

The Courier-Journal

# ROTO-MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 28, 1943



C.-J. COLOR PHOTO BY H. HAROLD DAVIS

**THE ANGEL OF MERCY WHO DOES HAVE WINGS**

See Inside

# THESE ANGELS FLY ON MAN-MADE WINGS

By ED EDSTROM  
and JOE CREASON



**1** A NURSE from the School for Air Evacuation Nurses at Bowman Field goes to work under conditions similar to a battlefield. First she treats the wounded soldiers and selects those to be ferried back to a field hospital for immediate attention. In this series of pictures, Bowman Field represents the battlefield, Camp Aiterbury, Ind., the hospital.

AS THIS war rages on, wounded American soldiers up near the front lines of battlefields all over the world will be opening their eyes to a sight both pleasant and welcome, but which is just about the last thing they'd expect to see so near no-man's-land. They'll be seeing attractive nurses who sport the gold bars of Army Air Corps second lieutenants.

Chances are most of the wounded doughboys will probably close their eyes and sigh: "An angel! I must be in heaven already!" HA!

Actually, the nurse will be there to see that they don't depart for heaven before their scheduled time. She'll be there getting the soldier on a stretcher and into a big troop carrier plane for transportation back to a field hospital.

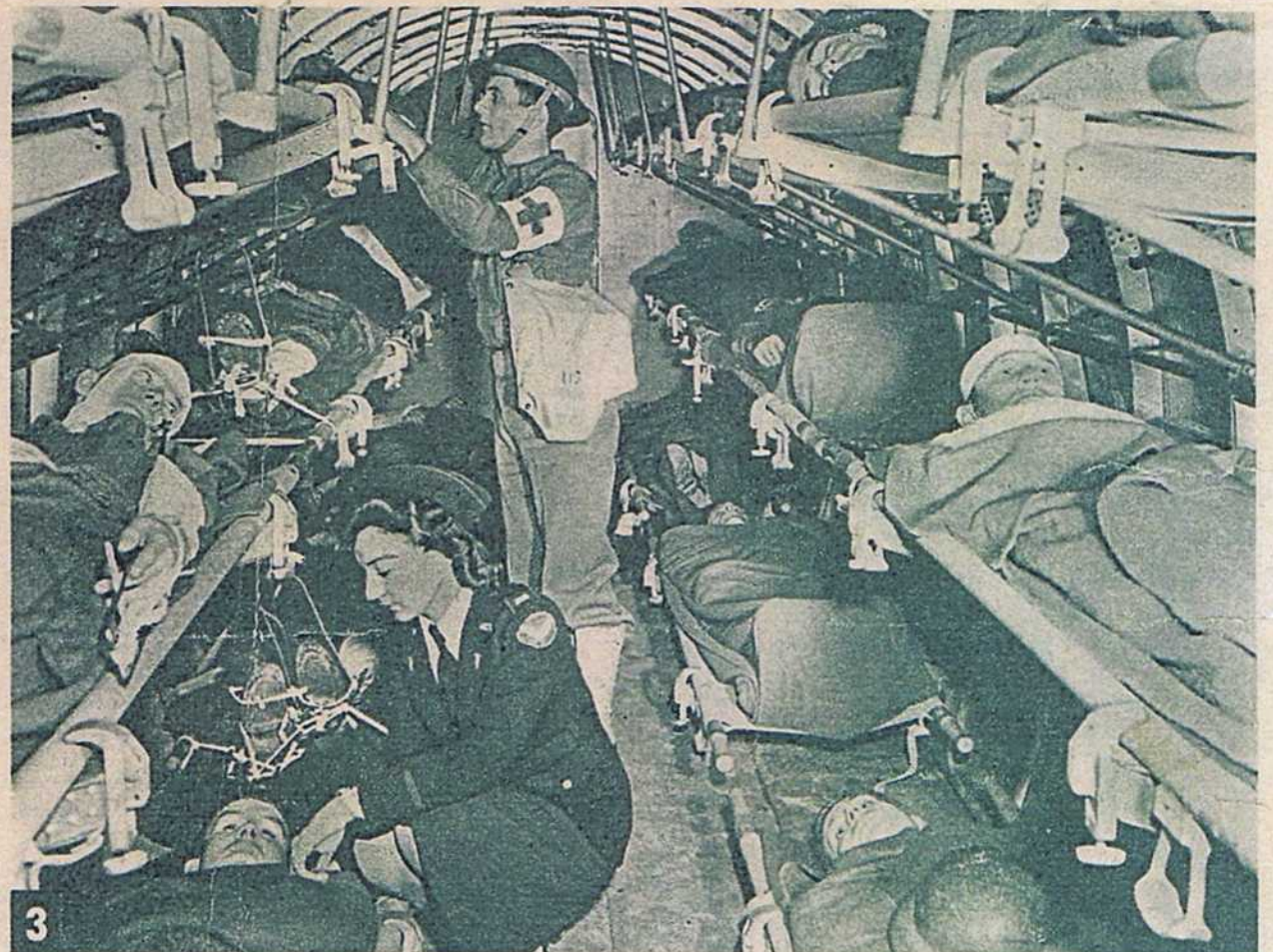
But the soldier will be partly right. The nurses are angels—angels of mercy; and they do have wings—man-made wings of aluminum. And the work they are doing is the start of a new chapter in the history of nursing, a chapter the first lines of which were written at the rapidly expanding School for Air Evacuation Nurses at Bowman Field, Ky.

Only a week ago the first class of air evacuation nurses was graduated. Four days later a new class was started through the arduous four weeks' drill which fits it for nursing duty.

Because being a flight nurse has glamor appeal, entrance into the school is difficult so as to keep out those who would enter purely through the love for adventure. A girl must be a registered nurse, under 38 years old, not over 5 feet



**2** NEXT wounded soldiers are loaded into the transport at the Bowman Field front by enlisted men under the supervision of the nurse, a second lieutenant in rank.



**3** INSIDE THE PLANE the litters of wounded are strapped into place along both sides of the plane. Each plane can carry twenty-four patients, who are attended by the one nurse and a medical staff sergeant. During the journey back to the hospital, the nurse may have to give special attention to some of the wounded soldiers.

## Air Evacuation nurses at Bowman Field are writing a new chapter in nursing

6 inches tall and weighing not over 135.

First step for entering the school is enlisting in the Army Nursing Corps. The Red Cross has a recruiting station for this in nearly every city. Then the girl applies for air evacuation training.

Once in the school, the girl, who was given a second lieutenant's commission when she joined, goes through a stiff training course. She'll learn to drill and will be taught Army discipline. This period corresponds roughly to the draftee's basic training period except that the girls are immune from K.P.

Despite her nursing background, the prospective flight nurse has much to learn about aviation medicine. High altitudes affect patients; some dosages must be increased, some decreased. She must learn about tropical diseases. She also must learn how to load an air ambulance, how to unload, and the proper crash procedure. While her brain buzzes with those problems, her body undergoes gas drill, calisthenics and the regulation "Hup, 2, 3, 4" drill.

"NURSES in civilian life learn to depend on the doctor for instruction, but a flight nurse must often be the doctor," says Lieut. Col. Ralph T. Stevenson, head of all evacuation forces at Bowman field. "She decides which men to evacuate first and their treatment. Often she must arrest sudden hemorrhage, treat shock or administer oxygen."

To understand air evacuation better, let's climb aboard one of the hospital ships on a practice flight from the Columbus Air Base, Camp Atterbury, Ind., to Bowman Field and back again. The Columbus Air Base, we'll assume, is the isle of safety to which the wounded men at the battlefield, Bowman Field, are to be evacuated for treatment. The ship's crew is a pilot, co-pilot, one nurse and a medical staff sergeant.

On its way to the front the plane is loaded with fresh troops, supplies and equipment. Thus it can't carry a Red Cross sign of immunity to enemy attack. This is a minor point, however, since the enemy has often used the Red Cross emblem as his bull's-eye.

As soon as the plane lands at Bowman Field, the troops leap from the ship and it immediately is transformed into a flying hospital ward. Meanwhile, the nurse is supervising the loading of the wounded, dressing wounds and deciding which men are to be evacuated first.

Enlisted men carry the wounded into the plane. The litters are snapped into place along both sides of the plane in just a few minutes.

The plane reaches Camp Atterbury and again the flight nurse becomes a supervisor as she directs the unloading of her patients. Again it is loaded with fresh troops and supplies and the trip back to the front is repeated.

The advantage of evacuation by air can best be told through simple figures. By road, the distance from Bowman Field to Camp Atterbury is approximately seventy-five miles, or even on highways not pocked by bomb bursts a journey by motor of at least an hour and a half. By air that distance can be covered, in fact, was covered on the



4 C.-J. PHOTOS BY BILLY DAVIS

AS SOON AS THE PLANE lands at Camp Atterbury, the wounded are unloaded and placed in waiting ambulances and rushed to the hospital. Just as she supervised the loading, the nurse also has charge of the unloading of her plane. When the last man has been removed, the plane will be filled with fresh troops and supplies for the return trip to the Bowman front.



5 HEAD OF THE 83d Division at Camp Atterbury, Maj. Gen. Frank W. Milburn checks on the time required for the trip with pilot Maj. E. P. Curry (center) and Maj. N. Robert Drummond, executive officer.



6 THEIR WORK completed temporarily, the nurse and the men relax for a second as the ambulance, loaded with wounded they evacuated, heads for the hospital.

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trip when some of the accompanying pictures were made, in around thirty minutes. And that included the time necessary to take off and land.

Now suppose the land between the Bowman Field battlefield and Camp Atterbury were impassable jungles, mountains or desert waste as most of today's fronts are. Under such conditions not only does air evacuation save time and lives but it is often the only way to get the wounded out.

Bowman's first official graduating class heard Brig. Gen. David N. W. Grant, Air Surgeon for the Army Air Forces, give a graphic example of the time saved by air evacuation:

"The wounded in Eastern New Guinea were flown over the Owen Stanley Mountains," said General Grant, "in forty to fifty minutes. Any other form of transportation would have taken at least three weeks."

Perhaps you're wondering what inspires these girls to be flight nurses. Generally speaking, it's the same innate love for adventure that makes all boys want to be pilots. Some already have a touch of flying in their blood from previous aviation experience. They were airline hostesses or perhaps flew in their spare time. But many others, like the landlubber who joins the Navy, had never been in an airplane. Then some, like blond Alice Anderson, ex-airline hostess, had extra motivation. You see, she has three brothers, and one is a flying cadet, another is in the Navy and the third is soon to join the Army.

But whatever their motive, they're angels to the boys at the front.



**FOUR RIGOROUS WEEKS** of training ended, gold second lieutenant bars are waiting up ahead for these nurses, the first official air evacuation group graduated at Bowman Field. All were told at graduation that they face immediate call for foreign duty. Each nurse going into the air wears flying togs, but her hospital uniform is the traditional white dress.



AP PHOTO BY JULIAN WILSON

**REALISM IS STRESSED** in the nurses' training and here three trainees move through a gas field, wearing gas masks. Thirty-nine nurses graduated in the first class. All were already graduate nurses and volunteered for duty. For every nurse in air evacuation, there are twenty names on the list of applicants.



**MANY** of the nurses have had many hours in the air. Lieut. Leora Stroup, assistant plans and training officer, has over one hundred hours in the air to her credit as a pilot.