

Fact Sheet No. 3
For Insertion in the War Information Manual
Section VI - The Fighting Forces

OFFICE OF WAR INFORMATION
BUREAU OF MOTION PICTURES
HOLLYWOOD OFFICE

NOTE: The following information is being sent to you as a supplement to the War Information Manual. Its purpose is to give further amplification to the Government's war program, and to provide material for short subjects and feature pictures. If more detailed information is desired, it will be furnished to you, on request, by the Office of War Information. Should you wish to use this material in your short subject or feature program, kindly communicate with this Office in order to avoid unnecessary duplication.

WANTED -- 50,000 NURSES

THE PROBLEM: AMERICA NEEDS NURSES

America needs 50,000 more nurses in active service. They are needed urgently. Today. The Army alone is calling for 2,500 more nurses per month, the Navy 500 per month. But there are not enough available registered nurses to answer the call. Nor will the need be filled by this year's crop of graduating nurses, which will number not more than 25,000. Each week the demand becomes greater, the shortage more acute.

Today Army nurses are serving in 219 stations in the continental United States and abroad. They are stationed in Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Panama, Newfoundland, Trinidad, Iceland, Ireland, Australia ... wherever the boys of our armed forces may have need of their services.

American nurses are doing the kind of superb job they have always done, winning new testimonials to their skill, courage and unfailing good humor. But there aren't enough of them.

The problem of supplying nurses to the fighting forces is complicated by the fact that the demand for nurses at home has risen sharply with the advent of our colossal war production program. Industrial areas have become congested. Men and women are working longer hours. Both of these factors are health hazards. They increase the likelihood of accidents, sickness and epidemics. Hence more work for nurses - in factories, in homes, and in hospitals.

Hospitals are 10% understaffed. Why? Civilian incomes have risen. More people can afford hospital treatment because of increased wages and group insurance plans. Hospitals throughout the country are very close to capacity. But nurses cannot be found to take care of all the patients.

Every time a nurse in active service volunteers for war duty, she leaves an empty post in a hospital or some other institution. She further depletes the supply of nurses serving the civilian population. There has always been a shortage of nurses -- even during the depths of the depression. Today the shortage is so grave as to constitute a national emergency.

HOW THE PROBLEM CAN BE SOLVED

- (1) More graduate nurses, unmarried and under forty, must be

induced to volunteer for war duty. This is the most important concern of the moment. Nurses who satisfy the physical qualifications may volunteer for either the Army or Navy. The first step is to enroll in the Red Cross First Reserves, from which list they are called to duty - as second lieutenants or ensigns. Nurses choose their profession because of its tradition of service, because it is exciting and real and vital. They know that their primary duty in war time is to serve the fighting men. They have an unswerving sense of loyalty and responsibility. These qualities are needed now more than ever, needed for the greatest cause of all time.

(2) More young women must be induced to enter the nursing profession. This year some 35,000 girls have enrolled as students in the 1,300 nurses' training schools in the United States (most of which are operated by hospitals). The Government hopes to increase the number of students to 50,000. Enrollment is open to young women between 18 and 35 who are high school graduates and in good health. It takes three years to acquire the coveted "R.N." - Registered Nurse - but meanwhile students, performing much of the work of graduate nurses, are able to fill in for those who volunteer for war duty.

(3) 30,000 inactive or retired nurses must be brought back into service. Several times this number of qualified graduate nurses have left the profession for one reason or another. Usually the reason is marriage. Most of these women, supplied with a short "refresher" course, would be ready to resume active nursing duties, on either a

full-time or part-time basis. Every one who responds to the call will make it possible for a younger, unmarried nurse to join the Army or Navy.

(4) 100,000 women must be enlisted as nurses' aides and auxiliary workers. Nurses' aides volunteer their services, while auxiliary workers are paid. Their purpose is to release nurses to exercise their special skills by taking over their routine labors -- such as making beds, folding linen, carrying food trays, etc. Almost every housewife can qualify as a nurse's aide. Instruction, given by the Red Cross, consists of only 80 hours of classroom study and ward practice, while only 150 hours of hospital service is required of an aide each year.

(5) Civilians must do their part in relieving the nursing shortage. Housewives should enroll in first aid, home nursing and nutrition courses given by the Red Cross. Thus they will be equipped not only to take care of minor accidents and illnesses, but also to prevent sickness by keeping their families healthy and strong. It is the duty of civilians to keep out of the hospital, to call for the services of a nurse only when it is imperative.

NURSING AS A CAREER

The supply of graduate nurses has never equalled the demand. Regardless of how many nurses are graduated during the war, there will be jobs for all of them after the war. There is a never-ending call

for nurses to fill general staff positions in hospitals, in government nursing services, and in public health nursing agencies.

The pay is good. A United States Office of Education survey shows that during the first year out of college, nursing is the best paid occupation for women.

The chances for advancement are excellent. Since nursing is essentially a woman's profession, and one that is rapidly expanding, there are more top positions at present than there are workers equipped to fill them. Nursing is one of the two vocations paying the highest salaries received by women who have been out of college eight years.

Nursing offers the opportunity for adventure, for travel, for service to country and to humanity.

NURSING AS A TRADITION

The Red Cross stands as a symbol of the finest tradition of the nursing service. In time of flood, tornado, dust storm, epidemic, earthquake, war, the Red Cross nurse is always ready to respond to the call for help. She recognizes no difference between people because of their color, of the manner in which they worship, or of the particular geographical boundaries within which they live. They are human beings. They are homeless or sick or injured. Therefore they are her charges.

Today, in field hospitals and aboard hospital ships, nurses in both services are constantly within battle range. Hundreds of our nurses have been under fire - in the Philippines, Hawaii, the Dutch

East Indies, Alaska. Some nurses have been killed, but not one has deserted her post. The story of the calm, smiling heroism of the nurses of Bataan has yet to be told. In the panic of Pearl Harbor, in the black despair of Manila, in the heartbreaking retreat down the long chain of islands to Australia, the nurses were always there to care for the wounded, the sick and the homeless. More than that, they kept alive in the hearts of weary, battered soldiers the precious strength of spirit that found voice in the words: "We'll be back!"

This is the tradition of the nursing service. Today America needs young women to carry on the tradition, needs older nurses to return to duty, needs thousands and thousands of civilian women to do their bit as nurses' aides. The army of Women in White is fighting for its country against terrible odds. It needs reinforcements and it needs them badly.

The call must go out to every woman in America. In the newspapers. Over the radio. And, most important, through motion pictures, which can make visual the heroic deeds known to us now only in words. The nurses of Pearl Harbor, of Manila and Bataan, of Dutch Harbor, are heroes, just as the fighting soldiers, sailors and fliers are heroes. Because their stories are first-rate drama, because they constitute a shining example for young American women, they are stories that should be told -- by the most effective means possible -- through motion pictures.