

Don't Worry About Your WAC Overseas; She's Healthier And Happier Than When at Home, Says Medical Officer

Major Janeway Tells Of 14 Months With N. African Contingent

By GERTRUDE BACHMAN
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WASHINGTON, D. C.—If your daughter, sister or wife is a WAC and stationed in the Mediterranean area, you are probably worrying a lot more about her than she is about herself. Maj. Margaret Janeway, Medical corps, U. S. Army, gives a report that should put to rest all unnecessary fears.

"They are never sick," Major Janeway told a press conference in Washington. "The Fifth army WACs have had an amazing health record from the beginning."
Of 1,800 women soldiers who landed in North Africa since January, 1943, only 12 have been sent home for medical reasons. Dr. Janeway believes that this record may prove one thing—that the more primitive the circumstances, the better a woman thrives.

"They take hardships in a spirit of fun," Major Janeway said. "When the first contingent went over in January, 1943, it found circumstances definitely primitive. The trip over wasn't exactly a sum-



PVT. MARION DeGRAY of Milwaukee, Wis., brings an armload of homemade bread into the messhall. Excellent food is credited to a large extent for the splendid health record of the WACs overseas.

mer cruise — especially since most of the women hadn't ever been to sea before. They landed at Oran on January 13, and took a train for Algiers. They discovered their quarters to be an old French convent with no heat and no water. They used their helmets for carrying water from an old well in the courtyard and for wash basins. It was bitterly cold. Major Janeway said: "It was May before we thawed out, and it was May before we could get an occasional good night's sleep."

The women slept 12 in a room on straw mattresses placed on double-decker bunks, wore all their own clothes and wrapped themselves in three blankets when they went to bed. Those on the night shift were envious because they slept during the daytime when there were no air raids.

On Duty 12 Hours Daily.
Such were the conditions of their employment. The wages of WAC privates are the same as those of G. I. Joes—\$50 a month plus 10 per cent of the base pay for overseas duty. The hours were 12 a day, seven days a week. Since curfew was at 7 p. m., and the Algerian shops were closed at that time, there was no point in time off.

During this whole period, despite hardships — or what most of us would consider hardships — there were no serious illnesses and very little jitters, Major Janeway said. A three-bed dispensary had been set up in what was described as "a large closet" in the convent. This was used only as an isolation ward for those with colds—and as a room for an occasional rest of 24 hours for the very weary. Major Janeway said that after such treatment most of them were ready to go back to their jobs. Despite all the dire warnings, not one WAC contracted any of the diseases they had been told very carefully to guard against.

When more WACs arrived in Algiers in May, the entire WAC colony took over an apartment house which provided more comforts, and much more warmth. The number of beds in the dispensary was increased to 11.

Of the 68 women who came with this contingent, only three had to be

Hairdressers, Cosmetics, More Free Time, Keep Up Girls' Morale

"I think these WACs must really lead charmed lives," Major Janeway chuckled. "Their sick rate has been exceedingly low and it's significant, I think, that in the last three months of 1943, the companies which had the lowest sick rate were the companies which had been there the longest.

"There are ample facilities in Algiers now to keep up a woman soldier's morale, though the morale



STROLLING DOWN the roadway to the entrance of the old French convent which is their barracks in North Africa are these five WACs who are assigned to the headquarters offices of Allied forces headquarters. They are, left to right, Mary C. Woods, Everett, Mass.; Ellen Condon, Missoula, Mont.; Mary Livingston, Chattanooga, Tenn.; Lucille James, Sioux City, Iowa; and Elizabeth Page, Escanaba, Mich. A nun is passing in the background.

returned to the States. The reason given was "excessive nervousness." The three women were aged 30, 35 and 40 respectively, and had backgrounds of nervous instability. WI had been a potential inability to adjust at home under secure routine now became complete maladjustment. Major Janeway said they just "couldn't take it."

No diet deficiencies were discovered. Army food was more than adequate, and in addition, the WACs were the friendly concern of army and navy men. They received oranges, eggs that cost \$2 a dozen, and a general supply of "nice spoiling." The navy men—who vied with the tradition of their marine brothers for having this situation well in hand—even obtained pillows for the WAC bunks.

"Every time a girl got a letter from home," Major Janeway said. "Mama wanted to know if she was getting her vitamins. She was, but she didn't know it. Fortunately, their folks started sending them vitamin pills and that settled the problem for us. They ate their pills and felt better."

Too Much Sun Tan.
The power of the North African sun was an unknown quantity to the WACs. Anxious to get a smooth tan, they discovered, to their dismay, that it could very easily be overdone. After a few painful burns,



LETTERS FROM home are the best morale boosters. Sgt. Betty Jane O'Leary of Pittsburgh, Pa., sounds the welcome "mail call."

which kept the victims away from work, sunburn was classified "not line of duty." That meant that any WAC who was not sensible enough to get her sun gradually, would have her pay docked for any time she was off work. They soon learned how to do it gradually.

By November, three more WAC companies had reported for duty in Algiers. In December, one company fresh from the States went directly to Italy.

The healthiest women in the whole Mediterranean area, Major Janeway found, were the Fifth army WACs living in tents very close behind the fighting lines in Italy. They were part of a communications platoon based at Naples and half up toward the front, living in tents, working the command post message center. They were with the Fifth army in North Africa and followed when American troops took Naples.

Major Janeway said that the WACs at the front and those in North Africa, for that matter, are so healthy because they do not have time to spend in "frivolous activities."

There is no special training for keeping the WACs in trim. In winter they don't have much opportunity for exercise, but in summer they swim. In North Africa, a program has been set up which pro-

vides each woman, after so long a time, a four-day rest period. A rest camp has been established 20 miles up the coast from Algiers. It was opened first for those earliest WACs who were beginning to look a little fatigued after their 12-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week grind with no passes from January to June.

No similar arrangement has been made in Italy as yet, but Major Janeway believes that one soon will be.

Only Six Marriages.
In 14 months, there have only been six marriages of WACs in the Mediterranean area. It is possible that a three-month waiting period—known as the "cooling-off" period—after announcing marriage intentions to the commanding officer is the reason. This is an army regulation and applies to both men and women.

In regard to the unhappy stories that have been circulating about the morals of the WACs, Dr. Janeway cited medical statistics which showed definitely these rumors to be figments of somebody's imagination. The women were homesick at times, but "not too badly," Major Janeway said. Six weeks after the first group arrived in Algiers, however, there was no mail from home, which resulted in many a tearful night. But the regular arrival of mail after that, and the strict regimen took care of homesickness pretty thoroughly.

There have been no battle casualties among the WACs. One woman was injured, and one killed in a jeep accident. There was plenty of bombing, but the bombs fell "just across the street" from the Algiers barracks. The bombs would hit the same spot night after night. During the day the damage would be repaired, and that night it would be undone. Yet none of the WACs was hit.

A piece of shrapnel hit the bed in which a WAC was sleeping, but she was unharmed. There was some dispute between her and the occupant of the next bunk as to whom the piece of shrapnel belonged. Major Janeway said that the jobs which the WACs perform, and about which "they are very keen" are those of stenographers, telephone operators, drivers, cooks and all kinds of communications jobs.

Asked if the WACs overseas feel that girls at home are lackadaisical about not joining up, Major Janeway replied: "They certainly do!" She continued:

"It takes a level-headed and very well-balanced woman to stand up against that pressure and maintain her own good sense. It takes a level-headed woman to keep rested and to maintain her sense of humor."



A WAC in North Africa hangs up some personal laundry in the back yard of the convent which serves as a barracks, giving a homelike touch to the grim business of war.

In addition to his newly-won singing laurels as host of the "Broadway Matinee" airshow, baritone Ronald Graham will probably win some more when his latest film venture, "Ladies in Washington," is released.

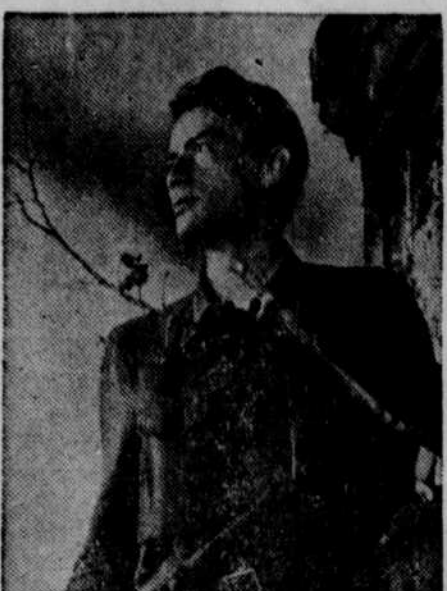
ODDS AND ENDS—Ozzie Nelson and Harriet Hilliard sing their own special arrangement of "Sunday, Monday and Always" in Paramount's "Take a Big Girl" . . . The new "Glamour Men" with Cliff Arquette, may become one of those summer air shows that win a permanent place for themselves; it's a smart combination of comedy and quizzes . . . Victor Borge returns to the "Basin Street" show for eight weeks in the fall; he's used to contract renewals—had four consecutive 13-week contracts on the Bing Crosby show . . . "Ministry of Fear" has one of the tallest groups of male principals ever in a picture—led by Ray Milland.

Star Dust

STAGE-SCREEN-RADIO
By VIRGINIA VALE
Released by Western Newspaper Union.

ONE of the war's most incredible ventures, the drive of General "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell to retake the Burma road, is shown in this month's "March of Time." It's called "Back Door to Tokyo." You'll see American boys flying the "hump," the world's most dangerous air route; you'll see Merrill's Marauders on the attack and General Chennault with his forces. MOT's ace cameraman, Victor Jurgens, has again turned in an outstanding photographic scoop, portraying a military feat so gigantic that it's an important historical event.

"Days of Glory" isn't a world-beating picture, but RKO feels pretty sure that it launches a new male star—Gregory Peck, who has ears like Clark Gable, and is too tall and broad-shouldered to be com-



GREGORY PECK

fortable in an ordinary chair." Proof of his drawing power is the fact that a wave of excitement ran through the studio when he appeared, and Ginger Rogers asked to have him in one of her pictures.

Metro is cooking up another of those pictures in which various episodes will be written by famous authors, with Metro's biggest stars appearing in each. Called "The Common Sin," it will have Carey Wilson as producer. The first writer signed for a single episode is I. A. R. Wylie.

After years of diligently preparing himself for that elusive motion picture break, a young Oakland Junior college graduate got it; he's Greg McClure, 26, and he landed the role of John L. Sullivan in Bing Crosby's production, "The Great John L." He's worked as a salesman, longshoreman, laborer on a railroad, and farmhand; finally he went to dramatic school at night and worked during the day.

Because film babies are allowed to work before the camera for only short intervals between long rests, Warner Bros. is saving production time by casting twins for a single role in "Christmas in Connecticut," the Barbara Stanwyck-Dennis Morgan comedy. The twins, just eight months old, are Sandra Lee and Susan Lee Taylor.

September will be a busy month for Xavier Cugat, who's heard as "Your Dubonnet Date" maestro over MBS Wednesday nights. He'll make two one-week theater appearances, open at a smart Hollywood night spot, and begin work in Metro's "Week-End at the Waldorf."

Ever try to remember the names of those fantastic characters Garry Moore talks about on the Moore-Durante airshow? They're Twinkles Gooch, Rancid Crumknecke, Elvira Smoop, Arbutus Crunkquodgit, Schmildwidder Funk, and Farnsinsendindles Crud!

Alan Young, who's heard Wednesday nights on NBC at nine, EWT, crashed radio at 15, in a 15-minute show for which he was paid \$2.50 a week. He played dozens of characters, got a raise of 50 cents after 26 weeks, asked for more, and was fired. He formed a vaudeville act with his sister, things went well, then she married. He returned to radio, and real success came quickly after that.

Madeline smiled. "You've no appreciation of romance. Besides, she probably thought it would be good for your morale."

"Nuts! Jerries on the run is all my morale needs." They were entering the town and he leaned toward her eagerly. "Listen, Beautiful, I won't even call up this gal with the fantastic ideas if you'll give me a break."
Madeline stopped the car at the curb and faced him with severity. "But Lieutenant Milton — Lieutenant James Milton — my brother never described you as a person who would run out on anyone."
She waited expectantly, but no astonishment was evident. Only a good-natured grin.
"O. K., Mary, we're even now," he said softly. "You knew me when you picked me up. But those initials M. S. on your car door were a dead giveaway, too. So forget all I said about your letters. How about tonight?"
Madeline laughed. "It's all right, but first you'll have to speak to my eleven-year-old sister. Her name is Mary — and she's the one who's been doing all the writing."

Knight Errant

By R. L. ARVIN
McClure Newspaper Syndicate.
WNU Features.

MADLINE saw the soldier while she was some distance up the highway and impulsively she started to slow down. But as the car stopped beside him she was a trifle uneasy. She had never before picked up a hitchhiker. She scanned his face as he tugged at the door handle and a measure of confidence returned. He was lean and brown and hard and reminded her of her brother; he wore overseas ribbons, too.

The lieutenant brought into the comfortable coupe the not unpleasant odor of a mild soap and good tobacco and also, to Madeline's astonishment, a casual intimacy that did nothing to improve her driving.

He sat half-facing her, with one arm thrown over the back of the seat and his fingers played gently with the collar of her polo coat. She turned toward him reprovingly and saw that his eyes had missed nothing — from the tight roll of chestnut hair clear down to her slender ankles.

"You'll do," he decided, catching her glance.

Madeline blushed. "Thanks. I was expecting a whistle," she said tartly. "You'd rate a whistle if you'd take off those shell-rimmed cheaters, fluff out that hair-do into something modern and slip into a jersey that should be more becoming than that gunny sack you're wearing," he shot back at her.

Madeline clamped her jaws tightly to regain control of herself, then



"She wasn't?"

asked: "You're going to Middleton?"

He nodded. "And I would that I were not."

"Home to a wife and children?" Madeline chided.

"An obligation, yes, but not that kind." He stared at the road ahead. There was silence for a minute before he explained:

"It's a long story. Beautiful. Maybe I'd have been better off in the long run if the Jerries had got me. This fellow saved my life the first day out. I was a wise guy, see, a smart aleck, but he shoved me into a hole when those MEs started coming over. I made that right a little later by drilling a sniper who had his bead set on him. So we got to be buddies — the best kind. Well, I thought his sister must be all right, too." He hesitated and Madeline gave him a look of encouragement.

"She wasn't?"

The lieutenant closed his eyes and frowned. "You can judge for yourself. I get a letter from this girl, thanking me for saving her brother's life. Then our outfit splits up and my buddy and I are separated. I don't find out anything about her from him but I answer her letter and away we go. Well, at first she's amusing. Then she begins to write about our 'glittering tanks' that charged into battle like avenging angels of death." Even that sounded kind of cute, but after a while everything gets daffy. I don't get it at all."

"No?" Madeline prompted, her twinkling eyes glued to the road.

"No. She wrote about the night having a thousand eyes that watched over me. I was her knight-errant and she was my ladylove. Imagine it!"

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It is generally believed that camouflage developed during the 1914-18 war. Armies then used all sorts of devices to make themselves invisible, and vessels were painted in "dazzle" style. In the beginning, however, many uniforms were splendidly colorful. The French infantry wore red pantaloons.

British uniforms, from earlier experiences in India and South Africa, were already the dull but useful khaki, which blends into the ground colors so well. First to use camouflage was the ancient Egyptian king, Rameses III. He made his soldiers paint their shields and tunics with tiger stripes, to confound and terrify the enemy.

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