

**1st Lt. Lena Rivers Robertson**  
**U.S. Army Nurse, 1941-1946**  
 1385th Service Command Unit, McGuire General Hospital

Lena "Polly" Rivers Robertson was born on 13 June 1914 in Scottsville, Virginia; she was the daughter of local farmers, James H. and Carrie Robertson. Polly attended Scottsville Schools, and after her father's death, she went to live with her aunt, Mrs. D. G. Smith in Brems Bluff as a teenager. She graduated from Fork Union High School in 1933.

Perhaps inspired by her older sister, Emma Robertson, who went into psychiatric nursing, Polly, too, wanted to be a nurse. In 1933, she enrolled in the Johnston -Willis Hospital Training School for nurses in Richmond, VA, and graduated from its 3-yr. nursing program on 12 May 1936. The Nurses Examining Board for the State of Virginia awarded Polly her Registered Nurse certificate on 9 January 1937, and she immediately went to work as a special Nurse at Johnston Willis Hospital.



*Lena "Polly" Rivers Robertson*  
1945

In early Summer 1940, planning began quietly for the formation of the 45th General Hospital, months before the Virginia National Guard was put on alert for an announced year of training as a measure of preparedness. The hospital was to be a 1000-bed hospital, staffed primarily by Richmonders, for employment in event of the United States' entry into WWII.

Dr. Carrington Williams and Colonel Stuart McGuire were called into consultation, and Williams was delegated to form an organization 'on paper.' The work was carried on without publicity and six months before Pearl Harbor was attacked, Dr. Williams was given the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and the Title of 'Director.' He was assigned 57 officers, including 20 physicians and 20 surgeons all from the Medical College of Virginia's faculty. The majority of the nursing staff were also from the Medical College's hospital staff. Among the recruited nurses was Polly Robertson from Johnson-Willis Hospital. Polly entered the U.S. Army Nurse Corps on 15 April 1941.

Polly and the other medical recruits reported for duty at Camp Lee, VA. This new organization had 58 officers, 75 nurses, and 500 enlisted men. They trained at Camp Lee and worked in the camp hospital. On 28 May 1941,

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*Johnston-Willis Graduate Nurses Get Diplomas*



Graduates of the Johnston-Willis hospital training school for nurses are shown above as they received their diplomas this week at commencement exercises at the Commonwealth Club. In the picture (left to right) are: First row—Misses Pauline Phillips, Anne Timberlake, Elizabeth Nuckols, Louise Thompson, Louise Taylor, Betty Wellons and Sally Whitehead. Second row—Misses Myrteen Butler, Viola Cglier, Mary Chase, Grace Goodman, Lena Robertson and Alice Goodman. Third row—Misses Anne Hood, Mary Smith, M. M. Langford, superintendent; Lucille Ford and Matilda Jeffries. Miss Alice Goodman made the highest average in the class during her three years' training. [Dementi photo.]

nurses at Camp Lee stopped their hospital duty to get a taste of what war might be like in the event of a gas attack. Armed with instruction and gas masks, 46 nurses at the camp went through their first gas mask drill and came out minus any glamour they might have taken into the drill. Eyes were weepy, lipstick smeared, and skin felt 'like it was on fire.'

These nurses were the first women to receive the 4-hour instruction which was then given to every individual on the post. The exercises were held around a gas chamber on post. First a huge smoke screen was laid, and the nurses marched through it as they became used to their gas masks. Next they walked through the chamber which was an air-tight building in which tear gas was placed. On their last trip into the building, the nurses had to take their masks off after they were inside. Much weeping and gagging was in evidence as the nurses exited the chamber.

Months of waiting ensued. The recruited staff for the 45th General Hospital trained at Camp Lee and worked in the camp hospital as they waited to go overseas.

### **Grim Service at Rabat**

The 45th's first foreign duty was in North Africa where they arrived on 29 March 1943. For eight months it was stationed at Rabat in French Morocco. While it was a picturesque setting, the unit wanted more action. When that action finally came across the Mediterranean in Italy, the 45th personnel



*Lt. Terrell inspecting nurses' gas masks before the opening of a gas mask drill at Ft. Lee, VA, on 8 May 1941. Nurse third from left is Lt. Lena Robertson.*

no longer had time for anything except grim work.

At Rabat, the 45th functioned as a general hospital, station hospital, and disposition center. It occupied a number of cement, stone, and marble buildings, all within an enclosure equal to three city squares. One of the buildings had been a college, and another, a French government center. Within the enclosure was an athletic field used by hospital personnel and patients in quiet periods. Red Cross movies, athletics, and other entertainments helped pass away the time. Occasionally, ice cream was welcomed as a change in the normal GI menu.

Admissions to the hospital at Rabat averaged 1000 per month, some sick and others battle casualties from the African and Sicilian campaigns. Occasionally there were as many as 300 admissions in a single day. Twenty-five per cent of the patients were returned to duty.

With the Christmas season approaching, plans for the holiday observance were scrapped gladly when word passed through the hospital that the 45th was 'moving up.' Where they were going was not known, but hospital personnel all welcomed a change that would bring the type of work for which the unit had been formed.

On 15 September 1943, the 45th General Hospital landed at the Italian Front with the American 5th Army. Polly saved a newsclipping describing the arrival of the first American Army nurses :

*"The first American Army nurses to debark on European soil since 1917 landed in the Salerno sector of Italy this afternoon from landing barges and immediately went to work in a hospital.*



**Moroccan Scenes 1943**



*U.S. GI watching camel train outside Rabat, Morocco, 1943*



*GIs standing beside bombed military truck outside Rabat*



*45th General Hospital nurses with Moroccans on donkeys*



*Moroccan father with two sons outside Rabat*



*Nurses getting a Moroccan taxi ride in Rabat*



*Father and son outside their home in Rabat*



*Hassan Tower is the minaret of an incomplete mosque in Rabat begun in 1195*

*Garbed in GI steel helmets and full-length fatigue uniforms with long trousers, at first they attracted little attention until one soldier noticed their dainty way of wading ankle deep onto the beaches and cried:*

*“Wow! Women — and here!”*

*Many of the nurses were veterans of the Sicilian campaign.*

*The first group of American nurses to arrive in Italy totaled 57.”*



*A view of the 45th General Hospital's area when it arrived in Naples on 19 December 1943. A bomb crater is in the foreground. This building was repaired enough to house the most serious patient cases.*



*2nd Lt. Lena Robertson in helmet and battle garb as she prepared for the 45th's landing on the Italian front, 15 Sept. 1944 .*



*2nd Lt. Lena Robertson at bombed-out Building A where the 45th General Hospital was to be situated in Naples. December 1943.*

The 45th reached Naples on 19 December 1943 only to find the city a shambles. As a Christmas Eve present, the hospital received 160 patients and felt that its real mission had started. The hospital site was an area in Naples which had been destined for an Italian world's fair to celebrate their conquest of Albania and Ethiopia, but the buildings were shattered and debris covered the area. As rapidly as facilities permitted, repairs were made. The more serious cases were assigned to the buildings with ambulatory patients being sheltered in tents. At the time, the hospital was only 30-odd miles behind the front, and enemy planes buzzed around frequently to add to the feeling of insecurity. There was no time for the men and women of the 45th General Hospital to take in the sights of the Italian countryside.

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In a single year, the 45th General Hospital performed 6,279 operations of all kinds for American, British, French, and Russian patients and even for some prisoners of war. The Fall of 1944 found the hospital serving the Brazilian Expeditionary Force. During its time in Italy, the hospital served as the neuropsychiatric center for the Italian theater of operations.

The 45th General Hospital during its entire period overseas had a death rate of only 1.682 per 1,000 patients admitted. The number of admissions exceeded 36,000 in Africa and Italy. Part of its success was due to a blood bank started in Italy in March 1944 from which a monthly average of 429 pints of whole blood was dispensed. During one month in Naples, the hospital, which was set up for 1,000 beds, averaged 2,000 patients and in one 24-hour period did 240 operations. On one day this hospital had 2,626 patients, or more than the bed capacity of all Richmond hospitals.

This record was made despite the difficulties of inadequate housing and facilities. At no time was the



*45th General Hospital tents in Naples as viewed from the Medical Building. Approximately 50 per cent of the hospital's patients were cared for in tents; tent patients were ambulatory cases. (1944)*



*Tents caring for ambulatory patients at the 45th General Hospital in Naples in 1944.*



hospital housed in buildings originally built for the hospital. The World's Fair buildings in Naples had been considerably damaged by bombings and had to be partially rebuilt.

Several bombing raids by German planes added to the difficulty of operations.

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45th General Hospital's surgical building in Naples, Italy 1945. It was originally the machine shop for the Italian world's fair grounds before the 45th arrived in March 1944. Mt. Vesuvius is in the background.



Mt. Vesuvius outside Naples after it erupted and lava started flowing on 18 March 1944.

## San Sebastiano Destroyed By Mt. Vesuvius Lava Flow

By Sgt. VICTOR DALLAIRE  
 (Stars and Stripes Staff Writer)

ON MT. VESUVIUS, March 21— Allied Military Government officials today rushed evacuation of Cercola which lies in the path of a quarter-mile wide stream of lava that already had destroyed half of San Sebastiano on the northwest slope of Mt. Vesuvius.

The molten mass, sweeping everything before it, was late tonight only a few hundred yards above houses on the outer fringe of the city of 7,000. A new and more violent eruption of the volcano at 1730 hours today threw lava a thousand feet above the crater and added new millions of tons to the fiery stream.

So great was the new surge of fire from the mountain that secondary streams took on new proportions and some concern was being felt for the town of Torre Del Greco and its 16,500 inhabitants. No evacuation of that city was planned unless the threat grew more serious.

AMG last night completed evacuation of the 6,000 residents of the pretty little town of San Sebastiano

just ahead of the quickly-moving flood. Late yesterday the lava flow increased and residents and soldiers worked at top speed to evacuate the population.

The flood reached the steel bridge which separated San Sebastiano from Massa di Somma at 0319 hours today, crumpling the heavy structure like tinfoil. Earlier, several large homes on the upper side of the town were crushed by the irresistible mass of fire and stone.

The road leading from San Sebastiano was crowded with refugees throughout the night. Peasant carts aided AMG's 172 trucks in moving furniture, bedding and other household goods from the doomed homes.

The evacuation proceeded in the midst of crashing buildings and shouts in a half dozen tongues. Trucks were backed up to the doors of homes while residents loaded household goods. Nearly everyone carried some cherished possession which he did not trust in the general load. Women sobbed on street

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Above article was in the 21 March 1944 Stars and Stripes newspaper. Lt. Robertson scribbled on the back of this news clipping: I was working at the base the night Mt. Vesuvius erupted!



45th General Hospital staff at outskirts of Cassino, Italy, after its bombardment. May 1944.



MEDICOS ALSO march in ruins, mud and water. Stretcher bearers file through village of San Clemente at the base of Mount Camino on way to front. It was a three hour journey up the hill and three hours back—with wounded. (British Army Film Unit Photo through PWB)



After treating her patients in Ward P-7, Lt. Robertson prepared to scrub



A 45th soldier gets a haircut in the Naples' debris



A 45th soldier washes clothes where he can in Naples, 1944.



The 45th's Hospital Mess in Naples, 1944.



*Lt. Lena Robertson with Capt Richard Michaux, a 45th General Hospital surgeon in Naples that served Polly's ward (1944).*



*Lt. Robertson sits with Corporal Joseph Horabik (at right) and another enlisted man, who served in Polly's ward most of 1944. Polly inscribed the back of this photo with: "I had 65 critically ill colostomy patients plus patients with serious head wounds in this one hut alone!"*



*Lt. Robertson is shown in the doorway behind two of her Brazilian patients with a Brazilian female soldier on the steps. In Fall 1944, the hospital served the Brazilian Expeditionary Force and the 45th General hospital group to which Robertson belonged served as advisors to the Brazilian doctors and nurses, who were not familiar with administration of army hospitals.*



*Bill Leonard of Texas was a patient whom Lt. Robertson nursed for 10 months at the 45th General Hospital in Naples. His legs had been amputated even with his hips, back pulped, and use of one hand was gone. At his request, Nurse Robertson had placed Bill out in the sunshine the day this photo was taken.*



On 4 April 1944, the War Department announced the promotion of 1st Lt. Polly Robertson of the Army Nurse Corps to that rank. Work continued at a feverish pace. Polly's ward was P7, a prefabricated building that treated critically ill colostomy patients and soldiers with serious head wounds from the Italian front. The hours were long for the medical staff at the hospital, and opportunities to rest, slim. In Polly's own words, "Looking back, I was sick most of the time overseas — I would work until I dropped, and then be put back to work when too sick to eat, walk, or think."

But Polly kept on and excelled. As Captain Richard Michaux, her ward surgeon throughout the 45th's deployment in Italy, said in a letter to her dated 10 July 1945: "Polly, I hope you are happy in your work and I always want you to know that I think you are tops. I surely envy the doctor for whom you are working...only wish it could have been me. I really miss my old colostomy ward — I guess the only time I was really happy was when we had a ward full of them. Anyway, Polly, I sure wish you could be with us — we really need a few nurses like yourself if they want a good running evacuation hospital."

From Corporal Joe Horabik, Polly's ward boy in the P7 ward at the 45th General Hospital in Naples: "I'd give anything to work with you again. I really miss it. You were the best nurse that I ever worked with and ever will." (22 July 1945)

From Captain A. Schreiber, a doctor: "Here's to one trooper who is really a great healing aid!" (undated)

Polly was an outstanding nurse in an outstanding unit that proved itself throughout the war both at home and overseas. For the excellent record the hospital established during its service in the North African and Italian campaigns, it was awarded the Army's

Meritorious Service Unit Plaque with an accompanying citation that reads:

*"For superior performance of duty in the accomplishment of exceptionally difficult tasks in the Peninsular Base Section for the period, June 1, 1944, to December 1, 1944. Operating far beyond its authorized capacity, this unit maintained the highest standards of the medical profession. In addition to its normal duties, this hospital cared for all psychopathic and dermatological patients of the Base Section. These additional duties made it necessary to train personnel in the fields of neuropsychiatry and dermatology. From the professional viewpoint, the training was sound and the results were very satisfactory. The continued superior performance of exceptionally difficult tasks by the 45th General Hospital has kept its standards high so that this award carries on the military policy of recognizing service performed according to the highest traditions of the United States Army."*

On 6 January 1945, Polly received word that she was being rotated back to the United States. As early as October 1943, she had suffered from a chronic cough and was hospitalized on at least two occasions for asthmatic bronchitis. She was not well when word of her rotation arrived. Reluctantly Polly packed up and turned to her 45th colleagues as she prepared to leave, "It's up to fate from now on — I can't do any more." On 11 February 1945, Polly and Lt. Spratt, a fellow nurse, boarded a truck for the Army's airport in Naples for the long trip back to Camp Lee, VA. At 8AM in the morning, they took off in a C47 for Casablanca, arriving there eight hours later. The following travel entries are all that remains in Polly's diary of her life in military service, thanks to the heavy editing of Army censors in Naples:

—————  
*Feb. 14th—left Casablanca @9:05 a.m. Arrived in Atar @ 2:45 p.m. stop. The temperature is 140 degrees! At 3:10 p.m. we started for Dakar and landed at 6:07 p.m.*

*Feb. 15th — we were allowed to tour Dakar for two hours. Two truck loads went.*

*Feb. 15th — alerted @ 11:00 a.m. Left at 4:30 p.m. This trip was in a C54! Inspections, censorships, and superfluous orders again. Regulations read. Briefed. Told what to do in land or sea crash. In nine hours we were in Natal, Brazil — 1:40 a.m. Set clock back 2 hours. Spratt and I were in a tent in a field in Brazil. Meals 50 cents and real bananas. Saw lights for the first time!*

*Feb. 17th — alerted 6:30 p.m.*

*Feb. 18th — Left Natal @ 3:55 AM. Awakened @ 2:00 and had breakfast.*

*Arrived @ 8:40 a.m. in Belem, British Guiana. Departed 11:35 a.m. and arrived in Puerto Rico at 7:15 p.m.*

*Arrived in Miami at 22:50 p.m. Total hours = 22 hrs*

*Feb. 20th — Left Miami 8:16 a.m.*

*Feb. 21st — Arrived in D. C. @ 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday. Per Diem = \$17.25 for entire trip.*

*Leave until April 27th, 1945.*

—————  
1st Lt. Lena R. Robertson was separated from the U.S. Army Nurse Corps at McGuire General Hospital, Richmond, Virginia, on 11 February 1946 when her unit was demobilized. She was awarded an American Defense Medal and Europe-Africa-Mediterranean Service Medal with 2 Bronze Service Stars. She listed her permanent address as Breemo Bluff, Virginia.

Lt. Robertson's health was permanently impaired for the duration of her life. Her lung problems continued and made working long nursing hours very difficult. After the war, Polly lived in Scottsville with Thomas Tyler Robertson, her brother and manager of the local flour mill. She did not work as a nurse again and passed away on July 12, 1979 in Scottsville.



*Army of the United States*

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

*This is to certify that*

LENA R ROBERTSON N 724 362 1st Lt

1385th Service Command Unit, McGuire General Hospital

*honorably served in active Federal Service*

*in the Army of the United States from*

10 July 1944 and in the ARMY NURSE CORPS  
15 April 1941 to 11 February 1946

*Given at* McGuire General Hospital, Richmond, Virginia

*on the* 11 *th* *day of* February 19<sup>46</sup>

*P. E. Duggins*  
P. E. DUGGINS, Colonel, M. C.  
Commanding

MILITARY RECORD AND REPORT OF SEPARATION  
CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE


1. LAST NAME - FIRST NAME - MIDDLE INITIAL ROBERTSON LENA R			2. ARMY SERIAL NUMBER N 724 362		3. ASS. GRADE 1st Lt	4. ARM OR SERVICE ANC	5. COMPONENT AUS
6. ORGANIZATION 1385th SCU, McGuire General Hospital			7. DATE OF RELIEF FROM ACTIVE DUTY 11 Feb 1946		8. PLACE OF SEPARATION McGuire General Hospital Richmond, Virginia		
9. PERMANENT ADDRESS FOR MAILING PURPOSES Bremo Bluff, Virginia				10. DATE OF BIRTH 13 Jun 1914		11. PLACE OF BIRTH Scottsville, Va.	
12. ADDRESS FROM WHICH EMPLOYMENT WILL BE SOUGHT See 9				13. COLOR EYES Brown	14. COLOR HAIR Brown	15. HEIGHT 5' 7"	16. WEIGHT 120 lbs.
17. NO. OF DEPENDENTS 0	18. RACE WHITE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NEGRO <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (specify) <input type="checkbox"/>	19. MARITAL STATUS SINGLE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MARRIED <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (specify) <input type="checkbox"/>		20. U.S. CITIZEN YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	21. CIVILIAN OCCUPATION AND NO. Nurse III 0-33.10		

MILITARY HISTORY

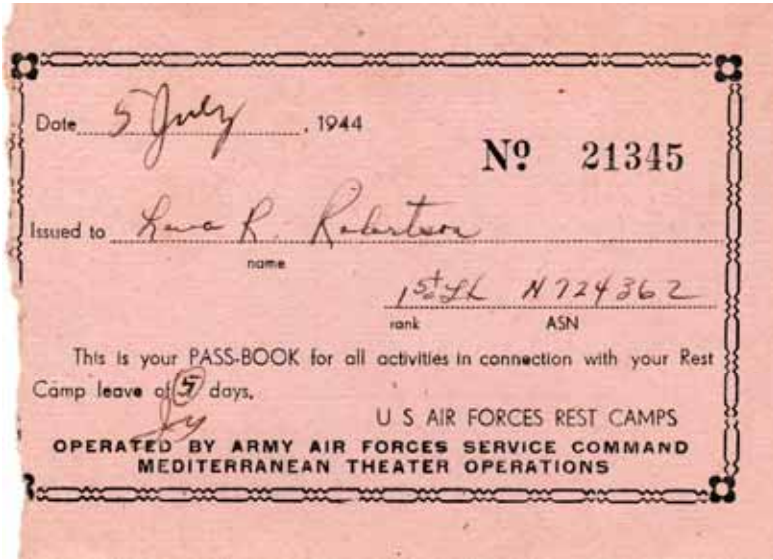
SELECTIVE SERVICE DATA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	22. REGISTERED YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	23. LOCAL S. S. BOARD NUMBER	24. COUNTY AND STATE		25. HOME ADDRESS AT TIME OF ENTRY ON ACTIVE DUTY 606 North Boulevard, Richmond, Va.				
26. DATE OF ENTRY ON ACTIVE DUTY 15 April 1941		27. MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY AND NO. Nurse, Administrative (3430)							
28. BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS Naples-Foggia Rome-Arno									
29. DECORATIONS AND CITATIONS American Defense Medal SAME Service Medal with 2 Bronze Service Stars									
30. WOUNDS RECEIVED IN ACTION None									
31. SERVICE SCHOOLS ATTENDED None				32. SERVICE OUTSIDE CONTINENTAL U. S. AND RETURN					
		DATE OF DEPARTURE	DESTINATION		DATE OF ARRIVAL				
		20 Mar 1943	North Africa		29 Mar 1943				
		28 Dec 1943	Italy		31 Dec 1943				
		11 Feb 1945	USA		19 Feb 1945				
33. REASON AND AUTHORITY FOR SEPARATION Sec II RR 1-5 Demobilization									
34. CURRENT TOUR OF ACTIVE DUTY						35. EDUCATION (years)			
CONTINENTAL SERVICE			FOREIGN SERVICE			GRAMMAR SCHOOL		HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
YEARS	MONTHS	DAYS	YEARS	MONTHS	DAYS	8	4	3	
2	10	27	1	11	0				

INSURANCE NOTICE

<p><b>IMPORTANT</b> IF PREMIUM IS NOT PAID WHEN DUE OR WITHIN THIRTY-ONE DAYS THEREAFTER, INSURANCE WILL LAPSE. MAKE CHECKS OR MONEY ORDERS PAYABLE TO THE TREASURER OF THE U. S. AND FORWARD TO COLLECTIONS SUBDIVISION, VETERANS ADMINISTRATION, WASHINGTON 25, D. C.</p>										
36. KIND OF INSURANCE		37. HOW PAID		38. Effective Date of Allotment Discontinuance		39. Date of Next Premium Due (one month after 38)	40. PREMIUM DUE EACH MONTH	41. INTENTION OF VETERAN TO		
Natl. Serv.	U.S. Govt.	None	Allotment	Direct to V.A.				Continue	Continue only	Discontinue
X			X		28 Feb 1946	31 Mar 1946	3.45	X		

42. 	RIGHT THUMB PRINT	43. REMARKS (This space for completion of above items or entry of other items specified in W. D. Directives) 1. Lapel button issued
44. SIGNATURE OF OFFICER BEING SEPARATED <i>Lena R. Robertson</i>		45. PERSONNEL OFFICER (Type name, grade and organization - signature) R. J. CONWAY, WOJG, USA Chief, Mil Pers Branch <i>R J Conway</i>

**Scenes from Capri, Italy, July 1944**



Above is Polly's passbook for a 5-day leave in July 1944. During the 23 months she was overseas with the 45th General Hospital, the only leave Polly was allotted was this pass to a U. S. Air Forces Rest Camp on Capri. From her notes and scrapbook, she and her nursing colleagues had a grand time in the Mediterranean sunshine.



The LST that ferried Polly and other 45th staff members to Capri.



Polly (3rd from left on the bench above) and fellow nurses eagerly watched for Capri and a brief opportunity to relax before going back to treating casualties from the Italian campaign.



They also boated into the Blue Grottoes, a sea cave on the coast of Capri.



Polly ( at right above) and friend enjoyed a convertible ride with a souvenir Capri hat ready to shade them if needed.



At left, Polly stands outside her Capri hotel, wearing what she and her nurses called the 'Capri sash'.



*Italian troops marching in Naples, 1944*

*The Coliseum in Rome, 1945. It was built under the emperors Vespasian and Titus in the years AD 70-80 and seated 87,000 spectators.*



*Three 1944 photos of the Roman ruins at Pompeii, which is located south of Naples.*



**R. TEATRO S. CARLO**  
**NAPOLI**

THE UNITED STATES ARMY  
presents  
*Irving Berlin's*  
All-Soldier Musical Show

**"THIS IS THE ARMY"**  
Music and Lyrics by IRVING BERLIN

"This Is The Army" is presented overseas under the supervision of the Special Service Division of the United States Army.

MAURICE J. MEYER  
Colonel, J.A.G.D.  
Special Service Officer  
Peninsula Base Section



**THEATRICAL REUNION**

TWO YEARS AGO two men left an ack-ack outfit in Paterson, N. J., to join the cast of "This Is The Army." This week their old unit's GI in charge of special service came in to Naples to get tickets to the show for his frontline troops and met his former buddies for the first time. Discussing the show above are, left to right, Cpl. George Lee, West Haven, Conn., guitar player with the show's band; Pvt. Norman Logan, Boston, Mass., who came in to get the tickets; Irving Berlin, director of the show, and Pfc. Joe Wojcikowski, Philadelphia, dancer. The show opens a two-week engagement at Santa Maria's tonight. (Staff Photo by Sgt. Max Montgomery)

In late 1944, Irving Berlin came to Naples to direct an all-soldier company of singers who performed Berlin's 'This Is The Army.' According to Lt. Robertson, the performance was held in a bombed-out area, and Berlin was so hoarse that he could barely talk.



**THE UNITED STATES ARMY**  
presents  
**IRVING BERLIN'S**  
All-Soldier Musical Show

**" THIS IS THE ARMY "**

Music and Lyrics by Irving Berlin  
Musical Numbers and Dances Staged by Sgt. Robt Sidney  
Scenery Designed by Lt. John Koenig  
Costumes Designed by Sgt. Joseph Fretwell III  
Musical Director: Sgt. Milton Rosenstock  
Entire Production Staged under the Personal Direction of MR. IRVING BERLIN

**OVERTURE** ... .. **THIS IS THE ARMY ORCHESTRA**  
Captain: Cpl. Ralph Magelssen, Sgt. of the Guard: Sgt. Alan Mannion,  
Guards: Sgt. Gene Berg and Cpl. John Draper.

**OPENING CHORUS** ... .. **The Company**

**" THIS IS THE ARMY, MR. JONES "**  
Sung by the Selectees: Sgt. Julie Oshins, Cpl. William Roerich, Cpl. Hank  
Henry, Pfc. Henry Jones, Pfc. Arthur Gilmour, Pvt. John Hederman,  
and Pvt. Daniel Longo.

**SGT. DICK BERNIE**  
" I'M GETTING TIRED SO I CAN SLEEP "  
Sung by Sgt. James Burrell.  
Assisted by Sgt. Zinn Arthur, Pfc. William Collier, Pfc. James Farrell, Pfc.  
Roger Kime, Pfc. Orville Race, Pfc. Donald McCray, Pfc. Earl Lippy,  
and Pfc. Carl Nicholas.

**" DONT SING—GO INTO YOUR DANCE "**  
Sung and Danced by Cpl. Pinkie Mitchell.  
Sgt. of the Guard: Sgt. Sidney Salzer. Guards: Sgt. Maurice Kelly and Sgt.  
Nelson Barcliff.

**SGT. JULIE OSHINS**

**" MANDY "**  
Sung by Cpl. Ralph Magelssen, Mandy Herself: Sgt. Richard Irving Her  
Boy Friend: Pvt. Fred Kelly.  
Girls: Cpl. Jack Lemmy, Pfc. Eugene Jarvis, Pfc. William Pillech, Pvt. Char  
les Dickson, Pvt. Charles Tate, Pvt. Alfred Daniels.  
Boys: Sgt. Joseph Johnson, Cpl. Clarence Jaeger, Cpl. Phil King, Sgt. Car  
mine Capuzzo, Pfc. Joseph Wojcikowski, Pfc. Stephen La Marr.

**MILITARY VAUDEVILLE**  
Juggler: Cpl. Larry Weeks. Mess Sergeant: Pvt. Daniel Longo.

**LADIES OF THE CHORUS**  
Girls: Sgt. Robert Sidney, Cpl. Hank Henry, Pfc. Arthur Gilmour, Pfc.  
Henry Jones, Pvt. John Hederman, Sgt. Joseph Fretwell.  
Boys: Sgt. Sidney Salzer, Pfc. Norman Stuart, Pfc. Kenneth Bates, Pfc. Ri  
chard Browninaid, Pvt. Daniel Longo, Pvt. Richard Reeves.

**MILITARY VAUDEVILLE**  
Acrobats: The Allen Trio (Sgt. Geno Erbisti, Cpl. Louis Bednarek, Cpl.  
Angelo Boono), Sgt. Gene Berg, Sgt. Arthur Steiner, and Cpl.  
Pinkie Mitchell.

**" WITH MY HEAD IN THE CLOUDS " and " AMERICAN EAGLES "**  
Sung by Sgt. Robert Shanley and Company.

**" WHAT THE WELL DRESSED MAN IN HARLEM WILL WEAR "**  
(Dance Staged by Cpl. Pete Nugent)  
Sung by Cpl. James Cross  
Assisted by Sgt. Clyde Turner, Sgt. Jack Brodnax, Cpl. Orlando Johnson,  
Pvt. Robert Jackson, Pvt. George Anderson.  
Danced by Cpl. Pete Nugent, Pfc. Melbourne Scott, Pvt. Thomas Lee, Pfc.  
Al Martin, Pvt. Randolph Cutley, Pvt. William Smith, Pvt. Charles  
Johnson, Pvt. Herbert Flinter.  
Dance Speciality: Pvt. Billy Yates and Cpl. James Cross  
Spousal Speciality: Cpl. Marion «Spousal» Brown.

**FINALE** ... .. **The Company**

INTERMISSION

**EXTRACTE** ... .. **This Is The Army Orchestra**

**STAGE DOOR CANTYEN**  
Dancers: Sgt. Robert Sidney, Sgt. Arthur Steiner, Sgt. Maurice Kelly, Sgt.  
Gene Berg, Sgt. Carmine Capuzzo.  
Carteases: Sgt. Joseph Johnson, Cpl. Clarence Jaeger, Cpl. Jack  
Lemmy, Cpl. William Roerich, Cpl. Phil King, Pfc. Ray Goss, Pfc. Nor  
man Stuart, Pfc. Bert Whitley, Pfc. Arthur Gilmour, Pfc. Harvey Prisel,  
Pfc. Kenneth Bates, Pfc. Eugene Jarvis, Pfc. Joseph Wojcikowski, Sgt.  
Joseph Fretwell, Pvt. John Hederman, Pvt. Larry Gengo, Pvt. Alfred  
Daniels.  
Jane Cow: Sgt. Alan Mannion, Cypay Rose Lee: Sgt. Julie Oshins,  
Vera Zorina: Sgt. Nelson Barcliff, Jack Benny: Sgt. Dick Bernie,  
Donald Duck: Pvt. Joe Allen, Rochester: Cpl. James Cross.  
Ronald Coleman: Cpl. James Kearney.

**" I LEFT MY HEART AT THE STAGE DOOR CANTYEN "**  
Sung by Sgt. Earl Oxford. Eileen Pvt. Charles Tate.

**MILITARY VAUDEVILLE**  
Magician: Sgt. John Prince Mendes. Captain: Sgt. Ross Elliott.

**" THE KICK IN THE PANTS "**  
Sung by Sgt. Zinn Arthur.  
Quarier: Cpl. Murry Deutch, Pfc. Al Lane, Pvt. William Collier, Pvt.  
Irving Deutch.  
Dancers: Sgt. Maurice Kelly, Pvt. Fred Kelly, Sgt. Richard Irving, Sgt.  
Gene Berg, Sgt. Arthur Steiner, Cpl. Phil King, Pfc. Harvey Prisel,  
Pfc. Joseph Wojcikowski, Cpl. Carmine Capuzzo, Pfc. William Tri  
leb, Pvt. Charles Tate.  
Three Boys: Sgt. Joseph Johnson, Pvt. Charles Dickson, Pvt. Alfred Da  
niel.  
Three Ballerinas: Sgt. Robert Sidney, Cpl. Clarence Jaeger, Sgt. Nelson  
Barcliff.

**DADDY'S FURLOUGH**  
Children: Pfc. Ray Goss, Pfc. Frank d'Elia, Pvt. William MacLhargey.  
Their Daddy: Sgt. Julie Oshins.  
Her Mommy: Cpl. William Roerich.  
Her Mommy: Cpl. Hank Henry.  
W.A.C.'s: Pfc. Kenneth Bates, Pfc. Arthur Gilmour, Pfc. Albert Whitley,  
Pfc. Norman Stuart, Pvt. John Hederman.



## Scenes from Dakar, Senegal,

290 Main Street, Box 101  
Scottsville, VA 24590

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February 15, 1945

When Polly Robertson and several other members of the 45th General Hospital, Naples, were rotated back to the U.S. in February 1945, they traveled home via Casablanca, Dakar, Natal, and Miami. On 15 February Polly and colleagues arrived in Dakar on a C47. They were allowed to tour Dakar for two hours, and Polly and friends filled up two U.S. Army trucks for the tour. Here are the photos Polly took of Dakar street scenes that day...lots of people everywhere on the streets!





**Nursing with the 1326th SU, McGuire General Hospital, Camp Lee, VA**  
 15 April 1941—20 March 1943



*2 Lt. Lena Rivers Robertson (standing) is shown with 4 fellow nurses at Camp Lee ca. 1943. Robertson had just come off an all night shift at the hospital when this photo was taken*

**Hospital Unit Impressive at  
 Camp Lee**

By Overton Jones, ca. 1943  
 Richmond

Any mother who is uneasy as to what may happen to the health of her son if the Army gets him probably would find trained medical men and nurses working with the very best equipment. She would see a hospital unit which can offer adequate treatment for men suffering from maladies ranging from the common cold to major organic trouble. And if she still needed convincing, she could talk

to patients themselves, who would tell her how well they were being taken care of.

If she had made her visit yesterday, she would have found nearly 900 patients at the hospital. That sounds like a whole lot for a military reservation of 22,000 men. But in the Army, they don't wait until a fellow figuratively has one foot in the grave before sending him to the hospital. Instead, the hospital offers its services in treating minor ailments, which in civilian life wouldn't even keep a man away from work.

**Reason for It All**

And you can be sure there's a mighty good reason for this extreme care taken of the soldiers. Get a bad cold in civilian life and you don't do much about it except to complain and sniffle and, perhaps, give colds to other members of your family. But let a soldier get a cold, and his whole company is in danger of catching it.

Sixty-seven connecting buildings with a normal capacity of 871 patient beds constitute the Camp Lee Hospital, operated by the 1326th Service

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Unit. In case of emergencies, the hospital can take care of 1250 patients.

Included among the services are dental, eye, ear, nose and throat, laboratory, medical, neuro-psychiatrist, physical reconstruction, surgical, urological, and X-ray. To do this work, there are 39 medical officers, 10 dental officers, 5 medical administrative officers, five medical administrative officers, one sanitary officer, 62 nurses, 310 enlisted men, and 165 civilian employees.

### **Extensive Experience**

Officers in charge of the station hospital are men of extensive experience. In command of the unit is Lieutenant-Colonel Emory H. Gist, a graduate of Barnes Medical University in 1911, of the Army Medical School in 1922 and the Medical Field Service School in 1921.

Executive officer and second in command is Major Clayton H. Hixson, graduate of George Washington University in 1927. A reserve officer, Major Hixson entered the Army for active duty on February 1.

Colonel Leslie D. Baskin is dental surgeon. Major Peter J. Kapo is chief of the roentgenological service, Major Clarence W. Hardy is a chief of surgical service and Captain Henry N. Bronk is chief of medical service.

The operating room contains two tables in order to provide for any

emergency. In addition to the chief surgeon, there are five assistants, three nurses, one anesthetist, and five enlisted men. As a rule, two or three major operations are performed daily.

### **Two Dental Clinics**

There are two dental clinics with facilities for 40 dentists.

Service of the clinics, wards, operating room, and ambulances are maintained on a 24-hour basis.

A central heating plant of 900 horsepower furnishes steam heat for all 67 hospital buildings, and the temperature in any building can be controlled.

In addition to the station hospital, there are nine infirmaries operated in various sections of the camp. A sick soldier goes first to the infirmary for preliminary examination by the doctor on duty there. The doctor treats the case himself or sends the man to the hospital.

### **Primary Causes**

Primary causes of hospitalization at the camp are common respiratory diseases such as colds and sore throat, according to Lieutenant Ernest t. Sheen, adjutant and public relations officer of the hospital. Of 878 patients on hand on a recent day, 432 were being treated for respiratory diseases. On the same day, there were 79 cases of influenza, 69 of German measles, and nine of mumps. There was one case of black measles, a rather unusual disease.

Another explanation for the apparently large number of men in the hospital is that most of the troops at

Camp Lee are raw recruits. Coming directly from civilian life into the far-different mode of living in the Army, the men go through a period of readjustment during which the prevalence of sickness is high. The sickness usually is of a minor nature. Some of the selectees run mild temperatures following typhoid inoculations.

Lieutenant Sheen said he expected the number of sick men in camp to decrease sharply with the arrival of summer.

### **Handle Mental Cases**

Besides the purely medical treatment, the station hospital also has facilities for handling mental cases. There are two detention wards with barred windows. Some men considered to be "queer" in civilian life manage to get along fairly well living in their own homes and following their own peculiar habits of life, but they fail to fit in with Army regularity and discipline. When such men come to the attention of the hospital, they are sent home.

The number of injuries sustained by soldiers at Camp Lee has been negligible. Lieutenant Sheen said the most serious injury was a broken arm, and that was suffered by a civilian construction worker. About 20 of the approximately 700 patients admitted to the hospital weekly come in for treatment of injuries.

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**Only One Death**

Thus far, there has been only one death in the hospital. A Negro soldier attempted treatment of a pain in his stomach by taking two doses of a strong purgative. The pain was from his appendix, which burst before an operation could be performed. He died from peritonitis.

Friends of hospitalized men may visit them any day from 2 to 4 p.m. and 6 to 8 p.m.

Richmond doctors, who have been called to active duty and are now stationed at the Camp Lee hospital, are Captain P.W. Oden, Captain D. H. Rosenfeld, Lieutenant R. C. Manson, Lieutenant G. D. Hall, and Lieutenant R. F. Bell.



*Horace Edward O'Connell, gets a lot of attention from three Richmond nurses on the staff of Camp Lee Station Hospital (L to R: Lieutenants Mary Elizabeth Stephens, Helen Hall, and Lena Rivers Robertson. O'Connell is one of 11 CCC boys from nearby camps currently receiving treatment at the hospital*



*In this 1943 photo, Lieutenant Lena Rivers Robertson is shown with one of her patients at Camp Lee Station Hospital in Richmond, VA.*

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**Selected Drawings of Nurse Robertson By  
Her Camp Lee Patients  
1941-1943**



*Per Nurse Robertson's handwritten note on the drawing's back:  
"This patient seems peeved with me."*