

THE ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE NURSING SERVICE.

All over Canada, and especially on the prairies, there are vast establishments about which very little can be told. They belong to the Royal Canadian Air Force, and from them come the men who are writing the name of Canada in flame in the dark skies over Germany.

More than 300 Nursing Sisters are now on duty with the R.C.A.F. in Canada, many of whom are attached to small medical units that usually include a 35-bed hospital. Most of these stations are in isolated areas and have a relatively small staff of Nursing Sisters who, while they cannot give all the bedside care that is required, are responsible for supervising the hospital assistants and other auxiliary personnel, thus making certain that the safety and comfort of the patients are assured.

In case of a crash or other accident the Nursing Sisters must be self-sufficient in a fashion rarely encountered in the other Services. The Medical Officer will be at the scene of the crash, and the nurse must direct all activity in the hospital and make sure that everything is in readiness when he arrives with the patients. Her ingenuity and resourcefulness are constantly brought into play, for she has no matron or supervisor to whom she can appeal. Her assistants are willing and anxious to help, but they may become alarmed and excited. They look to her for guidance, and she must therefore remain "calm, cool and collected" at all times and under all circumstances.

In order that such emergencies may be met promptly and efficiently, the Nursing Sisters are selected carefully and are given special training. The larger R.C.A.F. hospitals are equipped with very fine operating rooms, and the Sisters-in-Charge have been operating-room supervisors in civilian life. Nurses who have already had some experience in surgical nursing are assigned to these units for instruction before they are sent out to take charge in the smaller units.

Shortly after they join the Service, the Nursing Sisters attend the School of Aviation Nursing in Toronto where they learn about R.C.A.F. organisation and administration. They are also taught something about the physiology of flying, and the course is now being modified in such a manner as to place more emphasis on this subject. Physical training and calisthenics also form an important part of the course.

Matron Jessie E. Porteous is in charge of the administration of the Nursing Service and is stationed at Air Force Headquarters in Ottawa. In addition, other matrons are in charge of the larger R.C.A.F. hospitals throughout Canada. Matron Porteous is a graduate of the School of Nursing of the Saskatoon City Hospital. She has taken the course in administration in hospitals and schools of nursing offered by the McGill School for Graduate Nurses as well as a post-graduate course in tuberculosis treatment

and nursing in the Saskatoon Sanatorium. Keenly interested in teaching, she served for two years as instructor in the School of Nursing of the Saskatoon City Hospital, and, at the time that she joined the nursing service of the R.C.A.F., was assistant director of nursing in that hospital. She is fond of riding and skating whenever she can find time in her busy life for recreation.

Matron Porteous is of the opinion that nurses who have had post-graduate courses or practical experience in teaching and supervision, ward administration or public health, are particularly valuable. She is very appreciative of the fine work done by Sisters who are alone in isolated stations and who have cared for dangerously ill patients day and night for a week or more. "None of this is glamorous, but is just what we must expect in certain circumstances" is the way she puts it. They just rise to the occasion like the fine Canadian nurses they are.

A recent development which has international implications is of great interest. Six R.C.A.F. Nursing Sisters have just returned to Canada after attending the School of Air Evacuation at Bowman Field, in Kentucky, U.S.A. A member of this group, Nursing Sister Emma Jordison, tied for first place in a class of 94 nurses from all over the United States and Canada. She is a graduate of the School of Nursing of the Toronto General Hospital and has taken a course in teaching and supervision at the School of Nursing of the University of Toronto.

Upon the successful completion of the course, the entire group became qualified Flight Nurses. Since returning to Canada they have been stationed at R.C.A.F. hospitals, where their services are being utilised in air transportation of patients. The Douglas Transport lends itself very well to this type of work and is the plane most commonly used by the American Army Air Force for evacuation purposes.

In addition to the members of the Nursing Service who are on duty in Canada, 22 R.C.A.F. Nursing Sisters are already serving overseas, some of them

with the R.C.A.F. Bomber group and others with Royal Air Force personnel.

No matter where their duty takes them, it is certain that the R.C.A.F. Nursing Sisters will give an excellent account of themselves and will prove to be worthy of the Service with which they have the high privilege to be associated.

The Canadian Nurse.

E'en now their vanguard gathers,
E'en now we face the fray—
As thou didst help our fathers,
Help thou our host to-day.
Fulfilled of signs and wonders,
In life, in death made clear—
Jehovah of the Thunders,
Lord God of Battles, hear!

R. KIPLING.



MATRON JESSIE E. PORTEOUS, A.R.R.C.,
Royal Canadian Air Force Nursing Service,
recently honoured by the King.

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