CHARLES GLASS

THE AMERICAN HOSPITAL OF PARIS DURING THE TWO WORLD WARS:

BRAVE VOLUNTEERS & HEROES OF THE RESISTANCE
INTRODUCTION

In 1906, Dr. A.J. Magnin and Mr. Harry A. van Bergen created an association that was to become the American Hospital of Paris. Since its inception, the Hospital has continuously played a unique role in Franco-American relations, particularly during World War I and before and during World War II. This document recounts this unique role with salient elements from each period.

Chapter I recounts the role of the Hospital in the years before the United States finally entered the war. In the years between 1914 and 1917, the Hospital’s Board of Governors helped stimulate and organize the amazing response of American volunteers and donors who rallied to support the French cause. Even before war was declared, the Hospital’s board sought to prepare the Hospital for the challenges to come. This chapter tells what happened next as war was declared and the small American hospital in Neuilly found itself faced with a monumental challenge of scaling up.

In 1918, near the end of the war, in order to thank the Hospital for the services it rendered to wartime France, the French Government decreed “that the American Hospital of Paris be recognized as an institution of public benefit”. A second decree, signed by President Raymond Poincaré, authorized the hospital to receive donations and bequests under French law. Chapter II covers the years between the two world wars. At the conclusion of World War I, the American Hospital returned to its private
status. Among its patients were world-renowned writers and artists.

Chapter III is a story of incredible heroism on the part of an American Hospital surgeon, Dr. Sumner Jackson, and his family during WWII. The full extent of the family’s heroism as members of the French resistance and deportees has only recently been uncovered. Their story is a powerful one of selfless dedication to service and an unhesitating devotion to duty to help others.

This manuscript is an edited version of a longer manuscript prepared by Charles Glass at the request of the Hospital. Mr. Glass devoted considerable time and effort researching the materials herein; his footnotes references have been included for those readers who wish to dig more deeply into these remarkable stories. The second and third chapters on the Jackson family’s heroic role rely extensively on Mr. Glass’ book, *Americans in Paris* (Harper Collins) 2009, which tells the story of the American citizens who chose to remain in Paris when the Germans occupied the city in 1940. Hal Vaughan deserves a special mention for bringing the remarkable story of the Jackson family to public light in his book *Doctor to the Resistance* (Brassy’s), 2004.
“France is fighting, I’ll be right there!”

The American Hospital in Paris did not wait for war to begin in 1914 to commit unconditionally to the French cause. On 2 August, twenty-four hours before the German Empire declared war on France, the hospital began, in the words of its 1914 Annual Report, “massing our forces so as to meet the conditions which faced the Hospital during the period of war.” The Board of Governors of the four-year old institution in the Parisian suburb of Neuilly-sur-Seine resolved to assist the French soldiers who would inevitably be wounded. Unlike the vast majority of their countrymen at home, Americans in Paris were anything but neutral.

The American Hospital’s Governors, led by American Ambassador Myron T. Herrick, approached the French Army the same day with a proposition. Drawing on memories of American Dr. Thomas Evans’s medical tent city in Paris during the 1870 Franco-Prussian War, they would erect similar tents in the hospital gardens to treat French casualties free of charge. French Minister of War Adolphe Messimy responded with an astounding counter-offer: the government would give the Lycée Pasteur, a soon-to-be opened school for boys, to the Americans to run as a fully fledged military hospital. The proposed facility could receive six hundred or more patients to the hospital’s twenty-four, nearly thirty times the capacity.
It took no more than a few hours for the Americans gathered at the United States Embassy with Ambassador Herrick to grasp the challenge. When Germany and France officially went to war the following day, 3 August, the Hospital’s Governors wrote to Herrick, “We take pleasure in announcing that the proposed American Ambulance was organized this afternoon under your official patronage, and under the auspices of the American Hospital in Paris.” The American Hospital’s Board of Governors and a Medical Board undertook to manage and fund the Ambulance de l’Hôpital Américain de Paris, section des blessés in the Lycée Pasteur. They chose the name Dr. Evans had used in 1870, the French term ambulance deriving from hôpital ambulant, a medical unit that historically followed soldiers to the front but came to mean any military hospital. Ambassador Herrick estimated that establishing and operating the Ambulance for a year would cost $400,000, a sum immediately guaranteed by the directors of the American Hospital, the American Chamber of Commerce in Paris, other Paris Americans and their powerful friends at home.

The unfinished, massive boys’ Lycée Pasteur a few streets from the hospital in the Boulevard d’Inkermann, beautifully designed by architect Gustave Umdenstock, was due to receive its first students in October. With battle looming, the Governors of the American Hospital set out to complete its half-done interior, install electricity, gas and additional infrastructure to convert the school into a hospital for at least six hundred wounded soldiers. The minutes of the Ambulance’s Executive Committee for 7 August noted that the hospital could receive French battle casualties within ten days, when “the organization of the Ambulance should be complete.”

That deadline appeared impossible, as two Ambulance Committee members, Charles Carroll and Dr. Samuel N. Watson, observed when they inspected the site.

Watson wrote: The vast buildings of the Lycée Pasteur which surrounded a hollow square were unfinished at the time we took them over; there were no doors, windows, plumbing, baths, heating, electricity; there were no kitchens; and the floors in general were covered with plas-
ter; such was the condition of the plant on the day that Charlie Carroll and I went there to locate the offices and to plan for the beginning of administrative work.4

American architect Carroll Greenough volunteered to oversee the renovation, but he needed skilled laborers. “Of course, there were no workmen in Paris to finish the building,” wrote the New York Times in 1914. “All the workmen had gone to the war.” A solution was at hand. The New York Times reported, “The American students of architecture at the [Ecole des] Beaux Arts crossed the river in a body, journeyed out from the Latin Quarter to Neuilly, and set to work.”5 Young aspiring American architects turned their hands to carpentry, masonry, electrical wiring, heating and plumbing to transform the shell of a school into one of the finest hospitals in Europe. The Times reported that they finished the job in two weeks, an impressive demonstration of Yankee ingenuity and pluck. The building was ready, but it needed beds, linens, x-ray machines, instruments, bedpans and myriad other supplies, not to mention physicians, nurses, orderlies, telephone switchboard operators, cooks and watchmen.

The first medical personnel to sign up were the American Hospital’s leading physicians, Dr. Edmund Gros, Dr. A. J. Magnin, and Dr. Robert H. Turner. The Hospital’s chief surgeon, Dr. Charles Winchester Dubouchet of Philadelphia, assumed the same post at the Ambulance and chaired its Medical Board. Dr. Joseph Blake, finding himself stranded in Paris when war began, gave up his practice at the Presbyterian Hospital in New York to care for French casualties. Appeals went out to doctors in the United States, and the response was overwhelming. Cleveland’s Western Reserve University led the way, sending a team of physicians under Dr. George W. Crile. Crile suggested that “it might be better to form a unit among the men at Lakeside Hospital [in Cleveland] and take complete charge of a given number of patients. This proposal was cabled to the American Ambulance and a favorable reply returned. This was the beginning of the university-unit plan of organization for service with the American ambulance.”6 A Harvard Unit, under Drs. Harvey Cushing and Robert B. Greenough, soon followed, as did teams from the
country’s other leading medical schools. American doctors were responding to an association between American and French medicine dating to the early 19th century, when American medical schools were in a primitive state. From the 1830s on, between thirty and fifty Americans studied each year at Paris’s Ecole de Médecine. Among them was the famous Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., later dean of Harvard Medical School and a popular poet. Another was Dr. Mary Putnam, America’s first woman physician. The Ecole made her docteur en médecine de la Faculté de Paris in 1870. She treated casualties of the Franco-Prussian War, the Paris Commune and the subsequent massacres before returning to the United States.

Doctors were not the only Americans to answer France’s call to arms. A former American ambassador to France, Robert Bacon, sent a telegram from Boston to a friend in Paris: “France is fighting, I’ll be right there!” Bacon, a former J. P. Morgan banker, had been successively Assistant Secretary of State, Secretary of State and, from 1910 to 1912, ambassador to France. He reached France in early September, checked into the Hôtel Crillon and sounded out his successor, Ambassador Herrick, on the country’s immediate needs.

The American community in Paris mobilized in August 1914 to recruit staff, obtain equipment and cover the costs of both. The American Chamber of Commerce in Paris, established in 1894, guaranteed 25,000 Francs at the outset. On 18 August, it appealed to the mayors of Galveston, Texas; San Francisco, California; and Dayton, Ohio. These were three cities that Americans in Paris had supported with generous donations after the hurricane that hit Galveston in 1900, the San Francisco earthquake of 1906 and Dayton’s Great Flood in 1913. Telegrams crossed the Atlantic with the stirring plea:

Under present circumstances when every effort being made to relieve suffering humanity, American Chamber of Commerce cannot refrain from recalling prompt response made by Americans Paris under its auspices to your city’s call for help. This Chamber now collecting funds urgently needed by the American Ambulance Hospital organized under American Hospital Paris and independent of Red Cross. Five hundred
thousand dollars required and we confident your community will desire to help.\(^{10}\)

The positive response was so swift that the Chamber dispatched similar messages to other metropolitan mayors. Cities across America vied to sponsor individual wards. Fourteen of the eighteen original wards, each with nine beds, took the names of the cities that subsidized their operations: New York Ward, Boston Ward, Saint Louis Ward, Cleveland Ward et al. American holders of the Légion d’honneur supported the Lafayette Ward. One visitor to the Ambulance noted that the names inscribed on endowed beds “read like a social register of New York and Boston.”

Donations came in many forms. The Ford Motor Company, despite Henry Ford’s opposition to American participation in the war, provided ten Model-Ts “with conductors” free of charge. Ford engineers used the wooden packing cases in which the chassis had been shipped to fashion rectangular bodies with canvas tops and flaps to serve as ambulances. “A specimen Ford car, transformed by the Ford Company for ambulance duty was submitted to the Medical Board, and after having been tested, was found to meet the requirements in every way,” the American Hospital’s Board of Governors noted on 17 August 1914. At that time, the French Army relied mostly on horse-drawn ambulances from the 1870 War.

The Ritz Hotel offered chipped crockery, and the Christofle silver company loaned chariots for keeping beef warm and pewter pots and pans. Wine and fruit “exclusively for patients” were donated by Maison Fontaine.\(^{11}\) American women’s committees at home collected and shipped medical provisions. Dr. Elliot Carr Cutler, a volunteer with the Harvard Medical School Unit at the Ambulance, reserved special praise for Mrs. Frederic S. Mead’s Surgical Dressings Committee of the Civic Federation in Boston: “Some 40,000 yards of gauze were sent them, which they cut up and packed as handkerchiefs, rollers, pads, etc., putting the goods first into tin cans and then boxing numbers of these cans. Everything thus prepared was sterilized either at the [Massachusetts General] Infants Hospital or Peter Bent Brigham Hospitals.”\(^{12}\) The popular effort was engaging Francophile Americans on both sides of the Atlantic.
By early September, the Ambulance had taken shape. While work continued on the upper floors, one hundred beds were ready and waiting on the completed first floor. On 6 September, the waiting ended. The French Army launched its counter-offensive to save Paris and push the invading Germans north of the River Marne, producing some of the first wounded of the modern age. That evening, Dr. Samuel Watson wrote, the Ambulance received an urgent telephone call:

“Message of immediate importance from the Chef du Service de Santé for Monsieur le Président of the American Ambulance.” “Yes, mon Général.” - “You will please make ready to receive 300 wounded to-night.” - “But, mon Général, we have but 100 beds as yet.” And the reply came back, short and sharp - “Beds! Who is talking about beds? It is wounded soldiers I am talking about; if you have not beds put them on straw on the floor.”  

The first four wounded troops arrived at the Ambulance on 6 September, and the numbers increased with each passing day: 91 on 15 September, 146 the next day, 209 the day after that, leading to an average of 238 new casualties every day for the rest of the month.  

The Ambulance’s doctors were not content to wait for wounded to be delivered from the battlefield, usually in horse-drawn wagons and too late to save. Early on the morning of 8 September, a convoy of motorized ambulances drove to the front. Former Ambassador Robert Bacon, newly arrived from Boston, accompanied Dr. Gros and Dr. Dubouchet to collect the Marne’s worst casualties. Bacon’s biographer, James Brown Scott, wrote:

They arrived at Meaux at midnight and found the town in utter darkness. Not a sound in the streets - not a light. The only living things were hundreds of cats. The men called, they shouted, in vain they tried to arouse someone. At last they succeeded in awakening the mayor of whom they asked where they could find the wounded. “My village is filled with them,” he replied. “I will show you.”

By the aid of a lamp they felt their way through the streets to a dilapidated schoolhouse. There was not a light, or a sound... The building was
packed with wounded; over five hundred, with all kinds of wounds...

Dr. Gros and his ambulance corps brought back first the severely wounded with shattered legs and arms and penetrating wounds of the abdomen and chest...\textsuperscript{15}

While the surgeons were sending wounded men from the front, Dr. Watson examined the list of casualties the Ambulance took in on 14 September: British, 25; French, 42; Algerian/Tunisian/Moroccan, 21; German, 2. Watson objected to German troops in the Ambulance. The French military’s Service de Santé had assigned enemy wounded to the Val de Grâce Hospital.

He wrote, “The head orderly, on being questioned as to the admission of these German wounded to our Hospital instead of sending them on to Val de Grâce, said that he had had no choice in the matter; that the men were brought in during the night by Mr. Robert Bacon, former Ambassador to France, who was one of the most devoted workers in and for the Hospital; that the Military Attaché of the Embassy came with him; and that the men were brought in the Ambassador’s car.”\textsuperscript{16}

Watson went immediately to Ambassador Herrick, who seemed unperturbed. Watson did not understand, until some years later when the two men met at Watson’s house near Baltimore. Watson wrote that Herrick explained,

The Secretary of State, Mr. [William Jennings] Bryan, was much exercised about that Ambulance Hospital of ours at Neuilly; he held that our maintaining and supporting it was an non-neutral act; that inasmuch as it was called a Military Branch of the American Hospital of Paris which latter was chartered by Congress, it was virtually an interference in the War by a recognized creation of the Congress of the United States; that it was therefore within the power of Congress to revoke the Charter of the American Hospital, and that then the Hospital would have to close. Whether this was merely a threat, or whether it had some reality behind it I did not know, but I made up my mind to take no chances on what the demonstrations of an ultra-neutral Administration might result in, so I said to my Military Attaché, “I would like to have a couple of woun-
ded German soldiers in our Ambulance at Neuilly; can it be managed?” “Most easily,” he said, “they are lying all along the road but a few miles away.” “Good,” I said, “when it is dark, take my car and go out and get two of them and take them to the Ambulance.” Robert Bacon was in the office at the time, and he said, “I’ll go with him.” They got their prisoners and brought them to the Ambulance and safely installed them there as you know; and when their report came to me that the deed of darkness had been done, I cabled the State Department, “Hospital neutral; have German wounded.”

Robert Bacon made daily trips between the Crillon and the Marne frontlines to collect wounded in as many cars and ambulances as he could commandeer. Bacon’s dedication extended to rising early each morning to collect, as the Hôtel Crillon’s manager recalled, “first edition papers, a good supply of cigars and tobacco, and some bottles of cognac, for he would say to me, ‘This is what pleases your dear soldiers most’.”

The Governors of the American Hospital and the Ambulance elected Bacon president of both boards. His energy was boundless, as was his wife’s. As chair of the Ambulance’s American Committee, Martha Cowdin Bacon raised $2 million for her husband’s projects in France. Her husband did not flinch from going to the battlefield, from which he sent a telegram to the Ambulance Committee urging it to establish a hospital nearer the front. The sooner men could be treated, the better their chance of survival. The Committee acted on Bacon’s idea. Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney, a Hospital Board member, funded a two hundred bed hospital near Meaux at the Collège de Juilly. Thirty miles closer to the fighting than Neuilly, Juilly was the first of several “auxiliary” hospitals under the auspices of the American Hospital of Paris. French President Raymond Poincaré soon paid visits to the wounded at both Neuilly and Juilly.

In April 1915, one of the most talented neurosurgeons of his time, Dr. Harvey Cushing, arrived in Paris at the head of the Harvard Unit of the American Ambulance. He began treating wounded men the day after he arrived in Paris.

With so many wounded men coming into the Ambulances at Neuilly
and Juilly, the need for more nurses became acute. The Ambulance Committee met at the Lycée Pasteur on 27 September to consider an offer by Mrs. Oliver of the Saint John’s Ambulance Association in London to provide orderlies and “as many trained certificated nurses, speaking French, as might be needed.” The Committee accepted the offer, and English nurses took their place alongside their American sisters at the Lycée Pasteur.19

Robert Bacon wrote to his wife on 17 December 1914, “The Whitney Unit at Juilly is coming along all right, and is playing a big part in the development and extension of the whole thing as originally hoped for and planned by Herrick, and now the Transport Units, the Ford Squads and Sections are going to play a still bigger part, and this of late has been my chief interest and is just beginning. I was much pleased to-day to get Elliot’s [Mrs. Bacon’s father, lawyer Elliot Cowdin] cable saying he had money for ten more Fords.”20 Bacon’s recent experience at the Marne had convinced him that fully equipped motorized ambulances were vital to saving lives. Bacon and Dr. Gros sponsored the American Ambulance Field Service, which at first served the Lycée Pasteur and later offered help to other military hospitals. Several other Americans in Paris organized units of ambulances. H. Herman Harjes, senior partner of the Morgan-Harjes Bank in Paris and a founder of the American Hospital, funded five Packard sedans to operate as the Morgan-Harjes Section. Richard Norton, son of famed Harvard art historian Charles Eliot Norton, founded the Anglo-American Volunteer Ambulance Corps. Norton and Harjes later amalgamated their units into the Norton-Harjes Ambulance Corps. In addition, the Ambulance provided fully equipped railway carriages for the trains sanitaires that formed part of the network of transport for the wounded.

For many of the ambulance drivers, frontline service was still not enough to whet their appetites for adventure and for aiding France. They wanted to fly combat missions, as they told Dr. Edmund Gros. Dr. Gros asked the French Army to form a squadron of American pilots within the French air corps. On 21 March 1916, the French Air Department established the American Escadrille. The name was changed to Lafayette
Escadrille in December, following German protests to the US government over this breach of neutrality. Americans flying in other French units became known collectively as the Lafayette Flying Corps. Of the 267 Americans who flew for the Lafayette Escadrille, the majority had come from the ranks of ambulance drivers. Americans flew for France during the conflict. Like the ambulance sections and auxiliary hospitals, the Lafayette Escadrille was a stepchild of the American Hospital of Paris.

Some battle injuries were new to warfare, most famously the effects of poison gas. Physicians at the Ambulance struggled to deal with its effects, especially a form of gangrene that the chemical weapons produced. It hit the body’s extremities, causing pain, depression and death. Dr. Kenneth Taylor, a University of Minnesota bacteriologist at the Lycée Pasteur, tested chlorohydrate of quinine on laboratory animals at the Lycée Pasteur. It cured the animals, but he did not know how it would affect human beings. At this time, English nurse Mary Davis intervened by deliberately injecting herself with the poison so that Dr. Taylor could test his formula. She recovered almost at once, and thereafter soldiers suffering gas gangrene were usually cured within forty-eight hours. 21

On 9 April 1915, Dr. Cushing came across his first case of a war injury that was new to him: “One artillery officer was knocked down three times in succession by shells landing only a metre or two away from him; he suffers from a severe nervous concussion - what the British call ‘shell shock’.” This was not to be the last case of battle trauma, and no medical cure was at hand.

Another unit of Harvard physicians arrived in France in 1916 with the British medical services, in time to confront the bloodshed of the Somme. Among the surgeons was a thirty-one year old genito-urinary specialist and surgeon from Maine, Dr. Sumner Jackson. Captain Jackson treated men for burned flesh, gangrene, trench foot, gas poisoning, gueule cassée and wounds from shrapnel and bullets. Transferring eventually to the American Army as a lieutenant, he finished the war at the American Red Cross Hospital Number Two in Paris. Jackson, although he did not serve with the French armed forces, fell in love with the country and married his French nurse. We pick up his story in the following chapter.
Prominent Americans escalated their efforts to assist the increasing number of victims. They lent their names, time and money. Edith Wharton established the Oeuvre des Enfants des Flandres (Action Committee for the Children of Flanders) to assist orphans and other civilian victims of the fighting. Her friend Henry James became chairman of Richard Norton’s American Volunteer Motor-Ambulance Corps.

Life at the Ambulance, despite the suffering of so many, attracted American and French ladies of fashion. Women who had maids at home ministered to the needs of injured men, changed bed sheets and bedpans, served tea and raised money. Margaret Benét, whose husband Laurence was a Governor of the Hospital, son of the U.S. Army’s chief of ordnance and uncle of poet Stephen Vincent Benét, often visited the Boston Ward.

By December 1916, the American Ambulance was treating 1,600 wounded men daily and ran a fleet of thirty-five ambulances. Its American staff contributed to the war in another, non-medical manner. After a German submarine sank the Cunard liner RMS Lusitania on May 1915, killing all 1,195 people aboard, including 124 Americans, more than one hundred Americans sent a telegram from Paris to President Woodrow Wilson:

> We, the undersigned, having observed strict neutrality though living amid the horrors of war, now feel that in justice to our conditions and in order to preserve our self-respect we must voice an indignant and energetic protest against the sinking of the Lusitania, an act pre-eminent in its savagery, and which places the responsible Government outside civilized humanity.

Signatories included most of the doctors and volunteers at the Lycée Pasteur, the American Hospital and the various ambulance corps, among them Dr. Gros, Dr. Dubouchet, Abram Piatt Andrew, Laurence Vincent Benét and Captain Arthur W. Kipling of the American Ambulance Corps. The appeal failed to find favor with most of the American public, who believed that American citizens should avoid travel on belligerent vessels.

Robert Bacon explained to a French friend that budging the United
States away from neutrality was not easy. “In America,” he said, “there are 50,000 people who understand the necessity of the United States entering the war immediately on your side. But there are 100,000,000 who have not even thought of it. Our task is to see that the numbers are reversed.” Nonetheless, whether the United States entered the war or not, the Americans in Paris continued their humanitarian work in France, and many of them flew combat missions for the Lafayette Escadrille or fought in the Foreign Legion.

President Wilson maneuvered the U.S. into war on 6 April 1917, when the House of Representatives followed the Senate in voting for his declaration of war. The vanguard of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) arrived in France in June under General John J. Pershing. His French advisor was Count Aldebert de Chambrun. Colonel de Chambrun, a veteran of fighting at Bar-le-Duc, was as American as he was French. He was a direct descendant of the Marquis de Lafayette, the French hero of American independence and loyal friend of George Washington. Under an April 1788 act of the Maryland legislature, all of Lafayette’s male heirs were automatically citizens of the state and, thus, of the United States. Aldebert grew up in Washington, D.C., where his father was ambassador, and in 1910 married the sister of House of Representatives Speaker Nicholas Longworth.

With the arrival of American troops in France that June, the American Hospital of Paris came under U.S. Army control. The hospital placed, as its governors had offered in 1914, rows of medical tents for the wounded, now all American, on the grounds. The Ambulance, however, continued to operate as a French military hospital. The various American ambulance sections resisted absorption into the U.S. military structure. Norton and Harjes disbanded their service, while the AAFS became part of the U.S. Army’s ambulance fleet.

After the war ended in November 1918, the American Hospital reverted to its status as an American-chartered civilian facility for Americans in Paris but open to all.
CHAPTER 2
CALM BETWEEN THE WARS
THE JACKSONS

“This hospital is a little bit of the United States right here in Paris…”

After the Great War and the departure of the American Army, the little hospital that admitted its first patient in 1910 and had served the French and American armies in wartime had outgrown its original site. The post-war influx of Americans to Paris, some driven there by the harshness of Prohibition and others attracted by the relatively inexpensive and easy life in France, led the Board of Governors to expand the hospital beyond the plot at the corner of Boulevard du Château and Rue Chauveau in Neuilly. The new Memorial Building, designed by American architect Charles Knight, opened next door on Boulevard Victor Hugo in May 1926. Looking like a comfortable seaside hotel, the Memorial Building housed 150 patient beds in a central block and two matching wings.

The Hospital’s charter, signed into American law in January 1913 by departing President William Howard Taft, required it to offer medical services free to American citizens in France. Wealthy Americans and foreigners, like the kings of Yugoslavia and Spain, paid for private rooms. Indigent Americans were placed in wards. Among Americans without funds was Ernest Hemingway, who came to the hospital at least twice during the 1920s. Dr. Charles Bove removed his appendix, after which
he began writing The Sun Also Rises in a ward bed. Dr. Sumner Jackson stitched and bandaged Hemingway’s head after a bathroom skylight fell on it. James Joyce was made an “honorary American” to receive eye surgery at the hospital in 1923. F. Scott Fitzgerald’s wife, Zelda, came to the hospital in 1926 with gynecological ailments, and Dr. Thierry de Martel operated on her. Gertrude Stein, the poet E. E. Cummings and other American writers relied on the American Hospital for medical care that, as often as not, was given free of charge. “This hospital is a little bit of the United States right here in Paris, Bove,” Dr. Edmond Gros told Dr. Bove.

The Governors of the American Hospital of Paris were the grandees of American Paris. The president was Nelson Dean Jay, who had come to Paris in 1917. He had stayed on to work with J. P. Morgan’s Paris bank, Morgan and Cie., the successor to the Morgan-Harjes Bank that had financed the American Hospital during the Great War. He and his wife, Anne Augustine, lived at 58 avenue Foch, just down the street from Dr. Sumner Jackson. The couple entertained most of the prominent Americans, like Charles Lindbergh, IBM chairman Thomas Watson and Allen Dulles of law firm Sullivan and Cromwell, who came to Paris between the wars. The Managing Governor and First Vice-President was Edward B. Close. The Board’s Secretary was William DeWitt Crampton, John D. Rockefeller’s man in France, officially vice-president of Standard Française des Pétroles. Like the others, he lived in the lavish 16th Arrondissement on the Right Bank, at 23 rue Reynouard. A 1914 Columbia graduate, he had been awarded the Distinguished Service Order by the British and become a Chevalier of France’s Legion of Honor during the Great War. Crampton belonged to the exclusive Travellers’ Club on the Avenue des Champs-Elysées, not far from his office at number 82. Other board members were treasurer Bernard S. Carter, lawyer Max Shoop, Laurence Hills, J. S. Wright and General Aldebert de Chambrun.

The outstanding personality on the medical staff was Dr. Sumner Jackson, an archetype of the tall, strong and silent Yankee. He was born in Spruce Head on the rocky shore north of Portland, Maine, on 7 October 1885, and as a youngster, he had worked on farms and in quarries.
His rugged looks and powerful physique marked him as an outdoorsman from the harsh American northeast. Having worked his way through Maine’s Bowdoin College and Jefferson Medical School in Philadelphia, he served his internship at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. His next post was with the Harvard Group of volunteers in the British Army from 1916. He arrived in France as a field surgeon in time to treat thousands of casualties thrown up by the Second Battle of the Somme.

Transferring to the American Expeditionary Force deployed late 1917, he was posted to American Red Cross Hospital Number Two in Paris to treat severely wounded men brought back from the trenches. Sumner met a French Red Cross nurse, Charlotte Sylvie Barrelet de Ricout, who had taken up nursing when the war began in 1914. Her Swiss Protestant parents had settled in France and had a holiday house near Paris at Enghien-les-Bains. He called her by her family’s pet name, Toquette, and she called him Jack. Jack had just turned thirty-two when he married twenty-seven year old Toquette on 19 November 1917. Nine months after the Armistice of November 1918, the couple sailed to the United States and tried living in Spruce Head, Maine, the hometown he had left in 1905. Before winter set in, they moved to Philadelphia. The infamous Palmer Raids that deported aliens for their political opinions exposed a streak of American xenophobia, and the new Prohibition on alcohol seemed silly to a couple used to wine with dinner. Sumner wrote to the director of the American Hospital in Paris, Dr. Edmond Gros, to inquire about employment. Dr. Gros, who knew Sumner from the war, replied that French law required foreign doctors to obtain a French high school diploma, the baccalauréat, and earn a French medical degree before they could practice. Although aged thirty-six with vast experience, Jackson returned to France with Toquette in September 1921 to become a high school student.

After Jackson passed the baccalauréat exams, entered the Faculté de Médecine in Paris and received his second medical degree in 1925. The Jacksons moved into an apartment at 11 avenue Foch in the 16th Arrondissement, and Sumner began work as a surgeon and urologist at the American Hospital.
In January 1928, Charlotte Jackson gave birth to a boy. They named him Phillip. In this family of nicknames, Sumner was Jack, Charlotte was Toquette, her sister Alice was Tat and young Phillip became Pete. When the Depression came to France a few years after it hit the United States and many Americans left Paris, the hospital lost patients and cut staff salaries.

In 1938, soon after the agreement at Munich that ceded part of Czechoslovakia to Germany, the American Hospital’s Board of Governors offered their facilities once again to the French government in the event of war. On 26 April 1939, Edward B. Close, vice-president and director of the American Hospital in Paris, wrote to General Maisonnet, director of the health service at the French War Ministry:

The Board of Governors and the doctors of the American Hospital of Paris wish to play the same important role that the hospital played during the last war (the American Ambulance at the Lycée Pasteur, the American Ambulance Field Service and the units of the Norton-Harjes, each of which comprised about 60 sections of 20 ambulances); and we wish to submit a complete plan of organization that we wish to adopt. The three page letter set out the hospital’s offer of its own facilities at Neuilly, plans to run auxiliary hospitals nearer to the frontlines and to provide ambulances as it had in the previous war. It added that the governors had rallied physicians in the United States to assist France as their colleagues had twenty years before.

When Britain and France declared war on Germany in September 1939, the hospital treated men injured from shelling and shooting along the Maginot Line. Although there were fewer casualties in the so-called “phony war” than in the First World War, Dr. Sumner Waldron Jackson and Dr. Edmund Gros operated on wounds similar to those they had dealt with nearly twenty years before. The hospital filled with young French and British soldiers who, at Christmas in 1939, were entertained by vivacious American singer and dancer Josephine Baker. The men, in pajamas and many in wheelchairs, toasted her beside a Christmas tree. To better serve troops closer to the line, the Hospital established a temporary center on the Normandy coast at Etretat.
CHAPTER 3
THE JACKSON FAMILY
HEROES OF THE RESISTANCE

“[Sumner] had such big qualities.”

In mid-May 1940, Germany invaded France in a series of lightning advances that saw the French and British armies collapse within weeks. The auxiliary hospital at Etretat was forced to relocate, and the New York Herald Tribune reported on 8 June 1940, that the hospital’s doctors had already “selected a building at Angoulême in the Charente, which has been requisitioned to be turned over to the hospital for this purpose by the French government.”32 The one hundred bed field hospital was on the direct Paris-Bordeaux rail line, so the wounded could be moved there without being trapped on roads blocked by thousands of refugees feeling the battle. Other temporary American hospitals and dressing stations opened at Châteauroux and in the casino of Fontainebleau, just south of Paris. Dr. Jackson, Dr. Bove, Dr. Morris Sanders and other American surgeons labored day and night on the growing number of French soldiers whom the Germans had seriously wounded. Most of the casualties came to the hospital in ambulances of the American Ambulance Corps, paid by donations from American citizens and driven by American volunteers. When French friendly fire hit one ambulance and wounded a French soldier, Jackson had to amputate his leg in darkness. The amputation was nonetheless clean enough for the leg to take a prosthetic. When he
was not operating on patients, Sumner took care of anesthesia for other doctors. It was grinding, bloody labor without any reassurance that the suffering would save France from German conquest.

American Ambassador William Christian Bullitt, nominally head of the Board of Governors, asked the hospital’s chief surgeon, Dr. Thierry de Martel, to remain in Paris even if the city fell to the German onslaught. Martel, scion of a French aristocratic family and staunchly anti-German, promised to stay. Then, on 13 June, as German forces surrounded the capital, he wrote to Bullitt. Bullitt read the letter the next day, as the Germans occupied the city and their commanders settled into the Hotel Crillon beside the embassy. “I promised you not to leave Paris,” the letter said. “I did not say if I would remain in Paris alive or dead. To remain living in Paris would be a cashable check for our adversaries. If I remain here dead, it is a check without funds to cover it. Adieu. Martel.” Having lost a son in the Great War and taken an oath never to speak to a German, the great surgeon who had saved so many lives in the previous war took his own life before he had to face a German soldier.

His loss caused anguish at the American Hospital of Paris, where other doctors had depended on his leadership as much as patients did his surgical expertise. His oversight of surgery for wounded soldiers fell to his colleague and friend, Dr. Sumner Waldron Jackson.

Dr. Bove, who operated beside Sumner Jackson day and night during the Battle of France, recalled the chaos of those days:

When the Allies, pushed to the coast, fought a rear-guard engagement at Dunkirk, Paris felt the full impact of things. All city hospitals were crowded with casualties. The nurses were so overwhelmed with work that additional women volunteered by the hundreds to wash the faces and feet of the wounded. They carried cups of coffee to those who were able to swallow. We surgeons operated until late into the night, cutting away on jagged wounds like butchers in a slaughterhouse. I lived on five or six cups of coffee and a few sandwiches daily... We rarely stopped before midnight. The agony of the men awaiting their turn in the outer room and begging us to relieve them made it impossible for us to quit. My feet became so sore that I could barely walk, and to attempt
to straighten up out of the bent position I had maintained for so many
hours over the operating table caused excruciating pain…

This went on for two weeks. Then, as the Nazis approached Paris,
the city was virtually cut off; the wounded began pouring down to eva-
cuation centers in the middle and southern parts of France. As the news
filtered into Paris that thousands of British and French troops had been
evacuated from Dunkirk, the crowds pushed and fought their way into
the churches to light candles to their patron saints and to pray that their
loved ones had reached England.  

The day before the Germans entered Paris, Dr. Bove told Sumner
and Toquette, “It’s only a matter of a few weeks before Roosevelt brings
America in and declares war on Germany. But this time the Boches will
have Paris, and if we stay they’ll lock us up.”  Bove prepared to leave. Dr.
Gros, in Bove’s words, “seemed to age before our eyes” and was no longer
able to work.

Jackson considered going, but his wife convinced him that the hos-
pital’s French staff would not stay without him. Sumner asked Toquette,
who had resumed working as a nurse, to take their son to safety. She and
her sister Alice left Paris with twelve-year-old Pete for the family’s lakeside
house at Enghien.

Sumner moved into the hospital. On the last warm June night before
Paris fell, he ascended to the roof to smoke a cigar. He saw the fields
where French kings hunted before the 19th century bourgeoisie planted
suburban villas in Neuilly. Artillery flashes on the horizon signaled that
the Germans were advancing on Paris from the east and north. It would
not be long before they reached Neuilly. Sumner’s main concern was to
save the hospital from falling into German hands. Wounded French and
British soldiers needed the institution, one of the finest in France, as
much as the American civilians still in Paris. There were rumors that
the Germans had listed the hospital for requisitioning. Soon, Sumner
would face another dilemma. Donald Coster, a young American who
had come from Montreal to drive ambulances for the American Field
Service, asked him for a safe haven. Coster was also an undercover U.S.
foreign service agent, who collected information on France, German
troop strength and the nascent escape routes through which British and French soldiers would make their way to England. For the hospital, helping him could mean immediate seizure by the Germans. Dr. Jackson, who was beginning an underground railroad from the hospital, agreed to obtain the papers Coster would need to cross the border to Spain. Until the false identity documents were ready, Coster stayed out of sight under the American Hospital.\textsuperscript{35}

Dr. Jackson risked arrest and execution by the Gestapo, but he was already hiding British soldiers, disguised as Frenchmen, in the wards. Dr. Jackson, fifty-four years old with a wife and young son to protect, had decided which side he was on. Helping Coster would be only another step along the same anti-German road.

Immediately after the Germans entered Paris, a report prepared by the American Hospital for its American governors in New York concluded, “Too much praise cannot be given to Dr. Sumner W. Jackson, who has been a member of the attending Staff since 1925 and who accepted the professional supervision of the wounded for the period of the war.”\textsuperscript{36}

Dr. Edmond Gros, seventy years old and director of both the American Hospital and the American Library, was operating on war wounded alongside his surgical colleagues. Dorothy Reeder, chief librarian at the American Library, wrote on 19 September, “Dr. Gros has been quite ill and plans to go to the States.”\textsuperscript{37} By the time he left Paris later that month, he had suffered an emotional and physical breakdown. General Aldebert de Chambrun, who had joined the hospital’s board of governors when he left the army, replaced Dr. Gros as the hospital’s director.

The American Hospital of Paris continued its assistance to the war’s victims when Paris fell under Nazi domination. “The Germans permitted Dr. Jackson to set up a dressing station for the French wounded at Fontainbleau [sic] and to evacuate selected patients to the American Hospital,” wrote Dr. Morris Sanders, chief anesthesiologist at the American Hospital in 1940.\textsuperscript{38} Sanders, who called Sumner “Dr. Jack,” went on the first ambulance to Fontainebleau with Drs. Jackson and Gros, and he took part in surgery on the French wounded there. “With the Occupation of Paris,” Sanders wrote, “Dr. Jack worked long hours, gave his
blood numerous times and slept in the building, and visited his family only on weekends.”

From the first day of the occupation of Paris, the American Hospital extended its operations from field hospitals to prison camps, where many of the newly interned soldiers were either ill or wounded. Facilities for prisoners were rudimentary, if only because the Germans were not prepared to deal with almost two million captives. Otto Gresser, the Hospital’s Swiss superintendent, recalled, “An impressive line of ambulances packed with bread and other essential products, all run by American and French volunteers, daily left the Hospital for the prisoner camps in the Paris area, some of them went even as far as Château-Thierry, Chartres and Alençon. From June 15 they visited 250,000 prisoners desperately in need of food.” Sumner Jackson, who worked without rest, did not believe enough was being done for the prisoners. He blamed what he called the “bullshit bureaucracy of old men,” both German and French, for failing to distribute all the American aid intended for the prisoners.

The Hospital, while providing assistance to demoralized French PoWs, had the most up to date intelligence on the locations, security measures and sizes of all the German camps in the Paris region. Some of the injured prisoners that the ambulances brought to the Hospital did not, when they recovered, return to the camps. Dr. Sumner Jackson made certain that those who walked out of the Hospital left no trace for the Germans to follow.

On 6 July 1940, an American ambulance brought two wounded French prisoners to Neuilly from the Hôpital Foch in Suresnes, which the Germans had just requisitioned. One of the two casualties was André Guillon, classified as dying from wounds he received fighting on 7 June at Beauvais. Guillon noticed, as he was wheeled into the Memorial Building, “the flowers, the walkways, winding through impeccable lawns, the very beautiful trees, an oasis of calm and silence, and yet something troubled us the moment we entered this magnificent hospital... the coldness of our welcome.” He soon realized that what he took for indifference was “neutrality that we quickly understood and that was absolutely necessary.” Another aspect of the hospital made a stronger impression:
“There were no sentries at the door and no one controlled the entrances or the exits of the hospital.” The Germans, however, had established their Neuilly headquarters, the Kommandatur, opposite the hospital’s main gate.

One of the first patients he met in his ward was a Jewish officer he called Captain M., who told him, “Because I’m Jewish, someone [a German officer] refused to accept my word of honor as a French officer. Now, morally, I must try to escape.” He asked Guillon what he should do. Guillon advised him to flee. “That, moreover, is what he did.” As Guillon observed, Captain M. was not the only one. Dr. Sumner Jackson, far from discouraging escape, looked the other way and falsified hospital records to say such men had died.

Neither Guillon nor any of the other French prisoners saw Donald Coster in his basement hide-out. Sometime in mid-July, Sumner Jackson brought him documents to cross the Line of Demarcation and the Spanish border. Then, like Captain M., Coster disappeared. He turned up in Lisbon to take a ship back to the United States.

The occupation did not interrupt the Board of Governors’ monthly meetings. On 26 July, most of the board appeared for the 6 P.M. conference at 25 avenue des Champs-Elysées. “At present,” the minutes noted, “we have approximately 125 serious fracture cases in the Hospital, most of which will take several months to recover.” The first order of business was to order a plaque in memory of Dr. Thierry de Martel. A month later, on 22 August, the board unanimously approved the text of a plaque to be placed in the hospital:

In Loving and Grateful Memory of
Dr. Thierry de Martel de Janville
Chief Surgeon of
The American Hospital of Paris
1920 - 1940
Dedicated by the Board of Governors

In August, Dr. Sumner Jackson’s wife and son, Toquette and Pete, returned to Paris from the lake house at Enghien. Sumner wanted them
back to protect their empty apartment in the Avenue Foch from requisitioning by the Germans. Even with a red U.S. Embassy seal, the Jacksons’ apartment in the Avenue Foch was vulnerable if no one lived in it. The Nazis had already taken houses in the avenue Foch for the Gestapo and Sicherheitsdienst, the party’s secret police known as the SD. Toquette’s sister Alice, nicknamed Tat, remained at Enghien to protect the vacation house from seizure. Dr. Jackson continued to sleep at the hospital to be available for emergencies.

The Board of Governors met again in September amid the uncertainty of an occupation that was making new rules every week, closing theatres and allowing some to reopen with German licenses, changing the hours of curfew, gradually tightening the restrictions on Jews and permitting different German bureaus to set conflicting policies. The Board had urgently to decide how the Hospital would manage if the governors were forced to leave France. More than 2,500 American civilians and many French and British prisoners of war depended on the facility. The Governors unanimously approved a motion that “in the event of prolonged illness, absence or inability to act for any other reason of Mr. Edward B. Close, Aldebert de Chambrun be and hereby is appointed Managing Governor ad interim in the place and stead of Mr. Close, with the same powers as those now held by Mr. Close.”

Eddie Close told the Board that Wayne C. Taylor of the American Red Cross had asked him to increase the number of beds for military use to 200, effectively adding fifty beds for French and British war casualties. The Board “unanimously carried” a resolution to make the 200 beds available and “not to call upon the Red Cross for financial assistance at this time.”

When the meeting ended at 6.45 P.M., General de Chambrun went back to the business of keeping the hospital open and free of German control. A veteran of the First World War, he still called the Germans “Boches.” Despite the policy of collaboration adopted by his son René’s father-in-law, Vichy Prime Minister Pierre Laval, Aldebert vowed never to give a bed to a Boche soldier.

Aldebert de Chambrun, Sumner Jackson, Otto Gresser, Elisabeth Comte and the rest of the staff improvised means for the hospital to func-
tion without the necessities the Germans had either requisitioned or prohibited. The Germans did not seize the American Hospital’s ambulances, although the Governors voted to donate six or seven of the fleet of ten to “services or municipal organizations where they could be utilized in the best interest of the parties concerned.” Without gasoline, ambulances were converted to run on gazogene, carbonized wood chips. The remaining ambulances were vital, not only for transporting patients, but for bringing food from farms around Paris to feed five hundred people a day.

On Friday, 11 October, General of the Army Charles Huntziger, who had signed the Armistice for France in June and was now Minister of War at Vichy, came to the hospital to award it the Order of Merit and the Croix de Guerre. The citations honored the hospital for services to the wounded during the Battle of France. Several hospital personnel, including Sumner Jackson, Elisabeth Comte and Edward Close, were cited by name. “Operating by day and by night,” the citation read, “the hospital took care of an almost interminable number of wounded and undoubtedly saved a great number of lives. In direct contact with the enemy, and working in an enemy-occupied zone, the hospital continued with unflagging dedication not only to care for the wounded but also to bring aid to the prisoners.”

On 21 November 1940, the Hospital’s Governors met again at 25 Avenue Champs-Elysées. Nelson Dean Jay, Edward B. Close, John B. Robinson, William D. Crampton and General Aldebert de Chambrun faced one another around a conference table to discuss the first arrest by the Germans of a hospital employee. The Germans had taken the Hospital’s gardener, a British subject named Mr. Burgess, when they interned the rest of the British community under the age of sixty-five. The Minutes stated that “the consensus of the meeting was that no action be taken in connection with this matter.” The Germans were not likely to release an enemy alien, even to please the neutral Americans. The Board was holding its fire for American and French staff whom the Germans might arrest in future. Arrests were more likely than the Board knew, while British and French soldiers made the hospital a staging post on their escape route to England.
Germany declared war on the United States on 11 December 1941, four days after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. The Germans ordered all American citizens in the Occupied Zone to register with the nearest German Kommandatur by 6 P.M. on 17 December. When Christmas arrived in 1941, the hospital gave a party for its patients. Aldebert de Chambrun's American wife, Clara wrote that “we encouraged one another by saying ‘this time it really is the last; next Christmas we shall be free’.” The hospital auctioned the chef’s hand-lettered Christmas menus to benefit wounded British and French soldiers, whom the Hospital cared for under agreements with their two governments. Vichy paid the Hospital directly for French servicemen, and the British Embassy in Spain reimbursed the Hospital via American banks. The Germans approved the arrangement, one instance in which enemies cooperated while their armies savaged each other on the battlefield. The Hospital usually cared for about one hundred French and thirty to forty British casualties at a time.\(^{50}\) When the soldiers’ wounds healed, most of them could to look forward only to German prison camps, Stalags for the officers and Oflags for the men. A fortunate minority disappeared on the underground railway to Britain, sent secretly in civilian clothes by Dr. Jackson. The Jack-sons accomplished this “under the Germans’ very noses.”

“The German authorities eased restrictions on 340 American hostages held at Compiègne,” United Press reported from Vichy on 29 January 1942, “and indicated some physicians needed in American hospitals in Paris may be released if the hostage quota is maintained by internment of other Americans in their places, it was learned today.”\(^{51}\)

Mme Gillet of the French Red Cross contacted General de Cham-brun at the American Hospital, and he donated medical supplies to Frontstalag 122. The hospital had no linen or blankets to spare, but it sent medical teams to the camp. Some internees were brought to Neuilly for treatment. Otto Gresser recalled, “These patients were not at all eager to get well very fast. As soon as they were cured, we had to promise the Germans that they had to return to the civilian camps until the war was over.” Jackson and Gresser put some of the internees on a prolonged “unwell” list in a ward for the elderly.\(^{52}\) This kept beds full and internees
out of the detention camps.

Apart from auditing the American Hospital’s annual accounts, there was “no other interference by the German authorities.”\(^{53}\) This left the Hospital free to scavenge necessary but contraband supplies and allowed Sumner Jackson to hide the British, and soon American, flyers whose planes had been downed in France. The escape network was becoming more sophisticated, as the Resistance developed skills in forging papers, keeping safe houses, crossing the Line of Demarcation and deceiving the Germans. Routes that took Allied soldiers to safety also served to deliver photographs of German military installations and other intelligence to London. The Germans penetrated some of the networks and arrested their members. By the spring of 1942, they had not captured any Allied soldiers, whether escaped prisoners or downed airmen, on routes that began in the American Hospital of Paris.

With fewer Americans in Paris and most French prisoners of war in Germany, Aldebert de Chambrun sought new ways to fill the hospital with non-German patients. A proposal came in January 1942 from Dr. Alexis Carrel, a Nobel Prize winning French physician who had conducted research in America in 1906 at the then-new Rockefeller Institute and worked with the American Ambulance during the First World War.\(^{54}\)

Dr. Carrel requested the use of a laboratory in the American Hospital for his French Institute for the Study of Human Problems to research workplace injuries and establish standard first aid treatments. General de Chambrun accepted Carrel’s proposal and approached the French state railroad company, Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer, to send its workers to the American Hospital. In March, the hospital designated forty beds for SNCF laborers suffering industrial accidents or wounded in trains bombed by the Allies or sabotaged by the Resistance. “From this time on our 250 beds were nearly always occupied,” de Chambrun wrote.\(^{55}\) Occupied beds meant no space for German troops and independence for the hospital. Dr. Jackson cared for many of the cheminots, railwaymen, who were among the first groups of workers to organize resistance to the occupation.

“Général de Chambrun received visit after visit from German medi-
cal officers of high rank with no other object in view than to take over the whole establishment for the use of their army,” wrote Clara de Chambrun. “Every time, he pointed out that it was full to overflowing, and that it would not be large enough for them.”56 In his obstinate refusal to admit German patients or to allow the Nazis a role in running the American Hospital, Aldebert was inadvertently assisting Dr. Jackson to perform work for the Resistance that Clara herself abhorred.

On Thursday morning, 24 September 1942, the German authorities in Paris rounded up 1,400 American citizens in retaliation for the detention of Germans in the United States. Dr. Jackson waited at the American Hospital with packed suitcases. Luckily, no escaped prisoners or British airmen were in sight. German troops entered the examination room where Jackson was with a patient and ordered him to come with them immediately. Hospital staff, seeing the Germans leading their beloved “Dr. Jack” out of the hospital, mobbed him with presents. “Before leaving,” Jackson later told Clemence Bock, his former French tutor and friend, “I was given food packages, a few good bottles, and I stuffed it all in my pockets. I really didn’t know what to do with it all.”57 He was driven to a police station, where, “I ran into friends. We all had tags hung around our necks. They made me sign my name, and then we were shipped to the Gare du Nord, where I had the good fortune to come across a worker who had been one of my patients.” The worker would have been one of the SNCF employees on Dr. Carrel’s research and treatment program. “He was good enough to tell Toquette where I was.” The internees’ next stop was the camp for British men at St. Denis, on the northern outskirts of Paris. It was lunchtime, “and the English were getting aid packages from the King and Queen. So we had an hour and a half lunch that was better than we had at the hospital and at home. I also bought a pair of suspenders, the kind I never found in the Paris shops. And a reamer to clean out my pipe.” The men were taken by train to Compiègne. Clemence Bock recorded Jackson’s words: “That evening we were at Compiègne, the food was far inferior to the Saint Denis camp, but friends surrounded me and they gave me a small room with a small rug. Nearby was a camp where Jews were held.”
Sumner met other Americans he knew, many of them former patients at the hospital. One was the architect who designed the American Hospital's Memorial Building, Charles Knight. Another was the organist of the American Cathedral, Lawrence K. Whipp. Whipp had been in the camp, where he gave occasional organ concerts, since the first round-up in January. In another barracks were American millionaire Charles Bedaux and his son, Charles Emile.

On 28 September, the French Foreign Ministry in Vichy confirmed to the American Embassy that the Americans had been seized. The Embassy cabled the Secretary of State the same day: “On the grounds of reprisals for alleged arrests of Germans in the United States on September 24, about one thousand Americans (men) and four hundred American women were arrested in Paris… The men arrested were sent to St. Denis. They will be eventually sent to Compiegne where other Americans are now interned. Americans over 65 years of age and children under sixteen have not been taken.” The Embassy said it had previously sent “circular letters urging the Americans to go home.”

The camp commander permitted Dr. Sumner Jackson to offer medical care to African colonial troops of the French Army in an adjoining camp. The Germans’ treatment of the black, mostly Senegalese, soldiers disgusted him. He witnessed guards beating an African soldier and forcing him drink urine from a chamber pot used by the whole barracks. Jackson was not allowed into Sector C, the Jewish camp, where he correctly surmised conditions were worse.

“The Boches continued to annoy me with their paperwork,” Jackson told Clemence Bock. “I had to sign and re-sign their papers. I’ve never written my name so often.” The Germans never asked him whether he had helped British or French soldiers to escape to England, apparently suspecting nothing about his work for the Allies. Negotiations for the release or repatriation of some of the Americans were taking place in Paris and Vichy. On Jackson’s behalf, General Aldebert de Chambrun lobbied powerful friends in the French administration. Jackson lingered in the camp for a week, until General de Chambrun “came to get me in a Red Cross car with a chauffeur. He handed me copies of press clippings. We
“Several Americans Released in France,” ran the headline in the New York Times on 3 October, “Dr. Jackson of Hospital at Neuilly Is Among Those Freed.” Fame was unwelcome to Sumner Jackson. He had every reason to avoid drawing attention to the hospital, while Allied soldiers waited there to rejoin their units in England.

With Dr. Jackson’s release, SS-Brigadeführer and Police Leader Carl Oberg unknowingly freed a key operative in one of the largest escape networks in occupied Paris. It would not have been difficult to put Dr. Jackson under surveillance. His apartment in Avenue Foch was a short walk from both the Nazi Party’s Sicherheitsdienst (SD) and the Gestapo. The American Hospital where Jackson worked was directly opposite the Germans’ Neuilly Kommandatur. In failing to notice the physician’s importance, the “Butcher of Paris” missed an opportunity to shut down a vital Allied escape route. But Jackson, rather than count himself lucky and avoid suspicion, did more, not less, to resist. He sent ambulances to bring seriously ill Jews from the transit camps to the American Hospital. Tragically, when the patients recovered, the Germans sent them to their deaths.

Sumner and Toquette joined one of the many Resistance groups under the umbrella of Charles de Gaulle’s Free French in London. Through trusted friends, they had contacted the Goélette-Frégate network established in 1941 by Georges Combeau, code-named Chaloupe, in 1941. Combeau worked for Maurice Duclos, one of de Gaulle’s staff officers whose nom de guerre was Saint-Jacques. Goélette-Frégate included many railroad laborers, who for the most part supported active resistance to the Nazis, at Issoudun in Berry. Their primary objective was to send intelligence to de Gaulle and the Allies in London. The Jacksons’ apartment in Avenue Foch became one of their mail drops. A courier using the code name Verdier, or Greenfinch, picked up and stored papers there. This work was perhaps more dangerous than aiding the escape of soldiers. At the hospital, many people could come and go without question. Bringing résistants and compromising documents into their apartment exposed Sumner and Toquette to denunciation from watchful eyes in a quarter of
Paris filled with Pétainist Frenchmen and Nazi intelligence offices.

The heavens above Neuilly that spring afternoon saw the drama of bombardments, dogfights and crews floating earthwards in parachutes to avoid being burned alive. Below, the Renault plant was on fire. The Luftwaffe shot down at least four of the B-17s and just as many fighter escorts. The air war was beginning to cost the Americans, as it had the British for two years, thousands of planes and crewmen. It was also magnifying the danger to Dr. Jackson and the other résistants who were dedicated to saving the Allied survivors. Americans, British, Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, South Africans and free Poles and Czechs were parachuting onto French soil in greater numbers. For the Resistance, including Sumner Jackson, returning them to fight the Nazis risked torture and execution.

In 1943, the lack of food in Paris had, in General de Chambrun’s words, “reached its crucial point.” The hospital had to feed five hundred staff and patients, who desperately needed a sufficient calorie intake to guarantee their recovery, as well as fifty unpaid volunteers and a group of elderly Englishmen in a hostel. Ninetta Jucker, an Englishwoman who was not interned because she had an infant child, wrote that the house for old Englishmen beside the American Hospital had been a retreat for old women before the war. The Germans requisitioned it and left it empty, until the American wife of a pro-Vichy French diplomat managed to have the house reopened as a hostel in the spring of 1943. Its inhabitants paid no rent, but contributed the small sum of thirty francs a day for three meals at the American Hospital. The Hospital had to feed the elderly British subjects along with everyone else - more than six hundred people daily - when France was nearly starving.

“The problem was solved,” Clara de Chambrun wrote, “by making large farming contracts for regular supplies. Three departments collaborated in this effort: Comte de Caraman and M. Hincelin in Seine-et-Oise, M. André Dubonnet in Seine-et-Marne, and Alexandre de Marenches in the Eure lent their acres to furnish vegetables and fruits.” Otto Gresser recalled that the lawns and flowers that had made the grounds of the hospital so congenial to patients like André Guillon in 1940 were dug
up and replaced with furrows of tomatoes, beans, carrots and potatoes. Gresser himself was buying as much food as he could on the black market and from the wholesale food markets at Les Halles, where the vendors knew him as the hard-bargaining “Ferdinand.”

On Bastille Day morning 1943 in Paris, Phillip Jackson cycled past German sentries in the Avenue Foch and near the Arc de Triomphe through deserted streets to the American Hospital in Neuilly. Phillip was carrying eggs from the family’s maid, Louise, for his father. On arrival, Phillip asked Elisabeth Comte where his father was. Sumner was operating on a patient, so the boy went up to the roof to wait. The summer morning was tranquil, until German anti-aircraft batteries suddenly erupted with fire. American Flying Fortresses cruised the sky over Paris towards the air base at Le Bourget and dropped their payloads. Like his father from the same roof on 4 April, Phillip watched the Luftwaffe and the American Eighth Air Force dueling in the sky. Bombs fell, air gunners fired at one another, planes screamed in flames to the ground and parachutes snapped open. To the fifteen year old, the sight was unforgettable, almost hypnotic. Then his father appeared on the roof. Wearing a blood-spattered surgeon’s white robe, Sumner Jackson shouted, “Damn, Pete! Get the hell out of here. Shrapnel’s flying all around.” In the distance, American airmen were burying their parachutes and running for cover.

At the end of his shift, Dr. Jackson and his son bicycled with Toquette to their house on the lake at Enghien to spend the rest of the holiday with Toquette’s sister, Tat. When Philip recounted the story of the air battle he had seen, his mother ordered him to stay off the hospital’s roof. This seemed strange to a boy whose parents let him risk his life to photograph German naval installations at Saint-Nazaire. That was war. To be injured by falling ack-ack was unnecessary voyeurism.

The Jacksons’ lives were increasingly threatened. Toquette told Sumner that SS-Brigadeführer Carl Oberg was paying 50,000 Francs to anyone who led his agents to an Allied flyer in hiding. Those assisting the airmen would be shot. Someone had already taken the money, and one British airman disappeared. The informer responsible was himself murdered by the Resistance. One Resistance cell, she said, had been penetra-
A month after Phillip Jackson watched the 331st Squadron of the American Eighth Air Force from the hospital’s roof, a crewman from one of the downed Flying Fortresses suddenly appeared at the American Hospital. Gladys Marchal, a British woman working for the Resistance, delivered the nineteen year old tail-gunner to Dr. Sumner Jackson. The airman’s civilian clothes did not fit, and he did not look or speak French. Joe Manos was a half-Greek, half-Polish American from New York City, who, like Jackson, stood just over six feet tall. Joe had been on the run for a month, since that 14 July morning when Philip Jackson saw his plane shot down. Two of Joe’s crewmates had been killed inside the B-17. Joe had parachuted from 16,000 feet with seven others onto a field of sugar-beets near Le Bourget. Joe was separated from the other seven and wandered along a country road. Two Frenchmen spotted him and warned that a German soldier was cycling past. Joe hid in the brush, until the two men returned with a car, covered him in firewood and took him to a safe house. By the time Gladys Marchal brought Joe to the hospital, he had been in three safe houses waiting for the Resistance to bring him false travel documents. Somehow, though, the résistants could not obtain the papers he needed.

Jackson took Joe into his office, which the teenaged American remembered as “a nice place, well furnished. A citation framed on the wall caught my eye and I believe it was the French Legion of Honor.” After giving Joe a thorough physical exam, Jackson asked Elisabeth Comte to lodge the airman in one of the rooms for patients. “Everything, bed and linens were spotlessly white,” Joe wrote later. When they could not find a safe house for him, the Jacksons invited Joe to their apartment at 11 Avenue Foch. They had taken the precaution of asking Toquette’s sister, Tat, to keep their son at Enghien for a few days. “I suppose my mother thought that at fifteen, being with an American B-17 gunner was a bit too much for me,” Phillip Jackson told his father’s biographer, Hal Vaughan, years later. “I think my father brought Joe to the apartment on the back of his bike.” Even without Phillip there, Joe’s presence was a hazard. A neighbor might denounce them to the Nazi SD secret police in
the same street. Sumner knew the danger of mixing different Resistance networks. The American Hospital was part of one, and Goëlette-Frégate was another. Sumner had kept them separate to avoid the possibility of a captured résistant revealing under torture the secrets of both. Toquette fed Joe on their meager rations, and she contacted the escape networks to get him out of Paris before the Germans found him.

Gilbert Asselin of another Resistance group, Libération, was the man Toquette decided could provide Joe with the papers he needed and a safe route to Spain. When she asked Asselin to take responsibility for Joe, the Frenchman did not hesitate. He moved him into the flat of his mistress, Lise Russ. Joe spent long, dull hours there, waiting to go outside again. At any moment, he knew, a neighbor might guess he was there and inform the police to claim a reward. The Germans were searching everywhere for Joe and the rest of his B-17 crew, arresting French men and women whom they suspected of assisting them. After three weeks, everything was ready. Asselin presented Joe with counterfeit documents and delivered him to another safe house near Sainte-Foe-la-Grande. From there, Joe was taken to Toulouse in southwest France to wait for an escort to lead him over the border to Spain. In late October, along with RAF Squadron Leader Frank Griffiths, he was taken across the Pyrenees. Spain did not automatically mean freedom. Spanish police arrested Joe and Griffiths in Barcelona, where a German officer was allowed to interrogate them. For more than a month, they were moved with other Allied airmen from prison to prison. At the end of November, the Spaniards released them to the British Consul and allowed them to cross the border to Gibraltar. Back in England, Joe gave a full account to U.S. military intelligence of his escape route and the help he had received from Sumner and Toquette Jackson.

In December 1943, Dr. Jackson had an unexpected caller at the hospital. Twenty-nine year old Erich Posch-Pastor von Camperfeld introduced himself as Etienne Paul Provost. His long record of resistance to Hitler would have been unknown to Dr. Jackson. During the Anschluss in 1938, his Austrian regiment fought to prevent Nazi annexation of their country. His punishment was a year at the Dachau concentration camp.
On his release, he was taken into the German Army. When Germany invaded Russia in 1941, he was wounded on the Russian front. The army transferred him to France in February 1942 to oversee an armaments factory on the Atlantic coast at Niort. He managed to slow down the monthly production of bomb fuses from 13,000 to about 1,000. While in Niort, Posch-Pastor discussed politics with his landlady, Madame Missant. She was a Goélette agent, who told Paris operations chief Renaudot, R, about the dissident Austrian. R, who had already sent Phillip Jackson to photograph Germany’s U-Boat base at Saint-Nazaire in the summer of 1943, enlisted Posch-Pastor into the Goélette network in October 1943.

Posch-Pastor had brought Dr. Jackson plans from his cousin, who worked in the Wehrmacht’s munitions department in Paris, of the secret V-1 rockets and their locations. The Germans were building dozens of launch sites along the northern French coast, identical structures with long ramps, loading bays and storage sheds. Posch-Pastor could not rely on the normal mail drops in Paris to send the documents to London. The information was too important to leave anywhere, including the Jacksons’ apartment in Avenue Foch, that might be under Gestapo surveillance. Posch-Pastor was instructed to deposit the V-1 plans in a public place where the comings and goings of large numbers of people would not attract attention. He introduced himself to Dr. Jackson, had a short conversation and surreptitiously left the documents in Jackson’s office. Jackson passed the plans through a series of couriers and cut-outs, along a circuitous route to Brest, on to a priest in the village of Lannils and, finally, to a safe house on the English Channel. There, British sailors and airmen were waiting for a Special Operations Executive (SOE) boat to carry them home. The boat crossed the Channel in darkness just after Christmas 1943 and delivered the V-1 plans to England. The Allies repeatedly bombed the V-1 sites marked on Posch-Pastor’s maps, significantly reducing the rocket’s threat to the planned invasion of Normandy.

In Paris, the Jacksons’ existence became more precarious. Their health suffered from lack of nutrition, and Sumner contracted pneumonia. He wrote to a French friend in the United States, a former surgical
nurse named Elizabeth Ravina, “about starvation and the family’s dire need of clothing.” Clemence Bock’s diary recorded, “He was drawn and careworn and went about in an old army sweater with a hole that showed his elbow when he took off his long surgical coat. He went back and forth to Neuilly on a bicycle.” All he had to keep warm while cycling through rain and snow that winter were an old flying helmet and some fur gloves.

At the American Hospital, Otto Gresser came to see Jackson’s clandestine activities as routine: “He from time to time hid one or two air-borne American or British soldiers who had been shot down but weren’t killed. He would hide and take care of them. Of course, it was very serious. This continued for a long time and I remember very well in full war there were two British soldiers in the corridor of the Hospital.” Although some of the hospital staff knew that Jackson was aiding the underground escape network, no one appears to have denounced him to the Germans. If General de Chambrun had any suspicions, he kept them to himself. But, by the spring of 1944, too many people knew the secret.

On the morning of 24 May, Dr. Jackson was doing his usual rounds of patients at the American Hospital, when two French “policemen” in Milice black shirts and berets suddenly entered the hospital looking for him. The Milice agents forced him into their car and drove full-speed to the Avenue Foch, where both the Gestapo and the Sichereitsdienst had bureaus. But they did not stop at either. They took Dr. Jack to the corner of Avenue Foch and Rue Traktir, his own house. Inside, other miliciens were holding his wife and son at gunpoint. Black-shirted gunmen took the family outside to the garden, while the others ransacked the apartment. When the Milice officers were distracted, Toquette gave her Resistance papers to her maid, Louise, and sent her on an errand.

At lunchtime, the Jacksons invited the miliciens to eat with them. Afterwards, Sumner and the Milice commander smoked cigars in the garden. Phillip used the opportunity to arrange the curtains on the side street, rue Traktir, to indicate to anyone from Goélette that a meeting scheduled for that evening was cancelled. The Jacksons were not allowed to use the telephone and remained under Milice guard all night.

The Milice roused the family early in the morning and crammed
them into the back of a police Citroen. They headed into the countryside south of Paris and did not stop until they reached Vichy. The miliciens deposited Phillip at their headquarters in the Petit Casino. They took Sumner and Toquette to another interrogation center in the Château des Brosses. This mid-nineteenth century folly had two great turrets and a double exterior staircase up to the main door. Sumner and Toquette were led inside and taken upstairs, where they were locked in separate rooms for the night. The miliciens kept them apart until the next evening, when they permitted them to have dinner together on a terrace outside. The treatment of the doctor and his wife was strangely courteous. They were even allowed to speak English, something they took advantage of to agree what to say if they were interrogated.

Toquette wrote, “We were all arrested on May 25th [the day they were taken from Paris], not because we were Americans, but because we were working for the underground liberation movements, what we call the ‘Resistance’, we were therefore political prisoners and much worse off than regular prisoners of war.”

After two nights at the Château des Brosses, Sumner and Toquette were taken back to Vichy and locked up in the Petit Casino. The Milice headquarters in the casino had evolved into a center of secret confinement, interrogation, torture and execution. Sumner was locked in a cell on the first story with his son, while Toquette stayed alone on the floor above. Phillip had spent the three previous days without food in the chateau’s dungeon, fearful, hungry and occasionally hysterical. The sixteen year old boy was under intense strain, but his father’s arrival was comforting. Then, the interrogations began. The Milice questioned the Jacksons separately, a standard police tactic to uncover contradictions and lies. Toquette managed to send a letter to her sister, Tat, on Wednesday, 31 May, which referred to two previous letters she had written. “Today is the day Pete should have taken his examinations for the Baccalaureate,” she wrote, “and I haven’t seen him since Friday.” She added, “My courage is being tested to the extreme not so much for me as for Pete and also for Jack; if I knew that he was free my particular fate would be less painful.”

On 6 June, the Allies assaulted the Normandy coast and fought one
of history’s greatest battles to gain a foothold in Adolf Hitler’s “Fortress Europe.” Many of the young airmen flying over the beaches, as well as some of the soldiers fighting on the ground, made it to D-Day only because Dr. Sumner Jackson had helped them to escape from France. They had been spared prison, but Jackson had not.

Sumner, Toquette and Pete Jackson, enduring Milice interrogation in the Petit Casino, were unaware that the liberation they longed for was underway. The Milice turned them over to the Gestapo on 7 June, twenty-four hours after the invasion.  

Inquiries by the American Hospital, the American Legation in Bern, the Red Cross and the Swiss Consulate in Vichy were turning up only fragmentary details of the Jacksons’ incarceration. Vichy made the search for the Jackson family more difficult by repeatedly lying to the Swiss Consul, insisting it knew nothing. But American diplomats had received accurate information on 6 June, when Toquette’s brother in Switzerland “informed U.S. Legation his sister, her husband and son had been arrested on 26 May 1944 by the French authorities and transferred to Vichy.”  

Misinformation was clouding the original, reliable report. Leland Harrison, the U.S. Minister in Bern, sent a telegram to Secretary of State Cordell Hull on 13 July 1944, saying that “Swiss Legation Vichy reports it has been informed by Secretariat Mainain [sic] Ordre that inquiry made of French Milice Vichy and Paris reveal Americans mentioned arrested by German police and not (repeat not) taken Vichy.”  

A later State Department cable reported, “On June 27, 1944, the Swiss Legation in Vichy reported that the Secrétariat d’Etat au Maintien de l’Ordre advised that the Jackson family had been arrested by the German authorities and that, to its knowledge, it had never been taken to Vichy.”

In mid-June, after interrogating Sumner, Toquette and Phillip Jackson, the Gestapo sent the family on a circuitous journey that would be hard to follow. Through the Swiss, the State Department learned that the Jacksons “finally had been sent by the Germans to the Prison in Moulines.”

On 22 June, Toquette wrote to her sister, “I saw my son and my husband the other day during an inspection. They are together and that
makes me happy.” At seven in the morning on 7 July, father and son were hand-cuffed together and moved again. Toquette was left behind at Moulins. Phillip recalled, “Journey by bus, rather trying, without water, in a burning sun. We had left Moulins at 7 a.m. and reached Compiègne the next day at 3 a.m. We were handcuffed from the start at Moulins till the arrival the next day at Compiègne…”  They reached their destination at three the next morning. Sumner had been at Compiègne’s Frontstalag 142 in September 1942 as an internee. When he and Phillip arrived, the American and other enemy alien internees had been moved. The Compiègne camp, now a holding pen for political prisoners, retained some of the privileges of its first years. Phillip noted that there were “Red Cross parcels - no work; the only trouble was vermin, fleas, lice en masses.”  

As in 1942, Jackson’s stay at Compiègne lasted only a week. In 1942, that seemed a long time. In 1944, it was too short. This time, General de Chambrun did not arrive to take him home. On 15 July, which Phillip called “a fatal day,” he and his father were force-marched with about 2,000 other political prisoners to the train station “where we are pushed into cattle wagons for Germany.” Three days later, the train arrived at Neuengamme KZ concentration camp. The men’s’ bare bodies were inspected by guards. Each prisoner was given old and tattered clothes, “not fit for a beggar to wear,” and wooden shoes. Sumner was prisoner number 36,462, his new identity stamped on canvas strips sewn into his jacket and trousers. Phillip was Number 36,461. Sumner Jackson and his teenage son became American slaves of the Third Reich. It was 18 July, the day that the Allied armies broke out of Normandy on their way to Paris.

One of the prisoners at Neuengamme when Sumner and Phillip Jackson arrived was Michel Hollard, the head of France’s Agir Resistance network. Hollard had, like Erich Posch-Pastor, alerted the Allies to the V-1 rocket. The Gestapo captured him and subjected him to the baignoire, a torture that would later be called “water-boarding,” in which he was forced backwards into a bath of water and held under for varying periods. His repeated half-hour sessions, dunked and dragged up from the water, left him vomiting and sick. He did not betray the other
members of his network, and he was transferred to the Fresnes prison in Paris and then to Compiègne. The SS took him to Neuengamme, where he became prisoner 33,948, in early June 1944. Sumner and Pete met Hollard shortly after their arrival. Hollard later told his biographer of “a remarkable American called Jackson, formerly a doctor at the American Hospital at Neuilly.” Jackson, like Hollard, had helped the Allies to eliminate much of the V-1 threat when he passed along the plans that Erich Posch-Pastor had brought to his office. The American and French résistants became friends, surviving together twelve-hour days at hard labor in the Walther small arms factory.

“Nobody knew why they had been deported and Jackson never talked about it,” author George Martelli wrote, with help from Hollard himself, in The Man Who Saved London. “A man of sixty [in fact, fifty-eight], very upright, with white hair, strong features, and a stern, almost hard expression, he appeared as a person of great energy and forceful character. He was extremely reserved in manner and this and the dignity with which he supported [i.e., stood] the camp life immediately aroused the sympathy of Michel, with whom he soon established a tacit understanding. During their weekly meetings few words were exchanged and those only of a strictly practical use.”

To survive Neuengamme was almost impossible. The Poles, Russians, Danes, French and other prisoners were worked to death, and many were murdered. For the slightest infraction, men were hanged in the camp square. The Nazis secretly hanged many more in a row of cells from ropes permanently attached to rings in the ceilings. As at Auschwitz, there was a crematorium to dispose of the bodies.

Jackson told Michel Hollard of his desperation to tell his family in America that he and Phillip were alive. Hollard smuggled a post card out of the camp to his sister in Switzerland, who wrote to Jackson’s sister, Freda Swensen, a nurse living in Belmont, Massachusetts. When Freda read the letter, she notified the American government. The United States was certain at last that Dr. Jackson was alive. But the American Army was a long way from Neuengamme.

In the absence of Dr. Jackson, the American Hospital of Paris needed all of the seventy-two year old General de Chambrun’s energies to
remain, in its final hours under occupation, as free of Germans as it had been throughout his stewardship. His other duty was to prevent it from becoming a battle ground between the Resistance and the German garrison beside the hospital. The count worked day and night, helping the hospital to function amid shortages caused by fighting on the roads into Paris and overseeing the treatment of civilian and Resistance wounded.

The American Hospital in Neuilly had been unmolested by the German garrison at its Kommandatur headquarters facing the hospital’s main gate in the avenue de Victor Hugo. The area commander, an Austrian colonel named Bernhuber, had at his disposal a thousand combat troops with six large and twelve small cannon, five tanks and about eighty trucks. In addition, he told General de Chambrun, his men had machine guns and an unlimited supply of ammunition. The tanks were usually stationed at the traffic roundabouts to command the wide boulevards. Their strength was sufficient, the Germans believed, to keep order in tranquil Neuilly.

When Germans parked military vehicles near the hospital’s main gate for protection from Allied air attack, General de Chambrun went to Colonel Bernhuber and requested, officer to officer, “I ask you to consider that the flag of the Red Cross protects the hospital, not the cars of the Wehrmacht.” Colonel Bernhuber immediately ordered the vehicles moved away from the hospital.

The Germans erected a large Stützpunkt on Neuilly’s Avenue de Madrid to guard access to the town hall, the Kommandatur and the American Hospital. The bunker was “a fortress capable of withstanding a siege,” René de Chambrun wrote, based on his father’s reminiscences: “This strongpoint was under the command of a fanatic officer, Major Goetz, who had ordered his tanks to fire on the town hall.” Major Goetz’s unit was not under Colonel Bernhuber’s command. It reported directly to the Paris military governor, General Dietrich von Choltitz.

The German wounded needed emergency care. For the first time during the occupation, the Germans requested admission to the American Hospital. “It is impossible for me to evacuate about forty of our wounded from the Kommandatur,” Colonel Bernhuber said to General
de Chambrun. “Would you be able to receive them?” Aldebert agreed at once, and the German casualties were brought in on stretchers. Because the hospital’s beds were already taken, the Germans had to be lodged in the corridors. Otherwise, the hospital staff cared for them just as they did the French.

Meanwhile, the three Jacksons were still in German custody. The Gestapo had sent Toquette from Moulins to Romainville, near Paris, on 2 August. At Romainville, the Germans were holding 550 female political prisoners. Toquette was one of three American citizens in the camp. Romainville was one of the camps that the Red Cross was permitted to visit, and conditions were better than Toquette had experienced in Vichy and Moulins. Toquette’s sister, Tat, visited her at the camp on 10 August for a half hour. Toquette was unable to tell her where Sumner and Phillip had been taken from Moulins, where she last saw them. With each passing day, the women listened for news of the Allied advance that would set them free. The Abbot of Lilas was scheduled to say Mass for the women on the morning of 15 August, the Feast of the Assumption, but a German guard, woke the women early shouting, “Nicht Messe… Morgen, Alles transport Deutschland, tous mourir… tous mourir.” This mixture of German and French meant, “No Mass… Morning, all [to be] transported to Germany, all to die… all to die.” The women were herded onto buses. Virginia d’Albert-Lake slipped some letters to the French driver, who told her, “Since this morning, I have driven prisoners without stopping from Fresnes and Cherche-Midi to the station at Pantin.”

“You mean they are evacuating all the prisons in Paris?”

“Yes,” the driver answered.

She asked, “And the Allies… aren’t they advancing?”

“Yes. They are at Rambouillet.”

Rambouillet would not fall for another three days. As Toquette Jackson, Virginia d’Albert-Lake and hundreds of other women who had fought hard to liberate France rode in buses through Paris, they knew that the city would soon be free. From the sidewalks, people who had not resisted looked up at them in shame. They were then loaded on
crowded, airless carriages bound for Eastern France, but the railroad bridges had been bombed. They walked about five miles through fields to the town of Nanteuil-Saacy, whose inhabitants called out to the prisoners, “Bon courage!” and “Vive la France!” Strangely, a contingent of Red Cross personnel was waiting at the train station with boiled potatoes and milk for the prisoners. A few hours later, a cargo train took them to Germany. The train trundled slowly east for four days, until it reached the outskirts of Weimar. There, the SS separated the male from female prisoners. On 21 August, the women arrived at Ravensbrück Konzentrationslager, built in 1939 to house slave labor for the Texled textile and leather factory and the Siemens armaments plant.

As soon as they entered the camp, the prisoners were forced to strip completely. The guards wrapped their clothes in brown paper, as if they would be returned one day. Each woman was forced to undergo a gynecological examination for contraband, with no gesture towards hygiene. Most of the women, including Toquette Jackson, had their heads shaved. They were issued camp uniforms - baggy trousers without belt, a pajama shirt and a loose robe. Veteran prisoners warned the new arrivals not to drink the water, which was infected with typhoid. It would be better, they said, to drink the foul-tasting but boiled ersatz coffee. Ravensbrück was not a death camp, where prisoners were gassed or shot en masse. It was a place where the Third Reich’s enemies died of starvation, overwork and disease.

On the day Paris was liberated, Secretary of State Cordell Hull sent an urgent telegram to the American Minister in Switzerland, Leland Harrison. “Telegraph exact location Moulin [sic] and request Swiss to report urgently latest known whereabouts of Jackson family.” The Americans were out of date, Sumner and Phillip Jackson having been removed from Moulins and taken to Neuengamme KZ concentration camp a month earlier. The State Department put together what information on Sumner, Phillip and Toquette that it could from a variety of sources. Minister Harrison informed Cordell Hull on 28 August that all three Jacksons may have been moved to Germany “as hostages.” Hull fired back instructions that the Swiss insist, on America’s behalf, that the Germans reveal
their whereabouts. The Germans did not respond.

Paris was free, but Sumner Jackson was a slave laborer working on a forge at the Neuengamme concentration camp near Hamburg. His middle finger became infected and had to be amputated by a fellow prisoner, a Czech surgeon. Jackson worked fourteen hours a day, while his seventeen-year-old son Phillip labored in the kitchen from midnight to two o’clock each afternoon.

In the eight months prior to April 1945, as Germany was falling to the Allies, Phillip estimated that the Germans murdered 35,000 prisoners. On 21 April, the British Army reached the outskirts of Neuengamme. The Nazis herded its remaining inmates into cattle wagons for the train journey to Lübeck. Ten days later, most of the prisoners were put aboard three ships in the harbor. Sumner and Phillip boarded the 6,000 ton cargo carrier Thielbeck. On 8 May, Phillip wrote a letter to his “Dear Friends” that told what happened next:

[T]he “Thielbeck” on which we both were, my father and self, [hit] by rocket carrying Typhoons. The Cap [d’] Ancona was set on fire by the projectiles. Fortunately I was on deck and was not hit by the projectiles. I waited 5 minutes in hopes of seeing my father. I could not see him. I then jumped into the sea.¹⁰³

Dr. Sumner Jackson was never seen again, and his body was not recovered. The brave American partisan, who refused all compromise with the Nazis from the day they occupied Paris, died two days after Hitler killed himself in Berlin and four days before Germany surrendered.

Phillip Jackson, believing his mother had already died in a concentration camp, volunteered for the British Army. Toquette, however, had survived many months in the Ravensbruck camp, although badly disabled from starvation and exhaustion, to be repatriated to Sweden through the efforts of Count Folke Bernadotte. She and Phillip were reunited in Paris two months after the German surrender. On 18 July, Toquette wrote to Sumner’s sister Freda, “I want you to know that I never ceased to be in love with Sumner for whom I had forever a great admiration and respect. He had such big qualities.”¹⁰⁴
Sumner Jackson’s qualities became the subject of reminiscences by those who knew him best at the American Hospital, which, as during the First World War, became an American military hospital with the arrival of American forces. The Jackson family’s unwavering commitment to resisting tyranny only enhanced the hospital’s tradition of caring for wounded French, British and other allied wounded in two wars and covered it in honor.
ENDNOTES


3. Minutes of the Executive Committee, American Ambulance Hospital, 7 August 1914, in “Minutes of the Ambulance Committee Meetings of the American Hospital of Paris, commencing August 3, 1914 and ending December 30, 1915” page 887, American Hospital of Paris (AHP) Archives.


6. Dr. George W. Crile, speech to the Clinical Congress of Surgeons of North America, Boston, October 1915, quoted in Frank H. Martin, Digest of the Proceedings of the Council of National Defense during
the World War, Chicago, 1934, page 45.


9. Ibid., page 327.


11. Ambulance Committee Minutes, 10 September 1914, AHP Archives.


17. Ibid.


19. Minutes of the Ambulance Committee, 27 September 1914, AHP Archives.


in his memoir Stretcher (Yale University Press, 1929), “Once started, the infection may spread so rapidly up the muscle bundles that death from gas gangrene of an entire limb has been known to occur within 16 hours from the time of injury. The treatment, if it can be called that, was to flay the tissue exposing the anaerobic bacteria to oxygen which kills it. However, the treatment rarely works and gas gangrene killed thousands and thousands of our men.”


25. Charles Bove, Ibid., page 60.


29. General Services Administration, Statement of Service, Date: April 19, 1965, Massachusetts General Hospital Archives, File: Dr. Sumner Jackson. The document shows that Jackson was commissioned a First Lieutenant of the U.S. Medical Reserve Corps on 23 July 1917. See also, in the same file, Headquarters, United States Army Cantonment, Camp Devens, Massachusetts Special Orders No. 221, September 12, 1919, Discharge Papers, when Jackson was honorably discharged as a captain.


31. Letter, Edward B. Close to General Maisonnet, 26 April 1939, in
“Executive Committee Meetings, 1933-1950” AHP Archives.

32. “American Hospital to Open New Angoulême Hospital” New York Herald Tribune, 8 June 1940.


35. Donald Coster interview with Kathleen Keating, “The American Hospital in Paris During the German Occupation” 19 May 1981, fourteen page typescript, page 6, American Hospital of Paris Archives, File: German Occupation by Kathleen Keating and Various Other Histories, 1940-1944.


37. American Library of Paris Archives, Box 9, File E.3, Letter from Dorothy Reeder to Mr. Michel Gunn, Rockefeller Foundation, 49 West 49th Street, New York, 19 September 1940.


42. André Guillon, “Testimony of a French PoW on His Time at the Ame-
rican Hospital of Paris” thirteen-page typescript in French, page 1, American Hospital of Paris Archives, File: André Guillon. (My translation.)

43. André Guillon, Ibid., page 2.

44. Note: Coster went to North Africa as one of the vice-consuls in the spy network that Robert Murphy had established under the Murphy-Weygand Agreement ostensibly to monitor American relief shipments. Afterwards, he took part in the Normandy landings as an intelligence officer. After the war, he had a career with the CIA in Vietnam and Algeria.


46. “Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Governors of the American Hospital of Paris” 19 September 1940, American Hospital of Paris Archives, File: Correspondence and Reports, 1941, and Minutes, 19 September 1940 to 7 November 1941.


49. “Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Board of Governors of the American Hospital of Paris” 21 November 1940, page 7, American Hospital of Paris Archives, File: Correspondence and Reports, 1941, and Minutes, 19 September 1940 to 7 November 1941.


51. “Nazis Ease Plight of Seized Americans” United Press report, Vichy, New York Times, 29 January 1942, page 6. There was only one Ame-
rican hospital in Paris, and enemy alien internees were not hostages under international law.


57. Clemence Bock diary, quoted in Hal Vaughan, Ibid., page 54.


61. Hal Vaughan, Ibid., page 56.

63. “Several Americans Released in France, Dr. Jackson of Hospital at Neuilly Is Among Those Freed” New York Times, 3 October 1942, page 6. The paper added that another released detainee was Mrs. Charles Bedaux, “but her French-born husband is still interned at St. Denis.” Bedaux was by then at Compiègne.

64. Hal Vaughan, Ibid., page 62.

65. Goélette-Frégate’s nomenclature was distinctly nautical. Goélette is French for schooner, frégate is frigate; and a chaloupe is a rowboat. Saint-Jacques is a scallop. Although they helped résistants and Allied soldiers to go by sea from Spain and Portugal to England, all their operations were on land in France.


70. After-action report, quoted in Hal Vaughan, Ibid., page 93.

71. Hal Vaughan, Ibid., page 94.


73. Frank Griffiths, Ibid., page 178.

74. Of the seven other B-17 crew who survived, two were captured and the other five received help from the Resistance to escape to Spain.

75. Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, Is Paris Burning?, Simon and

76. Collins and Lapierre, Ibid.

77. Hal Vaughan, Ibid., page 105.


81. Handwritten letter from Charlotte (Toquette) Jackson to her sister-in-law, Mrs. Clifford (Freda) Swensen, 18 May 1945, Massachusetts General Hospital Archives, File: Sumner Jackson.

82. Note to American readers: European style is to call the ground floor merely the ground floor or, in French, rez-de-chaussée. The floor above, the second floor in the U.S., is called the first floor. In U.S. terminology, Sumner and Philip were on the second floor and Toquette on the third.

83. Letter from Charlotte Sylvie (Toquette) Jackson to her sister, Alice (Tat) Barrelet de Ricou, 31 May 1944, quoted in Hal Vaughan, Ibid., page 112. The Baccalaureate is the equivalent of an American high school diploma.


85. Letter via airmail pouch from Minister, American Legation, Bern, to Secretary of State, 8 June 1944, Document 351.1121, Jackson, Sumner W./6-2944, U.S. National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

86. Incoming Telegraph, Harrison to Secretary of State, 13 Jul 1944,
RG59, Decimal File, 1940-44, Document 351.1121 Jackson, Sumner W./7-1344, U.S. National Archives, College Park, Maryland.


89. Phillip Jackson, handwritten letter, 10 May 1945, op. cit.

90. “Paragraph of a Cable Received” from Leland Harrison, U.S. Minister to Switzerland, to Secretary of State, 2 June 1944, Cable number 3504, U.S. National Archives, College Park, Maryland, RG389: Records of the Provost Marshal General, American POW Information Bureau, General Subject File, 1942-1946, File: Vittel Vosges (Frontstalag 194). Harrison wrote that the Germans moved the camp because “black market operations were indulged in by certain elements at Compiègne for quite a while.”

91. Phillip Jackson, handwritten letter, 10 May 1945, op. cit.


93. General Aldebert de Chambrun to the Board of Directors of the American Hospital of Paris, 9 December 1944, page 5 (of a seven page typescript), in Archives of the American Hospital of Paris, File: American Hospital Report: 1940-1944. Otto Gresser, the hospital’s superintendent of administrative services during the occupation, wrote that the Germans in Neuilly had “18 guns, 5 tanks, 60 trucks and a large supply of munitions.”


97. Telegram Sent, (Secretary of State Cordell) Hull to Amembassy London, 14 September 1944, RG59, Decimal File 1940-1944, Box 1160, Document 351.1121, Jackson, Sumner W./9-1444, U.S. National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

98. Letter from Julia Barrelet de Ricou, American wife of Toquett's brother, to Mrs. Franklin Roosevelt, 1 November 1944, RG59, Decimal File 1940-1944, Box 1160, Document 351.1121, Jackson, Sumner W./9-664.


100. From the journal of Virginia d'Albert Lake, quoted in Catherine Rothman-Le Dret, op. cit., page 96

101. Ibid., page 97.


103. Letter from Phillip Jackson, 8 May 1945, written at Holstein, Germany, Massachusetts General Hospital Archives, Dr. Sumner Jackson file.

104. Letter from Charlotte Jackson to Freda Swensen, 18 July 1945, Massachusetts General Hospital Archives, Dr. Sumner Jackson file.
Throughout both world wars, the American Hospital of Paris remained faithful to its mission of providing care.

With steadfast support from the American community in France and the United States, the American Hospital of Paris provided medical treatment, assistance and comfort to thousands of wounded members of the French and Allied forces.

Solidarity, Commitment, Sacrifice.

To commemorate the 70th anniversary of D-Day and the 100th anniversary of World War I, read up on the history of the American Hospital of Paris. Discover the men and women who engaged in the fight for freedom.

www.american-hospital.org