

Operation Saving Lives



NORTHWESTERN AS THE 12TH GENERAL HOSPITAL DURING WWII



The 12th General Hospital Unit, comprised of Northwestern University physicians and dentists, Chicago-area nurses and other health professionals, and enlisted men from across the country, was officially activated on January 28, 1942. Following nearly a year of military and medical training at Fort Custer (Michigan), Fort Benjamin Harrison (Indiana), and Camp Kilmer (New Jersey), the Unit was deployed first to the Algerian seaside resort, Ain-el-Turck, and then went on to treat patients in the Italian cities of Naples, Rome, and Leghorn until the Unit was deactivated on September 15, 1945.

The 12th General Hospital personnel treated nearly 30,000 patients over the course of World War II. Staff performed emergency surgeries, contended with outbreaks of infectious diseases like typhus and malaria, dealt with chronic medical issues aggravated by war, and addressed the high number of venereal disease cases among American troops. For their exemplary work, several members of the group were individually recognized for their service, and the Unit as a whole was awarded the Meritorious Plaque.



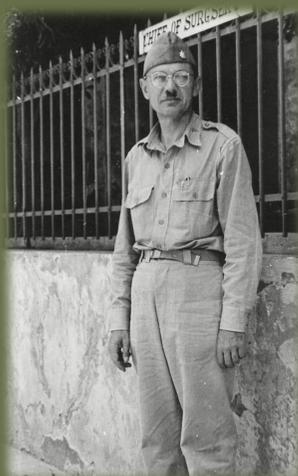
*Clockwise from top left:
Brace shop, Rome 1944
Officers' mess hall, Ain-el-Turck 1943
Unloading ambulance in front of x-ray department, Ain-el-Turck 1943
X-ray department, Ain-el-Turck 1943*

This display is predominantly drawn from the collections of Michael L. Mason and James A. Conner, held at Northwestern's Galter Health Sciences Library & Learning Center. It highlights the recruitment, training, and professional and personal experiences of those in the 12th General Hospital.

To learn more:

Visit the accompanying digital exhibit at <https://sites.northwestern.edu/twelfthgeneralhospital/>

Contact Galter Library Special Collections at ghsl-specialcollections@northwestern.edu.



*Above: Maj. James A. Conner, center, and colleagues, Fort Benjamin Harrison 1942
Left: Col. Michael L. Mason, Ain-el-Turck 1943*

