

Flying Nurses

EVACUATE WOUNDED by AIR



HEAD NURSE: Miss Frances Morgan of Dallas, Texas, heads the group of nurses who arrived here recently to aid in evacuation of wounded soldiers. (BRIEF photo.)



BACK FROM THE BATTLEFRONT: These young and comely Army flying nurses, pictured above, recently returned from a flight Down Under where they cared for wounded soldiers stricken during the invasion assault on the Gilberts. Reading left to right, Lts Madellne Harris, Agnes Flaherty, Mary Esther Pratt and Eleanor Hoppeck. (BRIEF photo.)

A HUGE, four-engined Skymaster C-54 settled down in Hawaii, loaded with American soldiers who only 36 hours before were in the bloody invasion assault on Makin island. The men were flown from Makin by a Navy plane and relayed to a Honolulu hospital for treatment. It was a trip covering more than 3,000 miles and is considered a record for air evacuation.

Aboard the airliner were three army nurses, especially trained for this type of work at Bowman field, Kentucky, part of the group of 25 nurses who arrived in Hawaii recently for the express purpose of bringing wounded soldiers back safely to home bases.

These "bomber hostesses" figure greatly into the future plans of the 7th AAF, now that the drive to erase the Jap blight from the Pacific has started, and hundreds of girls such as these are being graduated almost weekly from mainland schools to help and comfort American fighting men on all world fronts.

As 1st Lt Frances Morgan, of Dallas, Texas, chief nurse of this group remarked a few days ago: "Our work is just beginning, and we expect to be in the thick of things as long as one enemy soldier is left in the Pacific."

The ease and care with which this air evacuation, the first to operate in the Pacific area, is handled by these young and capable girls (age 23 to 35) has brought nothing but praise from high army officials who have watched them at work first hand.

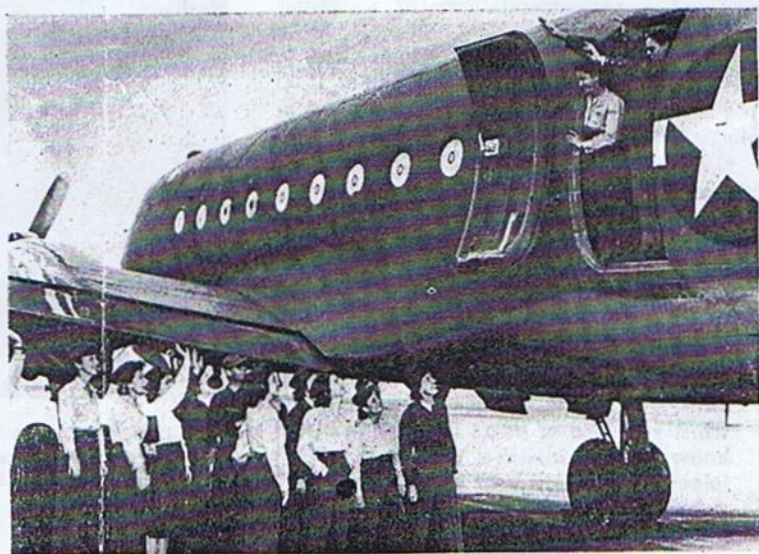
In a statement issued to a press correspondent who made one of these trips with the girls, Col Andrew Smith, chief flight surgeon for the 7th AAF had this to say:

"The sight of women nurses close to the battle area was not only a pleasant surprise but a boon to morale, and all of us, especially the soldiers, will be eternally grateful for the work they are doing."

The local unit which consists of nurses, medical officers and enlisted technicians, was the 9th group to graduate from the school and is commanded by Major A. D. Henderson of Mobile, Ala.

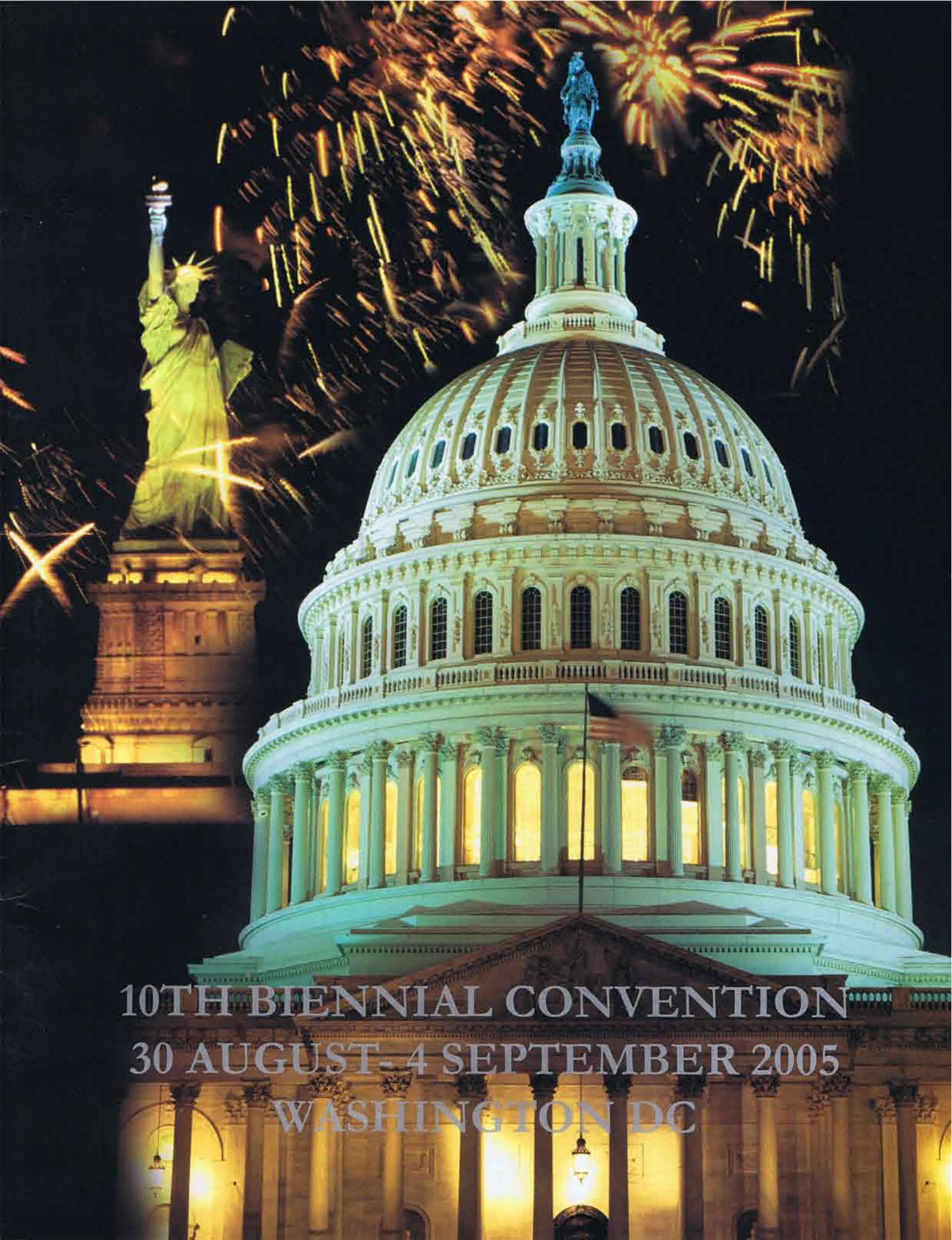


WOUNDED RETURN: Makin casualties, arriving at APO 953, are removed from a hospital transport plane in quick time. (Signal Corps photo.)



MERCY FLIGHT: Lts Lynn Doherty, Emma Raspel and Technician Carl Soukup, wave goodbye to fellow workers from the huge Skymaster, which a few minutes later roared down the runway to take flying nurses to the aid of wounded service men in the South Pacific. Some evacuation cases were returned to Honolulu in less than 40 hours. (BRIEF photo.)

Agnes E. Flaherty, 88 PORTLAND -- Agnes E. Flaherty, 88, of South Portland, passed away Sept. 20, 2008, at the Maine Veteran's Home in Scarborough. She was born on Nov. 19, 1919, in Portland, the daughter of Mark J. and Annie (Welch) Flaherty. She attended local schools, graduating from Deering High School in 1937. Agnes earned her nursing degree from the Maine Eye and Ear Hospital, her bachelor's degree in Public Health Nursing from Columbia University, and her master's degree in Administration of Nursing Education Programs from the Catholic University of America. She also received an honorary doctorate degree from St. Joseph's College in Standish. During her more than 40 year career, Agnes was one of the most highly respected nurse leaders in the state of Maine. She served as the Assistant Director of Nursing Education at Mercy Hospital from the late 1950s to 1960. For the next 10 years, she was the Executive Director of the Maine State Board of Nursing. She then went to Maine Medical Center where she served as Vice President of Nursing for 10 years. Some of Agnes' professional memberships included: the Maine State Nurses' Association, the Maine Medical Board of Corporators, the Medical Care Development Board of Corporators, the Altrusa Club of Biddeford-Saco, and the Hospital Volunteers of Saco Valley. Agnes also served in World War II as an army flight nurse. After the war, she remained with the 1125th U.S. Army Hospital (Reserve) in Auburn for more than 20 years. She was the Chief Nurse from 1968-1979, where she was described as the 'best chief nurse' the unit ever had. Throughout her career, Agnes received many awards. In 1945, she received the Air Medal, marking the first time flight nurses were decorated in the Pacific Theater. In 1969, she received the Outstanding Nurse of the Year Award from the Maine State Nurses Association. She was listed in the Who's Who of American Women, Sixth Agnes E. Flaherty Edition, and was recognized by the Deborah Morton Society of Westbrook College in 1972. In April, 2008, Agnes was recognized by the Remember Me Project as one of 54 Maine residents who have made a difference in their families, communities, state and country. The Agnes E. Flaherty Leadership Award also is given annually to a registered nurse leader who demonstrates leadership, courage and dedication in his or her interactions with patients and families, staff and co-workers, the profession and the community. Agnes was a communicant of St. Patrick's Church in Portland, and former communicant of Notre Dame Church in Saco. She is survived by her siblings, Adelaide Luttrell of South Portland, Katherine Massell of Richmond Hill, N.Y. and Edward Flaherty of Portland; and many nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grand nephews. She had predeceased by her parents; and siblings, Dorothy McLean, Eileen Leach, Helen Vankevich, Marguerite Schmidt, Mary Nelson, and Matthew Flaherty. Visiting hours will be 4-8 p.m., on Tuesday, Sept. 23, at the Conroy-Tully Crawford Funeral Home, 172 State St., Portland. Prayers will be recited at 9:15 a.m., on Wednesday, Sept. 24, at the funeral home, followed by a 10 a.m., concelebrated Mass of Christian Burial at St. Patrick's Church, 1342 Congress St., Portland. Interment will be in Calvary Cemetery, South Portland. Online condolences may be made at www.ctcrawford.com. In lieu of flowers, donations in Agnes' memory may be made to: The Hospice of Southern Maine 180 U.S. Route 1 Suite 1 Scarborough, Maine 04074 or to the Mercy Hospital Development Office 144 State St. Portland, Maine 04101



10TH BIENNIAL CONVENTION
30 AUGUST - 4 SEPTEMBER 2005
WASHINGTON DC







Agnes Mangerich



Dorothy Errair delivers a great speech!











WWII Flight Nurses

WWII FLIGHT NURSES COLLAGE

Saturday, 3 Sep 05
Members of the WWII FNA
gave oral & video interviews
about their service before,
during, and after WW II.



Agnes Mangerich
w/ Ruth Anderson, interviewer



Harriet Papp & Merilys Brown



Rose Miller



Dorothy Errair
President, WW II Flight Nurse Association



Agnes Flaherty



Frances Thorp



Gene Eisenhower

By Ruth Anderson

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2001

WWII flight nurses gather

By KATHERINE ULLMER

Dayton Daily News

WRIGHT-PATERSON AIR FORCE BASE — They flew without fear. Then and now — during World War II and after the Sept. 11 World Trade Center disaster.

The 23 World War II flight nurses who flew into Dayton for their annual reunion and to dedicate a plaque Friday in the Memorial Park at the U.S. Air Force Museum to honor all World War II flight nurses, came from far and near — Maine, Florida, California, Massachusetts, and Cincinnati, among others.

Between 1942 and the end of 1944, 1,514 nurses and 907 enlisted men were trained and 18 medical air evacuation squadrons were formed, according to VerNell Bjerke, 80, of Manhattan, N.Y., president of the group, the World War II Flight Nurses Association, Inc., which numbers about 430.

Bjerke, like Agnes Flaherty, 80, of Portland, Maine, treasurer of the group, flew in the Pacific with the Army Air Corps, which later became the U.S. Air Force.

Bjerke, like Flaherty, helped care for the wounded that were air evacuated from the battlefields of Guam, Okinawa, and Iwo Jima. Though they weren't fired on, "we would see firing in the background of Okinawa," Flaherty said.

Juanita Engelbrecht, 84, of Cincinnati flew with the 807th Air Evacuation Group from North Africa up through Sicily, Italy and Germany, often picking up war prisoners along the way. Like the others, she volunteered to serve her country, because "it was what you felt you had to do," she said.

Most of the flight nurses flew on C-47s or C-54s, prop planes that didn't have heat. There were many other inconveniences.

"A nurse wasn't allowed to have any dependents, even if you supported your mother," said Edith (Brown) Rothenberg, of San Antonio, Texas, whom the others in her squadron still call "Brownie."

Rothenberg spent 25 years in the service, serving through the Korean War and the early part of the Vietnam War. She and three other members of the 806th squadron, who flew air evacuations from France to England, Jean (Foley) Tierney, of San Antonio, Joan (Denton) Jervis, of San Francisco, and Geraldine Dishroon Brier, 85, of Cheyenne, Wyo., shared memories over lunch at the museum. The four have kept in touch by phone during the years.

Flying in over enemy territory with a plane loaded with fuel created stress, and they became a sisterhood, Jervis said. "We knew each other's family. Everybody shared letters."

Their squadron was "the first to go into the Omaha beachhead on invasion day" to pick up the wounded, Brier said.

Brier, the first graduate of flight nurse school in the country, recalled flying into a British air base and being refused access to the officers' mess hall. She was told no ladies were allowed, but her pilot replied, "She's no lady. She's an officer in the U.S. Army Air Corps." The man left, only to come back and say, "you're welcome to be in the mess hall," she said.

Flight nurse training was at Bowman Field in Louisville, Ky. Since they hadn't ordered any wings for the women, when she graduated in

Feb. 1943, "Gen. David Grant took his wings off and put them on me," Brier said.

Of the 1,176,048 patients evacuated by air, only 46 died in the air, Brier said.

Bjerke was 21 when she entered the service. After her two-year tour of duty, she worked for TWA for 41 years as a flight attendant, a purser, and service manager.

"Nothing ever scares me," she said. She lives about 30 blocks from the World Trade Center, but wasn't in town Sept. 11 when terrorists flew two commercial planes into the towers.

"When I worked for TWA I was with their trauma team, but I was out of town. In a way, I'm glad, too. It's really traumatic." She walked to the site last Saturday and was amazed at the pile of rubble, she said.

Still, "I never thought to be afraid to fly," she said. "I would have gone up the next day. If you've been through the war, you don't worry about anything," Bjerke said. "If we weren't going to come back, we would have been gone a long time ago."

It was a day for remembering, and about an hour before the flight nurses dedicated their plaque, a somewhat larger group from the 380th Bombing Group, which flew in the southwest Pacific during WWII, met to re-dedicate its memorial plaque in the park.

Former Speaker of the U.S. House ('87-'89), Jim Wright, 78, of Fort Worth, Texas, a bombardier with the group, and his former crew member, Delmar (Curly) V. Sprouts, 87, of Olathe, Kansas, a gunner target specialist, were among those present.

Center: Dayton OH dedication
Agnes Flaherty
10-5-2001



Agnes Flaherty &
Vernel Bjerki
10-5-2001



10 5 '01

Dorothy Errair on Left
Agnes Flaherty on Rt.
10-6-2001



WWII flight nurses gather

By KATHERINE ULLMER
Dayton Daily News

WRIGHT-PATERSON AIR FORCE BASE — They flew without fear. Then and now — during World War II and after the Sept. 11 World Trade Center disaster.

The 23 World War II flight nurses who flew into Dayton for their annual reunion and to dedicate a plaque Friday in the Memorial Park at the U.S. Air Force Museum to honor all World War II flight nurses, came from far and near — Maine, Florida, California, Massachusetts, and Cincinnati, among others.

Between 1942 and the end of 1944, 1,514 nurses and 907 enlisted men were trained and 18 medical air evacuation squadrons were formed, according to VerNell Bjerke, 80, of Manhattan, N.Y., president of the group, the World War II Flight Nurses Association, Inc., which numbers about 430.

Bjerke, like Agnes Flaherty, 80, of Portland, Maine, treasurer of the group, flew in the Pacific with the Army Air Corps, which later became the U.S. Air Force.

Bjerke, like Flaherty, helped care for the wounded that were air evacuated from the battlefields of Guam, Okinawa, and Iwo Jima. Though they weren't fired on, "we would see firing in the background of Okinawa," Flaherty said.

Juanita Engelbrecht, 84, of Cincinnati flew with the 807th Air Evacuation Group from North Africa up through Sicily, Italy and Germany, often picking up war prisoners along the way. Like the others, she volunteered to serve her country, because "it was what you felt you had to do," she said.

Most of the flight nurses flew on C-47s or C-54s, prop planes that didn't have heat. There were many other inconveniences.

"A nurse wasn't allowed to have any dependents, even if you supported your mother," said Edith (Brown) Rothenberg, of San Antonio, Texas, whom the others in her squadron still call "Brownie."

Rothenberg spent 25 years in the service, serving through the Korean War and the early part of the Vietnam War. She and three other members of the 806th squadron, who flew air evacuations from France to England, Jean (Foley) Tierney, of San Antonio, Joan (Denton) Jervis, of San Francisco, and Geraldine Dishroon Brier, 85, of Cheyenne, Wyo., shared memories over lunch at the museum. The four have kept in touch by phone during the years.

Flying in over enemy territory with a plane loaded with fuel created stress, and they became a sisterhood, Jervis said. "We knew each other's family. Everybody shared letters."

Their squadron was "the first to go into the Omaha beachhead on invasion day" to pick up the wounded, Brier said.

Brier, the first graduate of flight nurse school in the country, recalled flying into a British air base and being refused access to the officers' mess hall. She was told no ladies were allowed, but her pilot replied, "She's no lady. She's an officer in the U.S. Army Air Corps." The man left, only to come back and say, "you're welcome to be in the mess hall," she said.

Flight nurse training was at Bowman Field in Louisville, Ky. Since they hadn't ordered any wings for the women, when she graduated in

Feb. 1943, "Gen. David Grant took his wings off and put them on me," Brier said.

Of the 1,176,048 patients evacuated by air, only 46 died in the air, Brier said.

Bjerke was 21 when she entered the service. After her two-year tour of duty, she worked for TWA for 41 years as a flight attendant, a purser, and service manager.

"Nothing ever scares me," she said. She lives about 30 blocks from the World Trade Center, but wasn't in town Sept. 11 when terrorists flew two commercial planes into the towers.

"When I worked for TWA I was with their trauma team, but I was out of town. In a way, I'm glad, too. It's really traumatic." She walked to the site last Saturday and was amazed at the pile of rubble, she said.

Still, "I never thought to be afraid to fly," she said. "I would have gone up the next day. If you've been through the war, you don't worry about anything," Bjerke said. "If we weren't going to come back, we would have been gone a long time ago."

It was a day for remembering, and about an hour before the flight nurses dedicated their plaque, a somewhat larger group from the 380th Bombing Group, which flew in the southwest Pacific during WWII, met to re-dedicate its memorial plaque in the park.

Former Speaker of the U.S. House ('87-'89), Jim Wright, 78, of Fort Worth, Texas, a bombardier with the group, and his former crew member, Delmar (Curly) V. Sprouts, 87, of Olathe, Kansas, a gunner target specialist, were among those present.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Elected in Louisville



Standing: Jean Foley Tierney, Ct.; Irene Burch, Fl.; Liberty Sakryd, Fl., Membership Chair; Gerry Dishroon Brier, Wy., Treasurer; Ethel Cerasale, Fl., Past Pres., Agnes Flaherty, Me., Secretary; VerNell Bjerke, N.Y.;
Seated: Frances Crabtree, Wa., 1st V.P.; Jane Haynes, Fl., Pres.

The Board met at the home of the President on Sept. 23, 1992.

Decisions made were:

- . Dorothy Errair was authorized to sign checks as a 2nd signature.
- .. Life membership was reaffirmed and clarified. It is available to all members 65 yrs. of age and over for \$50.00.
- ... Voted to send the next Newsletter to all persons listed in the roster. Membership envelopes, which will include renewal and dues requirements, will also be sent.

Reimbursement of Board Members: It was voted to reimburse 50% of the cost of travel and hotel (2 days) to those Board members who wished to be reimbursed for the next Board meeting only.

The Board will meet in San Diego the first week in March 1993.



**Diversity in Age,
Unity in Purpose**



BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Elected in Louisville



Standing: Jean Foley Tierney, Ct.; Irene Burch, Fl.; Liberty Sakryd, Fl., Membership Chair; Gerry Dishroon Brier, Wy., Treasurer; Ethel Cerasale, Fl., Past Pres., Agnes Flaherty, Me., Secretary; VerNell Bjerke, N.Y.;
Seated: Frances Crabtree, Wa., 1st V.P.; Jane Haynes, Fl., Pres.

The Board met at the home of the President on Sept. 23, 1992.

Decisions made were:

- . Dorothy Errair was authorized to sign checks as a 2nd signature.
- .. Life membership was reaffirmed and clarified. It is available to all members 65 yrs. of age and over for \$50.00.
- ... Voted to send the next Newsletter to all persons listed in the roster. Membership envelopes, which will include renewal and dues requirements, will also be sent.

Reimbursement of Board Members: It was voted to reimburse 50% of the cost of travel and hotel (2 days) to those Board members who wished to be reimbursed for the next Board meeting only.

The Board will meet in San Diego the first week in March 1993.



**Diversity in Age,
Unity in Purpose**

