APPENDIX I

Physical Therapy Department, 108th General Hospital

Our whirlpools are used for many open wounds, especially hand injuries. Because of the large number of patients (an average of 50 a day having whirlpool, and only 2 whirlpools) it is impossible to change the water after each patient. Often it is necessary to give two or three patients whirlpool at the same time. I asked the laboratory to make culture of the water at various periods during the day and found that the bacteria count was high. Therefore to guard against cross-infection we experimented with various solutions trying to find one that would keep the water sterile but would not irritate skin or tissue. Lysol did not work, as a solution strong enough to kill bacteria was irritating to the skin. A creosol solution nauseated the patients. Finally, we tried sodium hypochlorite, which works perfectly. Cultures were again made and were completely negative. Perhaps this isn’t really necessary, as I’ve never seen a case of infection from whirlpool, but I felt it was better not to take chances.