movements of other hospitals. Expect relief soon, however. Wish we would have some good weather for a change; the sun came out a couple of days and then the rain started again.

Have decided to try to live each day and not look into the future. I find I'm happier that way. When I try to figure how long the war will last and when I can expect to get home, I get so upset and blue, I'm really almost desperate. Going to try to quit it.

Have a 30 calibre carbine now which I have just spent an hour cleaning. If things slacken this week, am going to try to go to an old, abandoned fortress nearby and shoot at a target with it and with my German pistol.

---

Bill

3 October 1944

---

Haven't written the past two days because I've been tearing about the country--mostly on wild goose chases. All the furore is about a new location and we are the victims of staff indecision. On one of my trips, stopped off and had lunch with Geo. Prazak. He is the same as ever, asked to be remembered to you. Thelma and the kids are well. Luckily I had recovered from a rather protracted spell of asthma before this hullabaloo started. Am off again at 5:30 a.m. tomorrow. The weather still is rotten. Had 1/4" ice on my water bucket the other morning but it rained later and the mud is something you wouldn't believe. Feel fine today and it's sure a wonderful feeling to be able to breathe again.

---

I am so glad of the prospect of resuming work again. I don't mean at the prospect of casualties, but if there are going to be casualties, we want to work on their's. The time will pass so much faster and I do so want the time to pass and the end of this to come. May it be soon.

---

Bill

4 October 1944

---

No news here. The hospital is quiet and not much to do. Believe I like it active better. It is so boring to sit here in the rain and mud with nothing to do. Sure wish we would get a dry spell. I'm trying to be patient and take things as they come, but it's hard.

---

---

Bill

5 October 1944

---

I thought Tennessee weather was bad, but this beats all. Cold, wet and muddy--mud up to your ankles. Wish I could write about something besides the weather but very little is happening here at this time. Gives one a rather dreary outlook.

---

I spare myself seeing the horribly wounded as much as possible but, of course, can't avoid it entirely. I'm afraid some of our surgeons can't quite understand my lack of surgical interest. I just can't help it, though. Believe we are doing a good job in spite of the handicaps and adverse conditions. Most of the hospitals have been located in hospital buildings in cities but, as yet, we have not been that fortunate. Maybe our next site will be in one. I hope so for everyone's sake. I can't describe the strain and wear incident to operating under these circumstances in weather like this.

---

Bill

6 October 1944

---

Nothing new here. Still the same cold, mud, rain and fog. We are not busy in the hospital and I'm going to Army Headquarters today to see if they have any new assignment for us. I don't suppose they have from the looks of the situation.

---

Bill

7 October 1944

---

The sun is out today and everyone is enjoying it to the utmost. A beautiful fall day. Have just come in from a trip and I certainly enjoyed the scenery. The leaves are beginning to turn and the countryside is lovely. Everything is quiet here at this moment and the personnel are getting a well deserved rest.

---

Have had word that General Patton might tour the hospitals today, so am on the lookout for him. Would rather he saw us when we were busy.

---

Bill

8 October 1944

---

Another sunny day! You can imagine our joy. Of course, the mud is still deep. It would take two weeks of sunny weather to dry it up. You can't imagine it. It is awfully tiresome and discouraging to keep ploughing through it. Think it's wonderful that these people stand it so well.

Was invited to the castle again today for tea but had to refuse as I hadn't the time. I'm sorry because I love to go there.

---

Bill

9 October 1944

---

Just had a visit from my friend, the owner of the castle. We sat in my tent and had a long conversation. He is certainly a well-informed person. We talked about nursing, metal refining, the future of the rubber industry, plastics, glass making, the effect of the war on world medicine, etc., etc. He sends me fruit and, all in all, we are the best of friends. Wish you could meet him and Madame some time. She is extremely nice but I don't know her so well since she "has no English". I must go the castle again soon for a visit.

---

Bill

---

13 October 1944

---

It's such a dismal, dreary outlook. Rain and mud and cold. My tent floor is wet but I keep my feet dry with Artics, which I wear all the time except when in bed. The sun has just peeped out--hope it stays awhile.

---

Bill

15 October 1944

---

No letters from you for five days. I suppose the biggest trouble is flying weather. We are still in the same location and are working hard to try to make the place liveable. It's much better but the mud is still bad. The hospital is quiet. Let some of the nurses go into a town about 20 miles from here last night to a dance given by a unit stationed there. They enjoyed it a lot.

---



---

Bill

16 October 1944

---

Another day of rain! It's almost unbelievable how it rains here. Have succeeded in getting some wooden floors in the nurses' tents, so that they can keep dry fairly well now.

I have become suspended in time. I mean, I live each day trying to avoid thinking of the past or conjecturing on the future. I have been happier that way.

Things are very quiet here at present. I prefer to be busy but am glad the casualties are low.

---

Bill

18 October 1944

---

Went walking today and walked to a nearby village. As I was walking along the street, a little boy about four ran out of a house and came over to me and grabbed my hand, smiling and saying, "des ouef" or "eggs." He pulled me over to the house and his father brought out a dozen eggs which he wanted to exchange for cigarettes. I made the trade. Will attempt an omelet tonight, perhaps.

There is little activity now and we are just sitting here in the mud. I've got some more books, which are a blessing. They are issued by the Special Service and are remarkably well selected.

---

Bill

19 October 1944

---

You can hardly believe the amount of rain we are having. It rained all yesterday, last night, and has rained all day today. It certainly is depressing. Have done very little but sit in my tent and read. Sure wish we would get a dry spell. Saw the people of a village the other day trampling grapes--in their bare feet! Would you believe it? Just as they have done for centuries. The extremes here are remarkable. Modern buildings in a city while in a village not 10 miles away, people are actually primitive--washing clothes in cold water in a common, open-air laundry, using farm implements that probably date back to Roman times. I had no idea that this condition existed.

---

Bill

21 October 1944

---

Just a note to tell you I'm well. We are doing nothing but trying to avoid going mad under the deplorable conditions we are living in. Major Rogers was promoted the other day. Yesterday he developed acute appendicitis and we operated on him. He's doing well.

---

Bill

---

Have a new Major, regular army, whom I have made Executive Officer and who is, I believe, going to be a jewel. He was an intern at Fort Sam when we were there and married Col. Moore's (X-ray) daughter. Used to live in the quarters the Farinaccis vacated. It's wonderful to have someone at last that I can depend on from an administrative standpoint.

---

Bill

23 October 1944

---

Dear One:

Am going to a city about 45 miles away tomorrow to see Cliff Best who has his Evac. Hospital in buildings there. We are the only ones left under tents in this Army. Hope I can get a nice visit with him. May get a chance at a later date to go to another city and see Sam Seeley, who is setting up his general hospital there.

---

Bill

24 October 1944

Didn't go to see Cliff today. Had a rather bad night coughing, etc., and it was so rainy and cold I decided not to go. Must go soon as I mean to go to the Quartermaster supply point enroute. Have to buy clothes, etc. for the winter. I left a lot of my winter things in England in storage and am unable to get them now. We could bring only a small amount of luggage.

We are getting along with the mud swimmingly. That is almost actually true as there are regular seas of it here

---

Bill

26 October 1944

i  
t  
c

---

Am going to try to get a chicken and cook it myself with some mushrooms, which I hope to get this afternoon on a walk up the mountain. Mons. Bonjeau has obtained a pike from the Moselle and has invited me to the castle again tomorrow, along with Col. Hancock. So you see, I am having quite a social whirl.

The hospital narrowly missed by a robot bomb last night, our first since England. It made a terrific bang but did no harm, as far as I know.

---

Bill

30 October 1944

Things are still quiet here. Went on a wild boar hunt today with my carbine but saw no boars. Have caught a little cold so will stay quiet tomorrow. The weather is raw and the mud is still with us. Cliff was out for dinner and we had a pleasant visit. He hasn't changed much.

---

Bill

31 October 1944

---

---

Bill

7 November 1944

---

Packed up and got ready to move after making a reconnaissance. Have been sitting here two days listening to the rain on my roof and living with the bare necessities because I had packed most everything and was afraid I'd be caught. This is very wearying and wearing, especially to one of my temperament.

---

Bill

---

11 November 1944

---

I

We've had one hell of a time moving. It rained continuously until it turned into snow. It has snowed three times in the past two days. The mud is appalling. Can you imagine the task of setting up a tent hospital under those conditions? In addition, there was a high, cold wind and the big ward tents were like sails which almost carried the men off at times. In addition to this, they took away our forty prisoners that we depended on to do so much of our labor. It was tough.

---

Bill

12 November 1944

---

I won't say any more about conditions here as I covered the ground pretty thoroughly yesterday. The situation is the same except possibly worse. We are doing our best for these poor unfortunates but our best is so far short of what they deserve and should have!

---

Had a rather bad night last night. My stove pipe came apart while I was asleep and filled the tent with smoke. I awoke coughing and wheezing, as you can well understand. I had an awful time getting it together again and when I finally did, I was in pretty bad shape. Feel fine now, however. Have just returned from a wading tour of the hospital area. It is snowing but not cold enough to freeze the mud.

---

Bill

13 November 1944

---

This is our day, dear. It is the finest day of my life. I hope we will never spend another one apart. It may sound silly when the expression "two made one" is used, but I am certainly but half a person when I am separated from you. I love you.

Things go on and on here with such regularity that one develops a narrowed outlook in which there seems to be no future or at least any definite realization of future developments. I protect myself as much as possible from the mental trauma of contact with the wounded but, of course, can't avoid them as much as I would like. I know it is cowardly but am afraid I am sadly miscast in this role. I guess I don't take a broad enough viewpoint and think too much of individuals.

Heavy snow here today bringing us more troubles with tentage

---

Bill



14 November 1944

---

Still snowing hard here but we are getting things in shape. Have located a captured German engineer dump and hauled building materials for walks through the mud and have laid rolls of roofing material on the ground for a floor in the hospital tents. Heating the tents is a continual problem and takes all our efforts but, so far, we have done all right. Have to practically fight for fuel. Have a good many patients and some pretty bad ones but are not swamped. Got 50 negro troops in place of our German prisoners. They are not as hard working but we certainly are grateful to have them. We went several days with no help at all and it was tough.

The year rolls on and we will soon start a new one. The new year will at least seem like a milestone and we may get some encouragement from the mere fact that it is a new year.

---

Bill

15 November 1944

---

It has either rained or snowed every day for the past 15 days. Today was no exception and this morning, the ground was white. However, the sun is now out brightly and the snow is fast melting. The sun is a treat. It's remarkable how much a simple, "taken for granted" thing like sunshine can mean to people living under these conditions. We are also conquering the mud and things are very perceptibly improved around here. The hospital is shaping up fine. Our 50 negroes and their negro Second Lieutenant are satisfactory. Although not as hardworking as the prisoners, they are much better than I had expected.

---

Bill

17 November 1944

---

Just a note to tell you I am all right. Have been on the road for the past two days covering a lot of ground looking for a place for another move. Trying to find buildings. Very cold here, at least it seems so riding in an open jeep with the top down. Ice on the ponds and the ground frozen hard in the a.m. Wear many clothes.

---

We have stirred out of our lethargy at last and are really moving again. Worst casualties are from the many terrible mines. They are horrible. Have been associated with Col. Joe Shelton. Am very tired tonight and must start out early tomorrow again. Want to go to a town where they wouldn't let me go today because the cavalry is still fighting there -- clearing out the Germans. It's only about six miles from the German border. Have great hopes of finding something there.

---

Bill

---

18 November 1944

---

Just got in after a 13-hour jaunt in the jeep. Got to a town  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Germany which I was reconnoitering for a hospital site. Was looking in a building when a shell came roaring in. Asked my driver if he had dropped his watch and received a falsetto laugh indicating that he had his doubts of my claims to be the soul of humor. Found a suitable site in another town. Much work in the offing before we can make it suitable. Will write more about it later. Have spent 3 days in the jeep in order to present all the facts to the Corps of Army Surgeons at once so that we could be insured of not being behind the eight ball. Believe I was eminently successful. Having covered all the ground practically to the German border, I was better informed than they and won all my points. Feel better than I did last night, perhaps because it wasn't so cold today. The Army Surgeon is going to visit tomorrow. Of course, I had to sound pleased but, actually, I am so anxious to get the work started on our new site, I will be very impatient to see him leave

---

Bill

21 November 1944

---

Have obtained a large girl's school in a city for our hospital and have been hard at work getting it ready. Terrible job lugging furniture, etc., etc., scrubbing and washing and repairing and blacking out windows, trying to get plumbing, heating apparatus, lights, etc. in shape. However, when it is done, it will be a dandy hospital. Have been living here the past two days with my orderly. Have a nice apartment with fine kitchen which I have stocked. I cook for the two of us. Hope to begin moving the hospital in a few days. I feel like a king in my apartment. Radio is playing and I am warm and dry. It's certainly a novel experience to sleep in a bed again. I even have a piano! The apartment was one formerly used by one of the professors. Hope we can stay here awhile. It's quite a break to get our people out of the misery of mud and cold.

---

---

Three shells just came into town but not close. Expect they were aimed at the pontoon bridge.

---

Bill

25 November 1944

---

Isn't it too bad, these delays? I have been busy day and night with this building. We opened yesterday and have quite a few patients already. We have thousands of windows to patch and then black out. The heating system and plumbing have been damaged by shell fire and we have had a terrible time. The lights were all messed up and we worked continuously on them and finally got them O.K. Have used 50 Russian men and 50 Russian women captured by the Germans. Also succeeded in getting 40 more prisoners back.

This place is going to make a fine hospital once we get it in shape. Excellently adapted for a hospital. Fine kitchens and dining halls. Good quarters for the officers and nurses (cubicles in large rooms.) My apartment is a joy--especially my completely equipped kitchen. Going to try to roast a turkey tomorrow.

---

Bill

26 November 1944

Just a note to let you know (filled my pen) I am O.K. Have been worried to death all day because the river flooded and filled our cellars, putting out the fires in the furnaces and naturally quenching the fires in our hot water system. Am planning to put up little coal stoves if we can't get the water out. Have five pumps going. Got them from the fire department, etc. Hope we make it.

Having my turkey today and it looks good, though I haven't had much time to tend it. The gas pressure is so low I'm going to leave it in the oven all day. Having Col. Hancock and Major Holmes in for dinner tonight.

---

Bill

27 November 1944

The turkey was fine and we certainly enjoyed it. Eating at a table with dishes was a treat for all of us.

Still have the pumps going and no heat. Am putting up stoves in the wards and operating section. Wish the river would go down. Haven't been out of this building since I came here but am going for a walk this afternoon and look at the town. The Germans dropped a couple of bombs here the other night but not close to us. The ack ack fire was hot for awhile. I can't tell you how wonderful it is to have Major Holmes after all those months with nobody to depend on. He's a fine young man and a perfect executive--energetic, intelligent and full of initiative.

---

Bill

28 November 1944

We are still pumping water from the basement and have not been able to use the furnaces. Have put up coal stoves, knocking out window panes where necessary to stick the pipes out. It is far from warm, however, and I do hope we can soon get the furnaces going again.

The picture of Nanny and Bill in their costumes was fine. Nanny is a pretty one and Bill getting so big. Kiss them for me and, of course, include the butterball and the two mites.

Glad to hear Mother is well. Give her my love. Hope Dad's troubles have abated.

Have been fairly well and am comfortably situated. I hope we may see the end of this soon.

I love you, dear

Your Bill

29 November 1944

Most of the water out of the basement but we now have mud in the intake flues and are seeking a special pump to get rid of it before we can start a fire. The river started to fall but it rained again last night. I sure hope it won't rise again. We are sure having our troubles but, at least, have a roof over our heads.

Must go to see Col. Shelton today as he is sick with sciatica. I'll outlast them all yet!

Have consented to talk at the Chaplain's Sunday evening discussion hour and have decided to talk on happiness. I feel particularly qualified to talk on

---

I am not popular with the Mayor and City Government here as I have found it necessary to demand another wing of this building, the Hotel de Bille. It means that I have to eject some of the officials of the French Government. I am absolutely unperturbed, however, for reasons that are apparent to the Armed Forces, here at least.

---

Bill

30 November 1944

---

I am happy to be able to announce that we have fought the good fight and won. The river is out of the basement! We had seven pumps going for three days and nights. Three of our five boilers are fired and the radiators are warming up. What a relief!

Col. Shelton was sent home--he had a neuritis. At least, he was sent to England. What the ultimate disposition will be I don't know. A new Corps Surgeon has been appointed, much to my relief. I was afraid I might get the job.

Not much for me to write you but ordinary hospital routine. We really have a fine set-up here, now that we have our heat. You would be astonished at the size of the hospital (expanded to 500 beds). We occupy a building in the form of a T and the top portion is a long city block in length and four stories high. The building is exceptionally adaptable for the purpose of a hospital. I was lucky to snatch it as many other organizations such as Corps Headquarters, etc. were all on the prowl. We had to high pressure the Mayor

---

2 December 1944

---

The hospital is warm today in spite of it being quite cold outside. Have no hot water for baths but it's getting warm. We are really getting well settled. Don't know how long we will be here. Received some very bad casualties yesterday. I can never get accustomed to it.

---

An ardent Nazi is holding forth furiously over my radio. I suffer it because I know it will be followed by some good music. I suppose, if anyone inquires what I would like for Christmas, it should be victrola records again. Am planning to send men out in the woods to chop trees to put in the wards and recreation rooms, lobbies, etc. The trimmings will be primitive but it's the best we can do.

---

Bill

3 December 1944

---

Daily improvement in the hospital. Have no hot water yet but have hopes. Am afraid the reservoir tanks are too small. The place is warm and we are getting to the point where we are getting the corridors clean and keeping them so. Have hired quite a few French women to help in the mess and with the cleaning.



Am going walking this afternoon as I haven't been outdoors for several days. Will look around the town and, probably, visit another Evac Hospital quartered here. The people are moving back and resuming their occupations. I believe there is more German than French spoken here. All the signs and shop names are German.

---

Am going to lead the Chaplain's discussion hour tonight, an experience I don't look forward to. Doing it as a duty.

---

Bill

4 December 1944

---

g Bill

---

7 December 1944

---

I intended, when I sat down here, to make some observations on the date and its significance to us. I have changed my mind, considering it futile. We are still in our nice building and functioning smoothly. I had intended going on reconnaissance to another city today but was unable to get clearance as it is still under shell fire.

---

Bill

8 December 1944

---

Am well satisfied with the hospital. Everyone seems to work smoothly in his groove now and things click. There is such a difference between a trained man and a trained and experienced man.

---

---

Am sending a detail out for Christmas trees on the out chance of our not moving before then. Have the Red Cross workers and convalescent patients working on improvised ornaments.

---

Bill

9 December 1944

---

Just inspected by an officer of the Army Surgeon's office. He was greatly impressed and said he would have the Surgeon visit us. I was much pleased as we really have a fine installation.

Feel still better today. Wanted to go to that city for reconnaissance but they still won't let me go because of heavy artillery fire there. It's well into Germany and I expect it will be a little while before I can go in. Looks like we will be here until Christmas at least.

---

Bill

---

10 December 1944

---

Everything going smoothly here at present. I am proud of the hospital. We have medical meetings and surgical meetings at which cases and topics are discussed and presented. Everyone is interested in their work and is doing his best. It's a wonderful feeling to see a big organization like this running smoothly and the personnel interested enough to take the initiative. Have recommended Lt. Col. Hancock and an enlisted man for the bronze star for distinguished service. I may recommend some more if these go through all right.

I hope I can keep this mood up in the hospital until the end, which I want desperately to be soon. I want to last it out. There have been times when I was close to giving up.

---

Bill

11 December 1944

---

Have had a busy day working on various and sundry annual reports. It's a lot of detail work and, as you know, something I don't particularly care about.

No move in sight at the present time. Have had permission to send my nurses to visit Paris a few at a time for a one-day stay. They are all agog!

My orderly, of whom I'm very fond, brought in a little five-year-old blonde girl to see me yesterday. She was sent from Paris to her aunt because of lack of heat there. I gave her some bonbons and she played a little mouth harp for me. When she went back to her aunt, she said she wanted to come

---

back to visit me. She was so cute. I felt like hugging her. Very shy. When I gave her the bonbon, her "Merci" was so faint I could hardly hear it.

---

Bill

13 December 1944

---

Still not allowed to make reconnaissance, so it looks like Christmas here. Will try to fix it up as Christmacy as possible.

Went for a walk today down along the river. Everything quiet here. The weather is cold and the skies grey. Snow on the mountains that I see from my sitting room window. It's wonderful to feel warm and dry with the bad weather outside and, above all, to give the wounded a nice warm and dry bed when they are brought in.

---

Bill

16 December 1944

---

Made a trip in the open jeep to Army Headquarters and it was colder than I thought. We were also delayed and got back several hours after blackout. I was thoroughly chilled and coughed very hard all night. Next day I felt exhausted and had a little fever, so stayed in bed quite a bit of the day. Slept pretty well last night but had a touch of pleurisy. Feel better today but am just sitting around.

They had a beautiful ceremony out in front of our building this morning. All the children were in their quaint costumes and sang songs. It was a celebration of liberation and many of the church dignitaries were present. Wish you could have seen it and the children too. Some little ones just big enough to toddle and they looked so cute in their little costumes. Wish I could get one each for the girls but they are, of course, not for sale.

---

Bill

18 December 1944

A week from today is Christmas. It doesn't seem like it here. Have had increased activity in this vicinity recently. Had an aerial bombing last night which was entirely too close for comfort. I worry a lot with all our patients in the hospital as we are rather helpless when it comes to taking shelter. Fortunately, these attacks are rare. The enemy, naturally, doesn't bomb hospitals intentionally as there are so many important tactical missions for their rather meagre air force.

Have a general in the hospital whom I am trying to evacuate as soon as possible as he is very impatient. Trying to get a plane for him.

The hospital is really a smooth-running and efficient installation by this time. Everyone is working hard and with harmony.

We have medical and surgical conferences most week nights and all the doctors show a great deal of interest. It sure is gratifying.

The weather is bad and I have a little more trouble getting started in the morning but am pretty well otherwise. Snapped out of my pleurisy without benefit of sulfa.

---

Bill

20 December 1944

---

There is a rumor that we will get mail tomorrow. I sure hope so. Heavy snow last night. It looks pretty but isn't so nice for the men who have to live outdoors.

It seems like weeks since I've heard from you. It's hard to write a conversational letter with nothing to respond to.

I've finished my second course of penicillin, 300,000 units this time, and am back at the job again. Hope it works O.K. this time.

Hospital quiet. Run about 300 patients.

---

Bill

21 December 1944

We have been in a turmoil here for the past few days. Many alarms and excursions. Were told at nine o'clock at night to be ready to move out the next morning. I was to go on reconnaissance at daylight. We carried all our equipment down to the first floor so as to be ready to load in the morning. We transferred all our patients. We loaded in the morning but received no orders. At noon came word to reopen where we were! What a day. We were all happy, however, to move back in our fine building. Looks like we will be here for some time.

The tactical situation right in front of us looked somewhat alarming but is, apparently, much better now. You will have read the news and heard the radio so really know what is going on better than I do.

---

Have put about 50 Christmas trees throughout the hospital and the personnel and patients have shown a great deal of ingenuity in trimming them with makeshift trimmings. Got a lot of glass wool insulation from a German engineer dump and it makes a fine trimming. Have one in my apartment which looks very nice.

---

Bill

---



22 December 1944

---

We are still comfortably ensconced in our nice building and it looks wonderfully well with all the trees.

Presented the Bronze Star for outstanding service to Lt. Col. Hancock and a sergeant at noon today in the presence of most of the personnel in the dining room. I was startled to find that I was deeply affected and my hands shook so that I couldn't pin on the ribbon. Wasn't that odd?

The ground is covered with snow and it's quite cold out. Expect big developments here beginning today. I surely hope we are successful and that the end will be soon.

I'm feeling pretty well but have to take it easy. Thank heaven I have Major Holmes. He is really a fine officer and absolutely loyal.

---

Bill

24 December 1944

---

Tomorrow is Christmas day. In spite of the Christmas trees and the snow outdoors, I feel little of the Christmas spirit. Our nights are filled with the din of artillery and the attentions paid to us by the Luftwasse. I have the greatest of hopes for the operations now in progress even though the reports of the last few days have been grave. I do hope the news will have one salutary effect in that it may awaken a large number of Americans to the fact that things here are still decidedly serious. There is nothing more exasperating to the men over here than to read news items that show so glaringly the total lack of understanding of the situation here in some quarters.

I had intended to have an open house here tomorrow, inviting the staff, but have decided to resort to my old friend, the sulfa, to clear up the respiratory infection that has been charging on for some time. Expect that a couple of days will knock it out.

---

We lost our Chaplain yesterday. He had developed an anxiety state and couldn't sleep--the slightest activity wakening him and causing extreme nervousness. I told him he deserved credit for sticking it out as long as he had.

---

Your

Bill

27 December 1944

Haven't heard from you in over a week. I can readily understand the reason as things are somewhat uncertain here and transportation is at a premium. Things have been quite hectic here, as you probably already know from the news broadcasts. Our nights are rather disturbing with the Luftwasse abroad, but it is rather quiet in the daytime. I hope all the wishful thinkers at home, who have been relaxing, have learned a lesson.

We are still in our nice building and are comfortable. Our greatest joy, however, is that we are able to offer so much more in the way of comfort and care to our patients than we ever could under tentage. God knows they deserve it! I can't bear to write some of the things I see. Wish I could develop a more detached viewpoint. One can't be successful in war if one considers individuals.

---

Bill

28 December 1944

I

---

Still great activity here. We are situated very close to actual combat in a fluctuating picture but I have every confidence that our position will be maintained. Naturally I have been greatly worried recently as a sudden thrust in our direction would force us to withdraw with the loss of considerable of our personnel since we are so unwieldy that we would have to leave personnel and equipment to care for our patients. I don't believe, now, such a thrust is likely as our general has created a wholesome dread in the German military mind and they don't seem to fancy mixing with him too much.

---

Bill

30 December 1944

Things seem to be well in hand and although we are rather out on a limb as far as the front goes, being only a few miles from the actual hostilities, I don't worry so much for the hospital, now. Most of our bombing has come at night but yesterday one dropped in the middle of the day, breaking some of our windows and knocking down some plaster. Rather close. We have a good, strong, modern building which is pretty safe. I have fixed an air raid shelter in the basement, which should be safe. If we get hit, it will be only casual as hospitals are not military objectives.

---

One of our nurses got them for me on a visit to Paris. Was able to send them half of our nurses for a 24-hour visit in installments. appreciated it.

---

Am going to have open house for the officers and nurses tomorrow and serve punch and sandwiches. There is a dance following, which should make a nice New Year's party. Don't seem to work up much enthusiasm for it as I usually do, but think I should do it.

---

Bill

3 January 1945

---

Things have been rather hectic here for the past few days. Have had repeated visits from the Luftwasse. No one hurt of our personnel. My open house was quite a success. Everyone had a good time and then repaired to the dance, which was very successful. I even danced a few dances myself. Some visiting officers were rather boisterous, one even going so far as to shoot off his pistol. We took care of him, however, and otherwise things went smoothly.

---

---

Bill

5 January 1945

---

The weather is quite warm right now and all the snow has melted. Haven't been outdoors for three weeks but hope I can start again soon. Have stopped the sulfa diozine but will continue penicillin for a day or so. I feel like a pincushion.

---

The hospital is running smoothly at present with a full complement of patients.

Have been able to get some fresh eggs lately and so have my favorite breakfast. Powdered eggs are all right but you can't cook them sunny side up.

---

Am working on efficiency reports. Almost as bad as income tax. Will be glad when they are finished.

---

---

Bill

6 January 1945

---

Won't say anything about the war as you will have known all about it long before you get my letter. Fairly quiet now--no bombing or strafing in town for several nights. Lots of snow here.

---

Hospital functioning well and everyone seems to be intensely interested in their work. I'm proud of them.

---

Bill

8 January 1945

---

Things quiet here. No Luftwasse lately. Artillery fire nearby but not very close. Heavy snow last night, making us thankful to be in our nice building. The hospital is running about normal with everyone apparently as satisfied as can be under these circumstances.

---

Wm.

9 January 1945

---

Feeling fine but still in bed due to the insistence of Maj. Fetterman. Am having my teeth checked as I have a hunch one of them with a big filling is bad.

Nothing much new to report here. Things functioning normally. Hospital not crowded.

---



---

Bill

10 January 1945

They haven't found anything wrong with my teeth. Took a big inlay off but found it was O.K. so put another one on. I feel better than I have felt for months and expect to go back to duty tomorrow.

Everything quite quiet in our immediate vicinity at the present. Have no observations to make on the war. You have drawn your own conclusions. I am thankful every day for our fine building here if we are to spend some time in it. It really makes a fine hospital.

---

Bill

11 January 1945

Feeling fine but Maj. Fetterman wants me to keep in again today. The penicillin sure made me feel better. The injections made my arms sore but it was certainly worth it. I feel better than I have for months.

---

---

Bill

13 January 1945

---

My little girl friend from Paris came to see me again yesterday. I gave her pineapple juice and cookies and two Japanese lanterns. She just sits and smiles at me with her big round eyes. Never says a word. Col. Hancock went to Bar le Duc yesterday to visit some general hospitals. He saw Sam Seeley and extended him my invitation to come and see me. I never go anywhere. In fact, I seldom go outdoors. Col. Hancock found a little doll for me and I'm going to give it to Elaine this evening. She certainly is a sweet little one. My orderly and driver, Waliky, is having quite an affair with her aunt. He is a very nice young man. I hope you can meet him some day.

---

14 January 1945

I'm feeling fine and things are going well here. Not much to write about as we go through a daily routine in which one day is much the same as the preceding. In fact, if I hadn't a calendar I would be at a loss to know the date or day of the week.

my little friend came down last night. I gave her orange juice and cookies and a bon bon. She was so pleased with her doll. Her eyes were as big as tea cups. We played a few games and she got over some of her shyness.

Bill

15 January 1945

Dear

A beautiful day with the sun shining on the snow. I am going to venture out for the first time in weeks. I am really feeling fine and am looking forward to getting out.

Everything is quiet here and the hospital runs smoothly. Many planes over this morning. They made beautiful white opaque streaks high in the sky.

Bill

17 January 1945

Bill

19 January 1945

No news here. Hospital the same. Everyone works well and we hope few domestic problems. Have permission to send six more nurses to Paris since we are not pushed here at present. One of our nurses went off her base and had to be sent home.

Bill

22 January 1945

visited by the Army Surgeon yesterday, an event I've been looking forward to for a long time. Said we had the best hospital he has seen since he came to France last July. I was naturally quite pleased.

Bill

24 January 1945

---

The hospital is fine but I received quite a blow yesterday when we were told to reorganize under the new table of organization. It deprives me of a medical officer as executive. Of course I have told you about Holmes and how much I liked him and depended upon him. I kept him in the organization by changing him to Chief of the Ward Section, but had to make one of my medical administrative officers executive. Selected Lt. Ruskin, who is all right but not nearly as capable as Holmes. By the way, Holmes is now a Lt. Col.

---

Bill

January 1945

---

William

---

26 January 1945

---

The war is getting hot again here and we are uncomfortably close to the scene of activities. We have the river in front of us, which is a comfort.

---

Our hospital is pretty full and everyone busy. The mine casualties are heart-rending. Shouldn't talk about them.

---

The snow is deep here and coming down steadily. Fine for winter sports in a sane world but rather harrowing for people bent on killing and keeping from being killed.

---

Bill

27 January 1945

---

Came across one of the boys who was in my battalion at Ft. Jackson. He recognized me as I was going through the ward. Foot blown off by a mine. I wish I could be where you are! Honey, it's awful. I know I shouldn't write when upset like this but we have a whole hospital full of them, mostly worse. I am doing my best to carry through but if I ever needed you, I do now. I guess I haven't what it takes. Will it ever end?

---

There is deep snow here and the mines are, therefore, doubly dangerous.

---

Wm.

---

28 January 1945

---

Many casualties and hospital crowded. Everyone very busy and working hard. Had a slight setback but penicillin bringing me out of it again.

---

Not much news. The new setup is not as good as the old one but, I believe, it will work out.

---

Bill

29 January 1945

---

I am back on the feet again but still taking my shots every 4 hours. Feel all right. Hospital going at top speed. Have no other comment to make.

---

Bill

---



31 January 1945

Feeling fine. No fever all day yesterday. Still taking penicillin. Feel better than I have for months.

---

Hospital quite busy. Am really proud of our record. Things run smoothly and we take periods of stress with efficiency and without confusion.

Have had a little artillery lately but no air threat for some days. Situation in the East looks promising. I hope it's the beginning of the end.

---

Bill

3 February 1945

---

I am so tired that I can't seem to feel the general optimism that is prevalent since the big Russian drive. I feel I must finish this out here for reasons which I can't well express. I look on this hospital, which, by the way, is one of the show places of the Army, as an achievement for which I can take a large amount of credit. I want to see it through. When this phase of the war is over, however, I am through. Don't know whether I am physically up to an assignment at home or not, but am sure I am not capable of going to another theatre. I have had, and am having, a rather rough time of it but am taking the best care of myself and following medical advice. Everyone is so solicitous and anxious for me to stay with them that I am flattered and stimulated to whip the thing.

---

Bill

4 February 1945

Nothing new to report. Hospital busy. Have lost a lot of litter bearers and colored soldiers so am hiring French help. Told them to hire old women who are quite ugly. They work. The young, strong things have other irons in the fire but earning their stipend.

Plenty artillery lately but we lead a charmed life. I don't pay any attention to it any more.

Bill

5 February 1945

Hear you are having some severe weather. Have had a thaw here and am keeping my eye on the Moselle. Don't want to get flooded again.

I am feeling quite well and, although I'm still taking sulfa and penicillin, am sure I have this thing licked. Staying mostly in my apartment and resting. Hospital largely settled to a routine.

Nothing of much interest to tell you. We are dreading the day we have to leave this fine building. Hope it isn't soon.

Had a dance for the officers and nurses Saturday but I didn't attend. Went to bed early.

Bill

8 February 1945

---

Everything about normal here. Wish we could stay where we are until the end as we are so wonderfully located.

---

Wm.

12 February 1945

---

I have finally given up. Had a conference with Lt. Col. Hancock, Holmes and Maj. Fetterinfan and decided I was just kidding myself. Have notified Col. Hurly and expect to be evacuated to England soon. Am going to try to get into Col. Kendall's hospital. I know this news will relieve you, dear.

All my friends here have been so fine to me and so considerate I feel badly about leaving them with the job not done. I have the satisfaction of knowing, however, that this is a fine hospital and that it will go on smoothly without me.

If you don't hear from me for awhile you will know I am enroute. Hope to fly from here direct to England. Don't know yet.

---

Bill

15 February 1945

Am comfortably ensconced in a fine modern hospital in Paris. I feel so well today, having arrived here only last night, that I feel a little ashamed of myself. What my disposition will be I don't know. They will make up their mind here whether I return to the Combat Zone, go on duty in the Communication Zone, or to the U.S.

General Hawley visited our hospital (106) yesterday before I left. He inspected it all over. He said some very flowery things about it and about my work. Col. Hurley was with him. He seems to think I should go directly back to the U.S. but it's not definite.

Don't worry about me physically as there is nothing wrong that a little rest won't clear up. My asthma is naturally much better.

I had a very sad leavetaking. So many good friends. They were all so kind and considerate of me. They made me proud and happy and sad and unhappy all at the same time, which is surely a conglomeration of emotions. The enlisted men gave me a beautiful wrist watch. It was certainly affecting. I wept a little. You know me--sentimental.

---

If I go to England, Gen. Hawley said he'd see that I got in Col. Kendall's hospital. I know you will be pleased to hear that.

---

Bill

---