

# War Life and Hardships of American Women Nurses

## Dr. Anita Newcomb McGee Describes Intentions and Accomplishments of The American Corps.

## Head of The Spanish War Association Goes into Detail as to Hardships the Party Must Endure.

"An army nurse," said Dr. Anita Newcomb McGee, president of the society of Spanish-American War Nurses and herself probably the best known army nurse in the United States, "should be possessed of nerves of steel. She should have a constitution that is proof against exposure to weather or to the strain of long hours of work, for she is subjected to both, and yet, with it all, she must be patient and kind, with a touch as gentle as that of a ministering angel. The nurses whom I take with me to Japan are all what are known among us as 'vets' for they have served through several campaigns, and even the hardest soldier is not more prepared to play his part in a war than are they. My nurses would know just how to go into camp, to forage for food, to cook their own meals, to help the doctors pick up the wounded, lay out the field hospital, and then stand by to soothe and care for the sick for eighteen hours at a time if necessary.

### Prepared to March.

"Of course, we don't expect to have all that to do as a regular thing in Japan, but we have done it, and in this case, in the event of an emergency call in the field the nurses will be prepared to march at once. I have seen some of the nurses trudging along the road carrying almost as heavy a burden as the soldiers. There were times when there was no one else to carry their blankets and ponchos, and with it, of course, they took the nurse's indispensable equipment, the "hypos" syringe, thermometer, and surgical case, and sometimes a small alcohol lamp.

"This experience in Japan, I think, will be very much like that which the nurses had in Cuba.

"There is every possibility that they will be sent on the field, and our coming experience will stand us in good stead. Summer is now approaching, and the heat in the hospitals and out in the glaring fields will undoubtedly be one of the discomforts we have to fight against. Our duty, however, in that event will probably be the same as in Cuba, when the day shift began at noon and ended at midnight in order to give the nurses who take that watch the advantages of several hours of darkness in which to sleep.

### Used Palm Leaves.

"I have seen many tents, for example, where the interior was fairly covered with palm leaves which they pinned to the walls. In Cuba, and I presume it will be the same way in Japan, the dews were so heavy that a nurse wouldn't dare to hang up her clothes at night in the interior of the tent for fear they would be a lump soaking mass in the morning. Not only for protection of her clothes, but to make her couch more comfortable, a nurse would always roll up her dress and put it under her head as a pillow.

"In that way you see we wouldn't be a bit worried by the Japanese custom of sleeping on wooden platters. For we could substitute the other. These things of which I am now speaking are, of course, only experienced on field duty, but that is what we expect to get.

"There are some little tricks and ways about going into camp which an army nurse has to learn. Of her equipment I have already spoken, but for a nurse to have any degree of comfort, two of them must sleep together. This is in order that they may have one poncho and blanket to lay on the ground and another couple to draw over them.

### Earth Beds.

"The poncho is very necessary in tropical countries, where the dew is heavy. In making her bed the nurse first has a little hollow scooped out in the ground somewhat conforming to a person's body. In this she lays the poncho ribber side down, on that she puts the heavy army blanket, and her child's equipment then serves as the upper covering for both of them.

"On first going into camp, a nurse very often has to forage for her own food. We have our paninikins, and thus, and with them we go to the general mess and get our portion of hard bread, coffee, and beans, which we take to our tents. If we are so fortunate as to have an alcohol stove, perhaps we can cook them into better shape, but you will never find an army nurse or a regular soldier complaining if the rations are anywhere near presentable.

"In Japan we expect that our rations will consist of rice, tea, and fish, and with these we will be amply satisfied. Strange as it may seem, however, nurses are not very fond of tea, and to us that will not be any particular attraction in Japan. If we can get malted milk on the field we will be much better satisfied. I do not know just what the system of mess is for the Japanese nurses, but in the event that our rations are issued to us raw there will be no trouble, as an army nurse is as good a cook as a French chef, and we can fix the food to suit ourselves.

### In the Wards.

A little rapid maneuvering about in the cramped limits of the tent and it is ready for breakfast. Promptly at 7 she must report at her ward, where the night nurse gives one the orders for the day. One nurse usually has about twenty patients in a ward to look after. It is the first duty to go about the ward feeding the patients, making up the beds, and preparing the whole division for inspection. Then the temperatures are taken and the nurse makes up the record preparatory to the coming of the doctor, who usually arrives between 8 and 9. The visit is the most important of the day. A nurse must have all the instruments spick and span and the patients clean and trim for their examination.

"After the doctor's morning visit the nurse then has charge of her patients for a twelve hours' watch.

"How will we understand the wails of a wounded Japanese or Russian soldier without knowing their language, you ask? Well, how do we understand the wants of a patient with delirium, or a man with a bullet through his head? It is by observation. There is a language about a sick room which has no dependence on nationality. For example, many of our nurses have been sent on emergency calls to boiler explosions, mine disasters, and similar accidents, where men of every nationality bleeding and wounded were placed under their care.

### Past Experiences.

"Did the nurses have any trouble attending a wounded Italian who could not speak a word of English? Not a bit of it. Convalescent patients who cannot speak your own language are of course a little harder to look after, but there are a thousand ways to amuse them without talking to them. A nurse can put her patient to work making splints, or rolling bandages, whittling sticks, or anything else to keep them from brooding.

"The Ohio men frankly admit that they have been simply following up the work of Herr Otto Lilienthal, as Chanute and Peile have done, but they have gone one step further. Beginning in about 1890, Lilienthal made short, nearly horizontal flights with a light framework to which were secured widely extended, stationary wings. He also had a rudimentary steering to the right or the left. Inasmuch as the sustaining surface of the air upon such a mechanism is chiefly exercised only while it is moving, Lilienthal would acquire headway at the outset by running a few steps. It was also necessary to start from some elevation, like a housetop or low cliff, because there would be a slow, gradual descent after launching. This sort of flight was called gliding. Prior to his death, which resulted from an accident to one of his machines, Lilienthal made about 2,000 such journeys through the air. In a few cases he managed to cover 1,000 feet before landing. During the time he was at work he changed the shape of his machine, but the principle remained the same. Eventually he intended to add a motor and screws to propel him, but he did not live to carry that purpose into effect. The forward impetus for his flights was derived first by running and then by cravatation.

### SELF-DROPELLED AIRSHIPS

THOUGH Wilbur and Orville Wright have been actively experimenting for a considerable period with the aeroplane for aerial navigation, they have been fortunate enough to avoid observation and criticism until they were ready to take the public into their confidence. These brothers live at Dayton, Ohio, most of the year, but during the summers of 1900 and 1902, and again in October, 1903, they were quietly working in a secluded place on the North Carolina coast. The scene of their operations was about four miles from Kitty Hawk, where the United States Weather Bureau has a station. The success achieved on the occasion of their latest attempt has been so inadequately reported by the press that the particulars now supplied by them in the pages of "The Independent" will be welcomed by everybody interested in this sort of adventure.

"The site selected for the first gliding experiments was the Kill Devil sand hill, which rises fully one hundred feet above the beach and slopes away to the northeast at an angle of ten degrees. A dozen attempts were made when the wind had subsided to a moderate breeze an hour, and all were successful. Neither operator nor machine was hurt when they landed, although their speed was often twenty miles an hour at the critical moment. The aeroplane always obeyed its helm beautifully, and its stability was perfectly maintained.

"With the renewal of experiments in 1902 a change of pattern was decided upon. Lilienthal began with a single horizontal plane, and later adopted the double deck style of construction. Thus, he secured twice the sustaining power for the same lateral and longitudinal extent. The Wrights followed the same policy. In 1900 they moved with a single aeroplane, and in 1902 they operated with two. Their machine in the latter years measured thirty-two feet from tip to tip, sideways, and five feet fore and aft. The total area secured was 306 square feet.

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### Washington a City of Insomnia, Which the Physicians Are Endeavoring to Banish.

Local physicians report that of all the cities of the United States none is made up of people who suffer so much from insomnia as do those of Washington. The physicians make no attempt to explain this condition except to assert that it is probably due to the greater amount of brain work in ratio to the population in Washington nearly the whole population is composed of brain workers. The laborer, he of the factories, who makes up so much of the population of the other cities, is unknown in Washington. According to the physicians, insomnia is curable only by three methods; proper rest, the use of drugs and by hypnotic suggestion. As to the rest, the doctors say that a comfortable night's rest depends upon a soft bed for one thing. The bed should be soft enough to yield to every muscle of the body. If there is an aching spot, the bed should not be hard enough to hurt it.

A feather bed was not without its advantages. Indeed, in these days, feather beds afford a great deal toward banishing insomnia. There are many people whose nerves are so delicate that the body cannot rest comfortably at night in the ordinary bed. Each nerve seems strained, and the slightest movement wakens the sleeper. Once awake it is not easy to go to sleep again.

### Surgeon of Local Railroads Tells of Many Queer Experiences

"THERE is one branch of the railway service little known to the traveler, but which is of as much importance as any other, and at times decidedly more so," said Dr. A. P. Rixey, an old railway surgeon, to a Times reporter yesterday. "I refer to the surgical department, where there is an organization of physicians and surgeons ever on call to be rushed to the relief of the injured in any wreck or casualty that may occur along the line of the road. These organizations are maintained by the Southern, Pennsylvania, Baltimore and Ohio, Seaboard, Atlantic Coast Line, Norfolk and Western, and, in fact, all well regulated railroads.

"Frequently during the night I have gotten out of bed to answer the telephone when such a message as the following would be read to me: 'Wreck near — Station. Rear end of two passenger trains. Four or five men scalded and killed. Rush relief car instantly.'



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## What Nurses Must Know and Do

- They must know as well as a regular soldier how to make a camp and take care of it.
- They must be able to forage for food with the troops and know how to cook it after obtaining it.
- They must have nerves steady enough to go out on the battlefield and aid in picking up the wounded under fire.
- They must know how to arrange and erect a field hospital, keep it in order, and soothe the sick and wounded.
- They must be able to remain on duty eighteen hours at a stretch among the wounded without flinching.
- They must at times trudge along the roads in rain, mud, heat or cold, like the soldiers, marching with heavy outfits.
- They must be able to sleep in blankets on the ground at any time when duty compels it.
- They must have a comprehensive idea of medicine and surgery and must assist the surgeons at operations.
- They must eat the rough and frequently spoiled rations of the troops without complaint.
- And they must, above all things, be courageous to the point of heroism when a human is to be aided.

Those who have been sleeping with the head flat should try the plan of lifting it gradually. At first the neck will be uncomfortable, but soon it will be a habit to sleep with the head raised.

If you are a light sleeper, and most people at some time or other have trouble getting to sleep, you may try the pillow cure. This calls for soft pillows, of two sizes. One is to rest under the head and the other is to make the neck comfortable.

The rule is to make your neck comfortable when you go to sleep. "Make your head as easy as you can. Then place your neck comfortably on the pillows, of two sizes. One is to rest under the head and the other is to make the neck comfortable.

"I am afraid you won't do. You have a rupture." The applicant has left the room, and then the surgeon turned to the reporter and said: "That fellow did not recognize me. He's an old-timer. He's made a small fortune out of that rupture. It's his game to get a job on a railroad, then hurt himself somehow, and bring a \$10,000 suit for damages based on his rupture."

"The work of the railway surgeon is not confined to attendance on casualties as the result of accidents. Our employees are required to pass a rigid examination in their departments before they are put on our rolls. The examination is imperative, and when a man applies for promotion, say from fireman to engineer, he is forced to take an examination. We realize that a man may cram for the examination and get rusty after a time. When we grow suspicious of a man, and we watch him closely, we call him up and it is his duty to pass his surgeon's examination. This schooling the employees in the

rules will minimize the number of accidents, but it will not eliminate them. Of course, the officials are anxious enough to avoid anything of this sort, but too much depends on the employee. For instance, a red signal means danger. If an engineer runs by that all the instructions in the world won't help him off. As to prohibiting the use of tobacco, I hardly think we would attempt it."

"While we can see the value of the hospital car for a railroad of limited mileage, or one which passes through a section of country containing few hospitals, we do not find it practicable. Instead of this we have contracts for beds in hospitals of fifteen towns and cities between here and New York. These beds are used for the Pennsylvania Railroad and no one else. If an accident occurs we put the injured on board a special car and hurry them to the nearest hospital. Our line is divided into surgical districts and the surgeons are subject to immediate call.

"We have on our trains what we call a doctor's medicine chest. It contains simple surgical instruments, bandages, lotions, antiseptics, antiseptic cotton, and anesthetics. There are two of these chests on every one of our trains. One is carried in the cab of the engine, the other in the caboose of the freight train, or the baggage car of the passenger train.

"You might think that the ordinary trainmen would not know how to handle these various articles. We have tried to provide against ignorance in this respect, for we have in every chest a small book giving instructions on first aid to the injured. The work of the trainmen is necessarily crude, but we have found it to answer exceptionally well until a competent surgeon could arrive. In several cases lives have been saved, and in blood poisoning has been averted, hundreds of times, especially with employees on the freight trains, who often are injured.

"When I was a boy," said the Senator, "my uncle had a fine field of clover, and he discovered that woodchucks were making sad havoc with it. On the field was a log, and near that log the destruction was the greatest. My uncle told me I must kill those woodchucks. I went to the field a number of times, but could not get a shot at them. I came to the conclusion that I must use a little strategy, so one morning I went to the field before sun-up. With my gun, both barrels loaded with heavy charges, I got in a position where I could make a range of the log lengthwise. As it began to grow light the woodchucks gathered for their morning frolic. They mounted the log, sat up and looked around to see that there was nothing to disturb them. When I recovered I went to the log and picked up fourteen dead woodchucks, and that wasn't any great log for woodchucks, either."

## Feminine Nerves of Steel and Robust Constitution Essential to All Work in the Field.

## Both Food and Clothing Meager and Chances of Death Little Less Than With the Troops.

trouble than a severe case of typhoid fever. A surgical case, you see, is very quick. It is either all over or else a decided improvement as a result of the operation. It is a woman's part to stand by the doctor's side ready to apply the bandages, to fetch the patient's suffering to see that he gets his nourishment, and very often to prepare it for him.

### Pathetic Scenes.

"I have seen some pathetic scenes in the camp.

"At Montauk I will never forget the day before President McKinley was made his inspection, when even the

patients seemed to brace up in eager anticipation of seeing the Chief Executive, and the nurses were spick and span in their white costumes.

"In Cuba there was a particularly pathetic scene at a hospital camp at Quemados, situated on a high bluff overlooking the Atlantic. When the poor fellows raised themselves in their bunk beds they caught a glimpse of the fleet of Admiral Sampson going home to the land which these soldiers had left so far behind.

"In the Philippines and in China there were many exciting experiences which the army nurses went through. The only one in my party who followed the allied armies to Pekin was Miss Alice Kenner, of Indiana, who nursed patients in an old pagoda in the heart of the besieged city.

"There will be no drinking of tea in pagodas for us. It is to be downright hard work, and we fully expect to do our part."

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### Too Much Sleep.

A woman afflicted with insomnia went to a physician for a cure. "I go to bed every night at 10 o'clock," she said, "and I waken at 3. From that time until 6 I lie awake. Then I sleep an hour very heavily."

"Try going to bed at 12 o'clock for a while," said the physician.

"A week later the woman came to his office with beaming face and bright eyes. "I have tried your remedy," she said, "and it worked. I go to sleep at 12 and sleep like a top until 7. I find that I do not need more than seven hours' sleep."

"That," said the physician, "has cured half the insomnia patients in this country. There are people who need nine hours' sleep a night, and others that do not need over seven. It is all a matter of personal idiosyncrasy."

Prepare yourself slowly and comfortably for bed. Do not go to bed until you are sleepy. And then make yourself perfectly easy. These are the rules for getting a good night's rest.

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## A NEW SPECIES OF RAT

WHEN cold storage was first introduced into this country the chilly storage rooms were absolutely free from rats and mice. The temperature was kept considerably below the freezing point, and the cold surroundings rats and mice were unable to live.

In time, however, the rich stores packed away there proved too tempting for thieving rodents, and they began to make inroads into the cold storage rooms, at first paying a hurried call and as soon as they had taken a few nibbles rushing with a shiver out into warmer places.

Gradually, however, these visits were lengthened and became more frequent, not without considerable mortality among the rats, but in the end there grew into being what is known as the "cold storage rat." This animal has neither tail nor ears, both having been frozen for its ancestors, resulting in their total loss to the families of the first intrepid pirates of cold storage.

These earless and tailless cold storage rats are usually at home in a temperature below the zero mark. They thrive on wintry atmospheres, and very probably were driven out into the warmer atmosphere of a heated room they would suffer a great deal and perhaps many would perish.

This fact may be regarded as one of the most striking examples of how the animal kingdom in the wise economy of nature can adapt itself to the most severe surroundings.

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"Frequently during the night I have gotten out of bed to answer the telephone when such a message as the following would be read to me: 'Wreck near — Station. Rear end of two passenger trains. Four or five men scalded and killed. Rush relief car instantly.'

"This was a hurry call, and you can imagine how quickly I donned my clothes, and lit out for the station, where a wrecking train had been gotten ready to hurry to the scene of the disaster."

A dark-haired workman enters the office of a railroad and makes application for the job of switchman. He says he has never worked on a railroad before, but wants to try it. The man is then turned over to a surgeon, who carefully examines the applicant according to the rules of the company; the man must be physically sound to secure employment. Before examination has gone very far the surgeon remarks with a smile:

"I am afraid you won't do. You have a rupture."

The applicant has left the room, and then the surgeon turned to the reporter and said:

"That fellow did not recognize me. He's an old-timer. He's made a small fortune out of that rupture. It's his game to get a job on a railroad, then hurt himself somehow, and bring a \$10,000 suit for damages based on his rupture."

These are two illustrations of the tragedy and comedy in the life of a railway surgeon. The great traveling public knows little of him, although it derives innumerable benefits from his labors. It is not alone his duty to aid the wounded and dying in a train wreck or examine applicants for employment on a railroad. The railroad surgeon guards the public against disease by providing for the sanitation of cars. He makes a special duty of the peculiar ailments following railroad accidents, and is constantly working to find a still quicker and surer way of curing or correcting them.

"You would think," said the surgeon, "that there wouldn't be much comedy in our lives, but such is not the case. Here is only one example. A young woman sued the company for which I am a surgeon for damages said to have been incurred from a derailment. The examination which I made failed to justify her claim; but believing my testimony would not go as far with a jury as that of an outsider, I had a detective employed on the case. The detective was supposed to be recovering from his injury, was introduced to her as a New York broker, and soon became her chief escort. One day when the two had been in bathing, the detective proposed taking her picture diving off a high raft. The dive was made, and the picture was heartlessly exhibited later in court. The young woman lost her suit."

"But the work of the railway surgeon is not confined to attendance on casualties as the result of accidents. Our employees are required to pass a rigid examination in their departments before they are put on our rolls. The examination is imperative, and when a man applies for promotion, say from fireman to engineer, he is forced to take an examination. We realize that a man may cram for the examination and get rusty after a time. When we grow suspicious of a man, and we watch him closely, we call him up and it is his duty to pass his surgeon's examination. This schooling the employees in the

## PLATT'S WOODCHUCK STORY

SOME ONE asked Senator Platt to repeat Fay Templeton's word puzzle. "How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood? A woodchuck would chuck wood," the Senator did so, and then he ventured the opinion that he knew more about woodchucks than Fay Templeton, or anyone in New York.

"When I was a boy," said the Senator, "my uncle had a fine field of clover, and he discovered that woodchucks were making sad havoc with it. On the field was a log, and near that log the destruction was the greatest. My uncle told me I must kill those woodchucks. I went to the field a number of times, but could not get a shot at them. I came to the conclusion that I must use a little strategy, so one morning I went to the field before sun-up. With my gun, both barrels loaded with heavy charges, I got in a position where I could make a range of the log lengthwise. As it began to grow light the woodchucks gathered for their morning frolic. They mounted the log, sat up and looked around to see that there was nothing to disturb them. When I recovered I went to the log and picked up fourteen dead woodchucks, and that wasn't any great log for woodchucks, either."