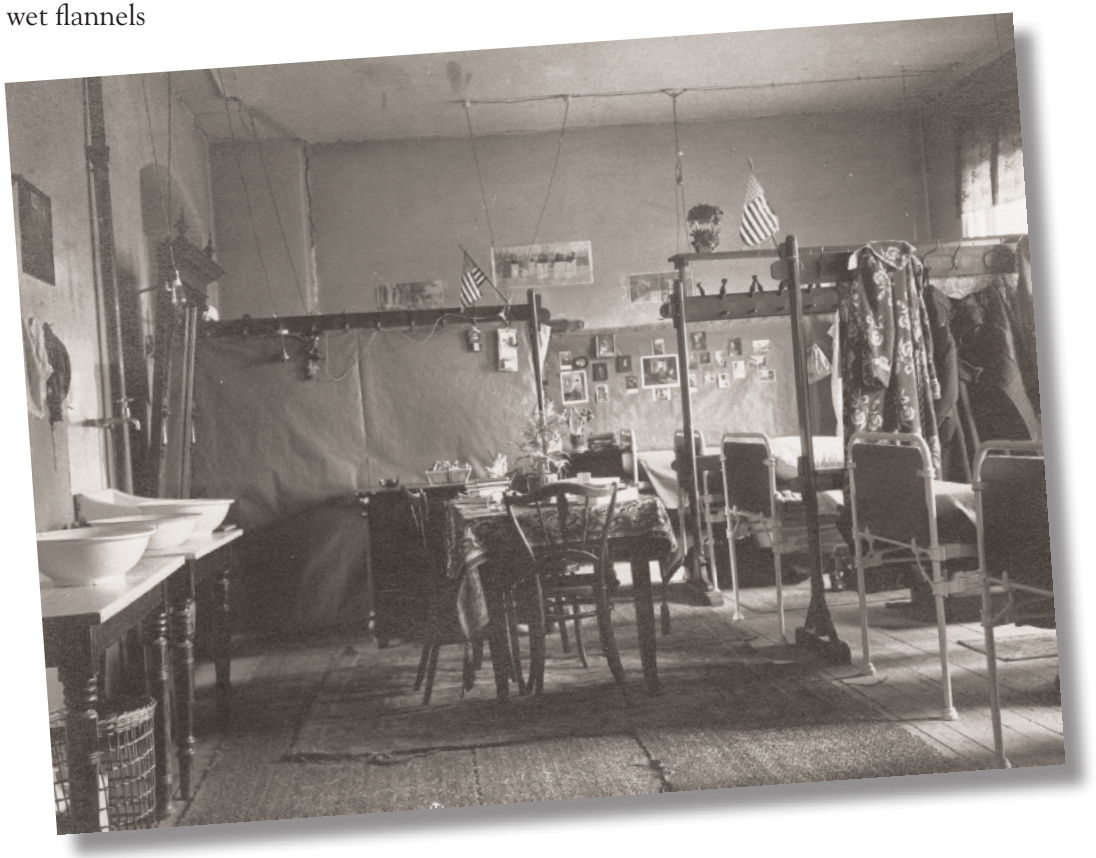
Behind the Lines

Quarters and Living Conditions

"For the nurses the question of laundry led to much discomfort. Some of the hospitals were able to provide their own laundries, some secured French women to do the work, and sometimes the work was done in French laundries in neighboring towns. In many cases, however, the nurses themselves had to launder their own clothing, including their uniforms. This was a hardship, particularly during the times when their physical strength was taxed to the utmost in caring for their patients. The director of nursing service on her inspections of nurses' quarters noted but few rooms in which during the winter months, flannels were not hanging to dry. The lack of proper facilities for laundry work and the dampness of the winter months made it necessary for many of the nurses' rooms to be 'festooned' with wet flannels from one week end to another. Mobile hospitals which were equipped with portable laundries seemed to solve the problem in the best way." *(The Medical Dept in the World War, Vol. XIII, p. 338)*



Nurses' bedroom and dining area at Camp Hospital No. 24, Langres, France.

7
URINAL

Latrine views at Camp Hospital No. 33, Brest, France.

(Above) *Nurses' quarters at Base Hospital No. 20, Chatel Guyon, France.*

(Opposite) *Interior of nurses' quarters of the "semi-permanent" barracks type.*

Nurses' mess hall at Base Hospital No. 17 in Dijon, France, September 5, 1918.

Leisure

REST, RELAXATION, AND RECREATION were important to Army nurses whether they were in France, England, or back in the United States. Yet in France, "opportunities for recreation for nurses were often very limited. Muddy roads frequently eliminated walking in places where that was the only chance for diversion. Dim lights prevented reading, writing, or sewing in the nurses' rooms, and even when general living rooms were provided they frequently were too cold and too poorly lighted to permit of any enjoyment from playing cards or other indoor games. In the hospital centers the American Red Cross gradually provided recreation huts equipped with libraries, moving-picture apparatus, and musical instruments; in some places they even built special huts for the nurses' recreation houses. These recreation houses were like private clubhouses and were fitted with assembly rooms, libraries, kitchens, sewing rooms, and laundries." *(The Medical Dept in the World War, Vol. XIII, pp. 338–339)*

Sunday afternoon on the beach at a popular leave area in Biarritz, France.

(Opposite) *Evening dance for the staff of Evacuation Hospital No. 1 (26th Division), on May 7, 1918, at Sebastopol, France.*

(Above) *The nurses' recreation hut at Angers, France.*

(Right) *"Pride" was played by Mary Devine, a nurse at Base Hospital No. 101, in this patriotic play.*

(Opposite) *A cast of nurses, officers, and enlisted men who took part in "Democracy Victorious" at Base Hospital No. 101, St. Nazaire, on July 4, 1918.*

"We have found a way to get sugar. We can buy two pounds of sugar at a time, each one of us, at the U.S. commissary and we got some cocoa [at] a French store and also got some walnuts. We made fudge a couple of nights ago. I tell you it did taste good. The first fudge we have had a chance to make. We are going to enjoy life a little more now." *(December 12, 1918, Elizabeth Lewis, Vichy, France)*

(Above) *A popular pastime—fudgemaking party on the ward at Base Hospital No. 34. Participants and date unknown.*

(Opposite) *"The Allies" featuring Nurse Beaumont as France, Nurse Woeckner as America, and Nurse Randall as Great Britain. In the rear is "Democracy," a role played by Nurse Morriss.*

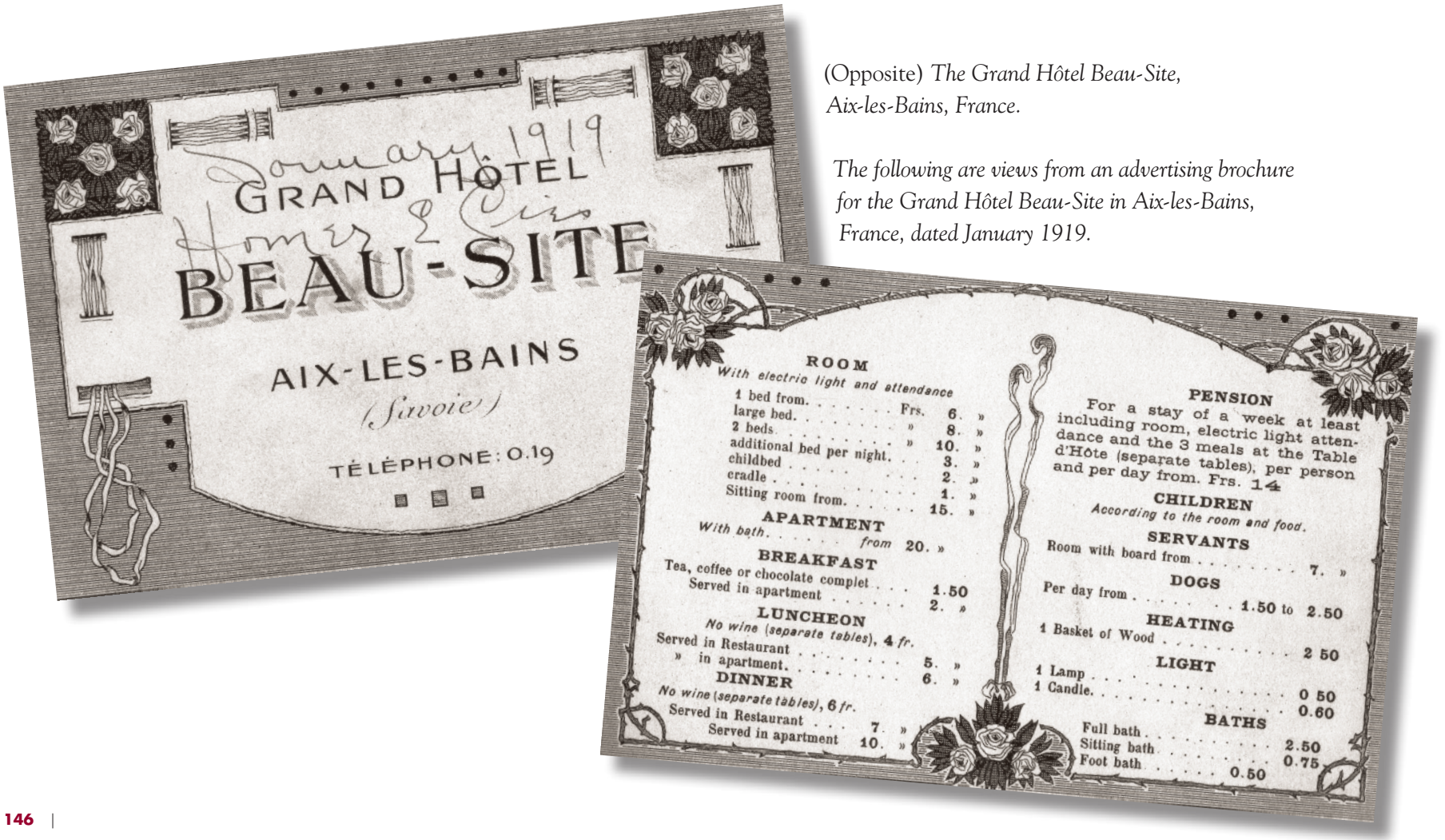
(Opposite) *Relaxing in the Nurses Recreation Hut in Washington, DC (Fox Hills).*

(Above) *American Red Cross Nurses' Club in London, England.*

(Above) *Relaxing in the Conservatory of the ARC Nurses Club in London, England.*

(Opposite) *Nurses wearing straw blue hats authorized for summer wear.*

"In February, 1918, the United States Army established a leave-area center in Aix-les-Bains, Savoie, France. This proved such a success that soon other parts [of the provinces] were secured and turned into an Alpine playground for the American Expeditionary Forces. . . . The real purpose of a leave area is to give health and happiness to the Army and so increase the vigor and efficiency of the whole American Expeditionary Forces. In this work the hospital plays a very important role, not only in caring for those already ill, but also by establishing dispensaries and inaugurating methods of sanitation for the prevention of disease." *(Surgeon General Report, 1919, p. 2116)*



(Opposite) *The Grand Hôtel Beau-Site, Aix-les-Bains, France.*

The following are views from an advertising brochure for the Grand Hôtel Beau-Site in Aix-les-Bains, France, dated January 1919.

"Aug. [?] [1918] Saturday—we arrived at Aix-les-Bains at 7:30 AM. Signed in with the A.P.M. [Assistant Provost Marshall]. Breakfasted at the Depot, then searched for rooms. With a lot of persuasion and $1.00 we were given accommodations at Thermal Establishment Hotel. We waited for ages for a room, so went across the street to a wonderful Bath Establishment and had a wonderful bath. We were told J. Pierpont Morgan had a private suite here. It was all very grand and old, after lunch at the Hotel we crawled into our wonderful beds, box springs, feather mattress, and down quilt, and slept until Sunday morning. We were never so tired as when we retired and such luxury!" *(Maude Frances Essig, 1918)*

CHAMBRE

Avec Lumière électrique et Service

à 1 lit.	depuis Frs.	6. »
grand lit	» »	8. »
à 2 lits	» »	10. »
lit de supplément		3. »
lit d'enfant		2. »
Berceau		1. »
Salons	depuis	15. »

APPARTEMENT

Avec Salle de Bain, depuis Frs. 20

DÉJEUNER

Thé, café ou chocolat, complet	1.50
Servi à l'appartement	2. »

DÉJEUNER à la FOURCHETTE

(Vin non compris, 4 fr.).

Servi au Restaurant.	5. »
à l'Appartement.	6 »

DINER

(Vin non compris, 6 fr.). 7. »

ARRANGEMENT

Pour un séjour d'une semaine au moins y compris chambre, éclairage électrique, service et les 3 repas à table d'hôte (petites tables), par personne et par jour. Depuis Frs. 14. »

ENFANTS, arrangement spécial

suivant Logement et Nourriture.

DOMESTIQUES

Chambre et pension . . . . . depuis 7. »

CHIENS

Par jour . . . . . de 1 50 à 2.50

CHAUFFAGE

Un panier de bois 2 50

ECLAIRAGE

Une lampe.	0 50
Une bougie.	0.60

BAINS

Grand bain	2.50
Bain de siège	0.75
Bains de pieds. . . .	0.50

Ier ORDRE

ASCENSEUR

LUMIÈRE ÉLECTRIQUE

Près des Bains
En face le Parc

OUVERT D'AVRIL
à fin Octobre

*I*st CLASS

LIFT

ELECTRIC LIGHT

Near the Baths
Opposite the Park

OPEN FROM APRIL
to end of October

The Salon Seats over 1000 Dough Boys

A rear view of The Grand Hôtel Beau-Site.

Quiberon, a commune of the French Department Morbihan, situated on a peninsula in the region of Brittany, is known as a seaside resort for the French during the summer and for its history of sardine production.

(Left) *Shown here are American nurses most likely stationed at a nearby camp hospital, enjoying the life of this beautiful area, outside a local villa.*

(Bottom) *Nurses on the beach at Quiberon, and with their housekeeper and her children.*

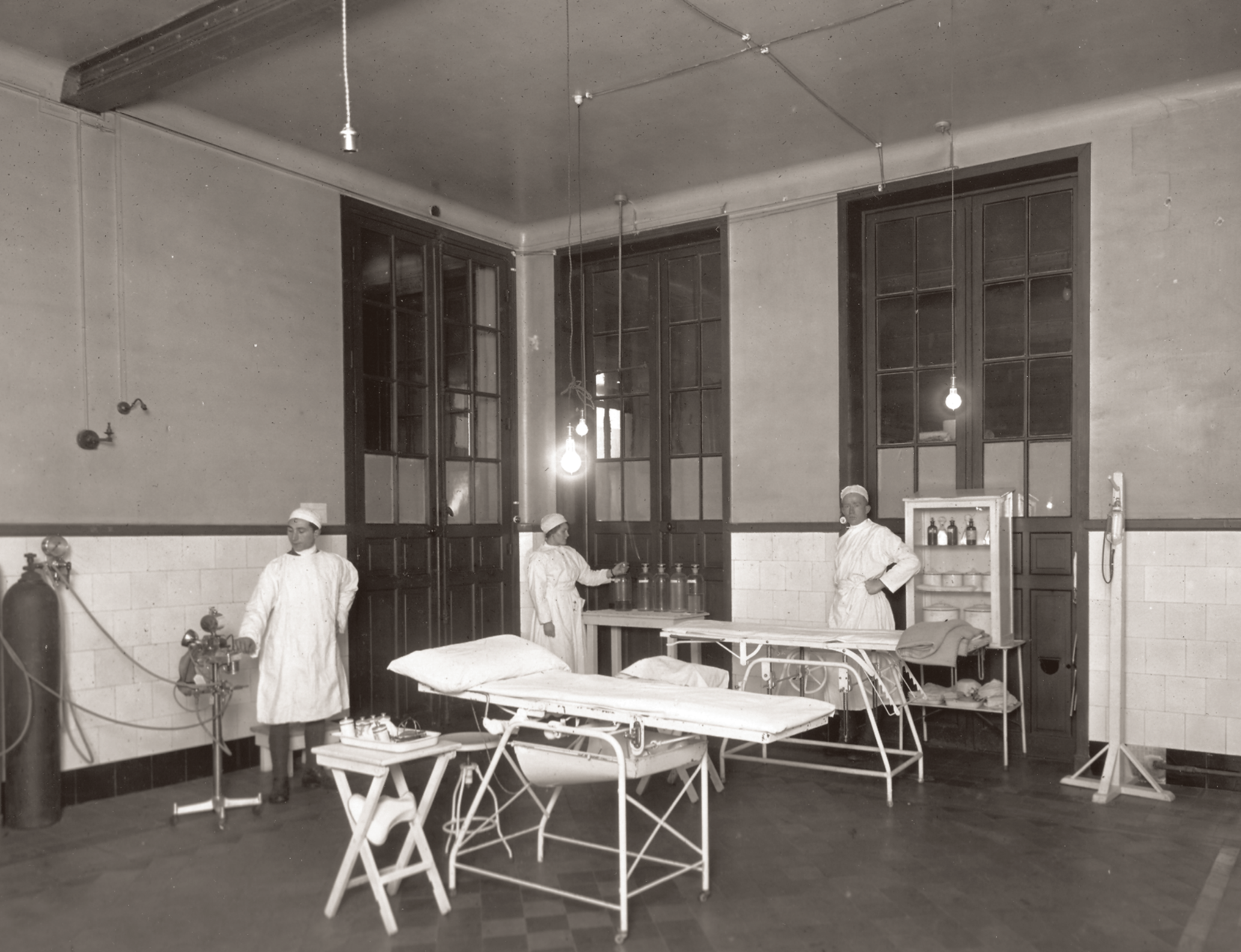
In the Operating Room

"A STEADY STREAM OF PATIENTS is carried into the X-ray room and from there either directly to the operating room or back to their tents. The plates are developed almost immediately and are examined while wet and stuck up in improvised holders on the windows of the operating room. They all showed foreign bodies and often bubbles, indicating the dreaded infection by the 'gas bacillus,' which causes such dreadful gas gangrene. All these cases have to be opened up and the necrotic tissue cleaned out. The supervisors were each on their side of the hospital, and the nurses were all getting the poor creatures as comfortable as possible. . . . Then we began in the operating room, taking out foreign bodies and incising and draining.

We took pieces of shell out of necks, hips, knees, skulls, ankles, shoulders, and out of the spine of my poor paralyzed man. Some of the men took the ether badly and screamed and fought and cursed; some thought they were in the battle and called out to their comrades." *(September 28, 1917, Stimson, Finding Themselves)*

(Left) *Triage at Base Hospital No. 45, Tours.*

(Opposite) *The G.U. (Genito-urinary) operating room at Base Hospital No. 57, Paris.*



Base Hospital No. 57 took over a large school building and functioned as a part of the Paris district. The normal bed capacity of the hospital was 1,800, distributed in 75 wards, but during October 1918, as many as 2,000 sick and wounded were in the hospital. This hospital admitted both surgical and medical cases; the total number admitted during the war was 8,505. The hospital also operated a central dental infirmary, which cared for a majority of the dental cases in the district of Paris; 7,292 such patients received treatment during its period of activity.

Base Hospital No. 57 sailed from Brest, France, on August 13, 1919, aboard the *Kaiserine Augusta Victoria*, arrived in the United States on August 22, and was demobilized shortly afterward.

(Opposite) *Operating room. Private Nicholas Romeo, Alice Cahn, and Sergeant H.T. Aardweg, all listed on the Signal Corps photograph caption as "surgical assistants." U.S. Military Hospital No. 57, Medical Corps, Paris.*