Chapter Eight

Paul and Army Medicine

Paul Marries Marge [1]

Paul came from a family—the Walstads—who could not have been more different than his future wife's family, the Vandenbergs. While Lambert Vandenberg was making good money in Southern California's oilfields, Paul's father Oscar Walstad was preaching across the Midwestern prairies for a pittance. While Lambert lovingly tended to the needs of his daughter Margie, Oscar let wife Hilma and children pretty much fend for themselves.

The Vandenbergs enjoyed socializing with each other—playing cards, dining, golfing, swimming, gossiping, etc. They celebrated holidays and festive occasions with gusto and took ocean cruises together. In contrast, the Walstads were focused on education, religion, paying the mortgage, and putting food on the table.

After Paul became got his M.D. in 1943, he interned at the Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles where he met a young nurse—Margie Vandenberg. Paul's mentor, a physician and former missionary, introduced the two on the tennis court. The couple played tennis together and began dating in the spring of 1944. When Paul left Los Angeles that summer, he had not yet met Margie's father.

In January of 1945, Paul was stationed in St. Louis, Missouri. He was starting his two-year army stint as a lieutenant in the U.S. Army's Medical Corps.

As part of his training, he learned to diagnose for syphilis, gonorrhea, and malaria. He and his captain spent an afternoon taking blood from horses to make blood agar plates for the lab. Then, Paul moved onto the surgery and the orthopedic wards. The nearby parachute training school yielded plenty of fractures and broken bones for the young doctor to work on.

Paul's mind was very much occupied with marrying Margie—or as he called her—Marge. On January 11, he telephoned her. They decided to marry on his next leave and as soon as possible. Paul's commander approved Paul's request for leave. The marriage date and place was set for Jan. 31 in Los Angeles. However, just a day before his departure for California, the military shortened Paul's leave, requiring that he report to Fort Benning, Georgia no later than midnight Jan. 29. Aw shucks….

Paul and Marge (1945)

After a long flight cross-country, which was disrupted by war-time troop movements, Paul arrived in Los Angeles. "Beautiful morning… Found Marge at Good Sam scrubbing on abdominal case."

Lambert had never met Paul, but he approved wholeheartedly. Paul was a good man, plus Lambert was "tickled to death" that his little Margie was marrying a doctor.

Paul and Marge grabbed time to talk about their future life together before exchanging marriage vows in a pastor's home on Jan. 24. That same evening and just a few minutes before midnight, Paul's best man drove the couple to the railroad station. Their "honeymoon suite" was a Pullman car during a 5-day train ride across the country. "Train slow and jerky. Difficult to sleep in the berth." Paul rushed by taxi to Fort Benning only minutes before his Jan. 29 midnight deadline.

Marge and Paul moved into a 2 bedroom apartment that they shared with another couple. Married life suited them. Marge wrote in her diary: "Paul came home early. We had dinner and talked over financial plans. We had a fine talk about religion, and I learned a lot. Played tennis 'til 11 p.m. and surely enjoyed it. The moon was bright and the night warm. Had cokes in bed." [2]

To their delight, they discovered a park of 1,200 acres near the Chattahoochee River where they rode horses together. On March 18, Paul learned that Marge was pregnant.

In May, Paul was transferred to a convalescent hospital in Butner, North Carolina. Once there, the happy couple continued their romance—reading poetry to each other and catching glowworms and fireflies on spring-time walks in the countryside. During the day, Paul worked at the general dispensary taking care of returning soldiers. Many had gotten "trench foot" [*leg and foot sores from standing in cold, muddy trenches*] while fighting in Europe.

On May 8, 1945 Germany surrendered unconditionally, marking the end of war in Europe. Paul and Marge were in a celebratory mood as they took an evening walk and picked flowers. No doubt, they expected to spend the rest of Paul's war service in North Carolina where they would await the birth of their first child.

The two lovers were passionately attached to each other. Even a brief separation from Marge caused Paul consternation. Surely, it must have been unsettling for this cerebral man who generally kept a tight rein on his feelings. During bivouac training, Paul had confided to his diary, "If two days away from Marge seems like an eternity, what will the separation of months seem like?" He would soon find out.

CBI Theater

Indeed, the war wasn't over. America was still fighting Japan. Paul's commanding officer (Colonel Sheppeck) lobbied the Washington brass to move his unit overseas to the China-Burma-India (CBI) theater. [1] Medical supplies and personnel were sorely needed for the approximately 33,000 U.S. troops stationed in China [3]. The Stilwell Road had just opened up. U.S. truck convoys could now enter China's "back door." (As the Japanese controlled all of the China coast, it was the only way into the country.)

The CBI was a neglected backwater of America's military action. During the early years of World War II, the U.S. military had viewed China as a possible launch pad for bombing Japan. Thus, it proceeded to build air bases in China for that purpose. At the time, Japan controlled all the Pacific islands within bombing range. However, as the war continued, Americans began capturing the islands, coming closer and closer to the Japanese homeland. When U.S. marines finally took Okinawa on June 22, 1945, even Tokyo was within bombing range. Air bases in China became increasingly irrelevant.

While the U.S. no longer needed China for bombing Japan, it continued to support China and its only recognized leader Chiang Kai-shek. The American people had a sentimental attachment to China, bolstered by the recollections of returning Christian missionaries.

Less recognized, though, is that China served as a sinkhole for Japanese troops, just as Russia's vast and inhospitable countryside became one for the German army.

During World War II, Japan had a total of 4.8 million soldiers. Of those, 2 million were defending the homeland, 1.8 million were bogged down in the Chinese quagmire, and 1 million were fighting the Americans [4]. One shudders to imagine what American casualties would have been like if U.S. marines had faced 2.8 million Japanese troops instead of 1 million on the islands of the South Pacific. Thus, the U.S. military was motivated to support Chiang Kai-shek—despite his flaws—to keep Japanese soldiers occupied in China.

China's Troubles

In 1945, China was—in almost every respect—a basket case. In a scenario reminiscent of many European countries during the 19th

century, China was without enough land or jobs to sustain its population. Most people were peasant farmers and farm-holdings were small. In 1949, China's population was almost 90% rural, with 0.44 acres of cultivatable land per person [5]. (In contrast, the U.S. had almost 3 acres of cropland and another 3 acres of pastureland per person [6].)

Life expectancy for Chinese peasants was only about 39 years [7]. (In the U.S. and Britain, it was 66 years.) Millions of poor, single young men migrated to the cities to live at subsistence level towing boats, pulling rickshaws, or carrying heavy loads across their shoulders. Without wives or family, the sense of loneliness must have been unimaginable. Opium smoking, which had taken over the country,[1] hastened many men to an early death. In the meantime, it provided sweet dreams to cover the pain of hunger and hopelessness.

Chinese Peasants (1940s) [10]

After the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty in 1911, China was torn apart by civil war for decades. Warlords, fueled by opium revenue, fought each other mercilessly. The butchery and famine was almost unimaginable, with deaths possibly numbering 20 million [9].

Initial hopes for a peaceful united China centered around Chiang Kai-shek. Beginning around 1928, the wily Chiang gained control

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[1] In 1900, China harvested 35,000 tons or 85% of the world's total opium and had 13.5 million addicts. By the 1930s, the number of addicts had increased to 40 million [8]. According to one British observer, opium smoking in China was as common as tea drinking in England.

over the prevailing political party, formed the Nationalist army, and with it took over much of China.

Left alone, Chiang might have produced a stable government. However, Japan's military aggression ruined any chance for a peaceful, united China. In 1931, Japan—newly industrialized and cocky—took over Manchuria, a large resource-rich area in northeastern China. Emboldened by the ease of grabbing Chinese territory, Japan began a full-scale invasion of the heartland in 1937. Japan intended to colonize China just as European nations had colonized vast swaths of Asia and Africa.

When the Chinese people inevitably resisted, Japanese troops committed horrific atrocities. Over the years, the invasion developed into a brutal, grinding war with the Chinese people—often fighting with no more than swords—taking the brunt. Because the Japanese had modern artillery, they killed 20-40 Chinese soldiers for every one of their own [11]. Between 1937 and 1945, continuous warfare turned more than 95 million Chinese into refugees [12]. Most moved westward to China's more remote provinces. One of those refugees [13], who later became a physician and emigrated to the U.S., related the story of his chaotic boyhood:

Chinese Immigration to America

For Europeans during the 19th century, immigration to America had given them an escape from their overcrowded homelands. For the Chinese, though, there was no such escape. In 1882, the U.S. Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, America's first restriction on immigration, a diplomatic insult that targeted a single racial group.

At the time, there were 100,000 Chinese immigrants in America, mostly male "coolies" that had been brought in to help build the country's trans-continental railroad. Once it was completed in the 1860s, their services were no longer required. American workers resented Chinese laborers, who would accept lower wages. They pointed to the opium smoking habit of Chinese immigrants—and its potential spread.

[The Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed during World War II when the U.S. allied with China against Japan.]

I was only eight when the Japanese tried to conquer all of China. My parents, three sisters and I were living near Hankow [*present-day Wuhan}*. It was a very large house containing not just my family but my father's 6 brothers and their families. We were educated and middle-class. My father had been a soldier in Chiang Kai-shek's army.

As the Japanese armies moved south from Manchuria towards us, our entire extended family became refugees. We moved west into the hill regions of China's vast heartland. There were no trains, so we either walked or rode boats up the Yangtze River. My father was poor, but skilled in calligraphy. We would live in a town until he had earned enough money for us to move on. Along the way, my mother gave birth to a boy. No medical care was available, and they both died a few months later.

The people in these regions were small farmers, poorly educated and without radios, telephones, telegraph, etc. Some villages were unaware that Japan had invaded China!

One small town in which we stayed was fire-bombed. The people there had never seen planes before, so when the Japanese approached, they came out of their houses to see the strange flying machines. The planes quickly gunned down the town, leaving burnt houses and mangled bodies everywhere. I was just a boy, but at that moment, all I could think of was killing Japanese.

It took us almost 5 years to reach Chungking where Chiang Kai-shek had set up a temporary government. Here, we were safe and I could continue my schooling.

When I was 14, my uncle forced my father to give me up to him. (If an older brother had no sons, Chinese tradition said he could take a boy from one of his younger brothers.) At first my father refused, because he didn't think my uncle's wife would be a good mother. However, my father was so desperately poor that eventually he gave in.

After World War II ended, the Communists used the weapons left behind by the defeated Japanese and began fighting Chiang Kai-shek.

The uncle who adopted me worked for Chiang Kai-shek as a civil engineer in the Chinese Air Force. We moved to Nanking. As the Communist armies advanced from Manchuria, we slowly moved southeast to Shanghai. We kept hoping Chiang Kai-shek would win.

However in 1949, the Communists finally won and took over all of China. There was more chaos and hardship for us. Chiang Kai-shek moved his government to the island of Formosa (now Taiwan). Along with other refugees, we piled into boats and fled to Formosa.

Later, I heard from a sister who had stayed behind that my father was "purged" by the Communists for associating with Chiang Kai-shek and committed suicide.

The Nationalist army headed by Chiang Kai-shek often made a bad situation worse. In 1938, Chiang Kai-shek—in a vain attempt to halt the Japanese advance—ordered his generals to destroy the dikes that held back the mighty Yellow River. The resulting flood killed 900,000 people outright, moved the river a hundred miles off-course, and created 3.9 million refugees [14].

Chiang Kai-shek was seen by many as an incompetent leader. U.S. General Joe Stilwell referred to him privately as "Peanut" or "the little dummy."

Equally onerous was the Nationalist army's cruel conscription of Chinese peasants—or any man too poor to buy his way out. "Press gangs" dragged the peasant from his field, bound him in ropes, and forced him into military service [15]. No matter that his crops were left untended and that his family might starve. This forcible conscription introduced famine into whole villages.

While Chiang justified his actions as "the price of war," they were militarily ineffective and ultimately self-defeating. Despite massive U.S. backing, Chiang Kai-shek lost China to the Communists in 1949.

Military Medicine

A Chinese army on the march generally left a wake of exhausted and dying soldiers behind. "Derelict soldiers, too starved or ill to keep up with their units and too far from home to find succor, could be seen along the roads hunched over their begging bowls in silent misery." [16] Losses of soldiers due to malnutrition and disease sometimes reached 40% per year. A division of 7,000 might require 3,000 new recruits annually [17].

Sanitation was almost non-existent. Chinese military commanders did not seem to understand that digging latrines and boiling contaminated water could prevent the spread of diseases like cholera, dysentery, and typhoid fever. They ignored directives to delouse new recruits, a measure that would have prevented outbreaks of relapsing fever, a disease transmitted by the ever-present lice [17].

Chinese soldiers were easily exploited for profit by their commanders. The government paid each commander a lump sum based on the number of men under his command. As long as a soldier's death went unreported, the more soldiers who died, the greater a commander's income. Plus, a dead warrior requires no rice. [18]

Wounded soldiers who reached hospitals were little better off than those who died on the battlefield. Red Cross observers compared Chinese army hospitals to German extermination camps. [18] In June 1945, American officials described horrific conditions at a Chinese military depot near Kunming. One hundred per cent of the men were suffering from malnutrition, tuberculosis and other diseases, but no medical care was provided. [19]

U.S. military leaders were justifiably shocked by what they saw, for they knew that preventive medical care and proper sanitation were critical for troop morale, health, and—winning wars. In the 19th century, the U.S. had begun reducing the death rate of its soldiers due to preventable diseases such as smallpox, scurvy, malaria, dysentery, yellow fever, typhus, typhoid fever, etc.

America's progress in reducing non-battle deaths did not come solely from advances in medicine, sanitation, and public health. For what good is knowledge if the nation's leaders see no value in applying that knowledge?

Florence Nightingale, Britain's heroine of the Crimean War (*See* pp. 178-82), broke through the status quo by assigning real (i.e., monetary value) to a soldier. Using the new science of statistics, she convinced those in power that improving the living conditions of the common soldier was ultimately cost-effective for the army.

Nightingale's ideas eventually crossed the Atlantic and influenced America's treatment of its own soldiers. In 1861, Congress created the U.S. Sanitary Commission—based on the British model—to improve the often horrific living conditions in overcrowded army camps during the Civil War. Disease-related deaths—as a percentage of war fatalities—declined from 90% for the Revolutionary War to 60% for the Civil War, 50% for World War I and 25% for World War II. [20]

John Sutherland (l., 1855), a Scottish physician, is shown here with his assistant Robert Rawlinson. As head officer of the British Sanitation Commission during the Crimean War, Sutherland cleaned up Britain's army hospitals in Turkey. His efforts brought the death rate down dramatically. (One of his first tasks was to have a decomposing, dead horse removed from the water supply at the Barrack Hospital.)

Nightingale's efforts to reform the British army is a story worth telling, for advances in military medicine have a habit of spreading throughout the world and into civilian medicine.

Nightingale Reports to Queen Victoria

After the Crimean War, Nightingale came home in August of 1856. She was ill, disoriented, and unsure of what to do next. And then… she received an invitation from Queen Victoria and her husband Prince Albert to visit them at their Balmoral Castle in Scotland. The royal couple wanted Nightingale, who had become a darling of the general public, to relate her personal experiences of the Crimean War.

By this time, Nightingale had acquired a coterie of capable, reform-minded men. These upper-class Brits, who had more ideas and ability than power, were electrified by the invitation. They were anxious to expose the polluted, immoral, and treacherous life imposed on ordinary soldiers. A royal connection was their chance to effect changes, and Nightingale was their perfect spokesperson:

> In that quiet, witty, ladylike, rapier way of hers, she could persuade the Queen that the troops to which both she and Victoria were so devoted, needed and deserved reforms. As for Prince Albert, Florence Nightingale was exactly the kind of intelligent, informed, capable, yet religious person with whom he felt most comfortable. [21]

Queen Victoria is shown here with Prince Albert in 1854, fourteen years into their love match. The royal couple took Nightingale's ideas to heart.

Nightingale's visit to Balmoral was a resounding success. The Queen and the Prince authorized a royal commission to look into the state of the British army. Sutherland,

the no-nonsense sanitation officer who had cleaned up the army hospitals during the Crimean War**,** would be one of the commissioners.

Nightingale and her all-male team (Sutherland, Rawlinson, Sir Sidney Herbert, etc.) rose to the challenge. They formed a "Little War Office" that met almost daily in London for the next 5 years, either in Nightingale's hotel room or in Herbert's home. While they were professional collaborators, they became life-long friends. [22]

Nightingale approached her mission with religious fervor, resulting in perhaps her greatest achievement, a ~1,000 page report entitled *Notes Affecting the Health, Efficiency, and Hospital Administration of the British Army* (1858). Although the demure Miss Nightingale did not formally claim authorship, she paid for the printing and sent copies of this confidential report to the Queen, the Prince, and key government officials. The report contained a formidable mix of statistics, personal observations, analysis, and recommendations. [23]

Surely, *Notes…Army* must have shocked the royal couple and government officials. The following excerpt describes in detail the horrors and squalor that Nightingale encountered during the Crimean War at the Barrack Hospital:

> When the barrack was reopened as a hospital, no sufficient pains were taken to repair those pipes, or secure a flow of water, and the pipes soon choked up, and the liquid feces, the evacuations from those afflicted with diarrhea, filled up the pipes, floated up over the floor and came into the room in which the necessaries were, extended and flowed into the anteroom, and were more than an inch deep when I got there in the morning; men suffering from diarrhea, who had no slippers at the time and no shoes on, as this flood of filth advanced, came less and less near to the necessary, and nearer and nearer to the door, till at last I found them within a yard of the anteroom performing the necessary functions of nature, and in consequence the smell from this place was such that I can use no epithet to describe its horror.
> ...A further misery, and the cause of much disease, was, in the autumn of 1854, the placing of tubs in those wards farthest from the privies (in the absence of utensils), to

> hold the excreta of from thirty to fifty patients afflicted with diarrhea and dysentery; it is easy to imagine the consequence of these frightful nuisance, and it often became Miss Nightingale's duty to see these tubs removed and emptied by a couple of orderlies who carried one on a pole between them. [24]

Mistreatment of Soldiers

Nightingale—and her all-male team—chose the army for humanitarian reform. Granted, the 19th century workhouses of the poor—as described in Charles Dickens' novels—also begged for improvement. However, Britain's standing as a colonial superpower depended on the efficacy of its soldiers, not its paupers in the workhouses.

Florence Nightingale (1820–1910) was incapacitated during the Crimean War. From then on, Nightingale worked mostly from her hotel room to improve the health and lives of ordinary soldiers, Indian villagers, etc. She succeeded by dogged work, money, social skills, religious faith, and a brilliant mind.

At the time of the Crimean War, British army officers were not selected for merit or experience. Rather, they were aristocrats who had purchased their commissions and looked smart in uniform. Commanders generally viewed the soldiers as brutes given to drink and prostitution. Officers escaped the diseases and squalor of the army camps by living in farms and villages. During the Crimean War, Lt. General Lord Cardigan had lived aboard his private yacht on the Black Sea. Despite

growing evidence that an army's death rate could be reduced dramatically by digging latrines and protecting the water supply, field officers saw little glory in promoting better sanitation.

A soldier's life was a hard one. Out in the camps, they had to scrounge for scarce firewood and camp kettles with which to cook food and prepare their coffee. Standard army rations consisted mainly of salted beef and biscuits, a minimalist diet that frequently led to scurvy.[2] [*Scurvy is caused by a Vitamin C deficiency, brought on by the prolonged absence of fruits and vegetables in the diet.*] Scurvy causes not only swollen gums and loosened teeth, but sores in the intestines, thereby exacerbating the "gut diseases" of cholera, diarrhea, and dysentery. According to one surgeon at the Crimean battlefront, over 80% of the 4,465 men who died of infectious diseases between Oct. 1, 1854 and March 31, 1855 also had scurvy. (The scurvy-induced damage to the intestines could be detected upon autopsy.) [27]

Statistics and Overhauling the British Army

Britain had deployed a total of 98,000 men during the Crimean War. Of the 22,000 soldiers that died, 17,000 deaths (79%) were due to disease, frost-bite, starvation, etc. [28] Much of that death could have been prevented.

Nightingale calculated that each soldier's death cost the British government— in terms of his recruitment, training, etc—over £100. [29] {£100 in 1860 would be worth £11,400 in 2016 [30]}. Thus, a soldier's death meant more than simply the loss of his life and the tears of his family.

During the Crimean War, Nurse Nightingale kept accurate and detailed health and mortality records. Afterwards, she collaborated with a government official named William Farr who had been keeping health records on British citizens since 1841. Farr provided Nightingale with vital statistical data, plus showed her how to use it. (Farr is now considered to be the founder of medical statistics.)

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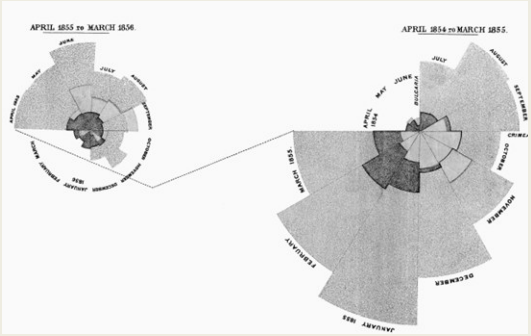
[2] Scurvy was also a major problem in America's Revolutionary War and the Civil War. Towards the end of the Civil War when efforts were made to improve rations, the death rates associated with scurvy declined. [25, 26]

In the 19th century, statistics was not even taught in British universities. Because politicians were untrained in statistics, legislation was according to Nightingale written by officials who "legislate without knowing what they are doing." [31]

Nightingale, a devoutly religious person, believed that statistics was the language by which God revealed his laws to mankind, so that men could better serve Him [32]. She also tried to make statistics understandable and experimented with various methods of depicting the raw data. Her "coxcomb" drawing with its two pie charts is one famous example (*See* figure). Nightingale's drawing shows a sharp reduction in deaths after Sutherland's Sanitation Commission cleaned up the mess at the army's hospitals in Turkey and Crimea.



Causes of Soldier Mortality during the Crimean War [33]

The size of the 12 wedges in each of the two "pie charts" reflect the number of soldier's deaths that month. Chart #1 (r.) is before the hospital cleanup and Chart #2 (l.) is afterwards. (Note how much larger Chart #1 is than #2, signifying a huge drop in deaths after the Sanitation Commission arrived in March 1855.)

The outer, lighter-colored portion of each wedge represents deaths from preventable causes (disease, starvation, etc). The inner areas of each wedge represent deaths due to battle. (Original drawing is in color and has Nightingale's explanations.)

In later work, Nightingale showed that British soldiers were dying unnecessarily, even before they reached the battlefield. She discovered via statistics that soldiers in army barracks in peacetime Britain had a consistently higher death rate than nearby civilian men. For soldiers aged 20-30, death rates were two-fold higher (*See* table on next page). Her finding was particularly astonishing, considering that the army would have selected only healthy men to serve as soldiers.

Nightingale provided in her report additional data showing that most of the soldiers' deaths were from preventable diseases. These were the diseases that typically arose from poor sanitation in overcrowded living conditions. Nightingale then pointed out that the unnecessary mortality was just as criminal "as it would be to take 1,100 men each year out upon the Salisbury Plain and shoot them." [34]

Mortality of Civilians v. Soldiers [36]

Age		***Annual Deaths*** (per 1,000)
20-25	Englishmen	8.4
	English soldiers	17.0
25-30	Englishmen	9.2
	English soldiers	18.3
30-35	Englishmen	10.2
	English soldiers	18.4
35-40	Englishmen	11.6
	English soldiers	19.2

Nightingale argued that the true loss to the army was much greater than what her mortality rates indicated. For mortality rates did not include soldiers that became invalids during their service and were then discharged from the army. Nightingale pointed out that if a soldier was "invalided" during service, he was just as great a loss to the army as if he had died. Thus, the army needed to keep track of those who were "invalided"—not just died—in order to monitor the true status of an army's health. [35]

Nightingale fought to improve a soldier's overall well-being. Unlike many army commanders, Nightingale saw soldiers as inherently moral beings who could improve themselves with better treatment. During the Crimean War, she had set up a postal system whereby soldiers could send their wages back home rather than spend it on liquor. She argued that amenities like coffee shops, libraries, and recreation rooms in army barracks would discourage drinking and prostitution. Upon entering a hospital, soldiers should not be expected to provide their own bedding, clothing, eating utensils, etc as in the past. Army rations should be nutritious, not simply salted beef and hard biscuits.

Nightingale's report motivated Britain's leaders to overhaul their army. Reforms were slow but inevitable. Nightingale's suggestions for improved sanitation and diet were first tested in a conflict with China. Compared to a 50% death rate during the early stages of the Crimean War, the rate for British soldiers fighting in China was only 6%. For soldiers stationed in England, fatality rates were cut in half within three years. [37] With a continuous stream of letters emanating from her hotel room, she improved the atrocious living conditions of British troops stationed in colonial India.

Nightingale backed up her arguments for reform with statistics. Without valid statistical data, politicians could resist changes to the status quo. The army reforms inspired by Nightingale and her "Little War Office" included a thorough reorganization of the army's Medical Statistics Department. Afterwards, it became the best in Europe [38].

Lt. Paul Walstad Goes to China [39]

On June 9, 1945, Paul flew out of New York with an envelope containing sealed orders. Once in the air, he opened the envelope and learned the nature of his assignment.

Paul then flew in—and out of—Newfoundland, Azores, Morocco, Libya, Egypt, Iran, Karachi, and India. On June 29, a "bucket seat C-47" flew Paul to Bhamo, Burma (*See* map next page). Here, he joined up with the 96th Signal Battalion.

Bhamo was a bombed-out town in the Burmese jungle. It had been virtually flattened by American bombing to drive the Japanese out.[3] During the original 1942 Japanese invasion, many of the former residents had scattered to the hills and/or India. Paul noted that when a band of wild elephants entered a village not too far away, "the natives drove the animals out by beating on their kettles and drums."

Paul shared a tent with another lieutenant who had salvaged a "Jap refrigerator" so they could enjoy chilled drinks. He watched a Jack Benny movie with the troops in a bomb crater that had been turned into

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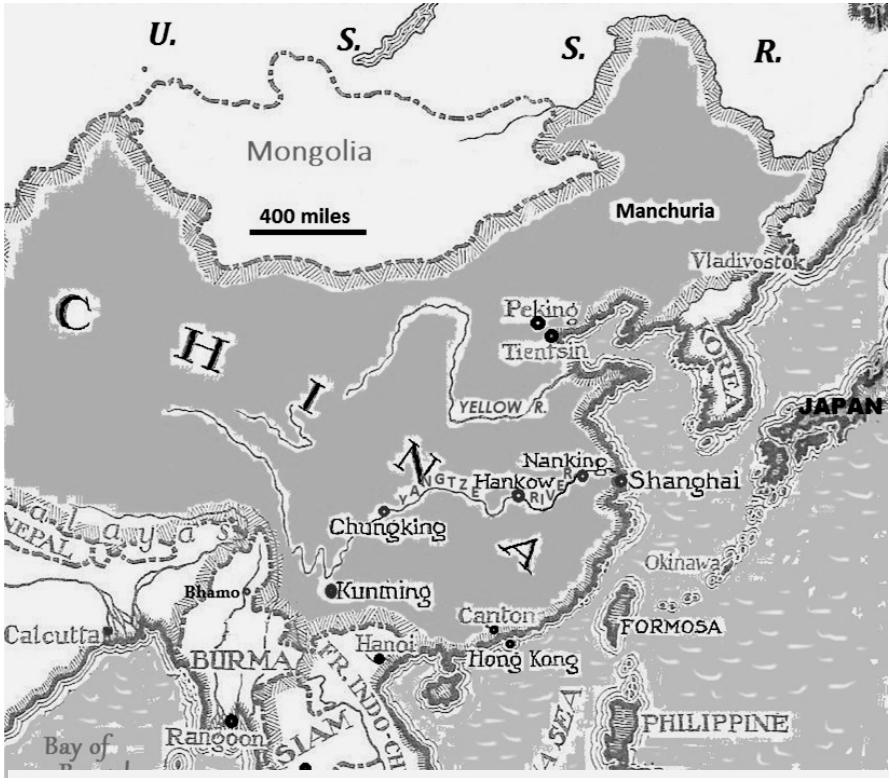
[3] Japan, being wholly dependent on foreign oil, coveted Burma's oil. In April of 1942, the British deliberately blew up their refinery and the oilfields in Yenangyaung to keep them out of Japanese hands. [These were the same oil fields that Lambert Vandenberg had worked in 1915-1916 (*See* pp. 86-87).]

a movie theater. At the medical dispensary, Paul incised abscesses. He methodically listed the medical supplies he would need to fulfill his mission—bringing medical care to U.S. troops in China.

About two weeks later—on July 12—Paul began riding in a truck convoy along the Stilwell road, an engineering feat carved out of mountain and jungle.[4] The average speed in some places was only 1-2



China in 1945 [41] Map shows Bhamo in northern Burma where Paul began his trip eastward across the Himalaya Mountains to Kunming, China. [Also shown are the Chinese cities (Hankow and Chungking) described by a Chinese refugee on pp. 190-92.]

Some of the names have changed since 1945 (e.g., the nation of Burma is now Myanmar; the island of Formosa, Taiwan).

[4] The Stilwell Road opened for business in January 1945. During July of 1945—the month of Paul's trip—75 convoys with 4,745 vehicles and 5,900 short tons of cargo made their way into China [40].

mph. Slow moving and lots of heavy pulling… The road averaged one bridge every three miles. After 98 miles of rough going, the convoy stopped for the night at a camp not far from the Chinese border.

Stilwell Road (1945) [42] Photo shows a U.S. truck convoy slowly climbing up the 24 loops.

As the convoy wound its way through the Himalayas and entered China, Paul marveled at the magnificent scenery. Pine and evergreen forests changed to jungles of bamboo and teakwood at lower elevations. In the valleys were towns and terraced farms—rice paddies, banana groves, fields of hemp, and mud-brick houses with thatched roofs.

On July 14, the Americans arrived at Paoshan, an ancient, walled city that few white men had ever visited. Outside was a repair station for tending to the abused trucks and a field hospital for U.S. soldiers. Paul provided minor first-aid and sent one soldier to the hospital for possible gonorrhea. He gave emergency treatment to another with angina pectoris (*chest pain*). Late at night, he was called on to treat a head wound.

The convoy left Paoshan on July 16 and continued its journey. The trucks spent all day climbing higher and higher. Paul bought eggs from the natives and fried them at the noon lunch stop to supplement his K-rations, which he considered inedible. The convoy managed to make only 86 miles before stopping for the night at a transient camp where Paul washed off the day's dust and grime.

The trucks left camp early the next day with less climbing. Paul noted that, "Women do much of the work in rice paddies and carry heavy bundles of wood on their backs. Women with bound feet common. Appear to be walking on amputated stumps."

Another army physician, who traveled the same route during the war, described what he saw:

> In this part of China, the people are extremely poor—exist and that is all. I would estimate that 90% of adults and 25 to 50% of children have goiters. I have seen thousands and thousands of goiters just driving along the road. Many goiters are as large as 3 or 4 grapefruit. Along with this are hundreds of typical cretins (thyroid dwarfs). [43] [*Goiters and cretins are symptoms of iodine deficiency, reflecting this area's backwardness and its long distance from seawater sources of iodine.*]

Chinese Girls with Bound Feet [44]

Foot binding began in the Chinese emperor's court in the 10th century. The feet of baby girls were bound tightly with cloth strips to permanently compress the foot to an adult length of 3-4 inches. By 1945, this mutilating practice—designed to make girls more docile, attractive, and marriageable—had been officially banned, but it survived in the hinterlands.

The convoy made 135 miles before stopping for a couple days near the Yunnani Air Base. From his tent quarters, Paul reported, "Sick call tonight—colds, skin diseases. Sutured a lacerated palm tonight under very unsanitary conditions." Afterwards, he and other officers sat down in a Chinese restaurant to Swiss steak, fried eggs, potatoes, and coffee. "Food quite good. Table linens very dirty."

The convoy left Yunnani on July 19. The riding was rough and Paul's back began to ache, a common ailment for those riding one of the world's roughest roads. Many drivers complained of having "their kidneys pounded to jelly." The next day, Paul noted that, "All along the road, natives begged for personal articles and food. We discarded much of our K-rations which they eagerly took."

As evening fell, the convoy finally reached Kunming and the 96th Battalion Headquarters. It had taken a week to travel 707 miles. [45]

On July 21, Paul "reported to headquarters and took care of personal details. 40 letters. 20 from Marge. Happiest day since overseas. Read and reread for hours. Wrote 22 page letter to Marge."

Paul moved into a tent with a dental officer. His medical work consisted of treating the usual upper respiratory infections, skin diseases, eye infections, and G.I. upsets. He gave a lecture on sex hygiene to the enlisted men.

Kunming [46] celebrating the arrival of the first U.S. convoy on Feb. 5, 1945.

Situated on a high plateau (elevation 7,000 feet), an influx of war refugees had swollen the city's population (~90,000 in the 1930s) to untold numbers.

Paul's patients were mainly U.S. troops, but he had a few Chinese soldiers. One night, he was awakened to treat several severely wounded Chinese soldiers for shock. In the coming weeks, he provided medical care for other native soldiers with a variety of problems—gasoline burns, a badly injured hand, and leg ulcers. In view of the horrific conditions in Chinese army hospitals, these men must have felt very fortunate to reach an American physician.

On August 9, Paul wrote, "News by radio. Russia declared war on Japan. New bomb being used by U.S. contains uranium—devastating effect."[5] Finally on August 15, Paul received the news that all Americans—and Chinese—had been waiting for. Japan had agreed to an unconditional surrender. World War II was over!

Meanwhile, Paul's life in Kunming went on. When he visited the city, he took his firearm with him, "as trouble was brewing with Chinese elements." On a rainy day in late September, Paul was practicing with his carbine out in the countryside when he found a well-preserved human skull. (He brought it home with him.) When the 988th Signal Battalion arrived, Paul began to immunize the soldiers against cholera, typhus, and typhoid fever. Apparently, they had not had a physician since activation.

Paul bricked the floor in his tent and built a walkway above the mud between his tent and the medical dispensary. He worked on improving the dispensary and painted the interior. He checked military showers to insure that the water was properly chlorinated. He submitted the names of medics for promotion. On Sept. 9, Paul received a 5-point combat star for being in Burma's combat territory.

For recreation, Paul and other officers played softball and volley ball against the enlisted men, with the enlisted men frequently winning. Paul spent many hours writing letters and reading at the Red Cross

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[5] On August 6, the U.S. unleashed an atomic bomb over Hiroshima, followed by one over Nagasaki on August 7. On August 8, Russia declared war on Japan and invaded Manchuria, which was then under Japanese control.

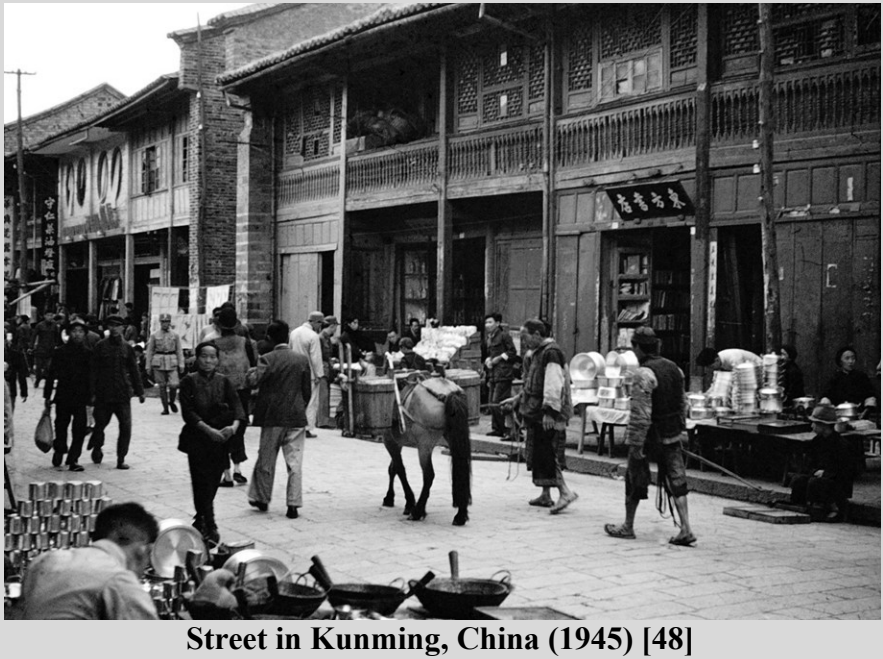
Russia's entry into the war probably hastened Japan's surrender to the U.S. "Russian atrocities in Manchuria gave the Japanese a taste of things to come should Russian troops ever reach the home islands." [47] It seems the Japanese preferred an American—over a Russian—occupation.

headquarters. At a Kunming orphanage, he picked up a silk kimono, hand-embroidered and custom-made, which he had ordered for Marge.

On Sept. 24, Paul tended a U.S. soldier who had—while on guard duty—beaten a Chinese boy. After diagnosing the soldier as a psychopath with paranoid tendencies, Paul took "the recalcitrant fellow" to a neuropsychiatric doctor at the 172nd General Hospital.

For several days, Paul and other soldiers could not leave the base camp because of fighting in Kunming. After Japan's defeat, Chiang Kai-shek had scores to settle. On Oct. 3, he moved against General Long Yun, a corrupt governor who had been running his own show in this remote Chinese province (Yunnan). Paul didn't sleep much, because "big guns fired all night." Three days later, General Yun was quietly relieved of his position and flown out of Kunming. Peace returned to the city and the curfew was lifted.

The U.S. Army began the long process of dismantling a large military base and sending its soldiers home. On Oct. 7, the 96th Battalion moved out of Kunming. Paul watched as the "Chinese immediately swarmed over the area, salvaging everything in sight." On



Street in Kunming, China (1945) [48]

Oct. 16, four of Paul's fellow medics moved to a processing center for flying to Shanghai. Paul probably imagined that they were the lucky ones to be on their way home.

As the weather in Kunming turned cold, Paul moved from his tent into the dispensary, where there was a gas burner. He continued to inoculate, diagnose, and treat U.S. soldiers with a variety of ills—amoebic dysentery, chronic prostatitis, syphilis, and malaria. Day after day he moved "ambulance loads" of surplus medical supplies to the local mission hospital.

Finally on Oct. 29, it was Paul's turn to leave China. At 1:30 a.m., he was flown out of Kunming to land in Kharagpur, India (a U.S. and British military center about 80 miles west of Calcutta). However, there were 170,000 soldiers in the CBI theater [49], and the War Department had only so many ships. It planned to move 44,000 soldiers out in November [50]. The rest of the men, which included Paul, would just have to wait. Worsening matters was that because of his transient status, he had no contact with Marge. His wife's expected delivery date for their baby was Nov. 8, but her messages were not getting through.

Paul described his month-long stay in Kharagpur with a desultory, "Little to do. Time passes very slowly." To be sure… While waiting, he continued treating soldiers, attending religious services and movies, touring Kharagpur, playing volley ball, etc.

On Dec. 20, he learned that he would be going home aboard the SS *General Patrick*. On Christmas Day, Paul had a "very fine" dinner at the Officer's Mess and watched a couple movies.

On Dec. 28, he boarded the *Patrick* with 18 other officers and about 3,000 enlisted men. "Bunks in tiers of three." The ship slowly made its way down the Hooghly River from Calcutta. After breakfast on Dec. 29, the ship's chaplain delivered Paul a brief message transmitted via the Red Cross, "Daughter born Oct. 31. Mother and baby well." On the last day of 1945, the *Patrick* entered the open sea and Paul was soon "watching flying fish" and on his way home.