

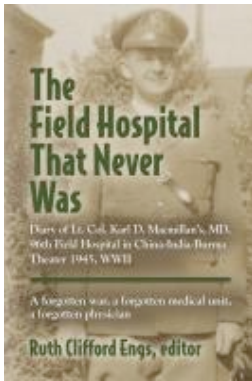
# The Field Hospital That Never Was

Diary of Lt. Col. Karl D. Macmillan's, MD,  
96th Field Hospital in China-India-Burma  
Theater 1945, WWII

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A forgotten war, a forgotten medical unit,  
a forgotten physician

**Ruth Clifford Engs, editor**



*Lt. Col. MacMillan, physician and commanding officer of the 96th Field Hospital in the almost forgotten China-India-Burma theater of World War II, provides vivid impressions and observations in his diary. The unit slogs over the treacherous Ledo-Burma and the Burma Road in China, and battles against deplorable sanitation, accidents, insects, and virulent tropical diseases. The diary provides a unique insight into MacMillan and the many challenges he faced during the winding down of WWII.*

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## Chapter 7: Kunming to Tushan: The Beginning of Confusion

MONDAY, JULY 16, 1945

Our last day at camp McMillan. It had rained during the night and the ground was wet and the days slippery. My truck #1 was the first out and I skidded a bit in leaving. It took the rest of the vehicles over 1/2 hour to get off the hill. We started out at 0930, quite a late hour, for the 109 mile stretch from KUNMING to CHANYI [*Now Zhanyi in Qujing, Yunnan Province [ See Map 4].*

**Table 7-1: Towns traveled through from Kunming, Yunnan Province to Liuchow (Liuzhou), Guangxi, Province**

<i>Name of town WWII</i>	<i>Modern transliteration if different</i>	<i>Province</i>
<i>Kunming</i>		<i>Yunnan</i>
<i>Luliang</i>	<i>in Qujing</i>	<i>Yunnan</i>
<i>Chanyi</i>	<i>Zhanyi in Qujing City</i>	<i>Yunnan</i>
<i>Annan</i>	<i>Qinglong</i>	<i>Guizhou</i>
<i>Panshien</i>	<i>Panxian</i>	<i>Guizhou</i>
<i>Anshun</i>		<i>Guizhou</i>
<i>Kweiyang</i>	<i>Guiyang</i>	<i>Guizhou</i>
<i>Tushan</i>	<i>Dushan in Qiannan</i>	<i>Guizhou</i>
<i>Liuchow</i>	<i>Liuzhou</i>	<i>Guangxi</i>

*By old roads, it's approximately 675miles (1,030 KM) from Kunming, Yunnan Province to Liuchow, Guangxi Province.*

About a mile out, our motor started to miss and we found out that a wire had come loose from a spark plug. It was soon fixed and we were on our way again.

CHANYI [*Zhanyi, near Qujing*], is a small village, with inevitable suburbs of cheap stores between it and camp. CHANYI is a rail head and a large QM depot and is a beehive of activity. Here we found that the MTS to be in worse condition than usual—which is pretty bad. Everybody was confused and the confusion was heightened by the presence of a party of generals, Gen. Weidemeir [*Wedemeyer*] and Simpson.

*Wedemeyer and Simpson may have been planning the campaign using Chinese troops, with the training and support of the Americans, to open one of the Chinese ports. This proposed campaign is discussed in Romanus and Sutherland, "Chapter XII: The End of Wedemeyer's Experiment" in Time Runs out in the CBI. During this campaign, numerous Chinese troops died of starvation, cholera, and other diseases. However, the campaign was halted upon news that the Japanese would likely surrender in mid-August 1945.*<sup>1</sup>

There was no available area for parking nearby and no tents that were unoccupied, so we finally drove about 3 1/2 miles away to a flat, area beside the road, in a little limestone valley. And on our way there, we saw something that was a laugh. There was a sign saying "Convoy Parking Area Entrance" with "under construction" in small letters. A bulldozer had just recently made a small opening from the road to some terraced rice paddies and cornfields. 100 yards up the road was a similar "Exit" sign, also with a 20 ft. road leading to neighboring fields. Only fields in between. As everything was so brand-new, it was obviously eyewash for visiting generals, who might be fooled by them. I, who had a convoy to park, just laughed sardonically.

*The Field Hospital That Never Was*

We borrowed 4 empty, shaky trucks from the MTS and shuttled the O and men back and forth to showers and mess. These latter were really good, the showers hot, and a good meal with excellent Chinese bread.

After supper we put up our jungle hammock and Capt. Brummett got his carbide lamp going. It really works well and even in a strong breeze throws a steady, brilliant light.

TUESDAY JULY 17, 1945

We tried to get an extra truck or two, or even some half-loaded ones from MTS, but no luck. We did however, have this luck; we are to gas up along the way, and in this way, can keep all the trucks and all our equipment together and be ready to set up as soon as we arrive. Also heard that the road, closed by a landslide is now open, and that we will be able to proceed in the next days, instead of having to lay over 2 or 3 days as they had told us yesterday.

Lt. Ostroff is trying to get parts for our hydraulic brakes. No less than 9 out of 25 of the Dodge trucks had their brakes go bad on them, that's about 1/3, too many.

We are to leave at 0900 on Wed. the 18th and a gas truck is to be out at our area shortly after 0800.

The generals and our officers had breakfast at the same time this morning and traveled on afterwards.

Capt. Pearl stopped in and surprised me by telling me that HQ had 2 units of the 22nd Field Hospital [*that*] were located 1/2 miles E of us, on the main road. I dropped over at 7:15 p.m. and met Maj. Yee, a Chinese American from California, who is now in command, and Lt. Col. Johnston had just left for the USA. (I met Col. Johnson a few days ago in Kunming). They have a nice set up on a small hill, and are putting up mud brick buildings and laying out crushed stone walls.

Their surgery is still being done in a tent. They have been overseas for over two years now and were in the SALWEEN river campaign.

After I was in bed about 1/2 hr., a messenger in a Jeep came in to tell me that the road was closed beyond ANNAN [*Qinglong*] and that we would have to lay over a day or two.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 18, 1945

Early this morning, gave orders that we were to lay over this day and were to travel the next day. This morning while at breakfast Capt. Hogan said that he had seen Lt. Shoemaker, Transportation O, in the latrine, and had been told that the road was open. So it was. At 5:00 p.m. the message came in that the road was closed, at 11: 00 p.m. that the road was open again. So, I quickly changed plans and we were ready to set out soon.

A POL convoy was supposed to leave at 0800, so we planned to leave at 0900. Shortly after we were shuttled down to our area, it started to rain, and it poured steadily all morning. Our parking area was a flat spot, below the road level, and I was afraid that some of our Dodges might get stuck, but they all got out without trouble, but very slowly, as the POL convoy trucks kept rolling by us. Pretty soon my pant legs were soaking wet, where the water ran into them from my raincoat. My helmet liner kept my head, but not my face dry. As I was directing traffic, I had to stay out in the rain and soon the water ran down my pant legs into my shoes and I was actually swishing in water every time I took a step. Wet and cold, I got into my truck when we took off that 0930.

We drove over the usual up and down, right and left turn road. For several hours we could see a mountain range to the N. that we were paralleling. At lunchtime it had stopped raining and we halted by the side of the road in the little valley, just outside of a small town. (Didn't see its name). While we were parked there, a Chinese driver's truck went through the stone wall of the nearby bridge, turned over,



and tossed out its load and driver. The latter was miraculously unhurt, except for an injured finger, but was, of course, quite shaken.

We had quite a time getting through the little town. The Chinese driver's, according to custom, eat their meals at Chinese restaurants and they practically blocked the street with their trucks, and one spot in particular, by double parking. That spot was just passable, and most of our trucks hit one wheel of the offending truck and whenever that happened, the Chink driver made an awful fuss. That, of course, made us feel better.

About the middle of the afternoon, we came to a small, narrow, valley. At the bottom of the valley, we found our night's destination PANSHIEN [*Panxian, Guizhou Province*], a small-town, with the main suburban street of slopes and houses, of the usual squalid type.

The MTS people were bulldozing a parking area and it was entirely too muddy for us to use. Seems that we always are too early in nearly every step, to benefit from their ultimate arrangements. Coolies gassed and oiled our trucks there and then we were led to our parking area, which was a large, flat piece of ground, right next to the city wall and one of its main gates. It was a large expanse of black, evil-smelling earth, mainly a big mud puddle. We chose the higher dryer, area near the city wall. The place stunk and we soon discovered the same coolies had left buckets of fecal material standing nearby. To make matters worse, a mule came trotting along and upset one, a filthy, grueling mass, just swarming with maggots. We covered the spot with dirt and put oil in the remaining buckets. Bet the coolies were mad.

We really had a mob of spectators out to watch us. Just like the crowd watching a carnival setting up. Capt. McAuliffe had a rope put up, and the guards kept the mob back of this rope. They sure were a nuisance, especially one professional beggar, who had a baby strapped to his back. What made things worse, was the fact that the kids had

firecrackers and were selling them to our men, who were throwing them into the crowd. I put a stop to this nonsense soon.

The Chinese city walls are interesting. Any town or village of pretension has a wall. The lesser ones have mud brick walls, the better ones, cut stone walls. These walls are not very high, often not more than 10 ft. in height and have battlements on them. PANHSIEN's wall was about 12 to 14 ft. high, cut stone face and the wall filled with rubble. It had a nice gate and gatehouse, with a pagoda on it. These gate houses are well built. The Chinese are good stonemasons. The entrance was like a tunnel, with a vaulted roof, about 12 ft. high and about 30-40 ft. long. The floor was paved and sounded hollow to the tread. There were a pair of swing-hinge, iron-plated doors just within, which, when swung open, fitted into a recess, so that they wouldn't narrow the passage. In the vaulted ceiling, just before the doors, were square holes, which looked like places through which could be shoved large timbers, to act as a grate, for added protection.

THURSDAY, JULY 19, 1945

Up at 0500 and on the way at 0715—a little late, due to our need for shuttling back and forth and also due to the fact that a POL convoy was to leave before us.

We went up the hill on the east side of the valley and soon reached a high, narrow, alpine valley with a flat bottom. Later we went down hill and then up another. We had lunch overlooking a branch of PEPANG KIANG [*Beipan*] River.

At about 2 p.m., we came to the foot of the famous 24 steps near ANNAN [*now Qinglong, Guizhou*]. The road winds up and up, 24 switchbacks and is the one that is so frequently photographed.

*Sometimes the 24, or 21-steps, have been attributed to being on the Ledo-Burma Road. However, these hairpin turns were on the road that connected Kunming, Yunnan, China — at the end of the Burma*

*Road—to Chungking (now Chongqing) the Nationalist Chinese provisional capital and headquarters of Gen. Chang Kai-shek. Through much of its travel, after leaving Kunming, the 96th Field Hospital traveled approximately along what is now the G320 Chinese highway that goes through Yunnan and the Guizhou Provinces. Many parts of this highway, that begins at the Burma-Chinese border, was part of the old Burma Road[See Map 4] <sup>2</sup>*

The town of ANNAN [*now Quiglong*] is on top, in a saddle between two peaks. I led the convoy right through and 7 miles past, by mistake and we all had to turn around in an old convoy area and return. Was I burned up! And so were the rest. When we finally returned, we found that we should have turned left on a Chinese alley. They did have a sign, but had taken it down to repaint it, and hadn't stationed an MP yet, because they weren't expecting us as early as the time we arrived.

This camp is a very nice one. We slept in tents and had good showers and mess. They even had a movie there. I must've been pretty tired, as I fell asleep before the lights were put out and one officer moved in, and I never even heard him.

#### FRIDAY, JULY 20, 1945

Up at 0600 and off at 0800. They claim that this is the worst day's travel, 106 miles, all up and down, except for the last 30 miles into ANSHUN [*in Guizhou province*]. The place we had spent the night in ANNAN, near the famous 24 switchbacks, is near the top of the range. We were traveling downhill and in 1/2 hours were at the bottom, a deep gorge out by the PEPAN KIANG [*Beipan River*].

We had seen this range east of the PEPAN KIANG River, ever since leaving ANNAN. This ridge was long and saw-toothed, with all the little peaks about the same height. We climbed over several foothill ranges and on looking back to the west, saw that the ANNAN mountains also looked saw-toothed. About 2 miles back of ANNAN

we came on a truck on its back. The geology of this range is interesting. The west side slopes up toward the eastern sky, then there is a valley, high up and on the other side of the valley, the layers slope at 90° from the first, a clear indication of a definite break in earth's crust. We had lunch in this valley and then continued downhill to a more easterly branch of the PEPAN KIANG River.

Our climb up the east slope of this gorge was noted by our passing a convoy, westbound. We nearly had a head on collision, when one fool Chink tried to pass another on a blind curve. We just missed colliding and in the back sway he side-swiped the truck back of me, causing no real damage, however. Boy, was I mad and ready to force the next Chink off the road over the cliff. Our passing of this convoy was on a narrow spot, on a sheer cliff-like hillside and on most of it, we were on the outside and often the outside wheels were just a few inches from the edge.

On top of the hill, we came to a plateau. Here we had about 30 miles of good, wide, though dusty, road, all the way into ANSHUN. On this plateau were numerous rounded, conical hills, many perfect in shape. Well this is typical of all Chinese hills which are well eroded and treeless, these in particular look artificial, as they were cut from horizontal rock layers, and looked like a gigantic pile of pancakes, each one a little smaller than the one below. Something like an old-fashioned beehive.

ANSHUN is a walled town and looks cleaner than the usual Chinese town, as it has paved streets and sidewalks; it has a circle in the center and it's a good thing that I had received directions at ANNAN, as there were no signs in this town at all. We took the street to the left at the circle. The only sign was "Pro-Station." After 4 miles of China's bumpiest road, we came to the convoy area, located near an old airstrip [*See Map 4*].

We had a nice location, hot showers and a good mess. We slept by the cars in our jungle hammocks. McCain was late putting mine up,

as the weapons carrier McAuliffe and Brummett were driving, and in which my bedding roll was, broke its fan belt and was delayed on the road. The moon was half-full and it was a beautiful night.

After I had gone to bed, I heard a loud argument, mainly one man inciting the other. I yelled for them to stop, but they didn't hear me, so I got out of bed, good and mad, put my boots on and went over to where I heard the altercation, but it had ceased before I arrive. I then discovered that it was XXX7 and XXX8, the former who was loudmouth, while XXX8 was a lot more quiet.

### SATURDAY, JULY 21, 1945

Started off at 0800 sharp, as it was reported to me that the expected incoming convoy was not scheduled to run today.

The road back to ANSHUN was just as bumpy as before, and the rest of the way out of town was just as bad. The streets were nicely paved in well cut, rectangular blocks, but many of these blocks were depressed, probably from the weight of the trucks, as well as from age.

The road was still in this plateau valley and was wide and not hilly, but was very dusty. We drove along this valley most of the morning. The topography of our route and the map don't seem to agree, as was true of most of our journey. As well as I can figure out, we were following the valley of the LUKWANG HO, a north flowing tributary of the WU KAING. We crossed no sizable stream until we came to the one on which KWEIYANG [now Guiyang, Guizhou] is located. About 10 miles from KWEIYANG, the country became rough as we went down grade and finally we entered a deep gully and came to some buildings and to a sign "City Limits of KWEIYANG." We soon were out of this area and then around the corner, came to the real city itself. We followed the signs and came to our parking area at the "race track." That's what it was, too; we parked our trucks on the southeast curve. We found good tents and a good mess hall, as well as hot and cold showers.

It was hot all day, reminiscent of INDIA, but not as humid. Capt. Abelson, the base's surgeon came down to see us and asked Capt. Hogan and me to meet him at his office in about an hour.

We showered and cleaned up and McCain fixed up my quarters in a small tent that I'm sharing with McAuliffe. I even have my table and desktop now.

At 1500, Capt. Hogan and I drove to see Capt. Abelson. We had to take a guide with us, as the road wound around the hill and then came to the river and followed its course for about 1/2 mile. The surgeon's office is up the side of the hill and is very nice and cool and comfortably equipped.

Here Capt. Abelson told us that HQ and one unit would probably set up at TUNSHAN [*Dushan in Qiannan City*], about 1/2-way between KWEIYANG and LIUCHOW [*now Liuzhou, Guizhou*], while all the med. O. and some of the EM of the other unit would be put on D. S. for a while [*See Map 4*]. I didn't like that, but what could I do? It's common gossip at this camp that they have been awaiting us, just so that we could have these men on DS to relieve others, mainly from the 172d General Hospital, who are being recalled to the parent Unit at KUNMING. The 172d G. H. is to take over the hospital at KUNMING and to relieve the 95th station hospital there now.

The 27th F. H., stationed here at KWEIYANG, is to move to LIUCHOW and start a hospital there, and after starting it, is to be relieved by the 95th Station Hospital. What a mixup, and were in the middle as usual.

Maj. Lamber is on D.S. with the 27th F. H. at WANPING, and will probably stay there as long as the 1st Unit is being used on D. S. Well, we'll probably be here several weeks, so may as well settle ourselves down comfortably, as well as we can. Our trip from KUNMING to KWEIYANG was not too bad. I feel a little tired from

the 1500 mile trip, not exhausted at all, but my eyes feel tired and heavy.

Distance Table—Approximately

Kunming—Chanyi 86 miles, Annan 80 miles  
to Pan Haien, 80 miles Anshun, 100 miles  
Kweiyang 85 miles

*This confusing table appears to trace the mileage from one convoy camping area to the other along his route of travel from Kunming to Kweiyang. Google.com shows that from Kunming, in the Yunnan province, to Kweiyang, in the Guizhou Province, is about 326 miles (525 km) on old highways. The route of travel of the convoy was approximately along the G320, a primitive road at that time, along with other roads that may not exist anymore. It is unclear why he says 1500 miles in the preceding paragraph when in the next paragraph from his speedometer he says the distance was about 380 miles.*

My speedometer, on the Dodge truck I drove all the way from KUNMING, registered 653.0 KM, or 380.0 miles. Well, don't know which to believe now, probably the speedometer, or well just split the difference, and call it 400 miles.

SUNDAY, JULY 22, 1945

This morning went over to SOS HQ [*Kunming*], where I had an appointment with Capt. Abelson. Here I met Maj. Brown, dental surgeon for Base Section #III: Lt. Col. Ricamore, executive O; Lt. Frank, Ord. O, and Capt.— ? MTs. O.

We went to the Chinese contagious hospital where they are taking care of the victims of the local cholera epidemic. A lot of the poor devils were dying here. These are the first cholera patients I have

seen. They are very dehydrated and were given intravenous saline. Out in the yard, carpenters were busy making coffins, not a cheery sight for the patients, but they were too sick to care. Instead of beds, the patients were lying on wooden platforms, no mattresses or covers at all, and the floor was filling with vomitus, and partly filled, rusty bedpans were lying around the floor too.

MONDAY, JULY 23, 1945

What a day this turned out to be! First, a telegram from Kunming, ordering T/4 Down, our only stenographer, who can both take shorthand and type, to report to the JAD6 office in Kunming. I wrote a letter to the Commanding General, in which I stated that this man was not a court reporter and asking them to rescind the order. It will do no good, I know.

Secondly, the local-based surgeon's office is not satisfied with the number of officers and EM, especially MAC officers, that we can supply and threatens to force our supplying them by an order from the local HQ.

Thirdly, I lent Lt. XXX9, MAC, account inspector, a Jeep yesterday. The Jeep was found parked today with a broken windshield and a broken rearview mirror. He just left it there, without a word of thanks, apology or explanation.

Fourthly, I have had orders cut, putting the 3 remaining officers of the 1st unit, and about a dozen EM, on Detached Service [DS]. That ruins our 1st unit, just as we are ready for action. Capt. Abelson needs these O and men, and then some, from our unit, to fill in for those who are being taken away from him by the need of these men in their parent units, the 172d G. H. and the 27th F. H. What a day!

The PX supplies we brought with us, were unloaded into the orderly room tent, and are to be sold tomorrow. We had to guard them well tonight, as PX supplies are particularly unattainable here and they



might be stolen by soldiers stationed here. An example of their value is given here. A soldier was ready to sell 616 film for \$1.00 a roll (normally about .35 a roll) but was willing to swap two rolls of film for 1 can of beer!

McCain cleaned up all my leather goods today, as several things were mouldy[sic], especially my visored winter cap. It's raining now and cooler than it was yesterday.

Was pleased to find my little coin purse, given to me by Babbie, in my briefcase. I thought it lost on a trip from CALCUTTA, to CHABUA, the end of March.

TUESDAY, JULY 24, 1945

At 1000 we started to distribute our remaining PX supplies and most everybody received a carton of cigarettes, chewing gum, tropical candy bars, fruit juices and matches, about \$3.00 worth of stuff. I bought a leather shoulder holster for my .45 automatic, why, I don't know. Had some laundry done, which was needed much more than the shoulder holster.

Arrangements were made for inoculating us with booster shots for typhus, cholera and plague at 1400 today.

*Diseases including cholera, malaria, typhoid fever, amebic dysentery, scrub typhus, sexually transmitted diseases such and chancroid, syphilis and gonorrhoea and even the plague were common in the CBI Theater and were endemic among the civilian population.<sup>3</sup>*

Capt. Hogan made a trip to see Capt. Abelson, SOS Base Sec. # III Surgeon Kweiyang this morning with a list of Ist unit O and EM to be put on D. S. When he came back from there, he had news. First there was a telegram from CHANYI, requesting the return of the 25 Dodge trucks they had lent us. That meant unloading them, but Lt.

Ostroff suggested that we drive them, fully loaded, to TUSHAN [*Dushan in Qiannan, Guizhou Province*] and unload them there, put the TO/E equipment in tents, and keep some men there to guard them, until the unit appeared.

Plans were laid for this, Capt. Peterson [*was*] assigned as O in charge and 25 drivers and 25 riders detailed for the job, 14 men and Capt. Peterson to remain with the equipment of HQ and units I and II. Arrangements were made to give these men their shots early, so our caravan could leave shortly after 1300.

Lt. O'Neil was to get rations for 15 men for 35 days and the ration truck was to leave later, after it was loaded.

Secondly, mail had arrived for the first time in a week, but, alas, no mail for me. Am still looking for Babs letter #49, which hasn't arrived yet, though #50 did come in.

Got my 3 shots for this evening, one of them really stung.

Capt. McAuliffe, Lts. Wurzetebeck and Nowell are to go on DS with 259th. Stat. Hosp. here in KWEIYANG, tomorrow. Had some films developed of our LEDO-BURMA road trip. They turned out pretty well, especially those of DIBRUGARH, Assam that the chaplain took, but doggon it, McCain left my head out of some of the best, those of me with the truck at the LEDO- BURMA road junction.<sup>4</sup>

### WEDNESDAY, JULY 25, 1945

Receive some mail this morning, 2 letters from Babs, dated July 1st and 4th. Our mail is really taking a long time to arrive here. Our evening mail had a lot of broken packages in it, and was a wet mouldy [*sic*] mess every package broken and most of its contents broken up. It's really too bad.

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Went over to the 295th Stat. Hosp. with Capt. McAuliffe and Lts. Nowell and Wurzetebeck, where they will be on DS for a while, hope not too long. This hospital, opened up about 2 months ago, is located in a group of 3 fairly large, 2-story stone buildings, which until recently was a school. It's located upstream from KWEIYANG and is one of the prettiest, little villages I have seen in China. The stream runs numerous water-life wheels for irrigation, and quite a number of Chinese mills, the kind with a horizontal water wheel.

Lt. Holzberg dropped in tonight, working on a JADS case and will be here a few days. He is tickled with his new assignment.

Heard tales of a high-ranking general being called back, due to his leaving here with a large quantity of money, which he can't explain away too well.

It appears, from what Capt. Hogan gathered from Capt. Duffy at SOS HQ [*Kweiyang*], that we will be given a fund of \$15,000,000 CN [*Chinese*] for hire of labor and buying of materials for our new location. We will even be given a truckload or two of Chinese workers to take along with us. That sounds pretty good.

THURSDAY, JULY 26, 1945

Full moon last night and really bright. Saw Col. Oliphant, CO of Base Sect. # III. An affable gentleman, quite a conversationalist. It might be that we are to go to KWEILEN [*Guilin*] after its liberation. That wouldn't be bad at all.

Had lunch with Maj. Brown, DC, at SOS surgeon's office. They really are fixed up nicely. Capt. Avery, the new CO of the race track convoy area was over today, crying on Capt. Hogan's shoulder that he needed the space we are occupying for other transients. Well, isn't that just too bad? What do they want us to do, sleep on the ground? So that others can sleep where we are.

Cookie had done a nice job stenciling the proper numbers on our vehicles. Had McCain repaint our helmets and stencil our names on the inside of them.

The QM depot group that was serial "D" of our LEDO-KUNMING convoy #270, came in today. Poor devils had lost one man and one vehicle, when it was forced over a bridge. Driver was killed. Accident occurred about 1/2 day out of CHANYI.

Got myself some DDT dusting powder for the bites I got every night.

FRIDAY, JULY 27, 1945

Lt. Ostroff and the drivers returned safely this evening from their trip to TUSHAN, where they left our supplies. One truck burned out its bearings on the way, and Howell was left at TU YUEN [*Duyun*] due to minor injuries occurred when he was knocked down by a truck. They put up 7 or 8 pyramidal tents and several squad tents for the equipment. Don't know when we will need the stuff.

SATURDAY, JULY 28, 1945

Saw Capt. Abelson, base section surgeon, and Lt. Col. Cavanaugh, from surgeon's office, Kunming, this morning and had lunch with them. It seems that the 96th is destined, for a while at least, to act in reserve only and it looks as if we'll have to loaf around TUSHAN for a while. Well, if we do, we'll set up, even if we only have a few patients.

McCain and I will start out in my Jeep early tomorrow morning, and drive there. Found my alarm clock in Hogan's and O'Neil's tent. Neither know anything about its being there. Hmm-mm.

SUNDAY, JULY 29, 1945

McCain and I left KWEIYANG this morning at 0800. We took our jeep and a change of underclothes and bedding roll for a 3-day stay at TUSHAN. The weather was cool and cloudy, with occasional rain clouds. We stopped for lunch at MA-SHAN-PING and then traveled on again. The road was good, bumpy in a few places, but usually pretty wide and not too hilly.

At about 1500 we came to TU YUEN [*Duyun*; *See map 4*]. This was the farthest advance point of the Japs invasion last December. The first evidence of this was wrecked cars and trucks and bridges and culverts blown up by our OSS. The town of TU YUEN was badly bombed, ruined and burned up. The bridge over the river was partially blown out. The RR ends at this town and we saw wrecked trucks and cars, many of them burned up.

Just before we entered the town, I saw an ambulance in the ditch. It wasn't due to an accident, just got stuck going down to the river to be washed. We stopped and took one of the men with us, as he wanted a wrecker brought over from the 27th F. H. which has a unit near TU YUEN.

The hospital is about 5 or 6 miles from town, over a terribly rough and narrow road. The hospital itself is located in a nice, little valley, in some good buildings. Here we saw Pfc. Howell, who had his foot run over by a truck when Capt. Peterson was convoying our equipment to TUSHAN. Howell was doing quite well.

Saw a poor Chinese boy here who had found a Jap hand grenade and to set it off while playing with it. The poor kid was blinded in both eyes, his face was peppered with fragments and he lost his fingers from his right hand and toes from his right foot.

We arrived at TUSHAN at about 5:00 p.m. It was raining then. We first had supper at the airfield and then went to the convoy camp.

The airfield is a nice, high, one, large enough for landing C-46's [*Commando; cargo*] and P-51's [*Mustang; fighter*], being a fighter base for the latter.

The convoy camp was near a RR station and a former rice paddy. Capt. Peterson and his 14 men were there, quite comfortable in wooden-floored and matting-sided pyramidal tents. Our T/M equipment was in squad tents. Kitchen equipment was under a fly, and the cooks had made coffee and baked a fine chocolate layer cake. The camp had a latrine, but no showers yet.

I slept in Capt. Peterson's tent. It was quite comfortable and had electricity from one of our little surgical lamp generating sets.

#### MONDAY, JULY 30, 1945

Met Capt. Davidson, Airfield CO, and looked his place over. He was planning on moving his group and thought we could take over all the buildings here. It's a fine set up, but we would have no need of a hospital here. They do have a 10 bed dispensary here, with a couple of Chinese nurses in it.

Loafed around all day. Left an EM at the control tower to watch for Capt. Abelson's arrival. Doubted his coming, as it was raining all day.

*This chapter from diary pages 95-111*

#### ***ENDNOTES***

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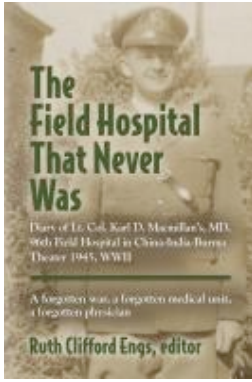
<sup>1</sup> Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland. *Time Runs Out in CBI. U.S. Army in World War II* (Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1958), 369-394.

*The Field Hospital That Never Was*

<sup>2</sup> Mark D. Sherry, *China Defensive 4 July 1942–4 May 1945* (U.S. Army Center of Military History, Department of the Army, 1945), 6; The modern G320 Road is found on: Google maps: <https://www.google.com/maps>. Click on China road maps, go to Yunnan province, and then enlarge.

<sup>3</sup> Kirk T. Mosley and Darrell G. McPherson in *Army Medical Service. Preventive medicine in World War II. Volume VIII*, ed. John Boyd Coates, (Dept. of the Army, 1976), 635-636.

<sup>4</sup> The location of these photographs is unknown.



*Lt. Col. MacMillan, physician and commanding officer of the 96th Field Hospital in the almost forgotten China-India-Burma theater of World War II, provides vivid impressions and observations in his diary. The unit slogs over the treacherous Ledo-Burma and the Burma Road in China, and battles against deplorable sanitation, accidents, insects, and virulent tropical diseases. The diary provides a unique insight into MacMillan and the many challenges he faced during the winding down of WWII.*

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