
OUR EUCOM HOSPITALS: THE 279 TH STATION HOSPITAL

By

Major Henry J. Eggler, MSC*

The hospital plant now occupied by the 279th Station Hospital is located at 44-46 Unter den Eichen, Lichterfelde West, in the City of Berlin. Construction of the hospital was begun in 1898 for the District of Teltow by direction of the Landrat von Stubenrauch, and was opened as a 150-bed hospital on 26 June 1901. The hospital was first called the Kreiskrankenhaus Teltow but more recently was known as the Stubenrauch Kreiskrankenhaus. New buildings were erected from time to time during the period from 1901 to 1913 when the last building was completed. The cost of construction of the entire plant is said to have been between 12 and 13 million marks. Annual building maintenance costs were in the neighborhood of 47 thousand marks. The hospital was used as a municipal (non-charity) general hospital until 1 May 1941 when the entire plant and grounds were purchased by the German Reich for five million marks. It was then designated as a hospital for the Waffen-SS. Official German records indicate the following valuation at the time of acquisition by the Nazi Government: Building and grounds (approximately 17 acres) - RM 4,351,858**; equipment and furniture - RM 620,372.

During the war the hospital cared for battle casualties as well as the non-fighting members of the Nazi party. Shortly before the Battle of Berlin the hospital census was more than 700 patients. After the fall of Berlin the majority of the patients were evacuated, and for a short time the hospital was taken over by elements of the Russian Army. A requisition for the hospital plant was prepared by the U.S. Berlin District Surgeon on 20 July 1945, and was approved by the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-4, U.S. Headquarters Berlin District, on 3 August 1945.

Buildings and grounds had been damaged to a considerable extent by allied bombing and by small arms and artillery fire during the Battle of Berlin. Further damage to buildings and equipment was the result of vandalism during the chaotic period immediately after the fall of Berlin.

* Executive Officer, 279th Station Hospital. Article submitted for publication 1 November 1950.

** Editor's Note: The official rate of exchange at this time was RM 2.50 to \$1.00. Although marks were cheaper in some "free" markets, the official rate best represents actual property value.

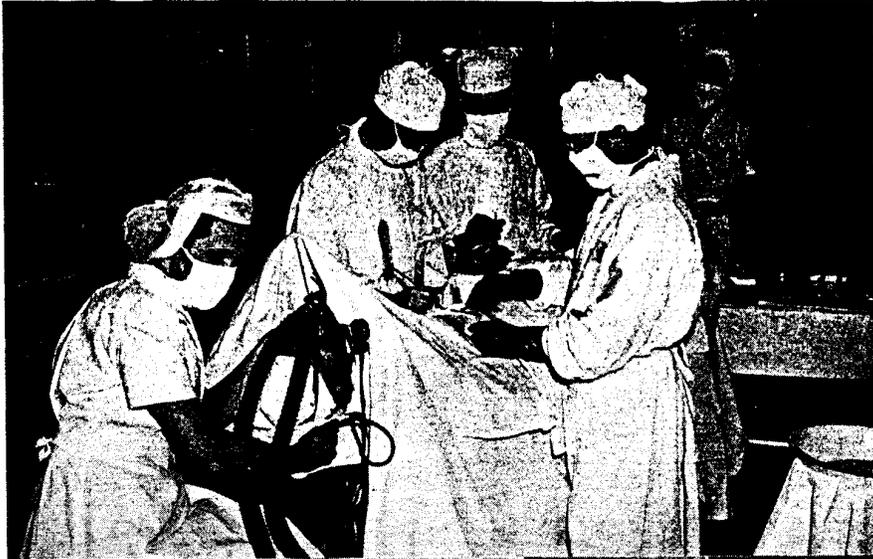


Aerial View of the 279th Station Hospital, Berlin



Entrance

Main Building



Around
the
Clock
at the
279th
Station
Hospital



At the time of the arrival of the advance party of the 279th Station Hospital from Verdun, France, on 11 August 1945 the entire hospital area was in great disorder. Work was begun immediately to remove useless and unserviceable furniture and equipment to prepare the buildings for occupancy.

Shortly after the arrival of the advance party a common grave in the garden was opened and the bodies of seventeen unidentified Germans were removed. There are still present in the grounds the graves of two Russian soldiers.

Upon entering the grounds of this hospital one cannot fail to notice the architectural splendor of the main building and the beautiful grounds. During the five years that this hospital has been used by the U.S. Army a constant beautification program has been in progress. At the present time it is the show place of Berlin and one of the most beautiful Army installations in EUCOM. (The lion's share of the credit for this fine plant must go to the energetic Col. Frank T. Chamberlin, MC, now retired.- Editor's Note.)

The hospital at the present time has an authorized capacity of 163 beds and an expansion capacity of 396 beds. It operates 150 beds presently. The personnel authorizations are broken down into Americans and German - the American authorization is based upon T/O&E. Employed German Nationals supplement the staff. The hospital covers 17 acres of ground and is composed of numerous separate buildings.

The location of this hospital makes it necessary for the constant study and planning and an intensified training program. Each individual member of the team of the 279th Station Hospital must know his position on the team and the part that he will play if the hospital were called upon at any given moment to care for a great influx of patients.

On 1 September Colonel Otto L. Churney, MC, assumed command of the hospital (see photo in October issue). The following is a chronological list of previous commanding officers:

Lt. Col. Elmer A. Lodmell.....	Sep 45 - 30 Jan 46
Col. Henry S. Murphey.....	31 Jan 46 - 5 Jun 46
Col. E. A. Coates, Jr.....	6 Jun 46 - 31 Mar 47
Lt. Col. Paul V. Kiehl.....	1 Apr 47 - 3 Apr 47
Col. Frank T. Chamberlin.....	4 Apr 47 - 22 Oct 49
Col. Cleveland R. Steward.....	23 Oct 49 - 23 Mar 50
Maj. David L. Deutsch.....	24 Mar 50 - 20 Apr 50
Lt. Col. George R. Carpenter.....	21 Apr 50 - 30 Aug 50
Col. Otto L. Churney.....	31 Aug 50 - present.

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