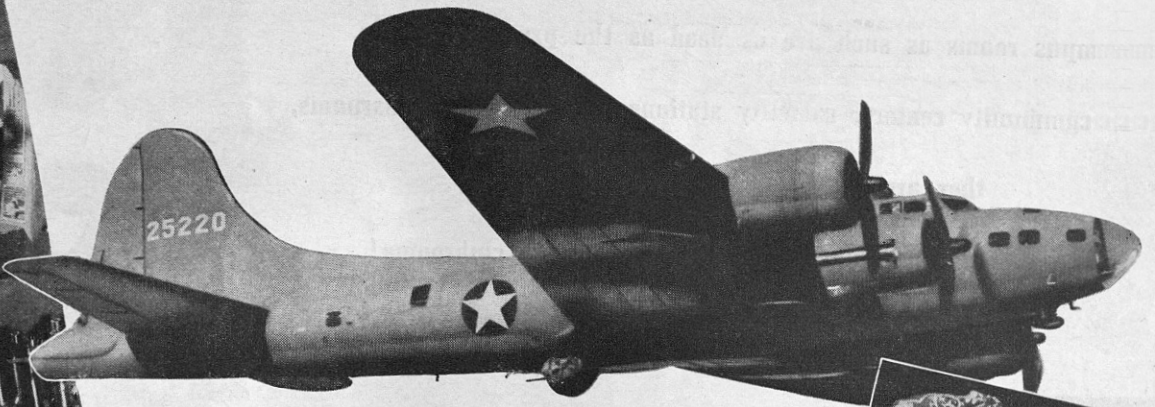


Boeing Flying Fortress, B-17-F, ship on which Lucile Dickerman works



# Mother —1943 model



Photographs, courtesy Boeing Aircraft Co.

BEATRICE GRAY COOK

HITLER said "Americans are soft!"—fighting words that made our blood boil. It drew fire from military men and undreamed-of production from the nation's assembly lines. Employment doubled and trebled in shipyards, munition plants, airplane factories and in all other war production. Soft, are we? Not while mothers are working shoulder to shoulder with men in defense jobs. But challenge is nothing new to Americans—we were bottle-fed on it!

Today there is a new way of life for countless thousands of women. Theirs are double duty days for they work the same shifts as men and also run homes. Mighty fine homes, too. Don't you wonder how they budget their time and energy? Uninformed pessimists insist that children are being neglected and that juvenile delinquency will reach a new high. However, in Seattle, Washington, where more defense work per capita is done than in any other city in the United States, this isn't true. John C. Kelly, chief probation officer, reports no increase in delinquency in spite of working mothers and a suddenly added population of over 150,000 persons. This means youthful character-building agencies are working harder than ever to prevent trouble before it starts. But it also means that in general employed mothers are supervising their children and that the youngsters are sharing their parents' added responsibilities.

Want to visit a home where a mother works on a man's shift—and a woman's, too? Perhaps you are curious to see just how anyone can manage two full-time jobs successfully? I introduce Mrs. Harry E. Dickerman, of Seattle. Mother of three growing children, a charming, college woman, she is a Junior Inspector at Boeing, home of the Flying Fortress. It was nine o'clock in the morning when I called. She had just come off her shift, had bathed, donned pajamas and a luscious satin house coat. She is pretty and very feminine—listed as a mechanic!

"While I'm doing my tiny bit in war production," she told me, "I want you to know I'm not neglecting my family. But I had to choose the graveyard shift to make things come out right. You see, I go to work at midnight and return in time to eat breakfast with my family—and braid my daughter's hair for school."

As she talked, I was fascinated by the way she makes each minute count. Lucile Dickerman could show a top-drawer executive a few tricks!

"My children hardly know I'm leading an abnormal life," she continued, "for I sleep when they are in school and I'm up and dressed to meet Ann, my fifth grader, when she returns. My University daughter helps me; between us all we get the housework done. My husband and children are proud that their extra work at home is a contribution toward the war effort as is mine on the graveyard shift at Boeing."

While she gets dinner, she also prepares the breakfast fruit and

*She works a graveyard shift at Boeing, a full shift at home. "But," says Mrs. Dickerman, "the boys in Africa are busy, too."*

cereal and their High School son helps out by doing the dinner dishes.

"Generally, I spend a perfectly 'at home' evening with my family," she said, "mending, spelling lessons and menu-planning all mixed up with algebra."

She doesn't feel she is imposing upon her husband and children for it is she who makes the greatest sacrifice with no time for recreation.

"But I don't mind," she said. "The boys in Africa are pretty busy, too. Though I'll admit I yearn to get at my spinning wheel and loom."

"Your what?" I gasped. (This modern Priscilla wears overalls!)

"That's my hobby," she smiled. "Last year I took a course in textiles and weaving at the University of Washington. Since then I've bought my own raw wool, washed the fleece, carded it and spun it into yarn. This batch on the staff I intend to dye and weave into dress material."

But Lucile Dickerman was more interested in talking of her job at Boeing. She told me a little of what an inspector must know, how an error in judgment can mean the crack-up of a plane. Explaining intricate processes, she freely used such terms as "anodizing" and "passivate"—words not even in the dictionary!

"It was dreadfully hard at first," she admitted. "Imagine stepping from one environment into a completely unfamiliar one. The factory was a new world and I was surrounded by queer objects without names. My first day I knew just how a baby feels when he starts to notice things. Total strangeness. But gradually I learned, even a new language!"

Why is Lucile Dickerman working? She certainly does not have to for her husband's income as a vocational school principal is in the higher brackets.

"I'm holding down a defense job because I read in the paper an urgent plea for 25,000 women," she said, adding, "I registered because I felt it was my duty to do so. We are needed. All-out effort will shorten the war. Women always work for visions. Maybe I'm sentimental," she said, "but I feel I'm repaying a debt to the country which has given me and mine the way of life we love."

So, hats off to Lucile Dickerman and the women she typifies who are working double time for an ideal—a safe home in a safe democracy.