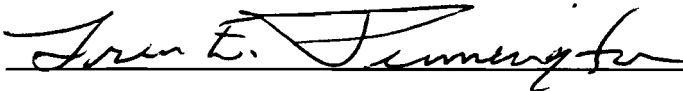


AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Joanne M. Rosenberger for the Master of Arts

in History presented on July 19, 1994

Title: A New Breed of Amazons: Portrayals of Army Nurses During World War II

Abstract approved: 

The enlistment of fifty thousand women into the Army Nurse Corps was an incredible feat of propaganda. Propaganda efforts--both military and civilian--fostered images of women in uniform that usually ran toward glamorous, unrealistic, and ultimately unattainable. Yet society, and more important, women, accepted these images. These unrealistic images created and reinforced the impression that women joining the military would retain their inherent femininity since they would still be doing traditional women's occupations, assuaging some of the doubts about women entering into a traditionally male sphere--the military. The images of servicewomen ran the full gamut from salutary to derogatory, depending upon the source. Early war images reflect glamour, adventure, and patriotism. Those in charge of the dissemination of images of servicewomen presented women in a non-threatening manner, thus encouraging enlistment rather than piquing hostility toward the idea of women in uniform. Later in the war the images underwent a transformation. The civilian media toned down the romanticism and glamour of the early images, yet did

not fully embrace women in the martial setting. The military's images underwent an even more complete transition. The nurses' rigorous training and effectiveness in the field effected a positive change in the portrayals of women in uniform. These positive portrayals found their way into commendations, after-action reports, and letters home, but not into mainstream civilian media. Thus they remained out of the public eye, and as a result the achievements of the nurses went largely unrecognized outside the military. Regardless, propaganda efforts helped to encourage women to step outside of their expected domestic sphere and enter the military war effort. Moreover, the processing, training, placement and utilization of ANC members illustrates the remarkable means by which these women overcame the initial perceived images and succeeded under conditions none ever expected to face.

**A NEW BREED OF AMAZONS:
PORTRAYALS OF ARMY NURSES IN EUROPE DURING WORLD WAR II**

A Thesis

Presented to

the Division of Social Sciences

EMPORIA STATE UNIVERSITY

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

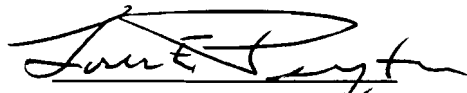
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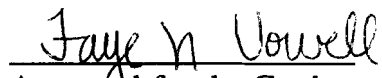
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Approved for the Major Division



Approved for the Graduate Council

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"There is only one qualification for it: nobility of soul."

Major General Norman T. Kirk

US Army, Surgeon General

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I: CIVILIAN IMAGES OF SERVICEWOMEN	9
CHAPTER II: G.I. NIGHTINGALE ENTERS THE ARMY	23
CHAPTER III: TRAINING NIGHTINGALES FROM FRONT LINES TO FLIGHT	40
CHAPTER IV: IMAGES OF NIGHTINGALES FROM THE MILITARY PERSPECTIVE	50
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION	64
APPENDIX	70
BIBLIOGRAPHY	72

INTRODUCTION

The World War II propaganda characters "Rosie the Riveter," "Jenny on the Job," and "G.I. Jane" created the impression that a majority of women broke down the walls of domesticity to become riveters, ship builders, munitions workers or servicewomen. This impression, however, proves largely erroneous; from December, 1941, until 1944, seventy-six percent of all American women remained homemakers.¹ Women's greatest opportunity for impact came from outside their traditionally domestic sphere. One of the ways in which women contributed to the war was as members of the Army Nurse Corps, or ANC. Life as an Army nurse involved new challenges. Army life required women to exhibit courage in the line of fire, and most important, called upon women to overcome the defined roles the civilian and military media created for them.

The role of woman as compassionate healer fell well within the bounds of a woman's traditional sphere of influence, but when a woman donned a military uniform, the role became skewed. The transition from the expected role of woman as domestic goddess to professional military nurse left the general public, the military, the media, and the women themselves confused as to what a military woman's role should be, and prompted many to question their possible impact on the war effort. The military's policies concerning women, pertinent legislation, and its various propaganda images did not lessen the perceived confusion; if anything, these "mixed messages" served to muddle the already-confusing role of women in the military.

Military leaders promulgated regulations concerning females in the military. Those in the ANC filled positions which enlisted men had formerly occupied, and the paternalistic regimentation imposed upon the ANC indicated the Army's intention of functioning in loco parentis.² Just as regulations guided a male enlistee's life, so too did they guide the Army nurse's life. Yet, this sense of order belied the confusion and disorder associated with the recruitment and utilization of nurses.

When the United States entered the war, mechanisms for recruitment, mobilization, and deployment of the female recruits showed a decided lack of coordination. Nurses from all over the United States arrived at ports of embarkation without inoculations, blood work, dog tags, uniforms, or any military indoctrination.³ Initially, overseas nurses left for the European Theater with medical units without the benefit of proper military training. Once the United States committed itself to a total global war, time was of the essence, and nurses received their indoctrination in military dogma while in the field. The failure to train nurses properly placed women in foreign field situations that initially they could not effectively handle. This lack of coordination in the training of nurses led the General Board of the United States Forces of the European Theater to comment that nurses sent out before they received training did not perform effectively.⁴ In response to this concern, by mid-1943, nine training facilities existed in the United States. The sole purpose of these training centers was to prepare ANC members to deal adequately and effectively with expected field conditions, thereby ending the military's mournful cry of unpreparedness. Nurses received physical conditioning, field preparedness, and

instruction in chemical warfare. Once a nurse's basic training program was completed, she was ready to go overseas.

While the military wrestled with the question of how to deal with the enlistment and utilization of women, two especially pertinent pieces of legislation were commanding attention in Congress. Representative Frances Bolton of Ohio offered a bill that stipulated that the government should pick up the training expenses of any nursing student who would agree to serve, where needed, for the war's duration plus an additional six months.⁵ This legislation, which passed through Congress unanimously in May, 1943, established the Cadet Nurse Corps and sent 125,000 nurses to school.⁶ The Cadet Nurse Corps' responsibility lay in training nurses to fill shortages both overseas and on the homefront. In a sense, this legislation put women in a position of equality with men since the Armed Forces already picked up the expenses for any specialized training male recruits required.

A second piece of legislation, House Resolution No. 2277, proved more controversial for it would have amended the Selective Service Act to include nurses.⁷ The controversy focused not on the concept of drafting women, because most legislators recognized that need outstripped enlistment, but rather on the concept of drafting only one segment of the female population--nurses. The need for a draft for nurses surfaced in 1944 but was not acted upon until 1945 when, in a presidential message to a joint session of the Senate and the House of Representatives on January 6, President Franklin D. Roosevelt noted:

The present shortage of Army nurses is reflected in undue strain on the existing force. More than a thousand nurses are now hospitalized, and

part of this is due to overwork. The shortage is also indicated by the fact that 11 Army hospital units have been sent overseas without their complement of nurses. . . . The care and treatment to our wounded and sick soldiers have been the best known to medical science. Those standards must be maintained at all costs. We cannot tolerate a lowering of them [the standards] by failure to provide adequate nursing for the brave men who stand desperately in need of it.⁸

The public agreed with Roosevelt. A Gallup poll published three weeks later revealed broad popular support for the drafting of women into the military; seventy-eight percent of those polled perceived a shortage of nurses in the Armed Forces, and an overwhelming seventy-three percent approved of the draft.⁹ Roosevelt managed to diffuse a potentially controversial issue by gaining public support. House Resolution No. 2277 passed the House of Representatives in early 1945 with strong support: 347 in favor, forty-two opposed.¹⁰ The Senate Military Affairs Committee approved the Nurses' Selective Service Act of 1945 in early April, but the bill still awaited further approval by the entire Senate. Prior to Senate consideration, however, the Soviet
▶ army marched into Berlin and United States forces took control of west central Europe, rendering the legislation unnecessary. As a result, the War Department ceased to press for the passage of the legislation.¹¹ Had the war gone on a little longer women would most likely have been drafted, an unprecedented action in United States history.

Although by May, 1945, the drafting of nurses had become a moot point, the successful recruitment of over fifty-three thousand women into the ANC can be viewed as the result of successful military propaganda. Government and media sources disseminated propaganda in an effort to influence public opinion, and during

wartime reflected public sentiment. While modern usage of the term "propaganda" assumes a largely negative connotation, during the war years propaganda images took both positive and negative forms. Much like the propaganda that various agencies directed towards men, propaganda aimed at women attempted to entice them to enlist by appealing to their sense of patriotism and duty and their desire for adventure and travel. The images used to encourage military enlistment did not change drastically in style or form; rather, the military added other methods, as pamphlets and books which became new tools of the propaganda arsenal. Beautiful women in uniform appeared on recruitment posters, asking nurses to help them save the lives of the brave fighting men by enlisting.

Images and portrayals of nurses emanate from two different sources: the civilian media and the military media. Each functioned within a similar set of boundaries. Both types of propaganda emphasized that women would continue to do "women's jobs" and that despite the fact that women were entering "a man's world," they would remain bastions of femininity. Naturally, each source approached this mandate from a different angle, yet each achieved its goal--to encourage women to step outside their traditionally domestic sphere and enlist in the military.

The eventual comprehensive training which nurses received not only allowed them to become an indispensable part of the war effort, but in effect changed how the military viewed servicewomen and more important how the women viewed themselves. The commendations, the battle reports, and the servicemen's letters home reflect a transition in the military's perception of the nurses. Unfortunately,

this reversal of perception (from nurses as frivolous decorations to brave and effective members of the medical unit) did not fully develop on the homefront. Civilian media sources did tone down some of the romanticism they created about women in war and the single perspective of war as glamorous, but the homefront media sources never took the final steps of acceptance.

Historians such as D'Ann Campbell and Doris Weatherford have for the most part ignored the Army Nurse Corps and the valiant women who served in the European Theater. Thus, they have resigned these valiant women to a non-existent role in the fight for North Africa and Europe. The ANC in North Africa and Europe played a role that bore only a slight resemblance to the ANC in the Pacific Theater. The medical units in the Pacific participated in island hopping, usually remaining well in the rear of the actual fighting. However, in the Pacific the specter of nurses being captured became reality at Bataan and Corrigidor, and those nurses became prisoners of war. No records remain which record any instance of nurses in the European Theater being captured. Medical units did occasionally become trapped behind enemy lines, as was the case at Kasserine Pass in the North African campaign when the fast moving pace of mechanized warfare shifted the front lines at a rate in which the medical units could not keep up with or retreat behind them. One cannot compare the circumstances and experiences of living in the desert of North Africa or the marshy fields of Southern France to living in the jungles of the Pacific. Because the ANC nurse in the European Theater engaged more actively in front line battle conditions than their counterparts in the Pacific, their experience can provide us with

a more complete picture of the travails and accomplishments of women in combat in World War II.

NOTES

- 1 D'Ann Campbell, Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era (Cambridge, Mass., 1984), 81.
- 2 Ibid., 29.
- 3 Colonel Julia Flikke, Nurses in Action (New York, 1943), xiii.
- 4 Mary M. Roberts. American Nursing: History and Interpretation (New York, 1954), 346.
- 5 Doris Weatherford. American Women and World War II (New York, 1985), 17.
- 6 Campbell, 54. Also see Senate Reports: Miscellaneous Vol. 2 79th Congress, 1st Session (January 3 - December 21, 1945), (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1945), 7. The Bolton Bill was passed in June 1943, but was not signed until July, and not implemented until September 1943.
- 7 Ibid., 19.
- 8 Ibid., 2.
- 9 Campbell, 19.
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- 11 John H. McMinn and Max Levin, Personnel in World War II (Washington, D.C., 1963), 231.

CHAPTER I

CIVILIAN IMAGES OF SERVICEWOMEN

Calls for men and women to enter military service in World War II took many forms. One of the most influential means of disseminating information about the military and, hence, the images of servicewomen came by way of civilian media sources. Magazines, books, and even movies were readily available to the general public and thus provided the best sources of images of women in uniform. Civilian propaganda reinforced the impression that women were not quite full-fledged adults by referring to them as "girls," "gals," or even "little ladies,"--terms commonly applied to pubescent females. The homefront media, however, also proved an influential image maker. Civilian media enhanced the concept of the beautiful, frivolous woman stepping forward for a patriotic adventure. By observing the various offerings the civilian media created, a very noticeable change in their presentations appears. The changes in the portrayals of women in uniform occurred in a very subtle manner, suggesting the initial reluctance of the media to show women outside their traditional domestic sphere. The ideal created for servicewomen was a Madonna in uniform, an image that no mortal woman, no matter how hard she tried, could achieve. Media perceptions of women in uniform affected public impressions of servicewomen, and were instrumental in creating a favorable impression. Enlistment of servicewomen of any branch of the armed forces, not just the ANC, slowed in relation to the dissemination of negative publicity.

The image of a nurse at the beginning of the war was, in the words of journalist

Holly Hazel, one of the "Red Cross nurse in a spotless white uniform kneeling on the battlefield holding the head of a wounded soldier in her lap, a expression of spiritual devotion on her face."¹ This image evoked memories of other angels of mercy such as Clara Barton and Florence Nightingale, both romantic nursing figures.²

In spite of the romantic image of Florence Nightingale, the Army Nurse Corps, or ANC, encountered problems with enlistment when questions of nurses' immorality and sexual promiscuity surfaced in 1943. Historian D'Ann Campbell determined that "a nationwide underground slander campaign painting all women as sexually promiscuous began in 1943, about the time of increased government publicity emphasizing how badly women were needed."³ This contention gives the distinct impression that while women commenced to be a serious force in the military effort, the acceptability of their place outside the home came into question. Campbell notes that the Pentagon "determined that American servicemen were inventing and spreading these false rumors."⁴ Historian Doris Weatherford contends that this "vicious campaign [was] fostered by those who were firm in the apparent belief that if a military woman wasn't a lesbian, she must be a nymphomaniac."⁵ References have been made to the slanders as a "campaign." Use of the word "campaign" denotes a certain amount of organization--organization which has not been proven by scholars. Current research indicates that the negative perceptions were most likely the culmination of rumors transmitted by enlisted personnel and some civilian media sources and were incidental rather than a coordinated, organized, intentional plan. However, the rumors and innuendo did affect the civilian media. In June, 1943, at the height of such negative publicity, solicitations ceased for specific branches; most prominently the Women's Army Corps or WAC. Only

after the furor died down in 1944 did WAC resume solicitations.

The often negative nature of civilian images is highlighted by the newspaper clipping one nurse's mother sent to her daughter. It read:

Contraceptives and prophylactic equipment will be furnished to members of the [WAC] according to a supersecret agreement reached by high ranking officers of the War Department and [WAC] Chieftain, Mrs. William Petus Hobby. . . . It was a victory for the New Deal ladies. Mrs. Roosevelt wants all young ladies to have the same overseas rights as their brothers and fathers.⁶

Though the group mentioned was not the Army Nurse Corps but the Women's Army Corps, this nurse's mother likely felt that if the rumor/innuendo held true for the WACs it would also hold true for the ANC. In reality, this "supersecret" document was no more than a high school sex education pamphlet designed to educate women on female anatomy, physiology, venereal disease, a woman's menstrual cycle, and menopause. The noncontroversial pamphlet did not mention contraceptives; thus a simple anatomy and physiology pamphlet became distorted in the public's eye into a license for free love overseas.⁷ The incident does provide an excellent example of how quickly an innocuous comment in a memo could be transformed into a scandalous situation and how jittery the public was about women in uniform.

Conversely, the spiritual, healing quality of the nurses as portrayed by the media was a positive image. The ANC thus had an initial advantage over other women's services which were unable to draw upon a positive historical image. The San Francisco Examiner played up the spiritual component of the image of nurses in uniform in 1942:

But when you pray to God to take care of our boys over there, don't forget to remember that there are mothers in this country with a daughter "over there"--a daughter who may be the reason why the boy over there comes back to you.⁸

The civilian media, however, did not attempt to downplay the glamorous image of servicewomen. Campbell has noted that "public policy during the war presented a strange contradiction to women. As a result, the media, closely following directives from Washington, glorified martial values, and saluted women chiefly when they took on traditionally male roles as soldiers."⁹ The media created an unrealistic image of the glamour and excitement of war, fostering "an image of "wonder woman" in khaki."¹⁰ An example of this is provided by the 1943 photo "First Aid for a Jeep." In this photo U.S. Army nurse Lieutenant Elizabeth Biller and American Red Cross hospital worker Sylvia Rubin pose as women working on a stalled jeep; the hood is up, yet the women look at the camera, not under the hood.¹¹ This picture from 1943 gives the people at home a dual image. Before the war such efforts on the part of women to repair the jeep would be uncharacteristic, hence the military presented this new breed of military woman as capable of accomplishing such tasks with ease and grace, while remaining feminine despite the new challenge. Thus the first image presented is paradoxical: women who entered the military embraced the masculine martial values yet were required to retain and portray their inherent femininity.

The frivolity of a woman visiting a beauty shop, for example, would emphasize that the servicewoman was no different than her counterpart on the homefront--both wanted to look attractive. The frivolity of looking attractive while participating in the war effort permeated advertisements. This assessment reinforces the idea that the change in women's roles during the war was subtly resisted by the media. The traditional perception of women as beautiful homemakers striving to be attractive to men remained in place. The public and media usually referred to the servicewomen as gals or girls and played up

activities that were more dramatic or frivolous, "such as their [newly designed, ultra feminine] uniforms and their patronage of beauty shops."¹² A perusal of The Ladies Home Journal from 1942-1945 shows women gloriously marching off to war with shiny, manageable hair, clear complexions, and matching nail polish and lipstick, preferably Cutex's "On Duty" red.¹³ Each advertisement with a woman in uniform once again presented to the general public a glamorous image of military service. This type of portrayal would be consistent with the early images of women in uniform; beauty certainly was in the eye of the beholder and any hint of seriousness was far removed from the media portrayals.

In these advertisements, women dressed in generic military uniforms appeared in magazines asking for other women to answer their calls to duty. Some advertisements were no more than a simple statement of fact. The following advertisement's text utilized the simple symbol of the Red Cross with these words embossed over the cross: "Wanted: 55,000 Nurses. . . . For every million men in the armed forces, the United States needs 4000 nurses selflessly devoted to their profession."¹⁴ Later in the war when the need was more urgent, the advertisements became more insistent and persuasive. A heart-wrenching ad used a purple heart and the following text: "The Wounded Are Waiting for Your Answer!. . . . Urgent! More nurses needed now--All women can help!"¹⁵

Other advertisements glorified the Army nurse's role. Two such advertisements appeared in the June 1945 issue of The Ladies Home Journal. The first read:

Pin-up Girls . . . in Our Heroes' Hearts

Privileges? By Act of Congress, every Army Nurse is an officer. . . with an officer's rank, pay and retirement pensions for length of service and disability plus all provisions of the G.I. Bill of Rights.

But the privilege that means most to her is the **right to save our boys' lives.**

Ninety-seven percent of our wounded in this war have been saved! If this truly wonderful record is to be continued--more nurses must answer the call!¹⁶

And the second continued in a similar heroic vein with a

Salute to An Army Nurse. . . Miss [Anne] Spillman, Second Lieutenant of the Army Nurse Corps, was the first nurse ashore on the Anzio beachhead, where she spent 78 hazardous days. She also served as the only woman member of a shock team with the invasion force in Southern France and is a veteran of four invasions. Ordered home under protest, she was hospitalized in this country in an effort to rebuild her health. Miss Spillman's tenacity and unflinching courage are typical of our Army nurses. Thousands more such women are urgently needed.¹⁷

These two advertisements certainly play up the more glamorous or adventurous side of military participation. However, a note of realism which was lacking in early portrayals can be seen in each of these. One final advertisement appeared in the same issue; the focus was to remind the public that their loved ones overseas were in good hands. A framed photograph of an ANC nurse in her white uniform and crimson and blue cape adorn a breakfast table. The text simply reads: "Does an Important Job."¹⁸ The media encouraged women to help the war effort in any way possible, on the homefront and in the war.¹⁹ These appeals ranged from one article that showed the homefront that "American women are no longer bystanders of war--They're in it up to their ears,"²⁰ thus implying the acceptability of stepping out of the traditional sphere, to an advertisement where a female member of the United States Coast Guard encourages the recycling of tin.²¹ Other women in uniform appeared in an advertisement for the American Meat Institute of Chicago, encouraging women on the homefront to serve nutritious meals to their families.²² The media, therefore, utilized the military woman to instruct the civilian woman about her domestic duties, an interesting paradox in and of itself. Advertisements and articles also

showed men saluting military women; these portrayals inherently promoted military participation, because in a subtle manner this advertisement lets women know that men approve of women's participation in the war. One specific Canada Dry advertisement has a whole table of men raising their glasses to the portraits of women in all branches of the armed forces. The caption reads, "These gallant young women are dedicated to the service of our country."²³

Of course, the nurses fell victim to satire as well. After creating a positive, even popular images of military nurses in the media still wielded the ability to denigrate the very image they created. In September, 1942, this poem appeared in The Ladies Home Journal's weekly feature, "Your Men in Uniform":

Nurses? Curses!
 Sing us a song of pain and penance--
 Army nurses are all lieutenants.
 Whether they're blonds, brunettes or titians,
 The hell of it is: They have commissions.
 And private, creatures of low degree,
 Can dream but never hope to be
 More to the nurses that win their hearts
 Than pulses, temperatures and charts.²⁴

The nurses once again become objects of lust and thus viewed in a derogatory light. Their professionalism was overshadowed in one fell swoop by media presentation. This poetic attempt is also consistent with the early war image of servicewomen. No such ditty comes forward later in the war.

Others, such as journalist Marion Porter, sought to promote a more positive image of nurses. However, her article helped disseminate an unrealistically heroic image of flight nurses. "There may be no atheists in foxholes," Porter wrote, "but occasionally there are

ladies, and when you run across one, it's a safe bet she's a flying nurse of the Air Evacuation Service--a tough new breed of Amazons."²⁵ Rather than discussing the valuable, life-saving work these women undertook, she helped reinforce that these nurses were somehow magically mutated military nurses into super-human Amazons. American Magazine's 1944 article "Girls in Foxholes," continues the themes of bravery, heroism, and patriotism with help from Major General Norman T. Kirk, Surgeon General of the US Army. Kirk writes of the efficiency of the ANC nurse who "in the hell of battle. . . face[s] death as coolly as the most hardened veteran."²⁶ The story of these "hardened veterans'" heroism comes from wounded soldiers who had benefitted from the nurses care and compassion. The convalescent men had been consolidated into a single tent with more seriously injured men, thus getting a glimpse of the nurses at work. Kirk writes:

There were hundreds of wounded men in the Evacuation Hospital, Some of them had no legs or arms. Some of them had been hit in the face by shell fragments and didn't look quite human. . . . Seeing them all together like that, row on row of bloodstained litters, attended by a handful of nurses, was enough to make any man tear down a pin-up girl from the wall and stick up a picture of an army nurse and light a candle in front of it.²⁷

Kirk then launches into a commentary on the necessity of having the nurse so close to the fighting, citing the new mechanized warfare as the reason behind the move. "On occasion," Kirk writes, "the nurses have been caught in the actual fighting. . . . It has been necessary to take the women so far forward, even to land them on contested beachheads, because of the swiftness with which the front advances in mechanized warfare."²⁸ He then concludes that "those nurses mean to follow our soldiers through hell if we'll let them."²⁹

The realism and importance of the ANC's role--albeit blown out of proportion to make the nurses into superpatriotic figures, was refreshingly accurate. However, even Kirk

could not resist referring to the nurses in a frivolous light, saying, "no matter where the women are on earth they have toilet creams and cosmetics,"³⁰ alluding to the perception that they were always ready to entertain servicemen. Once again, the media showed the public that these women maintained traditional domestic values even after donning a uniform. This glamorous overtone almost eclipses Kirk's appeal to the general public to release private nurses for military service.³¹

Appeals to nurses took forms other than the printed word. Images of servicewomen also appeared in the form of pictures, such as those printed in Colonel Julia Flikke's Nurses in Action, and other media sources. In Flying's article "Flight Nurse," pictures of young women in uniform appear; marching in columns, helping servicemen out of an airplane, and drilling with gas masks. In Independent Woman's article "Be a Nurse and See the World," the public saw smiling young women dressed in sparkling white uniforms and dress blues, and nurses in an operating room.³² These images encouraged women to be adventurous and join the Army and, of course, "See the World."

Nurses in Action glamorized the role of the ANC member and pleaded for qualified women to enlist immediately. The images put forth by Nurses in Action appear to be the most dramatic. For example, one photograph is almost in negative; set on a black background, all that is in relief is the body of a wounded soldier and the white cap, hands, and profile of an angel of mercy who ministers to him.³³ Such images fill the pages: happy nurses in a bunk-room before embarkation, women taking blood from a Red Cross donor, nurses looking at training planes, practicing gas mask drills, and modeling the newly designed ANC uniforms.³⁴ In each of these pictures the woman is cheerful and dressed

immaculately, providing an attractive role model for other women who might want to enlist.³⁵ Colonel Flikke portrayed Army life as being not much different from civilian life, a new way to meet interesting people, enjoy travelling, and be entertained while heroically serving her country. As Flikke wrote, "Voluntarily she comes in response to the utmost need of the men with shattered bodies whose cry is for the compassionate touch of a woman's hand."³⁶ In her book Creating Rosie the Riveter, historian Maureen Honey tells the story of a young miner's daughter whom the propaganda influenced. The miner's daughter clipped out a picture of a newly commissioned ANC nurse from the paper saying, "I studied the trim, neat uniform. Very soon I would look like this earnest girl."³⁷ The image of a woman in uniform appears to have encouraged enlistment. ANC veteran Ruth Foor validates this assumption. When asked why she enlisted, she responded with the emphatic answer that she could not resist the uniform.³⁸

Military women served as models of glamour, beauty and exemplars of a child-like innocence, or as members of a new breed of Amazons--beautiful women doing a man-sized job. Each portrayal, however, proved unrealistic and presented an unattainable goal for women towards which to aspire. Yet media portrayals underwent a subtle but drastic change between 1942 and 1945. The images presented to the public changed from the that of glamorous woman whose main concern appeared to whether her nail polish and lipstick matched to the still beautiful, to that of the serious-minded woman who asked her fellow women to participate in the war effort to their utmost capacity.

ENDNOTES

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- 2 D'Ann Campbell, Women at War with America: Private Lives in a Patriotic Era (Cambridge, Mass., 1984), 5. Also see Susan Hartmann, The Homefront and Beyond: American Women in the 1940's (Boston, 1982), 49.
- 3 Ibid., 39.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Doris Weatherford, American Women and World War II (New York, 1985), 91.
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- 7 Mattie E. Treadwell, The Woman's Army Corps (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief Military History, Department of the Army, 1954), 501.
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- 9 Campbell, 8.
- 10 Campbell, 31.
- 11 "First Aid for a Jeep," 1943, n.p. (From Helen Gorman Zeiger's scrapbook).
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CHAPTER II

G.I. NIGHTINGALE ENTERS THE ARMY

The United States's involvement in a global war necessitated the effectual utilization of all the Armed Forces's resources. The recruitment of large numbers of women became imperative, not just to fill clerical positions which men had held, but to fill new demands made by medical units.

Until the U.S. officially entered the war, the number of women who qualified for military service proved ample to satisfy the needs of the nation's various military hospitals. Involvement in a global war which raged on two fronts, however, necessitated the recruitment of more nurses. A coordinated recruitment effort enabled the military to entice, encourage, and even compel women to enlist. The recruiters encouraged registered nurses to join the war effort immediately and emboldened young women to consider nursing as a career choice, thus helping to create an ever-growing base of nurses for the war effort. The Army itself responded by changing the age and marriage requirements to encourage enlistment. The wholesale use of nurses in the Army qualified as a new concept in the 1940's. Prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor, the military trained only male officers and soldiers to assist doctors; female nurses played no role in evacuation hospitals. This role changed in 1941, when some Army officials convinced Washington to allow nurses to be assigned to evacuation hospitals.

The recruitment of women into the military precipitated a flurry of new regulations to help guide the recruits' lives. The regulations which the Army created and implemented soon determined what a woman's place was within the Armed Forces. When a woman enlisted, she voluntarily handed over control of her life to the Army. Like anyone else who entered the Armed Forces, nurses had to recognize the Army in a position of parent. Every aspect of the Army nurse's life was both scrutinized and regulated. The Army's standards determined who would become an Army Nurse Corps nurse, whom she could date, and whether or not she could marry and have a family. Before the war the Army would accept any qualified, unmarried and dependentless nurse between the age of twenty-one and thirty. Once the United States became embroiled in the war, nurses with specialized training in anesthesiology, hospital administration, or operating room procedures could be as old as forty-five. Yet this minor relaxation of the regulations did not fill the quota of nurses needed in hospital units overseas. Accordingly, the Army relaxed the general age requirement, first to forty years of age then finally, by the middle of 1942, to forty-five for any qualified nurse.¹

Initially the ANC would accept only single women. Early recruiting pamphlets reminded married women of the Army's feelings towards them, namely, that their place was still in the home.² Many qualified nurses with husbands in the service were thus ineligible for military service. This restriction proved countereffective to recruitment, and by 1943 the Army ended the ban. Colonel Julia Flikke noted that the restriction on married nurses had been lifted for the duration,

and if a woman married she would no longer be forced to resign her commission.³ The Pentagon's ruling changed again when the Army decided to allow married women to enlist so long as their husbands served in a different branch of the military. If a servicewoman dared to marry a man within the same branch of the Armed Forces, the woman, not the man, faced reassignment.⁴ Married women with children under the age of fourteen automatically became ineligible for overseas duty. The military thus reinforced the notion that "wives in general and mothers in particular were not welcome."⁵ These women, according to military doctrine, should be in the domestic sphere first and the public sphere last.

Because ANC nurses were commissioned as second lieutenants, fraternization policies forbade the nurses to date enlisted men, thus complicating the nurses' social lives. Veteran Verena Seberg recalled: "You didn't date enlisted men. . . . When I look back I remember two nurses at Fort Riley, Kansas. They came in after I did, and they dated enlisted men. When it was found out, they left the next day."⁶ Though this restriction might have diminished some of the nurses' romantic opportunities, the restriction also made nurses fair game for male officers' harassment. In an article for The American Journal of Nursing, Lt. Edith Aynes explained the plight of the ANC nurse overseas:

Nurses are facing many problems that do not pertain to nursing. They are meeting men of all kinds, types, and descriptions; they are being thrown into situations they never dreamed possible. Some of them know how to avoid these gracefully; some bluff their way through; but some follow the line of least resistance with the weak excuse that "this is war," thereby giving the Nurse Corps . . . the name that decent women for years have fought and are still fighting to conquer.⁷

The women who "followed the line of least resistance" projected a negative image of ANC nurses and did little to lessen the complaint that nice girls did not enter the military.⁸ Other women, such as Lt. June Wandrey faced outright sexual harassment, which she documented in her wartime journal.

[I] was invited to Major General Truscott's dinner party held in a big ward tent. . . . The General gave me a corsage and expected a kiss for it. Not from me. . . . My refusal spurred the General into humorous pantomime posturing, attempting to lure me in front of all those strangers into giving him a kiss. Not from me. I was grateful for the corsage, but I never grovel. He made me feel like a prize yearling in the auction ring. It was demeaning.⁹

Propaganda that trivialized and glamorized the servicewoman's role in the military may have contributed to the instance of harassment. Harassment aside, being in close proximity to a large number of men did encourage friendships among men and women. Lt. Theresa Archard noted in her journal that some of the ship-board romances later ended in matrimony.¹⁰

The Army also decided whether a woman would be allowed to marry. The Army instructed all commanding officers to discourage romances, liaisons, and possible marriages among all personnel, including the nurses. Commanding officers advised against marriage, threatened to transfer personnel, arranged with civilian authorities for marriage licenses to be denied, or openly disapproved of the marriage, thus making the officer requesting permission miserable.¹¹ Each European nation further complicated matters by having different rules and regulations and requiring the appropriate paperwork.¹² While in Italy in late 1943, Lt. Wandrey's new tentmate encountered the difficulties of marriage as dictated by the Army. Wandrey recorded in her journal that her new tentmate had recently gotten married "and hasn't told

anyone as the Army frowns on that. Other nurses who married were sent to another theater. The war tries more than men's souls."¹³ Six weeks later she noted that her tentmate had been "remarried" by an Army chaplain because "the Army didn't approve her Italian marriage."¹⁴ The Army even determined the legality of foreign-soil marriages.

The Army also attempted to impose a prenuptial waiting period for couples. Both the bride and groom had to obtain permission to marry and the marriage license from their commanding officers.¹⁵ Once the couple submitted all the required forms, in triplicate, the Army forced the couple to wait three months to receive permission, if permission was at all forthcoming. Seeing the impracticality of a three month waiting period, by late 1942 the Army had reduced the "cooling off" period to two months.¹⁶ The waiting period for female military personnel suggests that the Army was unwilling to acknowledge that women could make life choices independently. However, if the woman became pregnant or the man was transferred to a new theater the commanding officer could waive the waiting period and allow the couple to marry immediately.¹⁷

The Army discouraged marriage for a more practical reason. An ETOUSA (European Theater of Operations, United States of America) memorandum alludes to this reason. "Marriages of female personnel represented ahazard [sic] to their future service."¹⁸ The military's concern that a married woman might become pregnant, and be therefore discharged from active duty, while exaggerated, is justified. There was an acute shortage of nurses in the theater, and the presence of one could be the

difference between life and death for a wounded soldier. However, the fact remains that although these women had undertaken a serious professional role--that of ANC nurse--the Army worried they would miss or long for domestic life and become pregnant to achieve that end.

Regulations also determined where a woman's traditional sphere intersected with the military--in a traditional role as nurse and comforter. While defining this role, the Army set out the restrictions or rules of contact in a combat zone: an ANC officer could date and socialize so long as she chose only officers. The Army hoped she would not lapse back into her traditional domestic sphere and marry, but if that "weakness" proved unavoidable the Army requested that she marry according to the rules and in triplicate. Above all else, a woman was discouraged from becoming pregnant. The Army cleverly conveyed this last wish through the skillful use of guilt. The military reasonably maintained that by becoming pregnant a woman would remove herself from the theater, thus creating a nursing shortage and placing brave fighting men in jeopardy of not receiving proper care.

When considering that the Army assumed the role of a woman's parent, these rules and regulations might not appear overly protective. Fathers in the 1940s generally took interest in who dated and married their daughters; the Army did likewise. Thus the paternalistic nature of the military was not necessarily antithetical to the way women were treated in the 1940s.

As the Army began recruiting to complete the hospital units going overseas, the nursing shortage in the United States intensified. In 1940, 120 nurses assumed

responsibility for every thousand hospital patients. By 1943, that number had dwindled to 105, and by 1944 only eighty-three nurses staffed every thousand beds in civilian hospitals. Despite this acute shortage of nurses, an overwhelming number volunteered for military service. According to statistics kept by the national nurse's associations, forty-three percent of all active registered nurses volunteered for military service.¹⁹

The placement of nurses in key positions, such as in evacuation hospitals, was a new utilization of military nurses. "Field and evacuation hospitals [were] more suitable for use by the advance section [front line troops] . . . than [were] station and general hospitals."²⁰ Military records indicate that "it [was] desirable to [place] clearing elements into the beachhead as early as the tactical situation will permit."²¹ The nurses, thus were very close to the action. The nurses' presence helped evacuation hospitals accomplish their five stated goals: to provide surgical care, to give aid and treatment to casualties immediately, to move the casualties away from the combat troops, to provide a centralized location for the evacuation of casualties, and to prepare casualties with minor injuries to return to duty.²² Nurses facilitated each of these roles by providing something an enlisted man could not; namely, medical expertise. The nurses filled positions in general hospitals, station hospitals and field hospitals. The integration of nurses into medical units was implemented fully in 1942.

A critical need remained to recruit large numbers of women. The Army recruiters saved time by allowing the Red Cross to check a woman's credentials,

leaving the physical examinations and mobilization to the Army. The nursing schools affiliation with the Red Cross made it more expedient for the Army to utilize the Red Cross and its staff rather than to create and staff a new department within the military. The situation proved less than ideal early on; Colonel Florence Blanchfield, ANC Assistant Superintendent, noted that "some nurses objected to enrolling with the Red Cross for fear that they would be called by this organization [the Red Cross] for relief work in case of disaster instead of for work with the Army medical services."²³ This concern led the military and the Red Cross to publicize that anyone who registered for the ANC or the Navy Nurse Corps would not be utilized if a domestic disaster occurred.

One way to encourage enlistment was through military pay scales. (See Figure 1) Not only did the military offer monetary inducement, it offered the opportunity to travel and the excitement of a new adventure. The majority of the women enlistees came from rural areas and small towns in the northern United States, areas where the war machine was not competing for the work force.²⁴ Since factory jobs were unavailable in the rural areas, the military may have served as an attractive means to induce some women to leave the small town life behind them. As a whole, recruitment of southern women was less successful than the recruitment of northern women. Historian D'Ann Campbell attributes this fact to the South's reverence for the male military tradition; being a military wife was more prestigious in southern society than was direct involvement in the war.²⁵

FIGURE 1: PAY SCALES (Monthly unless noted)

Grades	Annual Pay	Subsistence	Rental
Colonel	\$4000.00	\$21.00	\$105.00
Lt. Colonel	\$3500.00	\$21.00	\$105.00
Major	\$3000.00	\$21.00	\$90.00
Captain	\$2400.00	\$21.00	\$75.00
1st Lieutenant	\$2000.00	\$21.00	\$60.00
2nd Lieutenant	\$1800.00	\$21.00	\$45.00

Source: Colonel Julia Flikke. Nurses in Action (New York, 1943), 81.

On a practical level, the Army appealed to women by offering new income opportunities. On a more personal level, however, the wartime propaganda struck emotional chords. The Army's appeals urged women perform hospital work because when a man is injured "there is a need in a man for comfort and attention that only a woman can fill."²⁶ One recruiting pamphlet emphasized that historically during in crucial times women were under an obligation to fulfill their traditional nursing role. Thus the woman was told to fulfill her job as a woman and to care for men. Military publications such as War Jobs for Women reminded women that "it is as much the duty of a qualified nurse to serve her country as it is for a man of similarly valuable training to enter the armed services."²⁷ Former ANC nurse Wilma Roth commented, "Everybody was caught up in the feeling that we had to stop Hitler. 'What can I do?

How can I help?'²⁸ The answer was to enlist. ANC Veteran Betty Taylor reminded people that, "it may be hard for most Americans to imagine the swell of patriotism these women [the nurses] talk about that gripped them 50 years ago and motivated them to do things few women had done before."²⁹ Even the captions on recruiting posters echoed this plea to women: "Women . . . our wounded need your care!"³⁰ and "Save his life. . . ."³¹ These pleas for "help" did not fall upon deaf ears. One ANC veteran, Betty Taylor, was unsure what she could do for the military, but she was motivated by the wartime recruiting campaign. "The government told us women we were needed,"³² she recalled, and Mrs. Taylor responded to the call.

The recruiters did not stop with already certified nurses; they encouraged high school girls to consider nurses's training. The recruiters not only appealed to the young lady's patriotism, but they also tempted her with adventure and travel and politely reminded her that if she took a job in a factory she would not be retained once the men came home from the war.³³ Posters reinforced this with captions such as "BE A CADET NURSE--THE GIRL WITH A FUTURE."³⁴ Pamphlets reinforced these sentiments, saying that "[N]ursing was ideal work for women because it was one of the few areas where they [the women] would not have to worry about giving up their jobs to returning veterans."³⁵ Such sentiment reinforced the prevailing notion that it was normally the man's place in society to work, not the woman's, and also bolstered the common assertion that nurses were doing "women's work" anyway. Quick to capitalize, recruiters extolled the virtues of nursing as a career choice, not just a temporary job. Air nurse Virginia Walsh affirms the success of such

propaganda; by 1942, she writes, "all my friends were enlisting in the service, talking about careers in nursing."³⁶

While enlistment campaigns proved successful, coordination of the ANC deployment still proved chaotic in 1942. The Army could not seem to prevent the confusion. Lt. Edith Aynes wrote that by the first week in January, 1942, she had the roster for the nurses under her command, but no nurses. When the nurses arrived in San Francisco, they did so in such a deluge that the Army was not ready to receive them and consequently they were stationed in all parts of San Francisco, rather than being concentrated, Aynes recalls that "apparently the Surgeon General told the Nursing Office that they wanted 500 nurses on the West Coast by January 5th. The Nursing Office got them there. But the rest of the War Department did not function that fast."³⁷ This type of confusion occurred everywhere as the nation geared up for total war.

The military supplied first class rail and water transport for new ANC members, providing they were sworn in before leaving for the port of embarkation (P.O.E.)³⁸ If a woman traveled to the P.O.E. in a group, she could not carry her own military documentation; someone further up in the military hierarchy held her identification.³⁹ This situation was not unique to military women, merely exacerbated by the military's inexperience in dealing with women recruits. Once at the P.O.E. nurses received bed rolls, mattress covers, blankets, tents, helmets, gas masks, mess kits, and canteens. First Lieutenant Archard noted "to judge by the amount of clothing that had been issued to us, we were going to be away from home for some

time to come."⁴⁰ Each woman was also issued a "need to bring" list showing quite clearly that at least until 1943, the Army was unable to provide for all of a female recruit's basic needs. To complete the processing, each nurse received dog tags, and inoculations for smallpox, yellow fever, and tetanus.⁴¹ Between the time they arrived at the P.O.E. and the time of embarkation, the nurses were not allowed to go out alone; the whole group was required to stay together. Lt. Edith Aynes pointed out that this directive created an esprit de corps.⁴² Aynes explained that since each nursing unit was small in number and would work and live within very close quarters this regulation provided an opportunity, or rather forced, the women to become acquainted and work out personal quibbles before they even left the United States. Archard remembers that on the evening before she left for North Africa, the chief nurse cautioned the nurses "above all, don't talk. Don't tell anyone you are going overseas. Remember your lives are at stake, and a careless word may bring disaster."⁴³ This warning would certainly be consistent with the philosophy of the day that--"Loose lips sink ships."⁴⁴ Before embarkation each nurse was given a "safety arrival card" that was to be addressed to her kin. When the nurses arrived safely these cards were mailed from the P.O.E.⁴⁵

During the passage to North Africa the women discovered exactly what their role in the war would involve; the images the nurses had been bombarded with and influenced by showed women in glamorous, adventurous situations, not danger. Lt. Theresa Archard remembered the first night aboard ship when her commanding officer, Colonel Ringer, finally let the nurses know that they would function as a field

hospital unit. "We will be leap-frogging one another on the field of battle," he warned, "Just how close to the fighting line we will be will depend upon battle conditions."⁴⁶ The military's upper echelon clearly realized the grave danger the nurses would face, though it is important to remember that when the convoys left for North Africa these nurses had not yet received military training. Colonel Ringer ended his introduction by reminding the women with the following remarks: "[R]emember you're playing for keeps. One false move, and it may be too late."⁴⁷ A heavy burden was thus placed on the shoulders of these untrained women.

For the most part, the enlistment campaign succeeded. The civilian and military propaganda efforts to encourage enlistment varied in style and form. Yet one thing remains abundantly clear: each was designed to present to the general public images that would make enlistment desirable, and yet not enflame hostility and resentment on the homefront. Mobilization and deployment of the ANC, however, placed nurses in positions with which they could make significant contributions to the lowering of the mortality rates of World War II. As they would prove once they arrived at the front, the nurses would play a vital role in the war effort, a role their training prepared them to play.

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CHAPTER III

TRAINING NIGHTINGALES FROM FRONT LINES TO FLIGHT

Members of the Army Nurse Corps participated in all theaters of operation, usually behind the front lines. This location was not their intended position. The United States affirmed the no-combat duty policy for women, and the prospect of women in dangerous situations was clearly downplayed in early propaganda efforts as well as in military policy. Historian D'Ann Campbell has noted that "the image of fair damsels engaged in hand-to-hand combat in trenches and jungles was a terror and fixation that drove Americans to endorse the rule."¹ Yet, ANC members participated in roles that demanded they be close to the action, so close at times that they dug their own foxholes. In some cases, the hospital units could be found set up on a hill, in front of the artillery, or between two strategic military targets.² The preliminary military strategy called for male corpsmen to work on the front lines. Generally, the military deemed it imperative to keep the nurses away from areas that were under siege or threatened.³ Ideally nurses would remain in the Army Zone at base hospitals in secure positions, far from the combat zone, only going as far forward as the evacuation hospitals in the Corps Zone. However, as members of the regular Army Medical Corps and later, as members of the Army Air Corps, nurses did their most necessary work in the line of fire.

The Army Nurse Corps had four specific designated roles for the nurses to fulfill: specialized surgical work; technical work, treatment of difficult cases, and the

training of enlisted corpsmen and pharmacy mates.⁴ The Recruiting Publicity Bureau, however, stated the nurse's role in a more glamorous light in 1944. "The Army Nurse is the Army Doctor's right hand," it wrote. "Without her, the present high standard of health among our soldiers, and the gratifying percentage of recovery of battle casualties, would be impossible."⁵ This particular piece of propaganda is an excellent example of the transition which propaganda underwent from the beginning of the war until V-E and V-J Days in 1945.

In order for nurses to reach the pinnacle accomplishment of "Doctor's right hand," the Army had to train them. In mid-1943, the Army finally succeeded in establishing a basic training course for the newly-commissioned nurses. The course consisted of field and hospital war management training,⁶ and included classes on military courtesy, chemical warfare protection, care of tropical fevers and their prevention, sanitation, and military law. As a matter of practicality, the white nurse's uniform was traded in for Army green fatigues, thirty pound packs, mess kits, gas masks, and four-pound helmets.⁷ Each nurse underwent training to become proficient in helpful field skills, such as converting a newspaper into a bedpan or a pair of trousers into a stretcher.⁸

Basic training also included physical conditioning. While most nurses expected to remain in places where the art of bivouacking (forming temporary encampments) would not be necessary, the endurance built by conditioning would serve them well when they were called upon to work sixteen- to eighteen-hour shifts. The impact of this conditioning was especially noticeable when there were large

operations going on two European fronts in 1944 and 1945 and when enlistment numbers decreased in proportion to the wounded caused nursing shortages within medical units. A nurse's basic training included a number of hikes with full packs to aid in her physical conditioning. One nurse described these hikes as follows:

After the first six [miles] they made us stop to rest and gave us a gas mask drill. The darn things seemed so hard to put on that most everyone of us were crying our eyes out by the time we learned how. They kept throwing tear gas around and if we weren't quick enough to get the mask on, that was our own hard luck.⁹

Though these gas mask drills to counter chemical warfare proved unnecessary, they were quite thorough. Every nurse breathed small amounts of all noxious gases which the Army expected them to encounter, such as mustard and chlorine gas, so that they would be able to spot identify them in an emergency.¹⁰ Physical fitness became an integral component of the flight nurses training as well. All potential flight nurses received field equipment and taught to pitch and disassemble tents. Instructions in practical military hygiene and sanitation, camouflage techniques and map reading also were included. The marches came with regular frequency and were of increasing lengths. As a part of the survival course, each nurse learned deep water procedures, parachute drills, simulated bombing, rescue measures, ditching procedures with and without a lifeboat. Finally, each nurse had to be able to swim fully clad while "dodging live machine-gun fire."¹¹

The nurses also learned to bivouac. The skill of being able to set up a temporary encampment soon proved to be of vital importance to those nurses who were stationed in the evacuation hospitals. Often the front lines would move at such a

pace the evacuation hospital would have to be set up and torn down every few days. Occasionally the nurses knew more about bivouacking than the Army's experts. Lt. Archard recalled one such instance in the Trebessa Hills of North Africa.

A reconnaissance expert had gone on before us and had found our bivouac area. He was told to camouflage it and took these orders literally. Tents were pitched at an angle of forty-five degrees. He was an expert in natural camouflage and expected the trees and vegetation to take care of us. . . . However, he forgot that gravity has a hand in such things, and we were pitched at such an angle that we slipped through the straps of our bedrolls.¹²

In initial assaults these mobile hospital units traveled light, bringing only staff and some essential items, trusting that medical supplies would follow. Each hospital came equipped with a dynamo (electric generator) that provided power for the x-ray room, operating room, laboratory, supply room, and pharmacy.¹³ The hospital units arrived and began receiving patients before the supply vehicles had arrived. In the North African campaign, when nurses and medical units came ashore, no medical supplies came with them due to the constant barrage of enemy artillery.¹⁴ Therefore, a scarcity of medical supplies existed, no food came ashore for the staff or incoming patients, forcing nurses to be inventive in order to accomplish ordinary tasks such as feeding the patients and dressing wounds.

In addition to dealing with physically injured patients, the nurses also dealt with shell-shocked or combat-fatigued patients. According to the Army, 102,989 men in the European Theater of Operations experienced neuropsychiatric injuries, the majority of whom were victims of combat fatigue.¹⁵ Most men diagnosed as suffering from combat fatigue returned to their units and combat. According to military regulations, "separate facilities of the triage and treatment of combat exhaustion

casualties [had to be] available;"¹⁶ in other words, more hospital wards for the nurses to staff. Psychiatrists instructed nurses to keep shell-shocked patients totally sedated with barbiturates. No doubt a majority of medical personnel followed the military directives that called for sedation. However, when dealing with shell-shocked patients some of the medical unit's chief nurses came up with more creative and effective methods. First Lieutenant Archard was one of the more creative chief nurses. She disagreed with the regulations that mandated the total sedation of combat fatigued men:

One of my prettiest nurses, Helen English, a red headed girl from Florida--a good nurse besides being a bit on the Hollywood side for looks--was assigned to look after these two tents with one hundred dead-to-the-world patients in them. When those boys had rested, they awoke to see English walking serenely about, never flinching when there was an unusually heavy roll of barrage. Most of them decided then and there that if a woman like English could take it, so could they. In forty-eight to seventy-two hours, most of those boys were new fighting men, ready and eager to return to their units.¹⁷

In this instance, as in many others, the nurses themselves took their training to heart but often found it to be impractical in the field.

While regular nurses received their training, the Army Air Corps instructed the newest members of the lifesaving team: flight nurses. Every flight nurse's duty was to live up to the ideals of her creed. For example, a flight nurse was expected to "stand guard over the medicines . . . be untiring in the performance of my duty. . . be faithful to my training . . . [and] lift this lamp of hope and faith and courage. . . ." ¹⁸ Despite the nobility and stoicism which the creed conjures up,

"a flight nurse could never feel safe, because the same planes that carried out the wounded also brought in fresh troops, so the planes could not bear the Red

Cross symbol. This flight nurse was therefore exposed to as much danger as if she were in combat."¹⁹

The flight nurse's training course evolved between 1942 and 1944, initially a four-week course, then to six-weeks, and finally a nine-week course that was broken into a six-week segment and a three-week segment.²⁰ During the first six weeks nurses received instruction covering "subjects required of all medical personnel plus material peculiar to air evacuation."²¹ Subjects such as aeromedical physiology, therapeutics, oxygen equipment usage, transportation of neuropsychiatric patients, effectiveness of pharmaceutical, emergency medical treatment, security of military information, and Geneva convention provisions fell under the umbrella labelled "specific to flight nurses."²²

Nurses trained to make use of all available equipment aboard the transport plane in order to render their patients more comfortable, prevent excessive bleeding, alleviate pain, meet the needs of patients in shock, and handle any and all exigencies that might arise en route.²³ The flight nurse's training involved practical experience in air evacuations. Each air corps nurse participated in actual domestic evacuations of the sick and injured.²⁴ After full completion the nurse had to await conferral of the designation of "flight nurse" by the Commanding General of the Army Air Forces. After her designation was granted the flight nurse could don her "wings,"²⁵ (flight nurses wore a pair of wings, identical to that of a pilot, except that an "N" was embossed in the center of the wings).

The first class of thirty-nine flight nurses graduated February 18, 1943.²⁶ Between then and October, 1944, 1,079 flight nurses graduated from the Army Air

Corps Evacuation School at Bowman Field, Kentucky, and another 435 graduated between November, 1944, and June, 1946.²⁷ Flight surgeons did not accompany air evacuation patients. The flight surgeon's responsibilities included choosing which patients needed air evacuation, the preparation of the patient for flight, and the instruction of nurses as to any special treatment the patient would need while in the air. The flight nurse would be totally responsible for the in flight care of the patients.²⁸ Historian Doris Weatherford notes that their "work demanded much more independence than nurses generally exercised and she often did a doctor's duty."²⁹ The duties of an officer were fixed in the minds of the flight nurses, and as the officer in charge of the flight she took on even more responsibility. The woman was in charge and she was not to make a mistake. For the first time, the professionalism of the military nurse was truly acknowledged through the responsibility assigned to her.

Despite the lack of an early training program, effective and beneficial training regimens were developed and utilized, thus making the nurses an effectual part of the medical units. The initial chaos of enlistment, recruitment and deployment eased and gradually the path which women had to take to help their country became less rocky. Training benefitted not only the women who lived in the fields, and those that soared through the air but also their patients who needed the medical staff to be not only competent, but prepared. The training each nursing recruit received went far beyond the media images of marching and hand-holding, images that persisted despite the realities of their lives in the line of fire.

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- 9 Aynes, 235.
- 10 Aynes, 236, Weatherford, 7, and Campbell, 51.
- 11 Mae Mills Link and Hubert A. Coleman, Medical Support of the Army Air Forces in World War II (Washington, D.C., 1955), 376-377. Also see, Weatherford, 12.
- 12 Archard, 69.
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- 17 Archard, 108.
- 18 Link and Coleman, 375.
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- 26 Link and Coleman, 378.
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CHAPTER IV

IMAGES OF THE NIGHTINGALES FROM THE MILITARY PERSPECTIVE

Society expected women to join the war effort, but did not expect women to challenge their "defined" roles within society. Historian Sara Evans asserted that "government propaganda consistently reassured Americans that while women would do their civic duty for the duration, they certainly would return to their traditional roles once the emergency was over."¹ Use of this type of stance helped quell rumors that women in the military assumed what D'Ann Campbell termed "unnatural male roles."² Historian Susan Hartmann noted that the military did not challenge the accepted social norms concerning women's "natural attributes and their appropriate roles,"³ and in the military's policies, a maintenance of the traditional view of women as domestic in nature remained firmly in place.⁴ The desire to portray military women in traditional women's roles determined the nature of the images presented to the public. Official military publicity tried to dignify the servicewoman's role by lending a measure of seriousness to her contributions. The civilian media's efforts to create an exciting, glamorous image that held only a modicum of seriousness.

The Army Pictorial Service Company, or APSC, kept a photographic history of the events, people, and places of war. A compilation of photographs housed in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library yields a mere twenty-eight photos of Army Nurse Corps nurses. The twenty-eight photographs fall into five discernible categories: woman as beacon of patriotism and courage (89%), woman as compassionate healer

(42%), woman as a posed subject (32%), woman as glamorous (11%), and finally, woman as heroine (7%). These five categories showed women in both realistic and unrealistic situations. These photographs express the paradox of women in uniform: the ideal of military women remaining the bastions of femininity conjoined with the stark reality of these women putting their lives on the line to guarantee the safety of their charges, the victims of war. These two extremes are best exhibited in two specific sets of photographs.

Two staged "glamour photos" use the nurses of the 33rd Field Hospital. The 33rd Field Hospital was the medical unit that served consistently closest to the front line during the North African and Italian campaigns. The first photo has Second Lieutenant Viola D. Longstaff, ANC, applying cosmetics and yields the caption: "Even tho' she's just behind the front lines, 2nd Lt. Viola D. Longstaff, ANC, of Detroit, Mich. thinks a woman should keep herself as beautiful as possible. . . . [She's keeping] her date with the paint and powder box."⁵ In other words, she is applying makeup in order to remain beautiful, just like any other woman at home. The Army effectively deemphasized the danger of the nurses' position near the front lines and reasserted the glamour and "womanly" attribute of wanting to be beautiful. The second photo shows Second Lieutenant Rita E. Bernier hanging socks to dry, not a glamorous event in and of itself, but when coupled with the caption, the meaning behind the photo changes. The caption reads: "Silk stockings may look nice but aren't warm enough in the field."⁶ Once again the emphasis is on the expected societal answer, not the fact that she is participating in a field hospital directly behind

the front lines. This type of portrayal was in keeping with the self-imposed rules the military attempted to enforce concerning pictures of military women--namely, that pictures of servicewomen should depict them in non-threatening, non-dangerous situations. The Army prohibited the use of the image of military women in what it termed non-domestic situations, such as drinking and smoking, or pictures in which women appeared to be doing strenuous physical work.

The second set of photographs, taken in Italy, demonstrated a different expectation than the first group. These nurses proved their heroism and were rewarded for their work. The APSC also took two pictures of Major General John P. Lucas, Commanding General of the VI Corps awarding Silver Stars to three nurses, Mary L. Roberts, Elaine A. Roe, and Rita V. Rourke, thus denoting the other extreme, the "wonderwoman in Khaki" image. The photograph alludes to the bravery and courage exhibited while the women were under fire.⁷ The images show these gallant women standing in a field somewhere in the Nettuno Area in Italy, wearing fatigues and their newly acquired Silver Stars. The caption the APSC tacked to the second photograph reads:

Gallantry in action. . . . These nurses, during a heavy caliber enemy artillery of the field hospital immediately began the evacuation of 42 patients while quieting others. Their quick thinking and bravery prevented confusion which might have been critical, and were an inspiration to the enlisted men working under their supervision.⁸

The predominance of servicewomen in non-threatening, semi-domestic situations lends itself to the idea that the military propagators desired to portray women in situations where they wouldn't appear to be stepping too far out of their

traditional sphere while participating in the war effort. Yet, in the second pair of photographs, taken in 1944, the APSC shows three women who risked a very dangerous situation in order to guarantee the safety of their charges, enlisted men and the wounded. This instance would appear to be normal, not an aberration. When the U.S. forces assaulted the Anzio beachhead another woman proved her mettle. She writes in a letter to her friend June Wandrey of the ordeal.

Bombs killed one of our nurses and injured another. . . . Another time, at night, antipersonnel bombs were dropped. I was on duty and had a patient, under anesthesia, being operated on. Flak began raining through our operating tent. I reached down beside me and put on my steel bonnet. The doctor, scrub nurse, and circulator all got as far under the operating table as possible. I started to, but thought I can't do that, I've got to protect my patient. I leaned over my patient to protect him as much as possible. Imagine my surprise when General Clark and some other VIPs came to our unit and pinned a bronze star on me for bravery.⁹

The government recognized the need to recruit more women like the aforementioned unnamed nurse, and set out to convince civilian nurses to enlist. The government bombarded nurses with images of "their patriotic duty" in the form of recruiting posters. In an analysis of wartime posters Derek Nelson noted that only pretty women appeared on posters, providing a clean, bright role model for those who were thinking about enlisting.¹⁰ An example of this is the "Nurses Are Needed Now!" Army Nurse poster. A serious-minded nurse in a spotless white uniform begs with her eyes for reinforcements. Standing on a battlefield with a billowing cloud of smoke and an ambulance behind her, she is the epitome of stoicism and valor.¹¹ If women could see their equals in action, and in need of assistance, the inference seems to be that civilian nurses would be inspired to enlist. Nelson noted the issuance of a

different poster designed in 1944 by Sergeant Henry McAlear "was a result of the dramatic increases in American casualties after the landing in Normandy, the capture of Rome and the push into the center of Germany."¹² A beautiful young nurse with the same pleading eyes appears as in the "Nurses Are Needed Now!" poster, but she is dressed for "battle" in fatigues and is sitting in front of an intravenous unit that is hung on the butt of a rifle.¹³ The first image, while somewhat martial, has the nurse in front of the action, but she is not a part of the image, and is a superimposed image on the battlefield. The second image presents the nurse in a martial position with the woman in combat fatigues in front of a rifle, giving the impression that the woman was in the thick of battle. This is quite a change from the first image, yet the image is just as powerful. These two posters also demonstrate a change in the presentation of servicewomen to the public. The "pretty woman" is transformed from a battlefield decoration to a vital member of the war effort. Other posters such as "YOU ARE NEEDED NOW," "Symbol of life," "They CARED FOR FREEDOM--I'LL CARE FOR THEM," and "become a Nurse--YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU," present images of classically beautiful women in uniform, each ready to serve her nation courageously.¹⁴ Unfortunately these posters remain undated, leaving one to wonder if these too conform to the pattern of increasing seriousness as the war progressed. "YOU ARE NEEDED NOW," explains to women that they can register with their local Red Cross Recruiting Station.¹⁵ The "Symbol of life" poster explains to women that by wearing the caduceus with the "N" embossed they symbolize life "for our wounded, hope for our homes, a future, [and] not just a past for those fighting

men."¹⁶ The "They CARED FOR FREEDOM" poster specifically answers questions concerning the role of the ANC nurse. The poster gives information to women who want more details about the life of an ANC nurse, answers questions about training, and reminds women that through their enlistment and care the wounded soldier has a better chance at life.¹⁷ The "[B]ecome a Nurse" poster has Uncle Sam placing a white nursing cap on a winsome, beautiful brunette's head."¹⁸ Once again, all of the women in the posters show a high degree of professionalism, maintain the pretty women image, and reinforce the predominantly positive image of the ANC nurse.

While military leaders stressed the vital importance of women's services, and also strove to reassure the general public that women who joined the military still retained their natural feminine characteristics.¹⁹ According to the social norms emplaced by males, a woman's place was still in the home.²⁰ This can be clearly seen in the early propaganda efforts of both the military and civilian media sources. This type of publicity may have helped counter some of the hostility women faced from their families and friends when they decided to join the military. The official publicity affirmed the idea that women who entered the military retained "their charms as women," and that military service only increased their attachment to domestic responsibilities and feminine behavior. Even in military service the women would perform traditional women's jobs; their work would help attain a speedy end to the war, thus allowing their men to come home. This notion alone reinforces the idea that the military understood that gender role expectations needed to be changed in order to accommodate war needs. This change, however, was to be only temporary.

The military sought to reiterate that women would return to their homes and their domestic responsibilities as soon as their husbands, fathers, brothers, and boyfriends returned. Historian Susan Hartmann in her work The Homefront and Beyond: American Women in the 1940's noted that military propaganda was:

a product of the need to appeal to prevailing public attitudes. . . . Films, posters, and advertisements asserted the equivalency of women's duties and contributions--they were doing a "man sized" job, marching "shoulder to shoulder with men," for it was a "woman's war too". . . . Moreover, [and most important] women were pictured in traditional activities.²¹

Thus the military cultivated an image of nurses as women still clearly within a woman's traditional sphere of influence.

In 1943 rumors concerning rampant immorality among servicewomen surfaced. The emphasis placed on beautiful women and models helped to enflame the negative image that circulated. The resulting slanders were plentiful, with many coming from enlisted men. The innuendo reached its climax a year after female officers joined the medical units. Likely, many of those who spread the rumors found themselves for the first time in a subservient position, taking orders from women, and doing jobs, such as making beds, that they regarded as the sole responsibility of women.²²

The Army Base Censors who examined approximately eight percent of the total number of servicemen's letters for specific comments also discovered the negative sentiments in letters the men wrote home. Base censors were men who examined letters and edited out comments they considered inflammatory and in conflict with national security. One soldier wrote home that "although men continue

to speak highly of the Army Nurse Corps, practically no soldier wants his wife or sweetheart to have any association with the women's services."²³ This sentiment was echoed over and over again.²⁴ Historian D'Ann Campbell's research found that the reaction of male enlistees to women who enlisted "ranged from [an] enthusiastic reception through amused condescension to open hostility."²⁵ A survey administered to inductees by the Army concluded that eighty-four percent of the men were not in favor of the women's services and one anonymous soldier voiced this common sentiment in this letter home: "some [men] threatened to jilt a fiancée, divorce a wife, or disown a sister if she joined."²⁶ Apparently, some men feared that by donning a military uniform women would either be desexed, or paradoxically, become prostitutes.²⁷ Other letters, such as the following, condemned even the ANC. One soldier wrote home to his sweetheart: "There are good girls. . . [but I] haven't seen to [sic] many since I've been in the Army. And our Army Nurses aren't too good morally."²⁸

Conversely, the base censors' files also contain comments that reveal the deep care and commitment of the nursing personnel, and a large portion of the letters examined extolled the virtues of the ANC.²⁹ Letters reflect frank admiration of the nurses and their perseverance in the combat zone. One read, "There's only one kind of women [sic] in a war service that I think is appropriate [sic] and that's an Army nurse."³⁰ Another stated, "In my opinion I'd rather salute them [ANC officers] than the majority of our own officers."³¹ Yet another stated:

They are a hard working bunch of girls doing a marvelous job. The ones at this hospital [are] almost all from Georgia. It has been nearly two years since

they have seen the United States. For the last 18 months, they have followed the army across North Africa, through Sicily, to Salerno, to Naples, to Cassino, to Anzio and now to France, picking up the human wreckage of battle as they go along.³²

Other letters which the base censors sampled discussed the ANC's role and respectability. The following letter, written by an infantry private, expresses with clarity the fact that the Army nurse overcame the prevailing image of being "helpless," and "fragile," but not the less-than-adult image of being a "little gal":

Some of the nurses wear our regular combat clothes and they seem so small and lost in them. That of course is hardly so. Those little gals are very effective and anything but helpless. They don't always work under ideal conditions either. The wounded men coming back from the lines doesn't [sic] travel very far before one of the angels of mercy shows up to make him comfortable. I have a lot of respect for the army nurse.³³

This particular letter home shows to a certain extent the temporary acceptance of nurses outside of their traditional domestic sphere. Although nurses entered the war as commissioned officers, they sometimes experienced a lack of respect from enlisted personnel. A key example came from ANC veteran June Wandrey when a male comrade informed her that nurses were little better than bedpan commandos.³⁴ Some of the letters refer to the lowly status of the nurses and the writer's desire to do anything to help improve the women's lives.³⁵ Whether this concern was paternalistic or simply compassion for another human being is unknown, but the sentiment that a woman needs additional assistance is there.

Military officials noted the nurse's role and participation in the war in a positive light. The positive images are exhibited in commendations the nurses's units earned as well as in military after-action reports. News of such commendations

reached home in letters servicemen and servicewomen wrote, so the images of courage and bravery reached the homefront even if on a limited basis. Unfortunately, the positive images generated in after-action reports remained in the category of classified military records and made very little impact on the homefront due to the public's limited access to them. ANC veteran June Wandrey copied the four commendations her unit received into her wartime journal. The commendations recognize and applaud the courage, bravery and hard work of the medical units as a whole, and nurses especially contributed.³⁶

These commendations applaud the ideals of duty, skill, and devotion while not glamorizing the image of wartime service. Lt. Sidney Hyman wrote of the bravery and courage of the nurses on the beachhead at Anzio in his after-action report:

Faithfulness to the facts demands that a difference be noted in what combat troops and medical personnel can or cannot do when they find themselves under fire. Combat troops can readily seek shelter from that fire. . . . But [the] opposite standard of judgement exists for medical troops. The character of their training is judged by their willingness to expose themselves to enemy fire in order to safeguard the sick and wounded under their care.³⁷

In addition to medical assistance, the presence of two hundred nurses provided a psychological boost for the combat soldiers. Lt. Hyman continued:

The combat soldier's appreciation of what the "medics" faced was revealed in many ways. In bitter, front-line hours, the expression was commonly heard, "Well, if the nurses can take it, so can we." The knowledge that they stood as the only line of protection between the enemy and our medical installations on the beachhead strengthened the determination of countless Allied soldiers to fight the enemy with every ounce of energy they could muster.³⁸

Thus, the safety of the nurses became the impetus for continued fighting through the darkest hours. The possibility of nurses being captured represented a

grotesque image of American womanhood being violated. The Allied Forces contemplated the removal of the nurses from the beachhead but felt that the overriding psychological impact of such a removal on the combat troops would be detrimental.

As a result, the nurses stayed. The report finishes:

Nurses certainly are not expendable, but in a situation as critical as that which developed on the beachhead . . . these nurses assumed a major symbolic importance. . . . The presence of the nurses on the beachhead constituted a ringing affirmation of our determination to hold what we had.³⁹

Military and civilian propagators fought over and over again the battle to present wartime service in a realistic, unglamorized light. The negative image created, either inadvertently or consciously, has served as a focal point for many researchers such as D'Ann Campbell and Doris Weatherford. The focus on the negative aspects of the publicity overshadows the very real and positive images generated by the military and the military media. It is this positive perception that demonstrates the final step of acceptance of nurses as full-fledged members of the military. The glamorous images, patriotism, the desire for adventure, and monetary rewards may have lured them to the enlistment office, but they proved themselves worthy of honor in their training and on the battlefield. They stripped away the mantle of romanticism and projected the image of professionalism.

NOTES

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CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Honor, glory, perseverance, and yes, glamour--these words define the role of the Army Nurse Corps nurse in World War II. Each woman enlisted for a multitude of reasons, ranging from sheer patriotism to a sense of adventure, a sense of duty or the desire to leave small town America behind for the glories of war. Nearly fifty-three thousand women enlisted in the ANC, and overall, one percent of the American women broke down the barriers of their traditional domestic sphere. The debate as to whether or not these women anticipated the women's movement of the 1960s is a debate that rages on and has yet to find full resolution.¹ Historians such as Karen Anderson and William Chafe argue back and forth incessantly about the ultimate value that should be placed upon the women's experiences during World War II. However, for four years, four war-torn years, American women courageously fought for their country's wounded, some giving their own lives while protecting the "boys over there."

One persuasive factor that could have inspired the full range of aforementioned reasons for enlistment is propaganda. Whether in the form of a nail polish advertisement or a recruitment poster, civilian and military propagators set out to create a barrage of images. The images created reflected the degree to which the general public accepted the placement of women in a martial setting. The examination of periodicals, recruitment posters, pamphlets and other key sources

provides a clearer picture of the transition in degree of acceptability for the general public, and to a lesser degree, the acceptability of women as military personnel.

When the United States entered the war in 1941, advertisements and announcements reflected the conflicting emotions of the general public. Notices were posted for thousands of selfless women to enlist so that men would be freed for combat duty. Others appeared asking nurses to enlist as support for the inevitable casualties war would bring. Yet, at the same time advertisements appeared reminding women that even if they donned a uniform they were expected to remain beautiful and feminine, so they had better stock up on patriotic lip sticks and nail colors, such as Cutex's "On Duty" red. Advertisements such as Cutex's lent the military woman an image of glamour and frivolity, neither of which could accurately reflect the chaos of recruitment, training, and deployment, nor could they effectively demonstrate what these women would be expected to do in a wartime setting.

Observations within these sources show a clear if subtle transition. One can see this transition most clearly in civilian media sources which no longer portrayed servicewomen in advertisements as being totally preoccupied with make-up and fancy hair-dos but rather saluted them for their serious and significant contributions to the Allied war effort.

Unfortunately, the general public did not see many of the military media's changes because the military sequestered the images away in classified after-action reports, commendations, and base censor records. Early war propaganda efforts, from 1942 to 1943, are replete with beautiful women holding the hands of soldiers or

images of them in their newly designed, ultra-feminine yet unpractical, blue wool uniform. As the war progressed the images underwent a change. Women working in their practical, if not photogenic, seersucker uniforms or oversized combat fatigues now appear. They are seen as participants in the war, not as separated from it.

The realism which journalists interjected into the media sources coincides with the increase demand for personnel, a perceived acute nursing shortage in January 1945, the new and effective training programs, the creation of the Army Air Corps, and the surges of patriotism that washed over the United States as a whole. The actual experience of war for an ANC nurse, or any other female member of the Armed Forces, found its way into the propaganda. Granted, the romanticism which the media portrayed did not wholly abate, but rather tapered off to a degree. Perhaps the reason the civilian media did not positively embrace women more fully in a martial setting is because society as a whole was not ready to accept permanent changes in a woman's domestic role. Society could accept temporary changes, such as accepting Rosie the Riveter, but G.I. Nightingale, as a professional, portended real societal change--a change that society in general, as well as many women themselves, were unwilling to accept.

Army nurses were just as human as those who remained at home during the war, and they certainly did not like experiencing the horrors of war. Lt. June Wandrey succinctly provides an expression of the nurses' fears and frustrations. "I didn't come overseas to live like an animal for the past two years in Africa, Sicily, Italy, and France,"² she writes in her journal. "I am tired of the noises of war, the

trauma of war, the sleeplessness of war, the hunger of war, and the incessant griping."³ The memories of war haunted them as they attempted to ease the pain and anguish of the young men who fought with all their might. They patted the hand of dying men, knowing that others who would live awaited their attention.⁴ The civilian media never fully understood or portrayed the nurses in this light. If the civilian media could not accept these women as professionals, then it would seem natural that the general public also had difficulty viewing them as capable of success outside their traditional women's occupations. Veterans of the ANC returned home not to the fanfare that greeted their male compatriots but to a lackluster welcome, thus propagating the perception that perhaps the role they played in the war effort was not as valuable as the men's role.⁵

Yet, the military took notice of the nurses' heroism and rewarded them accordingly, issuing commendations and medals, and noting in the after-action reports the valor and bravery exhibited by women, women who men had viewed as only domestic in nature before the war. Ironically, that agency which proved most resistant to allowing women to serve in wartime--the military--proved the agency which embraced the change most completely. Perhaps it was most capable of assessing accurately the contributions of the nurses who served. ANC members who served in the European Theater experienced war from a different perspective than their counterparts in the Pacific Theater. These women participated in the invasions of North Africa, Sicily, Italy, Southern France, and Normandy, as well as the swift march into the interior. They dug their own foxholes when it became necessary, they

suffered the deliberate attack upon their medical units, and the hunger and discomfort of being cut off from the supply lines. Their valiant efforts have earned our remembrance.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Karen Anderson. Wartime Women: Sex Roles, Family Relations, and the Status of Women During World War II (Westport, Conn., 1981), 8, William H. Chafe. The Paradox of Change: American Women in the 20th Century (New York, 1991), 131-134, Maureen Honey. Creating Rosie the Riveter, Class, Gender, and Propaganda during World War II (Amherst, Mass., 1984), 2, and Doris Weatherford. American Women and World War II (New York, 1990), 306.
- 2 June Wandrey. Bedpan Commando: The Story of a Combat Nurse During World War II (Elmore, Ohio, 1989), 152.
- 3 Ibid., 144.
- 4 Ibid., 54-55.
- 5 Letter from June Wandrey to Joanne M. Rosenberger, dated 21 November 1992.

APPENDIX

CITATIONS RECORDED BY JUNE WANDREY

CITATION FROM MAJOR GENERAL JOHN P. LUCAS, dated 14 September 1943

1. You, your officers, nurses and enlisted men are commended for your excellent performance of duty throughout the Sicilian campaign. 2. You have helped care for over 12,00 patients, 3909 of whom were American Battle casualties. Through your untiring efforts, skill, and devotion to duty, you have rendered the highest type of surgical care. 3. I congratulate you and your unit for your exemplary performance of an arduous task.

CITATION FROM MAJOR GENERAL GEOFFREY KEYES, 12 December 1943

As a result of my personal visits, combined with reports of visits of officers of my staff I wish to commend you, your officers, nurses, and enlisted men for the efficient manner in which you are caring for the sick and wounded soldiers, not only of the II Corps Command but of the entire Fifth Army Command. The wounded to whom I spoke were outspoken with praise for the attention they are receiving.

In particular, do I wish to extend my commendation to the Nurses (emphasis Wandrey) for their cheerfulness and attention to duty as they go about caring for the wounded under the most adverse conditions of weather.

CITATION FOR MERITORIOUS SERVICE

CITATION for Award of the MERITORIOUS SERVICE UNIT PLAQUE. Field Hospital is awarded the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque for outstanding devotion to duty in the performance of exceptionally difficult task for the time period 16 August 44 to 30 November 1944, in France and in a similar capacity with other divisions in the following land operations, personnel have shown an outstanding devotion to duty in treating sick and wounded troops entrusted to their care. Though called upon to move their hospital units as much as two and three times weekly, in order to keep up with the combat troops, all personnel were equal to the task and have managed to always be in position to receive casualties and give them immediate and proper care.

CITATION FROM CENTRAL EUROPE, dated 7 May 1945

Elements of the -- Field Hospital supported the Division in its landing in Southern France, in the early part of the drive up the Rhone Valley, the assault on the Siegfried Line, the crossing of the Rhine, Main and Danube Rivers, and in the attacks on Nurnburg and Munich. Establishing in close proximity to the Division Clearing Station, the Field Hospital rendered valuable aid to the more seriously wounded at a time critical to saving life. The very nature of the cases handled called for the highest professional skill before, during, and after operations. The efficient manner in which the personnel of the -- Field Hospital accomplished arduous duties, often under the adverse conditions, indicate a high school degree of the training and morale and resulted in the saving of many lives and the alleviation of much suffering among the wounded of this Division.

Source: June Wandrey, Bedpan Commando: The Story of a Combat Nurse During World War II (Elmore, Ohio, 1989), 63-64, 81, 170, and 203. Reprinted with permission from June Wandrey.

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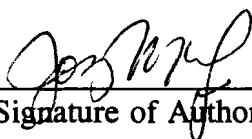
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