

# Army Air Nurse Recalls Italian Front

## "Doing What Had to be Done"

By Steve Mundahl

It was 1944. The Americans were marching up one side of Italy, and the British, the other side. At times, fighting was intense. At Anzio, plane loads of wounded were flown out daily.

With the frontlines behind them, wounded soldiers now faced an even tougher battle - survival. Enter one of the silent heroes of the great war - the army and navy nurses.



Litters of wounded in flight during Italian campaign

Army Air Corps took care of the sick and dying with the little tools they had.

"In the years that I flew," Dorothy recalls, "I often look back and wonder how we did what we did with as little as we had." There was her wits, her training, her instinct.

"No matter how busy you were, how uncertain you were, you couldn't pick up the phone and call doctor so and so and ask - what do I do now?"

Errair recalls one of her patients and his precarious hold on life.

"This fellow had a big hole in the back of his chest so that every time he'd breathe in, the air went right out his back. His color was dark blue. I knew we had about a four to five hour flight and that this fellow just wouldn't make it."

"I looked around, trying to figure out how to save this man. So I asked the crew

chief if he had a tank of oxygen. He did. Then I looked into my bag and found a rectal tube which I cut the end off of. But I needed a funnel."

"The crew chief took out an old greasy one from his tool box and asked me if this would work. One look at the soldier and I decided it had to work."

"I cleaned that old greasy funnel with some alcohol and I spent the trip holding the end of that funnel in his mouth pumping oxygen into him."

"Did he make it?" I asked. With a big smile Dorothy nodded her head and laughed, "he made it."

The front was as unsafe for the nurses as for the GI's. Dorothy Errair recalls how thirteen of her best friends, also nurses, were shot down over Albania and for seven months they were POW's.

Three of their replacements were also shot down just weeks on the job. They didn't survive their crash in the Balkans.

But luckily, there were lighter sides as well. Errair recalls how the Air Evac nurses all carried the reputation of being so buxomly among the soldiers.

With a hearty laugh she revealed a 45 year old secret, "we all carried toilet paper in our shirts!"

There were those fond memories of hearing that a few GI's survived and were doing well in some hospital somewhere.

But Dorothy Errair recalls the intensity

of those over 800 hours of flight and hundreds of wounded soldiers.

**"You did what you had to do, what you could do, to keep them alive."**

There were many precious memories. She was in Times Square when the Japanese finally surrendered.

"Everyone was hugging and kissing each other. It was just one of those special moments in life."

Dorothy Errair is also one of those special people you meet in life. Her years as an Army Air Corps nurse were followed by years of service as an emergency room nurse at Leesburg Regional Hospital and at Waterman Hospital here in Lake County.



Dorothy & Bill Errair

Dorothy Errair is now retired from her lifelong nursing career but hardly retired from many private pursuits.

She is working hard to find other women veterans of the war and would like to hear from anyone who was a woman vet, or knows of anyone who was.

"There will be a memorial built in Washington D.C. soon for women who served in the armed forces." She describes that finding women vets is often complicated because service records carry their maiden names and are not updated with married names.

Anyone knowing the whereabouts of women veterans or who personally served in the armed forces at any time are encouraged to call Dorothy Errair at (904) 343-7474.

Dorothy lives with her husband Bill, a navy vet, in Tavares. A truly remarkable woman, Dorothy Errair



"I put the critical ones on the bottom litters and the better ones on top," recalls Army Air Corps nurse Dorothy Errair of Tavares. "My job was to keep them alive as we flew them back to hospitals in the rear."

With little room, meager supplies and no equipment the job of the Army Air Corps nurse was no easy job. Many of the wounded weren't even aware of the women who held their lives together in those first critical hours after battle.

Most would never see that nurse again, and yet, very few GI's ever would forget her.

Taking off in good weather and in bad, friendly air or under fire, nurses of the





**Greg DAWSON**  
THE LAST RESORT

ave a seat  
hile you wait  
r store check

**Greg:** For my husband's 94th birthday, I bought him a recliner at Myers Furniture in Leesburg. During delivery, it was dropped on our driveway and came apart in two pieces, as we were informed by a neighbor who witnessed the drop. That evening, I noticed a gap on one side of the recliner that appeared to be wider than the gap on the other side. I also noticed a tear in the fabric. I immediately called Myers Furniture. The company said the recliner had been dropped and offered to fix it. I asked that the recliner be replaced with a new one, since I was paying for a new one and not a repaired one with possible internal damage. Myers Furniture refused. I sent two emails requesting a new recliner or a refund. No one replied.

— BLANCHE DEYOUNG  
CLERMONT

**Blanche:** It's no consolation to my hubby, but it sounds as if someone else has been reclining (if not reclining) on the job. There is dispute over the alleged "drop," but store manager Brian Silbernagel acted quickly to address your complaint, sending a technician to reinspect the recliner. He discovered a manufacturer's defect, which will be fixed. Brian also is sending you a check for \$75, which you can spend as you are so inclined, or reinstate the deposit.

**Greg:** My grandfather is 86 years old. Last year his wife died, and I had to handle his finances. In June I sold his house, and I contacted Orlando Utilities Commission to disconnect his service. I was told he would not receive a final bill because any deposit on the account would cover outstanding charges. On Nov. 26, we received a letter from a credit agency stating that my grandfather had not paid his last utility bill. I cannot get answers from them. I am not trying to get out of paying the bill. I only want to know if there is a deposit and if it was applied. I want OUC to inform the credit-rating agencies that it reported my grandfather in error. This is the first negative mark on his credit, and it is very important to him to have it cleared up.

— APRIL HAUKOOS  
OAKLAND

**April:** Oops! You were misinformed. It turns out there was no deposit on the account, and your grandfather did owe a final amount. OUC will credit the credit agency and clear his records soon as the bill is paid, said spokesman Grant Heston.

**Greg:** One of the results of Hurricane Charley was a crack in one of the toilet tanks, which had to be replaced. The new unit did not fit over the old one, leaving white grout, which



During World War II, Dorothy Errair (above) served her country aboard C-47s in the essential — and sometimes deadly — task of being a flight nurse.

## Chance encounter

Three women were left in grief by a coin toss and a wartime tragedy more than half a century ago. But a sense of closure finally came after an unpredictable event and a reuniting.



During the war, Betty Howren served alongside Dorothy Errair.

By RAMSEY CAMPBELL  
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

### TAVARES

For 60 years, the fate of an Army flight nurse who died when her hospital plane smashed into a Sicilian mountain has haunted three women.

It was Feb. 24, 1944, when Betty Howren, a 26-year-old flight nurse from Indiana, boarded a C-47 filled with soldiers wounded in Sicily and bound for hospital facilities in North Africa.

Two flight nurses — one now living in Central Florida, the other in Arizona — who were to fly in that doomed plane in Howren's place have been racked with guilt for decades.

Howren's death also had a profound

effect on her younger sister, who has a sad memory of the terse telegram in the middle of the night from the Army. The family never knew the circumstances surrounding the fatal air crash.

A chance conversation led to the three women finally getting together this fall in Chicago in a moment of healing.

"I feel a sense of closure now," says Dorothy Errair, 84, a Tavares retiree who had a 40-year hospital nursing career.

"I'm glad. I feel better too," says Jean Ann Veach, 73, of Terre Haute, Ind., who went into nursing, following her older sibling's footsteps. "I idolized her. I



Today, Dorothy Errair can still wear her original uniform (left) that she wore as a flight nurse more than half a century ago (right).

PLEASE SEE CHANCE, E3






1943



2004



# HEALING THE WOUNDED

 Occasionally, Dorothy White Errair drives to the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell to visit the gravesite of her late husband, William. Of the nearly 63,000 soldiers buried there, she ponders how many of them fought in World War II in Italy, where she served as a flight nurse performing aero medical evacuations.

"I can't help but to wonder if I helped pull any of them out of danger who went on to get married, start a family and lead normal lives," said the 84-year-old Tavares resident. "I always wonder about that every time I visit the cemetery, but I'll probably never know."

Dorothy was only two months from graduating from a nursing school in Detroit when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. One day after the historic event, she listened via radio as President Franklin Roosevelt addressed a joint session of Congress and the nation. "I knew right then that I'd be going to the service," she said. "Our country needed young people to serve, and I was very willing to do so."

At age 22, she became a flight nurse with the U.S. Army Air Corps 807th Medical Air Evacuation Transport Squadron. Flying in a C-47 airplane that landed directly in combat zones, Dorothy would quickly load wounded soldiers onto the plane. With little portable equipment, she did her best to administer medications, provide preliminary wound care and stave off emergencies while in the air until soldiers could be transported to camp hospitals.

Her squadron was stationed in North Africa and later moved to Sicily and then Rome. "Our job was to keep the soldiers alive at all costs," she said. "When we'd land on the battlefield I could hear lots of shooting, but I was focused on carrying out my job. I made sure the job got done. I never lost a patient who I cared for."

She treated both allies and enemies. "German soldiers were scared to death because Hitler had shown them movies about how cruel American nurses are," she said. "It was all propaganda, of course. However, there was one German soldier who tore a swastika wing from his uniform and gave it to me. I still have it today."

Today, Dorothy is president of WWII Flight Nurses Association.

*To nominate a Veteran of the Month, fax, mail or email us your nominee.*





COURTESY OF DOROTHY ERRAIR

Jean Ann Veach — flanked by Dorothy Errair (left) and Charlotte Wiehrdt (right) — followed her sister's career path and became a nurse herself.

## After half a century, closure finally comes for pair

### CHANCE FROM E1

always wondered what happened and why it had to be Betty."

Charlotte Wiehrdt, a retired flight nurse in Arizona, said it was a cathartic experience: "I know it has helped me."

### Dangerous assignment

Flight nurses were something new and special in World War II. The first air evacuations had begun in North Africa in February 1943.

Unlike regular Army nurses, flight nurses received special training in crash procedures, field survival and the effects of high altitude on patients. They were young and had to be in peak physical condition.

"We followed the front lines, cleaning up," says Errair. "Nobody has ever done anything like this before, but we felt we were saving lives this way. And we were."

It was a tough, dangerous assignment, though.

The C-47 planes commonly used to transport the wounded also doubled as cargo planes carrying supplies to the front lines. As a result, they could not display the traditional Red Cross marking to protect them from enemy anti-aircraft guns and fighter planes.

In spite of the hardships, only 46 of the 1,176,048 patients who were evacuated by air during the war died en route to better medical care. However, 17 of the 500 flight nurses were killed.

### 'Very gung-ho'

Errair was one of 25 flight nurses of the 807th Medical Air Evacuation Transport Squadron, which moved from North Africa to Sicily in September 1943.

Thirteen flight nurses from the squad based in Sicily had gone missing in November of that year when a plane taking them to a base in Italy got lost in bad weather and crash-landed behind enemy lines in Albania. The nurses eventually made their way back to the Allied lines but only after a harrowing two-month, 800-mile journey on foot. Howren and Wiehrdt were replacements for two of the missing nurses. Howren had been stationed in the States but volunteered for assignment with the short-handed 807th flight nurses in Sicily.

"She could have stayed here, but she wanted to go," remembers Veach. Her sister joined the flight-nurse squad shortly after Christmas. She quickly made an impression, Errair says.

"She wasn't there long, but it was a close unit. Betty was friendly and vibrant and thrilled to be there.

"She was very gung-ho" — so much so that when Errair had to miss a scheduled flight because of a high temperature, Howren was the obvious replacement.

### A fateful flight

Two planes loaded with wounded soldiers took off that fateful morning, bound for hospital facilities in Algiers. The

one carrying Howren crashed into Mount Etna shortly afterward, killing all on board.

Errair was ridden with guilt.

"I woke her up. I helped her get ready," Errair remembers. "I wasn't even feeling bad, I just had a temperature. It could have been me — it should have been me."

"This has been a lump on my back ever since."

But she wasn't the only one to suffer guilt.

Wiehrdt, now 87, was also scheduled to fly out to Algiers that same morning.

"Normally we took whatever plane was available," recalls Wiehrdt. "But one of our nurses was injured and going out as a patient and we both wanted to be with her. So we flipped a coin to see who would go in that plane."

Wiehrdt lost the coin toss, and Howren climbed aboard the plane with the nurse who had broken her spine in a Jeep accident and was in a full body cast.

"I saw Betty's plane take off behind us. Everything seemed normal," says Wiehrdt.

"She was a beautiful girl. I think about her all the time."

### An unexpected link

Almost 60 years later, an unpredictable occurrence

brought the two survivors and Howren's younger sister together for a chance to share their emotions.

Errair was speaking with a fellow nurse in Volusia County about her experiences in World War II. "We were talking about my being a flight nurse, and she said she knew a girl who was one and asked if I knew Betty," says Errair.

Learning of their common

*'It could have been me — it should have been me.'*

— DOROTHY ERRAIR

acquaintance floored Errair. When the Volusia nurse said she knew Howren's sister and how to contact her, Errair was left shaking.

Here was a chance, after more than half a century, to tie up so many loose ends. Errair wrote a hurried letter last Christmas to Veach, married and still living in Indiana, explaining the mixture of grief and guilt she has carried with her all these years.

Veach never dreamed she would hear from anyone who had been with her sister on her final morning.

"It was such a strange thing," says Veach, who found comfort from the unexpected connection.

Errair, the national president for the WWII Flight Nurse Association, invited Veach to the group's annual meeting in September in Chicago. Wiehrdt also was invited. There, the three cried together in honor of Howren and her death, which shaped their lives.

Veach knew only that her big sister had died in a plane crash.

"Nobody came to tell us — it was just a telegram that came one night," says Veach. "We just tried to accept the fact that she was gone, but my mother was never the same."

Veach said talking with the two flight nurses has helped her understand and accept her sister's death after all these years.

"It has meant a great deal," says Veach. "We always wondered, why her?"

"I'm sorry my mother and father aren't here."

It was a moment of closure for all involved.

"I sleep better now," says Errair. "I think we all do."

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## ERRAIR

Continued from Page 9

Errair described how the field hospital they had collected the patient from had done any emergency work they could.

It was the flight nurse's job to keep the patients alive until they arrived at the closest hospital.

Flights could last up to eight hours. She said the C-47 aircraft the nurses used were not equipped with oxygen machines.

The cabins were not pressurized, and IVs could not be used in the air. They had no soap, no food. Only water.

"He needed oxygen, so I got the crew chief to find a funnel. He found one used for oil and I cleaned it up with alcohol," Errair said. "I found a rectal tube, about 14 inches long. I cut off the end with holes in it, and put the other end which was made out of rubber, into the funnel.

"I turned on the oxygen and held this to his face for the entire four-hour trip. He was blue and purple when I got him, but he was gray when he left me."

Errair said that, when the plane landed, and a British doctor saw the contraption she had devised, all he could say was "Women!"

"What was I going to do?" Errair

said. "He was going to die on me."

She never learned whether the German survived.

But she said she never lost a patient while she was caring for them.

Errair was two months from graduating from a nursing school in Detroit when Pearl Harbor was bombed.

"I was needed, so I went," she said of deciding to join the military.

When Errair was deployed in

happened to some of Errair's fellow squadron members.

Others were killed in a Jeep accident or a plane crash. Errair was supposed to be on the plane that crashed near Algiers, but had been grounded that day because she had a fever.

Errair was fortunate to have only suffered temporary hearing loss during a stint in Bari, Italy during her war service when ships in the harbor exploded following attacks.

She was on leave in New York when the Japanese surrendered. Since the war ended, she was discharged as a 1st Lt. soon after.

Errair is the national president of the WWII Flight Nurses Association and is currently organizing a group to travel to Washington D.C. in May

for the opening of the WWII memorial.

Errair's late husband William is buried in the Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell.

He was a WWII U.S. Navy veteran and died in 1998. They had moved their family to Leesburg in 1967.

When she visits her husband's grave Errair said she wonders how many soldiers buried there were in Italy.

"I wonder who I might have cared for who went on to live a normal life," she said. "They were all so

*'We did something different but we didn't do anything special. We just did what we had to do.'*

Dorothy White Errair

1943, her squadron did not know where it was being sent, but members speculated it was to England.

"As we passed by the Statue of Liberty, everyone was out on deck looking at it. I promised if I came back I would walk to the top of her, and I did," she said.

They ended up in North Africa. Later they were moved to Sicily and then Southern Italy.

A book named "Albanian Escape: The true story of U.S. Army nurses behind enemy lines," by Agnes Jensen Mangerich documents what



Errair was two months from graduating from a nursing school in Detroit when Pearl Harbor was bombed. "I was needed, so I went," she said of deciding to join the military.

young. I was 22 and I felt ancient." Errair said she is glad for the military service and would do it over if she could.

"It was a very interesting time," she said, adding the flight nurses were the first women allowed to wear

pants as a uniform. "I am not trying to glamorize it. I feel sorry for those who didn't come back, and for those who missed it.

"We did something different but we didn't do anything special. We just did what we had to do."



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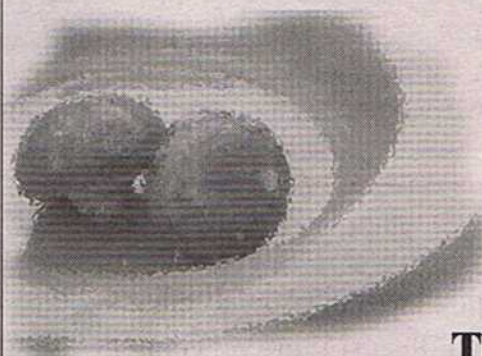
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## COVER STORY: DOROTHY WHITE ERRAIR



Second Lt. Dorothy White had only one order: "Keep them alive." "The Germans were always scared to death of us," she said. "They had been shown movies (by Adolph Hitler's regime) of what American nurses would do to them." The then 22-year-old from Detroit was a nurse with the U.S. Army Air Corps 807th Medical Air Evacuation Transport Squadron during World War II. Now 84, Dorothy White Errair rocks back and forth in a chair in her Tavares home, recounting memories of her war experience.

# Serving her country

*Dorothy White Errair worked as field nurse for wounded soldiers in World War II*

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"The Germans were always scared to death of us," she said. "They had been shown movies (by Adolph Hitler's regime) of what American nurses would do to them."

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Now 84, Dorothy White Errair rocks back and forth in a chair in her Tavares home, recounting memories of her war experience.

Air evacuation of soldiers was still a new concept to the world, and "Whitie," as she was known then, and her fellow nurses had to improvise where they could. They treated all soldiers, no matter where they were from.

"Nobody knew exactly what we would be doing. Wounded patients had



Dorothy White Errair said she is glad for the military service and would do it over if she could.

never been air evacuated before," she said. "No one knew what problems we

would have. But at 22 you can do anything. We'd invent things as needed."

Errair said the flight nurses would take the wounded to another destination where an ambulance would be waiting.

They never saw the hospitals. "It was tragic," she said. "You would see young faces and limbs off and you would wonder how they would make it the rest of their lives."

She said if language was a problem, they would communicate with their patients by using hand signals.

Errair recounted a time when she was based in Southern Italy in 1944.

"I had a really bad one," she said. "He was a German prisoner. A lot of German boys had never shaved. This guy was in his late 30s, so old for a soldier. He had a chest wound and every time he breathed, it would come out the hole in his back."

Please see ERRAIR, Page 10

By Jodie Munro O'Brien / Photos by Chris McGonigal



# W O M e n's Q u a r t e r l y

*A Supplement to The Daily Commercial • Volume 6/Issue 1*





# ERRAIR

Continued from A1  
until their IVs were empty.

The worst trip was to Anzio, Italy, in the spring of 1944. Japanese-American men had been secretly released from internment camps to fight for the United States, Errair says. A battle with German soldiers devastated the Americans. They were all so severely wounded that Errair

couldn't tell who to help first, she said.

The day she heard war was over in Europe, Errair says she and the other nurses were ecstatic.

"The first thing we thought was, 'No more patients. No more enemy-fire.'" She then went to a three-day picnic in Sienna, Italy. Americans taught locals baseball. And Errair tasted roasted pumpkin seeds for the first time.

She went on to work as an operating room nurse for 40 years with Florida Hospital/Waterman in Eustis. Errair retired in 1988. She continues to work a few days a week as a nurse in a doctor's office.

Now she's trying to find other women veterans.

"It's so hard to find them," Errair said. "They get married and change their names. But we were there."



# The

Sunday, May 28, 1995





Staff photo by Tracy Mack

Dorothy Errair, of Tavares, remembers burying fellow air evacuation nurses during World War II. Please see Memorial Day stories and photos, page C1.

# Looking Back

## 50 years of wartime memories

By Sharyn Till  
Daily Commercial Staff Writer

Dorothy Errair of Tavares returns to Sicily for the 50th year on Monday. She won't pack any bags. Memories of what it was like as one of the first air evacuation nurses take her back to the devastation of Europe during World War II.

"Memorial Day is always rather personal," Errair says. "I think of the nurses who didn't come back. I'm mentally back on a Sicilian hillside where we buried our girls."

Errair was 22 and a few months from nursing school graduation when she decided to become an Army nurse. Her mother tried to dissuade her. "She said, 'Let the older ones go,'" Errair says. "I told her, 'The older ones have families.'"

Errair says she was in the first graduating class at the Army's aerovac school in Louisville, Ky. "Nobody knew what to teach us except keep them alive," she says.

From August 1943 to August 1945, Errair flew with the 807th Medical Air Evacuation Squadron in C-47 planes. She traveled to North Africa, Italy, Sicily and Southern France to rescue wounded soldiers.

Most of the flights were eight hours long. The cabins weren't pressurized and the planes' roofs often leaked. Patients who needed IVs couldn't be air-lifted to safety

Please see **ERRAIR, A3**



Continued from A1  
city's first chief, James Lee Hux, who was killed by a bullet in 1924, and Jessie Beerbower, a city officer murdered in 1944.

Mount Dora Police Chief Norman Warren placed a rose for Clinton Hyde, an officer who got a chestfull of buckshot in 1959 while answering a domestic fight.

Sheriff George Knupp had roses for Daugherty, who crashed in 1993 on the way to a domestic fight, and for the late Deputy Bill Marie, a pilot who fell to earth in 1994 while flying what would have been the county's first police helicopter. Marie was responsible for Knupp having an aviation unit, the sheriff said.

"Tomorrow you may be called on to give your life to protect the citizens of the community," Knupp told his mostly police audience.

And they accepted that risk. Officers said they'd give their lives for community residents, despite the reality that the community also includes accused and convicted drug dealers, thieves, burglars and other law breakers. They must be served and protected, too, officers said.

"You're fighting for the principle. Whether the recipient of your beliefs agrees with them is irrelevant," Lady Lake Police Chief Ed Nathanson said.

"For every bad person, there are 10 good ones," Warren added.

## TODAY IN HISTORY

**SATURDAY, MAY 16:** Today is the 136th day of 1998. There are 229 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:  
On May 16, 1868, the Senate failed by one vote to convict President Andrew Johnson as it took its first ballot on one of 11 articles of impeachment against him. (Johnson was acquitted of all charges.)

On this date:

In 1770, Marie Antoinette, age 14, married the future King Louis XVI of France, who was 15.

In 1866, Congress authorized minting of the five-cent piece.

In 1920, Joan of Arc was canonized in Rome.

In 1946, the musical "Annie Get Your Gun" opened on Broadway.

In 1948, the body of CBS News correspondent George Polk was found in Solonica Harbor in Greece, several days after he'd left his hotel for an interview with the leader of a Communist militia.

In 1965, the musical play "The Roar of the Greasepaint — The Smell of the Crowd" opened on Broadway.

In 1975, Japanese climber Junko Tabei became the first woman to reach the summit of Mount Everest.

In 1977, five people were killed when a New York Airways helicopter, idling atop the Pan Am Building in midtown Manhattan, toppled over, sending a huge rotor blade spinning



The Associated Press

The "Rat Pack" is shown on a Las Vegas stage in this January 1961 photo. The members are, from left, Peter Lawford, Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr. and Joey Bishop.

## SINATRA

Continued from A1

The Voice fell silent — silent, but not silenced. There are too many records and signature songs — "My Way," "New York, New York," "Strangers in the Night" — too many TV shows and movies, too many memories, too lasting an imprint on American popular culture.

It is not an overstatement to say that Sinatra was the biggest name in show business, his appeal spanning three generations, from bobby-soxers, to baby boomers to Gen-Xers, from Tommy Dorsey to U2's Bono. He was the Chairman of the Board and Ol' Blue Eyes. It was a success that would come in spite of — or perhaps because of — a colorful, contradictory personality and humble New Jersey roots. For each story of Sinatra's punching or insulting someone, there was another of loyalty and generosity to friends and strangers. Those who knew him spoke of the deep insecurity behind the brash exterior, a big ego under a thin skin, a thug with the soul of an artist. Others just thought he was a jerk.

"Frank Sinatra was a true original," entertainer Mel Tormé said. "He held the patent, the original blueprint on singing the popular song, a man who would have thousands of imitators but who, himself, would never be influenced by a single, solitary person."

His songs were classics and crossovers: "Night and Day," "Young at Heart," "One for My Baby," "How About You?" "Day by Day," "Ol' Man River" and "Come Fly With Me." With daughter Nancy he recorded "Some-thing Stupid," a No. 1 smash during the rock era. In the '90s he teamed with modern pop stars on the "Duets" albums.

His movie credits included musicals — "Anchors Aweigh," "On the



The Associated Press

Frank and Barbara Sinatra smile before renewing their wedding vows on their 20th Anniversary, July 11, 1996, in Malibu, Calif.

Town," "Guys and Dolls," "The Tender Trap," "High Society," "Pal Joey" — and grittier fare, such as "The Manchurian Candidate," "The Man With the Golden Arm," and his comeback picture in 1953, "From Here to Eternity," for which he won the Academy Award as supporting actor.

And for several incredible years that brought the late 1950s into the '60s, the cultural planets aligned and the Rat Pack was born, led by Sinatra. It was a glorious, boozy, smoky, stylish, sex-filled male fantasy, hip then, retro-hip now, amoral, inexcus-

able, unforgettable, and documented in such films as "Ocean's Eleven" and "Robin and the Seven Hoods."

Frank, Dean, Sammy and Peter are all gone now. So's their playground, the Sands Hotel, demolished in 1996 to make room for a bigger, modern hotel. Only Joey survives. As does The Voice.

"One of Sinatra's favorite toasts to make with glass in hand was, 'May you live to be 100 and may the last voice you hear be mine,'" said Tony Bennett. "The master is gone, but his voice will live forever."

## FANS

Continued from A1

tion nurse, said the war had just ended and everyone was just waiting to go home when the USO Troop, headed by Sinatra, came to perform.

"He was just this skinny young man back then, but the show was spectacular," Errair said. "He sounded great."

After the show she passed through a crowded group of officers who were talking with Sinatra. As it turned out, they were waiting for the first woman to pass by so they could watch her "swoon" over the dashing singer, but all Errair did was stare at his beautiful white shirt, which was covered in what looked like diamonds.

"I just wanted to feel the material," Errair said. "My father had one just like it."

The next day the officers booed her when she walked into the room because she didn't even flinch in the presence of Ol' Blue Eyes.

"I only wish I could've sent my story to him before he died. He may have gotten a laugh out of it," she said.

His countless list of hit songs will continue to inspire audiences.

Ron Hale, a local entertainer who favors "The Platters" and Motown artists, said he would include a tribute to Sinatra in future performances.

"At least I'll do 'My Way.' I have to admit, Sinatra's the last of the big superstars. There's still Tony Bennett. When he goes, I'm done," said Hale, who is also a leader of the area Truckers Love Children organization.

Area music promoter Manny Rojas of Center Stage Concerts met Sinatra at a party in Chicago in the early 1970s.

"He was one of the most unique

individuals I have ever met in my life," Rojas said. "He was charismatic, charming, entertaining — you couldn't take your eyes off him."

Rojas said he plans to bring Frank Sinatra Jr. to Florida for a five city tour as soon as possible. Sinatra Jr. was the band leader for his father for the last ten years.

"He looks and sounds just like his dad," Rojas said.

"I think it will be a great idea to bring him here."

Howard Tepps of Lady Lake played behind "Rat Pack" member Joey Bishop in the early '50s in his band, The Dukes of the Rhythm. Now he is drumming for The Keynotes and Tepps said they do a lot of Sinatra tunes. He said Sinatra had the ability to sell any song to his audience.

"It's a loss, really, because he sold everything he had to sing," Tepps said.

"Even if the melody wasn't good, he sold it. He's up there with a lot of good company."

Wilson, who has played with many Sinatra studio musicians, agreed.

"From a musician's standpoint, he was a true professional and had a reputation for respecting everyone he played with," Wilson said. "He could read music and always knew what he wanted to hear. He could take a set of lyrics and just knew how to convey the emotion the writer wanted."

"He walked into the recording studio and that was it. He rarely needed a second take."

But Sinatra believes he may get another take — at life, that is.

Sinatra contemplated the afterlife in one of his last performances.

"I believe in the hereafter... very possible we might, or won't know our names or faces," Sinatra said. "But we might be back because people who leave us have to go somewhere. I believe that."



# The Daily Commercial

Saturday, May 16, 1998

Serving Lake and Sumter Counties since 1875

\*

Leesburg, Florida

## Curtain closes on legend

### Frank Sinatra dies of heart attack at 82

By MICHAEL FLEEMAN  
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES

Above everything, there was The Voice.

Say what you will about the style and swagger, the women, money, fame, power, mob ties, the tastes and habits that long ago fell out of favor.

There was, and always will be, the light baritone, seasoned by age, flavored by whiskey and cigarettes, romantic, vulnerable, tough and completely original. It was the source of all of Frank Sinatra's power and greatness.

Late Thursday night, Sinatra died at 82, his wife at his side, in the emergency room of Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, after a heart attack. He had been ill for more than a year.

Please see SINATRA, A2



The Associated Press

Frank Sinatra gestures to the crowd during a reprise of "New York, New York" at a 1990 concert in New York's Radio City Music Hall.

Sinatra died late Thursday night of a heart attack at age 82.

### Lake fans remember Sinatra

By GLORY PATTERSON  
Daily Commercial Staff Writer

"When he walked on stage, and started singing, he had them in the palm of his hand," said Lenny Wilson, of the Lenny Wilson Trio, as he joined area residents in mourning the death of the great Frank Sinatra on Friday.

Local fans showered Sinatra with accolades and fondly recalled memories of "the Chairman of the Board."

Tavares resident and World War II veteran Dorothy Errair said she regrets not sending Sinatra a story she wrote about him after watching a performance in Italy in June of 1945.

Errair, who was an Army air evacua-  
Please see FANS, A2



Staff photo by Glory Patterson

Dorothy Errair remembers a 1945 performance by Sinatra when she was in the Army in Naples, Italy. Errair wrote a story about the experience, but was not able to pass it on to Ol' Blue Eyes.

## Lake police honor fallen officers



## India proclaims nuclear statehood

By DONNA BRYSON  
The Associated Press

NEW DELHI, India  
India proclaimed itself a nuclear



South Lake  
wins  
pole vault

SPORTS, B1

### LAKE/SUMTER

#### Roundup

#### CLERMONT

#### Clermont water safe

Residents of the Greater Hills subdivision no longer have to boil their water, according to city public works officials. Now officials are turning their attention to figuring out why the water line burst that led to the precaution. A3

#### GROVELAND

#### High school football

After the South Lake High spring football jamboree on Friday night, two things are for certain: Three area teams are going to be young, and the running game is



# NURSES

Continued from C1

do whatever they could to ensure freedom for the United States and its allies. Both Errair and Haynes knew they could use their nursing training to serve.

In 1941, Haynes worked in a psychiatric hospital in Roseburg, Ore., where some of the Pearl Harbor soldiers were taken. She was moved by the young men, many of whom never recovered from their traumatic experience.

"After I saw all of those boys I decided to go into the air evacuation nurse training," Haynes said.

Errair felt the calling as well. She became a member of the first official class of 25 flight nurses shortly after completing nursing school and completed two months of training at Bowman Field, Ky., in July 1943.

"They had no idea what we were going to be facing, or if the patients were even going to be able to withstand the high altitudes," Errair said. "At that time, the planes had no pressurized cabins."

It was August of 1943 when Errair was sent to North Africa and Italy with the 807th Squadron. Haynes soon followed and spent three years in India, China and Burma with the 821st.

Their job was to evacuate the wounded and treat them in-flight as they flew to either the station hospitals or the general hospitals. Their unmarked C-47 and C-46 cargo planes also delivered gasoline, food and replacement troops.

"We had no radio contact when flying over the Himalayas," Haynes said. "Those pilots were flying by the seat of their pants. But we always had our minds on the patients."

A number of planes crashed and within three months of Errair's two-year term, many in her squadron were missing in action. Three nurses who had been sent as replacements were killed.

"It was devastating. These were young girls in their 20s who had their whole lives ahead of them," Errair said. "I want my buddies remembered."

Both Errair and Haynes humbly say they were overseas doing what had to be done — it was their duty.

But their duty involved being shot at, on the ground or in the air.

While on the ground, finding a place to sleep or go to the bathroom took resourcefulness. While in the air the patients needs were always the main concern.

At one point, a cave in China was found to be a temporary home of choice for Haynes and her squadron.

"It was cool and turned out to be a safe place," Haynes said. "You'd be surprised how comfortable a cave can be."

Both Errair and Haynes had times they barely escaped from death.

Two flights almost turned deadly for Haynes. Once a flight fully loaded with wounded was shot at by a "Zero," a Japanese fighter plane. Haynes said they narrowly escaped.

"A bullet ripped off the buckle of my shoe and grazed my ankle," Haynes said. "I received a Purple Heart for that, but didn't really like telling people about that one."

Another shooting incident involved a loaded plane just taking off out of Burma. The Japanese were firing, and the pilot knew they would be hit if they continued to ascend.

"We crash landed because the landing gear wasn't going to be able to go back down, since it was in the middle of retracting," Haynes said. "The plane caught fire, but all we could think about was getting the wounded off the plane. We succeeded,



Courtesy photo

**During bivouac, or temporary encampment, the Army Air Corps nurses lived without luxuries. They could expect to crawl through the most inaccessible places and tried to blend in with their surroundings.**

but I ended up with a sprained ankle on that one."

Haynes received the Distinguished Flying Cross medal, one of the highest honors one can earn, for her role in the close call.

They say the memories of the positive experiences far overshadow the negatives, but one of the things Errair has had a hard time letting go of was when another nurse took her place on a flight. Unfortunately, the plane never made it to its destination, and her friend was killed.

"I always felt terrible about that," Errair said. "I still think about her all the time, especially at this time of year. It was such a tragedy."

Since their homecoming so many years ago, each of the two women raised six children, and each continued her career in nursing. But they will never forget the days when survival had a far different meaning.

"You do what you have to do in life," Errair reflected modestly. "At that time we didn't do anything special. It was our job."





Courtesy photo

During their training at the School of Air Evacuation at Bowman Army Air Base, nurses were instructed in the proper manner in which to load casualties onto planes.

## NURSES

Continued from C1

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Courtesy photo

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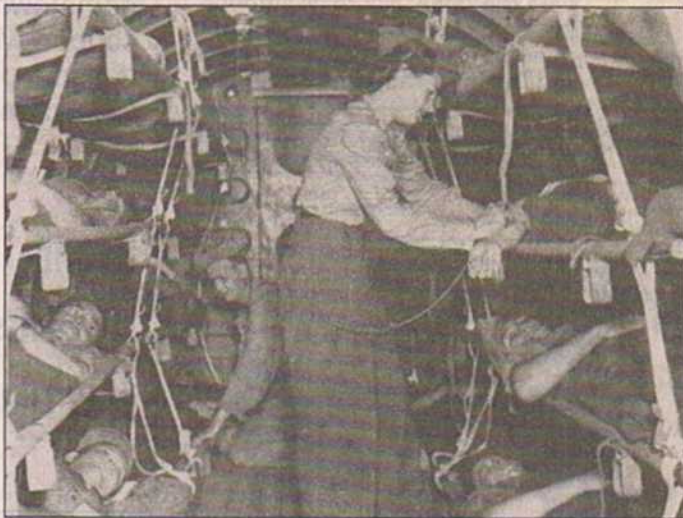
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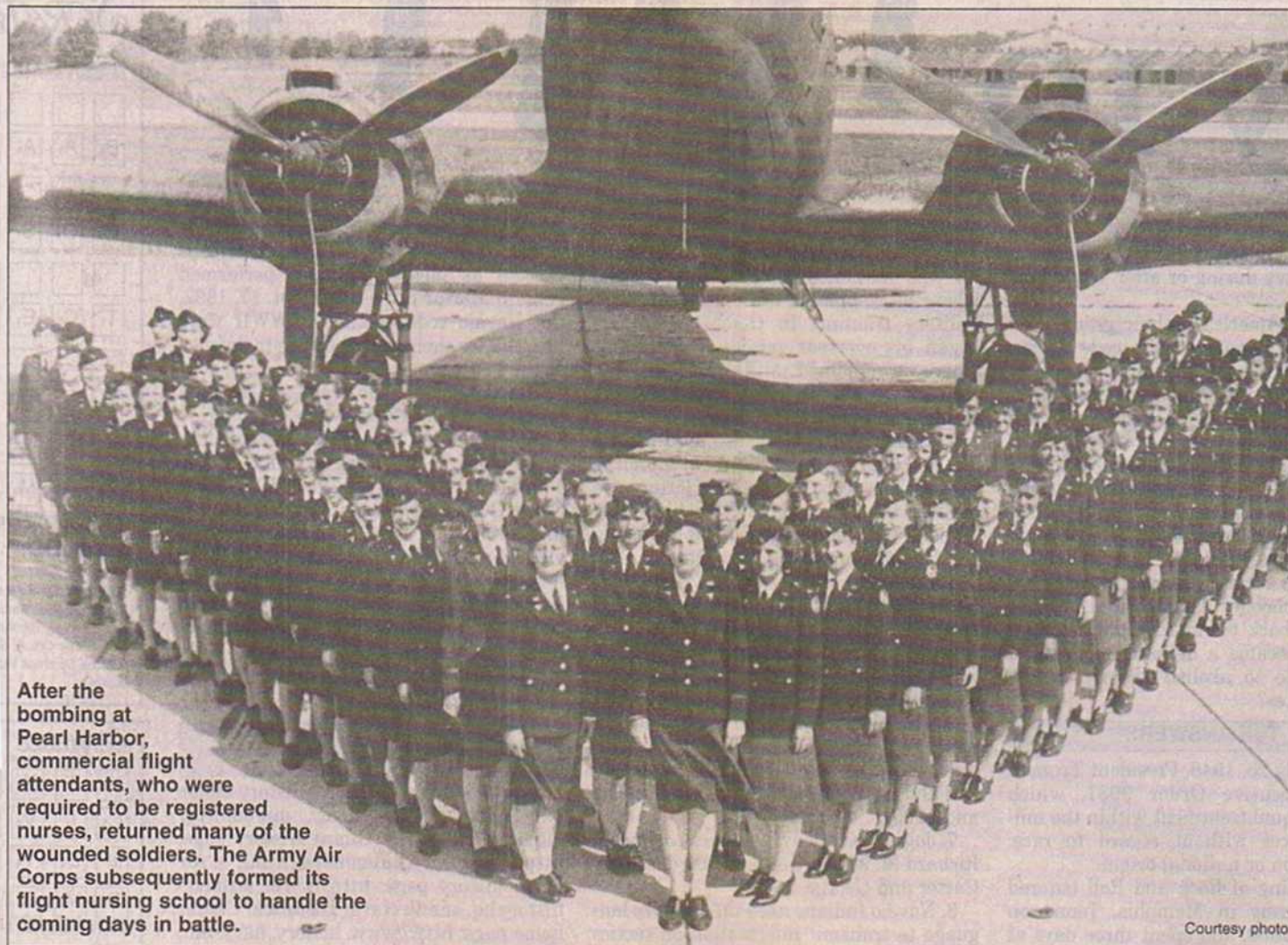


Courtesy photo

A nurse aids the wounded onboard an Army Air Corps plane.

# Women *with* Wings

*Flying nurses of WWII*



After the bombing at Pearl Harbor, commercial flight attendants, who were required to be registered nurses, returned many of the wounded soldiers. The Army Air Corps subsequently formed its flight nursing school to handle the coming days in battle.

Courtesy photo



Staff photo by Craig Litten

Dorothy Errair of Tavares can still wear the uniform that she served in as a World War II flight nurse.

By **GLORY PATTERSON**  
Daily Commercial Staff Writer

**"I** WILL SUMMON every resource to prevent the triumph of death over life ... this I will do. I will not falter in war or in peace."

These were words from the credo of the Army Air Corps flight evacuation nurses of World War II.

Dorothy Errair of Tavares and Jane Haynes of Fruitland Park are two of the 1,250 courageous women who will be spending time this Memorial Day remembering their own harrowing experiences and those of fellow nurses who didn't make it back from battle.

"I don't think people know that many nurses were killed over there. A lot of people don't realize what the flight nurses did," Errair said.

After the bombing at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii on Dec. 7, 1941, commercial flight attendants, who were required to be registered nurses, returned many of the wounded who were either mentally or physically unfit for duty. The Army Air Corps subsequently formed its flight nursing school to handle the coming days in battle.

It was a time when Americans banded together to

Please see **NURSES, C6**



## **Flight nurse attends reunion**

TAVARES — Dorothy Errair recently returned from a reunion of the World War II Flight Nurse Association held in Melbourne. The group met to plan a registry of all women that have ever served in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Errair and nearly 200 former flight nurses got together to reminisce about their war experiences and to plan the registry, which would accompany a planned memorial at Arlington National Cemetery in honor of women who have served their country.

The 70-year-old Detroit native worked as a nurse at Waterman Medical Center for 17 years.



# WOMEN

Continued from A1

they have now. You had no radio contact between one flight to another. You never knew if you were going to see any German or enemy aircraft. We just didn't even bother looking. It wouldn't do any good — we were up there like a sitting duck. If they saw us they could do what they wanted to.

"But it was important to get the boys back," she says. "And that's what we did."

Errair belonged to the 807th Medical Air Evac Transport Squadron. Her group transported more than 100,000 injured soldiers during World War II; only two soldiers in their care died. The nurses flew on large C-47s, used alternately as cargo and air evac planes. They put one nurse to a plane. Her job was to keep as many as 24 soldiers alive so they could get to Allied hospitals.

Errair primarily flew on missions to and from Africa and Italy. She recalls being shot at and making a number of risky landings, but she has had luck on her side.

Once, 26 people from the 807th crash-landed in Albania and were missing for weeks, British and Germans racing to reach them. Errair says she almost got on that plane.

Soon after that some friends injured in a jeep accident were being transported stateside, Errair says, and their C-47 crashed an hour after takeoff into a Sicilian mountainside killing all aboard. Another nurse took Errair's place that day.

"It could have been me," she says.

Despite such tragedies and brushes with death, Errair treasures her time in the Army. The Detroit native and retired operating-room nurse at Waterman Medical Center brims over with memories. She is adamant when she says, "Women are veterans too."

"Stand up for yourself," she says. "It's something women must do for themselves."

Errair says if for no other reason, women should be recognized because they were all volunteers. There was no draft board forcing them to sign up.

"We want to go back as far as we can. We want to recognize all women. It's important to us," she says.





Staff photo by Evan R. Steinhauser

Dorothy Errair, 70, of Tavares served in World War II as a flight nurse. Errair, along with the Flight Nurse Association Inc., is now working to compile a computer registry of every woman who ever served in the Armed Forces.

# Women of war seek recognition

By Hal Millard  
Daily Commercial Staff Writer

## TAVARES

They are the forgotten ones. They were relegated mainly to office work and entertaining soldiers. Some, however, were spies, saboteurs, suppliers, soldiers and nurses. In World War II great numbers of them often performed their duties under fire in enemy territory, keeping alive hundreds of thousands of wounded soldiers en route to hospitals flung far

## Local war vet fights for servicewomen

across the globe.

They are women, and outside of the branch of service they belonged to, these women of war are largely ignored.

War veteran Dorothy Errair of Tavares would like to change all that.

Errair, now 70 years old, is one of the 1,331 flight nurses who

served in World War II. Her goal, and the goal of the Flight Nurse Association Inc., of which she is a member, is to compile a computer registry of every woman who ever served in the Armed Forces.

The registry would include names, service records, photos and memorable military experiences and be open to public view.

The registry would complement a planned memorial to women soldiers at the entrance of Arlington National Cemetery, which is slated to open in 1992.

"We're not looking for medals, just recognition," she says.

Errair's job was often a perilous one, as dangerous as action on the ground.

"Remember, we did not have radar," she says. "We didn't have any of the safety precautions that

Please see **WOMEN, A3**



## 'Very gung-ho'

Errair was one of 25 flight nurses of the 807th Medical Air Evacuation Transport Squadron, which moved from North Africa to Sicily in September 1943.

Thirteen flight nurses from the squad based in Sicily had gone missing in November of that year when a plane taking them to a base in Italy got lost in bad weather and crash-landed behind enemy lines in Albania. The nurses eventually made their way back to the Allied lines but only after a harrowing two-month, 800-mile journey on foot. Howren and Wiehrdt were replacements for two of the missing nurses. Howren had been stationed in the States but volunteered for assignment with the short-handed 807th flight nurses in Sicily.

"She could have stayed here, but she wanted to go," remembers Veach. Her sister joined the flight-nurse squad shortly after Christmas. She quickly made an impression, Errair says.

"She wasn't there long, but it was a close unit. Betty was friendly and vibrant and thrilled to be there.

"She was very gung-ho" — so much so that when Errair had to miss a scheduled flight because of a high temperature, Howren was the obvious replacement.

## A fateful flight

Two planes loaded with wounded soldiers took off that fateful morning, bound for hospital facilities in Algiers. The



## History of 807th MAES

The radio was interrupted with the urgent voice of the announcer, "We have a message from the White House." Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt came on the air and in a very somber tone announced, "Dec. 7, 1941, a date that will live in infamy, the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by Naval and Air Forces of the Empire of Japan." The Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor!

I was a 21 year old senior nursing student in a large Detroit hospital. My future and that of thousands of registered nurses across the country changed with that announcement. The following 3 years were memorable because our generation was at war. On Oct. 5, 1942, I joined the ANC and later became one of the first flight nurses to go through the School of Air Evacuation at Bowman Fld., KY. We were at war and war casualties were mounting necessitating rapid removal of sick and wounded from the battle areas. Air Evac was a new phase of caring for the wounded and was not readily accepted as an alternative to the established means.

Aug. 1943, members of the 807th MAES left the states in a convoy heading toward the Mediterranean Theater arriving at Bizerti, Tunisia, staying at the bivouac area at the City of Tunis, their destination was Sicily. They did air evac from Catania Main Airfield, Sicily to Bari, Italy evacuating the sick and wounded from the battlefronts to the rear hospitals. There was very heavy fighting in Italy and with the backlog of wounded more teams of air evac personnel were being sent to the front lines. On Nov. 8, 1943, 13 nurses and 13 technicians plus a crew of 4 headed for Bari, Italy. They became lost and were forced to land in Albania in the Balkan Mts. in enemy territory and for the next 62 days, they criss-crossed those snow covered mountains in blizzards and snow storms, evading the Germans, who were searching for them.

The following day, more of us flew to Bari. The nurse's quarters in Bari only had six cots, so we figured we would be three to a cot! Upon our arrival in Bari, the Medical Officer wanted to know where the other nurses were as he had such a backlog of patients and the other plane load of air evac personnel did not arrive as expected. The next day, our CO, Maj. McKnight, met our plane and told us the plane was missing in the Balkans.

We had spent months in rigorous training in the KY hills to learn to do air evac in combat and here we had only been overseas three months and already 26 of our personnel were missing in action. It was devastating. For almost a month we waited and wondered and prayed for their safe return. On Dec. 2, 1944, the sqdn. was called together and we were informed that the C-47 had crash landed in Albania, there were survivors and the British would try to reach them. The Germans were also looking for them!

Our work with the 807th went on as usual but each day our thoughts and eyes looked east across the Adriatic Sea, praying for their safe return. The empty cots and vacant chairs in the mess hall were constant reminders of our loss. The war went on and casualties increased and 13 replacements were sent from Bowman Fld. in Dec. At noon Jan. 14, 1944, all our nurses were in the mess hall when the phone rang. Our CN, Lt. Grace Stakeman, answered. Then she informed the mess sergeant that there would be 13 guests coming for dinner! We became silent, glancing about with questions in our eyes — "Is it them?"

Suddenly the jeep horn could be heard in the distance, we ran outside to see our long lost friends waving, smiling and crying, — as were we all. Only ten nurses and the crew returned that day. The other 3 were still missing but in due time they returned to civilization and safety. This story is told by Agnes Jensen Mangerich in this book, so will not repeat it here. The enlisted men came home with the remaining three nurses. Many of the personnel had physical as well as emotional scars — they were emaciated, one could not see and other disabilities. Their biggest problem had been fleas, they had not showered or shampooed in two months!

After rest and recuperation, all were returned to assignments stateside and could never return to the ETO as the Germans had pictures of them and if caught, they would be tried as spies.

No sooner had we gotten over this episode in our squadron's life than two weeks later on Jan. 30, 1944, three of our nurses were badly injured in a jeep accident. Mildred Wallace died a few hours later, Allen fractured her arm and Dottie Booth fractured her spine. Three

— all 807th MAES. On the flight from Catania, Sicily to Algiers, North Africa one hour after take-off, the C-47 crashed into a Sicilian Mt., killing all on board. Our hearts were heavy as we followed the casket laden jeeps up the hillside where the American Flag was flying at half-mast and taps were being played in the background.

Three replacements arrived in early March — Rae, Willy and Holly brought our numbers up to 25. At the end of March, the last of the missing nurses returned to us. They were in much better physical shape than the 13 had been. They had been hidden in various homes.

39 years later, the nurses and enlisted men involved in the Balkan Interlude had a reunion Aug. 1983 in Columbus, Ohio. As we met again, we noticed the wrinkles, added weight and some gray hair, then the stories began and the years rolled back to 1944. We enjoyed a delicious dinner in a private club in Columbus, each told of their lives since the war. Some had married and had children but most had continued in some field of nursing or furthered their education.

We met the guest of honor, Lloyd Smith, former CIA agent, who had parachuted into Albania, staying with the missing group until they returned to Italy. On our final day of fun we received tragic news. Polly, one of the nurses, who survived the crash and was planning to attend the reunion, was killed in an automobile accident in Ill.

A few of our original group have not kept in touch with any of us. Where are you Ann, Bobbie, Billie and Vickie? 5 nurses have died since the war. May 1988 in San Antonio, TX, we met, remembered and shared a few days of laughter and memories — that's what keeps us forever young!

*By Dorothy White Errair*



Grace Stakeman, C.N. foreground with 807th MAES personnel receiving medals at Ledo de Roma.





# REFLECTIONS

Daily Commercial

Dear Abby  
Classifieds

Saturday, Jan. 26, 1991 **C**

## War secret

### Tavares nurse recalls chemical warfare of WWII

By Merrie Skinner  
Daily Commercial Staff Writer

**D**orothy Errair, an air-evacuation nurse during World War II who treated wounded soldiers close to the front lines, knows all too well what a war smells, looks and sounds like.

"I'm watching it on TV and reliving it," she says. "I still hate the sound of an air-raid siren. When I hear it, the hair stands up on the back of my neck."

Like most Americans, Errair hopes the war in the Persian Gulf will be as swift and decisive as President Bush has promised. But unlike most, she says she knows what deadly, painful wounds from bombs, flying shrapnel and chemical gas look like.

"When you have a war, you have wounded," the Tavares woman says flatly. "I don't want anybody else to see that."

From January 1943 to December 1945, Errair worked as an Army Air Corps nurse in Africa, Sicily and Italy. In her early 20s at the time, she says she was looking for adventure when she enlisted for duty.

Today, at age 70, she believes that going off to war is not the ideal way to see the world.

The day of World War II that stands out most in Errair's memory is Dec. 2, 1943, the fateful day the Germans bombed the quiet harbor city of Bari, Italy.

A massive harbor bombing that was second only to Pearl Harbor in its scope of destruction, the surprise German air strike reportedly destroyed 17 ships and crippled eight others.

The harbor was filled with Allied sailors and supply ships, including the John Harvey, an American merchant ship.

When the bombs began exploding in the normally calm harbor, Errair was sitting unsuspectingly in a nearby movie theater with friends watching a Sonja Henie film.

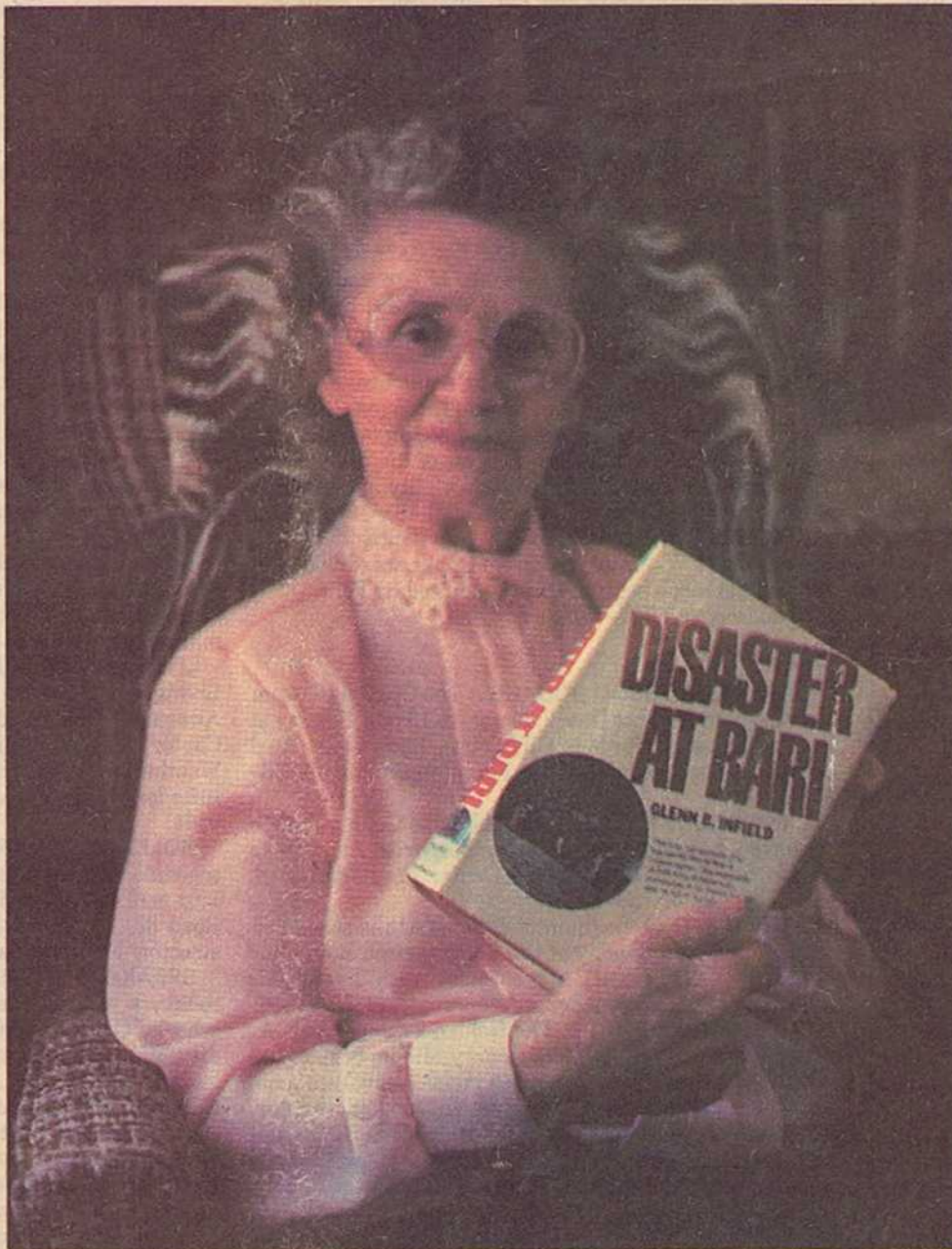
"We were at the theater and the roof caved in," she recalls, adding that she spent the rest of the night treating injured sailors who had survived the bombing.

Penicillin had not yet been developed, and medical equipment was primitive by today's standards.

Some of the wounded that Errair treated suffered intense burns that eroded their skin deep into the muscle. She says some patients at the British hospital in Bari mysteriously died for no apparent reason, leaving doctors and nurses mystified by the strange wounds and unexplained fatalities.

"All these people were dying in the hospital and nobody knew what it was," she says. "The doctors and nurses didn't know what it was. They'd be treating these people, and all of a sudden, they'd die."

Local hospitals were full, so Errair and other medical personnel helped fly wounded sailors to medical facilities in other areas. On



Staff photo by Bruce Borich

**Dorothy Errair learned only recently through the book *Disaster at Bari*, that some burn-like injuries she treated as a nurse in WWII were actually caused by mustard gas, a chemical-warfare agent.**

one flight from Bari to Africa, she says there were several sailors on board with the mysterious burn-like wounds on their arms, necks and hands.

The wounds were treated as though they were routine burns, and Errair says all she could do was put ointment on them and change the dressings when the wounds weeped.

"Their skin looked like raw meat," she says, adding that the wounds probably required skin grafts to repair the destroyed flesh if the men survived. After the flight to Africa ended, she says she never saw the patients again, nor did she have any way of finding out what happened to them.

During her nurse's training, Errair had been shown pictures of injuries caused by exposure to mustard gas, a chemical warfare agent. She says that she, as well as some of her co-workers, suspected the sailors wounded in Bari were suffering from mustard gas exposure, but no one would confirm their suspicions.

"I always had questions about that particular night," she says. "For years, I'd won-

dered about it, but nobody had any answers. They (government officials) kept saying it (mustard gas) wasn't used, and I know it was."

About five years ago, a friend in Washington D.C. called Errair to tell her about a 1971 book, *Disaster at Bari*, that detailed the explosion of 100 tons of mustard gas during the Bari bombing. After reading the book, she says many of her questions were finally answered.

Until she found the book, written by former U.S. Air Force Major Glenn B. Infield, Errair says people often doubted her stories about the injured sailors at Bari.

Now, she figures the sailors she saw on the airplane were burned by the deadly gas as they swam to shore in mustard-contaminated water to escape their bombed ships.

Today, she cannot supply the names of any wartime co-workers who can substantiate her stories.

But the 301-page book, which is available at Eustis Memorial Library, reports that the John Harvey contained 100 tons of top-secret

Please see GAS, C3

*'I still hate the sound  
of an air-raid siren.  
When I hear it, the  
hair stands up on the  
back of my neck.'*

Dorothy Errair, WWII nurse



11-11-90

# Lake woman works to honor female vets

By Sharon Johnson  
Daily Commercial Staff Writer

## LEESBURG

It started with a stubborn lady and a strong memory.

And it is that memory and that stubbornness that are seeking the recognition of other women. The response has been overwhelming.

Dorothy Errair is one of the 1,331 flight nurses who served in World War II. She, along with the Flight Nurse Association Inc., is seeking to compile a computer register of every woman who ever served in the Armed Forces. Errair is a member of the association.

Between 60 and 70 people in Lake County have contacted Errair since she first publicized her search in a newspaper story on Memorial Day, she said.

"I just get all wrapped up in it," Errair said. "I want people to know what happened. I just got to bug them, I guess, to get people talking about it. I was amazed at the response."

Women who served in the Armed Forces have not received much recognition. Errair remembers that she tried to join a Veterans of Foreign Wars post in 1946, but was not allowed to join because she was a woman.

Things have certainly changed since then.

Women are a part of veterans organizations and even have their own now. A whole movement has started to not only get computer files of all women who have served in the Armed Forces but to build a memorial to them at the main gateway area of Arlington National Cemetery.

Errair was a flight nurse for the 807th Medical Air Evac Transport Squadron. Her group transported more than 100,000 injured soldiers during World War II; only two soldiers in their care died. The nurses flew on C-47s that were used alternately as cargo and air evac planes.

With one nurse to a plane, the women were charged with keeping

Please see HONOR, B2

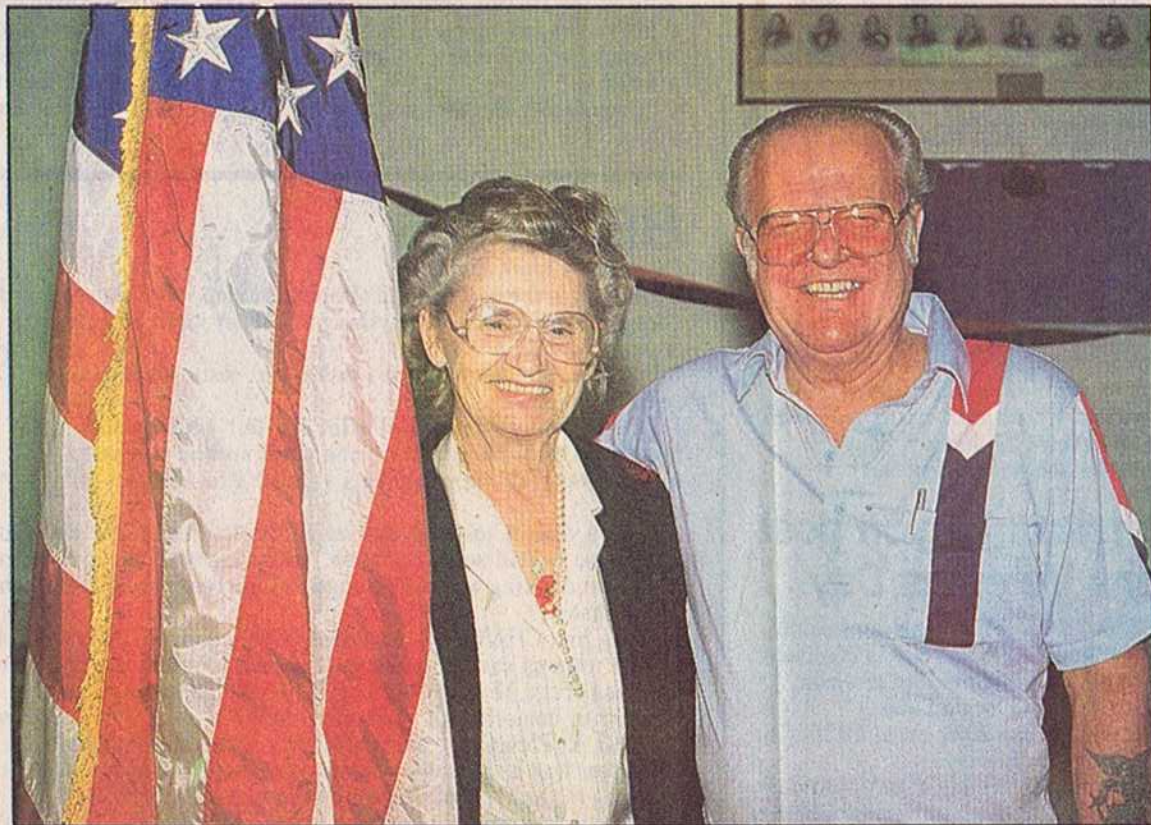


Photo by Cindy Lowe

Dorothy Errair poses with Tom Graham, commander of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post No. 8087 in Mount Dora. Errair, a flight nurse during World War II, wants to help compile a computer register of every woman who has ever served in the Armed Forces.



# N

# ighbors

**Contact:**  
**C.J. Risak**  
**Phone:** (352) 365-8254  
**FAX:** (352) 365-1951  
**E-mail:** features@dailyccommercial.cc

■ Colon cancer screening missed. **Health, C**

Thursday, February 18, 2010

The Daily Commercial

C SECTION



Dominique Dudley spotted at the LASER Haitian relief food packing event.

*Whether at home,  
 while shopping or  
 just enjoying Lake  
 County with  
 friends and  
 neighbors, you've  
 been ...*



Austin Langford spotted at the LASER Haitian relief food packing event.



Wilson Morgan at the LASER Haitian relief food event.



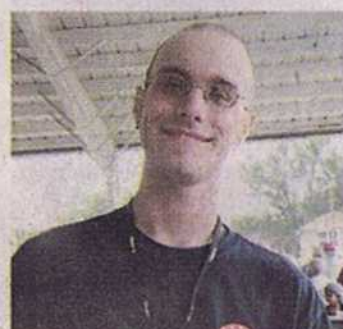
Gene Trachsel Eisenhower and Dorothy Errair spotted at Errair's 90th birthday party.



April Covert at Dorothy Errair's 90th birthday party.



Paula Herko at the LASER Haitian relief event.



Chris Rougeux at the LASER Haitian relief food event.



Melinda Errair Bruckman and Leslie Tinsley spotted at Dorothy Errair's 90th birthday party.



Regina Gross at Dorothy Errair's 90th birthday party.



Sharod Mollette at the Cops and Kids Motorcycle Run.



Shannon Parker at the LASER Haitian relief food event.



Bob Bostic at the LASER Haitian relief food event.



Sgt. Tim Parrish Jr. at Cops and Kids Motorcycle Run.



Jordan Coldren at the LASER Haitian relief food packing event.



Marti Errair spotted at Dorothy



Bryan Rimer spotted at the



Nicholas Lester at the Cops and Kids Motorcycle Run.



Cpl. Staci Chessher at Cops and Kids Motorcycle Run.

PHOTOS BY DAILY COMMERCIAL STAFF PHOTOGRAPHERS

FOR MORE SPOTTED PHOTOS, GO TO:



so much to do, so much to teach, so at 90 I'm still teaching."

She'll have a captive audience ready to hang on every word, even if they've heard it all before. Because this birthday extravaganza is more than just a recognition of another year of life, it's a chance to appreciate one woman's perspective on the many personal snapshots that have helped make up the big picture.

"I've watched so much of the world go by and it's been interesting," Dorothy said. "My house is splattered with pictures and every time I turn around there's another part of my life. I can't get away from myself."

"She's 90 and she has had a full, full life," Melinda said. "So this really just to honor her and as the invitation says, it's a life celebration with Dorothy White Errair not without her."



# Daily Commercial

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Saturday, February 6, 2010 • Leesburg, Florida • 50¢

## 90 years in the making



VICTORIA ALDRICH / DAILY COMMERCIAL

Photos of Dorothy Errair surround a picture she drew on her first day of school in her native Detroit on opening day of her five-day 90th birthday party and World War II-themed open house at her Tavares home on Thursday. Errair, who served as an Army flight nurse aboard a C-47 transport plane in North Africa and Southern Europe in World War II, is displaying her uniforms and other memorabilia through Feb. 8. "We proved that you can save lives by getting the wounded proper treatment," Errair said.

## WWII vet celebrates birthday with weeklong party

LARRY ELL  
Staff Writer

**TAVARES** — Dorothy White "Whitie" Errair loves to tell stories. And those lucky enough for an audience had better get comfortable because she's got a lot of 'em.

This week the floor will be all hers for five days of sharing the tales she's acquired from nine decades of living. To celebrate her 90th birthday, her daughter Melinda is throwing her mother an extended birthday party.

"When my daughter plans a party," Dorothy said, "she plans a big one."

She's not kidding. The program of events began Thursday with an open house and will end Monday with an all day session of visiting and snacks. In between, visitors will enjoy videos, stories, dinner, a "roast" of the guest of honor and too many recollections and out-of-town well wishers to count.



VICTORIA ALDRICH / DAILY COMMERCIAL

Dorothy Errair is surrounded by three of her children, Marti Errair, Melinda Errair Bruckman and Phil Errair, during the opening day of her five-day 90th birthday party and World War II-themed open house at her Tavares home on Thursday.

"We've got people coming from San Diego, Hawaii, Michigan, Vermont and a couple of WWII nurses that are gonna be here with mother," Melinda Errair said. "It's those nurses who'll likely touch her heart the deepest. At the age of 23,

Dorothy White went to war as a flight nurse. It was her job to keep wounded soldiers alive on the transport planes that flew behind enemy lines to pick them up. Even though it represented only a small portion of her life, the war helped define the rest of it.

"Mother is all about World War II, she's all about making sure the flight nurses are not forgotten," Melinda said. "There were only 1500 flight nurses in the Army Air Corps. They were a whole different breed."

Dorothy currently serves as the national president of the WWII Flight Nurses Association and the tales she continues to tell help keep their contributions and their memories alive.

"They're very fresh, they never go away," Dorothy said. "The friends I've lost, the things we did that no one knows about. There was

See PARTY, A2

## State: Jobs won't be back for two years

BILL KACZOR  
Associated Press

**TALLAHASSEE** — State economists now expect Florida's unemployment rate to peak at 12.3 percent later this year — topping the modern record by nearly half a percentage point — and remain in double digits for another two years.

They increased their last estimate by nearly a full percentage point Friday even as federal officials announced the national figure had dropped from 10 percent to 9.7 percent in January, the first decline in seven months.

Florida's unemployment rate hit 11.8 percent in December, just under the 11.9 percent record set in May, 1975. That was the highest rate since Florida began keeping unemployment statistics in 1970.

"We obviously recognize that the employment picture has been worsening since the last forecast faster than we thought so we adjusted the pace of what's happening in the short run," said legislative economist Amy Baker.

The new forecast predicts unemployment will hit the 12.3 percent peak between July and September and then decline slowly through the last quarter of 2012 when it's expected to fall below 10 percent.

The economists don't expect the unemployment rate to reach pre-recession levels of 5 or 6 percent until the middle of the decade.

The jobless forecast is part of an economic outlook that will form the basis of the economists' next estimate of state revenues in March. The Legislature will use those figures to formulate the state budget for the next fiscal year starting July 1.

## Comedian Golf Brooks tees off on Tiger

MILLARD K. IVES  
Staff Writer

**EUSTIS** — Material for the comedy show of Golf Brooks just went up a few birdies, thanks to the recent Tiger



# NURSES: Day for remembering

Continued from Page 1B

and service manager.

"Nothing ever scares me," she said. She lives about 30 blocks from the World Trade Center, but wasn't in town Sept. 11 when terrorists flew two commercial planes into the towers.

"When I worked for TWA, I was with their trauma team, but I was out of town. In a way, I'm glad, too. It's really traumatic." She walked to the site last Saturday and was amazed at the pile of rubble, she said.

Still, "I never thought to be afraid to fly," she said. "I would have gone up the next day. If you've been through the war, you don't worry about anything," Bjerke said. "If we weren't going to come back, we would have been gone a long time ago."

It was a day for remembering, and about an hour before the flight nurses dedicated their plaque, a somewhat larger group from the 380th Bombing Group, which flew in the southwest Pacific during WWII, met to re-dedicate its memorial plaque in the park.

Former Speaker of the U.S. House (1987-89) Jim Wright, 78, of Fort Worth, Texas, a bombardier with the group, and his former crew member, Delmar "Curly" V. Sprouts, 87, of

Olathe, Kan., a gunner target specialist, were among those present.

Wright said he and the others who fought in World War II were honored that newsman Tom Brokaw called them the greatest generation. "We were a product of our time and our

parents," he said. "Parents teach by example. I just have to believe that the same spirit that brought us through World War II still reposes in the nation's psyche.

"If not, our generation wasn't so great after all."



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LOCAL, REGIONAL & STATE NEWS  
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Five-day forecast  
from WHIO's  
Brian Orzel  
PAGE 6B



SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2001

Dayton Daily News

SECTION B



**Phrase  
response  
carefully**

**F**I AWACHIR AL QARNET tasia 'asher bada' at al wy'yul qomy teteghalgal bay-ayn ash shu-ub fil belad al 'arabiya.

That phrase has been harder to get out of my head this week than *The Ballad of Davy Crockett* was when I was a kid. It's been stuck in there since a trip to Building 8 at Sinclair Community College on Tuesday.

"Fi awachir..." is an amateur transliteration of Arabic for, "Toward the end of the nineteenth century, a feeling of national consciousness began to spread among the people of the Arab nations." It was one line among thousands in lessons we had to memorize at the Defense Language Institute, a mysteriously clingy line.

I only remember two others: "Hel tahib an tusharifani fi qaneena min al beera?" which means "Would you care to join me in a bottle of beer?" and thus has practical applications, and "Zawjat al mu'alim min medinat ash-sham," a catchy bit which means, "The teacher's wife is from Damascus" and which we turned into a song and skit.

"Fi awachir..." is neither practical nor catchy. In 33 years, I've never managed to work it into conversation. Somebody says, "Hot enough for ya?" it's a stretch to answer with a long-winded reference to national consciousness.

So the phrase has remained dormant. Until now. Now, for one thing, feelings of national consciousness have spread among the people of this country and, for another, I was at Sinclair for a Student Government-sponsored dialogue on Our Response to Terror Attacks. The phrase "national consciousness" was never used, but the concept was.

Each of the panelists spoke of national consciousness in one or more nations or peoples and one speaker, Iranian-born geography professor Mohsen Khani, spoke of many. Khani, while making it clear nothing serves as an excuse for the terror attacks, gave some background on why the U.S. isn't universally beloved. Student questions showed general agreement with his comments.

Since he comes from Iran, Khani began with the CIA's infamous oil-company-induced overthrow of the government there and reinstatement of the Shah in the '50s. Since the Shah's regime was notoriously corrupt (for example, when I lived there, he'd given a monopoly on cigarette production to a relative, who then banned all

# Prayer service to build bridges

*Coming Together  
to begin at 3 Sunday  
at Wright State*

By ANDREW CHOW  
Greene County Bureau

**FAIRBORN** — More than 300 Indian Americans will join community and religious leaders Sunday at Wright State University in a prayer and support service called Coming Together.

The 3 p.m. service in Room E-10 of the Student Union building will allow those of Hindu, Sikh, Christian, Jewish and other faiths to pray for the victims of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and to discuss what can be

done to help, said Jan Venkayya of Beavercreek, who is helping to organize the event.

Dayton Mayor Mike Turner, Beavercreek Mayor Julie Vann, Miamisburg Mayor Dick Church, Wright State University President Kim Goldenberg and religious leaders from around the Miami Valley will attend the event, said Dr. Hemant Shah, a member of the Coming Together organizing committee.

"The purpose is to convey our condolences and also to talk about what is it we can contribute to this melting pot," Venkayya said. "This is a country that's a beacon of hope for the rest of the world. It is our country of choice and we want to stand ready to offer our support to

### How to go

- **What:** Coming Together, a prayer and support service remembering victims of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks
- **Where:** Student Union building, Room E-10, Wright State University
- **When:** 3 to 5 p.m. Sunday
- **More information:** Call Jan Venkayya at 623-5540

help our own country." Locally, Indian Americans have been collecting money for Red Cross disaster-relief efforts, Shah

said. Indian American children have raised more than \$300 by selling home-made American flag lapel pins.

The Coming Together event will also help build bridges between the area's diverse religious and ethnic groups, Venkayya said, as some Indian Americans have become targets of mistaken anti-Arab backlash since Sept. 11.

"It goes back to: If you don't know anything about me, you'll assume things that may or may not be correct," Venkayya said. "By being more active in the community, they get to know us better."

Dr. Thomas Percy, a plastic surgeon in Kettering who will be master of ceremonies at Sunday's event, said Americans need to work

together in the wake of the attacks. "This is affecting everybody, whether they have any immediate family affected or not," Percy said. "This is a nightmare. People are afraid, they are suspicious of each other, and it may take some time to get over these things. But it's something we have to face."

Also on Sunday, Dayton's Hindu Community Organization Inc. is inviting the public to join it at a noon worship service at the Hindu temple, 2615 Lillian Lane, Beavercreek.

The organization is also holding a 24-hour prayer service today at the temple, where donations will be collected for disaster relief.

► **Contact Andrew Chow** at 225-2414 or e-mail him at [andrew\\_chow@coxohio.com](mailto:andrew_chow@coxohio.com)

# WWII flight nurses gather, reminisce

*Memorial plaque  
dedicated during  
annual reunion*

By KATHERINE ULLMER  
Dayton Daily News

**WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE** — They flew without fear. Then and now — during World War II and after the Sept. 11 World Trade Center disaster.

The 23 World War II flight nurses who flew into Dayton for their annual reunion and to dedicate a plaque Friday in the Memorial Park at the U.S. Air Force Museum to honor all World War II flight nurses, came from far and near — Maine, Florida, California, Massachusetts and Cincinnati, among others.

Between 1942 and the end of 1944, 1,514 nurses and 907 enlisted men were trained and 18 medical air evacuation squadrons were formed, according to VerNell Bjerke, 80, of Manhattan, president of the group, the World War II Flight Nurses Association Inc., which numbers about 430.

Bjerke, like Agnes Flaherty, 80, of Portland, Maine, treasurer of the group, flew in the Pacific with the Army Air Corps, which later became the U.S. Air Force.

Bjerke, like Flaherty, helped care for the wounded that were air evacuated from the battlefields of Guam, Okinawa and Iwo Jima. Though they weren't fired on, "we would see firing in the background of Okinawa,"



**DOROTHY ERRAIR (LEFT) OF TAVARES, Fla., and Juanita Engelbrecht, 84, of Cincinnati, who served together in North Africa, reunite Friday at the Air Force Museum. They had not seen each other since the 1980s.**

Flaherty said.

Juanita Engelbrecht, 84, of Cincinnati flew with the 807th Air Evacuation Group from North Africa up through Sicily, Italy and Germany, often picking up war prisoners along the way. Like the others, she volunteered to serve her

country, because "it was what you felt you had to do," she said.

Most of the flight nurses flew on C-47s or C-54s, prop planes that didn't have heat. There were many other inconveniences.

"A nurse wasn't allowed to have any dependents, even if you

supported your mother," said Edith (Brown) Rothenberg of San Antonio, Texas, whom the others in her squadron still call "Brownie."

Rothenberg spent 25 years in the service, serving through the Korean War and the early part of the Vietnam War. She and three other

members of the 806th squadron, who flew air evacuations from France to England, Jean (Foley) Tierney of San Antonio, Joan (Denton) Jervis of San Francisco and Geraldine Dishroon Brier, 85, of Cheyenne, Wyo., shared memories during lunch at the museum. The four have kept in touch by phone through the years.

Flying in over enemy territory with a plane loaded with fuel created stress, and they became a sisterhood, Jervis said. "We knew each other's family. Everybody shared letters."

Their squadron was "the first to go into the Omaha beachhead on invasion day" to pick up the wounded, Brier said.

Brier, the first graduate of flight nurse school in the country, recalled flying into a British air base and being refused access to the officers' mess hall. She was told no ladies were allowed, but her pilot replied, "She's no lady. She's an officer in the U.S. Army Air Corps." The man left, only to come back and say, "You're welcome to be in the mess hall," she said.

Flight nurse training was at Bowman Field in Louisville, Ky. Since they hadn't ordered any wings for the women, when she graduated in February 1943, "Gen. David Grant took his wings off and put them on me," Brier said.

Of the 1,176,048 patients evacuated by air, only 46 died in the air, Brier said.

Bjerke was 21 when she entered the service. After her two-year tour of duty, she worked for TWA for 41 years as a flight attendant, a purser

Please see NURSES/4B

# Hagan opens with blast at Taft

*Democrat vying  
for governor's post*

calling them "gutless" on the issue of taxes.

"Republicans control the House and Senate and they control the governorship," said Hagan, 55, a

Hagan named House Speaker Larry Householder, R-Glenford, and Senate President Richard Finan, R-Evendale, in his indictment. Taft, in a brief press conference at



**TIM HAGAN**, surrounded by family and friends, announced his candidacy for Ohio













Capt Bonita Brothers  
Flight Nurse Instructor

She met me at August and  
drove me around San Antonio



Front Row L - R

Mrs. William Brier  
Mrs. Helena I. Tynan  
Mrs. Dorothy Errair

Back Row L - R

Mrs. H. B. Wichtendald  
Mrs. Clare Murphy  
Col Florence Fintak  
Lt Col Iva Lee Holtz

Former Flight Nurses  
WWII

March 1976







# A sense of closure



STEPHEN M. DOWELL/ORLANDO SENTINEL

Dorothy Errair, a Tavares retiree, had been haunted for decades about how fate stepped in and prevented her from boarding a doomed plane when she was an Army flight nurse during World War II.

Recently, Errair had a long-awaited opportunity for closure.

A chance conversation led to a reunion between her, the sister of a flight nurse who was killed when her plane crashed into Mount Etna and another nurse who also missed the plane because of pure chance — a coin toss. **Story, Life & Times**

DOROTHY -

BECAUSE OF PEOPLE  
LIKE YOU - WE CAN  
ENJOY OUR MANY  
FREEDOMS TODAY.

ALL THE BEST  
BOB BROOKES YMCA





My rooms in  
visiting officer's BOQ  
Brooks AFB  
San Antonio





Welcome  
Colonel Robert Melver USAF MC  
Commander USAF School  
Aerospace Medicine



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
USAF SCHOOL OF AEROSPACE MEDICINE (AFSC)  
BROOKS AIR FORCE BASE, TEXAS 78235



31 MAR 1976

Mrs. Dorothy C. Errair  
Route 1, Box 139  
Tavares, Florida 32778

Dear Mrs. Errair

The School of Aerospace Medicine is grateful for your contribution to the Centennial Flight Nurse Class graduation. The students, guests and faculty enjoyed listening to your description of aeromedical evacuation accomplished in 1943. Your presence at the ceremony and the reception enhanced the celebration.

We appreciate your time and effort on behalf of the faculty of the Aerospace Nursing Branch and the School of Aerospace Medicine.

Sincerely

*Richard D. Hansen M.D.*

RICHARD D. HANSEN, Colonel, USAF, MC  
Chief, Education Division



DANIEL K. INOUE  
HAWAII

APPROPRIATIONS  
Subcommittee on Defense

COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION  
Subcommittee on Surface Transportation  
and Merchant Marine

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

DEMOCRATIC STEERING COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

## United States Senate

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FAX (808) 961-5163

September 9, 1999

Ms. Dorothy C. Errair  
1600 Tamarac Trail  
Tavares, Florida 32778

Dear Ms. Errair:


Thank you for taking the time to write to me. I was touched by your memories of my dear friends, the members of the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team.

I am glad you wrote to me because it gives me the opportunity to thank you for your service as a flight nurse. Although our paths may not have crossed literally, our lives are connected through my buddies whom you cared for and your fellow nurses who cared for me. The road to rehabilitation was extremely difficult for me, as it was for thousands of other injured soldiers. The first few days were especially trying. With encouragement from the nurses, I survived. The nurses provided more than medical care for my physical ailments. They treated my spirit, and gently, but willfully nursed me back to emotional and mental wholeness.

Thank you for telling me about the book, Albanian Escape. I look forward to reading it. I remember receiving news of the incident. At that time, the 442<sup>nd</sup> was still training in the United States and I had yet to be exposed to the horrors of war. Soon enough, I gained first-hand knowledge of war's ugliness. But I also witnessed great acts of bravery and integrity. The story of the 807<sup>th</sup> Medical Air Evacuation Squadron is a testament to the courage, faith and unselfishness of our nation's war-time nurses and medics.

Again, thank you for writing and please accept my heartfelt appreciation for your services in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps.

Aloha



DANIEL K. INOUE  
United States Senator

DKI:ss



DANIEL K. INOUYE  
HAWAII

APPROPRIATIONS  
Subcommittee on Defense

COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION  
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September 9, 1999

Ms. Dorothy C. Errair  
1600 Tamarac Trail  
Tavares, Florida 32778

Dear Ms. Errair:

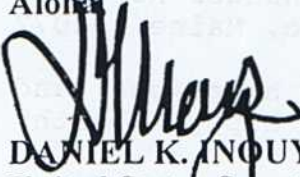
Thank you for taking the time to write to me. I was touched by your memories of my dear friends, the members of the 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team.

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Again, thank you for writing and please accept my heartfelt appreciation for your services in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps.

Aloha

  
DANIEL K. INOUYE  
United States Senator

DKI:ss



30 Rockefeller Plaza  
New York, NY 10112  
212 664-4444

A Division of  
National Broadcasting  
Company, Inc.



October 1, 1999

Dear Ms. Errair,

The response I have received to THE GREATEST GENERATION, book and documentary, has been overwhelming and most gratifying. I appreciate your letter and kind words.

Thank you for writing and sharing your own story. We have forwarded the letters you sent to Senator Dole and Mr. Takasugi.

All best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Brokaw". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "T".

Tom Brokaw

Ms. D.C. Errair  
1600 Tamarac Trail  
Tavares FL 32778



After reading <sup>A</sup> "The Greatest Generation" by Tom Browder

I wrote to Bob Dole.

He had been a patient  
on our Air Evacuation  
out of Pistoia Italy.

I may have been the  
nurse on his plane

D



BOB DOLE  
901 15TH STREET, N.W.  
SUITE 410  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005

September 20, 1999

Dear Mrs. Errair:

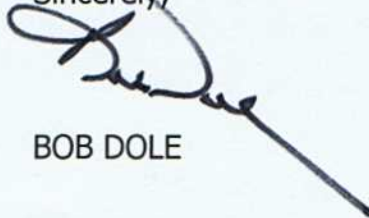
Thank you for your service to our country during World War II.

We may have met – I was evacuated by air from Pistoia, Italy to Casablanca and after a few days then to the United States.

I look forward to reading "*Albanian Escape*".

Best wishes to you and your family.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Dole', with a long, thin horizontal stroke extending to the right.

BOB DOLE

Mrs. Dorothy C. Errair  
1600 Tamarac Trail  
Tavares, Florida 32778



Life Membership. General Membership Assembly was presented with the amounts agreed on at the last board meeting of :

\$100.00 persons under 50  
75.00 persons 50 to 60  
50.00 persons 60 to 70  
35.00 persons over 70

This proposal was rejected by the assembly. Many variations were recommended by assembly. Membership fee of \$50.00 was recommended and agreed on. Life membership card will be denoted by having the WWII Flight Nurses Assoc, Inc. seal .

The By-Law changes reviewed and changed by Agnes Flaherty were read and accepted by the General Assembly.

Bi-Annual election of officers for 1992 to 1994. Nominations from the floor of General Assembly and incumbent officers of 1990 to 1992. Voting by ballot.

President	Dr. Jane Haynes
Vice Pres.	Frances Crabtree
Secretary	Agnes Flaherty
Treasurer	Geraldine Dishroon
Board Members	

Vernell Bjerke  
Irene Burch  
Liberty Sakryd  
Dorothy Errair  
Jean Tierney

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 noon.

Liberty Sakryd

*Liberty Sakryd*  
Secretary, 1990-1992



General membership meeting held 20, June 1992 at the Brown Hotel in Louisville, KY.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

20 known members have passed on and a moment silence in tribute to these women observed.

1990 Louise Hancock Smith, July  
Jean Boochoeroff Wycoff, August

Clare Stanton, August

Miriam Case Nelson, Sept.

Virginia Garnett, Sept

Marie Werner MacMartin, Oct.

Nadia Senko Stevens, Oct

Kathleen Davis Dietz, Dec.

Grace Dunnam Wichtendahl, Dec.

1991

Louise Johnson Wagner, Feb

Melissa Clark, April

Lynn Doherty Hanna, May

Lois Watson McKenzie, Oct

Marta Robinson Armsden, Nov.

Wilma Lytle Gibson, Dec

1992

Esther Brubach Feb.

Geraldine Curtis Pedone, Jan

Dorothy Nordenholt Roessle, Mar

Marion Sallade, April

Juanita Little, June

Minutes of last meeting, May 1990 read.

Treasurer Report read by Irene Burch, Treasurer

Presidents's thank you speech to Mr. Charles Arrington and Marilyn Haglund Lane and assistants Eleanor Rockwell, Joanie Allgeier of Brown Convention and Visitor Bureau of Louisville. Air Board & Kentucky Historical Society. All members who have written and participated in Our Association. Officers of WWII FNA: Barbara Carson, Vice President. Liberty Lee Sakryd, Secretary, Irene Miller Burch, Treasurer Bill Burch with assistance to Irene. Board Members . Membership, Elizabeth Harrington Martinsen: Newsletter, Agnes Flaherty & Eleanor Hoppock, Reunions, Florence Eleanor Rockwell VerNell Bjerke, Jane Witek Adriatico, who resigned. Nominating committee: Frances Thorp, Eulalia Shepard Parent, Geraldine Dishroon Brier.

*MARTHA RADSPIELER WEISBROD, cancelled*

Absent: due to illness Helen Maschino Erlandson, Cancelled

Brookie Mowery Unick, Having surgery

Mary Young Zaitz, Having surgery

Dorothy Berendsen, Edith Jackson Mize-Lewis, Florence Lucas Campbell,

Cancelled, Phoebe Lamunyan, moving to CA asthma in MO.

*(new address - PO BOX 11433, TAHOE PARADISE, CA 96155)*

Participation or dissolution. In 1988, in San Antonio, Members voted to incorporate, this was done. This means we must all work to keep the organization healthy. We were offered the option of joining the Society of Retired AF Nurses, we rejected it at that time as we would continue to increase WWII Flight Nurses Assoc., Inc. Nurses of Air Evacuation are eligible to join the Society of Retired Air Force nurses as an associate member at this time.



## CAPT. JOSEPH R. MONTANTE

(Continued from Page 1)

and cross country. He was Business and Sales Manager of the Griffin, the Wayne Year Book. Joe interned at Providence in 1939-1940 after which he opened an office on W. Chicago where he remained for two years, until he entered the service. On Sept. 30, 1939, he married the charming Irene Bondie and they have been blessed with two daugh-

ters, Mary Elizabeth and Margaret Ann. Joe is a member of Gamma Phi Delta, Psi Delta and Phi Beta Pi. He does not admit to any hobbies but enjoys all forms of sports.

## LT. DOROTHY WHITE

(Continued from Page 1)

Dorothy's hobbies range from stamp collecting and sewing, to dancing, swimming, skating and ping-pong.

## SERVICE LINES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

We hear from Lt. Comdr. Dayton H. O'Donnell somewhere in the South Pacific. He says in part: "In two weeks, I'll have finished my first nine months here. Only nine months to go. Then, if possible, they'll send me home for thirty days leave—let's see, that will be about June, 1945. See you then."

Let's hope it will be before that, Dayton. He also states that the Providence News is the most interesting piece of literature he receives, and enjoys it immensely.

Also from Charlie (Capt. C. L. Rivard):—"I received my copy of the Providence News and I eagerly read the contents from cover to cover, including the ads. Give my best to all at Providence. We have been busy taking care of our boys returning from the front lines. We are in a former Italian Military Hospital, so you see we have adequate quarters to take care of our work."

Somewhere in Italy

Dear Editors:

Our group has made wonderful progress since arriving in this theater, only three years ago. When we moved in here we found a newly constructed field, several scattered farmhouses and a large winery with large orchards and vineyards. The campsite assigned to my squadron was a large olive orchard with rows of grapevines between the olive trees, and rows of peas and beans among the grapevines.

A tent city sprung up in this crowded orchard overnight, including my tent dispensary. My work was immediately cut out for me with all sorts of sanitary measures neces-

sary. At that time this country was not so "sunny" either—"muddy" Italy would have been more appropriate.

After a few weeks of practice missions our flyers, a wonderful group of men, joined the "Big League" and they and the ground personnel have been doing a grand job. Needless to say that is when my job of "keeping the men flying" really began. These men are made of good "stuff," as we say, and take anything the Germans have to offer them.

We are in the air force so you no doubt have read about some of our missions.

During this time we have built mess halls and a day room, opened a theater and Chapel in the Winery and an Officers' Club with a marble bar—for our indoor recreation. In other words it's quite a community now.

I set up a new Dispensary consisting of two large tents over a wooden frame and a concrete floor at a cost of 540 liras, or \$5.40—cash on the line, no payments, no bills. We have Italian soldiers and civilians here doing most of the construction. My living quarters are in an Italian farmhouse.

Of my existence there is little to say. Though I have been here only a short time in comparison, I have that profound yearning to return to my beloved family and dear friends, along with our many friends overseas. The daily letters from Marge makes this life much easier (4 today). The Providence News is like getting a host of letters from friends at home and overseas more than anything I have received—have been watching for the April issue to arrive.

I have seen many interesting things while



# PROVIDENCE

# NEWS

Dedicated to the Personnel in the Armed Forces



VOLUME II

AUGUST, 1944

NUMBER 8

## WITH UNCLE SAM



**CAPT. JOSEPH R. MONTANTE**

Joe, who we believe is somewhere in Italy, was one of the first to answer his country's call. He served in the North African campaign before going to Italy.

Joe was born in Rochester, N. Y., on Dec. 28, 1913. His early training was received at Blessed Sacrament (Moore and St. George.), graduating in 1927. In 1930, he finished Northern High and entered Wayne University from where he received his A.B. and M.D. degrees.

He was very active in the College of Liberal Arts. Joe was Chief Manager of the Athletic Department, also of football, track

*(Continued on Page 2)*



**LT. DOROTHY WHITE**

Dorothy was born in Paterson, New Jersey, on January 24, 1920. She attended Isaac Newton School and Redford High, and received her R.N. at Providence Hospital School of Nursing in 1942.

After graduating, Dorothy did industrial nursing for six months, and in January, 1943, became an army nurse. She was stationed for some months at George Field, Illinois, where she helped open the station hospital, and was then transferred to Louisville, Kentucky. Since March of 1944 she has been overseas, serving as flight nurse with an air evacuation unit in Sicily and Italy.

*(Continued on Page 2)*



# Love lost then found: Old flames reunite

By MARY BETH KLATT  
SPECIAL TO THE SENTINEL

Alicia Garceau met Jeff Halbert, her first boyfriend, in seventh grade.

"I was in love with him as was every other girl on the [swim] team," Garceau recalls.

Though they dated, they were really just good friends. After two years, Halbert moved from Illinois to Pennsylvania, but they kept in touch with Christmas cards, e-mails and phone calls.

"Every time we talked, it was like we just picked up where we left off," Halbert says.

He always said he would visit Garceau when he moved closer to Chicago. So when he moved to Indianapolis, he made good on his promise.

The moment they saw each other, after 16 years apart, it was as though they were back in the seventh grade.

"It was almost like I knew instantly that this — marriage — is where we would end up," Garceau says. She soon moved to Indianapolis, and the two exchanged wedding vows in September.

The Halberts are part of a growing trend of people who are using the Internet to contact or keep in contact with first loves. Such Web sites as Classmates.com, Reunion.com and Military-Brats.com are making it easy to find out what happened to the guy or gal who broke your heart so long ago.

That's good news for singles. However, many of these reconstructions now begin while at least one person is married, says developmental psychologist Nancy Kalish, author of *Lost and Found Lovers: The Facts and Fantasies of Rekindled Romances* (William Morrow, 1997).

## The reunions work

Why is there such a strong pull toward the gawky guy who sent you gushy love letters?

"These early relationships are about the development of self," says Katherine Klehr, a clinical psychologist. "It's all about who loves you, who wants you and how attractive you are." Research shows that the emotional memories from teen love are imprinted in the brain, so that when you see this person again, the feelings return.

For men and women who are divorced, widowed or single, these reunions tend to be wildly successful, according to Kalish.

She decided to research this topic after she tried but failed to reunite with a lost love. After surveying thousands of couples who got back together after at least five years apart, Kalish found that more than 72 percent stayed together. Among those couples, the divorce rate was only 1.5 percent.

In her original research in 1993, more than a third of these

reunions took place when at least one person was married. Continuing data show that since the Internet simplified the process, more than 80 percent of rekindled romances today are extramarital affairs. Consequently, the number of couples reuniting successfully has dropped to 50 percent, according to her research.

"I'm not advocating affairs," Kalish says. What often starts as innocent contact, she says, morphs into a liaison.

Ivan Rupert, 57, can relate. He met Sandra Plaza in 1965 during high school in Okinawa, Japan. When he enlisted in the Army after graduation, the two lost touch. Plaza later heard Rupert had been killed in Vietnam. She learned he was still alive through the alumni association in 1996. She tentatively sent him an e-mail: "Do you remember who you took to prom?" Rupert promptly responded: "How could I forget?"

Plaza was separated from her husband and Rupert was in the middle of a divorce when they began corresponding. They met face to face in 1998.

"It was like the years didn't happen; it was 33 years where we were just married to other people," Rupert recalls.

They've been married for five years.

## Time apart was good

Dorien Peterson has a similar tale. She was 16 when she met her future husband, Bob, in high school. In college they got engaged, but Dorien's parents discouraged the marriage because they thought Bob wasn't motivated enough to hold down a job. Though the relationship ended, Dorien kept the ring. "I always knew I would hear from him again," she says.

She did. He called her while he was in the Navy — married with a young son. Dorien told him to stay away unless he was single.

But Bob couldn't forget Dorien. "She always meant more to me than anyone else," he said. He says he knew almost from the beginning that his marriage was a mistake.

"Sure, I loved her, so it wasn't totally cold-hearted," he said of his first wife. "But for some reason, it didn't stick."

The couple tried counseling but separated after seven years together. Bob looked up Dorien when he was in town to visit his parents.

Bob got a divorce. Eight years after Dorien and Bob parted, the two were married in 1982.

Dorien thinks they needed to be apart for the relationship to eventually work.

"He needed to become more mature and I needed to loosen up," she said. "We grew to the same spot."

This story by Mary Beth Klatt first appeared in the Chicago Tribune, a Tribune Publishing newspaper.



ZBIGNIEW BZDAK/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Staying in touch during the 16 years they were apart paid off for Alicia Garceau and Jeff Halbert of Indianapolis — they married.

# What to think about before you contact that lost love

It's easy to send an e-mail to an old boyfriend or girlfriend. All you have to do is hit the Send button, right? Here are some things to consider first, according to developmental psychologist Nancy Kalish, author of *Lost and Found Lovers*:

What was your initial romance like? If it was emotionally or physically abusive in any way, do not look for this person. Abusive people usually get worse, not better. Are you prepared for any

possible outcome? Can you handle no response? An angry response? A reunion that is wonderful and breaks up again, like years ago?

Perhaps your spouse has been contacted by a lost lover. You must stand firm to prevent a reunion. This is not idle jealousy; these old feelings are too strong.

If you're married, are you ready to leave your spouse, or have an affair, right now? If not, do not contact your lost love.



COURTESY OF DOROTHY ERRAIR

Jean Ann Veach — flanked by Dorothy Errair (left) and Charlotte Wiehrdt (right) — followed her sister's career path and became a nurse herself.

# After half a century, closure finally comes for pair

## CHANCE FROM E1

always wondered what happened and why it had to be Betty."

Charlotte Wiehrdt, a retired flight nurse in Arizona, said it was a cathartic experience: "I know it has helped me."

## Dangerous assignment

Flight nurses were something new and special in World War II. The first air evacuations had begun in North Africa in February 1943.

Unlike regular Army nurses, flight nurses received special training in crash procedures, field survival and the effects of high altitude on patients. They were young and had to be in peak physical condition.

"We followed the front lines, cleaning up," says Errair. "Nobody has ever done anything like this before, but we felt we were saving lives this way. And we were."

It was a tough, dangerous assignment, though.

The C-47 planes commonly used to transport the wounded also doubled as cargo planes carrying supplies to the front lines. As a result, they could not display the traditional Red Cross marking to protect them from enemy anti-aircraft guns and fighter planes.

In spite of the hardships, only 46 of the 1,176,048 patients who were evacuated by air during the war died en route to better medical care. However, 17 of the 500 flight nurses were killed.

## 'Very gung-ho'

Errair was one of 25 flight nurses of the 807th Medical Air Evacuation Transport Squadron, which moved from North Africa to Sicily in September 1943.

Thirteen flight nurses from the squad based in Sicily had gone missing in November of that year when a plane taking them to a base in Italy got lost in bad weather and crash-landed behind enemy lines in Albania. The nurses eventually made their way back to the Allied lines but only after a harrowing two-month, 800-mile journey on foot. Howren and Wiehrdt were replacements for two of the missing nurses. Howren had been stationed in the States but volunteered for assignment with the short-handed 807th flight nurses in Sicily.

"She could have stayed here, but she wanted to go," remembers Veach. Her sister joined the flight-nurse squad shortly after Christmas. She quickly made an impression, Errair says.

"She wasn't there long, but it was a close unit. Betty was friendly and vibrant and thrilled to be there."

"She was very gung-ho" — so much so that when Errair had to miss a scheduled flight because of a high temperature, Howren was the obvious replacement.

## A fateful flight

Two planes loaded with wounded soldiers took off that fateful morning, bound for hospital facilities in Algiers. The

one carrying Howren crashed into Mount Etna shortly afterward, killing all on board.

Errair was ridden with guilt. "I woke her up. I helped her get ready," Errair remembers.

"I wasn't even feeling bad, I just had a temperature. It could have been me — it should have been me."

"This has been a lump on my back ever since."

But she wasn't the only one to suffer guilt.

Wiehrdt, now 87, was also scheduled to fly out to Algiers that same morning.

"Normally we took whatever plane was available," recalls Wiehrdt. "But one of our nurses was injured and going out as a patient and we both wanted to be with her. So we flipped a coin to see who would go in that plane."

Wiehrdt lost the coin toss, and Howren climbed aboard the plane with the nurse who had broken her spine in a Jeep accident and was in a full body cast.

"I saw Betty's plane take off behind us. Everything seemed normal," says Wiehrdt.

"She was a beautiful girl. I think about her all the time."

## An unexpected link

Almost 60 years later, an unpredictable occurrence

brought the two survivors and Howren's younger sister together for a chance to share their emotions.

Errair was speaking with a fellow nurse in Volusia County about her experiences in World War II. "We were talking about my being a flight nurse, and she said she knew a girl who was one and asked if I knew Betty," says Errair.

Learning of their common

*'It could have been me — it should have been me.'*

— DOROTHY ERRAIR

acquaintance flooded Errair. When the Volusia nurse said she knew Howren's sister and how to contact her, Errair was left shaking.

Here was a chance, after more than half a century, to tie up so many loose ends. Errair wrote a hurried letter last Christmas to Veach, married and still living in Indiana, explaining the mixture of grief and guilt she has carried with her all these years.

Veach never dreamed she would hear from anyone who had been with her sister on her final morning.

"It was such a strange thing," says Veach, who found comfort from the unexpected connection.

Errair, the national president for the WWII Flight Nurse Association, invited Veach to the group's annual meeting in September in Chicago. Wiehrdt also was invited. There, the three cried together in honor of Howren and her death, which shaped their lives.

Veach knew only that her big sister had died in a plane crash.

"Nobody came to tell us — it was just a telegram that came one night," says Veach. "We just tried to accept the fact that she was gone, but my mother was never the same."

Veach said talking with the two flight nurses has helped her understand and accept her sister's death after all these years.

"It has meant a great deal," says Veach. "We always wondered, why her?"

"I'm sorry my mother and father aren't here."

It was a moment of closure for all involved.

"I sleep better now," says Errair. "I think we all do."

Ramsey Campbell can be reached at [rcampbell@orlandosentinel.com](mailto:rcampbell@orlandosentinel.com) or 352-742-5923.

## 17TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY ORLANDO SENTINEL

# ART CONTEST

Mail entry form to: Holiday Art Contest, MP-240 Orlando Sentinel, 633 N. Orange Ave., Orlando, FL 32801

Entries must be received by 5 p.m. Monday, December 13.

Artist's full name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Artist's age: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Artist's grade: \_\_\_\_\_  
 School name and county: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's daytime and evening phone numbers (for notification of winners): \_\_\_\_\_

### Official rules:

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING ENTRIES:** 5 p.m. EST on Monday, Dec. 13, 2004. Eligibility is limited. See restrictions below. The sponsor of this contest is Orlando Sentinel Communications Company ("Sentinel").

**TO ENTER:** Eligible students may enter by submitting one original piece of holiday artwork along with a properly completed and affixed entry form before the entry deadline to: Holiday Art Contest - MP 240, Orlando Sentinel, 633 N. Orange Ave., Orlando, FL 32801. Entries may be mailed or may be hand-delivered to the Sentinel's main lobby. Sponsor is not responsible for lost, late, incomplete, damaged, illegible, misdirected or incomplete entries. Entry forms will be published periodically in the Orlando Sentinel and are available in the Orlando Sentinel lobby at 633 N. Orange Ave., Orlando, FL 32801 and at [orlandosentinel.com/holidayart](http://orlandosentinel.com/holidayart) as of Nov. 17. They may be photocopied.

All artwork submitted must meet the following requirements or will not be judged:

1. Art must be on white or similar light-colored paper that is no larger than 9 x 12 inches.
2. Art must be in crayon, paint, pencil, ink, felt-tip pen or charcoal.
3. Submissions may be matted but mats may not be larger than 12 x 16 inches.
4. Properly completed entry forms must be affixed by glue or tape to the back of the artwork.
5. The names of the school or student may not appear on the front. Sponsor will not accept for judging any photographs, computer-generated art, three-dimensional objects such as mobiles or sculptures, artwork with cotton, glitter or other materials affixed, or any other artwork that does not meet the requirements set forth above. Winning artwork will be returned to the artists' parents after Jan. 1, 2005, in accordance with the information on the entry form. Other individual entries will be returned if they are accompanied by an adequately stamped, self-addressed envelope. Teachers may mail their entries in bulk and efforts will be made to return those same bulk entries. The Sentinel is not responsible for damage to artwork that may occur

during the judging process or in the process of returning the artwork. Except as otherwise provided in these rules, entries become property of Sponsor and will not be returned. By entering, contestants warrant that the artwork submitted is original and does not infringe the rights of any other person; contestants also consent to publication of the submitted artwork if it is selected as a winning entry.

**JUDGING:** All entries will be judged by a panel of elementary school art teachers who will apply the following criteria: (1) interpretation of the holiday theme; and (2) artistic skill exhibited. One grand prize winner will be chosen in each of the following three categories: (1) Kindergarten and Grade 1; (2) Grades 2 and 3; (3) Grades 4 and 5. Judging will take place on Dec. 13, 2004, after 5 p.m., or at a reasonable time thereafter. The decisions of the judges are final.

**WINNING ENTRIES:** The five top winning entries in each category will be published in the Orlando Sentinel on Christmas Day. Winners will be notified by phone on or about Dec. 14, 2004. A parent or legal guardian of each winner must complete and return an affidavit of eligibility and release no later than Dec. 17, 2004. Failure to timely complete and return that affidavit will result in disqualification and nonpublication of the artwork.

**ELIGIBILITY:** This contest is open to children in kindergarten through Grade 5 who attend public, private, parochial or home schools in Orange, Seminole, Osceola, Lake, Volusia, Polk and Brevard counties. Children who attend other grades than those listed or who attend a school outside one of the listed counties are not eligible. The children of Orlando Sentinel Communications employees are not eligible. Winners agree to allow the use of their name, voice, photograph, likeness and any information provided on the entry form, in any medium of communication, including print, Internet, radio and/or television and for any purpose, including advertising, promotional or other purposes by Sponsor and each of its affiliates, without further compensation.

**MISCELLANEOUS:** Entrants agree to be bound by these rules. Sponsor is entitled to interpret these rules as needed and its decisions are final. Names of winners will be published along with their winning artwork.





**Greg DAWSON**  
THE LAST RESORT

ave a seat  
hile you wait  
r store check

**Greg:** For my husband's 94th birthday, I bought him a recliner at Myers Furniture in Leesburg. During delivery, it was dropped on our driveway and came apart in two pieces, as I was informed by a neighbor who witnessed the drop. That evening, I noticed a gap on one side of the recliner that appeared to be wider than the gap on the other side. I also noticed a tear in the fabric. I immediately called Myers Furniture. The company said the recliner had been dropped and offered to fix it. I asked that the recliner be replaced with a new one, since I was paying for a new one and not a repaired one with possible internal damage. Myers Furniture refused. I sent two emails requesting a new recliner or a refund. No one replied.

— BLANCHE DEYOUNG  
CLERMONT

**Blanche:** It's no consolation to my hubby, but it sounds as if someone else has been reclining (if not reclining) on the job. There is dispute over the alleged "drop," but store manager Brian Silbernagel acted quickly to address your complaint, sending a technician to reinspect the recliner. He discovered a manufacturer's defect, which will be fixed. Brian also is sending you a check for \$75, which you can spend as you are so inclined, or return it.

**Greg:** My grandfather is 86 years old. Last year his wife died, and I had to handle his finances. In June I sold his house, and I contacted the Orlando Utilities Commission to disconnect his service. I was told he would not receive a final bill because any deposit on the account would cover outstanding charges. On Nov. 26, we received a letter from a credit agency stating that my grandfather had not paid his last utility bill. I cannot get answers from the agency. I am not trying to get out of paying the bill. I only want to know if there is a deposit and if it was applied. I want OUC to inform the credit-rating agencies that it reported my grandfather in error. This is the first negative mark on his credit, and it is very important to him to have it cleared up.

— APRIL HAUKOOS  
OAKLAND

**April:** Oops! You were misinformed. It turns out there was no deposit on the account, and your grandfather did owe a final amount. OUC will credit the credit agency and clear his records soon as the bill is paid, said spokesman Grant Heston.

**Greg:** One of the results of Hurricane Charley was a crack in one of the toilet tanks, which had to be replaced. The new unit did not fit over the old one, leaving white grout, which



During World War II, Dorothy Errair (above) served her country aboard C-47s in the essential — and sometimes deadly — task of being a flight nurse.

## Chance encounter

Three women were left in grief by a coin toss and a wartime tragedy more than half a century ago. But a sense of closure finally came after an unpredictable event and a reuniting.



During the war, Betty Howren served alongside Dorothy Errair.

By RAMSEY CAMPBELL  
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

### TAVARES

For 60 years, the fate of an Army flight nurse who died when her hospital plane smashed into a Sicilian mountain has haunted three women.

It was Feb. 24, 1944, when Betty Howren, a 26-year-old flight nurse from Indiana, boarded a C-47 filled with soldiers wounded in Sicily and bound for hospital facilities in North Africa.

Two flight nurses — one now living in Central Florida, the other in Arizona — who were to fly in that doomed plane in Howren's place have been racked with guilt for decades.

Howren's death also had a profound

effect on her younger sister, who has a sad memory of the terse telegram in the middle of the night from the Army. The family never knew the circumstances surrounding the fatal air crash.

A chance conversation led to the three women finally getting together this fall in Chicago in a moment of healing.

"I feel a sense of closure now," says Dorothy Errair, 84, a Tavares retiree who had a 40-year hospital nursing career.

"I'm glad. I feel better too," says Jean Ann Veach, 73, of Terre Haute, Ind., who went into nursing, following her older sibling's footsteps. "I idolized her. I



Today, Dorothy Errair can still wear her original uniform (left) that she wore as a flight nurse more than half a century ago (right).

PLEASE SEE CHANCE, E3