

The Grog Ration

A Bi-Monthly Digest of Navy Medical History

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The National Hotel Disease

By Ludwig Deppisch, MD

February 1857. The appearance of a mysterious gastrointestinal illness at a prominent Washington, DC hotel could not have happened at a worst time. Among the usual guest-list of politicians and business leaders was the president-elect, James Buchanan (1791-1868).¹ The soon-to-be fifteenth president, as well as dozens of other guests, were each struck violently by this exclusive illness. Some suspected foul play. However, the truth behind this “National Hotel Disease” was just as disturbing.

The National Hotel had long been a renowned Washington, DC institution. It was located on the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and Sixth Street, two-thirds the distance from the White House to the Capitol. The hotel was built in 1826. A decade later it expanded to over two hundred rooms.

By 1857 it was the largest hotel in the city and widely recognized as the one of the most luxurious hotels in the District.

In the 1850s, the National Hotel had become a favorite venue for Southerners who gathered in the capital during the contentious slavery debates.² Perhaps the venue’s political hospitality was the reason why James Buchanan, characterized as a “northern man with southern principles” was attracted to this hotel for a pre-inaugural trip in January 1857. Buchanan’s anti-abolitionist political stance was well-known. He supported the Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854), was an author of the Ostend Manifesto (1854) which proposed the annexation of Cuba as a slave state, and condoned the constitutionality of slavery in general.³ In 1856,

1. Remarkably this was not the first time Buchanan was exposed to this illness. In January 1857, while staying at the National Hotel he contracted the same ailment.

2. By the 1860s, the National Hotel was the favorite haunt of John Wilkes Booth. In April 1865, the assassin rented a room at the National Hotel shortly before killing President Lincoln. A search of his room located an incriminating letter that tied him to the assassination.

3. The Ostend Manifesto, written by U.S. Diplomats in Ostend, Belgium, described a plan for the United States to acquire Cuba from Spain.



The National Hotel in 1857. Here we see the hotel’s Pennsylvania Avenue entrance.

Photo courtesy of the Washington Historical Society.

despite this platform, Buchanan defeated John C. Fremont (1813-1890), the candidate of the newly formed Republican Party, for the presidency.⁴

Jonathan Foltz, Navy Physician to the President

Buchanan was a citizen of Lancaster, PA, which was also the family home of his personal physician, Surgeon Jonathan Messersmith Foltz, USN (1810-1877). In 1857, while in Lancaster on a family visit, Foltz was asked by Buchanan to accompany him as his medical attendant on pre-inaugural and inaugural visits to the nation’s capital.

Foltz was a long-time per-

sonal and political friend of the president-elect, and served as his personal physician. Buchanan had a long history of nasal polyps that seriously affected his breathing. Dr. Foltz successfully treated this malady over a period of years. The patient urged his physician to accompany him on a preparatory visit to the capital city, and as an inducement, Buchanan tantalized the ambitious navy officer with the prospect of a “significant career advancement.” The president-elect suggested that Navy Surgeon Foltz might wish to look around Washington in anticipation of his selection as Chief of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED), the antecedent of Surgeon General

of the Navy.

On the evening of January 25th, Buchanan, Foltz and six guests gathered in the National Hotel’s dining room for a celebratory dinner. Through Surgeon Foltz, who kept a voluminous diary, we can discover the first appearance of the National Hotel Disease. As we see through his writings, Foltz was not immune from the illness. Awakened at midnight, Dr. Foltz fell very ill with diarrheal cramps. His initial reaction was: “Why I have been poisoned.” He took an emetic and “by vigorous (unspecified) measures scarcely had relieved himself” when summoned to Buchanan’s bedside. The president-elect was “very ill indeed” with

4. The controversial Kansas-Nebraska Act, which allowed the settlers of the territories of Kansas and Nebraska to determine by “popular sovereignty” whether slavery would exist within its borders, led to great political turmoil in the 1850s. Debate over this act caused a segmentation of the Democrat and “Know-Nothing” parties and virtually eviscerated what little was left of the Whig party. In July 1854, during this political strife, the Republican Party formed as the anti-slavery party. Their first presidential candidate, John Charles Fremont, was a colorful and famous figure known as the “Great Pathfinder” for his Western expeditions.

similar symptoms. The physician applied unspecified treatments, and before long, received urgent calls for help from other members of the dinner party. Foltz remained up the entire night and tended to his patients, who remained bed-ridden during the following day. Seven of the nine at Buchanan's table had been sickened. Subsequent reporting documented a similar illness among many guests at the National Hotel.

The dysentery was, for many, chronic and debilitating, and for a few, fatal. Deaths occurred after months, and even years. The roll of the deceased included Mississippi Congressman John Quitman (1799-1858), Pennsylvania Congressmen John G. Montgomery (1805-1857) and David Robison (1815-1859). The latter died from complications two years later.

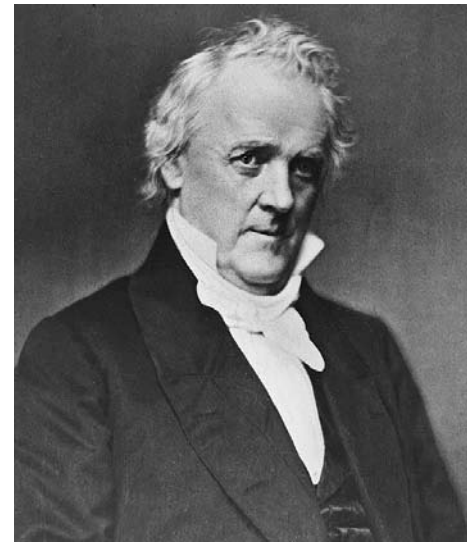
Buchanan did not fully recover from his initial bout with National Hotel Disease despite resting at Wheatland. A letter to Buchanan in Lancaster from Foltz in Philadelphia (February 23, 1857) expressed pleasure at his recovery, but prescribed: "...if there is any mineral poison in your system, the best means to eradicate it is, to supply the system freely with protine (sic) – i.e. – eat beef, mutton & all nutritious animal foods, avoiding vegetables and acids." The same letter warned against a return to the previous venue: "If you have not engaged rooms elsewhere, you should do so by all means. The water near the President(s) House all comes from the same spring and is the best in the city."

Subsequently, Buchanan summoned Foltz from Philadelphia after suffering a relapse. The politician accepted his physician's medical care, but not his advice.

Buchanan, somewhat recovered, returned with his doctor to the National Hotel in anticipation of his inauguration. We must return once again to Foltz's diary for his narrative: On Inauguration Day, disease broke out again with increased violence; four hundred were ill. More than forty died "with strong symptoms of having taken some mineral poison." Buchanan insisted that Foltz remain with him and installed him in the White House, in a room adjacent to the new president's. Buchanan recovered so slowly that he requested that the Secretary of the Navy extend Navy Surgeon Foltz's leave of absence. The specifics of his treatment are unknown other than Foltz, in a letter to his wife, "Tries to keep Buchanan from crowds who would kill him." The subsequent course and consequences, if any, of National Hotel Disease upon James Buchanan, are unrecorded.

The nature of Foltz's military responsibilities often found him in Washington during the following two years. The president always welcomed the surgeon to reside in his assigned room at the White House. However, Foltz's ambition for appointment as the Chief of BUMED was unsatisfied despite his active solicitation for the position. Foltz, feeling betrayed, broke irrevocably with Buchanan, and became an active opponent. Upon his retirement, Foltz expressed his hostility by the submitting a large bill for cumulative medical services rendered to Buchanan, and to Buchanan's estate, after the president's death. Foltz also changed the middle name of his first born from Buchanan to Steinman.

What then was the cause of this catastrophic illness that affected numerous politicians? The immedi-



James Buchanan was a Senator, and Secretary of State before taking the nation's highest elected office. His presidential tenure (1857-1861) is consistently ranked historically by scholars as one of the worst.

Courtesy of Library of Congress

ate suspicion was that the motive was political, and the means was intentional poisoning. Dr. Foltz wrote almost immediately: "intimations of a deliberate attempt to poison 'by some fanatical abolitionist.'" His spontaneous exclamation, after awakening with symptoms, was that he had been poisoned.

The New York Times story published on 5 June 1857 related: "A feeling of intense dissatisfaction pervades the public mind in the manner in which the mystery of the National Hotel Disease has been treated by the authorities of the City of Washington. From every quarter of the country come in denunciations of what is styled... the determination on the part of interested parties to stifle inquiry and hoodwink suspicion concerning what has every appearance of being the most gigantic and startling crime of the age." It concluded: "there is abundant ground for suspecting that the disease is the result of poison administered in the food

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of guests of the hotel.”

Certainly the juxtaposition of a known haunt for pro-slavery politicians, the presence of a pro-slavery president-elect, and an inflammable domestic issue might provide both a motive and an opportunity for homicide.

Both motive and opportunity for a homicidal act had presented themselves, but by what means was this to be accomplished? Heavy metal poisoning by either arsenic or copper was proposed by rumor, by newspaper articles, and by Jonathan Foltz. Both metals can cause acute poisoning with violent diarrhea and cramping. Others speculated that the manner of death might have been accidental, rather than murderous. A persistent rumor was that: “Arsenic had been used to poison rats, and...they had found their way into the tank from which the Hotel was supplied with water.”

This theory was disproved once it became known that the water tank was physically “absolutely inaccessible to rats or vermin of any kind.” Foltz was a proposed that the ingestion of copper was the cause, both according to the clinical and to the pathological findings. In response, hotel management denied the accusation that copper utensils used for cooking caused the illness. Moreover, Dr. Astibell of the Smithsonian Institution performed an analysis of the kitchen utensils as well as samples of meat, game and milk served at the Hotel. He discovered no traces of copper.

The Washington Board of Health investigated the National Hotel Disease. Several eminent District

doctors, including past and future presidential physicians James Crowdhill Hall (1805-1880) and Robert King Stone (1822-1872), submitted letters of opinion in this matter. All subscribed to the Miasma theory of disease.⁵ All concluded: “The source of the endemic in the National Hotel...was solely a poisonous atmosphere, probably engendered by the receptacles for offal and filth, under the building or adjacent thereto, in the sewers etc. These having been obstructed by ice, or otherwise by neglect, until the accumulation of foul air and noxious gases...” were sufficient to cause the disease. Therefore, the cause of The National Hotel Disease was a miasma of poisonous gases that emanated from sewage and produced symptoms in those who were unfortunately predisposed to this disease. Poison was completely ruled out as its agent of causation.

The miasma theory of disease was popular amongst doctors and the public from the Middle Ages until the late 1800s. It was defined as a poisonous vapor or mist that contained particles of decomposed material from a source of decay, dead rats or decomposing sewage in the case of National Hotel Disease. Inhalation of this noxious material produced the symptoms and signs of specific illnesses, for example malaria (which literally means “bad air”) and cholera. This erroneous theory was finally replaced when Robert Koch (1843-1910) introduced the germ theory of disease in the 1880s.

In a letter published in *The New*

York Sun in 1916, Henry E. Davis wrote: “At the time Washington had no good water system, and reliance for that indispensable article was had upon the city’s springs and wells. The National Hotel had at its top a capacious tank, for both drinking and other purposes. In preparation for Mr. Buchanan’s inauguration the house received a general overhauling and renovation, in the course of which rats in great numbers were discovered; and to get rid of them poison was resorted to, with the result that rats sought the tank, in which a very great many of them were drowned, of necessity infecting the water.”

In retrospect, The National Hotel Disease was undoubtedly caused by an infectious agent, most probably, by a bacterium. The transmission was fecal-oral in nature, by the contamination of the hotel’s food or water through retrograde sewage, or a polluted water supply. Without additional clinical information, e.g., the presence or absence of fever and the characteristics of the stool, diagnostic determination of the causative agent, whether staphylococcal, shigella, salmonella, cholera, typhoid, etc., is impossible.

James Buchanan completely recovered from his bouts with The National Hotel Disease and was healthy for the four years of his disappointing presidency. He was unsuccessful in preventing the secession of the Southern States and the run up to the Civil War. His presidency is rated as one of the most unsuccessful by almost all historians. Buchanan died in 1868.

He was also without his phy-

5. The British-born American doctor James Crowdhill Hall served as a physician to every president from John Quincy Adams to Abraham Lincoln. He was present at the deathbeds of three presidents--William Henry Harrison, Zachary Taylor, and Abraham Lincoln. Robert King Stone was the primary physician to President Lincoln and family. According one source, Stone’s medical records for the Lincolns have never been found. “[Only a]...disparaging remark about Mary [Todd Lincoln] and a praiseworthy remark about Abraham have survived.” (www.doctorzebra.com)

sician. Foltz was denied the promised post of BUMED Chief. Buchanan admitted that political considerations made his appointment impossible, and attempted to pacify the surgeon with a posting as physician at the Lazoretto, the immigrant quarantine hospital in Philadelphia. This was lucrative since its relatively minor responsibilities permitted a large civilian practice.

Dr. Foltz, no longer dependent upon Buchanan's support, had a successful naval career during the Civil War, was designated Fleet

Surgeon for Admiral David Farragut's good-will fleet tour of Europe and the Mediterranean, and was appointed Surgeon General of the Navy just prior to his retirement. He suffered from no recurrence of the National Hotel Disease.

The National Hotel's reputation survived. It remained a prosperous enterprise despite the ignominy of a unique illness. It remained fashionable through the 1880s but fell on hard times thereafter. In 1921, it was damaged by a serious fire. Later it was sold to the city and

served as the DC Armory and as headquarters for the city's Selective Service System. It was demolished in 1942. Although long-gone, the site of the National Hotel is occupied by another venue of historical interest. It is the new location of the Newseum, the recently opened museum of news and journalism.

About the Author

Dr. Ludwig Deppisch is a White House medical historian who has conducted seminars and presented lectures on the health of U.S. presidents at the Northeastern Ohio Universities College of Medicine, NEOUCOM, as well as nationally. His historical articles have appeared in *JAMA*, *PHAROS*, *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, and *Navy Medicine* magazine. His book, *The White House Physician* was published by McFarland & Company, Publishers, in July 2007.

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A Song For Navy Medicine

The History Behind *Corpsman Up!*

Historians cannot place its exact origins and statisticians have no way to quantify it, but no one can deny that the call “Corpsman Up!” has echoed through battlefields and bunkers of several lifetimes. Recent memory tells us the call was shouted on a weary road in the city of Fallujah, Iraq, on 17 September 2004. On this particular day, a corpsman ran toward the fiery wreckage of an exploded humvee in search of survivors when a rocket propelled grenade entered the fray, severing the corpsman’s left leg. Fighting unimaginable pain, the shock of his lost limb, and despite being shot an additional six times, the corpsman summoned the force of will to apply a tourniquet to his stump and inject himself with morphine. In this golden hour, he then answered the pleas for “Corpsman Up!” by crying out calls of his own: “Stay down! Stay down!” and “Put down the field of fire and evacuate!”

This was the harrowing tale of HM3 Joe “Doc” Worley and a selfless moment that inspired a musical anthem of the ages called *Corpsman Up!*

Chief Warrant Officer (CWO4) Brian Dix is a composer and a director of “the Commandant’s Own,” the Marine Corps Drum and Bugle Corps (D&BC). The fact that this group of musicians has not only survived time’s many tests, but has excelled into its 75th

year is a fact that Brian Dix takes great pride in. CWO4 Dix is a man dedicated to his craft, but also to military service. When not directing and touring with the D&BC, he manages a successful quarterly blood drive at the Marine Barracks at 8th and I, in Washington, DC.¹ He has, also, established an impressive tenure as volunteer at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD, extending back to 2003.

“When the Gulf War first broke out I was asked by our operations officer if we could do a performance over at Bethesda,” says CWO4 Dix. “At that time the support staff was one Marine liaison and one staff NCO.”² They

said come on over and we will bring you around. He brought us through and I was thinking that this was going to be tough to do and if the Marines are in the wings they won’t be able to get down and the ensemble won’t be able to do this. It was disheartening at first. Then they brought me into the rooms to meet the Marines.”

Admittedly, the experience of visiting wounded Marines was rewarding. CWO4 Dix brought patients Marine Corps calendars, D&BC CDs, and “any other goodies” he could find at the Marine Barracks. If he discovered that the patient knew someone stationed at the barracks, he set out to reunite the comrades. If the patient could



CWO 4 Brian Dix conducting the Marine Corps Drum & Bugle Corps at a Memorial Day Concert in Paris, France, marking the 90th anniversary of the Battle of Belleau Wood.

Photos courtesy of the Marine Corps Drum & Bugle Corps

1. CWO4 Dix estimates that Marines stationed at the Barracks have given over 1,000 pints of blood over the last five years of blood drives.

2. NCO or non-commissioned officer

not celebrate a particular cake-cutting ceremony due to their limited mobility, the CWO4 recreated the ceremony in their rooms. If the patient needed something as simple as a haircut, CWO4 Dix would arrange for a Marine barber to pay them a visit; and if the patient had trouble getting a social worker, CWO4 Dix and his Marine colleagues stepped in and found the means to assist.

On one afternoon in 2004, while making his rounds, CWO4 Dix walked into the room of Joe “Doc” Worley. He saw a young man surrounded by caring family members and friends. As Dix remembers, “Worley was gray as a ghost and yet he had so much vim and vigor. He looked at me and said, ‘Sir’ and sat up and I said ‘Don’t get up.’”

After what CWO4 Dix describes as a “friendly chat,” Worley shared stories of his Iraq experience—the fateful day in Fallujah that proved so costly to him and his platoon.³ The music director sat there in awe, captive to the story he was hearing. As he recalls, “‘Doc’ told this story and his wife stood nearby welling up at the story she no doubt had heard before. I watched and listened. I was actually stunned by his heroism. When

I left the room I just knew I had to do something for Navy corpsmen.” Like all good Marines and hospital corpsmen, the CWO4 is a man of his word. Inspired by the actions of all corpsmen, as exemplified by HM3 Worley, Dix set out to write a commemorative march.

When talking about the Navy’s medical sailors, the CWO4 is heartfelt as one usually is when discussing the proud achievement of a son or daughter. “I didn’t want this march to be just for IDCs [Independent Duty Corpsmen], but for all corpsmen. “Doc” Worley was the impetus, definitely, but it had to represent all of them. The corpsman has a gift for intuition that cannot be matched anywhere in the civilian sector. They can look into the Marine’s eye and know what’s wrong. There is a word that describes the way they carry themselves, ‘dignified.’ They know that there is no one else like them and the corpsman is the true bridge between the Marine Corps and Navy.”

CWO4 Dix expressed to his leadership his intention to write a long-overdue march for these “dignified” sailors. He admits that there was some concern in the Marine Corps that others in the Navy

Medical Department would feel overlooked. But as Dix explains, “I addressed these concerns by stating that other medical personnel would not feel slighted because they know that corpsmen are isolated from the rest of the medical field and they deserve some recognition.”

The Creative Journey

For CWO4 Dix, the route to symbolic expression is a familiar journey, but not always a direct one. A composer of close to 100 works, Dix drafted several musical ideas for *Corpsman Up!* but nothing seemed to work. Then one day while prepping for a performance in Canada the serendipitous moment unexpectedly struck. “Then and there the musical part of what would be *Corpsman Up!* was laid out before me.”

This vision took him, as he puts it “beyond the stretches of the imagination and beyond the standard military march.” Built firmly upon a programmatic structure rarely heard with marches, *Corpsman Up!* ultimately owes a bit to Berlioz and Sousa, as well as to the Navy hospital corpsman. For one who listens to the final composition they will hear a stirring musical score ushered by nine types of



The “Commandant’s Own” in concert on 4 July 2008. In 2009 the Drum & Bugle Corps marks its 75th Anniversary. It is the last of the military Drum & Bugle Corps.

3. “Doc” Worley’s Marine Platoon, dubbed “Pale Rider 3,” suffered severe losses and was disbanded soon after the incident on 17 September 2004.

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instrumentation. It is a certifiable force of sound that can be broken down into three identifiable elements: a steady drum-line, a colorful melody, and a thematic bugle, each interspersing into a heroic picture of a corpsman being called into action. For Dix, this audio image is every bit intentional.

“Throughout the composition you hear a consistent beating of a drum symbolizing the human heart. This is played throughout the introduction and through the melodic line,” explains CWO4 Dix. “In introductory passages you hear the pulse quite frequently, then you hear the melody elongated, then you hear the percussion actually go into a different rhythm. It’s not complementing it at all but it is complementary because you are going from one meter to the next.” The melody is symbolic of Marines on duty while the singular drum-like pulse is the corpsman—it is the march, yet it is the very lifeline of the entire platoon.”

The interwoven melody and drum-line is complemented by an almost valiant bugle call. CWO4 Dix, a contrabass bugler, composed this short tune specifically for *Corpsman Up!* More than anything else, it is the very call for the corpsman to action. As Dix asks rhetorically, “If Marines are in the field and someone had to shout ‘corpsman up!’ and you can’t hear it then what would the bugle call be? The bugle is the official form of communication. If you have a call to attention, a call to orders, or if there is an emergency for *Corpsman Up!* what would it be?”

“When the ‘corpsmen up!’ call goes, one can hear everyone come in,” Dix explains. “The force of the Marine Corps is behind that message—it is a total force. And

then the melodic line moves on through. You will notice what is called a bridge session where everything tapers down and it goes nice. That’s because the immediate action has been taken and everything settles back to its normal pace even though corpsmen are working for Marines and then it picks up excitement again and it just pursuing on. It’s never ending but a continuous flow of work.”

CWO4 Dix unveiled this masterful work in 2006 at the D&B’s training ground in Yuma, AZ. The Corps later played it at the opening for the Intrepid Armed Forces Rehabilitation Center at Brooke Army Medical Center in Fort Sam Houston, TX. And in 2005, just months after being scored, the Marine Corps D&B played *Corpsman Up!* at the Hospital Corps Anniversary Ball in Washington, DC. As CWO4 Dix remembers, “As soon as we played it every corpsman in the room stood. It was quite amazing and very emotional for the Drum and Bugle Corps to see. Its one thing when you receive standing ovations and accolades but it’s something really special when you see people stand up on the down beat for a piece of music. It was extremely memorable and one I will never forget.”

CWO4 Brian Dix and the Drum and Bugle Corps continue to play the march on their tours around the globe. They have made every attempt to make it accessible by posting it on their website. The march has been recorded and appears as first track of the D & B’s most recent album, “With Pride.”

Although it has not yet been adopted by the Navy Medical Department or the Department of Defense, we must realize that even “The Star Spangled Banner”

took 117 years before being recognized as the National Anthem. Still, playing the march has been acknowledged by some in the Navy Medical Department as a “new” institutional tradition. Some corpsmen even refer to *Corpsman Up!* as simply “The Hospital Corps Song.”

“I wrote it for Navy medicine and they can do with it what they wish,” CWO4 Dix admits. “And anytime Navy medicine—and BUMED—calls I will do my best to ensure that we are there.” With these words we see that the corpsman’s special bond to the Marine Corps is reciprocated in one very precious way best summarized by the phrase *Corpsman Up!* *ABS*

Navy Medical Humor Through the Years



In 1948 (April-May-June edition), The Hospital Corps Quarterly included a section entitled "Humor Through the Years" featuring Navy medical-themed anecdotes from the first decades of the twentieth century. The novelty of these jokes is not to be missed. Along with comic strips, service-themed jokes were a common feature in many of the hospital newsletters and newspapers published during World War II. In hopes that they may induce even the slightest chuckle in our readership, we present a sampling of these anecdotes below.

New Champ

Every hospital has its most pitiful case, who frequently is a patient long carried on the rolls. At the old hospital, League Island, was one of these whose combined affliction included chronic arthritis and St. Vitus' dance at the same time.¹ He reveled in the fact that visiting medical men came from far and wide to watch and pity him. But one day he lost the championship: a new patient was admitted who had chronic seasickness and lockjaw.

Transportation

Back in the prewar days the *Hennie-Maru*, was often the "first available government transportation" from Norfolk to the West Coast. A usual port of call was Port au Prince, Haiti.² A hospital corpsman, making his first sea voyage, was standing on deck as the ship passed Gonaives and he asked a seaman, "What comes after Haiti?" "Heighty-One," was the nonchalant reply.

"No Better"

Food in the Navy, including Navy hospitals, has come in for its share of criticism in days gone by. At one particular hospital the food was consistently poor. One day a patient who had recently had a major operation complained to the ward hospital corpsman, "I haven't had a bite to eat in 4 days." "Don't worry about it," was the reply, "It tastes the same as it always did."

Mistaken Identity

The abandoning of the Geneva Cross as a rating badge symbol for hospital corpsmen brings to mind an incident overheard in Norfolk some years ago:³

It so happened that there was a parade on the downtown streets only a short time after an American Red Cross drive for funds. A platoon of hospital corpsmen marched as a body representing the naval hospital. As they were passing along Granby at the corner of East Main, a spectator was heard to say: "I've got a buck invested in that organization."

Life Span

When nature first created man, monkey, and bull, she endowed the man with 40 years of life, the monkey with 40 and the bull with 20. The man wanted more and the monkey and bull volunteered to give part of their life spans. "Twenty is enough for me," said the monk. "I'll give him 10 of mine," said the bull.

And thus it came about that man's life runs to 70 years on the average, divided into three periods: first 40--normal living; next 20--monkey business; last 10--shooting the bull.

Somehow or another, the 10 years donated by the bull, got scrambled when hospital corpsmen were made and the apportionment doesn't always hold true.

1. Naval Hospital League Island, aka, Naval Hospital Philadelphia, operated from 1917-1935.

2. Gonaives or Gonaïves is a city located in Northern Haiti. Known as the "City of Independence" it is where Haitians declared independence from France on 1 January 1804.

3. The caduceus replaced the Geneva Cross on Hospital Corps rating badges in 1948. This change of insignia coincided with the change of "pharmacist's mate" to "hospital corpsman."

Scuttlebutt:

medical and nautical history news, notes,

Authors on Deck Series

The United States Navy Memorial has announced its 2009 "Authors on Deck" Book Series schedule. This ongoing series of lecture programs showcase books on the sea services. These noon-time, one-hour presentations are free and open to the public.

13 January

The Sheriff of Ramadi: Navy SEALs and the Winning of al-Anbar (U.S. Naval Institute Press)

By CAPT Dick Couch

27 January

Navy Medicine in Vietnam: Oral Histories from Dien Bien Phu to the Fall of Saigon (McFarland Press)

By Jan K. Herman

10 February

Lincoln and His Admirals (Oxford University Press)

By Craig L. Symonds

17 February

The Messman Chronicles: African-Americans in the U.S. Navy, 1932-43 (U.S. Naval Institute Press)

By Richard E. Miller

26 February

The Golden Thirteen: Recollections of the First Black Naval Officers (U.S. Naval Institute Press)

By Paul Stillwell

4 March

First Class: Women Join the Ranks at the Naval Academy (U.S. Naval Institute Press)

By Sharon Disher

26 March

Life in Mr. Lincoln's Navy (U.S. Naval Institute Press)

By Dennis Ringle

2 April

A Sailor's History of the U.S. Navy (U.S. Naval Institute Press)

By Tom Cutler

The lectures will take place in the Presidents Room of the Naval Heritage Center, located adjacent to the Navy Memorial at 701 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20004. The Naval Heritage Center is just steps from the National Archives/Naval Memorial Metro Station. For more information about this series, please contact Mr. Mark Weber at (202) 380-0723 or mweber@navymemorial.org.

Legacy and Longview from the Naval Hospital Philadelphia Experience

The Navy Surgeon General's lecture series will continue on 20 February 2009 with "In Service of the Public Trust: Legacy and Longview from the Naval Hospital Philadelphia Experience." This presentation will be given by Dr. Edward Gabriele, a noted medical ethicist, poet, and scholar. The one-hour program will take place at 1100-1200 in the Memorial Auditorium, National Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, MD. For more information about this lecture or the series please contact the Office of the Medical Historian at (202) 762-3244 or andre.sobocinski@med.navy.mil.

Recent Books of Note for the Navy Medical Reader

Before My Helpless Sight: Suffering, Dying and Military Medicine on the Western Front, 1914-1918. Illustrated. 527 pages.

Ashgate Publishing (March 2008)

By Leo van Bergen

Fighting Fit: Health, Medicine and War in the Twentieth Century. Illustrated. 306 pages. The History Press (November 2008)

By Kevin Brown

Frontier Medicine: From the Atlantic to the Pacific, 1492-1941. Illustrated. 381 pages. Alfred A. Knopf. (November 2008)

By David Dary

The Last Stand of Fox Company: A True Story of U.S. Marines in Combat. Illustrated. 288 pages. Atlantic Monthly Press (January 2009)

By Robert Drury and Tom Clavin

Navy Medicine in Vietnam: Oral Histories from Dien Bien Phu to the Fall of Saigon. Illustrated. 357 pages. McFarland Press (January 2009)

by Jan K. Herman

Please contact Office of the Medical Historian to recommend recent books of interest to Navy medical readers.

Third Annual SHNM Meeting and Paper Session

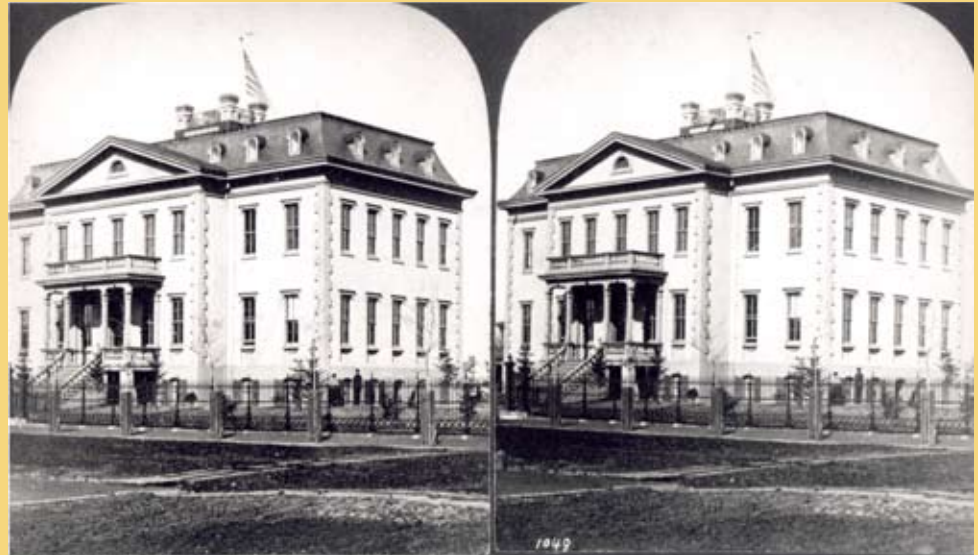
The Society for the History of Navy Medicine (SHNM) has announced that its third annual meeting and paper session will take place on 23 April 2009 in Cleveland, OH. The meeting will be held in conjunction with the annual Association for the History of Medicine Conference. Details on the upcoming meeting and paper session will be forthcoming. For additional information about the SHNM, please contact CAPT Thomas Snyder, MC, USNR (Ret.) at thomaslsnyder@gmail.com.

and miscellany

Wreath Laying Ceremony Honoring Civil War Sailor

A wreath laying ceremony will be conducted at 1100 on 7 February 2009 at the Navy Memorial, 701 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW in Washington, DC, honoring Ordinary Seamen Benjamin Drummond, the first patient ever admitted at Naval Hospital Washington, DC. In October 1866, Benjamin Drummond was a 24-year old Black sailor and Civil War veteran when he was admitted to the hospital. Drummond's hospital ticket noted that he was suffering from a gunshot wound received during a battle off the coast of Texas.

This special event will feature comments by the Surgeon General VADM Adam M. Robinson, Jr., Post Commander Vincent Covert of the American Legion Post 8, and Mr. Hari Jones, Assistant Director of the African American Civil War Museum. All interested individuals are encouraged to attend.



Stereoview of Naval Hospital Washington, DC (1866-1904)

BUMED Library and Archives

1912 Navy Medical Surgical Kit

Mr. W.B. Cox of Astoria, OR, is looking for information on surgical kits manufactured for the Navy in 1912 by the KNY-Scheerer Corporation of New York, NY. Photographs of this kit can be found below and to the right. If you have literature and/or leads on where he may find information about these specific surgical kits please contact him at wbcx97103@yahoo.com and "carbon copy" us at andre.sobocinski@med.navy.mil.



Looking for Shipmates from Naval Station Hospital Saigon

Mr. Donald Robert Sutherland, a retired hospital corpsman of Vancouver, WA, is looking for shipmates who served at Naval Station Hospital Saigon from 1964-1966. If you served at the station hospital during these years and/or know someone who did, please contact the Office of the Medical Historian at (202) 762-3244 or andre.sobocinski@med.navy.mil.

GORDIAN KNOTS

A Navy Medical History Quiz

In this edition of the quiz we offer you multiple choice questions and “true or false” statements about the Navy Medical Department one hundred years ago. See if you can untie these “Gordian Knots.” As with all our quizzes the first person to e-mail us the correct answers will receive a special prize.

1. As a means of reforming the U.S. Navy, on 4 January 1909, President Theodore Roosevelt issued the controversial General Order No. 6 directing that all active duty naval personnel:
 - a.) undergo annual drug testing.
 - b.) successfully pass an annual physical fitness test.
 - c.) serve a minimum of six months at sea.
 - d.) serve a minimum of nine months at sea.

2. *True or False.* In October 1909, one Navy surgeon proposed raising the minimum age of Navy recruits as a means of lowering the morbidity to diseases like chickenpox, measles, mumps.

3. Which of these cities did not have a Navy hospital in 1909?
 - a.) Las Animas, CO
 - b.) San Juan, Puerto Rico
 - c.) San Diego, CA
 - d.) Brooklyn, NY

4. According the *Report of the Surgeon General of the U.S. Navy*, in 1909 the following “special diseases” and conditions were most prevalent among sailors and Marines:
 - a.) Tonsillitis, Malaria, Mumps, and Tuberculosis
 - b.) Tonsillitis, Measles, Alcoholism, and Neurasthenia
 - c.) Gonorrhea, Tonsillitis, Suppurative Skin Diseases, and Wounds
 - d.) Gonorrhea, Suppurative Skin Diseases, Wounds, and Alcoholism.

5. *True or False.* Surgeon General Presley Rixey suggested that in dealing with cases of feigned illnesses or malingering among patients, it is imperative that medical providers maintain a sense of humor.

6. *True or False.* Syphilis was the leading cause of Navy and Marine Corps “disability” discharges in 1909.

7. Which of the following did not exist in the Navy in 1909?
 - a.) Hospital Corps school
 - b.) relative rank for Navy nurses
 - c.) tuberculosis hospital
 - d.) teaching hospital

SOLUTIONS TO PREVIOUS QUIZ (NOV-DEC 2008)

The year 2008 marked the 200th anniversary of the seminal military medical text, Observations on the Means of Preserving the Health of Soldiers and Sailors. Written by Navy Surgeon Edward Cutbush, this book can be considered the first ever medical text published by a U.S. Navy medical officer. In this installment of the quiz we will review several of Dr. Cutbush's "observations."

1. In referring to the diets of soldiers and sailors, Surgeon Cutbush wrote that this item is "an indispensable article in provisioning...not only to season food, but also in times of great heat, to preserve the body from disease, especially in garrisons where salt provisions are used without vegetable. It is, in my opinion, an article of so much consequence that troops should never be without it." Name this indispensable condiment.

Answer: vinegar

2. In addressing the influence of climates on the careers of soldiers and sailors, Cutbush would write that "I am of opinion that a proper selection of troops ought to be made for...men, who have passed the fortieth year of their age, and whose habits of life are fixed are preferable for [duty in]:"

- a.) colder climates
- b.) warmer climates
- c.) ship duty
- d.) shore duty

Answer: warmer climates

3. What was Dr. Cutbush referring to when he wrote: "that continual pabulum of life, justly commands our primary attention"?

- a.) diet
- b.) cleanliness
- c.) air
- d.) climate

Answer: air

4. In Surgeon Cutbush's day, animals were often a common component of ship's company. When a ship was returning to shore, Cutbush wrote that these creatures would "bellow on smelling the land air long before the mariners have any idea of setting soundings." What type of animals was he referring to?

Answer: cows

5. Surgeon Edward Cutbush wrote that "exercise on the forecastle, either in dancing, fencing, or in the use of the broad sword" was effective as a preventive measure against:

- a.) scurvy
- b.) weight gain
- c.) discontented temper
- d.) all of the above
- e.) "a" and "c"

Answer: scurvy and discontented temper

Congratulations to Mr. Davis Elliott for being the first to correctly answer all questions correctly!

About *The Grog Ration*

The Grog Ration is a bi-monthly publication dedicated to the promotion and preservation of the history of the Navy Medical Department and the greater field of maritime medicine. Articles and information published in *The Grog Ration* are historical and are not meant to reflect the present-day policy of the Navy Medical Department, U.S. Navy, and/or the Department of Defense.

If you would like to submit an article for publication in *The Grog Ration* please contact us at:

Bureau of Medicine and Surgery
2300 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20372-5300
Attn: Office of the Medical Historian and Publications

Tele: (202) 762-3244
Fax: (202) 762-3380
E-Mail: andre.sobocinski@med.navy.mil