

45th Surgical Hospital (MASH)

Foreward

This revision, prepared in July 1954, is the second known version was published in July 1953, written and edited by Sergeant First Class James Childers, then Sergeant Major of the Hospital. Since that time more information has become available concerning the early days of this units' existence, and as history is a live and continuing subject, more must always be added. This version covers the period from the hospitals' activation in July 1950 to its fourth anniversary in 1954. This version was written by WO William S Herd, and assembled by Sergeant Leonard Loethen then Sergeant Major of the Hospital.

Military histories are, by tradition, a cold compilation of facts rather than an actual story of units or people. Little can be said about the suffering and hardships of those men and women who served their tours of Korean duty. The awful winter of 1950 has been thoroughly storied in the press and in several works of fiction by men more competent than the author of this history. Hollywood has appeared with its version of service in a hospital.

The motion picture "Battle Circus" starring Humphrey Bogart, June Allison, and Keenan Wynn, made by Metro Goldwyn Mayer, was based on the early experiences of this unit in Korea. One of the early Commanding Officers of the 45th MASH was the senior advisor for that film, which while not entirely true to the actual life of the hospital was in fact a fair commentary on the mission of the unit.

A history is no placed to tell of the humor which is native to the American soldier. There is no room to tell the story of "Agnes," the Korean Nude, carved in wood which has been the pride of the Officers' Mess for many years. (It now resides in the Medical Museum in San Antonio). She was picked

up somewhere along the West Coast in the early days of the war and has followed the hospital along its rocky road in history. A history is not place for personalities and only brief mention can be made of the fine American soldiers who have participated in the unit's dynamic records, and trust that the reader will understand that none of the accomplishments of the 45th Surgical Hospital (Mobile Army) could have been so well carried out without the life, strength, and ingenuity of the American soldier.

WSH 19 July 1954

PAUL A REED LT COL MC Commanding

HEADQUARTERS
45TH SURGICAL HOSPITAL
APO 264

19 July 1954

UNIT HISTORY

The 8076th Army Unit, Mobile Army Surgical Hospital, was activated at Yokohama, Japan, per General Orders Number 161, Headquarters, Eighth United States Army, dated 19 July, 1950.

Original personnel for this 60 bed surgical hospital were twelve nurses and eighty-nine enlisted men from hospitals in Japan. One officer of the Medical Service Corps and one Warrant Officer were from existing units in Japan and ten medical Officers were flown from the United States. These personnel were originally assigned to the 155th Station Hospital in Yokohama which assisted in equipping the new unit in preparation for its departure for

Korea.

The personnel for the 8076th MASH began arriving at the 155th on the 17th and were processed and issued equipment through the 19th. On 19 July the unit moved to Pier 2, Yokohama and loaded aboard the USNS Sgt. George D. Keathley for shipment to Korea.

The following key assignments were made on that day:

Major Kryder E. Van Buskirk - Commanding Officer
Captain George O'Day - Chief of Surgery
Captain Elizabeth Johnson - Chief Nurse
Lt. Richard E. Edelman - Supply Officer
Lt. Octavia But - Detachment Commander

The 8076th sailed from Yokohama on the morning of the 21st of July, 1950, just two days after its activation. During the three day passage all personnel were briefed by the Commanding Officer on what to expect upon arrival in Korea.

Daily inspections were held and a tentative plan of job assignments was made. All personnel were screened and interviewed, Standard Operating Procedures set up, and a general overall plan for operations and movement was established. During this time the usual administrative operations of the hospital were taking place.

The unit arrived in Pusan on 25 July under the command of Major Van Buskirk. At midnight that same day it departed by train for Kumchon and arrived there on the morning of the second day. It remained there for only a few hours then departed for Taegu to stay there for only five days more. At 0330 hours on 1 August the hospital left for Miryang to the south,

began setting up at 1730 hours and worked all night preparing for operation. On that night guerillas attacked the supply vehicle but were fought off. The hospital lacked operating tables and many other essential items but, through improvisation, became operational on 2 August 1950 and Sgt Reed (Mess Sgt) became the first patient.

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The 8076th remained in Miryang for two months until the 4th of October, during which time it was the main hospital of the MASH category supporting the Pusan Perimeter, furnishing forward hospital support for every division in Korea with the exception of the 25th Infantry Division. During this period of time 5,674 patients were admitted to this hospital and in one instance 608 patients were admitted in one twenty four hour period. While at Miryang the supply truck was again attacked by guerillas who were successfully fought off.

It was during this period that the great amphibious landing was made at Inchon and accordingly the tide of battle turned as the Eighth United States Army began to advance north. The MASH also moved north and arrived at Taegu on 4 October, remained there for one week then on 11 October moved to Taejon. It remained in Taejon only two days and moved further north to Suwon for eight days and then on to Kumchon on 21 October. Again the unit was destined to move quickly staying at Kumchon for only eight days and on 5 November arriving at Haeju.

From the period at Miryang, when the landing was made at Inchon, until Haeju, things seemed to be going well for the United Nations and it was about this time that the famous statement that the boys would be home for Christmas was made. This was made without considering that the Chinese would enter the conflict, which they did on 27 November 1950.

(Major Van Buskirk was promoted to Lt. Col. on 5 November 1950).

About this time the hospital began to work in earnest again and moved to Kumchon on 7 November until the 22nd when it moved to Kunuri for what was perhaps the most tragic episode in American Military History.

It was then that the coldest weather ever encountered in Korea was met, with temperatures as low as 23 and 30 degrees below zero with copious amounts of snow. Because of the complete surprise of the Chinese intervention, and the unusually cold weather, there were men who were fighting in nothing more than fatigues and field jackets, so along with numerous battle casualties there were literally hundreds of men frozen to death. During the six days at Kunuri there were 1,863 admissions to the hospital and on one day 661 were admitted. This enormous flow of patients was served by 12 Medical Officers and 120 Enlisted Men. There were few stoves available and no blowers for heating and the entire hospital was in tents. Routinely there were 13 or 14 persons to each tent.

The patients were arriving in such large numbers that there was no place to put them inside the hospital tents. When the ambulance arrived patients would have to be left lying in the snow, where some froze to death before they could ever be admitted to the hospital. Being brought inside, however, was no assurance

against freezing because the temperatures in the tents were so low that patients froze there, their resistance being lowered as a result of injuries.

It was at this time that one of the most difficult decisions any Medical Officer ever had to face, was made. The influx of casualties was such that the unit was unable to care for all of them. Therefore, some of the more seriously injured patients were given sufficient medication to prevent suffering and then were put aside while attention was focused on those casualties whose lives could be saved.

After being in Kunuri for only six days, the order to "bug out" was given and on the 28th of November the hospital loaded up and moved out at 1600 hours. Because of the pressing nature of the tactical situation, not all of the patients were able to be evacuated, simply because there were not enough ambulances to carry them out, and as a result, about 40 patients, one of the doctors, and several of the corpsmen were left behind to a somewhat uncertain fate, since the

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Chinese were advancing with such speed that all of the roads and highways were clogged with retreating United Nations personnel and equipment. Fortunately help was obtained to rescue the stranded patients with the doctor and corpsmen, and none of them were lost to the Communists.

It was on this "bug out" from Kunuri (four hours before the arrival of the Chinese Communist Forces) that the MASH experienced its nearest disaster. Orders had been given to Lt. Col. Van Buskirk to withdraw to Pyong-yang, the North Korean Capital by a certain route. However, on reaching the fork in the road where the convoy was supposed to turn left, Col.

Van Buskirk decided that the route was unsafe and took the right fork. This was a fortunate decision because all of the troops and convoys which took the left fork were trapped at a Communist road block, with almost all of them either being killed or taken prisoners.

The unit arrived at Pyong-yang at 0200 and took over 1,000 patients from the 171st Evacuation Hospital, which had been forced to retreat. It continued to treat casualties, plus take care of the evacuation of all the casualties left by the 171st. Most of these evacuations were by air and the situation was so acute that planes which normally carried 35 or 40 patients were taking loads of 55 and 60.

The hospital remained at Pyong-yang for only four days before it was again forced to retreat southward to Kaesong, the old site of the truce talks. At Kaesong the unit stayed only a week, leaving there at about 1530 hours, 10 December 1950 for Suwon for the second time. At this time the retreat of the United Nations Forces was so precipitate that the roads were lined bumper to bumper with vehicles and orders were given that any vehicle which broke down was to be pulled to the side of the road, the motor destroyed, and the vehicle burned.

The tales of personal bravery, heroism, self preservation, and sheer guts of the American Soldier are a true credit to the Army. The Chinese captured one soldier, did nothing more than take his boots, and then release him in his bare feet. The weather at that time was sub-zero and the ground covered with snow. The soldier walked barefooted trying to reach friendly territory until his feet froze so that he was unable to walk any further. He was forced to sit out in the open for three weeks with no food, no shelter except for his uniform and no water except for what he could obtain from eating snow. He was found at the end of this three week period weighing approximately 65 pounds and with both feet gangrenous and black,

necessitating amputation of both legs. He was one of many who passed through this hospital.

The first Christmas and New Years Day were spent in Suwon while the front stabilized a bit, but again the United Nations Forces were forced to retreat and this time the hospital withdrew still further south to Taejon, setting up only to have to break down and move again after a few hours, going to Sangju on an over-night move arriving 6 January. Between 4 October and 31 January 1951 the hospital moved on an average of once a week, and on one move was broken down and ready to pull out in one hour and fifteen minutes. Personnel who were not assigned to drive vehicles rode on top of the trucks after the gear was packed.

The month of January was spent in Sangju as the United Nations regrouped its forces and began the long slow drive back up the peninsula. At Sangju the hospital was pitched on a river bed and guarded by heavy tanks.

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On 1 February 1951 the hospital moved north to Chunju where it stayed for a month before moving to Wonju on 4 March 1951. It was at Wionju that United Nations troops captured a Chinese Aid Station and found approximately 79 friendly soldiers who had been held as Prisoners of War. The unit moved to Hongchon on 5 April.

At this time the MASH was functioning as a truly Mobile Surgical Hospital and as a result it was never more than ten miles and often as close as five miles behind the front, and as the fighting moved forward the MASH moved right behind it. This proximity to the combat enabled the medical services to render treatment hitherto unknown to warfare, but at the same

time placed the unit in almost constant jeopardy due to the great strength and ferocity of Communist assaults. At Honghs'on in the latter part of April the Reds began their second counter offensive, and again the hospital had to retreat. By 0730 on 26 April 1951 the hospital was taken down, patients evacuated and en route to Chungju for the second time.

At Chungju the organization was placed in reserve some 60 or 75 miles behind the line and set up in a school building which was later occupied by the 11th Evacuation Hospital. This stay in reserve was short lived however, and two weeks later the unit was moved forward to Suwon for the third time.

During the history of this MASH, life was not grim all the time and occasional humorous events occurred which made life quite liveable and did much to blend the unit into a well-functioning, integrated unit with one of the highest spirits de corps of any outfit in Korea.

One of these incidents happened in Suwon, and although it was anything but funny at the time, it later served as a wonderful basis for reminiscing: This was the night of the big rain, one night after several days of almost continuous rain when the mud was almost up to the top of one's boots. In addition to the rain, there was a terrible wind storm which blew down almost every

tent on the compound and pulled out the tent stakes as if they were matches. Everyone was routed out by the tents falling down on top of him in the middle of the night with the rain pouring down in sheets. Everyone was outside trying to drive in new tent stakes. There was so much mud that this was impossible, so in the end all of the trucks from the Motor Pool were called out and the tents were held up by the trucks until the mud dried out sufficiently to permit tent stakes to be used again.

It was at Suwon that the 8076th was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation, which reads as follows:

GENERAL ORDERS NUMBER 353, HQ. EIGHTH US ARMY, 26 May 1951.

"The MOBILE ARMY SURGICAL HOSPITAL, 8076th ARMY UNIT is cited for

exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services in

Korea in support of combat operations during the period from 25 July 1950 to

11 May 1951. During this period the MOBILE ARMY SURGICAL HOSPITAL,

8076th ARMY UNIT functioned in close support of front line units rendering

outstanding medical services. Its primary mission was to perform as a sixty bed

surgical hospital, however, in many instances the unit assumed the additional

responsibilities of an evacuation hospital without loss of operational efficiency.

Between 2 August and 5 October at Miryang, the unit furnished forward hospital

support for all front line troops except the 25th Infantry Division, admitting 5,674

patients and in one twenty-four hour period handled 244 surgical procedures.

On another occasion this unit processed 608 patients in one day. A total of 15,000

patients were cared for during the nine months this unit has been in operation, and

the medical services rendered to the United States Forces was of the highest caliber

Under all types of conditions, this hospital has displayed outstanding initiative and

aggressive action in performing its many missions. Although the hospital was

required to operate in no less than thirteen different areas in close medical support of front line units, its effectiveness and efficiency has excelled the high standards set by the Army Medical Service. The MOBILE ARMY SURGICAL HOSPITAL, 8076th ARMY UNIT displayed such outstanding devotion and superior performance of exceptionally difficult tasks as to set it apart and above other units with similar missions. The efficiency, effectiveness, and versatility shown by the members of the unit in the performance of their assigned missions reflect great credit on themselves, the Army Medical Service, and the military service of the United States”.

The unit moved from Suwon to Chunchon on 29 May 1951 and shortly after arriving there, Major (later Lt. Col.) John Mothershead assumed command since Lt. Col. Van Buskirk had rotated to the United States. In Chinchona there was only a small air strip, no rail transportation available, and no bridges on the road between Chinchona and Seoul, so that after a heavy rain, supply trucks were frequently held up for several days until the streams went down enough to permit the trucks to ford them.

The peace talks were started about this time and accordingly the tactical situation diminished sufficiently that the unit had very few patients. There was an exception one night, however, when approximately 200 patients from a Chinese Clearing Station over-run by UN Forces were admitted within a period of an hour. Among these people was a Chinese Nurse who remained

with the unit for approximately a month taking care of the numerous prisoner patients.

On 17 September 1951 the unit moved forward to Hwachon. The stay at Chinchona was the longest in any one location, and by that time all of the original members of the outfit had rotated to the States, so this move was accomplished with less finesse and ease than the other moves, and in fact had to be made in a period of two days.

During the last quarter of 1951 the unit remained at Hwachon and as described above continued to function in a most efficient manner. From the period of 17 September 1951 to

31 December 1951 the unit took care of 3,986 patients, 98% of them being battle casualties.

Rotation and transfers to other areas in the Far East Command made heavy indentations in the experienced personnel. Adequate replacements commenced to arrive during the latter part of

November and December to the extent that the enlisted strength went from a figure of 196 in November to 223 in December. During the last quarter of the year the unit was in direct sup-

port of the 1st Cavalry Division and the 7th Infantry Division until mid-November, when the

front lines were moved north approximately nine miles and extended to our left and right flanks for an average of twenty miles. Republic of Korea (ROKA) Divisions commenced to replace American Divisions, which reflected in the patient status to the extent that about one half were ROKA patients for the last half of December.

Due to the peace negotiations the entire front was comparatively quiet with the start of the New Year which created a situation that found the unit for the first time in its history doing work comparable to that of an evacuation hospital. This included running a rather large out-patient service, giving consultation, performing laboratory medical service for nearby units and in general rendering a more diversified medical service.

However the primary mission as

as always was to give surgical support to combat divisions. During the month of January through April the hospital supported the 2d, 3d, 7th, and 25th Infantry Divisions and some elements of II ROKA Corps which commenced to move in the area to the north. The unit participated in one campaign during this period, the Second Korean Winter, 28 November 1951 to 30 April 1952 inclusive. In January of 1952, 1,178 patients were processed with only 323 battle casualties. In February 1952, 1,132 patients were processed with 208 of them as battle casualties. In March, 986 patients were admitted and 239 of these were battle casualties. In April 963 patients were processed with 223 battle casualties.

With the passing of winter and a comparatively quiet front, Lt. Col. Maurice R. Connolly, Commanding, ordered a general improvement program that got under way in July 1952. For the first sustained period in the history of the unit, personal conveniences and material comforts became of paramount importance. Prior to this everyone was too occupied in work, keeping warm and moving to be very much concerned about the adequacy of latrines and quarters, the suitability of the Enlisted Mens and Officers Clubs, etc. Now a concerted effort was put forth to improve the living conditions and the recreational activities in order that personnel could derive some comfort from their fairly comfortable surroundings. In conjunction with the improvement program, a training program was also put into effect for the first time in the history of the unit. Paper work, reports and red tape in general commenced to increase to an extent that at times the expression "police action" seemed a vague term as applied to the general situation as far as the

8076th was concerned. Rotation continued to have its effects as reflected in the decrease of enlisted strength from 223 in December to 149 in April. The Officers and Nurse strength remained fairly constant the majority of the time.

During May and June 1952, American Divisions to the north were shifted to other sections of the front and entirely replaced with the II ROKA Corps which included the 2d, 3d, 8th, 9th, and Capitol ROKA Divisions. Other than receiving patients from American Divisions in reserve and as a result of vehicle accidents, most admissions were ROKA soldiers. In May 762 patients were admitted with 246 of them battle casualties. In June there were 846 with 229 as battle casualties. In July there were 642 patients with 149 battle casualties.

The summer was highlighted by a formal presentation of the Republic of Korea Presidential Citation, complete with band and formation on 30 July 1952. The presentation was made by General Paik Nam Kwon, Commanding General, II ROKA Corps, who commended the organization for its support of ROKA units.

August 1952 was an uneventful month with a total admission of only 432 of which 214 were battle casualties. Such factors as R&R quotas, trips to Seoul, picnics and social activities gradually became of more importance, although dirt and generally undesirable living conditions were a constant problem.

Improvements of the area were expedited with the advent of winter, which included new tentage and floors for the hospital proper along with pre-fabricated wall linings. The enlisted mess tent was replaced, a Nurses quarters were completely replaced, and enlisted quarters were replaced as required. Pre-fabricated structures replaced supply housing, Officers and EM Clubs,

Theater and Chapel, shower unit and Motor Pool. The Post Exchange, barber shop and Post Office were put into one tent with a new floors, counters and shelves.

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August and September found many older personnel leaving. By 15 September the enlisted strength had decreased to 129 and new personnel were commencing to arrive weekly. The training program was stepped up to counteract this in the form of on the job training, classroom instruction and field training.

September of 1952 found admissions down to 362, 221 of them battle casualties. October admissions were 482 with 284 battle casualties. In November 322 patients were processed of which 189 were battle casualties and in December the number of admissions was down to 278 with 108 battle casualties.

On the 4th of November 1952, Lt. Col. Maurice R. Connolly was evacuated to the United States with hemorrhagic fever and Captain Charles E. Hannan assumed command. Major Irvine G. Jordan was transferred to the 121st Evacuation Hospital on 9 November and assumed command that date. On 2 December, Major Harry Grossman arrived from the 8163d MASH and relieved Major Jordan.

On 2 December 1952, the 8193d Army Unit, Helicopter Detachment was reorganized as the 50th Medical Detachment Helicopter Ambulance with an authorized strength of 7 Officers and 21 Enlisted men. This small unit was attached to the unit for administration and logistical support. The unit strength as of this date was 4 Officers and 4 Enlisted men.

The year 1953 commenced in an uneventful manner. For the month of January, 155 patients were admitted, only 42 of them battle casualties. Rotation continued to make constant changes in personnel. The enlisted strength continued to drop to such an extent that for the first two months

of the year it averaged only 115 men. Major Harry Grossman was evacuated for medical reasons on 29 January and for the second time Captain Charles Hannan assumed command.

On 1 February 1953 the 8076th Army Unit was redesignated and renamed the 45th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital in accordance with General Orders Number 69, Headquarters Eighth United States Army (Korea) dated 10 January 1953. T/O&E 8-571 under which it operated authorized 13 Medical Officers, 2 Medical Service Corps Officers, 1 Warrant Officer, 12 Nurses and 93 Enlisted Men. The redesignation entailed a considerable amount of administrative work which was effected completely by 20 February. On 7 February Lt. Col. Charles E. Hollingsworth was assigned and assumed command from Captain Hannan.

On 24 February practice moves by all hospital sections were made a part of the regular training program. The results were most gratifying in that during the week ending 28 February the hospital proper had moves by sections and the longest time taken by any one department was an hour and fifteen minutes to completely load, unload and set up to receive patients. As a result of this it was estimated that in spite of the long stationary period experienced, the hospital proper could set up and receive patients in five hours.

The 45th Surgical Hospital remained operational at Hwachon through the month of March 1953 and on 3 April made its first move in several months, from Hwachon to Munsan-Ni for the purpose of participating in Operation Little Switch, the first prisoner exchange. The function of the hospital was to receive and render first medical service to the returned sick and wounded United Nations prisoners of war. By afternoon of 4 April the hospital was set up and ready to receive prisoners.

In an effort to provide a maximum of comfort for the patients, metal folding type beds with mattresses were used and were made up with linen and two new blankets. On each bedside stand were a set of new pajamas, a bathrobe, towel and slippers. The patients were provided with a good meal, Coca Cola, coffee, malted milk, frappe and cigarettes.

Since there were no cases requiring surgery among the 213 returned prisoners, the average time spent in the hospital was relatively short – only forty minutes. Medical operations for this period were very light, consisting only of sick call for the assigned personnel and adjacent units.

After Operation Little Switch was completed, the physical plan of the hospital was altered in order to carry out the needs of an efficient Surgical Hospital. The ease with which the succeeding great number of casualties was handled proved the change to be adequate and practical. At this time the unit supported the 25th Infantry Division and the Turkish Brigade during the heavy fighting in Carson, Vegas and adjacent territory, and large numbers of casualties were received from the valiantly fighting Turks. Although there were some difficulties with the language barrier, there was no problem in handling these patients, partly due to the efficient operation of the hospital and in a large measure due to the marvelous spirit of the Turkish soldier.

The hospital continued operations at Munsan-Ni until 21 June 1953 when it moved to a new area at P'Aie-Ri. At no time during the move was the hospital non-operational. Casualties for the period came from the 7th and 25th Infantry Divisions, the Turkish Brigade as noted above, and other United Nations troops in the area.

After a rather quiet and orderly period at P'Aiu-Ri the unit made a hurried move to Toknan-Ni, North Korea to support the 7th Infantry Division against the massive Chinese assaults against the positions known as Pork Chop Hill. It remained there until 27 July 1953, the day the armistice or truce was signed and then returned to P'Aiu-Ri to await the opening of Operation Big Switch. On 24 July 1953, while at Toknan-Ni

this unit received a letter of commendation (dated 18 July 1953) from Major General Arthur G. Trudeau, Commanding General of the 7th Infantry Division, for its outstanding medical support.

On 25 August 1953, a section of the hospital was dispatched to the vicinity of Sangsillae-Ri. Appropriate equipment was taken along for the purpose of providing surgical support for the 40th Infantry Division.

The remainder of the hospital, still located at P'Aiu-Ri, was kept available to assist in "Operation Big Switch" which commenced on 5 August 1953. Fifteen North Korean and Chinese prisoners were admitted for treatment, the majority of them suffering from injuries caused by stone throwing civilians. Only five United Nation returnees were admitted and all were evacuated to a hospital ship on the day after admission.

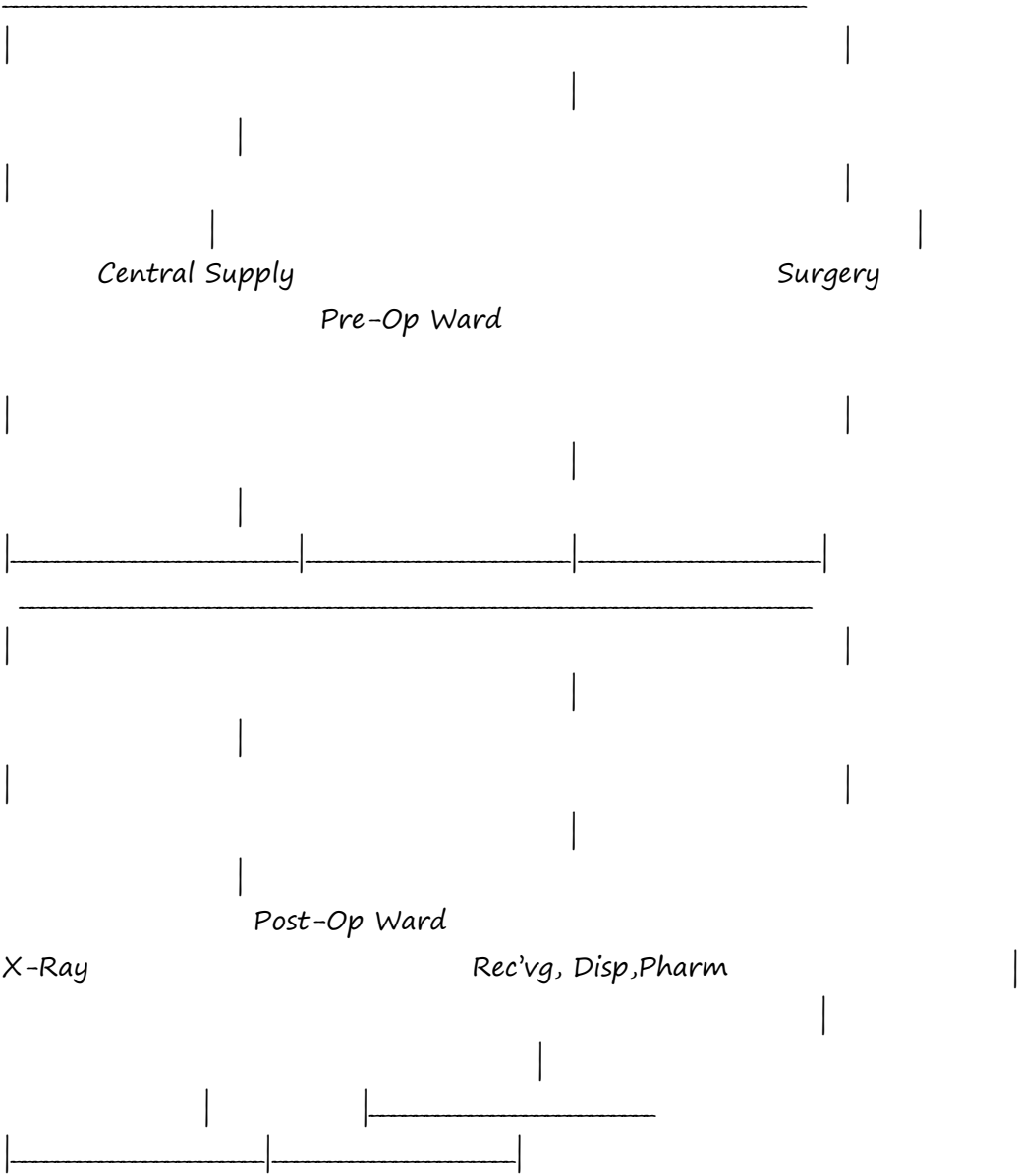
During the month the hospital functioned as a small station hospital with a thirty day holding policy. Sick calls and out-patient service brought approximately 500 patients for the month from neighboring Army units.

The month of September 1953 was quiet with only routine duties performed. The hospital continued to operate in two sections, with the Advance Section moving on 15 September to Konam-San. On 2 October the main body of the hospital moved to that location and the rugged

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mountain, and much work was required to make it suitable for hospital purposes. Grading and construction work was performed by IX Corps and 40th Infantry Division Engineers. Due to the soft ground and the exposed location it was difficult to maintain tentage and on several occasions high winds blew tents down. Patient loads were low and better accommodations were gradually acquired.

On 17 November 1953, Lt. Col. Neal Fisher, MC, assumed command by which time six Quonsets had been set up for the hospital. At this time the hospital layout was as shown in the diagram below:



On 30 December 1952, Lt. Col. Paul A. Reed assumed command and by the end of the year all important construction had been completed. Quonsets were established for Headquarters, Supply, Officers' Open Mess,

NCO Open Mess and the American Red Cross. Much land- scaping was completed and the area was emerging as a triumph of engineering.

On 8 January 1954, Captain John L. Rowbotham, MC, was awarded the Bronze Star for Meritorious Service. The presentation was made by Major General Ridgley Gaither, 40th Infantry Division.

During the month, weekly medical conferences were instituted by the hospital to be continued every Friday evening. The Medical Officers of all units served by this Hospital were invited and encouraged to attend. Hospital policies and procedures are explained and interesting and pertinent medical topics are discussed.

On 26 January, the Army Commendation Ribbon with Metal Pendant was awarded to Corporal Alfred Chock for meritorious service.

During the month of January the patient load increased and continued to show a steady climb through the end of May. The hospital operated smoothly and efficiently despite a sometimes serious under-strength of Medical Officers and Nurses. The month of May was the busiest period for over a year and 304 surgical procedures were performed.

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In February an annex was built between the two rows of Quonsets which comprised the hospital, joining them together. This was used for Receiving, Pharmacy, and Laboratory, and created additional room for waiting patients and hospital operations.

A new defense plan was set up and regular drills were held for Air Raids, Fires and Movement Practice. Beginning in January the TI&E Program operated a school to further the

basic education of enlisted personnel. The class, organized and taught by SFC William P. McAndrews, consisted of 18 men, 14 of whom successfully completed the course in April.

On 28 May 1954 a formal ceremony was held at which the unit was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation (Second Award). The presentation was made by Brigadier General John Hill, Deputy Commander, 40th Infantry Division assisted by Lt. Col. Spurgeon Neal, Commanding Officer, 30th Medical Group. The citation reads as follows:

“General Orders Number 314, Hq. Eighth U S Army, dated 21 May 1954

The 45th SURGICAL HOSPITAL (MOBILE ARMY) (2d Award) is cited for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service in Korea in support of combat operations during the period 1 April 1953 to 31 March 1954. Committed to the task of rendering service in close support of front line units, this organization's primary mission was to perform as a 60 bed surgical hospital. As a result of the lack of adequate facilities in the support areas it was often required to assume many additional responsibilities. Through diligent application and exhaustive efforts these added duties were effectively overcome and excellent medical care continued to be given all patients without diminishing operational efficiency. On one occasion, while providing support for the Turkish Brigade, 169 patients were admitted in one day and 184 surgical procedures were performed. During operation Little Switch medical examinations and treatment were given all repatriated United Nations Prisoners of War and later standby facilities were provided for Operation Big Switch. Although the hospital was required to operate its effectiveness and efficiency continued to exceed the high standards set by the Army Medical Service. The 45th SURGICAL HOSPITAL (MOBILE ARMY) displayed such outstanding devotion and superior performance of exceptionally difficult tasks as to set it apart

from and above other units with similar missions. The versatility, efficiency and compassionate regard for patients displayed by members of this unit reflect great credit on themselves and the military service of the United States'.

At this same ceremony, Major Edna M. Nelson, ANC, was awarded the Army Commendation Ribbon with Metal Pendant for meritorious service.

On 2 June 1954 the hospital received a letter of commendation from Brigadier General William Bradley, Commanding General, 40th Infantry Division as a token of thanks for the service rendered his unit. On about that date, the 40th Infantry Division departed for the States and the hospital took over the medical support of the 2d and 3d Infantry Divisions.

At the end of a very quiet month as the hospital neared the end of its fourth year, it received orders to cease operations. The majority of the personnel were transferred to the 44th Surgical Hospital (MA).

The 45th Surgical Hospital (MA) closed its doors on 30 June 1954, a small caretaker force remaining to dispose of property. The records were closed out at the 30th Medical Group in Seoul.

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This closed the operations of one of the finest units in the Medical Corps. The 45th has compiled a record second to none in the Far East. Its name and its personnel are known to every division in the theater. The reputation for kindness, excellent treatment and hospitality has been a great source of pride to the personnel of the unit. Every man and woman departs this station with regret.

During its existence the 45th Surgical Hospital (MA) participated in the following campaigns:

UN Defense	27 June 50 - 15 Sep 50
UN Offensive	16 Sep 50 - 2 Nov 50
CCF Intervention	3 Nov 50 - 24 Jan 51
First UN Counteroffensive	25 Jan 51 - 21 Apr 51
CCF Spring Offensive	22 Apr 51 - 8 Jul 51
UN Summer-Fall Offensive	9 Jul 51 - 27 Nov 51
Second Korean Winter	28 Nov 51 - 30 Apr 52
Korea Summer-Fall 1952	1 May 52 - 30 Nov 52
Third Korean Winter	1 Dec 52 - 30 Apr 53
Korea Summer-Fall 1953	1 May 53 - 27 Jul 53

Commanding Officers, 45th Surgical Hospital (MA)

Lt. Col. Kryder Van Buskirk
Lt. Col. John Mothershead
Lt. Col. Maurice R. Connally
Captain Charles E Hannan
Major Irvine G. Jordan
Lt. Col. Charles E. Hollingsworth
Lt. Col. Neal R. Fisher
Lt. Col. Paul A. Reed

When the 45th Surgical Hospital (MA) closed its doors on 30 June 1954, after three years, eleven months, an eighteen days of exemplary service, 42,752 patients (excluding out-patients) had been admitted for treatment.

