Shortly after the United States was declared to be in a state of war with the Imperial German Government the Allegheny General Hospital of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, voluntarily offered its services to the United States Government for any purpose that the Department of War might deem necessary. Not only was this the first offer from a hospital in Pittsburgh but also among the very first from the medical institutions of the country. Immediately the offer was accepted and the staff was requested to organize a Red Cross Hospital Unit. Such units were entirely new in the military service and the nature of the work to be performed was indefinite. However, following the suggestions of the Red Cross Commission the following form of organization was effected: a Director of the Unit, rank of Major; a Chief of Surgical Service, rank of Captain; a Chief of Medical Service, rank of Captain; four Medical Assistants, rank of First Lieutenant; four Surgical Assistants, rank of First Lieutenant; an Adjutant, rank of Captain. The nursing staff was to consist of a Chief Nurse with twenty assistants, each to be a Registered Nurse and a member of the Red Cross. In addition, there was contemplated a corps of four female clerks and a number of orderlies; this plan was revised and these places were to be filled from the ranks of the enlisted men. At that time, however, the number of enlisted men was not stated and it was not until September 1, 1917, that the Adjutant was directed to enlist fifty men for the Unit.

On the first of May 1917 the Staff of the Allegheny General Hospital Red Cross Unit was organized with Dr. S. V. King, surgeon, as Director. With some later alterations, the other physicians of the staff were: Drs. D. H. Boyd, D. D. Kennedy, C. E. Mullin, A. B.

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1 This paper is a part of a larger one detailing the history of the Hospital Unit in France in World War I. A copy of the entire paper was placed in the cornerstone of the new Allegheny General Hospital, June 8, 1930.
2 Of the twelve medical officers in the Unit only three — Drs. Brant, Mullin and the writer — now are living. Of the twenty-two nurses, only eleven survive. The number of enlisted men living is not known.
Miller, N. D. Brant, John L. Burkholder, C. W. W. Elkin, James L. Gilmore, Laird O. Miller, William N. Ennis. The staff, as constituted, was accepted by the Red Cross Commission and the Unit was to be known as Hospital Unit “L.” Shortly after this, following the plan for federalization of all the various military organizations for war purposes, the Unit was made a part of the military forces under the supervision of the War Department.

The enthusiasm shown at the time of the organization indicated that a good working unit could be produced, ready for any service the War Department might assign. At this early date, even a majority of the members expressed a desire for foreign service in spite of the danger entailed in crossing the sea and the submarine zone. On Sunday, May 8, 1917, the officers were given a complete physical examination by Major J. W. Boyce at Pittsburgh. Following the organization of the Unit, most of the physicians were assigned to various training centers and hospitals in the United States.

In the meantime the nursing force was organized with Miss Sara Mansell as Directress. With her were associated twenty nurses, graduates of the Allegheny General Hospital: Lillian Adams, Margaret Boal, Irene Dunlea, Wilma Forster, Emma Grier, Mabel Hudson, Katherine Joyce, Madeline Kemp, Anna Lease, Katherine Moist, Ada J. McLaughlin, Florence McCartney, Catherine McMorran, Edith MacNaughton, Mae Perrine, Helen Scott, Katherine Satterl, Ada K. Taylor, Mabel Vensel, and Iva Nolf. The nurses were given physical examinations for defects that might render them unserviceable for military nursing.

In May 1917, one of the unpleasant features of preparation for service was the vaccine inoculation against typhoid, followed in many cases by reactions of moderate or marked degree. Another inoculation of typhoid vaccine was ordered to conform to the government requirements. On reporting to various military posts and hospitals, it was learned that the Army Medical School vaccine was the only official one and that former courses of inoculation would have to be repeated.

Accordingly, the members of the Unit were agreeably surprised when orders were issued on December 11, 1917, calling the officers to report for duty with Unit “L” at Fort McPherson, Georgia. Major King was called from Chicago to Pittsburgh to mobilize the enlisted men. Lieutenant Kennedy reported from Camp Greenleaf, Fort Oglethorpe; Lieutenant Brant from the same Camp; Lieutenant Mullin from Camp Upton, New York; Lieutenant Elkin from Camp
Wheeler, Macon, Georgia; Captain Boyd from Camp Hancock, Georgia; Lieutenant Burkholder from Pittsburgh; Lieutenant Gilmore from Williams Bridge, New York; Lieutenant A. B. Miller from Camp Logan, Houston, Texas; Lieutenant L. O. Miller from Pittsburgh; Lieutenant Ennis from Brooklyn, New York. Most of the officers were advanced in rank before embarking for France.

When the first officers arrived at Fort McPherson there was nothing to indicate when the Unit would arrive or how long it would stay. It was learned that Unit "O" had been at the Fort for several weeks and had difficulty in procuring equipment for their men and were in the dark when they would be ordered for overseas duty. The officers of Unit "L" were wondering what had happened to the enlisted personnel of the Unit when they were agreeably surprised on the morning of December 22 to see a crowd of fifty men coming out of the barracks assigned to the Unit. There were men of every gradation in height; two were in partial military uniform; most were dressed in civilian clothes that could be discarded. Imagine then, the unmilitary appearance of this crowd as they "fell out" of the barracks for breakfast and "hiked" to their first meal in a military post. Most of the men had their first experience in barracks life, sleeping without mattresses and sheets on cots instead of beds. But most of the men seemed to enter into the spirit of the game and were willing to become soldiers even if they did not give evidence of it immediately. Action now began. The barracks were policed; an office was put in shape; details were assigned for various duties; kitchen police ("K.P.") were sent to the general mess hall. The men were canvassed for their occupations and were placed where they could serve best. There was no dearth of excellent service material; there were preachers, medical students, newspaper correspondents, insurance men, barbers, carpenters, electricians, college students, musicians, pharmacists and other occupations represented. The officers, too, were assigned to lecture and drill the men. Some time was spent in measuring the men for clothing. Army shoes are not made to meet every slight variation in length and width; they were procured one size larger than civilian shoes, as military life and marching broaden the feet. Blouses are short and wide, long and narrow, and are not usually made to fit like a personally tailored suit. Clothing was selected the nearest to a fit. Included were gloves, slickers, underwear, caps and shoes.

Christmas 1917 was spent in a new way by the members of the Unit. In military service there are certain duties that must be performed daily. But, the place of the home, the gifts of friends and
families, were partially replaced by the warm reception given the men by the local Y.M.C.A. The last few days of the year were occupied in drilling the men and preparing them for work overseas. Final inspection of the officers and men was carried out. But it was not until February 28, 1918, that the Unit received instructions to prepare for entraining in four days. On the appointed hour, on March 4, the officers, men and equipment were on board a special train for Camp Merritt, New Jersey. Major King was in command. This trip proved another innovation for most of the Unit, both as to means of travel and as to living conditions. During the trip connections were made with another Unit, to form a train of seventeen coaches.

On March 6, 1918, Camp Merritt, New Jersey, was reached. This was a military "transfer" camp where soldiers were continually coming and going. Comfortable quarters were furnished, and the food good. However, the desire to be moving, to get nearer the scene of action seized all of the Unit personnel. The Unit now consisted of eleven officers, forty-seven enlisted men, and twenty-one nurses. The nurses had been stationed in comfortable quarters in New York provided by the American Red Cross, where they were equipped and given instruction for their future work in the war zone. In the meantime Lieutenants Mullin, Kennedy, L. O. Miller and Elkin had been advanced to the rank of captains.

The Unit embarked from Hoboken on March 24, 1918, on H.M.S. Mauretania, one of the fastest and most comfortable of ships. The only unpleasant part of the trip was the crowded quarters of the men, who were assigned to hammocks so closely hung that its effect was later seen in the increased time required to assemble all on the deck in front of the proper lifeboats. By general orders everyone had to have his life belt with him continuously; at night no smoking was permitted on deck; no lights were to be seen from the doors or portholes. Yet freedom was given everyone from Brigadier to buck private to explore and visit different parts of this huge floating town. The trip was uneventful and few ships were sighted. Submarines seemed to worry few except apprehensive ones like Captain Ennis, who wore his clothes and life preserver day and night, even to bed. On the morning of April 1, we were reminded we were in the submarine zone by four "sea dogs," American destroyers, that kept zig-zagging on either side of the Mauretania assuring us of aid and protection if need be found for them. Above our vessel floated a dirigible balloon. In addition, the Mauretania carried two guns fore and aft, but fortunately, no occasion was found for their use, although rumor had it a submarine had been
Some members of the Hospital Staff.
Hospital at Bourbonne-les-Bains.
discovered one night during Easter services, when all lights of the boat were extinguished for protection. Sunday, April 2, the Cunarder docked at Liverpool, but disembarking was not permitted until the next day, when the Unit entrained for Southampton. The train trip through that garden spot of England by way of Oxford and the Shakespeare Country was most enjoyable. Officers and men were quartered at an Anglo-American camp near the city. The nurses were quartered at a hotel.

On the night of April 5, the officers embarked on an English Channel boat, Londonderry, an emergency troop ship carrying so many American and British officers and British “tommies” on their initial trip that all available floor space was utilized for sleeping quarters. The nurses crossed in a hospital ship, Guildford Castle, while the men in charge of Captain A. B. Miller, and Lieutenant Gilmore crossed in an old boat, Archimedes, carrying horses and mules, sharing their beds with these animals. It was an unpleasant trip, but a safe arrival at Le Havre, April 6, was full compensation for the unpleasantness.

On arrival at Le Havre, the officers were transferred by truck and the men marched to a “Rest Camp” on a hill above the city. To most of the Unit it was their first steps on French soil. Few would forget that rest camp; the wait for quarters, the heavy rain and leaky tents, the dirty goat-hair blankets, the muddy ground, the difficulty of getting food. But the next day the sun shone and the trip across France was begun April 7, on a train made up of third-class coaches and “wagons” renowned throughout the A.E.F. for their capacity of carrying “40 Hommes” or “8 Chevaux.” In the former rode the officers, in the latter all the men and their packs. There was no heat provided, no conveniences for mess or washing. Accordingly, at every stop men and officers would roll out, rush to a café for “des oeufs” or to the locomotive for “de l’eau” for a wash. The trip proved to be an interesting if not a comfortable one, passing just north of Paris, over the Seine and Oise Rivers, through Chaumont (G.H.Q. of the A.E.F.), arriving at Langres April 9, where officers and men de-trained for a real mess and much-needed baths. That night, at Vitrey-Vernois, our train was overtaken by one carrying the nurses. On April 10, 1918, the Unit’s destination, Bourbonne-les-Bains in Haute-Marne was reached. Bourbonne-les-Bains is unique in that it is the site of a Roman Temple built in the seventh century, burned in 1717, rebuilt containing the Civil Baths. In 1732 the Military Hospital was built by Louis XV on the site of an ancient charitable institution.
The natural hot springs of the town were used before the conquest of Gaul by Caesar. Here the Unit was met by Captain E. E. Goodrich, who relinquished command of the hospital to Major King as C.O. of Camp Hospital No. 21. The hospital was a modern hotel, recently constructed and equipped with steam heat, electric lights, bathtubs, elevators, good kitchens and mess halls and natural hot water from nearby mineral wells.

The first days at Bourbonne were employed in organizing the staff of physicians, nurses and enlisted men where they could render the most efficient services. Yet, emergencies arose requiring varying distribution of personnel. At this point details of activities in the hospital will not be given. Suffice it to say that the hospital served many organizations, such as the local 3rd U.S. Cavalry, the 92nd, 78th, 29th, 82nd Divisions, as well as many other detachments temporarily located in the area. In addition, surgical, medical and nursing squads were sent to various camps and hospitals elsewhere in France. It was while a surgical team was serving as A.R.C. Hospital No. 107 at Jouy-sur-Morin that the first casualty occurred when the hospital was bombed by the Germans and Corporal Dornon was fatally injured. It was while Nurse Katherine Joyce was serving at an Evacuation Hospital, south of Verdun, that she developed pneumonia and died, September 21, 1918. She was buried in a cemetery near the hospital, but her body was returned to Pittsburgh in 1919 where a military funeral was held at the First Presbyterian Church, members of the Unit acting as pallbearers. The Katherine Mae Joyce American Legion Post was named for Miss Joyce, in honor of the only Pittsburgh nurse to lose her life in France. Miss Mae Perrine and Miss Ada McLaughlin were later transferred to Germany for services among the occupational troops. These two nurses received citations for exceptional services among the wounded. In all, the number of deaths in the Unit was only six, including Lieutenant Deemar Stocker and Private Henry Howell.

On the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918 news of the armistice reached with the Germans was announced at the hospital. Soon the news spread to the French people of Bourbonne — entirely women, as the men were almost all in the battle zone. But the women danced on the street with the soldiers, sang songs of cheer, and gave way to unfeigned, rapt evidence of surprise. And though it was all France that celebrated, in every village and town, the day of deliverance, this day of the armistice, yet it was in Paris, the heart of all France, that the exultation reached its height.
Paris awoke with a long drawn-out roar, first with unbelief and then with the realization that the armistice was at last actually signed; and it gave way to uninhibited celebration. The roar grew as the news spread, streets and boulevards were crowded. The glow of victory was reflected from the faces of all French people. It was really "Le Jour de Gloire." The armistice was signed, the Hohenzollerns passed, the empire dissolved. Most everyone in the military force thought of going home. Writers of letters home now could mention towns and locations and give all the news. Nor did the celebration end soon. This writer was on leave in Paris when President Wilson, Clemenceau, Orlando, Lloyd George and their assistants and advisors rode down the boulevards and drew tremendous applause.

The hospital personnel had their minds on returning to the States. But much had to be done before the patients could all be treated and released. The last patients were discharged from the hospital on April 20, 1919. On May 2, the nurses left for the port of embarkation (Brest), and on May 9, the remainder of the Unit left Bourbonne by special train, given a farewell by the Third Cavalry Band and friends. It was a case of joy in returning home mixed with regret to leave the place that had been home for the organization for over thirteen months.

The trip to the port of embarkation (Marseilles) was a long one of four days, but in many respects an interesting one through beautiful valleys, old towns and poppy fields. On May 15 the Unit boarded the Canada, an old vessel used by the French forces in the Mediterranean. It was found necessary for the boat to take on coal. As a result the vessel put in at Oran, Algeria, where it was learned the native coalers were on strike. As a result, four days were spent on coaling, during which time the officers and men had an opportunity to go ashore and visit the old Arab portion of the city, the Mohammedan Temple and the ancient and modern French stores.

After leaving Oran the boat crossed the Mediterranean, through the Strait of Gibraltar past the Azores. The boat was crowded, the food poor, the result of which made many of the men sick and depressed. Accordingly, everyone was delighted to land at New York, June 2, 1919, followed by a trip to Camp Merritt, New Jersey. All from the Pittsburgh region were sent to Camp Dix where they received their discharge papers.

In the meantime, the nurses had arrived at New York from Brest on an earlier boat. Some were discharged at New York; a few were retained temporarily in the Army for service or on account of physical disabilities.
Many are the plain reminiscences of World War I: the service was a duty, an education for many, and friendships were formed that reminded the members of the Unit of pleasures and sorrows.

**APPENDIX**

**ENLISTED MEN**


The above paper is part of a report sent to the Surgeon General's office as assigned to the writer by the Commanding Officer of Camp Hospital No. 21, in France, at the end of World War I.—Editor