Letters from Overseas

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DEAR FRIENDS:

We are settled now, or rather as settled as we shall ever be. There are only three of us now, and as we expand we spread thinner and thinner. We work hard with very little equipment, which is exactly what we expected. Frankly, I love it. The boys appreciate so very much anything you ever do for them and I have never before gotten so much real satisfaction out of hard work.

We have a regular army set-up with food carts which we manufactured ourselves. We lost all ours along the way somewhere and will probably never see one again till we get home. We took the containers of field stores and put Number 10 cans in them and hot water in the large one to keep the food hot. We have smaller Number 2 1/2 cans for the soft food. We have a special diet mess and a regular patients' mess. In this way we have a minimum number of tray patients.

It is more fun to work out various ways of serving the same thing and we have worked out very good recipes for cooked custards and salad dressings using powdered eggs and evaporated milk. As there is no such thing as a measuring cup, our recipes read "so many soup bowls of powdered egg and so many cans of milk."

We are very proud of our fractured-jaw diets. In the states, where everything was available, these patients lost weight; ours have all gained weight in the one week we have kept records. One even gained five pounds. It's almost time to check them again and we are anxiously awaiting the outcome.

Our special diets are very simple—we are issued extra items for special diet use which can be named on ten fingers. You really have to put on your thinking cap sometimes. They love simple little things, like putting a canned peach in a dish with boiled custard or putting G ration crackers in their soup as they go through the line.

But most of all they like the personal touch and one of us always makes a point of going out to the tables and seeing that they eat it all and that they have enough. Seconds are always available. We were almost stumped when the boys informed us that a birthday was coming up in our special diet mess group. There was no possible way to bake a cake as we use field stoves with the exception of a temperamental electric oven which we salvaged to make toast, and which always goes on the blink at the most critical times. So we got our good old Number 10 can again, cut it down, put a hole in the middle and a candle (large one) through the hole. I made a flour and water mixture and stuck it all over the can. It looked like a real cake. We all sang "Happy Birthday to You" and he was really floored. Haven't had such a good time in ages.

We don't know about our commissions and are still waiting to get news one way or another.

Sincerely,

Martha Kitchen