

Stanislaus Historical Quarterly



An Independent Publication of Stanislaus County History

Hammond General Hospital

1942-45



Stanislaus County's Army Hospital

23,500 Soldiers Treated ◆ 2,000 Employees

Dr. William Alexander Hammond

Hammond General Hospital was named for Dr. William Alexander Hammond, a former Civil War Surgeon General, a medical scholar, who specialized in neurology.

Hammond was born on August 28, 1828 in Annapolis, MD, the son of Dr. John W. and Sarah (Pinkney) Hammond. At the age five, his family moved to Harrisburg, PA, where he attended a local academy. He began studying medicine when he was 16, graduating with a medical degree at the age of 20 from New York City University. After completing his internship at a Philadelphia hospital, he settled in Saco, ME to practice medicine. After a few months, he decided to join the Army, being commissioned as an assistant surgeon in July 1849. Not long after, he was sent to New Mexico, serving three years at nine different posts. In 1852, he became ill and was granted a leave to recuperate in Europe. From there he was assigned to West Point, followed by appointments at Fort Meade, Fort Riley, and Fort Mackinac. He studied nutrition and its effects on physiology, publishing a paper in 1857, for which he received an award from the American Medical Association.

He resigned from the Army in 1860, taking a position as chairman of the anatomy and physiology department at a Baltimore medical school. His first Civil War involvement was to treat wounded soldiers of the 6th Massachusetts infantry, who were fired upon while marching through Baltimore. He decided it was time to return to the Army, which he did in May 1861, assuming the rank of assistant surgeon. He was sent to West Virginia to inspect camps and hospitals. The U.S. Sani-

tary Commission was impressed by his work, urging his immediate promotion to Surgeon General of the Army, which occurred in April 1862. As Surgeon General, he increased the amount of medical supplies, provided better clothing for patients, built more military hospitals, helped to establish the Army Medical Museum, formed a permanent hospital corps, created a military medical laboratory, and founded a general hospital in Washington, D.C. In spite of these major accomplishments, War Secretary Edwin Stanton became critical of Hammond, relieving him of his office in August 1863, assigning him to inspect sanitary conditions in New Orleans. Hammond demanded to be restored to office or be put on trial. He was tried on the charge of irregularities in the purchasing of medical supplies. The trial was a bitter one, politically-charged, resulting in a guilty verdict. He was discharged from the Army in August 1864, settling in New York to practice medicine. He taught at a number of medical schools, while inaugurating two medical journals.



Surgeon General William Hammond
Web photo

In 1878, Congress restored his Army commission, listing him as a retired Surgeon General. In 1888, he relocated in Washington, D.C., establishing a sanatorium for the treatment of nervous and mental diseases. After a long and successful medical career, he passed away on January 5, 1900. RLS

Cover photo: Hammond entrance. All photos in this issue are from "A Camera Trip Through Hammond General Hospital, 1944."

Featured in the next issue: Stories of those from Stanislaus County who served in the military during World War II

Stanislaus Historical Quarterly

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Hammond General Hospital

1942-1945

A Massive Army Medical Facility in Our Midst

It began once again, the maiming, the killing, and the incomprehensible atrocities. Europe was at war once more. We tried to stay out of it as we did during the Great War, earlier in the Twentieth Century. We tried to confine ourselves to our insular womb, with the protection of two enormous oceans from the distant battles. But this war was different, because of advances in technology, especially in aircraft and submarine construction. Because of that and other technological improvements, those two oceans were no longer the colossal buffers between us and them.

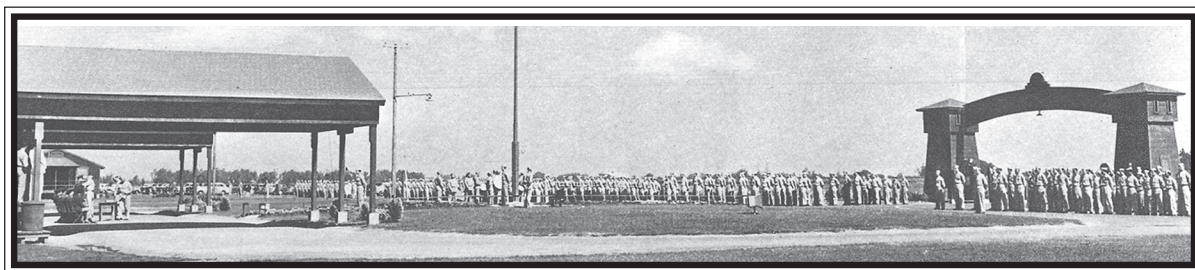
It took the attack on Pearl Harbor to stir us from our isolation and propel us into the worldwide fray, something for which we were not prepared. There would be casualties, enormous casualties, because of the war's magnitude and weaponry. Within hours after Pearl Harbor, our country's leadership saw the need to establish military hospitals and induct medical personnel to serve in them. The planning began at the War Department, and before long, our community was asked to host a massive Army hospital, Hammond General Hospital.

Northwest Modesto Is Selected

News that Modesto would host the site of a new Army hospital was telephoned to the *Modesto Bee* on January 19, 1942, from Washington, D.C., by Congressman B.W. Gearhart, representative of the local district. Rumors had been rampant, but now it was conclusive that it would be Modesto, selected from among several other locations in California and Nevada, which included Sacramento and Reno. On December 27, 1941, two Army officers, representing the medical corps and quartermaster corps, investigated three sites near Modesto, all within walking distance from one another. On December 29th, the Modesto Chamber of Commerce dispatched its secretary, R.L. Kimmel, to Washington, D.C. to lobby for the hospital. County, city, and local irrigation district authorities pledged their cooperation to the War Department, concerning issues of power, sewerage, and the closing off of a road and canal. Modesto offered to enlarge its sewer system and link it to the hospital's network. The county agreed

to close McDonald Avenue as a thoroughfare, because it bisected the hospital property.

Direct access to major transportation routes was one significant reason why Modesto was chosen, with Southern Pacific Railroad and Highway 99 being just adjacent to the chosen site. The local municipal airport was turned over to the



Hammond General Hospital's entrance

Hammond photo

Army to serve as a landing field for military transports ferrying in the wounded. Stanislaus County's dry climate was considered ideal for recovering patients, and the region was free of feverish diseases. Another consideration was the hospital site was near the coast, where there were many military installations, but inland, protected by coastal mountains from enemy attack. These and other factors caused the War Department to choose our area for an Army hospital.

Size and Cost

The selected property was one-and-a-half miles northwest of Modesto, lying between Shoemaker and McDonald avenues. The War Department budgeted \$3 million for the 1,500-bed hospital complex, which would have several hundred buildings. Construction plans began in February 1942, under the management of the Army Corps of Engineers in Sacramento, with Army Surgeon General James Magee having final authority for the hospital's configuration.

Initially, 141 acres were chosen for the hospital, but within 48 hours, the Army asked for an additional 40 acres, wanting to increase the size of the hospital to 3,000 beds. The government committed itself to paying \$200 per acre for the original 141 acres and fully for the extra 40. The remainder of the purchasing funds would have to come from local sources.

After some deliberation, city officials agreed to contribute \$20,000, which was matched by the county, for a total of

\$40,000 from public coffers. The Modesto Chamber of Commerce formed a fund-raising committee, seeking donations from local businesses. The chamber's president, R.G. Benson, headed the committee, which consisted of Arthur Puccinelli, Norman West, Paul Bomberger, Evelyn Evers, Jack Wherry, Peter Maddy, Everett Turner, E.L. Sherman, and Clarence Blemker. After canvassing Modesto businesses, the committee raised \$9,850.

structures, with fireproofing, meant more permanency than one-story buildings, cantonment types, constructed cheaply. Initially, the War Department was leaning towards two-story structures. Colonel John Hall, Army Medical Corps, drafted the specifications for the various structures and urged the Sacramento office of the Army Corps of Engineers to begin with 25 two-story structures, with fireproofing, to house a minimum of 1,500 beds, with 60 patients per building. Over



Hammond General Hospital's headquarters

Hammond photo

Ultimately, the average price for the 181 acres would be \$507 per acre. James Abernathy received \$22,000 for his 55 acres; William M. Breazeale, \$40,000 for his 47 acres; Joe Barboni, \$16,500 for his 38 acres; Domonico DeLuca, \$9,000 for his 28 acres; and Nellie S. Maze and Avis M. Tillson, \$4,400 for their jointly held ten acres. These acreages and costs are in round numbers, as provided by the *Bee*, so the actual figures were a trifle more, but basically, it cost a little more than \$92,000 for the 181 acres. Paul S. Bomberger received \$4,100 for serving as the real estate agent, resulting in an overall cost of approximately \$96,100. As recommended by the War Department, the Modesto Irrigation District (MID) purchased nearby acreage, to hold in case the hospital's physical plant needed enlargement later on.

Because the hospital was a war emergency, the sellers were given very little time to remove existing buildings. Army and civilian surveyors were already at the site, preparing the layout. MID began its work to supply water and electricity, while the city made preparations for sewage control. Congressman Gearhart remarked: "This is undoubtedly the best military project which has been awarded to the State of California. Modesto is fortunate, indeed, in having secured this mammoth hospital. It will be a permanent asset to the community and will employ as much local labor as it is possible to secure for the construction work."

Permanency of the Hospital

The permanency of the hospital was an immediate issue, because of the region's intended investment in employment and finances. Would it close at the end of the war? Would it become a veterans' hospital? The people of Stanislaus County and adjoining counties wanted to know. Two-story hospital

100 buildings would be needed for patients, a medical staff of 1,000, and other support units.

Word was received on February 19th that the hospital would have one-story frame cantonment type structures, with white asbestos siding and shingles, similar to barracks used to house U.S. troops elsewhere. It was a disappointment, because it meant the buildings were intended to be temporary; nevertheless, construction bids were requested from civilian companies.

It was announced on April 2nd that T.G. Meyer Construction Company of San Francisco had been awarded the contract of \$1,750,000 to build 113 buildings of various types. Meyers would employ 750 workers, with subcontractors using between 500 to 750 employees. Oscar Vetter was awarded the plumbing contract; Seabrook & Stroud, the utilities contract for sewage, water, and gas; and Collins Electric Company, the electrical contract. The general agreement called for the construction of "wards, administration buildings, mess halls, barracks, clinics, and certain scientific buildings." Barracks and wards would be 25 by 150 feet in size, with three miles of covered walkways connecting the various buildings. Construction would begin immediately, with September 1st set as the completion date. An additional \$750,000 was allocated for roads and utilities, increasing the overall cost of Hammond to \$2,500,000.

Hospital Personnel Arrive

On April 2nd, the hospital's commanding officer, Colonel L.R. Poust, arrived, establishing his headquarters in the Modesto Chamber of Commerce building. From the beginning, he was in touch with the community, speaking to various civic groups

and luncheon clubs about the new hospital. The hospital's adjunct officer, Major E.J. Gearin, reported for duty on June 5th, followed by hospital engineer, Captain C.Y. Hendricks on June 15th. Lieutenant S.J. Cunningham appeared the next day, who would be the hospital's quartermaster, and on June 27th, Colonel U.R. Merikangas, the hospital's executive officer, checked in, rounding out the staff of major administrative officers.

Dr. Dwight C. Baker, president of Modesto Junior College (MJC), announced that his institution would offer an accelerated program to train nurses for the new Army hospital. It was determined that the hospital would need at least 170 nurses, 70 doctors, and 700 enlisted personnel. On May 25th, it was announced that another 34 buildings were to be installed by October 1st at an estimated cost of \$100,000, to provide further housing and medical training quarters for additional 800 Army personnel.

First Patients Arrive

Captain Catherine Sinnott arrived early September from Camp Blanding Station Hospital in Florida, to serve as chief nurse at Hammond. She held the Distinguish Service Medal for her World War I service in France. During the months of July and August, the hospital's enlisted men arrived, many to serve as technical personnel, dieticians, laboratory technicians, physical therapy aides, and x-ray technicians. In August, the hospital hired a large number of civilians to work at the facility, providing maintenance, assisting in security, and operating the laundry and utilities. Red Cross field director, Theresa Golden arrived at the hospital, to supervise a force of recreational workers, social workers, and office help. On September 7th, Hammond received its first patient, Corporal Wallace Walker, who was treated at the neurosurgical center for acute jaundice. In October, the hospital received its initial group of 40 patients, followed by its first overseas patients.

Colonel Poust requested special zoning near the hospital from the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors and its planning commission. He was concerned that "Juke Joints, attracting vice and other unfavorable elements," would be built adja-

cent to the hospital. Public hearings were held in September concerning the issue in Superior Court Judge B.C. Hawkins's courtroom. The result was the county board zoned an area of one-half mile around the hospital for family dwellings and agricultural use. In other action, the State Railroad Commission authorized the construction of a railroad crossing for Blue Gum Avenue, since the McDonald Avenue crossing had been closed. On September 23rd, Colonel Poust spoke to the Modesto Garden Club at the McHenry Library in regard to the progress of the new hospital. He thanked Frederick Knorr of MJC and horticulturalist F.L. Brooks for their assistance in landscaping the hospital grounds. The Modesto Garden Club, led by Mrs. Herbert Wilson and Knorr, raised money to purchase plants and materials for the project.



Patient's dining room

Hammond photo

In November, Virginia Garrison, Director of the Hospital Camp and Service Council of the local Red Cross chapter, issued a call for items to equip dayrooms at the hospital. Requested were musical instruments, reading lamps, smoking stands, chairs, and tables. The council met at 1122 14th Street with representatives of local women's and civic organizations to plan for the collection of the donations. Though Omega Nu had already stocked the hospital library with books, additional books were requested along with magazines and other reading materials.

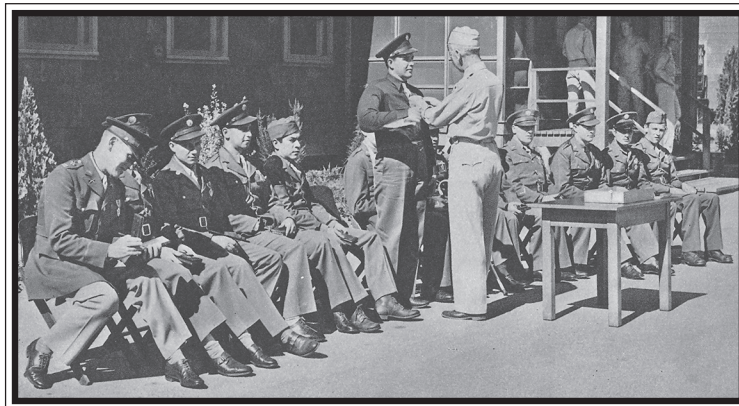
Hammond held dedication ceremonies on Armistice Day, November 11th, with Colonel Poust presiding, who dedicated the hospital "to serve the wounded." Other speakers were: Modesto's Mayor Carl W. Shannon, Chairman Leo Hammett of the Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors, and Vice President R.L. Ustick of the Modesto Chamber of Commerce. The invocation was given by Father J.C. Mills of St. Stanislaus Catholic Church, with the benediction by Rev. Arthur Wallace of the First Methodist Church. Music for the dedication was furnished by the Modesto High School Band, directed by Professor Frank Mancini. After the ceremony, the visitors were given tours of the hospital.

Community Entertainment

The local community formed a Hammond entertainment committee consisting of Rev. Arthur Wallace, Melvill Harris, E.J. Mitchell, Virginia Garrison, Josephine Dunkley, H.F. Blanchard, Howard Chrisman, and Jack Wherry serving as chairman.

November entertainment programs were held at the hospital's Red Cross recreation hall, featuring Frank Mancini and his band, Helen Cassel in a piano recital, Betty Belle Anderson's dancing team, Jack Hazard and the high school choir, and Betty Eckenrode, vocalist, accompanied by Imogene Klaer, both from MJC. Entertainment was scheduled every Thursday at 2:30 P.M. and Sunday evenings. On December 12th, the Modesto Symphony Orchestra performed, under the direction of Mancini. The showing of motion pictures, provided by Jules Laurent of Hollywood, became a common fair at the hospital.

The hospital chapel was dedicated on December 16th, in a ceremony attended by Hammond members and community guests. Colonel Poust presided, with hospital chaplain Lieutenant Colonel Witt conducting the service, being assisted by Rev. T. Ross Paden of Modesto's First Presbyterian Church. Poust noted in a *Bee* article that "a church was a basic unit for an Army post organization, identified with the earliest army organization in the United States." Captain Sinnott cut the ribbon to open the new chapel, with its doors remaining



Medals ceremony, with Colonel Poust presiding

Hammond photo

ment, Hammond had become a fully operational village. Colonel Poust thanked the community: "We are indebted to the citizens of Modesto and the surrounding communities for the interest shown in the activities of the hospital and for the material aid they and the civic institutions have put forth to make this institution a part of the community, and for the personnel of the Hammond General Hospital, who feel they are a part of the community."

Servicemen's Club

In January 1943, a servicemen's club was opened in Modesto at 921 I Street. A community committee consisting of Carol Couture, E.E. Arington, Dan Mellis, Dr. J.B. Simms, Dr. E. L. Gilson, Dr. B.S. Taylor, Ray Whitburn, and R.L. Ustick (chairman), raised \$4,000 in two months to fund the facility. The two-story club, opened 10 A.M. to 11 P.M. daily, was primarily for Hammond's enlisted men to enjoy a time of recreation and relaxation. There were

many amenities available: a juke box, soda fountain, writing desks, reading materials, shuffleboard, ping-pong, pool table, and board games. Also, there was a locker room with washing facilities and showers. Upstairs was a lounging area. Dances for servicemen were held weekly at the Odd Fellows Hall, under the coordination of Mrs. Neil Matteson.

In February, Hammond's Red Cross field secretary, Theresa Golden, asked the community to donate recreational equipment and household salvage items for crafts. In March, the War Department allocated \$1 million for the construction of additional buildings to increase the number of beds by 500 and to enhance the recreational facilities. The new construction was contracted out, employing several hundred civilian carpenters, electricians, plumbers, and laborers. The sewer system was extended as well, for an additional cost of \$200,000. The construction project would take four months to complete, bringing the total cost of the hospital to nearly \$5 million.

On April 8th, it was announced that six civilian employees, who served as dietitians and physical therapy aides, were given Army commissions as second lieutenants, having completed six months of training. Military dietitians were required to hold a college degree in home economics and have six-

Betty Belle (Anderson) Smith recalls Hammond:

I started teaching ballroom dancing to the ambulatory patients, recruiting my friends to be partners for the classes. There were a lot of crunched toes for the girls, because army boots were pretty clumsy and heavy. After they learned several dances (fox trot, waltz, swing, etc.), we would get a small local band and have a party with dancing and punch and cookies. It was fun and rewarding for both the patients and for us. They were so appreciative of our entertainment.

open 24-hours daily. The chapel consisted of seating for 350, with an altar designed to be adapted for Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish services. The chapel's interior was finished in natural wood trim on white walls, featuring a choir loft, and a peaked roof.

The hospital complex included a post exchange, for the purchasing of personal items, and five mess halls, serving over 5,000 meals daily. By the end of 1942, to everyone's amaze-

months training as a dietitian aide. They supervised the preparation of special diets and the serving of meals. Military physical therapists coordinated massage treatments and heat and water therapy. Those given commissions were: Velma Eichorn, Marjorie Ellsworth, Lois Lamberson, Doris Lieberman, Evelyn Smith, and Olive Smith.

Battle Shock

In May, there was a discussion concerning battle shock or fatigue (Post-Traumatic Syndrome) exemplified in fighting men from the Pacific Theater. This was of interest to Hammond because of its specialization in neurology. One Army psychiatrist commented:

The strain on the fighting man produced nervous symptoms that never have been seen before and may never be seen again. These men broke down mostly after the fight was over, not in the course of it. We believe that never before in history have such a group of healthy, toughened, well-trained men been subjected to such conditions as the combat troops. Most of us consider night as a time for rest and sleep, and the Japanese centered their activities on this period. They were taught a few American words or phrases, chiefly threatening or profane, and the dark hours were filled with this abuse. They were Machiavellian in their cleverly timed bombings and raids. Sleep was impossible or negligible. Weight losses in muscular, toughened young adults ran as high as 45 pounds. Rain, heat, insects, dysentery, malaria, all contributed, but the end result was not blood stream infection nor gastrointestinal disease, but a disturbance of the whole organism – a disorder of thinking and living of even wanting to live. And this incredible strain lasted not one or two days or nights but persisted for weeks and weeks. Headaches, keener hearing for sharp noises, periods of amnesia (forgetfulness), sensory somatic complaints (pains all over), marked muscular tenseness, tremors, pulses. Even after their arrival at our hospital, the slightest sharp or sudden noise would cause them to jump or run from the room. Many arrived with cotton stuffed in their ears.

Colonel Poust asked local hunters in a *Bee* article to refrain from shooting in the vicinity of the hospital “in order that patients under treatment for nervous disorders will not be unduly disturbed by noises incident to hunting.”

More housing was needed in the surrounding area for civilians employed at Hammond and regional defense plants. There had been a wartime moratorium on the construction of new housing imposed by the National Housing Authority (NHA), because construction materials were needed in the war effort. NHA ruled that new housing could be constructed in the Modesto area, for government employees, as long as it met NHA requirements. The houses were to have four rooms, a

floor space of 800 square feet, hot water heaters, floor furnaces, hardwood floors, and cost a total of \$3,750 to construct, including the price of the lot. The suggested cost of rent was \$35 a month. A total of 66 houses were constructed in Modesto under the NHA program, one subdivision near Oak Street and another by Wilson School.



Physical therapy

Hammond photo

yard and an apricot orchard. Captain Clarence Bittenwieser managed the garden, employing both patients and enlisted men. All harvested fruit and vegetables were used in the hospital's mess halls.

Victory Gardens

Victory Gardens were popular throughout the nation, with Stanislaus County having its fair share of the patriotic vegetable patches. Hammond cultivated a Victory Garden of 12 acres, plus a vine-

Victory Bonds

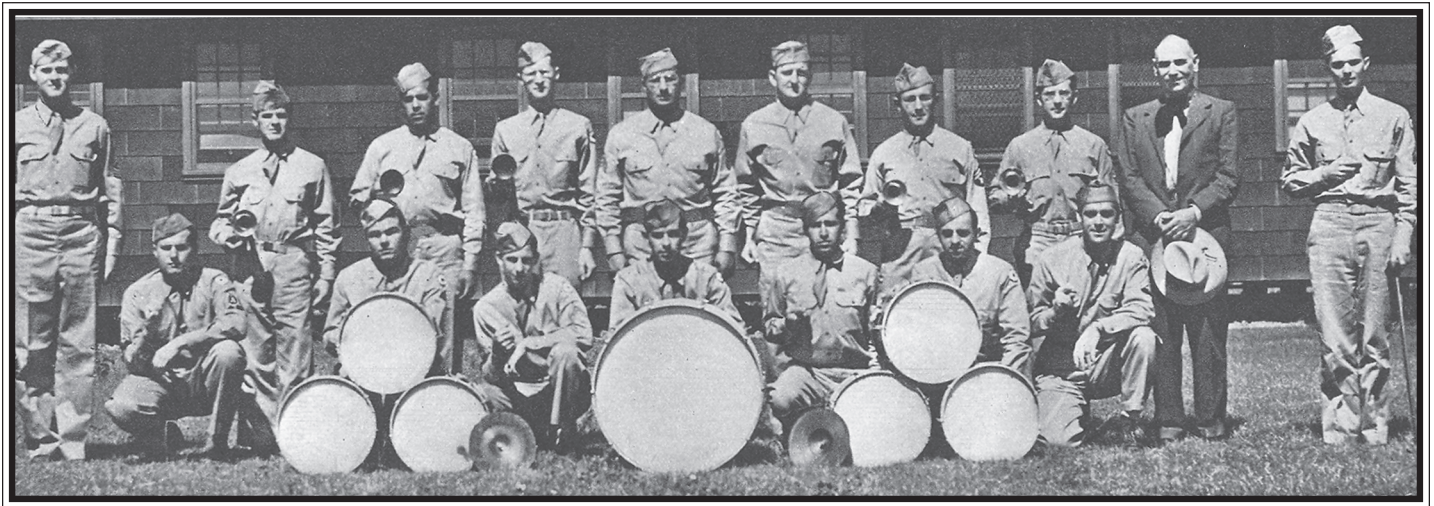
The war needed funding, giving rise to a number of Victory Bond drives. In June, Hammond civilian employees earned the “Minute Man Victory Banner,” because 90 percent of the employees committed 10 percent of their salaries towards war bonds. In another bond drive, civilian employees increased their commitment to 15 percent or about \$240 average monthly. They raised enough money to earn a bonus that was used to provide an Army Jeep for a medical battalion in New Zealand.

Hammond formed a number of musical groups to perform at the hospital and in the community. One such group, Rhythm Commandos, played July 9th at the Odd Fellows Hall, for a weekly dance for military personnel, sponsored by the Golden State Rebekah Lodge No. 10. Later in July, the hospital's Band and Bugle Corps appeared with the Stanislaus County Boys Band in concert at the West Side Park on Fourth Street. The hospital band played marches by John Philip Sousa.

Swimming Pool

Hammond received \$1,723 from San Joaquin Chapter No. 15 of Disabled American Veterans of the World War, for the construction of a swimming pool. The Standard Materials Company of Modesto contributed \$650 in materials, while Neil Cecil of the MID provided the labor and machinery to survey and excavate the pool. Charles Warner Company, Gravel Products Company, United Lumber Company, and the Kiwanis and Lion Clubs of Modesto contributed to the effort. The result was a 200 square-foot pool, available for hospital patients and Army personnel. It was the largest pool in the

estimated that 2,000 new nurses would be needed each month. Nurses accepting Army commissions received special training at Army Nurses Corps (ANC) centers, learning about “nursing care of malaria and tropical diseases, neuropsychiatric nursing, the delicacy of plastic surgery technique and its postoperative care,” as described in the *Bee*. They also had to complete basic combat training, i.e., “20-mile hikes, carrying full pack equipment, digging trenches and foxholes, crawling a 75-yard stretch, under a low aimed spread of live bullets from machine guns, setting up and tearing down their own tents, learning the effects of various gases, and how to use



Hammond band, with special guest, Frank Mancini

Hammond photo

Army’s Ninth Service Command, a proud achievement by the community, veterans, and the Army.

In the nation’s third Victory Bond drive, ending in early October, Hammond military personnel, civilian employees, and patients bought \$80,000 worth of war bonds. Not content with merely risking their lives in battle, Hammond patients, such as Private Dean Carver, who served 20 months in the South Pacific, purchased a total of \$6,500 in bonds.

Many patients and Army personnel shared their war experiences in the community. Hammond’s Captain Arthur Schultz spoke to members of the Modesto Exchange Club about his service as an Army doctor in the South Pacific. The hospital held a graduate medical conference in October, with 150 Army doctors in attendance, sponsored by the American Medical Association and the American College of Surgeons. Professors from Bay Area medical schools lectured and headed discussion groups.

Nurses Needed

As the war continued to engage more American military personnel, more medical professionals were needed. It was es-

timated that 2,000 new nurses would be needed each month. Army doctors and nurses were able to save 97.5 percent of those wounded.

On October 18th, Modesto Post No. 74 of the American Legion hosted a dinner and provided entertainment for Hammond nurses at Dania Hall, showing its appreciation for their invaluable service. The principal speaker for the evening was District Attorney Leslie A. Cleary, who commented: “Nurses are doing much to aid servicemen who have been wounded or who have become ill. The influence of these women will have much to do in getting the veterans back into civilian life in a proper frame of mind.” Colonel Poust and Captain Sinnott appealed to nurses everywhere to join the Army Nurses Corps.

First Anniversary

Award ceremonies were commonly held at Hammond, at which Colonel Poust presented medals to the recovering soldiers, such as Purple Hearts, Silver Stars, and other service awards. The occasion was formal, with the military men and women in dress uniform, preceded by a review and ceremonial parade, with marching music. The first anniversary of the hospital was celebrated the last week of October, with

3,000 military personnel and civilians in attendance. There were speeches, demonstrations, tours, medal ceremonies, and musical entertainment, featuring the Hammond Drum and Bugle Corps, and other instrumental and vocal performances.



Some of Hammond's nurses

Hammond photo

In the evening, there was a dance for enlisted personnel, with Hammond's Rhythm Commandos contributing the music. Another dance was held at the Officers and Nurses Club, featuring the Stockton Air Base Band.

The Army at this time was not racially integrated, but there were African-American servicemen. Since there was a servicemen's club in Modesto, the community wanted to open a similar facility for African-Americans. In November, such a facility was opened, with a call for community help to complete the furnishing of the new club. On December 15th, Modesto opened recreational clubrooms at 914 J Street for nurses and military women. Bessie Singleton coordinated the campaign to provide such a facility. Local organizations and individuals contributed the funding, which included: Kiwanis Club, Modesto Steam Laundry, Pacific Grape Products Company, Chapman Dehydrator Company, Dr. A.A. Meyer, William J. Silva, Mellis Brothers, Modesto Empire Traction Company, Modesto Chamber of Commerce, Junior Chamber of Commerce, Joe Kelly, and Stanislaus District No. 20, BPOE.

As winter approached, so did interest in basketball. Modesto High School gymnasium was available for hospital hoop action in early December. "Hammondites" lost its first game against a team from Stockton Air Base, 24-22, in overtime. It was common for military teams to have former collegiate and semi-professional basketball players. The captain of the Hammond club was Staff Sergeant Hal Adams, who played at University of Oregon and had been a member of a New York City basketball team. On December 10th, MJC's varsity team defeated a hospital squad by 43-23.

Recycling Materials

Orders came from the Army's Ninth Service Command Headquarters to reduce use of military vehicles by 25 percent. Already at a hardship level, Hammond relinquished nine vehicles to be used by other military units. Colonel Poust com-

mented: "It will mean more 'doubling up' and longer hours for our personnel, but the drivers are willingly cooperating to affect the much needed savings in critical tires, gas, and equipment." Conservation was important at the hospital. In a *Bee* report, Captain S.J. Cunningham estimated that 24,000 lbs. of tin, mostly from the mess halls, had been collected at Hammond since the beginning of 1943. Other scrap metal was collected as well, such as cooper, brass, and aluminum.

The hospital saved fat, meat scraps, and bones from its cooking services. For 1943, it amassed 60,000 lbs. of fat and 6,000 lbs. of meat scraps and bones. The fat was sold to soap manufacturers, while the meat scraps and bones went to the manufacturing of fertilizer, glycerin, and charcoal. Monitoring food wastage was done continuously in the kitchens and mess halls. It was reported that only food the size of a lettuce leaf found its way to the garbage can per one patient per day. There were salvage and reclamation programs at the hospital for clothing, rubber, leather, glass, paper, oil, and other recyclable materials.

Three civilian women operated the Hammond clothing and equipage repair shop. Bertha Hunt, Ethel Allard, and Jessie Nelson were responsible for repairing nearly 3,000 garments, saving the hospital \$1,000 a month. Another cost saving measure was the reuse of surgical gauze. In six months, the hospital had reclaimed thirteen miles of gauze. The used gauze was soaked, re-soaked, washed, and dried at the hospital's laundry facility. Next, patients were given "stretching boards" to return the gauze back to its normal shape. Then, the reclaimed gauze was sterilized and put to use. Of the nine bolts of gauze used weekly at the hospital, the reclamation project

returned seven bolts for reuse. Paper waste was another concern of the hospital. Wastebaskets and other containers were inspected daily to control waste. The Hammond laundry was operated by 52 civilians, with over 4 million pieces being laundered each year, at a cost of .27¢ per piece. Lieutenant Harold Myklebust supervised the facility that took normally five days from laundry pickup to returning the laundered clothing.

Christmas 1943

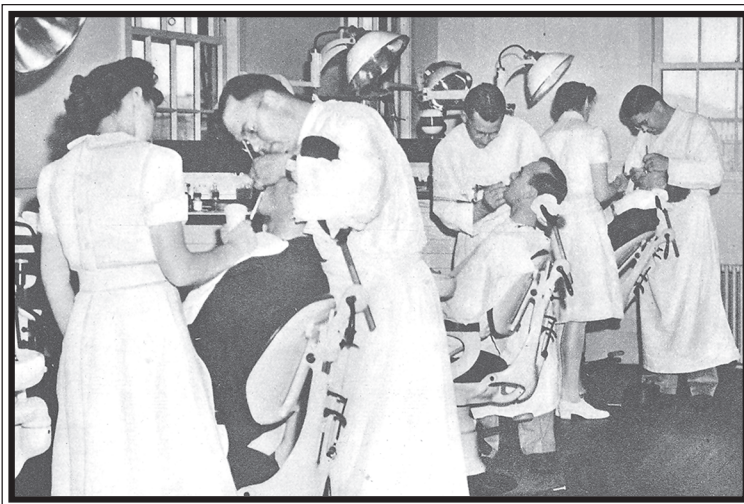
Civilian support for the hospital was astounding. Local organizations and individuals contributed hugely to Hammond's mission. The Gray Ladies of the Stanislaus County Chapter of the American Red Cross were responsible for keeping the wards and sunrooms supplied with flowers, and reading and writing material. For Christmas 1943, the group gave a hospital-wide Christmas party, with the Stockton Air Field Orchestra providing the music. There were Santa Clauses and Christmas trees. Every person at the hospital received a gift of some kind. Margaret Bell, senior recreation employee for the Red Cross at Hammond, commented with gratitude: "Their untiring efforts on behalf of the patients have gladdened the hearts of all with whom they have come in contact." There were parties for the children of military personnel and civilian employees, an employee luncheon, and holiday dances at the NCO club and Modesto's Elks Club.

KTRB Programs

To end 1943 at Hammond, the local radio station KTRB aired a half-hour program of interviews with officers, staff, and patients. Colonel Poust spoke of the accomplishments of the hospital and thanked the community for its contributions. Unique medical operations were discussed and in particular the 19 facial operations that Private Delbert Raymond, a Guadalcanal veteran, had undergone. Music for the program was provided by Hammond's Melody Makers, a 15-piece dance band, under the direction of Staff Sergeant Mark Berke.

On January 12, 1944, KTRB inaugurated a weekly radio broadcast series from the hospital that aired from 8:30 to 9 P.M., featuring interviews and music. Known professional entertainer, Private Arturo Canzano, played his guitar and

sang as he did in the stage and movie versions of "This Is the Army." Sergeant Luckie served as the program's announcer, as he did for many of the hospital's special events. Also KTRB had a weekly 15-minute program, 8:30-8:45 P.M., known as the "Hammond Kwiz Session," pitting the wits of the nurses against the officers.



Dental facility

Hammond photo

More Combat Men

As the Allies stepped up their offense, more able-bodied men were needed for combat duty. An order was issued on March 7th from the Army's Ninth Service Command that 30,000 to 50,000 enlisted men at its military installations were to be replaced by civilian employees. The announcement read in part: "No military personnel will be employed in jobs that can be performed by available civilians, with women-power given priority." More

"women-power" was needed in the military as well. Two WAC patients, Privates Alma Boddy and Amelia Arndt, urged local women to join the Army, serving in the signal corps, medical corps, quartermaster corps, and ordnance. The WACs wanted "women between the ages of 20 and 49, of excellent character, married or single, without children under 14 years of age, who can successfully pass the mental and physical requirements of the Women's Army Corps." Keeping its military personnel in good physical condition was a priority at Hammond. There was a 150-yard obstacle course, with six successive obstacles "designed to test the coordination and stamina necessary for field service of the overseas candidates." It was under the supervision of Captain James Brasfield.

Women began replacing men at Hammond as mechanics and in base security. The female MPs were versed in weapons, modern jujitsu, and military police procedures. Physical exercise and calisthenics were practiced daily to keep their skills in order. On their firearms performance, Lieutenant Hugh Eggers commented: "Although the handling of firearms is entirely new to most of the women, their pistol shooting progress has been nothing short of amazing." There were 15 female MPs at Hammond.

Reconditioning Center

In May, the hospital's reconditioning center was expanded. The facility was for patients whose medical treatment had been completed and now needed to rebuild mentally and physically to return to duty. The center was located on the east side of the grounds and was under the direction of Captain B.F. Kaye. The Hammond program on KTRB for May 3rd featured a discussion of the reconditioning program and its importance to recovering patients.

The hospital hosted an Army reconditioning conference on June 16th and 17th to exchange information on reconditioning practice. There were demonstrations and discussions on the various phases of physical, educational, occupational, and prevocational reconditioning. The emphasis was on returning the wounded soldier back to a productive lifestyle either in the Army or in civilian life. The Army training film, "Convalescent Reconditioning," was an outcome of the conference. The film was shot at Hammond in August by Paramount Pictures and the Army's Signal Corps.

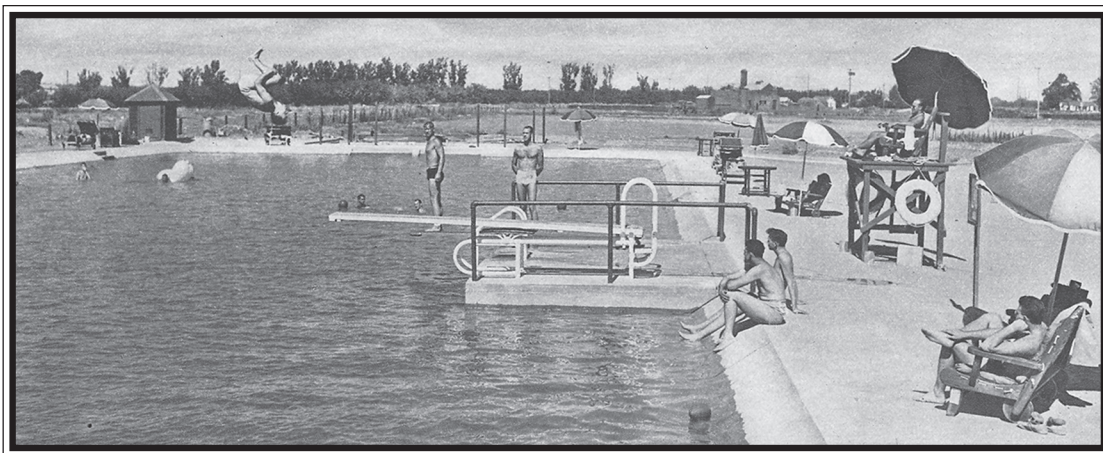
A hospital-wide communication system was installed, consisting of 80 loudspeaker units, 43,000 ft. of wiring, eight amplifiers, and two microphones. Overseas broadcasts, recorded music, and radio programs could now be heard in most sections of the hospital, especially in wards with bedridden patients.

Army information was released on August 21st about Hammond. It was one of the largest installations of its kind, built at a cost of \$4.3 million, excluding medical equipment. The hospital occupied 215 acres and held 222 buildings, with four miles of covered walkways. There were seven miles of paved streets and 22 warehouses of various sizes. The hospital proper contained 2,040 beds, and quarters for 1,006 enlisted men, 288 nurses, and 145 officers. There were four wells delivering water at 1,600 gallons per minute.

Surgical Center

During the last week of August, casualties arrived at Modesto's airport from battles in New Guinea, New Hebrides, Saipan, and the European theater. Hospital personnel met the arriv-

als, transporting them by ambulance to Hammond for treatment. It was the policy of the military to place the wounded at military hospitals nearest their homes. Hammond served as a surgical center, specializing in thoracic, chest, neurological, and orthopedic surgery. It had allocated 500 beds for neurosurgical patients and 1,340 beds for orthopedic and general surgery patients.



Swimming pool

Hammond photo

Colonel Poust appealed for more nurses: "We need nurses, practical nurses, and nurses's aides. The need for nurses to keep the death rate down can readily be seen. The situation is serious." On October 21st, Hammond celebrated its 2nd anniversary, with ceremonies and tours for a crowd of 1,500 visitors

The *Bee* ran an article on November 24th about Hammond dietitians, pointing out that properly prepared food speeds the recovery of patients. "In addition to selecting dishes for nutritious value, there is the very important detail of serving it in appetizing form," explained First Lieutenant Velma Harwood, head dietitian at the hospital. "It serves to bolster morale as well as the body." The hospital served 300,000 lbs. of food each month for 121,500 meals. Ten percent of the meals were for special diets, which were carefully prepared under the direction of five commissioned dietitians.

Christmas 1944

As Christmas neared, the Red Cross once again mounted a drive to collect gifts for Hammond patients. The gifts were wrapped at Red Cross's chapter house at 1416 J Street. There was also a call for Christmas trees, wreaths, and decorations. Two hundred patients, who were fit to travel, were granted furloughs for the holiday period. Just in time for Christmas, the hospital installed a new telephone center, which included six phone booths for patients and personnel. Twelve

lines were strung throughout 23 wards, which were connected to the central switchboard, providing bedside service. The telephone center was furnished with chairs, divans, writing desks, and reading materials for those waiting for phone calls. Hammond was part of an Army program to educate and train occupational therapists and aides. Colonel Poust commented: "Occupational therapy is one of the most important factors in the Army's reconditioning program. It is being used successfully as a curative measure, both mental and physical. It also affords the convalescing soldier an opportunity for developing natural vocational abilities." It was announced on December 27th that Modesto Rotary Club would donate \$1,025 towards a hospital bowling alley. Exercise from bowling was useful in the rehabilitation of devastated muscles and minds.



Laundry facility

Hammond photo

More Wounded

There was a huge jump in the number of battlefront wounded, causing the Army to increase Hammond's size to 2,500 beds. Those soldiers needing neuropsychiatry, neurological, and orthopedic treatment rose significantly. A contingent of 200 WACs arrived at the hospital, along with other medical personnel, occupying ten vacated barracks that had been used by a hospital unit now serving overseas. It was announced on February 24, 1945 that the hospital would be part of a \$20 million Army hospital enhancement program. Hammond would increase to 2,540 beds, plus add a gymnasium, library, and additional mess facilities. The hospital was also upgrading its existing facility, with the placement of new linoleum, landscaping, and painting, all designed to provide the wounded soldier with a cheery environment.

Answering the call for volunteer nurses, the *Bee* reported on January 30th that nurses from the four local hospitals (Stanislaus County, McPheeters, Robertson, and St. Mary's) were on duty at Hammond on a part-time basis. Those volunteering their extra time were: Dorothy Beauchemin, Wilma Schraeder, Anne Richards, Nadine Singer, Anna Mallett, Mary Brower, Pearl Fairgrieve, Theresa Campbell, Carolyn Gorud, and Madelyn Searing. By March 10th, they had volunteered over 700 hours.

The nursing shortage was critical. Sinnott, who was promoted

to Colonel, noted that only 926 nurses joined the Army in January, while 33,000 wounded had been transported back to the states in December alone. She commented in a *Bee* article: "Your wounded from overseas are calling you, and I don't think many people realize how urgent their call, until they have seen for themselves one of our wards full of paralyzed men." She continued: "Any registered nurse between the ages of 21 and 45 may wire collect to the office of the Surgeon General in Washington, D.C. requesting any information in regard to eligibility or enrollment in the Army nurse

corps or may contact the local Red Cross." The House of Representatives took action on March 7th, passing legislation that would require all women nurses who were unmarried, between the ages of 19 and 45, to register with the government, becoming available for

induction into the military. On March 20th, Hammond received 14 newly commissioned nurses from training at Fort Lewis, WA. On the same date, it was reported that nine women at Hammond were receiving emergency occupational therapy training.

Musical therapy was an important activity for patients who were bedridden and paralyzed from nerve injuries. Doctor Captain Ernest H.J. Bors explained: "The pleasure the patients are getting from learning to play musical instruments is beyond any doubt a great confidence and morale builder. And, it is to be hoped that the exercise thus afforded will stimulate the action of the diaphragm and rehabilitate breathing and abdominal muscles, which until now have been unusable." The members of Hammond's Melody Makers were the teachers, with many of the students having never read a note of music or played an instrument before. There was a shortage of instruments, causing the hospital to appeal to the community for help in obtaining them.

An Era of Transition

America's great leader, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, died at Warm Springs Georgia. On April 16th, 1,000 Hammond patients, many in wheel chairs, plus all base personnel, attended a memorial service honoring their late commander-in-chief. Hundreds of local civilians gathered as well at the hos-

pital, listening to guest speakers and singing “Home on the Range,” one of FDR’s favorites, and “America.”

The hospital’s swimming pool opened for the season on a hot May 2nd. It was considered to be the largest fresh water pool on the West Coast. Hours were 1 to 8:30 P.M. daily for military patients and personnel. It was under the management of the Reconditioning Division. On May 4th, a medals ceremony was held, with Colonel Poust presenting three Silver Stars, seven Bronze Stars, ten Purple Hearts, three Oak Leaf Clusters, and a Distinguished Flying Cross.

The war ended in Europe, and to celebrate this momentous occasion, Hammond held a victory ceremony before a crowd of 2,000 that included patients, military personnel, and civilian guests. According to the *Bee*, the theme for the celebration was “Give us humility, Lord, in our hour of triumph,” set by Captain Harold Hayward, Assistant Post Chaplain. The Hammond band played the “United Nations March,” with two patients from the European Theater speaking about their combat experience. One was Technical Sergeant Jackson Hughins, who commented:

All I’ve been thinking about is how tired the boys must be over there – how they should get every consideration. But I’m thinking, too, that the men in the southwest Pacific will be the happiest today. To them, it means getting the equipment, which has been on priority for Europe. They’ll be getting replacements and supplies. If we push ourselves twice as hard now as we think we can, the war would be really over and a lot of fellows will come back who otherwise might be killed.

Colonel Poust told Hammond patients that their “sacrifices have not been in vain.” Now that combat had ended in Europe, the drastic need for nurses vanished as quickly as it began. On May 26th, Congress announced that the legislation to draft nurses had been rescinded.

“Hello Mom!”

On June 7th, a “Hello Mom!” benefit dance was held to fund long-distance telephone calls placed by Hammond patients. The drive was part of a major telephone campaign, called “Dime a Week.” Mel Cardwell and his orchestra provided

the music at the Uptown Ballroom, which was broadcasted on KTRB, with dance prizes being contributed by local businesses. The benefit featured three Hammond patients calling long distance. Private First Class Clarence Denman talked to his mother in Phoenix, whom he hadn’t spoken to in 30 months. He had fought in the Pacific, being wounded at Okinawa two weeks prior. Sergeant Bob Covington talked to his girl friend

in Amarillo, TX, for the first time since seeing combat in France, Belgium, Holland, and Germany, where he was wounded. Private Hitashi Inouye of Honolulu, spoke to his brother, since his mother was not home. He hadn’t seen his family in 27 months. The three calls were aired by KTRB for its listeners to hear the precious moments in the lives of these wounded soldiers. Colonel Poust commented that phone calls did “tremendous good” to the recuperation of the patients, especially those who were bed-

ridden. The phone benefit collected over \$1,000 in funds.

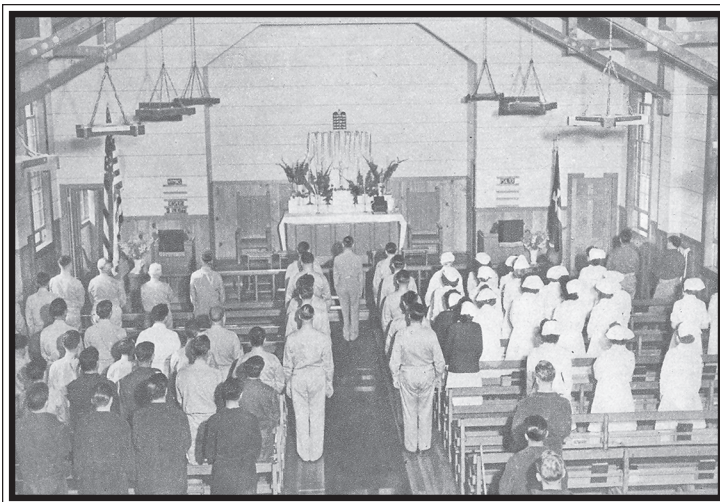
Last Six Months

In June, Hammond received a specially equipped car for the handicapped, donated by the American Legion Women’s Auxiliary. This was the third such car given to military hospitals in California. The automobile was used in the reconditioning program to provide impaired patients with driving experience. Participants were given classroom instruction on the use of the car and information on motoring laws.

Actor Sidney Toler, who played Chinese detective Charlie Chan on the stage, visited the hospital on June 23rd. He toured Hammond talking to patients, providing them with a personally autographed photo. He was accompanied by MGM actress Viva Tattersall, “putting a show on for the boys,” he noted in the *Bee* article. The patients asked for his “No. 1 Son,” and offered him detective problems to solve.

On July 13th, the Army declared that Modesto airport was surplus property, under the Surplus Property Act, and was turned back to the City of Modesto. Mayor Carl Shannon asked private individuals, groups, and businesses to consider contracting with the city on the airport’s use.

Hammond’s KTRB radio program of July 18th, celebrated



Interior of Hammond chapel

Hammond photo

the 170th anniversary of the Army Medical Corps, featuring music from the Melody Makers and songs from hospital vocalists, Corporal Ray Eisiman and WAC Corporal Joyce Frost. More than 700 local guests attended the open house for tours and to listen to music, speeches, and presentations of medals. Eisiman was guest soloist on July 27th at a summer concert in Graceada Park, with the Stanislaus County Boys' Band. The call went out for guitars for the hospital's patients, because a "hill-billy" band was forming. Also wanted was a small piano that could be moved on wheels throughout the wards. The Red Cross wanted records of popular hits, comic books, and fishing equipment for those patients who were anglers.

Hammond Is Praised

On July 30th, Major General William Shedd, commander of the Army's Ninth Service Command, inspected the hospital, giving it high praise, and being especially pleased with the swimming pool. Under the direction of Major Samuel Klor, Hammond offered prenatal to postnatal care of babies and full obstetrics to the wives of servicemen, normally costing at least \$200 in civilian life. The obstetrical ward had been delivering 30 to 40 babies a month and was anticipating an increase to 55 for the next few months.

In August, the medical supply department moved its tons of warehouse supplies to the gymnasium, where there was abundant space. Captain Harold Myklebust directed the department, noting that each month the hospital used 100 tons of supplies, which included: 500 bottles of intravenous solution, 22,000 yards of gauze, 2,000 yards of adhesive tape, 700 cans of ether, 10,000 X-ray films, 2,500 lbs. of dishwashing soap, and 6,000 bars of soap.

A patients' council of 20 members was formed in June. Suggestion boxes were installed, while council members visited patients to solicit input. By August, the council had received 73 suggestions of which 67 were implemented. A few of these were: "additional late bus service from Modesto to the hospital, Class A passes for patients in the most advanced stages of convalescence, additional materials and activity in the occupational therapy shops, expansion of the beer tavern, weekly band concerts at the swimming pool, weekly and monthly prizes for the best ideas in the suggestion boxes, and informative booklets for arriving patients."

On August 24th, Army Surgeon General Norman Kirk visited Hammond, commenting at a press conference that Colonel Poust was doing an "excellent, beautiful job" at the facility, saying the "the plant looks very good," and "the patients get excellent care. I'm very proud of Hammond." He noted that over 96 percent of the casualties survive their wounds, and death caused by disease was only .06 percent. He remarked: "The spirit of the wounded and handicapped men is great, and I'm very proud of it. They want no sympathy, charity or

pity, but just a job they are qualified to perform." Shortly after his visit, Army personnel at Hammond were authorized to wear a gold wreath insignia, known as the "Meritorious Service Plaque," signifying "superior performance of duty in the maintenance of a high standard of discipline."

Future Plans for Hammond

When asked at the press conference about the future plans for Hammond now that the war had ended in the Pacific, Surgeon General Kirk responded: "Hammond will close

when the patients get well, or when the Army decides to close it and transfers the patients." He didn't have any idea when that would be, but he noted that the buildings at Hammond were not permanently constructed, and the hospital would be the first to close, once its usefulness lapsed. He was asked if the Veterans Administration (VA) might want Hammond. He responded by saying that the VA wanted only facilities that were fireproof, and Hammond buildings were not.

The next day, Congressman Gearhart declared in the *Bee*: "There is no immediate chance for Hammond to close down, and there is a strong possibility Hammond still will be caring for patients 20 years hence." Still civilian employees at the hospital were in a state of uneasiness. WAC Lieutenant Leona Greene, Director of Civilian Personnel at Hammond, noted that the hospital needed at least 100 new civilian employees, such as laborers, clerks, storekeepers, and guards. Wages were being paid as high as \$1.11 an hour for a 44-hour work-week. However, she noted that if the hospital closes, the Civil Service Commission will assist civilian employees to find other government jobs. All employees were urged to stay until the job was finished.

The Red Cross remained on the scene, arranging entertain



Library

Hammond photo

ment and recreation. There were dances, picnics at Legion Park, and barbeques at local homes. Hobby sessions were conducted in music, stamp collecting, and fly-tying for fishermen. There were more medal ceremonies, along with recruitment sessions for a postwar Army, with two Hammond soldiers reenlisting immediately. In September, the annual horse show was once again staged on hospital grounds, provided by local equine enthusiasts, for the entertainment of hospital patients and personnel.

Closing the Hospital

Colonel Poust reported in the *Bee* on November 2nd that he had no official word about the closing of Hammond, though there were rumors that it would be closed by January 1, 1946. Three days later, word came that the hospital would be closed on December 21st, which was officially announced by the Army at the Hotel Covell. Hammond was one of 23 Army hospitals across the nation to be vacated. Modesto Chamber of Commerce petitioned the VA to consider Hammond for one of its hospitals. Chamber President Rex Kearney declared: "Because of the fine reputation Hammond has established, its central location, and low cost of operation, it is hoped the VA will recognize the opportunity of acquiring Hammond and continuing in its operation." Congressman Gearhart said he would make every effort to persuade the VA. The loss of the hospital would cost the community a payroll of over \$600,000 a month and purchases of local produce, dairy products, and poultry. Much of these local products were part of the monthly hospital consumption of 32,000 lbs. of beef, 15,000 dozen eggs, 50,000 lbs. of potatoes, 3,200 lbs. of spinach, and daily, 2,100 quarts of milk.

The community's servicemen and women clubs were scheduled to close by January 1st. Colonel Poust asked all civilian employees to remain on the job until they were released, because they were still needed to transfer patients to other Army hospitals and other to perform other duties. Hammond was averaging 120 Army discharges a week, and by mid-November, it had discharged 980 soldiers from active service.

On November 16th, Dr. Margaret Smyth, Superintendent of the Stockton State Hospital, proposed that the State of California purchase Hammond to care for the aged, paralyzed, and infirm patients now in overcrowded state hospitals. Her proposal was heard favorably by the State Department of Mental Hygiene. According to the *Bee*, Dr. Smyth described Hammond as "ideal" for state hospital patients, because it had the right facilities, with the proper equipment for surgery and psychiatric and occupational therapy.

However, the community still wanted Hammond to be a VA facility, sending California State Commander of the Disabled

American Veterans, James Rice, to VA headquarters in Washington, D.C. On December 6th, the VA announced that it considered Hammond to be 100 percent temporary, having cantonment type buildings, without fireproofing; therefore, it wouldn't be a VA hospital.

On December 21st, Hammond General Hospital closed. Over the more than three years of operation it had treated 23,494 patients, averaging daily over 2,500 patients in 67 wards. The average age of the patients was 27 years, and 87 percent were enlisted. There were 4,655 operations performed, with the majority being orthopedic surgery. There were several brain operations and one open heart surgery. The dental clinic averaged 3,000 patients monthly. At its peak, Hammond had 1,030 Army personnel and 1,016 civilian employees.

Colonel Poust was transferred to Birmingham General Hospital in Van Nuys, and Colonel Sinnott received orders to Letterman General Hospital in San Francisco. Some civilian and military personnel remained on duty to maintain the property until it was transferred to another proprietor.

On December 20th, California Governor Earl Warren sent a telegram to the Federal Surplus Property Administration (FSPA), expressing an interest in acquiring Hammond for a state mental hospital. The hospital was released by the War Assets Administration (formerly FSPA) on April 9, 1946, allowing the state to assume ownership of the facility. All medical and support equipment found at the hospital were "quitclaim deeded" to the state on October 20, 1947. The state's Department of Mental Hygiene operated the facility as the Modesto State Hospital until 1970, when it turned a segment of the property over to the Yosemite Junior College District (YJCD) on August 6, 1970 and another segment to Stanislaus County on August 10, 1970. On October 12, 1978, the county quitclaimed a portion of its site to YJCD. The county converted its property into a juvenile justice center and YJCD formed the West Campus of MJC.

Hammond General Hospital disappeared as suddenly as it had appeared. The facility did its job well, much to the appreciation of the 23,494 patients and their families. Our community's support was superb in its provision of services, goods, and revenue. It was heartening to see the facility become a state hospital, and then a junior college campus and county juvenile justice center. Though nearly all the Hammond's buildings have been removed, there are a few still serving the public and can be seen today. They are remnants of a day when there was a massive Army hospital in our midst, serving our country in a horrific war.

Article by Robert LeRoy Santos

Hammond's Victory Garden

From the *Modesto Bee*, June 8, 1943:

Men at Army Hospital Have Large Victory Garden

Hammond General Hospital's Victory Garden comes close to being a major government project. It is definitely not a backyard idea with a dozen this and that. For instance: "We picked something like a ton of radishes and expect to harvest 40 tons of tomatoes," Captain Clarence Bittenwieser was speaking.

12 Acres

He is in direct charge of the garden, which eventually will cover some 12 acres. Convalescent patients selected by their ward officers as being fit, spend two hours a day in the vegetable garden or doing other gardening work about the grounds. Instituted by Colonel L.R. Poust, commanding officer, the garden will provide considerable fresh vegetables for the army hospital. But that is only one value. The other is the therapeutic. It permits patients to get out into the sunshine, to build up their physique and to get their mind off their troubles, Captain Bittenwieser points out. Hard work is done by regular soldiers not the patients. Work periods for the latter are from 9 to 11 A.M. or 1 to 3 P.M. and the patients are watched carefully for any signs of fatigue. Any who show weariness are returned to their wards.



Hammond's Victory Garden

Hammond photo

Captain Bittenwieser declares some of the men like the garden work so much they spend two hours there in the morning and then return for the afternoon. About 60 men are released from the wards at a time, and Sergeant Grant McCutcheon sees that the men are detailed to the section, where they are needed most. Usually, about 20 are sent to the Victory Garden,

where Private Milton F. Tavernetti takes over and decides what needs to be done. Tavernetti, a graduate of the University of California, College of Agriculture at Davis, farmed 50 acres in the Salinas Valley before he joined the army.

Crops Are Varied

The crops are varied and among them are potatoes, peppers, egg plants, tomatoes, corn, parsley, salsify, radishes, Swiss chard, beets, squash, beans, watermelons, cucumbers, muskmelons and sweet potatoes. And in addition to the vegetables garden, soldiers take care of a vineyard and an apricot orchard, which were on the land when it was purchased for the hospital. Captain Bittenwieser has praise for the way individuals and business firms aided in the project. Although the hospital has two tractors, other equipment was lacking. Business firms and farmers readily lent the necessary items while even some seed was donated.

Edited by RLS

Inaugural Issue of Stanislaus Historical Quarterly

This is the first issue of a new periodical entitled Stanislaus Historical Quarterly (SHQ). The purpose of SHQ is to provide the reader with freshly researched Stanislaus County history on all topics for information and reading enjoyment. Also, SHQ will be deposited in historical archives found at libraries and historical organizations for future usage. The intent is for each issue to address subjects that are significant to Stanislaus County history, toward the end of building a bank of history that the citizens of our county richly deserve. Many readers may recall former work by SHQ's editor, Robert "Bob" LeRoy Santos, found in Stanislaus Stepping Stones, where he contributed over 30 articles and was the editor for a time. SHQ will continue his program of timely topics and correct historical standards, providing the reader with quality research and readable histories. Bob is a native

of the county, having graduated from Downey High School, MJC, and Stanislaus State, the latter with a degree in history. He earned an MSLS from University of Southern California and holds the academic title of Emeritus Librarian and University Archivist at Stanislaus State, retiring after serving 34 years at the university. He has published books and articles, mostly on California and local history. Currently, subscriptions and issues of SHQ will be provided at no cost to the reader, but readers must notify the editor to be placed on the mailing list. Manuscripts of articles may be submitted to the editor. Ideas for articles or historical information concerning topics of county history are eagerly sought and may be sent to the editor. SHQ is edited, copyrighted, and published by Robert LeRoy Santos, Alley-Cass Publications, 2240 Nordic Way, Turlock, CA, 95382. Tel: 209.634.8218. Email: blsantos@csustan.edu