

her strengths and weaknesses. It was the Flight Leader's job to capitalize on the strengths and know the weaknesses.

Flight A Leader was our only regular Army Nurse. The Flight A nurses were young, attractive . . . the dynamos on the social scene except one whose main interest was writing her husband daily.

Flight B Leader was a tall, beautiful brunette who was always eager to learn and was thoughtful about the needs of the nurses in her flight. On the whole she had a quiet, unassuming group who were not particularly interested in partying.

Flight C was the most dissimilar group. The Leader was an enigma. She was very tall with a deep raspy voice, plain and an "operator"; a feminine version of Sergeant Bilko.

Flight D, headed by an experienced public health nurse from Georgia, was the most sophisticated group. They were older and wiser.

Each of the nurses had her own personal concerns about flying over large bodies of water for extended periods of time. One of the nurses worried about the number of Mae Wests (life vests) it would take to keep a patient with a heavy cast afloat.

The uniqueness of the 809th mission, and later the 812th and the Navy Flight Nurse Group, clearly lay in the long over water flights. The unfamiliar cultures encountered on each island were a challenge to the military personnel and a new wonder for "the families and friends back home."

We called our quarters on Canton Atoll, "The Garden of Eden." Each morning two of the flight nurses had latrine duty. Scrub brushes and mops were used vigorously the first two hours.

A holiday was a day like all the rest. Thanksgiving 1943 saw two flight nurses leave Canton Island early in the morning to fly over the international date line to Funafuti, and back to Canton late at night missing the holiday in both places.

One of the nurses, a strawberry blonde, was on a plane that had an emergency landing on Apamama. The natives who greeted the plane were enthralled by the red head. The news of her arrival spread rapidly over the Island. When the sixteen year old Queen was escorted to view her, she whipped off her grass skirt and presented it to the honored nurse.

Tarawa served as our departure point for Kwajalein. We lived in a Quonset hut near the navy medical hospital. It was a lovely, breezy, pleasant place to be. We ate in a Navy mess along with the sailors and frequently had beans for breakfast. At supper time we would see fish jumping up in the lagoon and after eating we would go fishing with a net.

The natives were very curious about the pale-skinned women living in their midst. In the morning while dressing, it was not unusual to look up and see noses pressed against the screened windows of our hut. One night after we had gone to bed, a nurse yelled that there was a rat on her chin; she had forgotten to lower her mosquito netting. The flight nurses chased that rat round and round until someone got the bright idea to open the door and the rat dashed out. We had just settled down when another nurse screamed with an excruciating pain in her ear, an ant was walking across her ear drum. The intruder walked out when a flash light was used to examine the ear.

We had taken "lava lava" to Tarawa to use as barter. The Tarawans made baskets, wove floor mats, etc. "Lava lava" was a 3 yard piece of fabric that the natives, men and women, wrapped around themselves as skirts. We bought the fabric in the "5-and-10" in Honolulu for 25 cents a yard. We would bring back all sorts of goodies from our swap shopping.

On Los Negros in the Admiralty Islands, we lived in thatched huts built for other nurses. The hospital had no patients so the nurses had been farmed out to other units. The huts were right on the beach and we were frequently sprayed with sea water. We could sit in our huts and see porpoises playing. Transport plane arrivals to return air evac personnel to Biak were kept secret and as a result a lot of time was taken up waiting on the flight line. Sometimes a bridge game would take shape, or we might play cribbage.

The Biak commander ordered officers who were awaiting flights to help censor the mail. After breakfast the mail was dumped on the tables in the mess hall and we all had a hand in making sure that no secrets were written for enemy eyes.

Half of our flying time was traveling to a site to pick up patients. The time on these trips was our own, spent in many ways: bridge games, cribbage games, reading, sleeping, talking about the noises of the engines, etc. One of the advantages of our long flights was the time we spent with our patients. We were able to establish a rapport with them and appreciate their individual personalities.

There was lots of cheerful banter between patients and flight nurses. Something about the young nurses made the soldiers and marines feel at ease. They talked to these officers as they would never have dared to speak to their line officers.

The food on our flights from the forward areas depended on what was available in the mess halls. Sometimes we had only thick slices of GI bread with liberal amounts of orange marmalade. Vienna sausage and spam appeared once in a while. There were no gourmet delicacies except Nescafe which was a godsend to us all. If the mess hall didn't have it, neither did we. Occasionally, the patients would bring C-rations on board which was shared with all.

The massive abdominal wounds, the jungle rot (a severe skin fungus) which covered the entire body from top of the head to the bottom of the feet, the missing legs, the multiple fractures, the withdrawal syndrome were the major concerns to the Air Evacuation team. However, the battle casualties going home showed humor and thoughtfulness for each other rather than dwelling on their injuries.

A dying GI in an underground hospital on Canton Island gave the 809th its first experience with Penicillin. He had a very severe eye and face infection, a high fever and was delirious. After 3 days, with nurses around the clock caring for him and monitoring the drug given by intravenous drip, he showed great improvement. He made a complete recovery.

The evacuation of psychiatric casualties was the most serious dilemma faced by the air evacuation teams. A flight on a C47 with 20 patients, from Biak to Guadalcanal, was a near disaster. The patients had been sedated before take-off but their behavior was very difficult to control. Soon after that experience, a directive was issued limiting the number of patients with mental disorders to five on each plane.

One of the greatest shocks for many of us happened in February 1945. A group of Americans who had been Prisoners of War (P.O.W.s) in the Philippines were transported from Leyte to the United States. Among the prisoners were some of the 67 nurses who had been interned. The sight of our colleagues, emaciated and malnourished, was painful. For the first time, the suffering and deprivation experienced by these nurses was a reality. The hell of living through the capture and occupation was reflected in their faces.

A plane load of Japanese prisoners, who needed medical attention and who were to be interrogated, were flown from Tarawa to Hickam. In addition to the nurse and technicians to care for the prisoners, there were three representatives from the G-2 section of the 7th AF. Transportation of the prisoners created some conflicts about how much to do for the detested enemy. It was a great relief at the end of the flight to have them removed from our care.

The training of a group of young people on Tarawa to be nurses' aides was an unexpected challenge. Although language was somewhat of a barrier, the young ladies learned quickly. We brought fabric from Hawaii, made a simple uniform to replace the grass skirts and taught them to care for the sick. It was fun teaching them to take a temperature or to place a person on a bedpan, etc. The comedy of this situation was exacerbated by the young navy men who were hospitalized and had "great (?)" senses of humor.

There were many tropical diseases that we had not seen before going to the Pacific. Especially curious, to us, was a man with elephantiasis wheeling his scrotum around in a wheelbarrow.

The reputation of being "glamour girls" of the Nurse Corps was dispelled for one hospital nurse being air-evac'd from Fiji. After observing the Air Evac Team for about four hours, she remarked, "Thank God I work in a hospital, I never realized how tough your job is."

One day the 7th A.F. Surgeon, Colonel Andy Smith, facetiously suggested that if we cut off the legs of our khaki pants we would be cooler. Two of the nurses did just that, going to Funafuti in "shorts." It took just 24 hours for a directive to come out of 7th A.F. Headquarters: that no females would wear shorts on an airplane.

We were frequently exposed to some pretty famous people. One day James Roosevelt, the President's son, was riding in the crew compartment on his way back to Washington. He was very pleasant and offered to write letters to the parents of all our patients when he reached Washington. He took the names and addresses of everyone on the plane and followed through with his promise.

Spencer Tracy, dead-heading on a C-54 en route to a tour of the Central Pacific, was a very frightened man to be flying over the world's biggest ocean. He took frequent sips from a beautiful flask that always seemed to be full.

Edgar Rice Burroughs, author of Tarzan, invited three nurses to accompany him on an amphibious tank to visit another atoll. When they started, the tide was low, but on the way back the tide had risen and no one knew how to make the tank seaworthy and it was swamped. They all sat on top of the tank until some brave sailors came to their rescue. Mr. Burrough's jungle skills did not work in the lagoon.

Olivia DeHaviland, returning from a tour, was a charming and friendly woman en route.

There were unbelievable increases in the Air Evacuation capabilities during the last year of the 809th tenure. The number of planes had more than quadrupled; there were new flight nurses including Navy, arriving regularly and the numbers of sick and wounded being evacuated from Okinawa, the Philippines and the Southwest Pacific to the United States was impressive.

The reports of Japan's surrender dominated our discussions, especially after the B-29 bombing of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945 and Nagasaki on August 9, 1945. Each day we waited, then on September 2, 1945, President Truman declared the war was over! The Squadron was once again together at Hickam on that momentous day. We celebrated and shared feelings of pride and elation.

Shortly after September 2, 1945, we left the Islands as we had arrived 23 months before, at various times and on several different planes. We were thankful that the war was over and to be going home.

By Eleanor Hoppock and Agnes Flaherty

History of 810th MAES

The 810th MAES graduated August 13, 1943, from AAF School of Air Evacuation, Bowman Field, Kentucky. Each squadron was given continued training until oversea orders were received.

In November 1943, the squadron of four doctors, twenty-four nurses, twenty-four medical corpsmen and office personnel sailed aboard the Cristobol, becoming part of an eighty-ship convoy that zig-zagged across the Atlantic to avoid detection by German submarines. The 810th was sent to Bottesford, England and continued training until D-Day was near. Prior to D-Day the 810th was moved to Aldamaston, England, and assigned to the Troop Carrier Command.

D-Day plus four, the squadron began air evacuating the wounded from Normandy, with fighter escort protection. The first casualties had received only first aid and were still wearing combat fatigues.

As the army moved forward, the Troop Carriers C-47's carried in needed supplies and the medical crew. When the supplies were off-loaded, the Flight Nurse and Medical Corpmen converted the aircraft interior to receive ambulatory and litter patients. It was not unusual to hear or see bombs bursting nearby and it was imperative to take off as quickly as possible. The C-47's flew at low altitude, often just over tree tops, to avoid detection.

They followed the army forward until they reached Berlin. The squadron evacuated casualties from the Normandy, N. France, Ardenes and Rhineland Campaigns.

The Air Medal was awarded each member of the squadron for serving with distinction on dangerous air evacuation missions, in unmarked aircraft, in hostile territory.

In May 1945, the 810th was assigned to A.T.C. and few transatlantic missions between Prestwick, Scotland and New York and later between Paris, France and New York.

The last part of 1945 the squadron returned to the states and disbanded.

By Evelyn C. (Andersen) Taylor



Left: Lt. Jo Nabors takes temp of Gen. Erskine at Hickam Field — to detect Dengee Fever. Right: Marion Clark Dubbs on Canton Island. (812th MAES)



1st Lt. Eleanor J. Brownlee A.A.F. P.O.A. 812th receiving Air Medal in Hawaii, June 1945.

History of 813th MAES

It was one of those hot August days in 1943 when the five of us arrived from the Lincoln Army Air Base, Nebraska, to join with the other nurses for a three months strenuous tour of duty at Bowman Field, Kentucky. We were very much involved with many classes, daily drilling, daily calisthenics, bed checks, and room inspections. (Remember how tightly the blankets on the bunks had to be? They were tested religiously by bouncing a dime on it.)

Remember the forced ten mile hike with a full backpack? The Capt. driving a jeep in front of us — dripping tear gas that we were supposed to detect? And yes, we did don our gas masks in time to avoid the tears.

Remember the overnight camp with the nurses doing their stint at guard duty? I wonder how many would have been able to use their gun had the occasion arose. Then at 3 A.M., we were uprooted because of a noisy, simulated attack. And yes, we did make the move in record time.

Remember the wriggling on the belly in about six inches of dust and grime — for a couple hundred feet (?) — with live ammunition being fired over our heads? How many times were we yelled at to "keep your head down." (I wonder if it really was live ammunition. . .)

Because I had the loudest mouth, I was a Squad Leader for most of the time. Each day at the 4 P.M. Retreat, the drums and I counted cadence. And then there was the day we had a General come to review the troops. We really did look sharp as we marched up to the

reviewing stand. As we were ready to leave, I called for a left turn instead of the expected right! ALL followed the command, even though they knew it should have been a right turn. What a dilemma! An "about face" was called and all marched from the field in perfect unison. It was later pointed out how well we followed orders, even the mistaken ones!

October 1, arrived, and it was graduation day, and the winning of our coveted wings, a really big status symbol of the Flight Nurse. We were assigned to the 813th. We left Bowman Field on January 1, 1944 for the P.O.E.

Remember the bed rolls we packed, unpacked, and repacked . . . Just how were we to pack everything in only one footlocker?? Where were we to stow the extra soap, toilet tissue, kleenex and kotex? How embarrassing when the problem was solved by the enlisted men who had to do the repacking of the jammed full of all the little extras in the bed roll . . .

The 813th sailed on the Queen Mary — a total of 25 females and 15,000 enlisted troops stashed on board. (I recently learned that our Major and C.O. had guards posted outside our staterooms. He also tried in vain to have the hot water turned on a short time each day in order for us to have a hot shower. No luck! General Patton came aboard the Queen when we arrived in Scotland to welcome the troops — only we were not included . . .)

After our arrival, we boarded a typical British train for an all night trip to Balderton, England, our first of many stations. Believe it or not, but one of the first things to be issued to us was the 3 speed English bicycle! G.I. issue or not, it did get us around the country lanes. It was one of the main types of transportation.

Remember how we would barter our liquor rations with the cook for peanut butter, sugar and butter, and then cook up the best peanut butter fudge on our little 'monkey stove' that each of us had in our rooms? We lived in Quonset huts which had 8-10 rooms, with two sharing a room. Not bad quarters actually.

Later we transferred to Grove, England, where the Quonset hut grew to larger size. There were two large rooms, with 10-12 beds, and a couple of private rooms for the chief nurse. Also had a large gathering room where many entertained visiting officers. There were many a bridge game played, every time there was a short break, out would come a deck of cards. The famous "squeak" card game with as many as 6-8 participating was played on a G.I. blanket spread out on the floor. (Each had to have their own deck of cards.)

Our 813th was featured in the July 1944 Look Magazine. It depicted the life style of the Flight Nurse. Jeanne was the star featured.

I understand that one of the nurses from each group had been picked to watch out for any suspicious activity. She was to report weekly of any subversive action she might observe. (C.I.A.???)

In July 1944 we suffered our first casualty. Jacky was on her way to Scotland with a plane load of patients, bound for the U.S.A. The plane crashed into the side of a hill, killing all on board.

Bad news again in September 1944. One night Reba Whittle failed to return from her trip across the channel. Since many times we had to R.O.N. we did not worry about her. Days passed and no news from her. She was presumed dead, and we had a memorial service for her. That same evening we learned through the underground that she had been captured by the Germans, and was being held as a P.O.W. She later was repatriated through the Red Cross and returned to the U.S.A.



L-R: Irene Schultz, Helen Rarick, Vangie Comeaux, Mable Strube, Helen Morison, Betty Williamson, Vee Moss, Mary Bell Fraser, Winnie Plutz of 813th — Le Bourget, Paris, France.

Winter arrived on schedule, and we transferred to the Le Bourget Air Base, Paris, France. Since there were three empty houses, we were quartered there. No furniture, but we did have army cots issued and a down sleeping bag. It was cold and since there was no coal to heat the furnaces, we had to improvise. Each trip back to England with a load of patients, we all carried a gunny sack. Immediately after the patients were unloaded, we made a beeline for the ever present coal pile, filling the gunny sack with the nuggets. When we returned to Paris with the fuel for the furnaces, the warmth was well worth the effort.

Soon after the first of the year, 1945, we again returned to Grove, England. Now, there were more trips to the states with our patients. Sometimes we flew the northern route — Iceland, Greenland, Newfoundland, Prestwick and New York City. If it were the southern route, it would include Paris, Azores, Bermuda and then on to New York City.

Remember the 'Short Snorter'? Mine grew to several feet long, and I have many a signature on it.

The big day finally arrived . . . V.E. DAY . . . and look out America, here we come home!! The 813th soon became deactivated. Some were discharged back to the civilian life. Many were transferred to other active units — headed for the South Pacific. Several of us had been discharged because of pregnant condition. Looking back, we all were glad it was over — but had the satisfaction of a "job well done." And yes, if we had to do it all over again — we could do it!!

An 813th reunion was held on the Queen Mary at Long Beach, Calif. May 1988. Our first in 40 years!

By Tammy Barnacastle



813th MAES Nurses.

History of 813th — My View

The 813th left Bowman Field, KY for Ft. Dix staging area in NJ and boarded the Queen Mary, a luxury ship converted to a troop ship on 24 Jan. 1944. Our ship zig-zagged across the ocean in varying temperatures — first it was warm, then cold and wet causing the ship to do a 30 degree roll in the cold storm. Three nurses were assigned to one little stateroom with a cot three decks high. Our B-4 bags slid from one side of the room to another day and night as the ship rolled. Ropes were tied to the deck so we could walk to the dining room. Since the furniture had been moved from the lounge, we sat on the floor. However, we were entertained by an all black choir.

While listening to the radio one evening, we heard them announce that the German Wolf Pack had sunk the Queen Mary! We spent a lot of time on deck watching the ship plough through the aqua sea.

It was a cold, windy, rainy day when we landed in Scotland. We rode in a train with no windows. Arriving at Balderton AFB at Newark, England, we were assigned to the RAF Officer's club, were issued nine wool blankets and still froze during the night. The brick walls were wet with moisture in the mornings. Wading through the mud, we went to the USAF dining room. Soon we were moved to the British WAF quarters near the mess hall on the base. Each room had a pot belly stove for heat which an airman was assigned to keep fed with coal during the night.

Our meals were far from tasty. The powdered eggs, cooked like scrambled eggs, looked green and tasted like there was a spoiled one in the batch. The powdered milk for cereal had a very unnatural flavor. To spread the paraffin filled butter on the dark English bread, we held it on a fork over hot coals in the stove.

Being an early riser, I was assigned to be the house mother and awaken everyone for an hour of calisthenics. Once we were inspected by the CO of the 94th Sqdn. and he remarked later he was embarrassed to inspect nurses standing at attention with their bosoms protruding.

We sponged #10 can of peanut butter and fruit cocktail from the cook, having become bored with spam and old tasting cheddar cheese.

While waiting for the invasion, we flew pts. from England and Ireland to Scotland for Trans-Atlantic flights in C-54s to the states. Each of us had a chance to fly to the states at this period.

One March night, we heard a British bomber returning from a mission over Germany and the sounds of another motor which was nearby. A crash was heard, the German plane escaped but the British plane was shot down by error. On 6 June 1944, when we went to breakfast, the sky was full of planes in formation and the airfield was empty — D-Day had come. My first trip as a flight nurse was D-18. Wearing gas mask, helmet and carrying a canteen full of water, we flew into the beautiful sunrise over the English Channel. Sitting on bombs and barrels of gasoline, we landed at Omaha Beach, France on a bull-dozed air strip. When the dust settled and the C-47's door opened, there were hundreds of white crosses. There lay broken dreams; sweethearts; husbands; fathers; sons; young men all with aspirations and plans for the future gone. This was the future site of the National Cemetery of Omaha Beach, France. Some of the pts. were unconscious, still under anesthetic. Some of the soldiers were suffering from battle fatigue from tank duty in Gen. George Patton's Tank Corps.

Most of the time we were not sure just where we were as the airstrips were known by # for security reasons. Our seats on the planes were cargo of supplies for the war effort, food, Stars and Stripe papers, eggs or barrels of gasoline. When the French Resistance Fighters were near, they stopped for a visit and always thanked us for our help in liberating France.

Flying pts. out of Liege, Belgium, we had pts. lying on cots under trees and on the ground — all over the place. We split our teams filling all the planes as rapidly as possible taking the heavy pt. load off the field hospital. All this time, American and German fighters were involved in a "dog-fight" overhead!

Moving to Maryvale, England, we lived in quonset huts. Here we suffered our first tragedy. "Jacky" Jackley and her technician along with the crew and load of pts. perished on the cliffs in Scotland while flying in heavy fog better known as "pea soup." Jacky is buried in the National Cemetery in Epsworth, England.

To prepare the nurses for the hardships they would be facing after D-Day, they were assigned to the 100th Bomb Grp. at Epswich. I was almost a casualty over Scotland when to avoid hitting an English bomber, our C-47 pilot dived under the bomber. Two litters were torn loose and we were bounced about. The Lord was in that cockpit that day. In another instance of a close call, we were over the English Channel when the plane hit an air pocket and dropped 1000 feet. On board was a pt. on a litter, who was terrified of flying anyway and this episode caused him to panic. It took a lot of reassurance to get his emotions under control.

In Oct. 1944, we moved to Le Bourget Air Field in Paris, France, lived in bombed out buildings with no heat. The weather was cold, rainy, soggy and miserable. The planes were unable to fly in the Battle of the Bulge because of foul weather. Soon after we moved to Le Bourget, the Battle of the Bulge took place. On my first flight in, the plane had to pull up to miss a pine covered mountain.

One of our nurses, Reba Whittle was on a C-47 which was shot down by the Germans. She was captured and imprisoned for two months before she was repatriated. Thinking she was killed, the sqdn. held a memorial service for her. What a relief to learn she had been sent home later.

After we were transferred back to Grove England, I had a close call on a flight to Brest, France when the aircraft was fired on by the Germans from the Isle of Jersey. On a flight to Munich and Nurnberg, cities with no roof tops, we landed on a German airfield which had German planes parked on it — one with a smaller plane tied on top of it.

We were hungry and asked the cook for something and he made us sandwiches of chicken-a-la-king! We chatted with nurses from

the field hospital and saw the beautiful things they had collected.

Without warning, I was transferred to the 816th MAES and near the end of the war was transferred to the 811th. At the war's end, I returned stateside, was given a month's vacation before reporting to the station hospital at Long Beach, Calif. Saving a new white blanket from my flight kit, I arranged all the shoulder patches I had collected and attached them to the blanket with the US in the center. It is now in the March AFB Museum, Calif. I did air evac air shows in the states to help promote the program. While stationed at Brookley AFB, I flew to Panama and Puerto Rico and received a letter of appreciation from the Public Health Commander.

In 1950 at Ladd AFB, Alaska, I finally received the Air Medal for the period from Jan. 1944-Feb. 1945 while serving in the ETO in WWII! It was a struggle every inch of the way, but I attended college graduating with a BS in Nursing, BA in Education and a Masters in Education, later teaching in the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

June 6, 1980 the 94th TCG, lead group in the invasion of France, held its reunion starting in Amsterdam and retraced every area where they dropped gliders and paratroopers. The Mayor in Bastogne, Belgium gave a welcome reception for us. We ended the trip on the field where the invasion began on the same day in 1944. One speaker said, "it was the cream of American Youth, that liberated France." All those white crosses proved it without a doubt.

By Mable Strube Lada, Flight Nurse.

Lt. Reba Z. Whittle



Lt. Reba Z. Whittle from Rock Springs, Texas was the first flight nurse to be imprisoned by the Germans and the first to be repatriated by the enemy. On Sept. 27, 1944, Lt. Whittle and five other members of the 9th Air Force started on a mercy flight to the European battle front. Caught in a flak barrage, their riddled C-47 landed in a turnip patch behind enemy lines. Every member of the crew was injured including Lt. Whittle, who sustained flak wounds as well as a head wound. Despite her injuries, she assisted with moving a wounded medical technician from the burning craft.

As they huddled near their ruined plane, enemy soldiers rushed toward them. Neither side could understand the other. The Germans were shocked to learn one of the prisoners was a female! They administered first aid to the prisoners and then escorted them to the enemy camp. This was the beginning of four months of imprisonment during which Lt. Whittle never saw another female. She lived in the seclusion of a prison cell except during working hours when she nursed wounded Allied prisoners. She remarked that she was sure she was the greatest nuisance the Germans ever had. Apparently, they had never taken a female prisoner before and they did not have facilities for women. She kept quoting the Geneva Convention to them — the part about proper segregation of the sexes among prisoners of war. She learned this from lectures by Capt. Gray at Bowman. She always

felt they repatriated her out of sheer desperation.

As a prisoner, Lt. Whittle found ample use for her nursing. She volunteered to work among the prisoners suffering from burns. There were British, Americans and Australians attended by captured British Medical Officers. She was mentioned in the Air Force Diary by James Straubel. The English flyers gave her the silk lining from their flying boots to make underwear for herself.

History of 815th MAES

Activated at Bowman Field, Louisville, Ky. Jan. 1944 with Clare Stanton as Chief Nurse. This squadron was forced to cut short its training as it was needed in the ETO for the invasion. They were sent to Camp Kilmer, NJ, remaining there for a month prior to leaving for Europe. Sailed on the ILE DE FRANCE March 1944 — a four day trip. Arrived in Gurock, Scotland, put on a train to Lamborun, England, from there went by GI truck to Boxford House. They were prepared

to rough it and sleep in pup tents but could not believe their eyes when they got off the truck and were to stay in a beautiful mansion. The furnishings were less than elegant — GI cots with stiff reused wool blankets — but there was a formal garden and lots of grass and trees about. The little 11th century church across the street was the locale of the wedding of Tina Forney and her RAF pilot, Bruce Ford-Coates in July 1944. Evelyn Lamm and Tom Gannon were also married while at Boxford — in a Catholic church.

The 815th was supposed to fly with the 75th TCS based at Welford Park about 5 miles away, but it more often than not flew with other squadron planes that came in with material for the war zone in France. Some of the nurses left for TDY Nov. 1944 in Istres, France as members of a composite squadron to evacuate the 7th Army from Strasboursy back to Marsailles.

After D-Day, the planes flew in, picked up an air evac team and took off for France. Before D-Day, we had nothing to do as we could not work in the hospitals as nurses were AF and the hospitals were Army. They did roll plaster of paris bandages, got 12 hour passes to London, rode the bicycles issued to them and were generally bored. In April, there was a call for volunteers to go to a bomber base. No one seemed to know what was to be done but most volunteered for something to do. Four nurses went to Kimbolton, a B-17 base (others went to other bases). They were to attend briefings for the missions and be on the flight line when the planes returned to tend the casualties en route to a hospital. After their month of TDY, they returned to the 815th to await the invasion.

On two occasions, the air evac personnel were confined to quarters and the men were kept on base behind barbed wire to try and fool the Germans about the date of the invasion. The night the planes took off for Omaha Beach, the nurses watched from the roof of Boxford House — this time everyone knew it was THE REAL THING!

Shortly after D-Day, one of the flights of nurses and technicians, complete with flight surgeon went to Membury, England. They flew out of there with the 436th TCGp or any other outfits, which flew in to pick them up. In July, a flight was sent to Prestwick, Scotland to fly the Trans-Atlantic route to the states with patients from the war zones.

The 815th never seemed to remain a complete squadron — it was always being split up with personnel going on TDY. Due to this it is very difficult to give a complete history. The squadron was broken up and most of the personnel went with the 818th to Orly Field in Paris. The original personnel are pictured in the Bowman Book.

By Ethel Carlson Cerasale



Front Row, L-R: H. B. Wank, J. Williams, F. Bibas. Standing, L-R: W. Swiger, L. Chanard, H. Smith, R. Farley, J. Robinson. Pilots and nurses France 1945 — 814th MAES.

History of 816th MAES

Activated Bowman Field, Ky. Jan. 1944, left Bowman Feb. 1944 for Camp Kilmer, NJ. There was a delay of overseas departure and everyone took passes except Sgt. Arthur Hehr. He did not suffer too badly as he went into NYC every weekend and was treated royally. Departed on the ISLE DE FRANCE, a huge ship with a capacity to hold 15,000 people (we were told by the British crew), on March 13, 1944. The enlisted men's bunks were deep in the ship near the engines. The musty air and pounding engines added to the misery of the seasick personnel. The crewmen sold them English bread which helped soothe the weary stomachs. The ship traveled without a convoy, zig-zagging along with an occasional deep "whump" of a depth charge being dropped.

Arrived Scotland March 22, 1944 and were met by the Scottish people, who brought them coffee and donuts to the windows of the trains. From Scotland, went to Greenham Common near Reading, England. The German bombers passed over the base at Greenham Common every night on their way to bomb the English factories. The Germans were aware the air evac personnel were there but the factories took first priority. Here at Greenham Common, the GIs learned to change American dollars into pounds and shillings — mostly by shooting "craps." Greenham Commons was an old fashioned place with barracks with attached latrines for the nurses. The men had quonset huts with outdoor privies — necessitating a walk to the latrine with the "honey bucket."

The nurses were issued bicycles which they seldom used and we GIs used to borrow them to see the sights. The nurses were in demand as the Officers had dances and the girls were very popular. The officers usually had "wheels" and the nurses had transportation. When the sqdn. first arrived in Greenham Common, the techs were required to guard the nurses' barracks at night. At 4 AM, a tech would build a fire in the Chief Nurse's room and the Big Ward where the other nurses slept. This practice did not last long.

Various activities kept the personnel busy. The enlisted men built a volley ball court which was a favorite of all the personnel. Some of the people went on passes to London and others to TDY with the 815th. They all became acquainted with Thatcham and Newberry. The group continued the air evac training started in the states. They went to bomber bases for altitude and oxygen use training. We were located near bases loaded with C-47's and CG4 Gliders which they often visited and inspected. The 816th, under the direction of Maj. Albert D. Haug, (who was assisted in the planning stages by Sgt. Arthur Hehr) performed the first Glider Snatch of patients from Germany. 2nd Lt. Suella Bernard was the flight nurse on this glider evac. The trip was made March 22, 1945 from Remagen, Germany to an evac hospital 15 miles away in France. Maj. Haug escorted pts. in the 2nd glider. Ten technicians had already been "volunteered" to perform future glider evacs and were waiting for improvements on the gliders for evac missions when further glider participation was cancelled.

In May 1944, the invasion was expected and the 816th was placed on alert June 4-5th for the invasion of France. The unit also received its C-47's. A first aid station was set up near the flight line.



L-R: Blanche Garwood, Lonja Gieb, LaVergne Chanard, Berthe Ellison, Jane Sanders, Jennie Vassalo, Helen West, Jane Mobley — 814th MAES.

There was even a rumor going around that the "Dirty Dozen" were going to load there. No one ever knew if they did or not but there was a lot of "brass" running about. Around June 6th it was evident that the invasion had begun. The sqdn. was prepared for possible bail outs, trained in what to tell the patients, shown the first aid kits they would carry, were given French Invasion money they would carry, taught the use of parachutes which they carried on the Normandy flights. Later, because of weight and low altitude flying, patients and air evac personnel did not carry parachutes. (April 1945, Capt. Douglas, flight surgeon and Lt. Porter evacuated the first C-47 loaded with wounded from Germany.)

By June 9th, there were "blood runs," with the flight nurses accompanying the blood. Often the Troop Carrier crews dropped blood by parachute to hospitals on the ground — some pilots swore they hit the Red Cross on the ground dead center! By D-Day plus seven or June 13th, teams of air evac personnel, using cases of TNT for seats, headed for Omaha Beach under fighter escort. They landed on makeshift runways made of pieces of metal which had been stripped together — and dust was everywhere.

July 1st they moved to Prestwich, Scotland in preparation to start the Trans-Atlantic flights from Scotland to NY to evacuate the wounded from the invasion. Dr. John Fissell, surgeon, was killed returning to Prestwich from NY, where he had just been married. His plane with all on board vanished after crashing into a mountain. His loss was a tragedy for the sqdn. and the morale was at an all time low for it was a close-knit family.

By July 4, they were flying into Normandy. At St. Mere Eglisi, the German POWs were settled in and were assigned to KP. They were eating better than they ever did with the German Army and morale was high. The Americans were making money in the black market by selling German pistols for \$75 each. There was a big market for German souvenirs.

The Trans-Atlantic flights were made in C-54's manned by civilian ATC pilots and navigators. Transporting 18 patients, the flights were usually five hours to Iceland, where patients were fed, then eight hours to Newfoundland and another meal with change of patients' dressings and refueling of the aircraft. The last leg of the journey was six hours to LaGuardia, NY. These Trans-Atlantic crossings were far from safe. One flight which left Prestwich, Scotland, was lost over Iceland. The entire civilian crew and air evac personnel were lost. Lt. Catherine Price from the 817th MAES and T/3 Frank Sorrels from the 816th MAES (who was on TDY) both perished. The next flight out from Prestwich with Lt. Mildred M. Shaner and T/3 Elmer Cox with 18 litter patients and a civilian crew flying in a C-54 landed safely at Iceland. Two hours out of Iceland, they noticed a prop was not functioning and the plane landed at Greenland for repairs. This involved going over the IceCaps which was very dangerous. In the meantime, another engine began to cough and sputter forcing them to land at Buie West I. This load of patients was the first wounded from Normandy to reach Greenland and the patients were treated royally.

Their next move was back to Greenham Common and from there to Orleans, France — a muddy place. Late Oct. '44 found them at LeMans making flights to England and Paris hospitals. Many of the personnel went to southern France for that campaign. Some flew into Germany evacuating casualties in the Battle of the Bulge Dec. '44. Late March '45, they packed to move to Villa Coubley and Chateau near Paris. The men lived in the Chateau Marienthal, a millionaire's home. The group was evacuating American and German wounded from the Rhine area April 12, 1945 when it was announced over the radio that President Franklin D. Roosevelt had died. One German POW remarked Roosevelt was a good man but he knew nothing of this man called Truman!

Between flights, the personnel toured and learned about the area — especially Paris. For V-E Day, they shot off all the flares they could find — many of the natives learned of the war's end from the Americans' merrymaking.

Major Albert Haug, the Commanding Officer, volunteered the 816th for duty in the Pacific Theater. They went to an "Assembly Camp" awaiting orders to go to the Pacific when on Aug. 14, 1945, the Japanese surrendered.

The long wait was over and the hunt for suitable transportation home began. Space on the ship, SANTA ROSA was obtained and the 816th left for the U.S. Oct. 1st, 1945 arriving at Camp Kilmer, NJ Oct. 10 where they were disbanded.

Awards: All flying personnel of the 816th received the Air Medal, American Theater Ribbon, European and African, Middle Eastern Theater with 4 Bronze Stars, Good Conduct Medals and the techni-



Five nurses of the 816th MAES on 10 June 1944. First Row: Eleanor Geovanelle, Helen Melissa Clark, and Suellen Bernard. Second Row: Mary Ellen Young and Marijean Brown.

cians received their Crew Wings. All original personnel of the sqdn. are pictured in the Bowman Book.

IN MEMORIAM:

Dr. John Fissell, flight surgeon over Scotland

T/3 Frank Sorrells, medical technician near Iceland

By Elmer F. Cox, Arthur Hehr and Suella Bernard Delp

My First Flight Into Normandy on D-9

Our table of organization called for each plane for Air Evacuation to be manned with a flight nurse and a Tech. Sgt. who had been well trained to make these flights. Since these C-47 cargo planes carried military supplies to front lines we could not have the planes marked with a Red Cross, nor could they be armed as we carried injured soldiers to the rear for medical care. While cargo was hastily unloaded at forward positions, the flight nurse and technician set up the litter straps for the patients.

When we boarded the plane all the bucket seats were folded against the walls, and the cargo completely filled all the inside space. The pilot met us at the door and said, "Welcome, you don't have to worry; we have this plane armed." Knowing it could not be armed I replied, laughing, "Of course, the pistol you are wearing!" He laughed, saying, "Go look on the wall in the blue room, . . . we really are armed!" I found, hanging on the wall an ancient rusted muzzle-loaded shot-gun! It made good decoration if nothing else! Since we had only the cases of cargo to sit upon the T/3 and I looked it all over. Cases of 50 caliber machine gun bullets, cases of 105 mm shells, . . . and all the rest of the space was filled with five gallon cans of gasoline. We had to sit upon the cases. All the planes were lined up for formation take-off. On this flight we were to have fighter escort.

Taking off in formation, the planes were behind scheduled time

apparently as the cover of fighters and we had to be coordinated. We both watched through the windows when about three hundred feet or so off the ground our plane on inside wing position had to throttle-back to stay inside when the lead planes made a left turn. We were barely maintaining airspeed. The plane would sometimes slip sideways toward the ground. I wondered if we might crash . . . Then I was concerned about the cargo we were carrying. Remembering my few weeks detached duty at a B-24 bomber base near Norwich . . . That some of those planes blew-up on take-off, or also collided in air after take-off . . . I asked the T/3, "Do you think we would blow-up if we made a crash landing?"

"I don't know!" He seemed as nervous as I did about it! After some discussion of it, we decided that even a bullet in the right place might blow this stuff and us up. Our parachutes or the Mae Wests wouldn't do us much good either. Soon our formation straightened up and flew right. We felt much safer with the fighter planes over us . . . The Allied positions on the beach-head we had heard were precarious.

Soon we were over the English Channel. Below us we could see all sorts of ships heading both ways. We were well aware that the Allied force had such a small toe-hold on shore. Enemy resistance was fierce.

Across the channel as we neared the shore, we saw hundreds of wrecked ships that had never reached shore, as well as the thousands of wrecked equipment, wreckage . . . Unbelievable sights. All the wrecked, broken gliders that had crashed into posts set securely in any open field or into the thick impenetrable hedgerows . . . the open field where the mat landing strip was, still had the wrecked gliders with wings torn off, and other debris of war around it. The air was very dusty with all the activity. We could hear regular explosions of bombs and shelling as we landed. On the flight over, I'd been so interested in all we were passing over that I'd not noticed my ears becoming stopped-up a bit. That did not interfere with my hearing all the shells falling, seemingly nearer! As soon as the door was opened I stepped outside and saw a Flight Surgeon acting as coordinator, Capt. Mills. He was covered and caked with dust, his face, his hair, and clothes. Even his eyebrows were thick with it. He said the patients had been lined up on the litters on the ground nearby and in front of us for a long time because of the delayed landing. Shells falling and exploding nearby continued with regularity. Pattern bombing.

Quickly all the cargo had been unloaded and we immediately started loading the plane with the litters. Capt. Mills was overseeing it from the ground. The patients passed by me so fast I had only a quick look at them. Their charts were tucked under an edge of their litters. About eight patients were loaded when I noticed that one who passed by did not look at all good. He seemed to be comatose, and his color was very bad. Loading continued while I went forward to check his condition. His pulse was weak and thready; I checked his chart to see what his injuries were. He had serious abdominal wounds that had been surgically treated. He was dying, could not be roused. I decided to give him back for more care. Just that second Capt. Mills stuck his head in the doorway and yelled at us to, "Shut the doors and get the hell out of here, the shells are getting too close!" I immediately went to the door to give the patient back to him . . . But everyone, ambulances, . . . all had disappeared completely. No one at all there! We had to go . . . no time to lose!

Soon as we were airborne I went up front to notify the radio operator that we had a dying patient on board. That I was afraid he could not last until our landing, wherever it might be. "If he dies during the flight I don't want the other soldiers on board to know it. I'd like them to have a doctor on board the plane the second the doors are opened. In any event this patient needs very prompt attention." He said he would take care of it. Back in the cabin I told the T/3 about it. The plane was only about half loaded. Asking him to mostly take care of the others while I was busy with this poor dying soldier. We had a German prisoner of war with a sucking chest wound, . . . and I'd be mostly occupied with them on this short flight. All the other patients were really in quite good condition with their previous battle-ground care. The POW with the chest wound was not in the best of condition, but he was nervous, worried and not at all sure how he would be treated. Since he did not understand English I worked a bit harder with him and tried to assure him he would be treated well. I wanted to let him know he would be all right and that he would recover.

I constantly checked the dying patient, changed his position a bit. Not long after he did die. I definitely did not want the others to know about it, and I was afraid the patients across from him would notice

he wasn't breathing. I turned him a bit more towards the wall, adjusting his pillows and head to make it appear as though he were asleep. I immediately informed the T/3 and asked him to act as though all was normal. Our take-off from Normandy, near Ste.-Mere-Eglise had been done with great haste. The last shell falling even closer . . . that explosion popped my ears open!

When we landed in England near a General Hospital the plane had barely stopped moving when the doors opened from the outside. First on board was a flight surgeon followed by litter-bearers . . . They all seemed to crowd onto the plane. I spoke, "I'm so glad to see you Doctor. This is the patient I wanted you to check." I handed him the patient's chart which I'd closed. He then went to check the soldiers condition. He briefly checked the pulse, listened for a heart beat, turned to the litter-bearers and said, "Take this patient to Ward 3." I spoke to him of the German POW and his sucking chest wound. After checking him briefly the Doctor said, "Take this patient to Ward 2. Then take all the rest of them to Ward 1." It was a great relief to me that none of the patients knew that one of them had not 'made it'.

In May 1988 at San Antonio, Texas I attended a World War II Flight Nurse reunion. Also attending was former T/3 Elmer Cox of our Squadron. He mentioned that he had a patient who died on a flight out of Normandy. I asked him to please write the details of it to me, as I'd thought I was the only one who'd lost a patient. When his account arrived, he had the same date . . . D-9. He had not remembered who the flight nurse was. I am certain he was with me on that flight.

Summer of 1985 I attended a reunion of the 440th Troop Carrier Group to whom in October 1944 we were attached at A-50 airfield near Orleans, France. During one of the special social evenings in a large room each of the different group squadrons were in different areas of the large room swapping tales and renewing old friendships. I visited each group, talking with different ones. One of the former pilots was telling me about one of his first trips into Normandy to pick up patients. He spoke of the terrible wreckage along the shoreline as well as all the broken gliders in the immediate landing area. He said, "As soon as we landed I went outside the plane to get a better look . . . They had injured soldiers on litters lined up on the ground waiting for us. I wandered over to take a closer look at them. They were so young! One looked to me as though he was dying. He was lying there crying, tears rolling down his cheeks, and he kept calling for his mother. I've never forgotten him, . . . and whatever happened to him . . . Whether or not he made it through the war."

When I recounted to him the above description of my first flight into Normandy that pilot said to me, . . . "When you were telling me about that, chills were running up and down my spine! . . . That was my plane! . . . The wheels had barely stopped moving when we landed, . . . and the door was opened. The Doctor, litter-bearers . . . ambulances were all there! I never had it happen that fast again, . . . ever!" After all these years, this story is now complete.

By Louise Anthony de Flon — 816th MAES

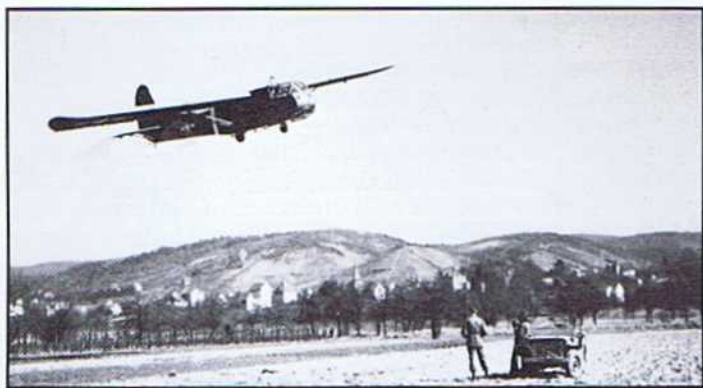
Glider Pick-up at Remagen by 816th MAES

Several persons in recent months have asked me about the glider pick-up with patients at Remagen, Germany and across the Rhine River during WWII when that bridge and all others were temporarily out. This happened forty-four years ago — on March 23, 1945 — and this is what I remember.

First, the planning had all been done when I came upon the scene and the gliders already made into hospital ships for transporting patients.

I remember this was not a completely new operation, since it had previously been done over mountainous territory in the China-Burma-India theatre, although reportedly not with nurses. At any rate, it was not heroic on my part — Major Albert D. Haug (our CO) had asked me to go on this flight just after my return from one of our routine flights with patients on a C-47. I was told I would care for patients in flight, the same as on other trips, and I readily agreed to do so.

I remember our landing at the pick-up point — an orchard strip — was smooth and uneventful. However, patients were not there and ready to be loaded as anticipated. I later heard that some had been ready the day before and we did not make the flight because of bad weather — therefore they weren't sure if or when we would arrive. There were several army ground personnel milling around, but no patients.



Glider landing in orchard to evacuate first patients from ETO — March, 1945, Remagen, Germany.



Loading Glider for air evacuation — Remagen, Germany, March, 1945.

I remember we waited what seemed like quite a long time and became concerned that the C-47 circling over-head would run out of gas and have to leave without us.

I did not see and do not remember anything about the 2nd glider, although I must have known about it at the time. I later learned that it may have been the first to land and take off.

I know there were two persons riding with me — other than patients — an Army Sgt. and another — perhaps a newsman. The patients finally arrived, were loaded in the glider, and the C-47 snatched us up. There was quite a jolt on take-off and one of the ropes by which the litters were suspended broke — thus dangling at one corner, three litters with patients. The Sgt. riding with me helped me to re-attach it. My one completely unconscious patient happened to be in this group and I remember worrying a great deal about him.

I don't know how long the flight lasted but one of the wheels collapsed on landing and we came to rest against a fence but had a fairly smooth landing in spite of it. The patients were removed from the glider and taken by army ambulance to a hospital. Of course, I never knew what became of them after that — wondered about it for a long time afterwards — but I then flew back to my base near Paris, and back to my usual duties.

This probably could have become a successful on-going operation, but, since transportation across the Rhine was re-established, there was no longer any need for similar air evac missions.

T/3 Elmer Cox remembers Maj. Albert D. Haug, M.D. worked to perfect the Glider Evac and attended wounded on the second glider.

By Sue Bernard Delp

History of 817th MAES

The 817th was organized 12 Nov. 1943 at Bowman Field, Ky.

Early in March — 14th — 1944, sailing orders were given and the 817th proceeded by truck and train to Camp Kilmer, NJ; then by ship to Scotland, arriving 2 April 1944 where we were greeted by a chorus of bagpipes. We went by train to Barkston Heath, England

near Grantham, arriving 3 April 1944. Quarters in England consisted of 2 open barracks with the most essential facilities across the street. It was cold and damp, our cots small and hard and orange crates became bedside tables. The comforts were few, but we were an eager and happy group. We sang with enthusiasm as we boarded trucks to and from missions.

After settling in at Barkston Heath, England, we began to explore the surrounding towns and villages. We were each issued a bicycle and we made good use of them to get around the Base and going to town for "fish and chips" or to a movie. We went on tours to Stratford-on-Avon to see Shakespearean plays, to London to view the historic places, and to Scotland for a boat trip on Loch Lomand. Gwen Ramsay Sheppard made a trip to North Wales to visit her grandmother and relatives.

Before D-Day, we evacuated patients from Ireland to England, England to Scotland and flew the Transatlantic route to NY.

During one of the Transatlantic flights, we had our first casualty of 817th personnel. On a mission out of Iceland, July 26, 1944, Catherine Price was lost. It was a traumatic shock to all of us for we were a very closely knit group. A technician from the 816th MAES, Frank Sorrels was lost with Catherine.

We had a heroine in Ann Macek Kreuger. Her plane loaded with patients crash-landed and burned at La Harve, France Dec. '44. Ann was awarded the Soldier's Medal for heroic achievement while evacuating patients from the plane after the crash. All on board were saved.

D-Day was 6 June 1944 and on 10 June we made our first flights to France and landed at St. Marie Iglese. On 14 Oct. '44, we moved to LeMans, France. Our quarters — previously occupied by the enemy and bombed out by our Air Force taught us to scrounge for the comforts of home. Because the runways were poor, we were soon moved to Dreux, France where we remained until May 1, 1945. Here we lived more comfortably on the third floor of a former school dormitory. We evacuated patients from the front lines to Rheims and Paris and across the English Channel to southern England. On these flights, we usually carried jerry-cans of gas, bombs or other supplies for the forward areas. Sometimes we had green, young soldiers going to the Front as replacements. Though these flights were dangerous, we had youth on our side, which sim-



Christmas party for French orphans.

ply meant we didn't know enough to be scared.

Dreux was only 40 miles from Paris and whenever our schedules permitted we would make the most of the Rue de la Paix, always in search of a better perfume. We worked the hardest right after each campaign and during the lull some of us were assigned TDY with ATC, evacuating patients to NY and Miami.

After we moved to France in Oct. 1944, it was not all work. We had R and R leaves on the French Riviera, to Switzerland, tours around Paris, to the U.K. and to Rome. We had 3 military weddings. Our nurses married Troop Carrier Pilots. Rosemary Lodes married Jerry Paccassi, Irene Wisti married Mike Wassil, and Ruth Cannon married Leo O'Conner.

The most memorable event for Ann Macek Kreuger was the Christmas party the 817th nurses gave for the French orphans of the Sisters of Charity. They were served in the GI mess, plates filled to

capacity and each plate was cleaned of its last morsel. The party itself was held in the Rec room complete with a trimmed tree and Santa played by 1st Lt. O. Miron, MAC Adjutant. The nurses had saved their candy rations, purchased small gifts and what few toys that were available. All the girls would have given anything to be home with their families but the sparkling eyes, broad grins and the joy in the laughter of the children was the best present they could have had other than being home. The nurses, who took part in the



The 817th Christmas party for the orphans at Dreaux, France. Back Row, L-R: E. Goldberg, M. Caulkins, F. McCain, J. Koster, R. Cannon, A. Kreuger, C. Gasvoda. Front Row, L-R: D. Berendsen, G. Todt, E. Reed, G. Bielecki, and G. Fruzynski.

event were Gasvoda, Cannon, Koster, Price, Caulkins, Goldberg, Todt, Fruzynski, Bielecki, Reed, Berendsen and Kreuger.

On 29 April we transferred to Toul, moving us closer to the front lines for availability to evacuate from western Germany to hospitals in France and England. On one of these forward flights, Christine Gasvoda, flight nurse, lost her life near Patterborn, 16 April 1945 — crashing into a mountain in Germany. This was the second stunning blow to our morale and her death saddened us all.

After V-E Day we continued to evacuate patients from prison camps, including German POWs. In May 1945 we moved to Paris (Orly Fld.), to fly the Trans-Atlantic missions evacuating "our boys" from Paris to the Azores, to Bermuda and on to Miami. Each of our nurses received the Air Medal and 5 Battle Stars for missions flown.

Before the Japanese surrendered, all except one of the nurses volunteered to go to the Pacific. August found us in tents at a staging area in Rheims awaiting orders for Pacific duty. During this time, we were able to visit Switzerland and the Riviera, then back to tents. Victory in the Pacific came before our shipping orders and by mid-September, we were Marseilles bound to await transportation home! The 2nd of Oct. '45, we boarded the *Marine Angel*, the Liberty Ship that would take 12 long days to sail us across the Atlantic. Within two days we were scattered to all parts of the country. These memories are ours, the 817th, to reflect on and to treasure for years to come. We were a close knit and compatible group and still enjoy our reunions.

The original personnel are pictured in the Bowman Book.

By Dorothy Berendsen, Gwen Ramsay Sheppard and Ann Macek Kreuger

History of 819th MAES

We of the 819th MAES are well-aware of our good fortune in being assigned to what we consider to be the best squadron to leave Bowman Fld. in the past, present and future. Our CO is Maj. Emerson Kundo and our CN is 2nd Lt. Phoebe LaMunyan. We graduated from the S.A.E. 21 Jan. 1944, earning the right to wear our golden wings. We wear them with the knowledge we have successfully completed a difficult course.

The week following graduation, our school was honored by a visit from Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of President Roosevelt. She visited our classes, ate our chow, watched the parade in her honor and

we demonstrated plane loading to her. We read with interest her brief description of the school which appeared in "My Day" — she spoke of the "Grim Litter Bearers."

No one knows just when we are leaving Bowman but rumors circulate daily. Suddenly, six of our girls left as replacements toward the Pacific Area. The morning of 14 Feb. 1944, we awakened to a base blanketed by several inches of snow. With full packs, helmets, gas masks and musette bags, we left Bowman accompanied by the 815th and 816th Sqdns.

15 Feb. 1944, we arrived at Camp Kilmer, NJ with the hope our stay would be brief. We attended lectures on subjects we had already spent hours studying previously. Military courtesy was lacking at Kilmer and we were subjected to whistles by the Ground Forces. After a week on a starvation diet, our meals improved a bit but not our relationship with the powers responsible for the abominable condition.

26 Feb. 1944, we started our long journey from Kilmer to the ship, H.M.T. Samaria, an old British boat, overaged and overcrowded. Midst music and doughnuts and thousands of fellow travelers, we boarded. 19 nurses were housed in two cabins. The officers had crowded quarters too but the enlisted men were placed in places unfit for pigs. A small epidemic of measles, mumps and meningitis broke out and the sick-bay was overflowing. With no isolation facilities available, we carried out our technique as best we could. Our free days began to grate on the nerves of the nurses working in the sick-bay, so we gladly took over the nursing of the ship to pass the time away.

Our trip across the ocean was slow with no enemy intervention. After two weeks at sea, land looked inviting. However a heavy fog made docking impossible so we sat for a day and a half in the *Mercey R.* Fri. 10 Mar. 1944, we pulled into Fort and watched the other units debark as the band played "Pistol Packin' Mamas." We debarked Sat. AM, were taken by truck to the R.R. station, put in our compartments and were fed doughnuts and coffee by the Red Cross.

Darkness found us in London with our destination still unknown. We finally spent the night at the Red Cross Club at 10 Charles St. We had seen London from the back of a G.I. truck in a blackout. We had a good meal, hot bath, comfortable beds and set forth the next morning on the final lap of our journey. We reached Aldermaston the morning of 12 March 1944. The ranking officers of the post had been removed to make room for us in the best Nissen Hut available. They took everything movable with them. We doubled up to make the largest room a lounge. Cold and shaking, we finally mastered the art of making a fire in an English stove with damp coke and wood. We found paint and redecorated with Patsy making couch covers for two cots. The Service Grp. located us a piano and it began to look like home. We even found time to plant a garden which thrived. We named our abode "The Last Resort."

When our bicycle issue came, we learned biking was more dangerous than flying! Everyone mastered the bicycle and we spent time cycling over the English countryside.

The 26 of March, Lois Roy went to the hospital with Mumps and two days later, Pearl Platt followed with the Measles. Fortunately, they were the only victims of the ship Samaria.

The month of May had passed quickly in spite of the fact our work has not started. We received 5 replacements for the 6 we lost at Bowman but Gertrude Berlings was transferred to the 806th. All of us had our turn at detached service at bomber bases with the 8th AF B17 and B24 varieties. We were expected to be on the line for all mission take-offs and returns and attended briefings. We flew in the bombers as much as possible to learn as much as we could about their equipment. The nurses at Old Bockingham were shown how to set up a B-24 for the evac of pts.

Jo Sansone of the 802nd visited our grp. and told us the practical aspects of Air Evac. Capt. Hatch taught us French and we had ditching procedure training. Our Sqdn. Softball team comprised of officers and enlisted men while not champions of the base, were in there pitching! Our pup, Winkie succumbed to a case of round worms and died while under treatment of the vet. And just as he had learned how to bark and become housebroke — almost!

Military momentum was reaching its peak. We could feel it and sensed it as new outfits — Anti-Aircraft, Field Artillery, Airborne Infantry — moved in. Restrictions were on again, off again — something had to be cooking.

June is ushered in with mystery and tension. Combat groups and squadrons were sealed in their areas. Our only glimpse of men aside from the Chaplain and Base Surgeon were brief glimpses of the sol-

emn faces of the columns marching to and from the mess hall and briefings.

The evening of June 5th 1944, Maj. Finkelstein, Base Surgeon announced that D-Day had arrived and we were permitted to go to the line and watch the takeoff and sweat out the returns. Time dragged as we counted the stream of red and green lights from a neighboring grp. flying toward the English Channel. We watched our own C-47's and gliders take off, circle the field forming a beautiful tree formation and fly off into the moonlight. We retired to our respective tents and tried to sleep until time to count the returning planes. We were seeing history in the making.

The next few days were spent in waiting for the announcement that evacuation by air had begun. We learned of this from a glamorous picture of girls from a neighboring field with their arms filled with poppies shown in the Stars and Stripes. Our battle for Air Evac had slipped a trifle. The picture left Flight Nurses wide open for ridicule — we were called the "Poppy Girls."

The 819th started its official evacuation 14 Jan. 1944. The 4 of us, who were fortunate enough to take part, returned to our base filled with high hopes of doing our part in our country's enterprise. We didn't know that we would appear almost as an excess sqdn. which specialized the entire month in being alerted and unalerted. We set new world records in dressing and undressing.

Strawberry season arrived and we discovered 2 large patches of them within the confines of the base. We ate berries and even made home made jam. For occupational therapy, we were presented a loveable little pussy cat, which we named Chloe. Seeking to keep her happy, we found a "Good Polish" kitten to keep her company, named Elmer.

Our month of June ended on a disappointed note. We were fast losing all hope that someday we would be allowed to take part in our primary mission — Air Evac. The 819th welcomed July bored, restless, irritable and resigned to the fact we were champion Gold-bricks. Gertrude VanKirk and Margaret Murphy arrived on the 4th to complete our quota. But just as we were reconciling ourselves to a life of laziness, the unexpected happened — we started flying and we loved it. We flew daily, weather permitting into Normandy. Our trips were comparatively uneventful as far as enemy hazards were concerned. Roy's ship was fired upon by sniper fire but was not hit; Rice hit Air Evac Strip #1 just in time for an air raid; Murphy's plane skidded sideways and blew a tire while landing with a full load of pts.; Pejke prepared for a crash landing but the plane landed safely.

Just as we settled in, rumors of our going to Prestwick for the North Atlantic flights surfaced, with transfer imminent. We decided to give a cocktail party for some of our friends. Col. Whitacre contributed a ham which Blackie, the mess Sgt. baked to perfection. Our 8th AF buddies parted with a portion of their whiskey stash. The party was a success but the evening ended on a somber note when June Sanders, our Sqdn. poet and historian, was in a jeep accident, suffering multiple rib fractures, fr. vertebrae, brain concussion and internal injuries. We held our breath and prayed for the next few days. Mary Graton was sent TDY to replace June. The next day, we were told we were to start taking atabrine and not to reveal this to anyone. When we took off for the southern tip of England, everyone realized we were leaving the British Isles and the ETO. But for where? Our trip was speedy, pleasant and uneventful except for a forced landing after the plane's hydraulic system was shot by a sniper at Casa Blanca. By July 25, 1944, we had reached our destination — never dreaming we would see Casa Blanca, Algiers and Naples.

Lido de Roma, our new home, was at one time Mussolini's playground. We had a large apartment house without windows, lights or plumbing. We plundered for furniture, built a crude fireplace in the backyard to heat water for showers and the techs built us a unique shower.

Soon after arriving, we started working — it was regular but not as pleasant as runs to Normandy. Runways were dusty and evac records were obsolete. Many of the pts. were British, Arab and Indian. We were not flying near the front lines as in Normandy and the pts. were not newly wounded. We enjoyed the work and especially Lido de Roma with its sandy beach, beautiful sea and gorgeous moon. We have Italian maids, however cannot converse with them. We were still anxious to return to England and our friends.

Another invasion was approaching, everyone could feel it — but when the day we arose to find our neighbors, the Paratroopers had disappeared leaving us their prize furniture and adorable Sicilian mongrel, Julie. In spite of this, the invasion came as a surprise. We heard about it on the streets of Rome — it was a success with few casualties and it appeared once again the 819th was not needed!

We went swimming, got a tan, saw Rome, had an audience with the Pope, saw St. Peter's Cathedral. We visited the catacombs and some investigated the catacomb the Germans had turned into a tomb for several hundred Italians a few weeks before. By this time, the heat, unsatisfactory messing facilities, too much C Ration hash, lack of mail, or the unsettled circumstances under which we were living had gotten to us and for the first time our sqdn. began to squabble amongst ourselves. Therefore it was with unbounded joy that we learned we were being returned to England. We left Lido de Roma 22 Aug. bright and early taking off from Oran. The PX there had bountiful rations and everyone stocked up. In Casa Blanca, we had some free time so decided to shop. We were dressed in slacks and wondered why so many men were overly familiar. It turned out any woman on the streets in slacks was considered a prostitute. By



Flight C of 819th Evacuation Sq. L-R: R. Burkhart, L. Oropeza, S. Pejko, M. Devard, L. Suminski, R. Daenzer.

the afternoon of Aug. 25th we were all back in England — with hot water and a bath tub again.

We were stationed at Prestwick to make the North Atlantic hops. The girls, who had made the trip to Newfoundland and returned were thrilled with the work. Those who flew on to the states were too. The nurses lived in an old hotel which was crowded but not too bad, protected by a Sgt. After arriving, the work load decreased. Was it possible that once again the 819th was not needed!

We were into Sept. and broke. Our money has not caught up with us and everyone is broke. And nothing is free. Three complete squadrons had arrived in Prestwick and Evacs were down. Our social life had dwindled — we were forced to "knit two, perl two." The news of the Holland Invasion reached our knitting circle and we sweated the boys out for casualties were heavier. While the girls knitted, the enlisted men were discovering the Scottish girls, who were cute and good dancers. They took in old movies and danced at the Bobby Jones Ballroom.

Our work was scanty but the North Atlantic run was a long hard grind. Many pts. are seriously ill and required lots of nursing care. The sickest pts. are accompanied by the Flight Surgeon and nurse. When critical cord pts. were evacuated, doctor, nurse and tech accompanied each ship. It's on runs like those when one realizes they're helping carry out air evac. All the nurses had had one trip across the ocean and some reached NYC. They were overcome by the bright lights, steaks, ice cream, milk and no shortages.

We moved to Westfield by the Sea in Scotland. We were miserable; what with our overbearing Sgt., over crowded rooms, oversized rats, drafty ventilation, overactive fleas, too few bathrooms — made us dislike Scottish castles.

Nov. has 30 days and that was enough! The plane one of our officers was scheduled to fly in returning from NY crashed in Newfoundland. Lt. Hickey circled for hours — finally landing in England

with 20 min. of gas left. Eichelberger, a tech on TDY in France rode a plane to earth leaving a much torn ground — but survived. We continued to fly to the states and a new stop was, Fort Totten — out of this world. No one there had been taught Military Courtesy; our techs had to work in the permanent personnel's mess hall on KP. Then our routine was changed and we only flew to the Azores. They were not well organized, food was unpalatable, quarters for transients were inadequate — not enough beds. They did have ice cream, lines, fresh fruit, leather goods, watches at reasonable prices. Nov. was over and it marked the 1st anniversary of the activation of the 819th. We had grown a lot, traveled a lot and had had our ups and downs. We are more united than ever before — a complete sqdn. and proud of it. We are praying for a transfer:

"Twas the night before Christmas in the ETO.
Our bedding rolls were packed all ready to go.
We went to church and said prayers sincere.
In hopes that our orders would soon be there!"

By June Sanders

The New Year 1945 finds us on the move again. The 806th left for Orley to open a new base in Paris. Some of our Christmas pkgs. arrived in time, others were stranded. Life continues in its slow monotonous fashion. We gave a party and had a great time. It was good to be all together again. Christmas day, Betty Rice was stricken with a queer type of paralysis, affecting partially the entire left side of her body but she is gradually improving. Christmas was celebrated with too much emphasis on the day.

"Christmas is over, the New Year draws near.
And from all appearances we still will be here.
We've spouted and pouted and fumed and we've roared.
The 819th's transfer has been well ignored!
Our mail can not find us; we're packed up on a shelf.
We surely feel sorry — mainly — for ourselves.

The time's in the offing, at the close of the year
For new resolutions soon to appear.
We're firmly convinced we should make a stand
Size ourselves up and take us in hand.
We will do our best no matter where stuck
We'll try not to send our tempers amuck.
We'll settle us down and all cease to gripe.
But who — in blue blazes — would believe all this tripe?"

By Phoebe LaMunyan

This history was incomplete when presented to the Editor so we shall end it here. However they did return stateside and some were discharged but many remained in the service making it a career.

By June Sanders and Phoebe LaMunyan

History of 820th MAES

The 92 personnel of the 820th MAES consisted of a CO, 4 Flight Surgeons, one administrator, one CN and 24 nurses, 60 NCO's and one Master Sgt. The class of 43H, flight nurses, received their certificates 21 Jan. 1944 from the AAFSAE at Bowman Fld., KY. During sqdn. activation week, all five sqdns. "passed in review" for Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt. The 820th nurses received a unit commendation for excellence.

On 9 Feb. 1944, the 820th left Bowman Fld. by train for Camp Stoneman, Pittsburg, CA, arriving on 18 Feb. The next day, they embarked on a small ship but later transferred to the USS West Point, a former luxury liner, which for the duration of the war would be utilized as a transport for military troops. Boarding 19 Feb. 1944, they joined a large convoy with Navy ships as escorts. When they crossed the Equator Feb. 28th, there were special Neptune ceremonies. 6 March, we docked at New Caledonia in the Pacific and reached Milne Bay, New Guinea 10 Mar. 1944 — 7,775 miles from our starting point! Disembarking on 13 Mar. 1944, we were trucked to a staging area for nurses. Many of the nurses had been there for two to six months, restricted to the compound area due to the recent rape of a nurse in this area.

The group set about readying the tents. The humidity, heat and insects had made us a bit short tempered. Occupants of the area fashioned a sign which read, "Creeps Inn." The nurses had certain hours for meals at the mess which was not remembered for its menu — many recall the grapefruit jc. and the can of orange marmalade

on each table — with no bread or crackers to spread it on.

Milne Bay, New Guinea, (APO 928) Base A. (which had represented the first land victory by USAF and militia in Aug. 1942). We were assigned TDY here for one week for orientation and acclimation prior to our first overseas assignment. A nurse, of this station, was assigned as a big sister to each of the 820th nurses to instruct her in tropical living, provide advice and reassurance. As part of the acclimation, we were required to take afternoon siestas!

On to Port Moresby, 19 March 1944, APO 929, our first air evac assignment. This island was occupied by US Troops on 18 Feb. 1943. We landed at the Ward Drome (strip) in compliance with General Order 129 par 2, Hq. 5th AF, APO 925, dated 10 Mar. '44, where our CO, Maj. Ralph M. Lechausee gave our welcoming speech. He started out with, "Ladies and gentlemen, this is it!" Many of us remember the beautiful Catholic church, the Dutch priest and the native servers. Our technicians were not with us at this point and some of us flew with the Australian medical technician, MacDonald on flights from Moresby to Saidor. Our technicians had gone ahead of us to prepare out headquarters and camp.

Here we were assigned to the 54th TCW, commanded by Col. Paul H. Prentiss, and under the 5th AF Commander, Ennis C. Whitehead, assigned routine flights with the 375th TC Sqdn. Flying in C-47's, supplies were taken to forward areas and injured soldiers were evacuated back to Port Moresby. We flew out of two airstrips: Ward Airdrome and Jackson Strip. Patients were evacuated from Dobodura and Wau.

Leaving Port Moresby 9 May 1944, we went to Nadzab, New Guinea (Markham Valley) which was captured by the Allies in Sept. 1943, and flew out of airstrips Sagerak, Dampier and Gusop, evacuating pts. from Lae, Tadjji, Saidor, Medang, and Finschafen. Flights to Finachafen were over We Wak and some encounters were made with "ach-ach" from a Japanese air base while flying over We Wak.

July 1944, the nurses began R and R — some going to Sydney, Australia and others to Cairns, Brisbane and Townsville, Australia. All the wonders of civilization, even breakfast in bed, were highlights of this wonderful leave time. They enjoyed sight-seeing, eggs, steaks, fresh fruits, vegetables and fresh milk. Sydney was a wonderful city with friendly and hospitable people, excellent water and sandy beaches. For entertainment, there were theaters, concerts, zoos with beautiful and rare birds and animals, and good restaurants.

Hollandia, which was located on Humbolt Bay and secured by US troops on 22 April 1944 was our next assignment, arriving there 7 Aug. 1944. We operated from three main airstrips: Cyclops, Sentani, and Hollandia Air Drome, evacuating injured from Morti, Wadke, and Owi. On our first flight into Wadke, we had to circle the airstrip to await the removal of planes destroyed by Japanese strafing only one-half earlier. Laila Budd, one of our nurses spent two nights in a trench dug around the air-strip perimeter in Wadke, due to enemy attacks. This was later a "Staging area" for the Jolly Rogers Bomber Grp. Our barracks here were erected on a Japanese burial ground as an area of disabled Japanese aircrafts, Zero's and Betty's were located just below our quarters. Swimming in Humbolt Bay was a treat.

On 7 Nov. 1944, we moved further north to Biak (Netherland East Indies), a coral reef captured by US Forces on 27 May, 1944. Upon our arrival, the 804th MAES was already stationed there. They occupied a wooden barracks and we lived in tents. We were placed on detached service with the 804th until they moved to the forward echelon at Buraen, Leyte, Philippine Islands. We then moved into their vacated quarters. Biak had palm trees, vegetation, hot weather, 90-100% humidity, rain, high forceful winds and monsoons.

As the war in the Pacific progressed our flights increased both in number as well as length. We evacuated pts. from Noemfoor, Sapsapor, Morotai, and began flights to Tacloban, Leyte, P.I., which required R.O.N.'s in Pelelieu, Palau Islands and continuing flights to Leyte. The forward echelon of the 820th had located on Baurauen, Leyte which required flights in L-5's from Tacloban to Baurauen and return trips to pick up our flights in Tocloben. Part of the Sqdn. remained in the rear echelon in Biak. It was during this period that two of the 820th personnel were declared missing or killed in action. On Jan. 26, 1945, Thelma LaFave from Georgetown, Mich., flight nurse and T/3 Orla Bittlitter technician were reported missing in flight from Pelelieu to Leyte (presumably over Zamboanga). No trace of plane nor crew was found. And on Mar. 10, 1945, Martha F. Black from Ny, NY, flight nurse and T/3 Delbert V. Beery, technician, were killed in Luzon, P.I. in an air crash with patients aboard. All persons on board were killed. The horrors of war and combat

were very real to us as we grieved for our lost friends. They shall always remain in our hearts and this history is dedicated to their memory. May we never forget them.

In late Jan. 1945, we moved to Burauen, Leyte, an island in the Philippines, which was captured by Allied Troops 20 Oct. '44. Burauen was a small dirty village from which we flew to Tacloben Air-drome to catch our flights throughout the area. Aerial "dog fights" between the US and Japanese fighters were a usual occurrence. It was here that two of our nurses had a very close call when on 10 Feb., 1 C-47 with a crew and passengers totalling 12, two of which were Lt. Victoria Lancaster and Lt. Theta Phillips, had blown off course in bad weather, was running low on fuel, had lost all contact by radio, was circling searching for a place to land. That morning on orders from Gen. Geo. C. Kenney, four P-51 fighter pilots, Apt. Louis E. Curdes, Lts. Schmidtke, Scalley and LaCroix, took off from Central Luzon at Mangaldan to do reconnaissance missions, each having certain areas to observe. Having observed Formosa, they headed for the Bataan Island chain looking for enemy activity or air-strip. Spotting an air strip on a Japanese held island, Lts. Scalley and LaCroix strafed the area. Lt. LaCroix's plane was hit by enemy fire injuring his leg and he was forced to ditch in the sea. When Capt. Curdes learned of the incident, he and Lt. Schmidtke arrived on the scene to help protect the downed pilot. Realizing fuel was running low and night approaching, Capt. Curdes ordered Lt. Scalley to return to base and send a PBY to rescue the downed pilot.

Capt. Curdes gave the Jap held air strip his full attention and strafed it from one end to the other. Pulling up, he suddenly saw another plane approaching which appeared to be a transport. He climbed to get in a good position to fire when he recognized the American insignia on the transport. Using his radio, he attempted to warn the transport of impending danger on the Jap held island but got no response from the transport. Ignoring his efforts to divert it, he was forced to fire a round of ammunition at both engines crippling it and causing it to ditch along side Lt. LaCroix in the water. When the door of the downed transport opened, out crawled 12 people, two of them nurses. They ditched safely and soon the two dinghies were tied together. Another crew of P-51's came to relieve Capt. Curdes, who had been keeping watch overhead. He returned to base and returned the following morning with a PBY to rescue the stranded personnel. Later, Capt. Curdes was awarded the DFC for deliberately shooting down an American plane and he proudly painted the American flag on the fuselage of his plane!

We prayed this would be the end of our troubles but on 11 Feb. 1945, a C-47 pilot was wounded by artillery fire while the plane was on the ground at Clark Fld., Luzon in the Philippines. On board, were Lt. Mary Coughlin and T/3 Joseph Pelletier, members of the 820th. The rest of the crew returned to base intact. Sad to say, on 17 Feb. 1945, tragedy struck again when one of our ground crew members, Louis Eilenberger was drowned in the surf at Dulag, Leyte Island in the Philippines.

Dulag was our 2nd assignment in the Leyte area. We lived in tents built upon stilts. The airstrip consisted of corrugated metal runways. While awaiting "take-offs" in our revetments, the noise from the fighters and bombers taking off was almost unbearable. From Dulag, we evacuated injured from Panay, Negros, Mindoro, Cebu, Samar, Baguio, San Fernando and Lingayen. On 3 June 1945, our CO, Maj. Hugh Crumay, M.C. was transferred to Far Eastern Air Forces in Manila as Flight Surgeon of FFAF. We greatly missed him and his fatherly concern for all of us, but it represented a promotion with an increase in rank to Lt. Col. His new post would unify all air evac operations in the Southwest Pacific area. Capt. Leopold Snyder, 804th Flight Surgeon and Senior Air Evac Officer in the 5th AF became our new CO. Our Chief Flight Nurse, Capt. Alice Ristine, received orders for duty change and Capt. Mary Kerr, 804th MAES was appointed to Chief Flight Nurse of the 5th AF. She was the first female to hold a staff post in the 5th AF Headquarters.

The 820th flight personnel were very busy with many rapid moves in the Philippines which were: Dulag, Leyte Island (Feb. 27, 1945); Camp Dau, Luzon (June 11, 1945); Camp Statsenburg, Luzon (Aug. 6, 1945). Aug. 22, 1945, we moved to Motobee, Okinawa Island, of the Riukiu chain. The sqdn's stay there was short due to a typhoon which demolished the area. We were evacuated to Kadena and then to Yantan, Okinawa.

We reached Luzon, P.I. 11 June 1945. Manila had fallen to the US Troops on 5 Feb. 1945. We were assigned to Camp Dau and occupied a barracks (brick) which was quite modern with a solarium and was formerly a Japanese Officer's barracks located near Clark and

Nicholas Air Fields. The only drawback to our plush quarters was an over abundance of bats, which necessitated the use of mosquito nets. It was great to be in civilized surroundings again with paved highways and to watch the caribou wandering about. Patients were evacuated throughout Luzon.

The last few months of the war were near; the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan 6 Aug. 1945. American C-54's arrived from England and were used to transport our prisoners of war to the US. The C-54's were quite a contrast to the C-47's and C-46's which we had been flying in. We flew with the large transports to Finchafen, Fadjie, Nadzab, Lae, Hollandia, Momote, Biak to Leyte, Luzon and Okinawa.

Some of the personnel witnessed the green strip down the runway when the Japanese came for the signing of the surrender of the Japanese to Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

Our personnel were rotating stateside, changes occurred swiftly and replacements came to fill each vacancy. Already we began to miss those that had left, we had little or no information or communication. The time in history for us in the Southwest Pacific was over, our work was completed and each of us had given our best effort to the war.

Maj. J.H. Paul wrote a poem called "The Conqueror" to an Army Flight Nurse aboard a Troop Carrier plane somewhere in the Southwest Pacific. We would like to send this message to him: "Your poetry is accurate, true and beautiful. We shall always remember you!"

The Conqueror

To an Army Flight Nurse, aboard a Troop Carrier airplane somewhere in the Southwest Pacific.

I caught the hesitant, the fleeting smile,
And read the anxious doubt in your soft eyes —
Born of the tense, disturbing interlude,
Your practical mind had failed to analyse.
I watched you as the over-burdened ship
Rose through the weather with a sluggish head
Then saw the color steal back to your cheeks,
Discounting all the things that had been said
Of stormy skies, the load, uncertain flight —
And knew the faith a child has in the night.

I saw these things, and marked your courage well,
For then I knew just how a vagrant dream
Could claim you, in that surging, plunging ship
While we fought through squalls . . . ahead . . . a beam.
For you have conquered fear of death, and pain,
With gentle words . . . The coolness of your hand
For those who fly . . . Oh, time and time again.
And so you slept; of course the pilot knew.

"Sleep gently, child. This one's on me . . . for you!"

Major J.H. Paul, U.S.A.

History By Trude Champlin White

History of 821st MAES

Activated Jan. 1944, left for Camp Patrick Henry, Va. May '44 arrived at Hampton Roads port of embarkation. A swing band serenaded them and the Red Cross offered coffee as they boarded the USS General George M. Randall, which was on its maiden voyage. May 27, '44, passed through the Panama Canal, May 30, '44, crossed the Equator and had a session in King Neptune's Court — face painting, hair cutting, and a shampoo of old coffee grounds and left over pancake mix. A dunking in the tank made them full fledged Shellbacks! June 13, '44, they crossed the International Date Line and June 14, 1944 never existed for them! June 21, '44, they reached Fremantle, Australia, where they were given shore leave and an opportunity to meet the friendly Aussies. July 5, '44, they arrived in Bombay, India which was during the monsoon season. The dull, dismal dirty dock crowded with dirty, gaping, emotionless Indians was uninspiring! They boarded a train in Bombay at nearby Ballard Station enroute to Calcutta. They reached Howrah Station at Calcutta July 9, '44, welcomed by an Army band playing American tunes.

They were under the impression they were going to China. Aug.

8, '44, they left by air for Chabua, India where they were billeted with the 803rd MAES until their future home was carved out of the jungle at Ledo by the Naga head hunters and three advance enlisted men. They shared air evac run, TDY, and hospital duties with the 803rd. By Sept. '44, the 821st had evacuated 1,449 patients. At the close of Oct. '44, 1,289 patients had been evacuated for the month with 1,806 being evacuated for the month of Nov.

Dec. 2, 1944, they reached their new home at Ledo, a neat and pleasantly situated area on a knoll overlooking the airstrip. In the distance, they could see the lofty peaks of the Himalaya Mountains, behind them beautiful jungle covered hills. No longer were they to be grateful for handouts from other units. Their job was to evacuate wounded and sick from Myitkyina, Tinkawk Saka, Shingbwiang, Sahmaw, Mauler, Moauk, Nansin and Katha — or any place our planes flew.

Dec. '44 was their biggest month for they brought out 4,575 patients, their first month with the 10th AF. Their total to Dec. '44 was 9,130 patients. Dec. '44, they were entitled to wear a bronze star on their Asiatic theater service ribbon. The flight nurses and medical technicians each received an Air Medal. One DFC and two Soldiers' Medals were also awarded. There were numerous close calls but no major casualties.

Flights A-B-D flew with the 10th AF in Burma, and Flight C with the 14th AF in China. In August, '45 they flew into Japan-held territory to evacuate POWs of the Japanese, some were the heroes of the "River Kwai," some women and children and some had been imprisoned four years, since the attack on Pearl Harbor. By June '45, only Flight C of the 821st was active. When the flight nurses were removed from the CBI, air evac duties were left to medical technicians aided by medical officers from various bases. It is an amazing tribute to the skill, resourcefulness and devotion of all air evac personnel that despite crossing the "Hump," weather conditions, the number transported, and the varieties of injured and sick, not a single death was reported.

The 821st left Ledo for Karachi late in 1945 arriving NY through the Suez Canal.

By Katherine Hack, Gene Rybowski, and Ralph B. Breckenridge



821st techs — Ledo, India



821st MAES somewhere in the Indian Ocean — July 1944

History 823rd MAES Later the 830th

February 1944 the 823rd MAES was formed with the arrival of 24 Lieutenants of the ANC for assignment to the eight-week course — the care and method of evacuation of wounded from battle areas — Air Force School of Air Evacuation, Bowman Field, Louisville, Kentucky. Upon Graduation and receiving the gold wings, the newly designated flight nurses of the 823rd MAES were released from assignment to the First Troop Carrier Command and assigned to the ATC, New Castle Army Air Force Base, Wilmington, Delaware and



Left: Lt. Vicky Newell (on left) and Lt. Rita Shea. Right, L-R: "Spook" Auld, "Ollie" Heritage, Vicky Newell. Cairo, Egypt



R-L: Lt. Betty Glutz, Lt. Vicky Newell, Lt. Mary Feeney. Greenwich Village

the Memphis Air Port, Memphis, Tenn. The 823rd as a squadron ceased to exist; however, the flight nurses and assigned technicians were actively performing evacuation functions transporting WW II casualties from European and Pacific Theaters to hospitals throughout the Continental United States from May to November-December 1944, at which time they were assigned to the 830th MAES, 1500 AAF Base Unit, AAF Air Transport Command, Hickam Air Base, Hawaii. As members of the 830th they participated in the evacuation of wounded from battle zones on remote Pacific islands to hospitals far behind the combat lines and to the United States flying over thousands of miles of Pacific Ocean. These islands included Hawaii, Guam, Saipan, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Australia, Solomon Islands, Shouten Islands (New Guinea), Iwo Jima, Japan, northern Marianas, Micronesia, Philippine Islands, Okinawa, Korea, Malasia, China, and others of forgotten names.

Battles and Campaigns participated in: Central Pacific, Philippine Islands, Luzon-Ryukyu, Philippine Liberation.

Citations: Meritous Service Unit Plaques; Air Medals, Army Occupation Medals; American Campaign Medal, Asiatic Pacific

Campaign Medal (4 battle stars); Philippine Liberation Medal (1 battle star); WW II Victory Medal.

Let's not forget — they served with loyalty and zeal for duty rarely, if ever, equaled.

Original personnel are pictured in the Bowman Book.

By Valeska S. Somlo

History of 824th

June 1944, six nurses and one flight surgeon were assigned from the 826th squadron at Bowman, Kentucky to Palm Springs, California. Within the month, four additional nurses and another flight surgeon were assigned. I believe the other flights at Romulus, Michigan and Memphis, Tennessee were similarly staffed. The day before we were to transport patients, we flew to Letterman General Hospital, San Francisco. We stayed with the same plane and crew throughout our trip. We picked up patients and flew them to hospitals for definitive treatment or to a hospital near their home. The personnel from Letterman would make phone calls to the first stop for each plane and advise the base how many ambulatory and how many litter patients would be off-loaded as well as the ETA. From then on, it was the flight nurse's duty to make those phone calls. At times, these cross country trips would last three days. If there were patients on the east coast, we would make a return trip westward. In the early stages, newspaper coverage was extensive and interest of ground personnel was intense but as the newness of the program wore off, so did the cooperation and exposure.

At Palm Springs, the nurses lived in a one story barracks. We each had our own bedroom and there was one living room to share. We had a field telephone — connected to the flight surgeon's office only. To shower, we had to go to a separate building about 200 feet away. Not exactly living at the Ritz but the gorgeous weather helped a lot.

By Mary Oldehoffe Stehle

History of 825th MAES Later the 830th MAES Flights 11, 12, 13, and 14

I do not have access to official orders or records therefore this is an unofficial history of the 825th MAES from April 1944 to November 1945 when I was discharged.

After the formation of the 825th MAES in April 1944, we were held at Bowman Field waiting for the southern France invasion. On 30 June 1944 we flew to Charleston, South Carolina for overseas processing and debarkation. On 2 July we sailed on the hospital ship Chateau Thierry, spending 18 days on the Atlantic, finally stopping at Oran, Algiers where we were supposed to disembark. We stripped our bunks, dressed in class A uniforms including helmets and canteens and waited on deck for orders. When our Doctors returned, no one on shore knew our final destination. As a result we remained on board the ship to its destination Naples, Italy. Here we were quartered in a bombed out school, which turned out to be in the middle of the red light district. We found out at dinner time that we were flying to Casablanca the next day.

Casablanca was the headquarters for our squadron. Two flights were stationed here. One flight went to Karachi, India, flying to Abadan, Iran and Cairo, Egypt. One flight went to Cairo, Egypt flying to Tripoli, Libya and Casablanca, French Morocco. The Casablanca based nurses did the Lagens A.F.B. Azore Islands run which was about six hours. We were flying in contract C-54's from Pan American, United and American Air Lines with all civilian crews except the flight nurse and the medical technician. If no one relieved us at Lagens, Azores we went on to Newfoundland or Bermuda. This meant a 16-18 hour flight, so we were allowed to go on to Uncle Sugar Able (U.S.A.) for 48 hours.

The Azores were a delightful place to visit, about 1920 era. Taxis were horse and buggies, women in slacks a real novelty. In Casablanca, we lived in crude small wood houses on Cazes Air Base. The showers (enclosed) were in the living room. We had Italian P.O.W.'s as house boys who chopped the wood for hot water and heat.

In January 1945, my flight moved to Karachi, India. Karachi Air

Base was fifteen miles out in the boon docks. Our house was at the end of the base. In back was a Gurka camp, next to it the camel caravan road to Karachi. Being based in Karachi was a different way of living. Our house consisted of living room, small kitchen, three bedrooms and two screened in porches. We rented furniture for the living room. The government furnished cots and dressers. Three servants (tongue in cheek) and gardener were paid for by Uncle Sam. The gardener watered shrubs for several houses and with temperatures that sometimes reached 125 degrees it was a thankless task. We paid for the master bearer, Mohammed who lived in a small house in back. Due to the cast system, we also had Baldy the sweeper who was an "untouchable." They had an Indian kitchen at the end of the house with charcoal stoves. Here they heated the water for our showers. Two buckets for a shower and three buckets for a shower and shampoo. We tried to scrounge coffee, eggs, bread and canned butter so we could fix our own breakfast. The mess hall was in the terminal and so far from our quarters we had to have transportation to go to eat.

Karachi was our introduction to the C-46 aircraft also known as the Curtis time bomb. They had gasoline heaters and a few had blown up so the pilots did not like to use them. Our flights left Karachi between midnight and two a.m. so we could reach Abadan, Iran before the heat melted the asphalt runways. The flight to Abadan was 7½ to 9 hours depending on winds and weather. Abadan was a crew change and refueling stop. The Red Cross gals fed our patients and entertained them so we could have a short break. The flight nurse and medical technician went on to Cairo another 6½ to 7½ hours. Due to the time change we were always eating breakfast. We were replacing a flight of sick nurses so we started with a large back log of patients. On arrival in Cairo we returned on the first plane available. These six months, despite the long tiring flights, were very interesting. Because of the political situation we were restricted to certain parts of the city. The shops contained beautiful materials, jewelry and ivory. We could be honorary members of the British Gymkana club and the Boat club. We went there for dinner and Saturday night dances (formal) when in town which wasn't often. I think I remained overnight at every airfield from Casablanca to Karachi because of weather or aircraft mechanical problems. We put patients up in tents, school houses in Algiers, British hospital in Palestine, hospital in Iraq and one at Sharja, Trucial Oman. My roommate and I returned so many times to Cairo with engine failures that the sergeant in charge of passenger manifests would tell the passengers if we were on board they would probably be back. One night we returned to Cairo three times.

Our flight the last summer overseas was spent on the Cairo, Tripoli, Casablanca run. We were stationed at Payne Field about ten miles from Cairo. Our Quarters were in a long building with an open porch. The rooms were large so we made one area into a sitting room with our rattan furniture we bought in India. Unfortunately there was no privacy as we were on a main street and people walked up and down the porch constantly. Cairo was a fantastic city with so much to see and do. Trips these days were more normal hours. Cai-



Flight A — 825th MAES became Flight II — 830th MAES.

ro to Tripoli, Libya was 6 to 7 hours refuel and crew change then Tripoli to Casablanca 6 to 8 hours. Our patients were freed American P.O.W.'s from Japan, Bataan death march, Merrill's marauders. This was a time you felt you earned your money by just being a female. These patients had been hustled through several hospitals but this was the first time they could really talk to an American female.

Our medical technicians did a wonderful job of supporting us. Our long flights would have been more difficult without them. Unfortunately I was unable to get the names of the technicians in the other flights.

Our squadron covered a distance of six thousand miles from Karachi, India to Lagens, Azores. We had other flights to Dakar, Senegal to pick up Italian soldiers and take them to Naples, Italy. My roommate, Marian Smith was the first American nurse in uniform in Istanbul, Turkey. Alice Johnson was sent TDY to Natal, Brazil flying the Natal to Dakar, Senegal run. In our theater Air Evacuation planes, personnel and patients were considered very special people and everyone worked to take care of them. In fifteen months our squadron flew twelve million miles and we were awarded the Presidential Unit Citation.

Original personnel are shown in the Bowman Book.

By Wilma Shackelford Ford

History of 826th MAES

The sqdn. 826th was destined to be only a training one. We were all anxious to go — trained special and definitely were the best! The enlisted men even bought a black cocker spaniel as a mascot. We had all had our shots, our 201 files were complete — all we needed was orders. However, the 826th was broken up and personnel sent out as replacements. They called all of us leaving Bowman at that time the 830th. When we reached Hickam Field, we were divided into 2 groups — one flew to Saipan and the other down under. I was put in charge of the Saipan group. Our biggest job was bringing to Saipan the injured from Leyte. It was a long hard trip. We left at 5AM and returned about 7PM or later. There was no camouflage for the plane.

By Mildred Osmun Beeman

History of 829th MAES

Many flight nurses as medical attendants aboard medical transport planes participated in numerous long over-water flights returning battle casualties to hospitals in the rear area. Many hours of these flights were flown over or within enemy held territory and were subject to possible enemy interception and anti-aircraft fire. Their devotion to duty and untiring efforts reflect great credit upon themselves and the military service.

Mrs. Jane (Simons) Silva, was on a trip off the eastern coast of New Guinea on a DC-3 when it hit an air pocket and suddenly dropped 1,000 ft. Heavy cargo boxes flew up in the air and came down with such a thud that the entire plane was filled with dust and she thought the plane would break in two.

On another flight to Okinawa in April of 1945, the plane Jane was on prepared to land at a field tent hospital surrounded by mud to pick up the wounded. Instead they were informed to go into a holding pattern for 45 min. while the fighter planes chased off the Japanese planes. She could see the battleships below in the harbor with smoke billowing from their cannons.

On another flight, Jane speialed a patient in an iron lung from the Philippines to Travis AF Base in Fairfield, CA.

A third experience was her most unforgettable, was bringing a load of prisoners of war from Harmon field near Manila to Hickam Field, Honolulu. (No details)

This sqdn. flew the Pacific route with home base being Hickam Field, Hawaii.

By Pauline L. Peterson

A Balkan Interlude

We took off at 8:15 AM from Catania, Sicily. It was overcast and gloomy for several days. Each day a group went out to go to Italy but could get no weather clearance so returned to quarters. Each day

another nurse and a technician would be added to the list to go until we finally had 13 nurses and 12 technicians, who were members of the 807th MAES. We had only been overseas two months. Activated late in 1942, we had been given an intensive 6 weeks training at Bowman Field, Ky. before leaving NY in a large convoy. Cpl. Hornsby from the 802nd MAES stationed in Palermo was hitching a ride back to Italy where he helped the doctors care and sort the patients for us. There was a crew of four. There were 30 of us on board that old C-53 (a converted DC-3 airliner. 1st Lt. Charles Thrasher was pilot, 2nd Lt. James Boggs was co-pilot.

The weather report was a cold front moving down from Naples — but we would get to Bari hours ahead of it — well, we evidently met it right off the Coast of Sicily. I've flown some 1,500-plus hours since and know I have never met rougher weather for such a stretch — we were in such weather for at least five hours. I remember seeing a couple of water spouts on the sea below us. We were on the deck trying to go under, and then 12,000 feet and over trying to get above to no avail. We did come out over Bari, but the radio either failed just after they gave their name, plane number, etc. and asked for landing instructions, or it was sending and not receiving. The pilots did not hear Bari give us landing instructions (we learned 2 months later that they had had an absolute minimum ceiling, but since we were there decided to let us come on in.) We also found out that all other planes that had left Catania that same day had turned back due to the bad weather! The pilots had dared not come down to 500 feet in the weather as the foothills of 600-plus feet were only 30 miles or so from Bari.

I first realized we were over enemy territory when after more than four hours of flying we came over an open area of sky and saw a field below. Thrasher said, "There's a field, we'll try to make it, fasten your seatbelts tight, it may be a rough landing." As we let down through the hole in the clouds, we saw puffs of anti-aircraft fire right up beside us — a slight clank on the tail and we lurched a bit. We took off into the clouds again. The pilot may have seen planes take off. My belief was that we had gone too far north into Italy.

I was sure sometime before this that the radio was not functioning as I sat in the 2nd bucket seat and could see the radio man desperately checking and trying to work the radio. Having made this same trip before I knew it was only about a two-hour flight.

Sometime after the anti-aircraft fire, I was sitting looking out the window and caught a fleeting glimpse of a mountain off our wingtip through the overcast — not unusual — but this one seemed to be higher than we were flying. I was sure we did not have enough parachutes (the ones we had been so carefully fitted with at Bowman Field had not arrived as yet!) and I could count about 6 Mae Wests swinging in the rear of the plane.

I can remember cautiously glancing down the aisle at the nurses — trying to see their reactions (four of the 13 were former stewardesses) but mostly they were a group of stoics. Perhaps our training accounted for it — nursing, airlines and air evacuation — for I could easily see that some of the technicians across the aisle were frightened and apprehensive. Because of their fear, I didn't want to appear to be too anxious about our situation. Nonetheless, as I saw it we had very slim chances, and with these thoughts I started "writing off" all the passengers. The nurses I knew fairly well (2 were married), I knew a few of the technicians and then only by name. I sat studying each one, wondering which might be married, and perhaps be leaving children as well as wives. After having gone down the entire line (some of the fellows were shaking so they had clasped their arms around their knees in an attempt to keep themselves still.) and after checking us all off, I decided I didn't want to know when we hit that mountain so I fixed our Musette bags, loosened my belt and lay back — somewhere along there I must have dozed off.

Thrasher came out some time later and said that we were going down through this hole because it looked like level ground down below. We were to fasten our seat belts tight as we were to make a wheels up landing and it could be rough. He did put the wheels down, however, it was wonderful those first few seconds to feel the wheels roll under us, but immediately we caught and could feel the drag as we mired in and the nose of the plane rooted in the mud. Sgt. Shumway (crew chief) sat in the back of the plane hoping to hold down the loose ends of equipment. He held onto the doorknob of the toilet for support. He could not hold on, and came through the air striking his forehead on the metal ceiling braces and cut his knee on the rough metal floor. I believe he later ascertained that he had kicked Lois Watson on the cheek as he flew past. She received a small cut on the cheek and loosened some teeth. We cleared the

plane quickly. Shumway was carried out and placed on the tail of the plane. Later the men removed part of the bucket seats and fashioned a litter to carry him to a farmhouse.

We had landed in a cornfield which was part of a dried lake bed. It was absolutely empty and we were sure we were miles from nowhere. Suddenly from behind almost every stump, bush and tree, a dozen or more men and boys came running toward the plane. All were carrying guns slung over their backs and some had hand grenades. One man came running right toward me with a big smile on his face, and I just stood watching him come, evidently believing his smile and ignoring the gun. I felt no fear, standing there watching his approach. As he reached me, he grabbed my hand jabbering wildly — of which I could not discern, "Americano, Americano!" Still thinking we were too far north in Italy, I pointed to him and asked, "Italia?" Italy invaded Albania in 1939 and the Albanians were not happy with Italy). He drew back, puffed himself up and pointed to the red star on his blue uniform-type hat, and said, "Russia!" I was dumbfounded — thinking, "We can't be in Russia, we were over water about ninety minutes ago." He had been telling me his allegiance, and I had been asking for the country in which we had landed. He went on to welcome the others and I turned to go back in the plane to get some things. Ann Maness, another flight nurse, was coming out. I stopped and must have stared at her for my mind was in a whirl and all I could think of was, "Ann is here too!" Since I had "written us all off" a short time earlier, I had to shake myself to bring myself back to reality. (Later Ann and I were discussing this and I explained as how I had "written us all off." Ann asked me jokingly, "which way did you think you went, since you were so surprised to see ME there!")

Some of us had gone back into the plane to salvage what we could. Boggs came running to the door to inform us we were in Albania and it was occupied by the Germans. — in fact, they were not far away and may have seen the plane crash. We grabbed what supplies we could — K-rations, bouillon, parachutes, Musette bags with personal items in them. The pilots took out the navigational equipment and the natives ruined the radios trying to salvage them.

Boggs explained that the man on the white horse would lead us to a nearby farmhouse. We walked about 2 miles, uphill, through open fields of stubby grass, bushes and stumps, and there was that constant cold miserable drizzle of rain. The farmhouse where we stayed two and a half days was a primitive place — a fireplace but no chimney, tiny windows with no panes, no furniture. We slept on the floor around the fire — it was a toss-up as to whether we would freeze to death or suffocate from the smoke!

Next day we headed for Berat, a village of 600 houses. The day we arrived, the U.S. B-25's bombed a German installation nearby. We were greeted by the townsfolk with flowers and songs. They thought we were the invasion forces of which they had prayed for. In Berat, we stayed with different families — breaking up into groups of 2 or 3 to a house. During the day, we were given a tour of the city — the local shrines and other sights of interest. We remained at Berat three nights. On the 4th morning, the Germans began shelling the town. Ann Kopsco and I were awakened and went to the door just as two of the technicians went by on their way to ask the pilot what they should do. We decided to head out of town and the small road was crowded. The pilots managed to hitch a ride on a bright orange truck and stopped and picked us up. The Albanians also crawled on board. German planes were bombing the town and each time they passed over we abandoned the truck for cover. We decided to go up into the hills and wait out the raids. In the meantime, the planes strafed the road and the truck we were using.

When we reassembled on the road, we realized we could not account for three of the nurses — Maness, Lytle and Porter. Not only were these three nurses missing but of the 27 accounted for when we crashed, 17 had gone up to hide. The other 10 plus an American speaking Albanian, who had been with us seemed to vanish.

We had been in Albania one week, exactly. We spent four days following a young boy, who actually did not understand a word we said! On the 3rd day, we came upon a village and there waiting for us was the missing 10! While they were waiting for us to catch up to them, they had had a chance to bathe. I was sitting by Jean Rutkowski telling her of our trek when she said, "You know, you positively stink!" We had all picked up body lice and fleas from the native homes. They often pushed a goat out of the way to make room for us at the fire. They did not have any covers to offer us for the Germans took moveable belongings and often hostages so any

extra blankets, dishes etc., were all carefully buried.

We wandered from village to village in search of food. The 27 of us, plus guides, interpreters, and "hangers-on" would eat all their available food. They were anxious for us to move on because of the fear that the Germans would find us there. Their fear of the "Ballista" (opposite of Partisans), who were sympathetic to the Germans was great. The permanent German encampments were fairly easy to skirt but the Ballista slipped about in small groups. For the first three weeks, our main reason for moving was for food and to dodge the enemy.

Thrasher sent a note via a runner to the British the 2nd week. We received an answer via the runner the day after Thanksgiving. They advised us to try and reach them as we were fairly near — a village near Korcza — almost to the Greek-Yugoslav border and we got there Dec. 1st. There we met Gary Duffy and Blondie, his wireless expert. They notified their headquarters in Cairo that we were accounted for. The Army notified our parents that we were in Allied hands. The British SAS made a supply drop and we received shoes and socks which were badly needed as our shoes were worn out. The clothes dropped were men's sizes and the small girls put six pairs of socks on to fit in the huge shoes. The British assigned Duffy and Blondie to accompany us to the coast, where we would meet a boat for pickup.

Our topic of conversation for most of our waking hours was food! The staples for the Albanians was cornbread with no salt and leavening and boiled beans. Occasionally goat-milk cheese which was a strong flavored food, was added.

The day after Thanksgiving, we crossed a mountain rather than go around it for the Ballista had taken a position in a town along the route. Later we learned the Albanians never crossed that route or peak after Sept. 1! Near the top of the mountain, a dark cloud moved in and suddenly we were in a blizzard. This compared to blizzards I had witnessed in Northern Minn. as a child. The guides panicked for the trail was being covered by the snow. Our long line of travelers began slipping, falling and disappearing from sight. The wind was howling so strongly, we could not pass the word to regroup. One of the technicians managed to get up to the head of the line and slow up the guides. Miraculously they stumbled out of the storm, down the mountain to a little village.

The numbing cold had left some with frostbite of fingers and toes. We noticed that as we came into the village some of the natives were chattering and gesturing toward us. This was the usual reaction of the natives so we ignored it. They were excited because we had crossed the second highest mountain after September! This was the second time on this adventure that I didn't expect to make it.

The Germans were aware that we were there and visited the villages asking if a party of Americans with 13 nurses had been there. This gave us hope that they had not captured the other three. We constantly worried about the fate of the three missing nurses.

The pilots decided to ask for planes to rescue us in mid-Dec. We had seen a field near Agricostra; were told the Italians used it but the Germans never did. And as far as the pilots could tell, it was not mined. They sent a message to the 12th AF Headquarters asking for a plane to rescue us at this site. The weather turned bad the next day and for 10 days we waited. On the 29th of Dec., we got a wireless that a C-47 with fighter escort would arrive about 1300 hours. There was dissension between the pilots and Gary as he didn't approve of this attempt at all. He had been in the country 7 months and was aware of the possibility the plane might bog down and then we would have more stranded to care for.

The Germans took Agricostra the day after Christmas. It was at this point that the AF decided to add the Wellington Bomber with bombs to circle the town with orders to bomb. We had wired that if we felt it was safe for them to land, some of the men would be holding a yellow parachute silk at the end of the field. Gary disapproved of the signal. He was not aware that eighteen P-38's and a bomber and 2 C-47's would be used. Our messages had been very garbled. We were up on a nearby hill and it was too far for us to reach the area without keeping the planes on the ground too long. We were amazed that the AF would put out that much equipment for so few of us! The rescue could not be made and the planes flew away as the stranded party stood and watched. Then came the long forced march of 7 days to the sea. By now, more than half had dysentery, two were seriously ill with jaundice, and another with pneumonia. Finally reaching the rocky Atlantic Coast, the nurses were met by a British Officer, who fed them chocolate bars and candy. Through the next silent hours of the night they were transported in

one row boat, a few at a time, to the waiting British motor boat. Shortly after midnight, they headed away from Albania to the Allied-occupied Italy, reaching there 9 Jan., 1944. The saga was not ended, though; for not until 25 March 1944 did the three nurses, who had become lost from the party, arrive by an equally circuitous path at 12th AF Headquarters.

Ava Maness, Helen Porter and Wilma Lytle were left behind at Berat. Ava Maness, one of the three mentioned above, tells her story at the WWII flight nurse's reunion May 1988. "We were taken to the city of Berat and hidden in various homes. The next morning, 27 of our group went off to meet an American OSS Officer. Three of us remained hidden in a home. The Albanians told us to keep wearing our uniforms, to act natural, and that if the Germans found us to immediately admit to being American nurses. In two days, we saw Germans out of the windows. Some Hungarian soldiers, forced to fight for Germany, found us. When they found out that we were nurses and Americans, they shook our hands and upon leaving told the Albanians hiding us, 'Take care of the girls'."

Around April 18th, we were told to make dresses so that we would look like Albanian women. Our hostess taught us how to make it in the style of an Albanian dress. When not making dresses, we played three-handed bridge. One night after being in the home four months, we three nurses began driving with two Albanian men who told us we would be coming to a German roadblock and we were to keep our eyes lowered in the manner of Albanian women. We did as we were told, the German walked all around the car and then let us pass. That night, we camped in hills that looked a bit like the Texas Hill Country. The following morning, the OSS Officer met

with us. He was the same OSS officer who met with the second group of refugees.

We got a lot of help from the British, who were well liked by the Albanians. The Albanians who helped us wore red caps and were called partisans. The talk was that they were backed by the Russians. Even an Albanian administrator, who was working for the Germans, helped us. The OSS man was paying money, but these people helping us took risks that money alone could not buy safety. Late one night we were put into a boat on the southern coast of Albania and were ordered below deck. It was a rough ride in the Adriatic Sea and all night long there was the risk of the Germans finding us. The next morning, we put into a southern harbor of Italy called Brindisi. It is precisely at the top of the heel of the map of Italy. It was under Allied control and from there we were taken to Bari, Italy.

The Army gave us orders to keep our mouths shut. I suppose because of the OSS Officer. To this day, I have never talked with the press. At long last, I would like to let the people know some of the things women went through for our country. I am simply telling you history."

The 13 nurses were returned to the states in April 1944 and were sent to the School of Air Evac at Bowman Field, Ky. where they served as instructors for the students. The 13 nurses were: Lts. Gertrude G. Dawson, Agnes A. Jensen, Pauleen J. Kanable, Ann E. Kopsco, Wilma D. Lytle, Ava A. Maness, Ann Markowitz, Frances Nelson, Helen Porter, Eugenia H. Rutkowski, Elna Schwant, Lillian J. Tacina, and Lois E. Watson.

By Agnes Jensen Mangerick



Men of "The Balkan Interlude" minus crew.



Nurses of "The Balkan Interlude" (10 of the 13) Jan. '44 at 26th General Hospital after returning to civilization. On R and R.

War Nurse

She was born in War's grim garden,
A rose of the battlefield,
Baptized under hell and fire
While the world around her reeled.

She stayed at the front against orders
And when GI gripes began
One Joe cried "If she can take it,
I am sure we soldiers can!"

Mercy's angel in a helmet,
She knew many a prison hell;
She lived and died like a soldier. . .
To the wounded she was "Swell!"

With the war she's been forgotten
Like the strains of "Over There,"
But each soldier boy remembers
Some brave War Nurse in his prayer.

-Nick Kenny

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

MEMORANDUM FOR UNITED STATES DoD FLIGHT NURSES

SUBJECT: Letter of Appreciation

You, the flight nurses who served during World War II, carved a unique role in history. You met the challenges with skill and determination and served as role models for future nurses. Advances in aeromedical evacuation have greatly improved the timely delivery of quality health care. Be it evacuation of the wounded from the battlefield, or humanitarian airlift of civilian and military personnel, the flight nurse has continued to play a vital role in worldwide aeromedical evacuation.

On the occasion of the 45th year of flight nursing, I am pleased and proud to salute you, the flight nurses of the Army, Navy and Air Force Nurse Corps' for your bravery and expertise. And, on behalf of the men and women of the United States of America, I thank you for your dedicated service and devotion to duty.

Congratulations and best wishes.

Frank Carlucci



802nd MAES Flight nurses in winter gear. L-R: D. Lonergan, C. Mancy, U. Thomas, H. Haskins.



Jenny — Hospital ship pioneer.



Simulated air evacuation practice. Bowman Field, 1944. Nurses and technicians.



Simulated air evacuation — Bowman, with Flight Nurse, Lt. McCain.



Ann Macek, survivor of plane crash Le Havre, France, 1944.



Squadron D, 1462nd AAF Alaskan Division A.T.C. White Horse, Yukon



Parachute class, Bowman Field, Kentucky 1944



Dingie life raft, ditching instruction 815th Flight Surgeon, Capt. Wormsley.



John Payne, Betty Grable, June Haver entertain troops at Bowman, 1944.



"The Scott Field Flyers" — L-R: A. Cox, E. Hiltunen, D. Gusinda, B. Keim, and B. Skule.



December 1944, Milwaukee, WI 6th War Bond Drive Demo team.



Grace I. Mundell, 1st Chief Nurse Bowman Field. School of Air Evac.



Mary Leontine, 2nd Chief Nurse, Bowman



Three Brazilian flight nurses meet American flight nurse, E. Page, 2nd from left.



L-R: Eileen Newbeck, Leora Stroup, Margaret Guddoba members of Michigan's 1st chapter of the Aerial Nurse Corps, meet and serve together in Air Evac, Bowman Field.



Graduation at Bowman Field, 1944. L-R: Lucille Koca, Mary Wilson, Barbara Watts, Elsie Brennan.



Graduation Day April 14, 1944 — Bowman Field, Kentucky



Class 44C April 14, 1944 — 121 graduates, the largest class to that date. Bowman Field, Kentucky



806th Flight nurses try on new uniforms. L-R: Geraldine Curtis, Geraldine Dishroon, Irene McMullen.



AAF School of Aviation Medicine — graduating class 46A, Randolph Field, Texas



Iron lung



803rd unloading patient from C-46 that arrived in Chabua on a Hump flight from Kunming.

Memories in Uniform

Bowman Field

1. Learning to march in cadence — and silly songs like (Be Kind to your Fine Feathered Friends).
2. BIVOUACS — Bugs, rain, pit toilets, exhaustion, and wonderful hot showers back in our barracks afterwards.
3. Dressers we made out of cardboard boxes for our bare rooms in barracks.
4. Flight Nurses Mess Hall and Club — good food and sociability. Favorite game and pass time — Backgammon.
5. Participation in Air Show — Milwaukee, Dallas, Boston, and New York City.

Overseas

1. In flight lunches for crew and patients — Thermos jugs of water, coffee and lemonade. Boxes of sandwiches — mostly tuna fish. Food poisoning resulting from just one tuna sandwich during flight.
2. Ten Hole "out house" on Kwajalein "Hell's Angels" — Nurses Quarters.
3. Brackish cold water showers.
4. Meals at Mess Halls on various Islands — little black bugs baked into the bread — dehydrated eggs etc.
5. Sai pan — Early days of occupation. Extra officer with gun required to ride along on every date off base.
6. Typhoon on Guam — Everyone taken to a large concrete building for 28 hours or so. Plenty of coffee and sandwiches.
7. Laundry drying on clothes line outside our quarters at Hickam AFB — Underwear only items stolen.
8. Nightly out door movies — plus mosquitoes.
9. Nurses Quarters on some islands enclosed with high protective fences and guards posted outside.
10. Getting accustomed to mosquito netting covering entire cot at night.
11. Japanese toilets — Hole in floor. — Straddle it and carry your own paper or go without.
12. Plane load of prisoner of war patients from the Philippines — so happy to be going home to U.S.
14. A few flight nurses — dinner guests of General Harmon at his quarters on Guam. He was killed a short time later.
15. Beautiful and lasting friendships formed — especially while overseas.

By Frances Martin Hill, 830th MAES

Flight Nurse

I have one battle souvenir I shall always keep. It was given me by a young rear gunner, shot down with one of our planes in the Marshalls. He was 19, with dark hair and eyes. He carried a volume of Rupert Brooke's verse everywhere he went. That golden poet of World War I was almost a god to him. Before he died in Hawaii, he wrote a sonnet, "Flight Nurse." And the spirit of it is all the things we hope we might be.

You spanned the brassy dome of burning sky
With winged feet — the wind was in your hair.
And even men who were about to die
Could smile because they saw a woman there.
Your fingers danced across the burning cheek
And cooled the brow, so burning hot with pain.
Delirium would stop when you would speak —
A woman's voice soothes, like gentle rain.
You bound our wounds, roused weary hearts from sleep;
You helped forgotten men to carry on
So each a braver rendezvous might keep
With Life or Death when came another dawn.
In wind and rain we'll build your monument,
And it shall live when tyrant's wrath is spent.

By Second Lieutenant Madeline S. Doherty

Westinghouse Presents "Top of the Evening"

Ted Malone . . . Speaking From Overseas
December 11, 1944

ANNOUNCER:

From the ETO, Westinghouse presents "Top of the Evening" with Ted Malone, bringing you human interest stories of life and events with your men overseas — how they live and work and fight — and most important of all — their thoughts of home and you. Now, Ted Malone, Westinghouse overseas correspondent, with his recorded shortwave broadcast from overseas!

MALONE:

Hello, there! This is Ted Malone overseas. Maybe this is a good time to remind you that American girls have about as rugged a time in this war as anybody. Dodging bombs and bullets, getting lost in the front lines, going down on emergency plane landings with litter patients and German prisoners, ditching in the cold water of the choppy English Channel, missing their meals, losing their sleep and sometimes even their lives, working side by side, regardless of danger, with the rest of the American Army — this is all more or less standard operational procedure, line of duty for the MAES of the 1st Allied Airborne Army.

Becoming pretty much of a commuter these days, I've had the privilege of flying with many of these air evac crews, nurses and techs, on their daily missions back and forth between front lines and base hospitals. They go in in planes packed with ammunition and supplies for the troops and bring back planes loaded with litters, rushing injured boys to hospitals where they can be given every medical aid known to science within only a few hours of their injuries. This is something new in warfare — air evacuation of the wounded — and it is saving thousands of lives. It is also costing a few, and some of these are nurses.

On our flight to Iceland, they told us about the big trans-Atlantic plane carrying a nurse and wounded that started for America and never has been heard of since. It just vanished. Nearly every time I visit air evac headquarters to see old friends, I find empty places at tables because a ship has hit bad weather and plunged into a mountainside. Only a couple of weeks ago, two ships coming in through a blinding English fog that had closed in suddenly over the field, crashed together and crews, nurses and all were lost.

But the girls say, "What do you expect in war?" And there isn't any answer. Until we win and end this fighting once and for all, we can expect these tragedies to go on.

Like the rest of the soldiers, the nurses don't like to talk about their adventures. But the other afternoon with a heavy storm grounding all planes and some hot coffee to go with the Christmas fruitcake someone couldn't wait to open, I collected a few stories that belong in the record.

Red-haired Capt. Jane E. Mobley, from Thomson, Ga. is Chief Nurse of the 814th MAES. Including one Atlantic crossing this Georgian gal has had 32 evacuation missions and just as an example, Capt. Mobley's first flight over was just after D-Day in a plane loaded with hand grenades. The brakes on the ship failed and they came within a few feet of rolling right on over a cliff into the ocean. Capt. Mobley's last trip was a little easier, but not without worries. A storm forced them down on a secondary field with a plane full of wounded and for a few minutes, Jane really thought it might be her last trip.

Of the 4 nurses sitting around the big stove munching fruitcake as the rain and sleet beat against the windows, all of them had stories. Lt. Kathleen Davies, from Bakersfield, Ca., protested at first that nothing special had happened to her. In the Army three years, overseas ten months, she has finished 32 missions without serious mishap, which means in a few words that she's flown with supplies for the troops, supervised the loading of from ten to 24 soldiers, and has brought them back safely to hospitals in England. This isn't quite as easy as it sounds. Many of the fellows on board have never been in planes before and are much more fearful of the flight back than their wounds. Some are in pain and must be quieted. All of them are hungry. All of them want to talk about anything else than the war, and all of them want to show the picture they have of their wives or mothers or sweethearts or children. Sometimes when wounded German POWs are aboard, it takes all the tact and diplomacy a nurse can muster to keep a small war from flaring up aboard a plane

or in stormy weather she sometimes has to care for new ailments not included on their chart. But assuming she overcomes all these challenging problems, then she calls it an uneventful standard operational air evac flight. Of course, she has help. Every nurse is accompanied by an enlisted man she calls her tech. And two of the air evac techs who worked with these girls and figured in these stories I want to tell you tonight are Sgt. Edward Kandvioriski, of Chicago, Ill, and Sgt. William P. Berry, Jr. of Corning, NY.

As I said, Lt. Davis has finished 32 such missions without serious mishap. But there had been a pretty close call a few weeks ago, she finally confessed.

"What happened?"

"Well, nothing the night we were there. But the night after we stopped at a hospital in Belgium, a buzz bomb came over and blew the place to smithereens."

"And if you had been there?"

"Well, but we weren't," Lt. Davis insisted. "The next day was Thanksgiving and we had to get home, so we took off early."

"And you got home all right?"

"Well, no; we didn't. Bad weather forced us down at a bomber base in Belgium. We ate Thanksgiving dinner over there."

"Ah, too bad!"

"No, we had turkey, believe it or not."

"Well, fine! Frozen, I suppose, from the States?"

"Yeh; although the fellows all denied it at first. They insisted that one of their bombs had accidentally fallen on a turkey ranch and all the turkeys had been scared stiff — frozen in their tracks, as the boys said."

Fearful that Lt. Davies was about to give me the bird, I hastily brought Lt. Bredmond T. Maietta into the conversation. She is from Curwensville, Penn. Knowing that I could never repeat her name twice, she said I might call her Betty. Like the others, she's been in the Army three years, overseas ten months. But Betty has a little edge on the others. She has three brothers and a secret in the services — Ralph Maietta, twenty-three, in the AAF; Tom and Pat, nineteen-year-old twins, in the Navy and Army, and her secret in the Air Corps. Betty doesn't really think that they would call off the war if anybody found out she was married, but since nobody except her friends knows it, I assume you are now one of her friends. He's an officer with a heavy bomber now in his second tour of mission. Most pilots tell me one tour of missions is plenty for anybody. So when I meet a fellow on his second tour, I figure he considers himself pretty lucky. The way Lt. Maietta tells it, they both feel pretty lucky finding each other over here.

Lt. June L. Sanders, of Canton, Ohio, almost joined the Goldfish Club a few weeks ago when her plane lost an engine over the Channel and everybody got ready to get out and get in, and June didn't relish the idea. She has a brother, Charles, in the Ordnance Division in France. And although her time in service and overseas is the same as the others, June has gathered a few extra missions, chalking up some 37. Her most exciting flight was one in which they returned home without patients. About half way across the Channel, one engine went out. In a couple of minutes the crew chief came back and said he didn't want to worry her, but she should immediately put on her life jacket and parachute, and he began getting everything ready to launch the rubber raft at the rear door. One motor was gone and the other coughed as it labored to pull the ship through the sky. It was dark outside, no stars overhead, but the black water below was even darker. The plane was losing altitude, creeping slowly along, it seemed hours. But Lt. Sanders said it was only about 20 or 30 minutes until the English shore loomed into sight and in 10 more minutes, they had made an emergency landing at a raft base along the coast. June said never in her life was she so happy to put her feet down on solid ground.

Lt. Emma S. Gingrich, of Lebanon, Pa., said she knew just how she felt, recalling at the same time her most exciting flight home. Ginny, as the girls call her, has been in the service almost four years. She's had 40 missions since D-Day. Their troubles began when, due to some misunderstanding, they flew to the wrong field to pick up wounded. The order, apparently, called for them to land 12 miles west of a certain city and they landed 12 miles east. When they opened the door of the ship to ask for the medical officer, a jeep came hurrying across the field and the excited soldier shouted to them to get into the air as quickly as possible, they were square in the middle of the front lines. He didn't have to shout twice. They slammed the cabin door shut, started the engines and roared across the field for all they were worth. Locating the correct base 12 miles the other side of the city, they came in for a landing, only to find bad

luck still hounding them. A soft bomb crater caught one wheel of the plane and swung it around to a stop just as another plane sped by and although no one was hurt, the ships collided and sheared off the wing of Ginny's plane. As she described it, "We knew then we had had it."

The only thing to do, then, was to double up with another crew and leave a crippled bird in the bomb crater. That is just what they did. The patients were brought aboard and in sqdns. of three with one navigator each flight, they started for a base hospital down by Cherbourg. All went well until they neared the tip of the peninsula, when a Channel storm blew in and in the rain and clouds the planes became separated and Ginny's plane got lost. For an hour or more they flew blind, hunting for a landing field. Once, out over the water, they were challenged by ships at sea and turned and fled before they were shot down as the enemy. The pilot called Ginny up and said he had just five minutes of gas left, and he was going to have to make a forced landing. So the nurse went back into the cabin, reinforced all the life belts, packed pillows and blankets around the patients and waited. There were so many tiny airfields in that section that the pilot found a little one to try to come in on, hoping that he could stop the rushing plane before it reached the end of the runway. He made it. It was no small miracle, but he made it. Then the problem was, what to do with the plane full of wounded on a deserted air field at night? War is curious, though; strange things happen. Up drove a sergeant in a jeep, he'd been out hunting for cider, seen their ship in distress and rushed to them when they landed. He took the pilot and nurse to a nearby hospital to arrange for accommodations for the wounded and the next morning when they saw how small the field was, they knew the pilot could never get a loaded plane out of it, so they loaded the patients into ambulances and drove to another field and the pilot and crew pulling the ship clear back to the edge of the runway gave both engines the gun and just barely made it over the fence of the smaller field and then flew to the larger one, sat down, reloaded the wounded and brought them home.

"Exciting?" Well, Ginny admitted nothing like that ever happened in Lebanon, Pa.

The nurses and medics and doctors of the evac unit, dodging bullets and bombs, are there flying right up to the front lines to bring the wounded back. The nurses of the American Army are soldiers in every sense of the word. Most of them will live to tell you more stories when it is all over, but some of them give their lives saving your boys fighting for you.

This is Ted Malone overseas, returning you now to NY and Westinghouse.

801st MAES IN KOREA

The following fifteen pages are reprinted from the book entitled **801st MAES** and traces the history of the 801st Medical Evacuation Squadron from its activation through the Korean Conflict.



Col. Allen D. Smith
Commanding officer



Lt. Col. Jesse K. Grace

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE 801st MEDICAL AIR EVACUATION SQUADRON

Air Evacuation of the sick, wounded and injured, which became a military necessity early in 1942 and today is ranked as one of the five greatest life-saving measures of military medicine, is an accepted procedure in the Air Force, Army, Navy, and Marine Corps. It is the "method of choice", in the prompt removal of the wounded from battle zones in all parts of the world, according to the Air Surgeon of the Air Forces. (Taken from an article written in 1945).

The achievements of the air evacuation program, which as late as 7 December 1941, was considered by many military authorities to be "dangerous, impracticable, medically unsound and militarily impossible", have been so startling that one high officer of the Air Force has predicted that air will be the open road by which all the wounded may be transported in any future wars.

Military authorities support air evacuation today because it has proved its feasibility from the standpoints of logistics and strategy. Medical personnel endorse and favor it because it provides casualties with the best possible care in the shortest possible time. Others have turned from skepticism to approval after noting its value in stimulating the morale, and consequently in hastening the recovery, of the wounded.

The story of how air evacuation has developed in the Pacific Theatre, starts almost simultaneously with the opening of American offensive action. Almost as soon as planes could land on air strips wrested from the Japanese, supplies were flown in, and patients were flown out.

The first experiment with air evacuation on Guadalcanal occurred on 6 September 1942. In the next five months 7,000 patients were evacuated by SCAT— always in the same planes that had flown in, needed food, and medical supplies.

Evacuation planes flew out of Tinian a few hours after the airfield was taken from the Japs. Aerial evacuation was an urgent necessity during this action, during which repeated efforts to move the wounded with small landing craft had failed.

The "Transport Air Group," made up of Army, Navy, and Marine personnel, transported 250 patients in a single day from Tinian. The evacua-

tion was 100% successful, although the fields were blacked out for both take-off and landing.

TAG planes landed on Saipan one week after D-Day with penicillin and left with the wounded. It was the same story at Peleiu in the Palaus. Frequently the planes were under enemy bombing, even during the loading. Evacuation from Peleiu was begun in the midst of fighting, but no patients, it was reported, suffered ill effects.

ATC, operating a vast network of military transportation routes to all parts of the world, actively began long range air evacuation in the Pacific areas in January 1943, when five litter patients were transported from Karachi, India, to Walter Reed Hospital, Washington, D.C. The trip halfway around the world, emphasized the necessity for establishing facilities and procedures for handling patients being transported over long distances. During one week of heavy work, 1,394 patients were moved. Perhaps, we can compare this figure with that of 5 December 1950, when 3,925 patients were air lifted in one single day.

Combat experiences in all wars are different, and the Korean conflict is no exception. The tactics and military maneuvers employed, must of necessity be different, since the rugged terrain of the Korean peninsula is unlike any country in which our forces have previously engaged in battle.

In the Korean combat zone, due to inadequate roads, rail and port facilities, medical air evacuation has been more valuable than during any other military campaign.

Korean roads are in very poor condition, most of them being merely winding dirt trails, snaking through mountains and valleys. In populated areas there are many roads, some of them good, but in the areas where some of the worst fighting has been taking place, particularly in the high mountainous areas where rocky peaks rear 6,000 feet into the air, there are few roads, and practically none are fit for ambulances or vehicles. Sometimes, bearers have to carry wounded for miles under terrible conditions of terrain. Travel on Korean roads is further complicated by continuous dust clouds stirred up by a continual



flow of trucks, tanks and other vehicles.

Railroads in Korea are in poor condition. Because of the time and material required to repair bombed out bridges and tracks, rail facilities have been considerably behind road traffic in availability. Still further, the Korean rail network is very limited and there are large areas of Korea which are hardly touched by rail lines. Because of the condition of both roads and railroads, even when available, travel on either is extremely hard on sick or wounded soldiers.

The 801st Medical Air Evacuation Squadron of the 315th Air Division (Combat Cargo), has evacuated by air over 190,000 patients from the beginning of the Korean conflict through 10 November 1951. This figure does not reflect the true number of casualties, however, since some patients are moved by air several times, from point to point in Korea, from Korea to Japan, or from point to point in Japan.

This air evacuation operation has been accomplished by Combat Cargo using C-54, Skymasters and C-47, Skytrains. Only in emergencies have other types of aircraft (C-46, Commandos and C-119, Flying Boxcars) been utilized. The intra-Korean shuttle of patients is necessary since patients are lifted from forward airstrips by C-47's, capable of getting into frontline fields, back to Army Hospitals within Korea. Patients expected to recover within 30 days are kept in

Korea.

Patients flown out of Korea, generally in C-54s, include all types of cases to be hospitalized for more than 30 days or those requiring specialized treatment. These patients are moved directly to general hospitals in Japan from major airstrips in Korea. Most of these patients have been hospitalized for short periods of time before undertaking this, a one to five hour flight, to the hospitals in Japan.

Intra-Japan flights are required to move patients from station hospitals in southern Japan to general hospitals further north in the Osaka and Tokyo areas, where they will receive specialized treatment.

The advantages of air evacuation have been proven in this theater. The patient realizes immediately that he is leaving the scene of his misfortune faster than by any other possible means. He realizes that it will be only a short time before he receives the best possible medical treatment. Dr. Elmer Henderson, former President A.M.A. while observing medical care in Korea said, "I talked to many of the wounded, and all of them were outspoken in their praise of the medical treatment they were receiving." One soldier, a negro lieutenant, told me, "Doctor, I was wounded when a mortar blew up. I was taken to a First Aid Station in 5 minutes, and within 55 minutes I was on a plane heading for



a hospital. When they take care of you like that, a man doesn't mind fighting."

Let us contrast this treatment of Americans with the medical care rendered wounded by our enemy. Eighth Army interrogation of prisoners of war in late January of this year, revealed that because of the large number of casualties, shortages of medical equipment and personnel, Chinese communist troops wounded in Korea are sometimes left to take care of themselves. As a rule, the serious Chinese wound cases are evacuated to the rear, using local villagers as litter bearers. Depending upon the individual commander, men left behind are provided with rations for one day. More frequently they are abandoned without either food or weapons.

United Nations patients are moved to the best possible medical treatment within a short period of time. Physicians with special training are usually located no further forward than fixed surgical hospitals. Adequate surgery and other forms of treatment cannot be performed as efficiently in the most forward areas.

It is generally agreed that airplane travel causes less trauma to patients than does surface travel, particularly slow, bumpy, dusty, surface travel in Korea. At selected altitudes, and with necessary medical supplies including oxygen, almost any type of wound case can be evacuated by air. Ground transportation is saved for use by actual

fighting troops if the sick and wounded are air evacuated from combat areas. Air evacuation of Marine patients from Hagaru-Ri and Koto-Ri in North Korea was a definite deciding factor in the ability of the surrounded units to free themselves from Chinese encirclement.

Combat Cargo aircraft alone have evacuated patients from more than thirty different airstrips in Korea, most of them no better than stateside cow pastures, and some of them infinitely worse. Helicopters have lifted patients from mountain areas that surface transportation could not possibly penetrate effectively.

Actually, our transport aircraft have progressed in size and capabilities. The C-124, Globemaster, can comfortably transport 127 litter patients. With each new and larger type of aircraft developed, ingenious means of heating and cooling have been installed as have mechanical loading aids.

The patient can now be transported from the battlefield back to a Mobile Surgical hospital by helicopter. After the patient's condition has become stabilized, he can be evacuated to a rear area hospital for definite care, or be carried all the way to Japan or the Zone of the Interior as his condition and military needs dictate.

There seems to be little doubt that air evacuation will continue to grow with leaps and bounds, as only time will tell.

Medical Service Officers



Major Maynard Tikham



Major Charles Peterson



Major John J. Waters



Capt. Charles Stefka



Major Joseph L. Gross



Capt. Thomas J. McGinley
Capt. Charles Daniels



2/Lt. Kenneth D. Hester



2/Lt. Pellegrino J. Tozzo



2/Lt. Richard J. Gabel



Major Lucile Slattery C.

Flight Nurses



Capt. Pizorka, Stella, A.



Capt. Gregg, Anne, M.



Capt. Gustafson, Wanda



Capt. Wiggins, Mary



Capt. Palm, Jamie F.



Capt. Kinkela, Lillian M.



Capt. Hovland, Otelia



Capt. MacDonald, Sarah K.



Capt. Troxell, Miriam L.



Capt. Chernak, Olga L.



Capt. Nobile, Antoinette



Capt. Jane, Murphy, E.



Capt. Sallade, Marrion, R.



Capt. Sanders, Mamie, C.



Capt. Vaslet, Mary T.



Lt. Chicken, Grace



Lt. McCarthy, Loretta



Capt. Feagin, Janice



Lt. Baxter, Mary J.



Lt. James, Marian



Lt. Kricker, Pat



Lt. King, Wanda M.



Lt. Wilson, Dorothy J.



Lt. Pacific, Mary L.



Last Row — Lts Wensink, Rhue, Brooks, Pfeiffer, Hellpap.
Front Row — Lts Anton, Garvin, MacDonnell, Harris.



M/Sgt. Wayne E. Simcox

Medical Technicians



M/Sgt. Irven, McGlocklin



T/Sgt. Clifford, Nelms



T/Sgt. James Smith



M/Sgt. Kitckin Alston



T/Sgt. Charles Stump



S/Sgt. Carl Bradley



Sgt. Rudolf Kimmich



S/Sgt. Horace Waters
S/Sgt. Kenneth Couture



S/Sgt. Andrew Wash
S/Sgt. Douglas Stratton



T/Sgt. K. W. Hall



S/Sgt. Alexander L. Harley



S/Sgt. Robert English



Cpl. Guillermo Siqueiro



S/Sgt. James Belew



Cpl. Herbert Watkins



S/Sgt. Ecidar, Duram



Cpl. James Hance



Cpl. Felix Gajewski



Cpl. J. D. Davies



T/Sgt. Reginald Butler



S/Sgt. Jim Burkholder



Cpl. Robert Bowden



Cpl. Tom Ledbetter



S/Sgt. L. J. Thrasher



Kirby, Ledbetter, Honeck, Kimmich, Halley, Corley,
Siqueiro, Lewis, Maus & Johnson.



Cpl. James Martin & Crew Members

150,000 Air Evac. Patient



The Day of The Record Load





LOADING IN KOREA



Lt. Lipman and Pilot Check Patients



Drew Shuttle

"Winged Medics"

I'm a man of the Eight-O-First,
I do my best, our foe, their worst.
I bring men back from the firing line
to the "docs" in the rear,
In plenty of time.

I tend their wounds
And ease their pain,
In turbulent weather,
sun, snow, or rain.
I give them smokes,
and light them, too,

A spark ignites when
they smile at you,
And suddenly you feel
so morose and blue
when so politely they ask
a boon or so;
You comply, then hear,
"Thank you, Joe."

Then soon I land at a southern
strip,
Off-load those boys,
And make another trip.
This goes on until we get them all,
The sun soon sinks and darkness falls.

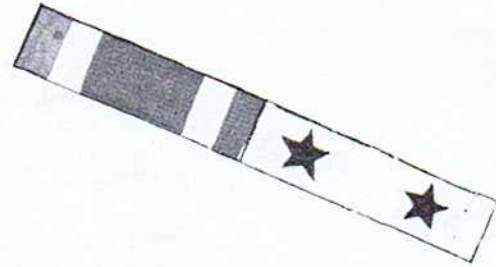
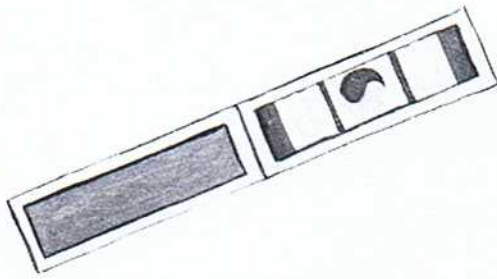
My day is done,
And I'm all in, I return to my tent
and from deep within,
I hear the laughing,
joking techs,
Who should really be
such physical wrecks,
From arduous hours, the mental strain,
Of easing, and soothing
Their patients' pain.

Their deep concern over
that pale, drawn face,
no matter their color, creed,
or race.

So suddenly I feel a spiritual lift,
And thank God for that American gift
of humor, sentiment, and also love,
And then I remember that God above
will forever remain with me and thee
and those who strive to keep men free.

I realize then, I have His guiding hand
When I treat that sick or wounded man.
Let him be in pain, or hunger, or thirst,
He'll know he can call on the
"Eight-O-First".

Sgt. Robert L. Campbell,
Medical Technician,
801st Med. Air Evac. Sqdn.



AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

801ST MED AIR EVAC SQ

1950 - 1951

AWARDS: for the Korean Conflict, 1950—1951

1. The Presidential citation for evacuating a total of 1,449 battle casualties from the Suwon-Kimpo area, 21 September to 30 September 1950, and 4,689 battle casualties from the Chosin Reservoir, 1 December to 10 December 1950.
2. Battle Stars: 2
U.N. Defensive, 18 August to 15 September 1950.
U.N. Offensive, 16 September to 2 November 1950.
3. Legion of Merits: 4
4. Bronze Star: 4
5. D.F.C: 2
6. Air Medals: 72
7. Oak leaf cluster: 21
8. Commendation Ribbon: 12
9. Korean Presidential Citation



Col. Smith and M/sgt Johnson



Col. Smith and M/sgt McMahan



Capt. Kinkela Completes her 100th Korean Mission



Ashiya January 1932



Tachikawa January 1952



Tachikawa January 1952

First Plane to Evacuate POWs From Hanoi

On a misty morning in February 1973, a U.S. cargo plane veered toward the only Hanoi airport runway that wasn't bombed out.

Rows of North Vietnamese soldiers stood stiffly at attention in the grass along the runway. Nurse Patricia Clark Stanfill remembers thinking, "They have guns laying in the grass."

Stanfill, a Lt. Col, was a flight nurse on the first air evacuation plane to land in Hanoi and retrieve American prisoners of war in Vietnam. It was a mission of anticipation and anxiety.

"We had been told that if something happened, they weren't going to come get us," recalls Stanfill, a certified nurse mid-wife at Barksdale, La. hospital. As the plane landed, "there was no question in my mind this was not a peaceful thing."

Many of the POWs had been captured five or six years earlier, some longer. As one boarded the plane, he grabbed Stanfill and kissed her.

"I don't think any of them really believed we were leaving until we were airborne," she says. "They had been told, yes we're coming: no, we're not. It was very difficult to believe it was finally over."

"I can still remember that as soon as we got up and the landing gear came in, everybody just stood up and cheered."

The POW flight was the apex of Stanfill's two-year tour as an air evacuation nurse from May 1971 to May 1973. During her tour, Stanfill flew out of either Japan or California mostly to Cam Ranh Bay to pick up patients. It was a complete role change for her, after having worked in a small community hospital's obstetrics department in Pa. "I wanted to be part of what was happening. I wanted to be able to help the guys."

The first time she flew in-country she felt the hostility. And she saw the results. — remembering a first lieutenant, who had been fragged — when they used to throw the grenades in the tents. He was so amazed that his had happened to him.

She remembered bringing him back and just talking to him. He had lost both legs. The roar of the C-141 prohibited much conversation. Many times on the five or six hour flights she sat and listened, holding their hands. "A lot of them had feelings of, 'What is going to happen to me when I get home?'" Her perspective on the world changed too. "It gives you a grip on what else is out there. We aren't in this tiny little world apart from everybody. Things happen in other parts of the world that we're involved in."

When she recalls the anguish of Vietnam, she also remembers that last assignment — flying the POWs out — in a very positive way. "Knowing that it was over and that this was the last of it and we weren't going to have to bring pieces home any longer — it was a good way of ending the tour and in a way helped me a lot, being part of that, that happy era at the end."

From The Times Shreveport-Bossier June 19, 1988.

AF Nurses Care for Hostages on Flight to Freedom

"The scene at the Algiers International Airport was unreal: After midnight, dark and raining. Our two medical evacuation planes were surrounded by photographers and a double line of soldiers. Inside that circle, we nurses were waiting to air-lift the 52 American hostages to Germany and to freedom."

"All we had been told was that the hostages were fairly well and ambulatory. All we could do was hope it was true, and wait, walking back and forth between the planes, checking every detail over and over, and planning how to handle all the possible emergencies.

"All of a sudden they were there. The Air Algerie plane landed near ours and taxied right by us. We could see the hostages at the windows, waving and flashing V-signs.

"When they were finally cleared for flight, the hostages didn't just walk to the American planes — they ran all the way. We nurses were standing at the steps, ready to shake their hands as they boarded the plane. Instead, all of us found ourselves hugging and kissing one another — 70 grown-up people laughing and crying, hugging and kissing. It was an incredible moment. I'll never forget that moment."

That was how it happened for Capt. Gretchen Malaski, one of the four German-based American Air Force flight nurses, who was cal-

led on Jan. 20, 1980 to escort the hostages on the final lap of their journey to freedom.

For her fellow flight nurse, Capt. Thomas Gormley, "our first encounter with the hostages was like meeting people from another planet. Some were dazed; they couldn't believe what was happening to them. They kept exclaiming, 'Oh my God, are you really Americans? Those uniforms look great! You're the neatest thing we've seen since we left the states.'"

"Then as they walked down the aisle of the plane, meeting their buddies and talking to us, you could see them decompressing, realizing that they were out of it at last. By the time we took off, they were cheering and applauding."

Flight nurse Capt. Angela Hardy was shaken by "the look in their eyes" as the hostages boarded the plane. "Most were completely ecstatic at that moment. But some were weak and emaciated — walking skeletons — and all were totally exhausted. You could see how starved they were for affection and friendly faces, and how they were reaching for physical contact with Americans. You would have hugged them too."

For both the hostages and their nurses, the three-hour flight to Germany was an almost explosive emotional experience. In a telephone interview, three of the nurses assigned to the flight told what it was like to meet face-to-face with the 52 hostages freed from Iran who at that moment were the focus of half the world's attention.

The nurses are members of 2nd Aeromedical Evac Squadron — the European branch of the 375th Aeromedical Air Lift Wing at Illinois' Scott Air Force Base. Stationed at Rhein-Main Air Base near Frankfurt, the squadron flies 10 patient-evacuation missions per week in western Europe, northern Africa, and eastern Asia in addition to two weekly flights to the states. To carry out those missions, the squadron maintains a fleet of specially equipped C-9A "Nightingale" hospital planes with a staff of up to 30 flight nurses plus 65 technicians who are specially trained to care for patients sustaining every kind of injury and trauma. Two "normal" alert crews (one nurse and one med-technician each) are kept available at all times on 30-minute standby.

For more than a year, the hostages' ordeal had kept the squadron in an intermittent state of crisis. Since Christmas, the air-evac crews had been almost continuously on a special hostage alert that called for two full crews for each of the two planes needed to transport the 52 hostages. By the final weekend of negotiations with Iran, the personnel preparing nursing schedules were working overtime to staff the squadrons' routine missions and to maintain two fully rested special-alert crews in constant readiness for instant take-off.

When the flash finally came at 7 o'clock that Tuesday night, the flight nurses assigned to hostage alert were fully prepared. All had packed their bags for five days flying. They snatched up their kits with narcotics, emergency drugs, and other medications and were on the planes with them in 30 minutes. The crew directors who were assigned to each plane — Capts. Malaski and Hardy — conducted briefings on emergency procedures and also saw that the crew's passports were in hand along with manifests for the patients.

Meantime, Capts. Gormley and Debra Kelly, the fourth nurse, were checking out the planes' medical facilities: the special-care area with built-in oxygen tanks; the nurse's station with air-to-ground communications links; and the medical supply section with sink, medical table and bottle storage. Each of the planes had been prepared in a 1-in-40 configuration that accommodates up to 40 ambulatory patients in addition to three or more stretcher cases.

With a strong tail wind to help, the two C-9As took less than two hours to reach Algiers' Houari Boumediene Airport where they were to rendezvous with the Algerian plane that carried the Americans to Tehran. Enroute, State Department-assigned physicians told the nurses what little they knew: All the hostages were said to be ambulatory; none were known to be gravely ill. The doctor's advice: "Use your head, look and listen, and be prepared for anything."

On landing at 9 PM, with more than three hours to wait, the nurses lost no time. The crews on the two planes conferred on the kinds of problems they might encounter, especially among the older patients. They decided who would be in charge of cardiac arrests, and where these patients would be placed in the planes. And they contrived the kind of physical environment they thought would make the returnees from Iran more comfortable: Yellow ribbons were hung from the luggage racks; seats were turned to create conversation pits; and copies of Stars and Stripes and current magazines were placed on every seat.