

standing of the patients. One of them was heard saying to an irrational patient struggling to get his arm free from the transfusion board, "Listen, pardner, please try to hold still for I hate like the deuce to see your arm stuck with that needle again."

THE MEDICAL OFFICERS

The supreme efforts of the Army surgeons to save their patients were a constant challenge to the nurses. Their hours were as long. Their sleep was more often broken. A stubborn invincibility in those men made them operate on the seemingly hopeless cases, and it was amazing (for example, the soldier with five sucking chest wounds and a head wound) how they did live after all.

The commanding officer had the grave responsibilities of keeping up food and supplies, evaluating the combat situation, and sensing emergency developments. He made contact with other supporting services to improve living conditions as much as possible.

OTHER PERSONNEL

In addition to the regular field hospital chaplain who divided his time among the three platoons, there were other chaplains who came to help out. The chaplain, Catholic or Protestant, bending over the cot whispering a prayer, was a familiar sight. On Sunday the Catholic chaplain drove into a vacant pasture and over the engine hood of the jeep draped an OD blanket covered with a white cloth to provide the altar for Mass. His coarse white habit was in perfect keeping with his muddy shoes. "There is no need to introduce myself," he said. "I am just a priest sent to help you maintain some regularity in your religious life." In the afternoon the same pasture was glad with the little organ and congregational singing of the Protestant

service. Sunday was different from other days.

The engineers were first to the rescue when rain poured with a vengeance. They fought the mud while the nurses struggled with death. The wards and operating rooms were a mire. They made walks by sprinkling ashes and gravel. A few days later they spread deep straw over that. It all sank quickly. The next day they made cat walks of small poles wired together like a picket fence. The mud engulfed these also. At last they made board walks, and these "rafts" floated triumphantly.

Mail service was opened, and mail began to come in. A laundry was established on a nearby stream and clothes were laundered for everybody. Hot showers came up every few days. A movie arrived and a post exchange; conditions were nearly normal. In the meantime, the patients were convalescing so that they were now transportable. The wards were becoming empty, and it was time to make preparations for the reserve status.

Looking back over their first period of activity in Germany, the nurses recalled one revealing incident. Soldiers stationed near enough to the hospital had come to see the patients from their units. Seeing how busy everyone was, they gave a hand about the ward. They carried food, washed faces, and occasionally shaved the longest beards. One evening while the nurses were wading quietly about their work, while the tent quivered with a constant artillery barrage, a very young visiting soldier said, "It's not right. It's bad enough for men, but this is no place for a woman."

The nurse looking at her patients, quietly and comfortably sleeping in the orderly ward asked, "Do you think there would be any difference here if there were no nurses?"

"Oh, my, yes," he quickly admitted.

"Well, then that is the reason we're staying."

Professional Nurses Needed in Postwar Years

By THOMAS PARRAN, M.D.

The spectacular advances in medical science during this war have convinced the public that adequate health and medical service are basic to a sound national economy. In my opinion, the future health demands of our people are certain to exceed by far anything we have known in the past. Obviously a greatly expanded nursing service is an integral part of any national health program.

This country never has had enough nurses to provide adequate nursing care for all the people. The training of an increased number of nurses to meet wartime requirements will not, in my opinion, create a surplus after the war if our people

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get the health care which they need and which I believe they will demand.

Our best estimates, based on actual nursing needs, indicate that the over-all requirement of the predicted postwar population of 138,000,000 persons is 485,600 full-time professional nurses. This is almost double the 1943 census of 245,345 available registered nurses.

Professional nurses of tomorrow must be even better prepared educationally than they are today in order to take advantage of the variety of opportunities being presented to them. Specifically I foresee new horizons in such fields as public health, nurse education, psychiatric nursing, veterans, rehabilitation, industry, administration, and research.