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NOTABLE DEATH

LILLIAN KEIL, a decorated flight nurse who helped evacuate thousands of wounded U.S. troops from the battlefields of World War II and the Korean War, died Thursday of cancer. She was 88. Keil flew on more than 425 missions during the wars, rescuing men who fought in the Battle of the Bulge, on the beaches of Normandy and in the Inchon invasion. A 1954 movie, "Flight Nurse," starring Joan Leslie and Forrest Tucker, was based on Keil's war experiences.

Ready to Carry Invasion Wounded

Evacuation Group Organized, Waits Start of Big Job

By Andrew A. Rooney

Stars and Stripes Staff Writer

The first complete air-evacuation group ever organized for the sole purpose of carrying wounded men is ready and waiting in England to transport thousands of Allied casualties a day from the invasion battlefields of the Continent to secure hospitals in the British Isles.

On the day of invasion there will be a large number of evacuation squadrons with the Ninth Air Force Troop Carrier Command. USSTAF officials revealed yesterday. Each squadron is composed of 13 transport planes, each capable of carrying 18 litter patients. There is one surgeon to a flight of six planes and a



Above, aboard one of the Ninth Air Force C47s which have been equipped as compact field hospitals, a flight nurse, 2/Lt. Lillian Kinkela, former air line hostess from San Francisco, talks with two patients. Behind her are the litter patients. At left, surgical technicians load patients aboard a C47 at a Northern Ireland base for a practice evacuation to hospitals in England.



nurse and enlisted surgical technician aboard every plane.

German squadrons were used to evacuate wounded as far back as the time of their participation in the Spanish Revolution, and British and American planes have been used extensively in the Mediterranean to evacuate an estimated 60,000 casualties from battle stations, but the USSTAF group in England is the first unit of that size to be organized solely for that purpose.

Speed Saves Lives

In carrying wounded men from field hospitals to well equipped station hospitals in the British Isles, the air-evacuation group will achieve three important results:

1—It will reduce the death rate among casualties by insuring quicker and more complete surgical treatment.

2—It will relieve rail and ship transportation, which will be heavily taxed in the early invasion days, from the burden of carrying wounded.

3—It will eliminate the necessity of supplying any but fighting troops in the combat area.

The planes used for the evacuation of wounded will be the same C47s which drop the first airborne units onto the Continent. Medical personnel will go with the ships on their trip to the battle-front loaded with either men or supplies, and, together with doctors at field hospitals, will decide on which cases that may be moved by air. Men suffering from serious burns and intestinal wounds generally are the only casualties which can't be evacuated by air.

The ordinary casualty will receive basic treatment at emergency hospitals close to the battlefield and will be moved by air to the safer, better equipped hospitals where major surgical operations may be performed.

The hospital planes are equipped so that nurses and technicians can give plasma

Ninth Has a Separate Troop Carrier Outfit

With the disclosure yesterday of details of the flying hospital wards which will evacuate wounded from second front battle areas, it was revealed that the Ninth Air Force has a separate Troop Carrier Command operating in the British Isles.

Besides evacuating wounded, Troop Carrier aircraft will drop paratroopers behind enemy lines, tow gliders with airborne troops, land airborne troop units and their heavy equipment to facilitate repair of battle-damaged airfields, and continually reinforce isolated units with weapons and material.

blood transfusions and render other minor hospital treatment. At some front-line stations, wounds will be covered with plaster of paris casts to facilitate moving the wounded.

Practice Shuttle

At present 200-300 sick soldiers are being taken every week from hospitals in Ireland to hospitals in England which have been set up to handle invasion casualties and are at present almost empty. For the air-evacuation group the three planes they send to Ireland every day is routine training for the job ahead.

Unlike hospital ships, which according to the terms of the Geneva Convention are protected from attack, the flying wards of the evacuation group are not guarded by international law. Hospital ships are clearly marked with white paint and red crosses, but planes can't be marked similarly because they are not used exclusively for the transport of wounded.

Hospital ships are not allowed to come into a port with a load of fighting men or any supplies and are consequently a one-way waste. Hospital planes, on the other hand, carry supplies and men to the front.

The aerial-hospital squadrons were organized back in the States in 1942 and have seen service in the Pacific and Mediterranean campaigns. Two squadrons,

working in Sicily after the landing, evacuated about 28,000 U.S. casualties. British units doing the same work took 50,000 Allied wounded off the Italian island.

In charge of organization of the Ninth Troop Carrier Command's hospital unit is Col. Ehrling L. Bergquist.

"In Africa," Col. Bergquist said, "men were in hospitals on the African continent a few hours after being wounded in Italy. Many who lived would never have had a chance if they'd had to take the long boat trip."

Field Treatment Reduced

"Air evacuation has proved much more effective than having big field hospitals. This way you don't have to have a lot of medical equipment and personnel hauled up to the front. It's proved much easier to bring the patient by air to a big hospital, in safe territory, than to try and give him thorough treatment in the field."

Col. Bergquist feels that even were it not for the added safety and the space and time saved by air evacuation it would be worth while. "The idea of having a woman available to give a wounded man sympathetic care almost instantly after he is hurt makes it worth while," he said.

The nurses working with the Ninth air-evacuation group have been chosen by someone with an eye toward something in addition to nursing ability. The nurses are, for the most part, a soldier's dream of what his nurse will be like. All are competent registered nurses with hospital or airline-hostess backgrounds.

The nurses and enlisted technicians work as a team in one of the Army's most unique enlisted-commissioned relationships. The enlisted men, staff sergeants most of them, have been trained to help and in some cases substitute for the nurses. They have worked and trained together for from four months to a year.

A typical team is the Jones-Marshall combination. The nurse is 2/Lt. Naomi J. Jones, of Hamilton, Tenn., and the surgical technician is 2/Sgt. George Marshall, of Pittsburgh. Lt. Jones is a very pretty little girl with a cute, turned-up nose, all of which belies her six years' nursing experience. For a year after she completed her three-year course she practiced nursing in Texas and then, two years ago, joined the Army Nurse Corps. She is neither married nor engaged.

Marshall is a big, rough-looking boy who looks as though he might have been on the Pittsburgh police force. He was. Before he joined the Army he spent eight years as a Pittsburgh cop and, later, detective. He has been married for seven years.

"Jonesy is the best there is," Marshall says of his diminutive working companion.

"Jonesy," on the other hand, claims that "my sergeant" is the finest surgical technician in the group.

People remember World War II nurses

by 2nd Lt. Amber Millerchip
Air Education and Training Command Public Affairs

6/8/2004 - **RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFPN)** -- Many Americans commemorated the 60th anniversary of D-Day on June 6, watching and remembering those World War II veterans who stormed the beaches of Normandy. Often forgotten are the flight nurses who served behind the scenes ensuring the men who fought that day lived to talk about it.

Flight nurses evacuated the wounded from battlefield hospitals to make room for the steady stream of incoming patients, said retired Air Force **Capt. Lillian Kinkela Keil**, a World War II flight nurse who participated in the Normandy and Battle of the Bulge evacuations. To survive, the critically wounded needed rapid evacuation to the nearest major military hospital.

"We did everything we could to keep the wounded alive, comfortable and see them out of danger," Captain Keil said.

She is thought to be the most decorated woman veteran in American history, said Dr. Bruce Ashcroft, Air Education and Training Command historian.

Five hundred Army nurses served as members of 31 medical air evacuation transport squadrons activated during the war. More than 1 million patients were evacuated, and only four were lost en route, Dr. Ashcroft said.

The record for any single day during World War II was 4,707 patients evacuated.

Before World War II, no care was provided to wounded Soldiers during evacuation flights, Captain Keil said. Although the role of the flight surgeon was developed in World War I, it was not until November 1942, when the School of Air Evacuation opened at Bowman Field, Ky., that the flight surgeon's counterpart -- the flight nurse --



WORLD WAR II -- Although the role of the flight surgeon was developed in World War I, it was not until November 1942, when the School of Air Evacuation opened at Bowman Field, Ky., that the flight surgeon's counterpart -- the flight nurse -- became a member of the medical flight team. Before World War II, no care was provided to wounded Soldiers during evacuation flights. (Courtesy photo)

- became a member of the medical flight team. Captain Keil was among the school's first graduating class of flight nurses.

Because of the rigors of the job, flight nurse training demanded physically fit nurses. To pass the course, the nurses were required to successfully navigate an obstacle course, sliding on their stomachs beneath a live wire and swimming under ignited gasoline.

This was important training in the event the nurses crashed somewhere, Captain Keil said, "so that no matter where we landed, we could take care of ourselves."

During World War II, although women performed many roles in the U.S. military, only nurses were allowed in combat zones, said Jeff Duford, Air Force Museum research historian.

Upon graduation, 2nd Lt. Keil and other 810th Medical Air Evacuation Squadron members sailed with the largest convoy of troops across the Atlantic Ocean at that time. There were 88 ships. Throughout the journey the ships had to continuously cut their engines because of submarine activity.

"Even before D-Day, we were picking up wounded from all over: England, Scotland, Iceland and the Azores," Captain Keil said. "We took them wherever they needed to go. We also had to deal with the German Junker 88s that flew overhead on their way to buzz bomb London."

Another flight nurse, retired Air Force Capt. Clara Murphy from the 802nd Medical Air Evacuation Squadron, was sent to North Africa before the Normandy invasion.

"We were always halfway between the front and back lines," Captain Murphy said. "Going forward had top priority. We would fly forward in the morning with supplies and then fly back with patients to Oran (Algeria)."

Right after D-Day began, fully loaded glider planes flew to the front lines with supplies, Captain Keil said. The flight nurses soon followed on Douglas C-47s, landing in the fields of France, as close to Omaha beach as possible.

Because the C-47s were also filled with military supplies, the aircraft did not carry Red Cross markings, which meant no protection from enemy fire.

"We brought over gasoline, oil, guns, medical equipment, blankets and anything it took to keep the fighting man going," Captain Keil said. "All (the supplies were) for

(General George S.) Patton. If we didn't land because of weather, Patton and his troops didn't go anywhere."

General Patton knew where the gas was coming from and how the nurses were taking the patients off the battlefields, Captain Keil said. As a thank you, Captain Keil said General Patton once sent them a case of champagne.

Each plane carried 24 litters and was similar to an emergency hospital ward, but only one nurse and one technician cared for the wounded. Oftentimes the patients arrived wearing a piece of paper, listing their name, rank, serial number and the field doctor's notes, Captain Keil said.

"We never left empty and nothing ever surprised me," Captain Keil said. "The boys were dirty. Full of mud from the foxholes and caked with dried blood. The mud was a real problem because any dirt around the wound was susceptible to infection."

Morphine was given to the patients to help them with the trip, Captain Keil said. Although many were still suffering a lot, they did not seem to care.

"Even when wounded badly, they would look up, see the nurse and feel extremely relieved because they knew they would get good care and were flying away from where they were wounded," Captain Keil said.

All passengers were amazed and just so happy to talk to an American woman, Captain Murphy said. The Soldiers would talk about their sisters, mothers, wives and girlfriends to the nurses. They also shared their fears about flying and worries about having to go back to the battlefield.

According to Captain Keil, every patient was unique and memorable.

"I had to make each patient feel [as though] he was the only one on the plane I was caring for, yet I was taking care of 23 others," Captain Keil said. "This made them feel very important, and they loved that."

Captain Keil recalled one flight that really touched her heart. They had reached their destination, circled a few times, but because of severe weather, could not land.

"It was a terrible sight," Captain Keil said. "I saw 12 litters in the snow. The boys were waiting and waving at us. Those who couldn't wave managed to at least get their hands out of their blankets in an effort to get our attention. We had to leave them. It was horribly sad."

Moving prisoners of war was also a challenge, Captain Keil said. On one flight, German POWs were on one side of the plane, and American Soldiers on the other.

They should never have been together, said Captain Keil, who had to calm down the Americans.

"I was very stern and talked roughly to (the Americans) explaining how the Germans were POWs, wounded like themselves and deserved the treatment they would want if they were captured by the Germans," she said.

Captain Keil flew 250 air evacuations throughout Europe and 25 trans-Atlantic crossings. She also flew 175 missions during the Korean War.

"I loved and enjoyed every flight," Captain Keil said. "It was fantastic because I was a nurse doing what I wanted to do: helping with the war effort and flying." (Courtesy of AETC News Service)

MEMORIAL

Pioneer flight nurse was 'a true patriot'

BY JOE VARGO
THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

The wounded and frostbitten soldiers she treated called Lillian Keil "the angel of mercy."

Capt. Keil was a pioneer flight nurse, a harrowing job that often required her to fly into airfields under fire to pick up scores of men and evacuate them to safety. She made more than 425 evacuations in World War II and Korea, becoming one of the most decorated and revered women in U.S. military history.

She was buried Friday with all military honors in Riverside National Cemetery. She died of cancer June 30 at the age of 88.

Navy chaplain Norm Good-

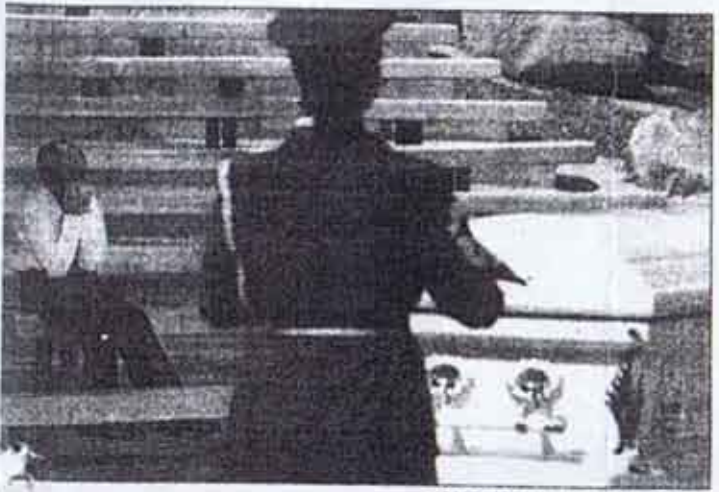


2000/THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Capt. Lillian Keil is one of the most highly decorated women in U.S. military history.

win, who presided over the service, called Capt. Keil an "outstanding individual" who earned "many honors in service of the country she loved."

See **NURSE/B6B**



MARK ZALESKI/THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

Max Brasher, 10, covers his face during the memorial service Friday for his great-grandmother Lillian Keil, 88, a flight nurse during World War II at Riverside National Cemetery.

NURSE

CONTINUED FROM B1

In a letter read on his behalf to the family, Gov. Schwarzenegger called Capt. Keil a "true patriot and trailblazer for women in the Armed Forces."

The Blue Eagles Honor Guard from March Air Reserve Base fired a 21-gun salute and served as pallbearers. Dual bagpipers played "Amazing Grace."

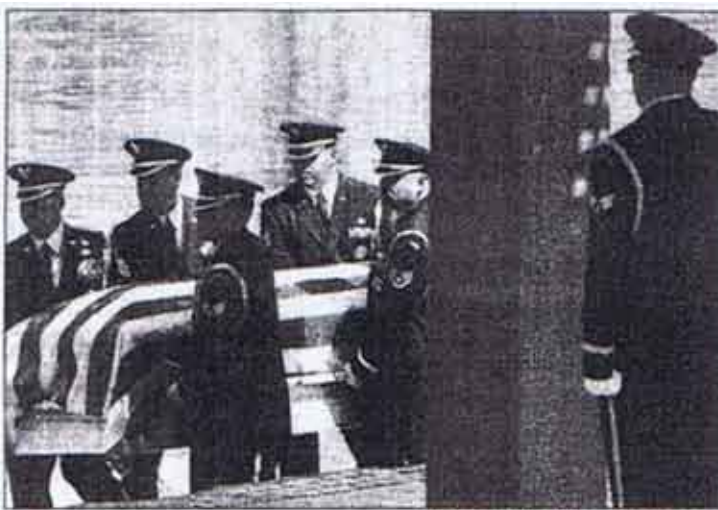
'HARROWING FLIGHT'

Capt. Keil, a longtime Covina resident, took to the air for the first time in 1938, becoming one of the first stewardesses for United Airlines. By that time, she had already earned her certification as a registered nurse but fell in love with aviation from the first moment she saw an airplane.

The U.S. entrance in World War II in 1941 gave Capt. Keil the opportunity to make use of her skills.

By 1943, she was stationed in England, where she pulled wounded airmen from battle-damaged B-17 Flying Fortresses when they returned home from bombing raids. She made the D-Day invasion in June 1944, helping evacuate wounded soldiers from the Normandy beaches and later saw action in the Battle of the Bulge. She often carried large baskets of oranges, which she gave to the wounded.

It was during the withdrawal from the Chosin Reservoir in



MARK ZALESKI/THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE

The March Air Reserve Base Blue Eagles Honor Guard served as pallbearers and later fired a 21-gun salute during Lillian Keil's memorial service Friday. 7/8/05

North Korea that Capt. Keil faced her ultimate challenge.

About 20,000 Americans were overrun by a force of 200,000 Chinese communist troops who threatened to annihilate them. The U.S. held the airstrip at Hagaru, and American pilots and nurses evacuated 4,690 wounded soldiers during a nine-day airlift, fighting temperatures that fell to 35 below zero.

Capt. Keil flew on the last plane out.

"It was a very harrowing flight," said Bob Licker, 74, a Korean War veteran and president of the Chosin Few, an organization of campaign veterans. "She was a marvelous lady who calmed everyone and told them they were going to be

all right. She was a sweetheart, warm like a mother, an angel of mercy."

MOST-DECORATED WOMAN

Capt. Keil always downplayed her service.

"It was a privilege to serve them," she said in a 2000 interview to mark the 50th anniversary of the start of the Korean War. "I'm a nurse. I liked flying. I liked being needed. It was my work, what I was put on this earth for."

Capt. Keil said all of the casualties shared characteristics.

"They were scared, they were wounded, they were scared they were going to die," she recalled five years ago. "They were so happy to be out of war, I

A HERO REMEMBERED

LILLIAN KEIL
AIR FORCE CAPTAIN/FLIGHT
NURSE

AGE: 88

EVACUATION FLIGHTS: 425,
including 23 Transatlantic
missions

MEDALS: 19, including a European
Theater medal with four battle
stars; Korean Service Medal with
seven battle stars; four Air
Medals and a Presidential Unit
Citation from the Republic of
Korea.

DIED: June 30 2005

BURIED: Friday in Riverside
National Cemetery

reminded them of their mothers and sisters and sweethearts."

Capt. Keil served as the inspiration for the 1953 movie, "Flight Nurse," starring Joan Leslie and Forrest Tucker. A 1961 appearance on the television show "This Is Your Life" generated thousands of letters from soldiers she cared for. She retired as a captain, earning 19 medals in 14 battle campaigns.

Many reports, including one compiled by the U.S. Air Force, listed Capt. Keil as the most-decorated woman in U.S. military history.

Reach Jon Vargo at (951) 967-2407 or jvargo@pe.com

LILLIAN KINKINA
801st.



... Among Us!

... 801st ...

... 801st ...

... 801st ...

... 801st ...

Captain Lillian Kinkela Keil, R.N. USAF, Ret.



- UAL Stewardess 1938 - 1943
- Flight Nurse WW II 1943 - 1945
- D-Day, Normandy Invasion - 1944
- Bastone, Battle of the Bulge- 1944
- UAL Assistant Chief Stew 1945 - 1950
- Flight Nurse Korean War 1950-1951 USAF- 1956
- The Inchon Invasion, The Chosin Reservoir 1950 & 51

Signed

dated

PHOTODUPLICATION SERVICE CENTER

AIRBORNE ANGEL OF MERCY: CAPT. LILLIAN KINKELA

BY Col. Barney Oldfield, USAF(Ret.)

"Are there no devoted women among us willing to go forth and minister to sick and suffering soldiers?" -- So wrote London TIMES William Howard Russell, who is honored on a wall inscription in St. Paul's Cathedral as "The First and Greatest of War Correspondents." His story, Sept. 21, 1854 after the Battle of Alma in the Crimean War produced such a woman who became a model for all the others who followed in her footsteps including the Persian Gulf War -- Florence Nightingale.

By Col. Barney Oldfield, USAF(Ret.)

COVINA, California.

She's a widow with grand children now. So completely did she disappear from view when she married as do so many who serve their country in uniform so well, when she was elected president of the Garden Club one year, her neighbors told each other over their backfences it "was so nice that something had finally happened to her" by way of recognition. Little did they know that the same quiet, caring lady was a pioneer, a life-saver extraordinary of statistical dimension, and who is, among those who know, called "America's most decorated woman." She, like the Florence Nightingale she so admired, was among the first to take care of the wounded into the atmosphere as an U. S. Army Air Corps (later USAF) Air Evacuation Nurse, With aircraft rigged for litters rather than seats, the addition of wings made the sobriquet "angel of mercy" an easy add-on.

To begin, with, Lillian Kinkela was a hospital ~~scrubwoman's~~ daughter. Her mother was too poorly paid to have a baby-sitter, so she took her big-eyed toddler with her to work. The playful, curious baby wandered in and out of the Richmond, California hospital rooms. She visited with and was crooned to by patients. She sensed so early that she picked up their spirits, and loved their warm response to her arrival and presence. The thing that dented her awareness and infant consciousness was the significance of the nurses. They helped those who could not help themselves. They reassured the recovering and comforted the dying, all in all a difficult task more compensated by the effect of their sensitivity than in the money they were paid. As soon as she began to talk, she played nurse with her dolls, and saying she wanted to be a nurse one day. Today, with 28 medals and 11 battle stars, 425 combat missions in World War II and Korea, and an incredible record of never having lost a wounded man under her care while enroute from the aid station where she picked him up and flew him to rear area hospitalization!

She was part of the heritage of the late Steve Stimpson. He brought a registered nurse named Ellen Church in 1930 to United Air Lines founder, W. A . Patterson, with the suggestion that girls like her with such credentials could be flight combination of aisle-walking charmers, soothers and barf bag handlers whose attentions would reduce fear of flying. It was at the beginning of America's third decade, and Lindbergh had flown the Atlantic three years before, the sky knew no limit -- and the stewardess who then had to be a graduate registered nurse became a historical fact. As "guinea pigs" go, Ellen Church was a cute one, and so did those who followed her tend to be -- including Lillian Kinkela.

When Hitler's parachute and glider troops took Bergium's thought-impregnable Fort Eben Emael on May 10, 1940 by landings on top of it rather than by frontal assault, President Roosevelt was on the phone to Gen. George C. Marshall to get on with U.S. vertical envelopement capability. This meant immediate interruption of production lines for air line and air freight carries, the product diverted through olive drab spray paint coloration and into entities called Air Transport Command and Troop Carrier Command. If it made sense, and it did, for planes to be delivery vehicles for fighting men and equipment --static-lined para-troopers and tow-lined gliders into harm's way, it also seemed logical that those carried in who were wounded could also be aerially brought out, cared for enroute with and by medical personnel who would hand them off as quickly as possible to rear area all purpose hospitalization. Where to get such people, those who were both competent and comfortable working aloft? -- where, indeed, but to dangle such adventurous opportunities before the growing number of air line stewardesses.. The planes, the pilots, the crews were all brought sought, and the girls were even more eager. The Air Evacuation Nurse who was a Lieutenant in a U.S. Uniform hung away her old stewardess gear and off they all went to -- Bowman Field, Kentucky, outside Louisville where glider pilots were also trained. There was an assemblage of qualified registered nurses from stewardess ranks at Bowman Field prior to Lt. Kinkela's class, but they were denied the full course and spirited off on a never disclosed mission which involved Albania. The first formally graduated class of Air Evac Nurses was the one in which Lt. Lillian Kinkela trained and there were 11 who got their bars in March of 1943 and for good reason

proper and due attention was given them as military milestones by Brig. Gen. Fred S. "Fritz" Borum, who honchoed Troop Carrier Command based at nearby Stout Field, at Indianapolis, Indiana, as well as the TCC Flight Surgeon, Col. Ehrling Bergquist. Missing from the proceedings was the Chief of Staff, crusty, converted from United Air Lines corporate shelf, Col. Reed Landis. The son of baseball czar, Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis, he had many of his no-nonsense traits and if he could come from air-line savvy, why not these experienced and competent women -- they all brought most of the required know-how with them.*

While there was undoubted glamor-added in this phase of personnel recruitment, what they were going into seemed to be a human "meat grinder" -- initially what was phase 4 of the allies' strategy for prosecution of the war against the Axis. In Cairo it had been agreed that there would be five steps - 1) take the Axis out of Africa, 2) get Italy out of the war, 3) bring Turkey into the war on the allied side, and 4) enter the continent of Europe and defeat Germany. After that 5) defeat Japan. The strategic bombing campaign against Hitler's (then) holdings was being pursued relentlessly, day and night, the costs in men and materiel and the nature of woundings calling for every medical skill and immediacy of treatment. Lt. Kinkela and her peers arrived in England as preliminaries to the Normandy invasion which would take place June 6, 1944 and was some months off.

There were fear and dread predictors as to the consequences of busting a hole in Festung Europa's Atlantic Wall and using flesh and blood people to do it -- not as wildly swinging as their present day merchants of morbidity offsprings in media and their so quotables in the recent Persian Gulf DESERT STORM.

* Landis was the one present when the great debate was on as to whether airlines should have open-holed toilets rather than the more expensive chemical fully contained variety. He listened glumly to the "cost effective" arguments of the accountants of the day who said at aircraft speeds and a few thousand feet of altitude all excrement would disintegrate into a "thin mist." He said: "If you were walking with your best girl in your best suit and she in her best dress, would it comfort you any more to be hit by a thing mist than a solid?" And the chemical toilet was in.

- 5 -

The National Guard's 29th Infantry Division was rife with rumors that 90% of them would be casualties on D-Day. First Army's Lt. Gen. Omar N. Bradley noted that Eddie Rickenbaker, trapped in his memories of World War I trench warfare, said: "Sorrow will come to a million homes!" Walter Winchell, the gossip columnist, who had vast circulation and commentary swathe for his print and radio wordage echoed him. Bradley went to the 29th and told them: "This stuff about tremendous losses is tommyrot. Some of you won't come back, but very few." Much to his chagrin, he found among his unbelievers a Prime Minister named Churchill, a President named Roosevelt, and the Army's Chief of Staff, Gen. George C. Marshall. British Air Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory, the invasion's Air Commander-in-Chief, predicted the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions would suffer 70% losses among their gliderists and 50% of the paratroopers. In Field Marshal Sir Bernard Law Montgomery's 21st Army Group Headquarters there was a memorandum going the rounds that the Troop Carrier aircraft faced a 50% loss prospect, and plans should be made to reconstitute it on that basis. All this, while little of it was public knowledge, was what Lt. Lillian Kinkela and her Air Evac counterparts had as a measuring stick for the quality of their courage -- and it would be Lt. Kinkela who landed in the first Air Evac plane for Normandy pickups of wounded when the initial airstrip became operational. No wonder Gen. Bradley, as a General H. Norman Schwartzkopf would 47 years later after having been 'body-bagged' up to here by DESERT STORM critics without competence, was quick to break the news that of the 55,000 seaborne troops in the 1944 Normandy invasion, only 4,649 casualties were taken, of which one-third were killed in action. Worst case scenarios tend to predominate in contingency planning, not unlike

racetrack touts who start a rumor to widen odds into ridiculously high number, then wind up betting on the horse themselves. Later would come the startlingly high recoveries of the wounded because of being air-ambulated to high quality hospitalization. And Bradley may have been lonely in his belief, but he was also right.

Later when Gen. George S. Patton, Jr. was goading his Third Army into and through Germany and the Geneva convention was sticky about Red Crosses on planes, Lt. Kinkela and her like rode forward with 50-gallon drums of gasoline with the potential of being exploded in a ball of flame by ack-ack fire, and after the plane was unloaded -- still unmarked -- would carry out the wounded left for them on runway aprons. It was more of the same when Korea's "police action" began on June 25, 1950. Lt. Kinkela did 175 of her missions there, operating out of Tachikawa and Itazuke, Japan. One of her distinctions is having gone far enough into North Korea to see Manchuria across the Yalu River, and win the right to be among "the Chosin Few" for her retrievals of U. S. Marines who had blackened stumps of fingers which had been frozen off. When the U. S. Navy commissioned its new destroyer, "Chosin". in 1991, Mrs. Lillian Kinkela was an invited guest.

"Low profile" has never really been allowed, although she knew a little of it while becoming a wife and mother. On March 1, 1956, Republic Pictures in Studio City, California released a film starring Forrest Tucker and Joan Leslie, one of the Korean aftermath "war pictures." The credits listed Capt. Lillian Kinkela as the technical adviser, but she was also the inspiration for Joan Leslie's role. She was a recruiter for the USAF Nurse Corps, and when addressing 1,100 student nurses in Chicago, she elected not to talk of benefits and pensions and pay and travel, but held her hands before her and recited what those hands had done. It so moved her audience, it was used on a transcribed radio series

- 7 -

called "Women in the Air Age" which is now in the Archives of the United States in Washington.

In 1961, the 11-year run of Ralph Edwards' "This Is Your Life" was coming to an end. Seeking a high drama subject for his next-to-last coast-to-coaster, he zeroed in on an unsuspecting Capt. Lillian Kinkela, USAF(Ret). A call came to me at (then) North American Aerospace Defense Command(NORAD) in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Ralph Edwards said their researchers had been into so many things about her written by me, they would like me to be the "Judas goat", the one who leads the lambs to slaughter pens. Our ruse was to be that Lillian was being asked to do a recruiting commercial for the US Air Force Nurse Corps, and it would be done before an honor guard of all services in -- where else? -- the NBC parking lot in Burbank, California. She thought the cameras were manned by Air Force photographers, but, of course, they were NBC's. As Lillian was studying the cue cards, Ralph walked up and I introduced him. "How very nice to meet you," Ralph said. "Tonight, Capt. Lillian Kinkela, THIS IS YOUR LIFE!" Lillian staggered against me, happily off mike and said: "Barney, I just wet my pants." It was a great USAF Nurse Corps commercial after all, as it ranked in the ten top mail draws in Edwards 11 years on the air. Military veterans all over the country recognized her as the one who'd made the difference in their being alive or dead wrote to her, sent photos of appreciative wives and kids, asked her to house guest "if you ever come this way."

On October 24, 1980, a feature of the Air Force Association's annual Air Force Ball at the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles, was a documentary film narrated by the late Lorne Greene, "Hollywood and the Air Force." It was composed of excerpts

of all of the movies from "Wings" in 1927 to that date which used Army Air Corps and USAF stories -- and the hardest to find was "Flight Nurse", but the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts & Sciences finally located it. That night on the dais to be introduced when the lights came up were Joan Leslie, the star, and Capt. Lillian Kinkela, USAF(Ret). That film is now part of the repository riches of the U. S. Air Force Museum at Wright Patterson Air Force Base, in Dayton, Ohio, just a few miles from where Orville and Wilbur Wright took flight from the fanciful to the feasible -- and as would Florence Nightingale if confronted by a Capt. Lillian Kinkela and the many she role-modelled for would surely be not only greatly surprised, but greatly satisfied by the scrubwoman's daughter who took what they gave her -- and improved on it.

What goes around, comes around, they say. Not far from the recent Persian Gulf DESERT STORM operation in a place called Scutari, Turkey is where Florence Nightingale came to attend the 18,000 dis-membered, maddened and suffering aftermath of the Crimean War's casualty list 137 years ago!

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Col. Barney Oldfield, USAF(Ret), consultant, author, philanthropist, was the paratrooping liaison officer to Hq. Troop Carrier Command and attended Capt. Kinkela's Bowman Field graduation in March 1943. His portrait hangs on the wall of the Pentagon's 4th floor A ring between the 8th and 9th corridors and says he was the "longest timer in military public relations of serving regular officers" and that CBS Charles Kuralt called him "King of the Press Agents." The latter may or may not be so, but that's what it says.