

LETTERS FROM READERS

The editors are not responsible for opinions expressed in this department. Letters should not exceed 250 words and should be signed. When so requested, signatures will not be published.

The Honor Column

The following two letters were sent us by Colonel Julia O. Flikke, Superintendent, Army Nurse Corps, to whom they were addressed.—EDITOR.

In my daughter's *American Journal of Nursing* I have been reading various articles pertaining to the increasing of the nursing force, articles so well written that one felt inspired by the enthusiasm and high ideals presented. But when I closed the book, I felt that the world to which I returned was cold and uninterested.

On Sunday I listened to a radio broadcast of a sermon from a local church. The minister prayed for the "men in service and their families." A regularly printed leaflet of a church of a different denomination carries an "Honor Column" entitled "Our Boys in Service." I happen to know that a nurse from that congregation is in foreign service. A prominent magazine offers half rate subscriptions to "men in service."

We are urged to be hospitable to these men who are strangers in our midst. I wonder if a nurse in a strange place—if she should happen to have a day off—would be invited into a home. Fashions on the screen give her uniform only passing mention, whereas with the exception of the defense worker, she is the only woman actually in war work. If her life is portrayed on the screen, it is usually with a silly sentimental emphasis, and some producers have even dared to depict questionable professional ethics.

In my family of four—one son rejected, one too young, and one subject to call—it remained for the only daughter to be the first to go. On March fourth she will have been gone six weeks. I do not know if by that time I shall know if she has reached her destination, but I am quite sure that from the maternal angle my raw days are no less

so than those of any mother of any man in uniform.

I would not take from him one iota of credit due the man in the service, but for these women who also feel the urge of patriotism and the desire to serve; who with courage and enthusiasm suggest the early pioneer woman and help refute any charge that the younger generation is soft; who by their presence impart to the battle-field sick-room the subtle suggestion of mothers and security with its attendant psychological healing; whose trained nursing care permits men to return to their homes and loved ones—for them I could shout from the house-tops, "These also serve." And when in the future more monuments are added to the numerous ones already erected to the memory of soldiers, sailors, and marines, I would say, "Build some too for the nurses."

I have a feeling that the public pretty much takes the nurse for granted, and that this attitude as well as your program would be greatly benefited by another program which would emphasize without melodrama the reality, high courage, and sincerity of her life.—New York.

There were just six of us, who, on November 15 were transferred to Station Hospital, Hickam Field, Honolulu. We felt that we were the happiest group of nurses anywhere—a new thirty-bed hospital, lovely quarters—just two blocks from the officers club, and, above all, the grandest chief nurse who enjoys everything as much as we do. Living on the field, occasionally we made trips to the other islands in a flying fortress.

Under such pleasant conditions the Japs found us *that* Sunday morning.

At 7:55 A.M. as I was making out the reports, I heard a roaring of planes, *very close*, and remarked, "Sounds like a plane falling." Then a great explosion—I said, "It crashed." The patients and I ran out on the third-floor

porch overlooking Pearl Harbor and saw numerous planes diving—an explosion with each dive, then a great mass of black smoke; startled, I said, “Ye gods! It’s the Japs!” (But I still could not believe it.) Then one of the patients remarked, “Oh! It’s maneuvers.” About that time the Japs were over Hickam Field and had laid the first egg in H.A.D. *Then we knew.*

I rushed downstairs and received permission from our C.O. to bring the patients down. All the electric clocks stopped at exactly 8:00 A.M. Just then, you cannot imagine the noise, between the aerial torpedoes, bombs, machine gunning, our anti-craft, and everything else. It was terrific! In the middle of this the other A.N.C.’s and medicos reported for duty.

Shortly, the first casualties began to come in. I cannot describe the condition some of the cases were in. Everyone was still in a “daze.” Phrases registered in my mind that I had never heard used, “All walking casualties in these trucks to Tripler,” then I wondered what “shrapnel” and what “strafing” was. Soon, officers’ wives and NCO’s wives came in to help—we sent them to a wing and had them make dressings by the hundreds. Up to this time we were able to tag all patients, give T.A.T., and M.S.

Then we heard the roaring of planes again—the *second attack*—someone yelled “DOWN,” we fell flat on the floor, the planes were louder, louder; the bombs—nearer, nearer (and we had neither helmet nor gas mask, and I kept thinking about all this cement building crushing in on us), so near that one made a thirty-foot crater about twenty feet from the wing; then they passed over and the next fell across the street near Headquarters. Then the smoke and fumes from the bombs came in, someone yelled “GAS.” Soon after that we had out masks and helmets.

Then more casualties which were worse than the first. We didn’t even get to tag them, all we could do was give M.S. and send them in to Tripler. Now buildings were burning. We were evacuating the major cases until noon, then for days minor cases due to bomb fragments came in. Water was brought to us in large cans, and the mess had started functioning—in fact, it was the

only active one at Hickam that day, and we fed hundreds. In the meantime, Red Cross nurses from Honolulu had come out to help—and officers’ wives who were R.N.’s were with us for several days. As you can probably realize, there were parts of that day I can hardly account for.

At sunset, directly in front of the hospital “Old Glory” was still flying even though she had a huge rip completely across, due to machine gunning and there were several bomb craters a few feet from the mast. Then began our first “blackout” night.

The climate, flowers, scenery, nights, et cetera, are still just wonderful but instead of wearing hibiscus and leis, we are wearing little tin hats and gas masks.

Major Flikke, there are days like December 7 when a nurse can fully appreciate her profession as never before, and deep inside there is a feeling of satisfaction and thankfulness that she was able to do her bit to help “Keep ‘em flying.”—R.N., Hawaii.

Word from the Recruitment Front

On the morning of December 7 when the island of Oahu was attacked, I was there! That morning and the weeks following found me with a feeling of utter helplessness. On the convoy coming home and since my return to the mainland a gnawing desire to be of service has been in all my thoughts. I have been thinking much about going into nurses training and the article, “Do You Want To Be a Nurse?” in the March issue of *Good Housekeeping* has prompted me to action.—TEACHER, Arizona.

Opportunities in Labrador

There are several vacancies for nurses for both permanent and summer service on the staff of the International Grenfell Association in Labrador and Newfoundland. Some nurses are required for general ward duty in the main hospital, and some to take charge of small nursing stations.

Contracts are for fifteen months service with traveling and living expenses paid by the Association. Nurses volunteering for summer service are given traveling and living expenses but no salary.

Applicants must be graduates of a recognized nursing school and for hospital appointments recent graduates will be