Historical Context:

This document is a post-WWII medical follow-up questionnaire dated February 10, 1946. It was sent by a physician (recently discharged from military service) to a veteran whom he had operated on during the war. The doctor's purpose was to gather firsthand information about the patient's injury, treatment, and recovery to include in a medical publication or case study. The document provides a vivid, primary account of battlefield injuries sustained in the Pacific Theater (Luzon, Philippines) and details the reconstructive surgical techniques utilized by US Army medical personnel in 1945, such as skin flaps and rubber band traction.

Details Mentioned:

The Doctor (Sender)

- **Name:** Unnamed in the document.
- **Role in Document:** Former military surgeon, author of the questionnaire.
- **Biographical Details:** Recently returned to civilian status as of February 1946. Residing or working at the Walnut Park Plaza Hotel, 63rd and Walnut St., Philadelphia 39, Pennsylvania. Preparing to publish a medical case study regarding the recipient's hand surgery.

The Patient (Recipient)

- **Name:** Unnamed in the document.
- **Role in Document:** WWII Veteran, former patient.
- **Biographical Details:** Sustained a hand injury from shell fragments on February 24, 1945, in San Mateo, Luzon, P.I. (Philippine Islands). The injury shattered the joint and bone up to the first joint. Underwent two operations by the sender on April 5 and April 15, 1945, involving amputation, a skin flap, and rubber band traction. Prior to his military discharge, he was on "Full duty status" but had limited mobility, only able to use his thumb and forefinger.

Key Findings:

- The document is a 1946 medical questionnaire sent from a Philadelphia doctor to a WWII veteran regarding a hand surgery performed in April 1945.
- The veteran details his severe hand injury caused by shell fragments on February 24, 1945, in San Mateo, Luzon, Philippines.
- The responses describe the surgical procedures, including an amputation with a skin flap and rubber band traction, and note that the veteran was left with the use of only his thumb and forefinger.

Full Text Transcription:

Walnut Park Plaza Hotel 63rd and Walnut St. Philadelphia 39, Pa. February 10, 1946

I have recently been returned to civilian status and would like a report on your hand. AS I am about to publish your case, I will appreciate your most sincere and honest answers. This questionnaire is for my private information and has absolutely no bearing in your Army status, hospital or otherwise.

1. In order to bring me up to date on your case, state in your own words as much as you know about the operation I did on you . [Handwritten:] The first operation was on 5 April 1945. The finger was cut thru the bone immediately back of the second joint leaving the flesh along the bottom of the finger up to the end and placed under tension. This bottom part was bent up over the end and sewed -- 15 April 1945
2. How did you injure your hand ? what was nature of injury ? When ? Where ? [Handwritten:] shell fragments. The joint and bone up to the first joint was shattered. Feb 24 1945. San Mateo, Luzon, P.I.
3. How long before operation was injury? Give any history which may be pertinent between time of injury and operation; i.e. X-rays and treatment (initial and otherwise, dates, findings), trouble hand may have given you (where and when), how long) dates, place, surgeon, hospital etc. [Handwritten, heavily crossed out text] [Handwritten:] Injury took place about six weeks before operation the only previous treatment was a splint. I don't know what kind of findings, pictures or treatment I had outside of the fact except the use of the splint.
4. How many operations did I do on you? [Handwritten:] 2 Intervals ? [Handwritten:] 10 days Dates? [Handwritten:] April 5 - 15
5. How long was rubber band traction applied and to what part of hand ? [Handwritten:] 10 days to the flap
6. Was there an open wound ? [Handwritten:] Yes If so, how did I treat it ? [Handwritten:] kept moist with some sort of yellow fluid
7. After removal of band traction, what treatment did I give you ? [Handwritten:] The second operation was closing the wound
8. How long after operation did it take wound or fracture to heal ? [Handwritten:] 14 days [crossed out text: the flesh was practically healed]
9. When and where was last x-ray taken ? What were the findings and what advice were you given at that time ? [Handwritten:] sometime in Aug. don't know what the findings were and there was no advice
10. What Army detail were you on prior to discharge ? How did hand " hold up ? [Handwritten:] Full duty status. I could only use the thumb and fore finger