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THE ROUEN POST

Base Hospital 21 — World War I

21st Gen. Hosp. — World War II

A PAPER DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF ROUEN POST No. 242
AND ALL FORMER MEMBERS OF B.H. 21 and 21st. G.H.

October 23, 1872 - January 10, 1948

DR. FRED TOWSLEY MURPHY



Fred T. Murphy

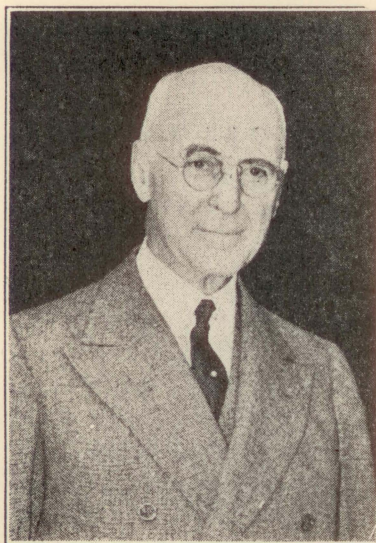
In appreciation of his guidance as Commanding Officer of Base Hospital Unit No. 21 in France from October, 1917, until May, 1918 ~ his continued interest in the former members of the Unit after their return to civil life ~ and in Rouen Post No. 242 ~ we present this testimonial.

Rouen Post No. 242
American Legion

On January 10, 1948, Dr. Fred T. Murphy, organizer and commanding officer of Unit 21, died at his home in Detroit, Michigan.

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Dr. Fred T. Murphy

from which he received the A.B. degree in 1897. He was active in the undergraduate life of both places and was captain of the football team at Yale in his senior year.

Throughout his life he was closely identified with both institutions, serving for many years as trustee of Andover, and for a number of years was a member of the Yale Corporation. In 1914 he received an honorary M.A. degree from Yale.

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During these years he decided to become a physician and after the completion of his college course entered Harvard Medical School, from which he was graduated in 1901 at the age of 28, a somewhat more mature age than the average at that time. He interned at the Massachusetts General Hospital where he turned to surgery. He followed the usual pattern of training and advancement at the time; asst. in anatomy Harvard Medical School 1903-04, asst. surgeon at the Infants Hospital 1904-08, Austin Teaching Fellow 1905, surgeon to outpatients at the M.G.H. 1907-11, asst. in surgery Harvard Medical School 1910-11. It was the slow tedious pattern of the development of a surgeon at the turn of the century in all of our medical schools, the method of service to the institution leading to advancement.

About this time a transition was taking place in medical education and Dr. Murphy

was offered and accepted the professorship of surgery at the Washington University Medical School in St. Louis. He was one of a group of twenty young men who were brought to St. Louis in 1911 to bring about the reorganization of the medical school. Among this group were Erlanger in physiology, Opie in pathology, Shaffer in chemistry and Howland in pediatrics. Edsall was the selecting genius behind this group but at the last moment withdrew and remained in Philadelphia. As a result Murphy became the one who was looked up to and recognized as the leader. At that time the Medical School was at 1806 Locust, and the clinical teaching was in two hospitals on Jefferson avenue which physically represented probably the worst in the United States. The trials and tribulations of those years are beyond description, but ultimately the goal was realized in the building of the Medical School and the Barnes and Children's hospitals at their present site on Kingshighway. Men of lesser stature than Dr. Murphy fell by the wayside during this period, but Murphy was always an optimist and a fighter and a strong support for all to lean upon. In 1914 with the completion of the group he became chief surgeon to the Barnes and St. Louis Children's Hospital. That the successful development and organization of these institutions was due in large part to his ability as an organizer and leader is recognized by all who were active in the medical school in those pioneer days.

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UNIT 21

In 1914 war broke out between Germany and France, and England came to the support of France. In the United States sympathies were divided and President Wilson attempted to maintain a position of neutrality. Many, including Dr. Murphy, were pro-ally in their feelings, and in their opinion it was only a matter of time before the United States would be forced into the war on the Allied side. A number of American physicians volunteered for military service with the Allies, and the American Hospital in Paris and two British hospitals were staffed by American doctors. In the fall and winter of 1915-16 a definite attempt was made toward medical preparedness, chiefly under the

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leadership of a group of the younger surgeons including Cushing, Crile and Murphy, as well as Surgeon General Gorgas. As the President would not permit expansion of the Medical Corps which numbered only a few hundred, a scheme was worked out to develop fifty 500 bed hospitals under the auspices of the American Red Cross. The personnel of each hospital was to come from the staff of a medical school or civilian hospital and be enrolled as Red Cross physicians and nurses.

In the spring of 1916 the plans were worked out on paper and Unit 21 was assigned to Washington University Medical School with Dr. Murphy as commanding officer. He called in Dr. Nathaniel Allison, Professor of Orthopedic Surgery, and Dr. Borden Veeder, acting head of Pediatrics, to discuss the plan and its feasibilities. They decided to go ahead. Dr. Murphy became commanding officer on the paper plan, Dr. Allison executive officer, and Dr. Veeder quartermaster. Next Dr. Malvern B. Clopton was asked to head the surgical service, Dr. Walter Fischel the medical, and Miss Julia Stimson the nursing service. Then the remaining places were filled—Opie, pathologist; Ernst, X-ray; Lawrence Post, ophthalmology; Proetz, otolaryngology; Schwab, neuropsychiatry; and Brown, dentistry, and in turn the staff under them as outlined by the War Department and the Red Cross tables of organization.

At this time the staff was on a purely civilian basis. It was intended that should the 500 bed hospital go into service in case of war, changes would constantly be made between the Unit staff and the teaching staff of the Medical School. There was no question of military rank and each position was one corresponding to a similar position in the medical school and its affiliated hospitals.

A second important consideration was that each Unit was to raise \$50,000.00 for the purchase of equipment through its local Red Cross chapter. The St. Louis Chapter was just being organized at this time, so Dr. Murphy undertook the raising of the money from his friends in St. Louis and contributed substantially himself. The purchase of the necessary hospital equipment—beds, instruments, X-ray, dental equipment, etc. was ac-

complished in the fall and winter of 1916-17. By early 1917 the equipment was in storage in the basement of the new medical school building, and Red Cross Unit 21 was in existence on paper. Quite frankly some on the faculty of the Medical School without the vision of Dr. Murphy looked upon it as somewhat silly, but could not stand out against the sincerity and enthusiasm of the Unit's organizer.

How the Red Cross Unit was suddenly and unexpectedly turned into an Army Hospital with the medical staff commissioned, and sent overseas in May 1917 to take over British General Hospital No. 12 has been told many times before in *The Rouen Post*. An army officer, Major James D. Fife, was placed in charge and so the Unit found itself with two commanders, one military and the other Dr. Murphy who was looked up to as the natural leader. Fortunately Major Fife turned out to be a man of character and understanding and with Dr. Murphy worked out a difficult situation within the Unit and with the British military system. In October 1917 Colonel Fife was attached to the office of the Surgeon General of the A.E.F. and Major Murphy became commanding officer in title as well as fact. In May 1918 Dr. Murphy was attached to General Hdqs. A.E.F., and later assigned with rank of Colonel as director of the Medical and Surgical department of the American Red Cross in Paris, representing General Ireland, chief surgeon of the A.E.F. Lt. Col. Veeder succeeded Col. Murphy as commanding officer of Unit 21 and continued in command until it was demobilized after the war in May 1919.

Colonel Murphy received the D.S.M. for his war services, and was one of the few commissioned as brigadier general in the Medical Reserve Corps in 1919.

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Dr. Murphy had no thought at that time that Unit 21 would become one of the finest traditions of the Washington University Medical School. At the request of the Army the Unit was continued after World War I as a reserve organization, the 21st General Hospital. For a number of the peace time years between 1919 and 1942 Colonel Clopton was in command with Lt. Cady as adju-

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tant. Later Colonel Cady became Commanding Officer and was in command of the Unit in World War II where it served in Africa, Italy and France. It is again being reorganized from the staff of the Medical School as a reserve unit. There is no doubt in the minds of those who served with the Units in World Wars I and II that the tradition of service which now goes back 32 years will be continued by future generations from the Medical School should the occasion arise. It is a lasting memorial to Fred Murphy.

* * * *

In 1919 after returning from France Dr. Murphy decided to retire from his professorship in the Medical School, and give up the active practice of surgery. There were two important factors in this decision. One was the decision of the Corporation of the University and the faculty of the Medical School to put the clinical departments on a 'full time' basis. Dr. Murphy did not approve of the plan and felt that the decision having been made the head of the department of surgery should be some one sympathetic with the plan. Another factor was the call that was being made on him by members of his family to return to Detroit to take active charge of the family estate which had been founded by his grandfather. He therefore left St. Louis for Detroit where he became an active figure in the civic and economic life of that city until his death.

* * * *

Fred Murphy was a man who had a definite influence on the lives of those with whom in one way or another he became associated. To him things as a rule were right or wrong, with little shading in between. He would fight with bulldog tenacity for what he believed was right. Dr. Murphy was a man of unswerving loyalty to his associates and associations. He demanded much it is true, but he gave more. None of us who were associated with him in France in the early days at Rouen will ever forget his attitude, which he reiterated again and again, that the purpose of the Unit was to serve, and to do what it was called upon to do without complaint or question. This was his own attitude and he expected it of every one else. He was a man of great dignity and some of those who did not know him well regarded him as cold and austere. Those of us who

through close association learned to know him better recognized to the contrary that he was a man dominated by deep emotions. There was no man more sincere, loyal and ready to help.

* * * *

In dedicating this issue of The Rouen Post to Dr. Fred T. Murphy, the founder and first commanding officer of Unit 21, we are paying tribute to an outstanding man, whose ideals of service to his country and his fellow man influenced our own lives, and whose influence will extend in the future through Unit 21 to the lives of many others.



Col. Murphy greets B.H. 21 nurse Mrs. Olive Serafini Flynn during our 25th Anniversary Reunion at St. Louis, May 1942. It was his last visit to St. Louis.

Dr. Murphy had a deep feeling for his associates of Unit 21 and so expressed himself in frequent letters to us. We believe his letter following the 20th Anniversary, briefly, but adequately reflected his innermost thoughts.

"Dear Engel: Mrs. Murphy and I certainly had a very memorable and enjoyable time. I have not realized what an emotional pull seeing you all would be upon me. I am so glad that the reunion was a success and that you are keeping up the old associations in your Rouen Post. My kindest remembrance to all the old friends. Fred T. Murphy"