

ANN M. KRUEGER, 84

Nurse decorated for WW II heroism

By Joan Giangrasso Kates
Special to the Tribune

In December 1944, World War II veteran Ann M. Krueger was the last to leave the burning wreckage of the C-47 transport that crashed after coming under attack near an airfield in Le-Harve, France.

According to family members, the former military nurse helped pull to safety more than a dozen wounded U.S. soldiers, who had just been evacuated and were headed for a U.S. base in England.

"Just minutes after my mom got out, the plane went up in a big ball of fire," said her daughter, Sue Rossow. "She heard an explosion and then the whole field lit up like the 4th of July."

For her actions that day, Mrs. Krueger was awarded the Soldier's Medal, along with the Air Medal and five Battle Stars for her service during the war, her daughter said.

Mrs. Krueger, 84, of Naperville, formerly of Clarendon Hills, a World War II Army Air Forces nurse and retired psychiatric nurse at Hinsdale Hospital, died of complications from pneumonia in her home Sunday, Feb. 13.

The daughter of Austrian im-



Ann M. Krueger in the 1940s

migrants, Mrs. Krueger was born in Erlauf, Austria, but grew up in Oshkosh, Wis., where her parents owned and operated a tavern.

Mrs. Krueger earned her nurse's certificate from St. Agnes School of Nursing in Oshkosh, and at age 22 joined the Army Air Forces as a nurse with the 817th Medical Air Evacuation Squadron.

"She once told me she enlisted thinking it would be exciting," her daughter said. "She became an evacuation nurse, because she loved flying and didn't want to be stuck at some desk filling out forms."

After completing 19 months of training at Chanute Field in southern Illinois, Mrs. Krueger was stationed in England for several months. Four days after D-Day, she was sent to France to help with an evacuation of soldiers wounded at Omaha Beach.

"She saw some terrible things during those days, but she wouldn't talk about it," her daughter said. "Instead she'd tell us about the people she met and the lives that were saved."

Before her military discharge in 1945, Mrs. Krueger participated in numerous evacuations throughout France and the Rhineland. Later that year, she married her late husband, Gordon, who died three years ago. The couple lived in Maywood and Westchester before moving to Clarendon Hills in the late 1950s. They moved to Naperville in 1995.

Mrs. Krueger worked as a psychiatric nurse at Hinsdale Hospital for nearly 20 years beginning in the 1960s.

Other survivors include a son, David; five grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

Visitation will begin at 10 a.m. Thursday, followed by services at 10:30 a.m. in Friedrich-Jones Funeral Home, 44 S. Mill St., Naperville.