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Liberty Sakryd receives her medallion Wednesday. (Andrew Knapp, FLORIDA TODAY)



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Terry Sakryd, Liberty Sakryd's son, looks at an album from his mother's service time (Andrew Knapp, FLORIDA TODAY)

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The advertisement features a smartphone displaying the app's interface with flight information for a USA TODAY Meeting on Sept 23, 2009. The screen shows flight details for A6 (BNA to IAD Limited) and 73 (Washington (IAD) Party Clubby), along with links to view a Flickr gallery and Hilton Hotels plucks.

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FLORIDATODAY.com

WWII nurses receive medals

3 honored for risking their lives

BY ANDREW KNAPP • FLORIDA TODAY • May 13, 2010

PATRICK AIR FORCE BASE — For 65 years, Liberty Lee Sakryd of Merritt Island has checked the newspaper, looking for recognition of what she and 800 other air-evacuation nurses did during World War II.

But for 65 years, she saw nothing. Until today.

Sakryd, 92, and two other retired Army nurses from Vero Beach -- Pat Courtney and Barbara Carson -- received the World War II Legacy Medallion from the Non-Commissioned Officers Association during a ceremony Wednesday. The award recognizes enlisted personnel and nurses who risked their lives during World War II.

"She says she really didn't want to be honored, but I know she did," said Sakryd's son, Terry Sakryd, 60, of Mobile, Ala. "It's been a long time coming."

Sakryd served for nearly four years, retiring as a first lieutenant in the Army Nurse Corps. Stationed in Hawaii from 1943 to 1945, she worked on a C-54 airplane, tending to injured soldiers who were picked up in the South Pacific and transported to San Francisco.

"These people were the pilot program to the TV show 'M*A*S*H,'" said Joanne Page, 53, of Merritt Island, Sakryd's daughter. "They're owed a lot."

Sakryd recalled her triumphs and flirts with death.

Once, her plane had just left Guadalcanal when a bombing campaign wiped out the mess hall she ate in.

Another time, she administered to a patient a newfangled "wonder drug" called penicillin. It saved his life.

On another mission, her plane lost three of its four engines over the Pacific.

"The pilot came on the microphone and said,

'Prepare for ditching,'" said Sakryd, a Brevardian since 1957. "We must have flown three hours on one engine, but we didn't hit the ocean. We just made it."

Flight nurses like Sakryd evacuated 1,176,048 patients during the war. Only 46 soldiers died in flight. But 17 nurses lost their lives.

"They are at a stage in their lives that this award is so wonderful," said Mary Lofstrom, who was a nurse in Japan during the war in Vietnam and in Thailand when Saigon fell. "They'll carry this memory with them for their remaining years."

Contact Knapp at 242-3669 or aknapp@floridatoday.com.

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Sixty five years after they served their country, three local WWII Nurses were honored with the World War II Legacy Medallion from the Non-Commissioned Officers Association in a ceremony held Wednesday afternoon at the Tides.

From left to right, wearing the medals, are Liberty Sakryd, of Merritt Island, along with Pat Courtney and Barbara Carson, both from Vero Beach. Standing behind the ladies are Col. Corinne Naughton, commander, 45th Medical Group and Senior MSgt. Virginia Gilliard, 45th Med Group Superintendent.

Photo by Jennifer Macklin



Nurses teach us heroic price of freedom

By Col. Ed Wilson

Commander, 45th Space Wing

One of the best parts of being your commander is when I get the chance to meet so many great people.

Such was the case Wednesday afternoon at the Tides when I had the opportunity – and very distinct pleasure – of watching Col. Naughton present three former World War II Nurses the Non-Commissioned Officers Association Patriot Medallion of Honor and Remembrance.

What a great honor to meet these wonderful ladies, especially while we all celebrate National Nurses Week, which was created in memory of Florence Nightingale, whose birthday was also celebrated Wednesday.

Just think of the sacrifices



Think of the lives they touched.

Close your eyes and just imagine what it must have been like.

Now think of what our Air Force nurses are doing today, not just here at the 45th Space Wing, but in far-away places like Iraq, Afghanistan, Haiti, and in every corner of the world.

Close your eyes and just imagine what it must be like. Think of the lives they are touching as you read this right now.

Today, we have more than 8,000

We need each and every one of them. Words can never do justice to the service they provide, and have provided for so many needy people.

I was especially touched by something I read about these medals at the ceremony. It goes like this:

"The heroic values you displayed under extraordinary circumstances – Valor, Sacrifice, Fidelity – must be known and burn in the hearts of every succeeding generation. Your courage and that of your comrade-in-arms has taught us the heroic price of freedom."

And while that statement was written for those heroes of World War II and all other conflicts, those very same words can be said of our nurse heroes today.

"Their courage and that of their comrade-in-arms has taught us the heroic price of freedom."

World War II flight nurses to be honored

BY JOE CRANKSHAW

joe.crankshaw@scripps.com

VERO BEACH — Three former Air Force flight nurses will be honored for their service in ceremonies in the Tides, the Patrick Air Force Base Non-Commissioned Officers Club in Brevard County on Wednesday.

The Non-Commissioned Officers Association will present its "Legacy Medallion" to retired Lt. Col. Barbara Carson and former Lt. Pat Courtney, both of Vero Beach, and former Lt. Liberty Sakryp of Merritt Island, according to Mary Lofstrom of the Society of Air Force Nurses.

The NCOA created the medal in conjunction with the dedication of the World War II Memorial in Washington, said Richard Schnieder of the NCOA headquarters. It originally was intended

"Many of them flew long hours ferrying wounded, in unarmed aircraft often in enemy air space."

**Mary Lofstrom
of the Society of
Air Force Nurses**

for enlisted personnel, but the association included the nurses to thank them for their devotion and service.

"Many of them flew long hours ferrying wounded, in unarmed aircraft often in

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enemy air space," Lofstrom said.

Carson, a veteran of more than 22 years of service, flew with patients during World War II and Korea. She received her nurse training at Roosevelt Hospital in New York City and was assigned to Scott Field, Ill., where she took flight training in Kentucky.

Assigned to an air evacuation squadron in the Philippines, she said she flew patients between the Philippine Islands and New

Guinea. After Japan surrendered, she helped carry American prisoners of war from Japan to Manila.

"They were not in real good shape," she recalled.

Retiring from the Air Force, Carson earned a master's degree in library science, worked briefly in the Fort Pierce library while living in Vero Beach, then went to Connecticut, where she and her sister took care of her mother.

"I am amazed to get an award like this after so long," she said Thursday.

"It is a bit of a shock to receive an award after 65 years," Courtney said, "a

real surprise."

Courtney took her nurse training at Robert Packer Hospital in Sayre, Pa., and became a nurse in the Army Air Corps in 1943. Trained at Randolph Field as a flight nurse, she was assigned to the Air Evacuation Service ferrying wounded soldiers between hospitals in the United States.

Courtney married her husband, William, an Air Force pilot, and left the service. She moved to Vero Beach while he was assigned to duty in Vietnam, and he joined her when he retired.

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LEGACY MEDALLION

PRESENTATION

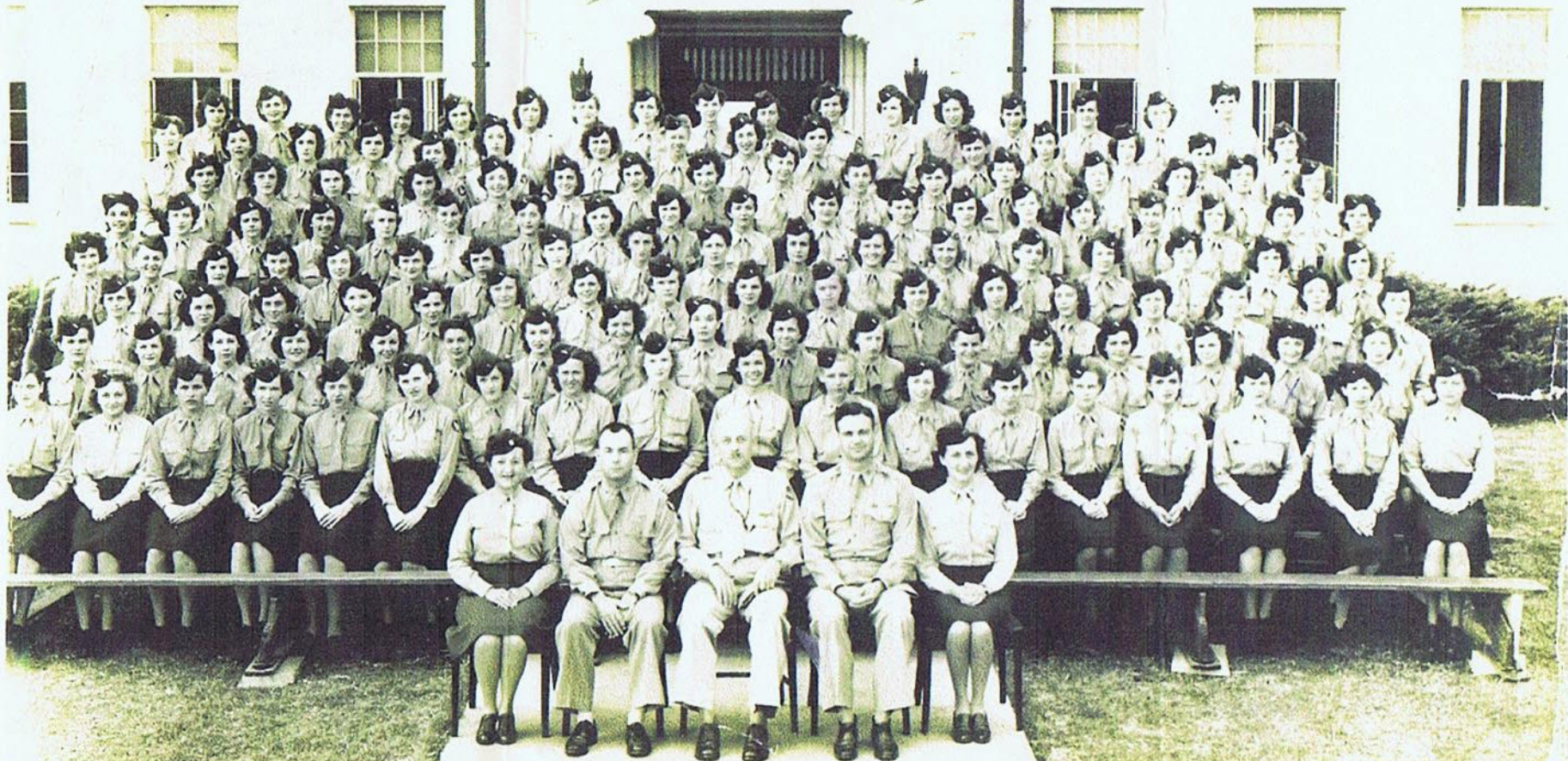
12 MAY 2010

THE TIDES

PATRICK AFB, FL



SCHOOL OF
AVIATION MEDICINE



21 JUN 45 A A 7BU SAN VALENTIN HIGH SCHOOL 943H RANDOLPH FIELD



HISTORY REVISITED: World War II flight nurses from left, Liberty Sakryd, Ethel Cerasale and Memrie Wilkes look over a World War II uniform jacket with an Air Borne Troop Carrier patch. All are members of the World War II Flight Nurses Association Inc., a group that will be holding a convention at the Melbourne Airport Hilton at Rialto Place this week.

JAY MORSE, The Times

Flight nurses share tales from WW II

By WEONA CLEVELAND
Times Writer

There were approximately 1,331 of them who served in World War II — little known, hardly recognized, with barely any glory or fame.

For the most part, they wore skirts because pants for women were still a novelty. Their flight pay was anywhere from \$50 to \$75 a month. None held officer rank.

"We had a 'relative rank,'" says Memrie Wilkes of Melbourne. "We were referred to as second lieutenants."

During the next four days (May 17-20), about 200 veterans who belong to the World War II Flight Nurses Association Inc. will meet in an annual convention at the Melbourne Airport Hilton. The organization has 333 paid up members. Ethel Cerasale of Satellite Beach is the national president.

Cerasale was Ethel Carlson in those earlier days: a registered nurse in Chicago when the United States entered World War II. She enlisted through the American Red Cross to go into the Air Ambulance Corps. She was sent to Bowman Field in Kentucky to the School of Air Evacuation.

"We marched, went on bivouac, read maps, took an infiltration course and learned how to take care of patients in the air," she says.

After six weeks, the graduates were sent to Scotland on the ocean liner Ile de France. "I was in a stateroom that had once been occupied by Marlene Dietrich," recalls Cerasale. "Only there were 24 of us packed into that stateroom. We

"I was in a stateroom that had once been occupied by Marlene Dietrich. Only there were 24 of us packed into that stateroom. We bathed in salt water, ate fish for breakfast and I was sick as a dog."

— Ethel Cerasale,
aboard troop ship

bathed in salt water, ate fish for breakfast and I was sick as a dog."

From Scotland the nurses were sent by troop train to England. Fully expecting to live in tents, they were amazed when their bus from the railroad station pulled into the driveway of Boxford House, a beautiful mansion four miles from Welford Air Base.

While their base accommodations may have been relatively plush, Cerasale and her fellow nurses found that their on-duty hours were rugged. After taking care of the wounded who were brought to a B-17 bomber base in England, they were later assigned to fly aboard C-47 cargo planes from England to France. Eastbound the planes carried hand grenades and cans of gasoline for General George Patton's tanks. On the westbound trip they brought out 24 litter patients.

"On my first trip we brought back wounded German prisoners," remembers Cerasale. "I was almost angry. But I later learned they were high-ranking Germans who were being brought to England for interrogation."

Each trip lasted one to two hours, with the aircraft flying "at almost tree-top level to avoid detection," says Cerasale. She made 12 missions, remained in the service for five years, and earned the American Theater ribbon, European Theater Operations ribbon with three battle stars, and the Victory Medal. Cerasale later served in Panama.

Liberty Lee Sakryd — named for the Liberty bonds of World War I — also was from Chicago. She was a registered nurse doing private duty when she signed up for service in December 1941. Letterman General Hospital in San Francisco was her first assignment in March 1942. She didn't make it to Bowman Field in Kentucky until June of 1943. She was there for six months, getting the usual training plus an extensive course in tropical diseases.

By December 1943, she was at Hickam Field, Hawaii, with the 812th Evacuation Squadron.

Flying in unmarked C-54 cargo planes, Sakryd saw service all over the South Pacific, including Saipan, the Philippines, Okinawa, Guadalcanal, Kwajalein, New Guinea and

Tarawa.

She often went into newly secured airfields and once had a close call on the ground at Okinawa. "We got word Japanese planes were coming in to bomb the place. We finished loading (the plane) and got out of there in a hurry."

During her two years in the South Pacific, Sakryd, with other nurses, served at a base on Guadalcanal at Gen. Douglas MacArthur's request, helped transport 3,000 wounded from Kwajalein in a gradual evacuation, and once learned that a rumor had floated about that she had been killed in New Guinea. "Fortunately, I had just got out of that New Guinea base before an air raid," she says.

Her most exciting mission was out of Tarawa on a C-54, the Melbourne resident says.

"Four hours out the two left engines quit, and the two right engines began sputtering. Our pilot told us to prepare for ditching," recalls Sakryd, who never learned to swim. "But we got back to Tarawa safely, where we later learned the fuel had been sabotaged."

Wilkes had been a registered nurse in Vicksburg, Miss., when the United States entered World War II. She enlisted in Texarkana, Texas, where she had been working in a defense plant hospital. It was with great difficulty that she received a release from the defense plant to enter the service.

Sent first to Lackland AFB in San Antonio, Texas, Wilkes was then sent to Bowman Field for Air Evacuation School. "I was in the last class to graduate from Bowman," she remembers. "I

recall that once we had to pass in review before Eleanor Roosevelt."

Wilkes remembers that during training at Bowman a mock bombardment was enacted. "They bombarded with flour and if we were hit by the flour we got a demerit and a ride back in the ambulance."

After Bowman, Wilkes was assigned to Memphis, Tenn., where she helped evacuate patients who had been brought from overseas. "We took them to other hospitals around the country."

She saw service in Hawaii, Manila, Guam and San Francisco and flew C-54s around the Pacific on long, tiring flights. Her most memorable experience was "taking the boys who had been on the Bataan Death March out of Manila to Hawaii."

Wilkes says that most C-54s carried just one nurse and two technicians. Among their duties: irrigating colostomies, giving plasma, changing dressings on wounds.

Wilkes got out of the Army when World War II ended, but returned to the services in 1950, joining the U.S. Air Force. She retired in 1968. During peacetime she saw service in Europe.

This weekend, Cerasale, Sakryd and Wilkes will have a chance to reminisce with other air evacuation nurses and to participate in a luncheon meeting with Air Force Gen. Wilma Vaught.

Vaught will discuss the memorial monument that is planned for the entrance to Arlington National Cemetery. The monument will honor all women who served in the military in World War II.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Elected in Louisville



Standing: Jean Foley Tierney, Ct.; Irene Burch, Fl.; Liberty Sakryd, Fl., Membership Chair; Gerry Dishroon Brier, Wy., Treasurer; Ethel Cerasale, Fl., Past Pres., Agnes Flaherty, Me., Secretary; VerNell Bjerke, N.Y.;
Seated: Frances Crabtree, Wa., 1st V.P.; Jane Haynes, Fl., Pres.

The Board met at the home of the President on Sept. 23, 1992.

Decisions made were:

- . Dorothy Errair was authorized to sign checks as a 2nd signature.
- .. Life membership was reaffirmed and clarified. It is available to all members 65 yrs. of age and over for \$50.00.
- ... Voted to send the next Newsletter to all persons listed in the roster. Membership envelopes, which will include renewal and dues requirements, will also be sent.

Reimbursement of Board Members: It was voted to reimburse 50% of the cost of travel and hotel (2 days) to those Board members who wished to be reimbursed for the next Board meeting only.

The Board will meet in San Diego the first week in March 1993.



**Diversity in Age,
Unity in Purpose**



MINI REUNION - 812th

Much reminiscing, laughter and some tears were shared when five of the 812thers got together at the home of Mary Manis in Hemet, CA.



What a great looking group ! Edna Brackett Moon, San Marcos, TX
Mabel Irwin Stohlmeyer, Phoenix, AZ Mary Neal Manis, Hostess
Liberty Lee Sakryd, Melbourne, FL and Elizabeth N. Pukas, Chief Nurse,
Walnut Creek, CA



**The Battle of
Normandy
Foundation**

In a ceremony in New York City, VerNell Bjerke began the registration for women of the ETO by symbolically placing the name of her friend and ETO Flight Nurse, Virginia Garnett*, on the Wall of Liberty.

The Wall of Liberty is the first monument in the world to honor everyone who served in the European Theater of Operations (ETO) during World War II. It is a testament to mankind's shared responsibility for freedom.

The Wall will be built in Caen, the capitol of Normandy, adjacent to Le Memorial, the world's largest World War II museum. The Battle of Normandy Foundation is leading the Wall of Liberty campaign to record the names of the five million American ETO veterans from all branches of the armed services and from all ranks, private to general.

To register and honor a relative or a friend who shared the sacrifice and triumph of World War II military service in the ETO, call 1-800-WW2-Vets or write to The Battle of Normandy Foundation, 1730 Rhode Island Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20036. A fee of \$40.00 is charged for each veteran registered, however, the fee will be waived for those veterans or their families who cannot afford to pay. Groundbreaking is set for June 6, 1994.

* Virginia Garnett was a member of the WWII Flight Nurses Assn. She died on September 28, 1990.

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CAN YOU BELIEVE IT ?

When Liberty Lee Sakryd, FNA Membership Chair, applied to the Army Nurse Corps in 1942, she specifically asked to be assigned to an Army Hospital in California.

Her orders arrived directing her to report to Sheppard Field in Texas. Liberty wrote back saying she did not wish to go to Texas and again requested California.

A couple of weeks later, orders arrived directing Liberty to report to Chanute Field in Illinois. Liberty immediately responded that she wished to be assigned in California.

Lo and Behold, orders arrived for assignment to Letterman General Hospital in San Francisco, California.

Perseverance is a wonderful virtue, sometimes achieving the goal!