Coffee, doughnuts, and a witty line of chatter: the Korean War letters of Helen Stevenson Meyner

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Coffee, Doughnuts, and a Witty Line of Chatter: The Korean War Letters...

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Coffee, Doughnuts, and a Witty Line of Chatter:
The Korean War Letters of
Helen Stevenson Meyner

by

Kathleen A. Stewart

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Abstract

Historians have given considerable attention to the changes in the roles and behavior of women during wartime in the United States, especially during World War II. They have analyzed the way in which women have assumed the traditional responsibilities of the fighting men in the home, the workplace, and even the military. And they have argued the impact this has had on the status of women in American society. However, inquiries regarding the roles and behavior of women who participate in various capacities within the war theater are practically nonexistent. Such analyses provide fresh insights into the relationships between men and women and the various gender roles each sex assumes under the stresses of war.

The letters of Helen Day Stevenson, written during her tenure with the American Red Cross in Korea and Japan during the Korean War, provide the basis for an examination of the roles female recreational workers played in sustaining the morale of soldiers in the war theater. Her particular insights provide vivid glimpses into the various relationships Red Cross club and Clubmobile workers
established with both soldiers and officers. The nature of their relationships were at once symbolic and personal. Figuratively, the women were emblems of home and country, sweetheart and mother. Personal relationships conducted during the women's off-duty hours, on the other hand, were symbiotic and served as coping mechanisms for the women as well as the men with whom they interacted.

While Helen's letters are rich and varied in content, they do not necessarily represent behavior specific to one woman. Helen's family background and history serving with the Red Cross during World War II informed her behavior and attitude toward her work. However, the examination of the history of the American Red Cross's recreational operations during World War II and the Korean War, and the subsequent experiences of the club and Clubmobile women from World War II attest to the value and uniqueness of female recreational workers in the war theater.
Introduction

While vacationing in Scotland in early October 1950, Helen Day Stevenson received a telegram from her father, William Edwards Stevenson, which read, "Interesting opportunity immediate Red Cross Club Service Korea." In a later letter, he pointed out that he and his wife, Eleanor, believed a unique and important opportunity had arisen for their daughter. Though she "would see a lot of the world, meet all sorts of people, including assorted wolves, and it could be an experience [she] would always be glad" to have had, "the job would not be an easy one and some girls wouldn't be able to handle it." He wrote that they would "speed you on your way if it appeals to you," as both Bill and Eleanor believed Helen could handle the job.

By early November, following a week of training in Washington, D.C., Helen was aboard a Royal Canadian Air Force plane en route to Japan with three officers, some

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2WES to HDS, 8 October 1950, Meyner Papers.
thirty enlisted men, and several other women. All were headed to the Far East to contribute to the war effort in Korea. The women were all recreational workers with the American Red Cross.³

Helen's account of her own experiences as a Red Cross recreational worker began even before she left the United States. During her train trip to an airbase in Washington state, from which she would leave for the Far East, she wrote in her diary that her "'being nice to all soldiers' has started already. Four of us Red Cross gals spent several hours drinking beer with and talking to some soldiers in the club car."⁴ Over the next fifteen months, this scene would be repeated, although, as her letters prove, it would become much more than a "'being nice to all soldiers.'"

By the time Helen arrived in Japan on November 3, 1950, there was already a small group of women setting up the first Red Cross club located in the city of Pusan, on the far southeastern coast of South Korea. Due to the fluid

³HDS to family, 3 November 1950, Meyner Papers.

⁴HDS diary, 29 October 1950, Meyner Papers.
lines of battle in the first winter of the Korean conflict, the Red Cross was not permitted to establish any more clubs until the spring of 1951. The women who arrived in the Far East in November 1950, remained in Japan, assigned to duties at ARC installations and military hospitals throughout the country.

Helen was sent to the Fifth Station military hospital at Johnson Air Base in Irumagawa, Japan, where wounded soldiers were flown daily for a period of recuperation before either being sent home to the states or back to the front. The hospital, with an authorized bed capacity of 402, was more often than not "overflowing with patients." In an early letter to her family, she wrote,

I do a little bit of everything in the hospital. I talk to patients..., drink gallons of coffee, wrap packages, take the patients over to entertainment at the Special Service club. I arrange card games and ping-pong tournaments. I'm even in charge of the birthday party

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for all the patients this Friday. I'm arranging a
talent show and musical games for it. 7

Helen and her co-workers spent between twelve and fourteen
hours a day comforting and entertaining sick and injured soldiers.

Helen juggled her work load with an active social life. She toured the country, marveling at its culture and its
people; in a way, this appeared to be an extension of her
tour through Europe the previous summer: "I don't mind
waiting here in Japan because being here is very new and
interesting to me. I'm getting a big kick out of it all." 8
She reported to her family that the "Japanese are a
likeable, little people," and that occupation Japan,
where "the liquor is cheap and there is always a good Jap
band," was very similar to the United States. 9

Despite the fun she was having in Japan, Helen remained
eager to get to Korea and do the work she had signed on to
do. She was so eager, in fact, she told her family that on
the fifth of April 1951, when she received her orders to go

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7 HDS to family, 15 November 1950, Meyner Papers.
8 HDS to family, 8 November 1950, Meyner Papers.
9 HDS to family, 19 November 1950, Meyner Papers.
to Korea, "I was so thrilled and excited, I nearly hit the roof."

On 13 April, she arrived at the ARC club in Pusan, on the wall of which the Red Cross women hung a sign describing the purpose of their presence in Korea:

With the hope that this little piece of America transplanted in Pusan may be a source of comfort and happiness, this Club is affectionately dedicated to the men of the U.S. Armed Services and to their friends in the United Nations Forces.

The prescribed intention of ARC recreational workers was to provide "Comfort and happiness" in the form of platonic companionship, coffee, and doughnuts. "As many as 8,000 in one day," either heading to or returning from the front, "invaded the Club" at Pusan and were greeted by only a handful of Red Cross women. The women answered questions, listened, shared a smoke, and played games with these men, who if only briefly, were simultaneously permitted to forget the drudgery and horrors of war in Korea, as well reminded of their country and the women waiting for them back home.

10HDS to family, 7 April 1951, Meyner Papers.
11HDS to family, 16 April 1951, Meyner Papers.
12HDS to family, 16 April 1951, Meyner Papers.
While Helen did work in the club, she was primarily assigned to a Clubmobile while in Pusan. A converted Russian truck, the Clubmobile carried Helen and a co-worker to isolated units in the areas surrounding Pusan. From this truck, coffee and doughnuts were dispensed, always along with "a line of witty chatter." Helen remained at the club in Pusan until October 1951, at which point she was transferred to a club at K14, Kimpo Air Base, near Suwon, south of Inchon on the west coast of Korea. She continued her work along the same lines until she left Korea for home in January 1952.

Helen's impressions and experiences, as she related them in her diary and letters home are vivid, entertaining, and often moving and insightful. She commented on her work, her social life, her surroundings, the war situation, issues of race, and, of course, the soldiers. And, while at first glance Helen's letters may appear a mere recounting of her daily tasks in both Japan and Korea, they also contain a startling glimpse into the hearts and souls of both the soldiers sent to fight on foreign soil, and the women who

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\[13\] HDS to family, 22 April 1951, Meyner Papers.
risked their own lives to make that fight easier and more effective.

Further investigation into Helen's writings provides a clearer understanding of the roles of both men and women as played out against each other in the war theater, as well as the very special, symbiotic relationships established between the women of the Red Cross and the airmen and soldiers they encountered. Whether recovering hospital patients in Japan or battle-weary, and Korea-weary, Marines and pilots in South Korea, the men all relied on these women as they struggled to cope with, comprehend, and sometimes forget, their situation.

In order to understand this relationship and the importance of women like Helen Stevenson during a time of war, the history and purpose of the American Red Cross's recreational services will be explained, as well as the impressions and experiences of the club and Clubmobile women of World War II, who were the first ARC recreational workers as such. In addition, the Stevenson family had first-hand knowledge of ARC recreational operations during World War II. Their experiences as a family illuminate the motivation and basis for this type of work.
The results of these investigations transcend World War II and shed light on those events in Korea between 1950 and 1952. Helen's personal experiences with her family's work in World War II informed her understanding of her own duty in Japan and Korea. Yet her letters provide the best evidence of the unique, important, and often therapeutic contributions women, living in the war theater, make to the war effort.

14The Red Cross ceased recreational operations in June 1952, nearly a year prior to the armistice.
Family Background

Helen Day Stevenson was born March 5, 1928, in New York City, into a family with an impressive educational and professional background. Her parents, William Edwards and Eleanor Bumstead Stevenson, familiarly referred to as Bill and Bumpy, were well-educated. Her father William graduated from Princeton University in 1922, and her mother from Smith College in 1923. Bill also attended Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship and received the degrees of Bachelor of Jurisprudence and Master of Arts from Balliol College in 1925.\textsuperscript{15}

Bill and Bumpy's accomplishments were not unexpected. Helen's paternal grandfather, the Rev. J. Ross Stevenson, served as the President of Princeton Theological Seminary from 1914 to 1936. Her grandfather on her mother's side, Henry Andrews Bumstead, was a physicist at Yale University, and he served as Scientific Attaché to the American Embassy in Great Britain during the World War I. His main

responsibility was to make sure the United States and Great Britain did not duplicate experiments undertaken for the war. Though not sure of the exact nature of his work, Bumpy, years later, recalled that "it was terribly important and very secret."  

After their marriage in 1926, Bill and Bumpy established homes in Stamford, Connecticut, and New York City. Bill pursued a legal career, serving in the offices of Emory Buckner, U.S. District Attorney for the Southern District of New York. He helped establish the legal partnership of Debevoise Stevenson Plimpton and Page in 1931. During these years, Bill and Bumpy had another daughter, Priscilla, born in 1929, whom the family referred to as Peekie.  

In March 1942, following the United States' entry into World War II, Norman Davis, then chairman of the American Red Cross, asked Bill if he would be interested in "taking

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17Stevenson Papers.
charge of our Red Cross operation in Australia. At first puzzled by the proposal, as neither Bill nor Bumpy knew much about Red Cross services to men in the Armed Forces, their further consideration made the possibility real for both. As Bill had studied in Great Britain, however, he requested a position there, and Davis agreed. Three weeks later, Bill left the United States to take charge of ARC operations in Great Britain. Bumpy, who had accompanied Bill to Washington, D.C., for his debriefing, was further inspired by the work ARC was doing and requested that she, too, be sent to Europe.

Leaving his lucrative law firm in order to assist with the war effort, Bill served as American Red Cross delegate to Great Britain from the spring of 1942 until November of that same year, when he became ARC delegate to North Africa until 1944. His main responsibility was the establishment and administration of relief for the troops of the American Fifth Army as they advanced from North Africa, through Sicily and into Italy. Bumpy joined her husband as a Red

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Cross worker in Great Britain and was also transferred to Africa, serving as a recreational worker in Algiers.

Following the Allied invasion of Italy, Bumpy served for eight months, between 1943 and 1944, with a Clubmobile unit, working, often under fire, at Salerno and Anzio. Bumpy published her impressions and experiences with the American Red Cross in her book, *I Knew Your Soldier.*

During this separation from their parents, the girls attended boarding schools. Helen went to Rosemary Hall in Greenwich, Connecticut, the same private school Bumpy had attended as a child. Vacations and school holidays were spent with their maternal grandmother, Luetta Ullrich Bumstead, at her residence in New Haven and summer home in Noank, Connecticut. While it may have seemed odd that Bumpy would leave her daughters and risk her own life in Europe during the war, a precedence had been set during World War I that made the decision easier. Luetta Bumstead had joined her husband in London while he served with the American Embassy, and Bumpy had spent the war with her grandmother, just as her own children did during World War II. Bumpy

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19Stevenson Papers; Meyner Papers; *I Knew Your Soldier,* passim.
remarked in *I Knew Your Soldier*, that when asked to care for Helen and Priscilla during this time, her mother "couldn't very well hammer the desk and say, 'No! Your duty is with your children,' since, after all, she had done the same thing herself." Bumpy did not justify leaving her children to work with ARC solely because her mother had left her during World War I. The real reason she did "not feel too badly about breaking up the family for the duration," was that she truly believed in the necessity of the work ARC was doing and her own unique ability to do it.21

Bill and, especially, Bumpy corresponded regularly with Helen while they were serving in the Red Cross. It is in this correspondence that Bumpy revealed that her reasons for joining ARC had more to do with social responsibility than anything else. For example, following a visit home to the states, Bill reported to his wife that he felt Helen was not taking her studies seriously enough. Bumpy addressed this issue of being "frivolous" in a letter to Helen and stressed the gravity of the war situation, saying "we can't afford

20Stevenson, 6.

not to take life seriously when people are willing to die or to become permanently disabled in order to make a better world." It was not enough to let other people physically fight the war; each person had something of value to contribute and to not do so would be a shirking of responsibility.

Bumpy acknowledged being "torn between wanting to be with my dear girls and seeing this war through," but realized that her work was unique, as was her ability to do it. If many women during World War II had trouble finding care for their children while they worked an full time job, the likelihood that there were women with family members who had the time and financial resources to care for their children so they could leave the country for the duration was even more slim. The Stevenson family, however, had the luxury of economic resources that kept Helen and Priscilla enrolled in boarding schools most of the year, and with their extended family during the summer. Bumpy

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22EBS to HDS, 1 May 1943, Meyner Papers.

23EBS to HDS, 19 October 1943, Meyner Papers.

understood that her familial and economic circumstances made such work possible for her, which reinforced her belief that she really had no choice but to join her husband in serving ARC. "There is so much to be done, and so few people to do it," she wrote Helen, that those who were able to contribute the time and energy required of ARC workers were hard pressed to find a reason not to.\(^{25}\)

Bumpy's letters were not all grim social responsibility but also showed Helen the joy of serving American soldiers, whom Bumpy considered "the most wonderful people on earth."\(^{26}\) In an effort to justify her work to Helen, as well as alleviate any of Helen's fears, Bumpy tried to help her daughter relate to her work. She told her how much she "would love it. We all sit on the ground and talk and laugh and have fun."\(^{27}\) Regardless of the degree to which these moments of lightness occurred, Bumpy tried to show Helen that the work was not all give and no take, was not always deadly dangerous, but also personally fulfilling.

\(^{25}\)EBS to HDS, 19 October 1943, Meyner Papers.

\(^{26}\)EBS to HDS, 20 February 1944, Meyner Papers.

\(^{27}\)EBS to HDS, 1 May 1943, Meyner Papers.
Bumpy encouraged Helen to, in effect, share in her work. She allowed Helen to establish correspondences with several soldiers. It appears that Helen made an impressive effort on behalf of the morale of the fighting men in Europe. In late 1942, for example, she asked her parents to forward a letter to a "dear little sailor boy" in England, whom she found so handsome she would not let her friends at school write to him. In addition to sending him comic books and magazines, she sent letters that would surely "help build up the British Navy morale." It appears she succeeded. Another soldier with whom she began a correspondence opened his first letter to her with "Hello, Helen." After a period of correspondence between the two, a later letter from the same soldier opened, "My darling angel." Clearly, Helen's words had struck a note in the heart of this soldier. Though concerned that she was "leading him on too much," Helen learned at an early age the

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28HDS to EBS & WES, 17 November 1942, Meyner Papers. Written, in Helen's words, "so I could give the old boy a kick," the letter appears to never have reached the boy, as it remains in the collection of Helen's letters. Perhaps he died before it could reach him, or perhaps her parents felt it inappropriate.
value of a woman's role in boosting soldier morale.²⁹

Soon after her parents left for Great Britain however, Helen had expressed youthful resentment toward her parents for leaving, as when she accused them of planning "not coming back to America."³⁰ She apologized several months later after her mother educated her on the work they were doing. She came to understand the gravity and necessity of her parents' work as they viewed it in support of the national war effort. As she wrote in her diary in 1943, 

"...I miss my mother and father who are in Africa,...so much that no one will ever understand....but I am putting up with it because I feel it is my war effort. (Sometimes I think I carry too heavy a burden for a girl of my years.)" ³¹

This physical distance from her parents at such a young age likely demanded an unusual level of maturity from Helen. Perhaps her upper class upbringing contributed to this maturity. Her attendance at boarding school required a degree of self-reliance at an early age. This maturity

²⁹Stevenson, 104.

³⁰HDS to EBS, [14 December 1942], Meyner Papers.

³¹HDS diary, February 1943, Meyner Papers.
fostered a very adult-like rapport, marked by honesty and openness, between Helen and her parents. Helen, a very clever child, was encouraged toward independence, with the full understanding that she would be held accountable for her behavior and her beliefs. Thus, she would not only have to accept her parents leaving her, but she also had to understand and appreciate the deeper reasoning behind their departure. This was expected of her, and she delivered.

Helen's parents left the American Red Cross in 1945, the same year General Mark W. Clark, Allied ground commander in Italy, awarded them both the Army's Bronze Star for their service to the troops. Soon after their return, Helen revealed her own personal growth and a deeper understanding of war and its impact in a poem to her mother:

And watching her leave gayly for England and seeing the tiny clipper studded with jewels like lights soar off into the fresh summer night — swiftly vanish.

I recall missing her but seeing articles and hearing stories of her from England, Africa, and then Italy, and feeling that she had left for an awfully big reason.

Best of all I can see her home, home again at last, and not the same mother, not the same person, but a bigger, and a better one, gay still but full of feeling. She

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32Stevenson Papers.

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watched the gilt curtain pulled off from war and she'd seen what was really under it, the grim reality of blood and smoke and death.\(^{33}\)

Clearly, what began as a confusing, almost ethereal, experience for Helen, turned into a clear appreciation that her mother's -- and her own -- personal sacrifices were also rewarding. Thus, five years later, when Helen found herself repeating family history on the other side of the globe, she was prepared. Her relationship with her parents, created by the distance between them during their separation and her comprehension of the profundity of their work in Europe, allowed Helen to blossom into an outspoken, strong, and caring person, which she would prove during her time in Japan and Korea.

In the summer of 1950, shortly after Helen graduated from Colorado College with a degree in history, the Stevenson family traveled to Europe and visited some of the places Bill and Bumpy had served during World War II. Their tour took them from the shores of Normandy, through Paris and the French Rivera, to the beaches of Anzio, Italy.

\(^{33}\)"To my mother on her 43rd birthday, or 'As I remember mama,'" in HDS miscellaneous writings, 9 March 1945, Meyner Papers.
During this time, Helen witnessed first hand the destruction of the recent world war in the shape of bombed-out cities and the grave sites of Allied soldiers. Many of these places held special meaning for her parents. As Helen wrote of Anzio in her diary, the "country-side still showed lots of war damage and it all made the war very vivid and real again to Mom and Pop....[They] had friends there and went to look at their graves."  

As she watched her parents reliving the past war, she could not help commenting on the current situation taking shape on the other side of the globe. "The war news is not good. Some think there may be war. The U.S. has sent troops to Korea....Please let there be peace." Little did Helen realize at the time that she would soon be having experiences similar to those her parents were then revisiting.

Six months later, soon after receiving her father's telegram and only a month into her work with ARC in Japan, Helen acknowledged the importance and relevance of her

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34 HDS diary, 26 July 1950, Meyner Papers.
35 HDS diary, 5 July 1950, Meyner Papers.
family's experiences with the organization in World War II. She wrote her mother that she had been rereading *I Knew Your Soldier* "which, by the way, means so much to me now that I'm in on this. It is my bible." By example, Bill and Bumpy instilled a sense of responsibility and understanding in their daughter, which increased her ability to be a valuable and effective ARC recreational worker. Though, as Helen wrote, "Just having heard you two talk about ARC has given me a lot of valuable information and training," it was the type of work that required sturdy, strong, and caring individuals. As will be examined below, many of the ARC women from World War II exhibited the same values and attributes of which Bill and Bumpy wrote during the war; and they are the same qualities Helen exhibited in her letters and diaries from the Korean War period.

Finally, Bumpy summed up the importance of Helen's time with ARC in Korea in a letter to Helen just before she returned to the United States in early 1952.

There is no other work as fascinating and as rewarding and as deeply wonderful. For the rest of your life you

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36HDS to family, 5 December 1950, Meyner Papers.

37HDS to family, 10 December 1950, Meyner Papers.
will have real values. You know now what is important. Nothing matters except human relationships and kindness and service. I am so happy that you have had this experience. You can never be trite, petty, little, or mean. If only everyone in the world could have a similar experience we would have peace tomorrow and forever.38

Here, Bumpy repeated her belief that ARC work was a special opportunity afforded to only a few. This passage reinforces both the selfless nature of ARC women, as well as the personal benefits gained from such work.

The women who worked for the American Red Cross abroad during World War II fit the needs that motivated ARC's establishment of the club and Clubmobile programs. An examination of ARC's activities during this time, as well as during the Korean War, indicates that the organization was compelled by a desire to cultivate soldier morale, relieve their anxieties, and, therefore, improve their effectiveness at fighting.

38HDS diary, 5 January 1952, Meyner Papers.
History of Red Cross Recreational Programs

World War II

From the moment the United States joined World War II, the American Red Cross had an agenda for its overseas operations different from any it had ever had in time of war. Unlike in World War I, the focus was not on emergency medical treatment for the wounded. ARC did not operate hospitals or employ nurses during World War II. The Army and Navy, by 1941, had both established medical departments that could handle the demands of modern warfare. However, Red Cross female hospital workers contributed to the welfare of wounded and sick American soldiers in military hospitals, helping to alleviate their anxieties, worries, and boredom, by writing letters home, listening to their gripes, and often just holding their hands. Nor would ARC take direct responsibility for relief efforts on behalf of the civilian populations of the United States' allies. In the Second World War, "morale was a primary function of command."39

Between 1941 and 1945, Americans dug deep into their

39Dulles, 367.
pockets and contributed $666,510,000, to the Red Cross, often exceeding the organization's goals for each annual fund drive. On the homefront, the Red Cross urged Americans of all ages to donate blood, so precious to the fighting men; and volunteers assembled nearly 14,000,000 kit, or ditty, bags containing "playing cards, chewing gum, writing materials, razor blades, shoe laces, a small notebook, and a 'housewife' replete with extra buttons, thread, and needles." Described as "Santa Claus, birthday present, Easter gift, and May basket all tied up in one small khaki-colored bag," they were distributed to soldiers on every front. And while the newly formed United Service Organization assumed responsibility for the welfare and recreational needs of soldiers at homefront railway station canteens and information centers on military bases, the American Red Cross "was everywhere with the troops of the

40Dulles, 381.


42Dulles, 383.
United States" as they spread across the globe.43

According to the Red Cross, the boosting of morale would be best accomplished by providing American troops abroad outlets that both reminded them of home and temporarily took their minds off the reality of war. Though critics, such as Walter Lippmann, questioned the reasoning behind furnishing "'an escape from the grimness of the war by reproducing the atmosphere of prewar civilian America,'" ARC was convinced that preserving the mental well-being and providing wholesome, homespun releases for the soldiers was essential to fighting the war effectively.44 The presence abroad of American women, the symbols of home, family, and country, was considered the best way to ensure the success of this mission.

43Dulles, 424. The United Service Organization was an alliance of the following relief agencies: the Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., the Salvation Army, the National Catholic Community Service, and the Jewish Welfare Board. Its stated function as a promoter of the "religious, social and recreational welfare" of America’s fighting men prompted journalist Ernie Pyle, one of ARC's greatest supporters, to write that "because the Red Cross is a relief organization and not a spiritual one, it completely absolves the soldier of having to pray for his chocolate bar." Cited in Dulles, 369.

44Walter Lippmann quoted in Dulles, 426.
In the spring of 1942, American Red Cross recreational activities began in earnest in Great Britain. Prior to the United States' entry into the war, members of the British Women's Voluntary Services distributed ARC relief supplies and later proved hospitable to American soldiers once they began flowing into Great Britain. The first American Red Cross clubs were opened in Great Britain in May 1942.\(^{45}\)

The Red Cross rented large hotels, converted them into clubs, and staffed them with an average of six female American workers, as well as some paid and volunteer British personnel. The clubs contained first-aid and laundry facilities; information desks, where, it was rumored, up to 30,000 questions a day could be answered; and lodging and meal services, both offered for a modest fee.\(^{46}\) Lounges

\(^{45}\)Dulles, 427.

\(^{46}\)Necessity forced the British to charge their soldiers in their own clubs for services similar to those of the American Red Cross. Therefore, in Great Britain and Australia, small sums, often at less than the cost, were charged for meals and billeting at American Red Cross clubs. Because the British did not have anything similar to the Clubmobile, described below, there was no competition between the American Red Cross and the British organizations in this area and, hence, no charge for Clubmobile services. See Dulles, 371; Marjorie Lee Morgan, ed. and comp., The Clubmobile--the ARC in the Storm (St. Petersburg, Fl.: Hazlett Printing & Publishing Inc., 1982), 15. This work is
provided areas for relaxation and often contained phonographs with large record collections, books, games, and playing cards. The recreational workers organized craft classes, bridge matches, and athletic events. For soldiers stationed nearby, the club workers held parties, and British women and girls served as hostesses, tirelessly dancing with soldier after soldier. So important was this new facet of Red Cross work--the welfare and recreation of American troops--that by the end of the year, forty-five clubs were scattered throughout Great Britain; by June 1944, that number reached four hundred.  

Harvey D. Gibson, General Manager and Commissioner to France in the First World War, took over as Commissioner to Great Britain in September 1942, when Stevenson moved on to administer recreational services in North Africa. While Gibson understood the value of club services for the American soldiers in Great Britain, he was dismayed that many soldiers were unable to reach clubs because they were

a compilation of the letters and articles of Clubmobile workers in Europe during World War II. Most of the quotes from this work, therefore, are contemporary accounts of the events, not reminiscences.

"Dulles, 426-28."
stationed at too great a distance from the regular ARC installations. He also looked ahead to the time when the American soldiers would be leaving Great Britain for the invasion of Europe. The "most useful service to a soldier would be to bring to him, when he needed it most, a symbol of the warmth of home...," Gibson believed, and this "could be done by a cup of hot coffee and doughnuts served by an American girl," delivered right to the soldiers on his new invention, the Clubmobile.\(^48\)

The Clubmobiles in Britain were buses, or Greenliners, converted into miniature mobile recreational centers. Each Clubmobile visited approximately twelve installations a week. These first Clubmobiles contained a small kitchen with facilities for making dozens of doughnuts and brewing gallons of coffee. There was also a lounge where soldiers could relax, talk with the girls, and listen to music on the Victrola. The men were often so anxious each week for the arrival of "their" Clubmobile, that, as ARC worker Louise Clayton wrote, on "most fields the Clubmobile is so full of

\(^{48}\)Morgan, 14.
GI's you can hardly turn around."\textsuperscript{49}

Eighty Clubmobiles followed America's troops into Europe a little over a month after D-Day, June 6, 1944. Working as close to the front lines as possible, the Clubmobiles were organized into ten groups of eight, each attached to specific divisions.\textsuperscript{50} As conditions on the continent were much more rugged than in Great Britain, these Clubmobiles were sturdy 2 ½ ton converted trucks. Space limitations and the layout of the trucks prevented the inclusion of lounge areas. On board each, though, was a complete kitchen with doughnut machine, six coffee urns, doughnut racks, Victrola, public address system, and record library. The shiny stainless-steel sink was equipped with running water provided by five 35-gallon tanks located at the top and under the body of the vehicle and so connected that water could be transferred from one tank to another by a hand pump.\textsuperscript{51}

In addition, a movie theater on wheels called a Cinemobile, traveled with each group.

Though Great Britain was the first location for clubs and Clubmobiles, Red Cross women traveled to all parts of

\textsuperscript{49}Morgan, 27.

\textsuperscript{50}Dulles, 446.

\textsuperscript{51}Morgan 45-6.
the globe, wherever there were American soldiers in need of their support. Clubs, Clubmobiles, and rest homes -- where soldiers, nurses, and often ARC workers themselves, could take several "days off" from the war -- were established in the China-Burma-India Theater, Northern Africa and Sicily-Italy, Australia and the Pacific, and the Middle East.

Without a doubt, such an extensive program was costly. The extent of ARC's -- and the nation's -- commitment to the morale of America's fighting men was obvious in terms of dollars spent. Between July 1941 and June 1946, the Red Cross spent over $700,000,000, with the third highest proportion (10%) going to club and Clubmobile services, after welfare services in Army and Naval stations (25%) and hospital work (15%).\(^52\)

Also indicative of the organization's dedication is the number of workers who risked their lives for the morale of the fighting men. Women accounted for approximately seventy-five percent of ARC's employees abroad during World War II.\(^53\)

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\(^52\)Dulles, 374. This does not include homefront volunteers, which surely would raise the percentage.

\(^53\)Dulles, 374.
workers peaked at two hundred in the winter of 1942-43, the regular complement of clubs and Clubmobiles was augmented with a Trainmobile, staffed by three women, which traveled between Teheran and Kohramshahr, serving non-combat American troops stationed along the way.\textsuperscript{54} By mid-1944, between Northern Africa and Italy, there were over one thousand Red Cross workers, again three-quarters of whom were women, staffing twenty-five Clubmobiles and over sixty clubs.\textsuperscript{55} By mid-1945, 2,700 ARC workers ran twenty-nine rest homes and over one hundred clubs in the Pacific Ocean Theater of war.\textsuperscript{56}

Initially, some theaters, such as the Pacific Ocean area, were not believed suitable for women because of the "difficult conditions" that existed there.\textsuperscript{57} Women were also not allowed to be stationed in areas under direct fire. Women worked at more permanent installations removed from the fighting, such as clubs, rest homes, and hospitals. They were later allowed to serve in more forward locations.

\textsuperscript{54}Dulles, 433.
\textsuperscript{55}Dulles, 444.
\textsuperscript{56}Dulles, 471.
\textsuperscript{57}Dulles, 470.
in the Pacific after they were secured. However, male field workers often brought comfort items to men in the fields of battle in the Pacific. Landing with the troops during the invasion of Guadalcanal, Thomas S. Montgomery assembled

"eighty Red Cross crates scattered among the piles of military stores [which included] 4,000 books; 2,000 sewing kits; 2,500 cakes of soap; 1,000 cigars; 500 cans of snuff; 250 packs of chewing tobacco; 600 tins of pipe tobacco; 2,500 toothbrushes; 40,000 sheets of stationary; 15,000 envelopes; 1,000 decks of cards; 5,000 packs of gum; 500 pounds of candy; $1,000 worth of musical instruments (harmonicas, banjos, ukuleles, etc.); three portable phonographs with $300 worth of records; two short wave radios; a sewing machine; a washing machine; and a piano."\(^{58}\)

As much as the fighting men undoubtedly appreciated all the comfort articles delivered by selfless, and often unarmed, Red Cross men, it was, undoubtedly, "the sight of an American girl [that] makes them go ga-ga."\(^{59}\)

In Their Own Words

While stationed in Great Britain, Eliza King summed up the varied experiences of Red Cross women in one paragraph.

\(^{58}\)Korson, 74.

\(^{59}\)Dulles, 443.
Your back aches so and you’re in a daze from looking down at canteen cups. Your face aches from smiling and your throat hurts from talking. But you pick up your feet gal and smile, smile if it kills you, ‘cause they’re more American soldiers come to fight a war—somebody’s sweetheart or husband or father. You may have seen millions like him but you stand for home to him, so pick up your feet and smile.  

The monotony and the pain were small sacrifices compared to the larger job of serving American troops sent to fight the war.

Unlike women who served with other organizations during the war, ARC recreational workers had no job other than to tend to soldier morale. Military nurses shared some of the same responsibilities of Red Cross women. A Navy nurse from World War II wrote of their dual roles. "The nurses had been battle tested and had settled down to the work they had been trained to do—the patching and healing of human bodies—and, though they did not talk about it as part of their job, the healing of unsettled minds and emotions." As George Korson wrote, however, the nurses often did not

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60 Morgan, 34.

61 Judy Barrett Litoff and David C. Smith, eds., American Women in a World at War: Contemporary Accounts from World War II (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1987), 81.
have the time "to do little extra things for their patients." Their main goal was the medical care of the sick and wounded.

Members of the Women's Army Corps (WAC) also helped tend to the morale of wounded soldiers. Doris Weatherford points out that WACs, in addition to the Red Cross women, "wrote letters home for soldiers who could not write; they held hands and lit cigarettes and did all the little things that meant so much to the men and that the nurses did not have time to do." However selfless the WACs were, their hospital service to the soldiers was ancillary to the clerical jobs they performed while on duty as Army personnel. Both of these examples indicate the importance of women for the soldiers' spiritual and emotional well-being. Women of the military nursing corps and of the different branches of service often transcended their intended work roles and did double duty as female representatives of home: mother, sister, sweetheart. The way they naturally slipped into these roles supports the

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62Korson, 254.

63Weatherford, 76.
validity of the employment of women as ARC recreational workers for the express purpose of soldier morale.

The employment of female Red Cross workers abroad appears to have been a key component in ARC's, and the military's, goal of preserving and improving soldier morale. The percentage of women recreational and hospital workers supports this point. However, it is the words and behavior of both the women and the men whose lives they touched, that reveal the true value of women in and near the field of battle.

Of course, the women were not able to affect and inspire every American soldier in every theater of battle. A questionnaire administered following World War II indicated that many GI's "had never seen a Red Cross club or Clubmobile, and had never had an opportunity to avail themselves of any of the much advertised Red Cross services."64 This, however, does not diminish the contributions ARC recreational workers made to the war. Testaments by officers and enlisted men alike support their importance.

64Dulles, 377.
Commanders often praised the Red Cross women and the work they were doing. The objectives of their presence was reinforced in letters from these officers to those in charge of Red Cross Headquarters. Harvey Gibson received a memorandum from Major General W. S. Paul in December 1944, in which Paul pointed out the "superior manner" in which the women of two of the Clubmobile groups in Europe "operated" in his division and that the Clubmobiles did "a great deal for the morale of the men." 65 Similarly, Colonel Albert F. Peyton wrote a tribute to the ARC women in which he pointed out their strength and uniqueness, and how when "watching these American girls we felt a surge of pride." 66 While officers took the time to note the work of the Red Cross women, words of thanks from the enlisted men truly reinforced the validity of their presence.

A group of Clubmobiles had been attached to the 101st Airborn in England prior to D-Day. The group had made it far into Europe at the time of the German counter-offensive in late 1944, when they were forced to retreat, leaving

65 Morgan, 102.

66 Morgan, 160.
sacks of their trademark doughnut flour behind. The Clubmobile group later received a letter from the boys in the 101st, then in Bastogne, who told them not to "worry" and thanked them "for the doughnut flour" they women left behind. The men were in the process of getting "this place cleaned up so you can come back," and they urged them to "have the doughnuts ready" once they were able to return to serve the divisions.67 The men felt close to the women and anxiously awaited their return.

The doughnuts, though, were really just props for the Red Cross Clubmobilers. While the girls were complementing K rations with hot coffee and doughnuts, what they were really doing was "bringing the heart and soul of America to Americans, wherever they may be."68 Lieutenant Mickey Kaufman told the readers of Newsweek what thousands of soldiers already knew: "It's the Red Cross that everyone naturally turns to for comfort and a feeling of 'this is the closest thing to home.'"69

67Morgan, 155-56.

68Morgan, 176.

69Morgan, 176.
Reporters in the field also wrote of the work of the ARC women. While visiting the troops in Italy, Doris Fleeson found that "it is generally felt that the girl and the doughnut bring out the best in each other." Similarly in Africa, "the biggest thing in [the pilots'] lives...is an American Red Cross girl under an olive tree serving coffee and doughnuts." Validation from reporters would also have undoubtedly had a positive impact on the Red Cross's reputation at home.

Perhaps, though, actions speak louder than words. Over and over again the club and Clubmobile workers described the men's reactions upon first setting their eyes on American women in months. When there were fifteen girls to dance with twenty-five hundred men, to "say that we were rushed off our feet would be a gross understatement. We were mobbed. We danced until we could hardly stand up." Just a few minutes, a few steps with an American girl helped the GIs cope a little bit better.


71 Raymond Clapper quoted in "Bill and Bumpy," 21.

72 Korson, 94.
ARC women took their jobs seriously and dedicated themselves to their work selflessly and tirelessly. It appears that there were relatively few complaints, and fear and fatigue rarely effected the execution of their duties. The women realized they would have to duck with the boys, pray with them, and get by or get it, just as they would. I didn’t expect, nor did I want, conditions to be any better for me than they were for the soldiers. I would eat their chow, live their life, share their chances and most important, their troubles....I got what I expected.73

A camaraderie, so natural that to talk of the soldiers was not like discussing work but more "like commenting on the air you breathe," grew out of the "sympathy, humanity, understanding, comfort, and...temporary escape from the bitter business of killing or being killed" that the Red Cross women provided.74

The women were also well aware of the uniqueness of their work, as witnessed in the varied responses they received.

Some stare, shake their heads in utter disbelief. Some cheer, some scream and wave — everybody greets us.

73 Margaret Cotter, "Red Cross Girl Overseas," National Geographic, December 1944, 745.

74 Stevenson, 212, 231.
Some wolf, some worship, some think you’re human and some don’t. You aren’t human really, you’re a Red Cross girl. You’re on the chow and charm circuit. You’re a griping, kidding G.I. You’re personality on legs.\textsuperscript{75}

Their roles were not easy to play out; they had to be so much to so many. All at once the women were symbols of home, yet comrades in the field; they were mothers and sisters, yet they were also sweethearts; they were flesh and blood, but they were also goddesses, almost so unreal at first that men would vow to "'go on the wagon; first it’s spots, now it’s girls in front of my eyes.'"\textsuperscript{76}

Despite the natural stress that would occur from becoming so close to groups of men who risked their lives with every bombing raid or push forward, the women knew that to fall apart in front of the soldiers was not a desirable option, for "they’d never forgive you if you did."\textsuperscript{77} One commanding officer told an ARC worker in Britain that breaking down would "be no good to us....you’ve got to keep smiling and keep us smiling."\textsuperscript{78} The women’s effectiveness

\textsuperscript{75}Morgan, 119.
\textsuperscript{76}Korson, 92.
\textsuperscript{77}Stevenson, 154-55.
\textsuperscript{78}Morgan, 54.
was directly tied to their ability to remain untouched by the trauma the men were experiencing and to symbolize home during peacetime.

Overall their strength and generosity were unfailing and reinforced by a clear understanding of their own participation in an extremely taxing but important event. As one worker pointed out, "If they're a tenth as glad to see us as we are to see them, then our job is worthwhile. They really thank us for coming which makes us feel pretty humble because we were grateful for the opportunity and thought it the biggest honor we could have." 79 The reasons for instituting a recreational program for soldiers during wartime were reinforced by the words and deeds of Red Cross workers, as well as the men they served.

There were problems and tensions, questions and doubts, regarding the validity of women in the war theater, as well as the potential problems of morality associated with it, which is not unexpected, but they appear minimal. 80 This issue will be discussed below. However, the evidence

79 Morgan, 27.
80 Dulles, 376.
suggests the establishment of a symbiotic relationship between the women and the soldiers, a relationship so effective to preserving soldier morale, that similar operations were instituted five years later during the Korean conflict.

Korea, 1950-52

Effectiveness in battle is relative to the level of the army's morale. And while historically some commanders believed "success in battle" coupled with "the hardships of combat and rigid discipline" were enough to ensure high morale, there were others who believed the most effective method was the transference of "the American way of life to the battlefield." For the Eighth United States Army in Korea the tendency "was certainly toward the latter" methodology. 81

In the summer of 1950, General Douglas MacArthur, Commander in Chief of the Far East Command, in his response to an inquiry initiated by then ARC president, General

George C. Marshall, indicated that "requirements placed on the American Red Cross in Japan and Korea should approximate that in a theater of operation in time of war and planning should be based on World War II experience factors." MacArthur assumed ARC would establish traditional services. This included the coordination of blood drives in the United States, assistance in the recruitment of nurses for the military, the provision of field men equipped with the usual Red Cross comfort items, voluntary hospital workers, and welfare services to able-bodied military personnel, as well as their dependents. In addition, he endorsed the establishment of clubs in Korea, "as soon as the situation will permit."

According to American Red Cross correspondence between Frank Cleverley, Administrator for Foreign Operations, and Henry L. Janeway, Director of Operations, Far East Command,

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83MacArthur to Janeway, 20 July 1950, Box 2020, ANRC Records. Welfare services also included providing emergency loans to military personnel and their dependents and serving as a go-between for soldiers and their families back home if either one was concerned for the other's well-being.
economics and public relations were primary concerns for the organization and ultimately directed operational decisions in Korea. In August 1950, Cleverley warned Janeway that 

"[neither] the coffers of the American Red Cross nor the pockets of the American people can wisely be tapped" for elaborate clubs and programs.⁸⁴ Though clubs and Clubmobiles were used in Korea, ARC no longer offered billeting and meal services, and Clubmobiles were rudimentary, serving coffee and doughnuts, as usual, but supplying ditty bags only in emergency situations.

According to Virginia Griffith, "the most important aspect of the [Clubmobile] operation is the fact that it is staffed by American girls and therefore the contact, banter, wisecracking."⁸⁵ Cleverley concurred, writing that those installations "operated exclusively by women," were "more effective and efficient in the club program."⁸⁶ Though

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⁸⁴Frank T. Cleverley, Administrator for Foreign Operations, ARC, to Janeway, 1 August 1950, Box 2020, ANRC Records.

⁸⁵Virginia Griffith, Regional Club Supervisor, to Cleverley, 20 April 1951, Box 2020, ANRC Records.

⁸⁶Cleverley to Janeway, 1 Aug 1950, Box 2020, ANRC Records.
pared down, the club and Clubmobile operations would remain successful as long as women were key components of the program.

ARC attempted to set up ground rules with the military that would benefit the economic and public relations aspect of the operation. ARC would not engage in the recreational field without "the understanding that all services rendered and all supplies made available in such clubs shall be without charge." In addition, the duplication of services by other relief organizations, especially the Army Special Services division, was unacceptable. Both requirements had grown out of the World War II experience.

Despite the fact that the Red Cross did not charge for services and supplies during World War II, except in Great Britain and Australia as indicated previously, many combat-weary GIs insisted that the Red Cross had charged them for comfort articles. This criticism created a considerable public relations problem on the homefront. Donald Paul, a

87Cleverley to Janeway, 1 Aug 1950.

88Folder 900.11/91 FETO - Korea Criticism and Controversial Subjects at NARA2 is full of letters accusing ARC of charging for services and supplies. Thorough investigations revealed these accusations to be unfounded.
Buck Sergeant in the United States Air Force during the Korean War, recalled that a former neighbor of his "had nothing good to say about the Red Cross," as the organization "sold what ever they had and there were no freebies" for him when he returned from the front lines during World War II. Described as "very bitter about the whole thing," the neighbor could not believe Mr. Paul when he told him everything from the Red Cross in Korea was free of charge. Because of his positive experiences, Mr. Paul's mother volunteered with her local Red Cross chapter for nearly twenty years.89

Red Cross continued to deny the allegations that they charged for services and supplies, yet found these rumors almost insurmountable. ARC could only surmise that, because their people wore military-style uniforms similar to those of other organizations, the soldiers often confused other groups that did charge with the more well known Red Cross.90 Army Special Services, which charged for services and supplies, was the most likely group with which the Red Cross

89Donald Paul, electronic mail letter to author, 17 June 1998.

was confused. Nonetheless, the organization was completely reliant upon the funds raised throughout the year and any negative press, regardless of its accuracy, was detrimental to their ability to provide services. In an effort to lessen confusion, ARC demanded that there be no duplication of services between themselves and Special Services.

The first group of ten female ARC club workers arrived in Japan under the supervision of Virginia Griffith in October 1950. In mid-October, Griffith reported that the establishment of a club in Pusan was progressing despite the difficulties of requisitioning buildings to house the operation. Working closely with personnel from the Second Logistical Command, headquartered in Pusan, Griffith indicated that the military's attitude was "one of extreme friendliness and cooperation," and that once facilities were located, the program would soon be activated. At the same time, Third Logistical Command, located at Ascom City, near Seoul, requested both Red Cross and Army Special Service

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91Dulles, 368.
The club in Pusan opened on Sunday, November 12, 1950. Over 175 invitations "made of brown paper, shaped like a doughnut, and hand written" were sent to all the United Nations forces in the area, Korean military and political authorities, and the "top individuals in the 2d Logistical Command" asking for a delegate from each group to attend the opening. Dressed in class A's, the ARC women, greeting each guest who arrived for a special morning coffee hour, "completely hypnotized" the visitors, including the British and Canadian troops who "couldn't quite figure out why we were giving the food away and were reluctant to ask for seconds." Positive soldier responses to the club reinforced the women's satisfaction with their work, as well as their belief that making "this huge barnlike edifice a warm, cozy, comfortable spot in this desolate, dirty, grimy, smelly, and God-forsaken spot of Korea has endeared us to many of the lonely men here."  

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92 Griffith to Cleverley, 18 October 1950, Box 2020, ANRC Records.

By the end of November 1950, plans were underway for the establishment of a Red Cross mobile operation working out of Ascom City and serving troops at the port at Inchon, Kimpo air base, and in Seoul, where "units are widely scattered, are without transportation, and almost completely devoid of recreational or morale-building services of any kind." The mobile Red Cross units would augment the proposed five Special Service clubs in the Seoul area. The second group of women recruited for work in Korea, which included Helen Stevenson, was scheduled to staff the operation at Ascom City. Unfortunately, sudden changes in the military situation in Korea precluded the establishment of any Red Cross installations outside of Pusan for quite some time, and these women remained on temporary duty in Japan through the winter. Similarly, Special Services, which had opened a club staffed by women in Ascom City on Thanksgiving Day, had to shut down its operations there a week later when the facilities were needed as a military

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However, Special Services eventually opened a club in Pusan on 9 December 1950. Staffed by six women, the club provided food and services that "must be paid for in Military Payment Certificates (scrip)." Though the fact that Special Services charged and the Red Cross did not would eventually be considered a reason why the Red Cross relinquished its recreational responsibilities in Korea, in the beginning of the war, the need was so great for morale-building services for the men that it made little difference. The clubs were located far enough apart that ARC did not believe Special Service activities threatened, hindered, or duplicated any of its club operations.96

The August 19, 1950, issue of Army Times reported that "Eighth Army Special Services are readying an initial fleet of five mobile service clubs to be sent to the Armed Forces in Korea for service in the field." Cleverley considered this "a direct steal on the American Red Cross World War II

95Griffith to Cleverley, 21 Dec. 1950, Box 2017, ANRC Records.

96Griffith to Cleverley, 24 February 1951, Box 2020, ANRC Records.
Cleverley's fear that "other organizations are trying to take over our responsibilities," reinforced ARC's ever present concern with public relations and its belief that "each organization should stick to its own knitting." Though ARC was attempting to provide a very noble and selfless service to the fighting men, the bottom line and the livelihood of the organization were always paramount concerns.

Though it is difficult to say why, Army Special Services did not establish mobile recreational services staffed by women in Korea. Virginia Griffith reported in February 1951, that Special Services had assigned Clubmobiles to different divisions, but they were being used by chaplains and male Special Service officers in the field. Red Cross conducted the only food-dispensing Clubmobile activity in Korea in the winter of 1950-51, and that was

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97Cleverley to Janeway, 22 August 1950, Box 2020, ANRC Records.

98Cleverley to Janeway, 22 August 1950, Box 2020, ANRC Records.
only in the area around Pusan.  

In April 1951, however, EUSAK confirmed, through correspondence from General Beiderlinden at G-1, ARC's assumption of all Clubmobile activities for Eighth Army, including the planned addition of twenty more units later that spring. Special Services would handle the expansion of all permanent club installations from that point on. Despite concerns at ARC headquarters that the 1951-52 fund drive, which in April had only reached 85% of its intended goal, would not raise sufficient funds prior to the beginning of the fiscal year in July, the organization went ahead with plans to expand its Clubmobile operations and began the recruitment of sixty additional female staff. Beiderlinden's confirmation of ARC's assumption of all

99 Griffith to Cleverley, 24 February 1951, Box 2020, ANRC Records.

100 Janeway to Cleverley, 20 April 1951, 7 June 1951, Box 2020; W.A. Beiderlinden, Major General, GSC, Assistant Chief of Staff, G1 to Janeway, 21 April 1951, Box 2020, ANRC Records; "General Summary Report," Meyner Papers.

101 Cleverley to Janeway, 27 April 1951, Box 2020, ANRC Records. In this letter to Janeway, Cleverley writes of a "smear campaign," in which the Red Cross was accused of "selling blood to the Korean [War] casualties," and that it had done "irreparable damage to the fund drive"; see also "General Summary Report," Meyner Papers.
Clubmobile activities dated 21 April 1951, coupled with General Matthew Ridgway's letter to Janeway in which he expressed his "understanding that as more personnel and funds become available to you, you do plan to increase the number of Clubmobiles operating in Korea" appeared to have settled the issue.102

However, Janeway received a letter from Lieutenant General Doyle O. Hickey, Chief of Staff of General Staff Corps, indicating that James Van Fleet, Commanding General, Eighth Army, had determined it "advisable not to use the services of the American Red Cross for [Clubmobile] operations in Korea." Though assuring Janeway that this decision was no reflection on the "ability of the Red Cross to operate such a program," nor that it was doubted that the "Red Cross girls are willing to and have in the past worked under very trying field conditions as might be encountered" in this theater, Korea, it was believed, was just too dangerous. Of primary concern was the unwillingness of North Korean and Chinese forces to abide by the rules of international warfare in respect to the treatment of non-

102M.B. Ridgway to Janeway, 7 May 1951, Box 2021, ANRC Records.
combat personnel and to recognize the neutral status of the Red Cross. 103

ARC could have insisted upon taking the issue further based on General Ridgway's support, the confirmation from Beiderlinden, and the fact that funding and personnel had already been allocated for the expansion. However, Janeway understood that this sort of action would do nothing to ingratiate ARC to EUSAK and would only hinder their working relationship. 104

By early June much money and time had been invested in the recruitment and preliminary training of forty-five new recreational workers. 105 At this time, the future of club and Clubmobile operations remained uncertain, as the Air Force had expressed interest in a program. It seemed unwise to let these forty-five return home. If expansion with the Air Force did occur, Cleverley determined, "the problem of recruitment would become almost insurmountable if we were to

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103 Doyle O. Hickey, Lieutenant General, GSC, Chief of Staff to Janeway, 4 June 1951, Box 2020, ANRC Records.
104 Janeway to Cleverley, 7 June 1951, Box 2020, ANRC Records.
105 Cleverley to Janeway, 11 June 1951, Box 2020, ANRC Records.
break faith with the select group that has already been recruited. At issue, again, was the public relations dilemma this could cause. ARC feared that if the women were dismissed from duty, or not given the opportunity to serve the troops in some way, they would return home to their communities, disillusioned with ARC operations.

The women were given the option to return home but were told that they would go on to the Far East to serve in other areas until the situation in Korea stabilized. Forty of the forty-five chose to remain with ARC and go to FETO. Conveniently, the Air Force requested club and Clubmobile services from ARC for their more secure base installations in Korea, despite EUSAK's decision not to expand such services to combat troops.

Prior to Van Fleet's decision to end Red Cross expansion to Eighth Army, the organization had added some installations to those areas in and near Pusan. In addition

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106 Cleverley to Janeway, 11 June 1951.

107 Cleverley to Janeway, 11 June 1951, Box 2020, ANRC Records.

108 Cleverley to Janeway, 11 June 1951, Box 2020, ANRC Records.

to the club opened in Pusan in November 1950, and the port
canteen serving troop transit ships to and from Japan, a
Clubmobile was put in operation in December 1950, a railroad
station canteen serving troops moving to and from the front
was opened on 26 April 1951, and a canteen for the 55th
Replacement Company serving combat returnees opened in late
May 1951. At K9, the airbase just east of Pusan, club and
canteen operations began 22 April 1951. Located too far
from the installation in Pusan, these facilities served base
personnel, ground and plane crews, and air-evacuated
patients.\textsuperscript{110}

The Red Cross also agreed to open a canteen in Sasebo,
Japan, in May 1951, at the request of Major General
Beiderlinden, who discovered a need existed "for a coffee-
sandwich-doughnut type activity to serve replacements and
rotation personnel" at Sasebo, which the military was
financially unable to fund.\textsuperscript{111} Four more ARC operations were
established on air bases between July 1951, and March 1952,
each consisting of a club and subsidiary installations.

\textsuperscript{110}"General Summary Report," Meyner Papers.

\textsuperscript{111}Beiderlinden to Janeway, 26 April 1951, Box 2020,
ANRC Records.
They were established in the following order: 29 July 1951, K2, near Taegu; 26 August 1951, K13, near Suwon; 2 September, 1951, K5, near Kunsan; and K16, near Seoul, was the last installation established on 18 March 1952.\(^{112}\)

The organization felt the impact of Eighth Army's decision not to allow the expansion of Red Cross Clubmobile operations in Korea, and Cleverley informed Janeway in September 1951, that plans were already underway to transfer some of ARC's recreational facilities to Special Services.\(^{113}\)

When Van Fleet decided not to allow the expansion of ARC Clubmobile services in Korea, the Red Cross reallocated the money budgeted for this program and returned to the organization's general fund. Only $325,000, was reserved for the maintenance of operations already established in and near Pusan at the time. Consequently, the expansion of services to the Air Force greatly strained the Red Cross budget, making this allocation entirely insufficient. Cleverley believed the Board of Governors would not be amenable to increasing funds for this operation, as the

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\(^{112}\)"General Summary Report," Meyner Papers.

\(^{113}\)Cleverley to Janeway, 11 September 1951, Box 2020, ANRC Records.
organization would be serving only one branch of the military and a small percentage of other troops passing through the bases en route to the front. However, Cleverley indicated that Red Cross would continue to provide recreational facilities where the need was greatest until the military could take over such operations.\textsuperscript{114}

The Red Cross continued to press for the transfer of their clubs to Special Services. Eighth Army and the Air Force requested Red Cross club and Clubmobile services to take place for a six month period following cessation of hostilities, which the military had begun planning for in late fall 1951.\textsuperscript{115} Keeping in mind this desire for a post-hostilities Clubmobile program and the organization’s budgetary restraints, an expedient transfer was most desirable, as any money saved on club operations could then be allocated for later Clubmobile services. A schedule was set up by which all Red Cross recreational operations in Korea and Sasebo, Japan, would cease by the end of the

\textsuperscript{114}Cleverley to Janeway, 11 September 1951, Box 2020, ANRC Records.

\textsuperscript{115}Cleverley to Janeway, 7 December 1951, Box 2020, ANRC Records.
fiscal year, as there was no allocation for a club program in the budget for 1952-53.\textsuperscript{116}

As peace negotiations had not been settled by late spring 1952, and there "seemed every reason to believe they could drag on indefinitely," ARC decided not to retain recreational operations in Korea that would have allowed for a Clubmobile operation following the cessation of hostilities.\textsuperscript{117} The confusion in the minds of service personnel regarding the distinctions between Special Services and Red Cross continued to be considered "an almost insurmountable public relations problem."\textsuperscript{118} And the unproductive peace talks and ARC's historic problems with Eighth Army left too many uncertainties for the organization to plan ahead confidently and effectively.

Beginning with the 55\textsuperscript{th} Replacement center in Pusan in October 1951, all Red Cross installations were transferred

\textsuperscript{116}Louise Wood, Administrative Representative, Insular and Foreign Operations, to Thomas M. Dinsmore, Assistant Director, Insular and Foreign Operations, 21 February 1952, Box 2020, ANRC Records; Cleverley to Janeway, 7 December 1951, Box 2020, ANRC Records.

\textsuperscript{117}"General Summary Report," Meyner Papers.

\textsuperscript{118}"General Summary Report," Meyner Papers.
to Army Special Services by June 15, 1952. Operations at K2, near Taegu closed in late January 1952, followed by Sasebo on 3 March 1952, K5 at Kunsan in April, the remaining installations at Pusan and K13 near Suwon in May, and lastly, the facilities at K16 near Seoul. During the twenty month period of operation, ARC spent nearly one million dollars on salaries, services and supplies, and over 27 million doughnuts and 950,000 gallons of coffee were served to United Nations forces in Korea and Sasebo, Japan.119

Impact Down Through the Ranks

It is easy to forget the practical economic concerns of an organization such as the American Red Cross which was dedicated to providing humane relief. Therefore, it is important to juxtapose the practical operational aspects of ARC recreational services during the Korean War with the humanitarian services that define the organization's higher calling. The effects of the American Red Cross administrators' problems in coordinating recreational services to the armed forces were felt below the command


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level by those who carried out its program. Helen Stevenson's letters home indicate this and reveal that she had an accurate understanding of the situation regarding changes in the recreation program.

Helen's letters from Korea reveal that she was aware of the proposed expansion of Red Cross services, as well as the constant fluctuations in plans. In April 1951, Helen knew that the homefront fund drive was going badly and expressed concern that "it might cut down this club operation because of no money." 120 She was also aware of the possibility that changes in the war situation could quickly put an end to club operations.

Almost weekly, she reported to her family the constant changes regarding expansion of the club and Clubmobile operations. On 30 April, she wrote of the proposal made a week previous to expand Clubmobile operations, to hire additional female ARC workers, and to build twenty new Clubmobiles. She also noted that over the course of the week, "the situation has changed again and it looks

120HDS to family, 22 April 1951, Meyner Papers.
doubtful." Helen lived day-to-day with the uncertainties of war, and with those of whether she would continue to work in Korea.

Helen also understood of Eighth Army's ultimate decision not to accept an expanded ARC Clubmobile operation because of the dangerous conditions in Korea, as well as the proposed expansion of service to the Air Force. Both of these situations effected Helen throughout the summer and fall of 1951, and ultimately influenced her decision to return home.\textsuperscript{122}

Though she was relieved when the recreational workers "got the break we should have had in my opinion months ago" to set up recreational facilities on air bases to the north, she soon showed signs of frustration with the limited service to the "fly boys who have it much better than Marines and GIs."\textsuperscript{123} Though she did serve Marines and GIs heading to and returning from the front, she was not

\textsuperscript{121}HDS to family, 30 April 1951, Meyner Papers.

\textsuperscript{122}HDS to family, 9 June 1951, 15 June 1951, 20 July 1951, 18 September 1951, Meyner Papers.

\textsuperscript{123}HDS to family 20 July 1951, 18 September 1951, Meyner Papers.
satisfied. "It burns me up!" she wrote. "The men who need Red Cross most can't get it....Nuts to the 8th Army for turning us down."\textsuperscript{124} She knew it was not only ARC that determined the extent of the operations but also Eighth Army.

ARC had determined that recreational workers stationed in Korea were only required to give one year of duty because of the rugged conditions there.\textsuperscript{125} Helen was asked to extend her stay until May 1951, so ARC would not have to recruit new personnel to cover the installations until Special Services could take over. Helen, "at a terrible loss to know what to do," would have chosen to stay if "it meant [working] up front with the Army." However, because this was not guaranteed, she would return to the states in early 1952.\textsuperscript{126}

Helen's in-depth knowledge and understanding of ARC operations in Korea reveals a degree of intelligence and awareness the define her as more than a young woman hired to

\textsuperscript{124}HDS to family, 18 September 1951, Meyner Papers.

\textsuperscript{125}Griffith to Frank T. Cleverley, 25 May 1951, Box 2018, ANRC Records.

\textsuperscript{126}HDS to family, 16 December 1951, Meyner Papers.
hand out doughnuts and look pretty for the soldiers. Her candid opinions of Red Cross's administrative issues reveal her strong desire to help the fighting men cope with the war, a job she took seriously. Her main concern was how the issues between ARC and Eighth Army effected, not her personally, but her ability to serve the soldiers.

Though the administrative problems within the Red Cross colored Helen's opinion of the organization and could have had a detrimental effect on her recreational work, this was not the case. Her opinionated reactions reinforce the value and meaning that she placed on her work and on her relationships with soldiers and airmen established during her tenure with the Red Cross. An examination of her letters regarding such reveals not only the depth of her own experiences, but also the uniqueness of Red Cross recreational services in the war theater.
In their article, "Enacting Traditional Roles in a Nontraditional Setting: Women Employed by the Red Cross in Viet Nam," Juanita M. Firestone and Cherylon Robinson, identified a wide variety of role expectations for Red Cross recreational workers.\footnote{Juanita M. Firestone, and Cherylon Robinson, "Enacting Traditional Roles in a Nontraditional Setting: Women Employed by the Red Cross in Viet Nam," \textit{Sex Roles: A Journal of Research} 34 (January 1996): 43-64.} Firestone and Robinson determined that the women had to work under official and unofficial behavioral expectations. When the official and unofficial conflicted, role strain developed. In response, the women either conformed to, modified, or rejected the problematic role expectations. Role strain, according to the article, "could also arise when individuals perform gender-typical jobs in non-typical situations."\footnote{"Enacting Traditional Roles," 46.} According to Firestone and Robinson, the presence of women in the male-dominated war theater of Viet Nam was extremely conducive to this type of role strain.

Though Firestone and Robinson's study is more sophisticated and detailed than this present examination, it
serves an important purpose. As the only other scholarly effort to examine the work of Red Cross women in a war theater, it helps validate the presence of a variety of roles the women assumed during war and the fact that different types of relationships were established between them and the men they served. However, the role strain and conflict Firestone and Robinson examined will not be addressed below.

Since Viet Nam occurred in a period culturally and socially distant from that of the Korean War, social conflicts and change, such as the Feminist Movement, more than likely affected the role expectations, behaviors, and modifiers of the Red Cross women in Viet Nam, as well as the soldiers. The expectations that the women were to assume the role of the "all-American Girl," such as mother, sister, or sweetheart, often caused role strain.129 Helen's letter provide little if any evidence of either conflict or strain. It is likely that, even though Korea is a precursor to the Viet Nam War, it occurred in a period much more similar to that of the World War II era, and the conflict associated

129"Enacting Traditional Roles," 53.

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with the expectations of the all-American girl were less pronounced. However, much like the women in Viet Nam, Helen Stevenson’s behavior in Japan and Korea reveals that she, too, exhibited a variety of roles in her relationships with the soldiers.

As previously noted, the American Red Cross’s belief that the presence of female recreational workers in a war theater had positive effects on soldier morale extended from World War II to the Korean conflict. Soldiers and ARC women established mutually beneficial relationships growing out of the war experiences of both sexes. Based on Helen’s writings, two different types of relationships emerged, one based on work-related relationships and the other on off-duty relationships.

The relationships that were limited to the interaction between Helen and the men when she worked in the clubs or on Clubmobiles were marked by the symbolic roles each assumed. The men, in this case, were most often enlisted personnel. It was at these times the women symbolized home, country, mother, sister, or sweetheart. Helen assumed roles defined by these symbols, to which the men responded with changes in their own role behavior. These relationships were basically
impersonal in that the specific identity and true personality of each person was not essential to the relationship.

Off-duty relationships, on the other hand, were personal and were marked by social interaction outside the Helen's role of Red Cross worker. Because these relationships were conducted under the stress of war and were "only for the duration," traditional social guidelines were often more relaxed.\textsuperscript{130} The men in this case were usually officers, for with rank came privilege and the freedom to move about more easily.\textsuperscript{131} Though the women insisted that officers visiting their quarters bring their drivers, who were enlisted personnel, in with them, they established more personal relationships with officers. Regardless of how the relationships are defined, the benefit to morale appears considerable, as both types served as coping mechanisms for the soldiers, the officers, and even the women.

That these relationships occurred naturally, and were

\textsuperscript{130}HDS to family, 22 May 1951, Meyner Papers.

\textsuperscript{131}The specific class dynamics of these relationships are discussed below.
not the purposeful creations for women hired to do a job, is reinforced by the seeming lack of training the women received and the less than rigid requirements for employment. All available information indicates that during both World War II and the Korean War, orientation and training took place in Washington, D.C., for between five and ten days. During this time, clearances, identification cards, and dog tags were issued, and the women attended "lectures on how to make a nice casserole from dehydrated cabbage, how to set up a checkroom in a Red Cross Club, how to tell a colonel from a corporal."\textsuperscript{132} Though the women received "intensive indoctrination on the history, organization, purpose, and function of the Red Cross," and "a thorough course in first aid," they were "instructed about the administration of service clubs [and] the type of entertainment that should be offered," but not necessarily on how to act.\textsuperscript{133} Emphasis appears to have been on very functional issues. Likewise, Firestone and Robinson

\textsuperscript{132}HDS diary, 24-28 October 1950, Meyner Papers; John C. Wilson, Assistant General Manager, ARC to Harold B. Nearman, et al., re: Club Program, 27 April 1951, Box ..., ANRC Records; quote from Morgan, 37.

\textsuperscript{133}Battlestars & Doughnuts, 3.
indicate that during Viet Nam, that "socialization into their roles occurred both officially and unofficially."

Very often, those rules outlining conduct and behavior in dealing with soldiers occurred only verbally, if at all. While the women undoubtedly were told how to behave toward military personnel and what types of behavior were unacceptable, those attributes ascribed to "normal American girls," such as "physical stamina, tact, [and] pleasant personalities," presumed that, as far as dealing with soldiers, the women automatically would know what to do.

ARC outlined job requirements for club workers. However, if Helen Stevenson is held as an example, these descriptions were not necessarily adhered to when hiring personnel. The "desirable qualifications" for an entry level club worker were a college degree, experience in the leadership and operation of recreational or entertainment facilities, clerical or secretarial skills, and a minimum

134"Enacting Traditional Roles," 47.
135Virginia Griffith to Frank T. Cleverley, 7 December 1950.
age of twenty-three.\footnote{From "CLUB WORKER I," 22 August 1950, Box ??, ANRC Records.} At twenty-two, Helen had one qualification: a college degree.\footnote{Of course, it is likely that the requirements were waived for Helen because of her parents' Red Cross connections. See WES to HDS, 8 October 1950, Meyner Papers.} The need for a college degree and the assumption that the women would behave according to proper social conduct indicates a class bias in the recruitment of Red Cross workers. Though there is no extensive research to support the assertion, most ARC recreational workers in Korea came from the upper-middle and upper classes. This is perhaps for the same reason Helen's parents were able to join ARC. They had the financial and familial resources to do so.

Whether the extent of the relationships between the men and the women was a coffee and doughnut stop once a week and a quick spin around the dance floor every now and again, or full-fledged friendships marked by daily interaction and socialization does not really matter. Whereas the evidence given previously indicates as much, deeper investigation into one woman's experiences, as recounted in her diaries and letters from the period, reveals the evolution of these
natural relationships between ARC women and the soldiers they served. Helen’s impressions disclose as much about herself as they do about the various relationships between and roles assumed by both men and women in a war theater.

Consideration in the following pages is given to specific aspects of Helen’s writing. While she covered a wide range of topics in her letters, focus here is on her work and her social life, especially in relation to her interactions with the soldiers. She made many insightful observations regarding race, occupation Japan, Korea, the indigenous populations of both countries, and the war situation in general; however, these topics will not be discussed directly. Those aspects which best reveal the relationships and roles of both the men and the women and which help to explain and reinforce the uniqueness of female American Red Cross recreational workers are addressed.

Helen’s understanding of her role as a recreational worker changed over the course of her tenure in both Japan and Korea. Differences in her attitude are apparent from her arrival in Japan in November 1950, to when she leaves for Korea, and to when she finishes her tour in Korea fourteen months later. These differences, whether they help
define her relationships with the men, or whether her relationships are what define her attitude, reinforce her mother’s view that this type of work was not only about helping others but also about personal fulfillment and growth. Many people find their work lives personally satisfying, as well as beneficial to others. However, female Red Cross recreational workers like Helen Stevenson experienced the horrors of war first hand, as well as its impact on the fighting men. Very few women can claim this. In a speech given in the 1960s, she said "the major lesson I learned from my experiences in Korea concerned the obscenity and ultimate futility of war. The bleak, barren, treeless landscape and human suffering I saw often made me heartsick." Therefore, Helen’s experiences informed her view of the world and her view of war forever.

Helen composed her first letter to her family while aboard the transport plane delivering her to Japan. She wrote, "As I sit across from a row of [GIs], I think, how typical." They were "trying to sleep, one of them...reads slowly moving his lips with every word. One is reading a

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138HDS speeches, [n.d.], Meyner Papers.
comic book." Two were "hitting each other and laughing," while others were "stretched out on the floor fast asleep." In sum, to her "they really are so cute and amusing. I'm getting a kick out of them already." Helen considers these soldiers children. Their behavior, as such, is "typical." And that is not all.139

Helen reveals very early that her world is separate from that of the soldiers. She is different from them. She is an outsider, observing them and anticipating the adventure to occur when their two worlds meet. This separation is useful on many levels. Primarily, it allows for a clearer understanding of the roles and relationships between Helen and the hospital patients. It also helps establish guidelines with which to compare Red Cross hospital work in Japan and recreational work in Korea. And, finally, it illuminates the evolution of her own perception of her role and meaning as a Red Cross worker.

Helen worked in the Red Cross recreation room at Johnson Air Base in Irumagawa, Japan, where ambulatory patients passed the time playing ping-pong, listening to the

139HDS to family, 3 November 1950, Meyner Papers.
radio, reading, and "chew[ing] the fat." 140 Though she did not work on the wards with bed-ridden patients, she often greeted wounded soldiers as they arrived from Korea. Regardless of which group she worked with, her maternal attributes complemented her view of the soldiers as children.

Helen often referred to the patients as "poor little kids" or "dear kids" and remarked that they were "so cute, so young, and most of them scared silly that they will be sent back to Korea." 141 It is her consideration of their youth, and her pity for their fears that motivated her treatment of them, as well as programs the Red Cross recreational workers arranged for their entertainment.

Commenting that "these boys aren't hard to entertain," Helen wrote of bingo games, floor shows featuring young Japanese tap dancers and acrobats, and interactive activities such as a "truth and consequences program." 142 She "asked impossible questions" the patients could not

140HDS to family, 17 December 1950, Meyner Papers.

141HDS to family, 1 December 1950, 3 February 1951, 15 November 1950, Meyner Papers.

142HDS to family, 10 December 1950, Meyner Papers.
answer and then made "one boy draw his ideal woman (while blindfolded)," another "do a hula-hula dance using a hula skirt that I had made out of newspaper," and then two others dress in women's clothing, "race across the stage and take the clothing off. We put bras and panties in the bags," which brought the house down, because "all you have to do to keep those men amused is to bring out a woman's brazier and they think that is terrifically funny."\textsuperscript{143} The activities were silly, but they also served a purpose, revealing much about how the women viewed the soldiers, as well as how the soldiers responded to the women and ARC programming. While these activities are indicative of the women's treatment of the patients as children, it may also indicate a willingness on the part of the GIs to engage in youthful pursuits as an escape from war and their roles as soldiers. It is possible, in addition, that the reality of their youth emerges in this type of situation when it is facilitated by women who assume maternal roles.

This type of behavior was most apparent during holidays, especially Christmas. The programming and the

\textsuperscript{143}HDS to family, 5 January 1951, Meyner Papers.
reactions of the men complemented each other. Helen described the different programs the Red Cross women arranged for different groups of service personnel. Though the programs vary slightly from group to group, and Helen's reactions vary accordingly, the women continued to respond to the soldiers' youthfulness.

The ambulatory patients at the 5th Station Hospital were treated to a sing-along in the recreation center, where "they all sang carols like mad." They sang serious carols, as well as "lighter numbers such as White Xmas and Rudolph the Red Nosed Raindeer [sic]," and Helen described the event as "really quite a touching thing for me as I looked at the men sitting in the theater in their pajamas and bath robes and watched them singing away so earnestly and seriously."\footnote{HDS to family, 26 December 1950, Meyner Papers.} The combination of wounded men in pajamas singing Christmas carols with heartfelt determination elicited in Helen a compassionate response that reinforced her belief in their latent youth and innocence.

Similarly, when Helen "dressed up in a night shirt...and read the [Hospital Detachment] boys that famous
'Night Before Xmas' poem" she received a response that, while not childlike, was adolescent, for they "thought the poem was a riot." She "started them off by explaining that mama and papa in the poem had just gone to bed. [Well] that started the tittering off and it lasted all through the poem. When they are in that certain mood or feeling gay you would not dare read them the Lords Prayer." It appears that the healthier the men are, the less young they seem to the women. However, a distinct sense of their youthfulness remains, for much like the woman's brazier elicited adolescent giggles, so did the veiled sexual implications of a man and woman in bed. These youthful reactions are the responses the presence of women continued to evoke, as their job was to improve soldier morale, help the men forget the war, and remind them of home.

Helen admitted that Christmas was a time when she was especially "sentimental" and that homesickness was a distinct possibility. However, "it was a busy Xmas but a very satisfying one and none of us had a moment to feel

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145 HDS to family, 26 December 1950, Meyner Papers.
homesick or lonely.  

The work she was doing for the men ultimately precluded any homesickness on her part, as their reactions made her work all the more important.

The importance of the Red Cross women as symbols to the men of home is also evident in the "souvenirs" they received from the women. A group of recuperated patients returning to the front, "wanted a souvenir" from her, and she "pulled every button off my Red Cross raincoat and gave the buttons I had to as many boys as I could." Traumatized by battle wounds, these patients had felt the physical pain of war. The buttons served as reminders of their respite from the war and of the women who helped them forget, if only briefly, their horrifying experiences.

Similarly, the ARC women awarded prizes for contests, such as Helen's "truth and consequences" program. In addition to cigarettes, which were a staple in the GI's diets, she gave them "little cloth dolls made by the junior Jap Red Cross." Surprised at the eager reception of such gifts, she wrote, "You would not think that the men would

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146HDS to family, 26 December 1950, Meyner Papers.

147HDS to family, 1 December 1950, Meyner Papers.
like dolls would you? But they do. The little dolls went over big."  

The dolls were childlike symbols of the time when the men were reminded of home, mothered by the women, and safe. Once the cigarettes, which provided temporary physical relief, ran out, they would be replaced by more from different sources. The dolls, however, provided mental relief and were unique to their experience with ARC women. The issue is not that the GIs actually played with the dolls; rather, the dolls served as reminders of the Red Cross women, who in turn, were reminders of home.

Helen arrived in Korea in April 1951. The nature of her work changed, but her working relationships with soldiers remained symbolic. Though Helen did work in the club in Pusan, as previously noted, she spent the majority of her working hours on the Clubmobile, "a Russian truck that was captured by some GIs in North Korea. They brought it down to Pusan and fixed it all up for us....and gave it to us as a present."  

The soldiers’ enthusiasm and support of the work the women were doing in general was often

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148HDS to family, 10 December 1950, Meyner Papers.

149HDS to family, 22 April 1951, Meyner Papers.

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exemplified in behavior such as this. The men facilitated the work which the women were there to do.

Driven by a soldier "who knows the roads," the women loaded up the truck with coffee and doughnuts and headed to "out-of-the-way little units of men and to big replacement centers and down to the piers and docks of Pusan harbor." When visiting these installations, the mere presence of ARC women, as they served up donuts, coffee, and conversation, seemed antidote enough to the dreary monotony of war.

Helen, a self-described "little bundle of personality," wrote of the excitement the presence of a Red Cross girl elicited from the enlisted men. She commented on the men's reaction, writing about how "cute and very thrilled to see Red Cross" the men were, and how "most of them couldn't believe their eyes." This enthusiasm, however, was not one-sided, as it was "so exciting to pull into a place and have the boys rush out to you so enthusiastically" that "it

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150HDS to family, 22 April 1951, Meyner Papers.
151HDS to family, 30 April 1951, 11 December 1951, Meyner Papers.
makes it all such a wonderful experience."\textsuperscript{152} It is evident that the enthusiasm was for the women, and not necessarily the doughnuts.

The coffee, which could be "stone cold" and the doughnuts, "soggy and repulsive from the rain," were "incidental," props which gave the women a reason for being in Korea. Much like little dolls and Red Cross raincoat buttons, the doughnuts were stimuli that helped the men escape from Korea for a brief time and also evoked memories of these periodic respites.\textsuperscript{153} And while Helen felt rewarded by the reception the GIs gave them, she also understood the nature of her relationship with them.

The relationships established between the GIs and the Red Cross women were ideal in that the women represented a familiar female image of home. While in Japan, the women were more motherly, in Korea they represented a more sexual female image. When Helen visited the First Marine Air Wing, the men "took a million pictures of me and made such a fuss

\textsuperscript{152}HDS to family, 22 April 1951, 30 April 1951, Meyner Papers.

\textsuperscript{153}HDS to family, 27 May 1951; "incidental" from Ella T. Cruise, "Recreation on the move," Recreation (January 1956) 15.
over me that you might have thought I was Lana Turner. I guess I seemed like Lana to them." This was a popular image that reminded the men of home and the quintessential all-American girls for whom they were fighting. Or at least that is how Helen viewed it.

Part of Robert Westbrook's argument in his article "I Want a Girl, Just Like the Girl that Married Harry James: American Women and the Problem of Political Obligation in World War II," centers on the use of pin-up posters as symbols of the women left at home. The women in the posters were not merely sex objects who inspired fantasies but represented the "average" American woman as compelling reasons to fight the war. In a way, the Red Cross women were pin-ups come to life. The men, without women for extremely long periods of time, were undoubtedly sexually attracted to the Red Cross women. The women, as well, attempted to appeal to the men in this way. Though the Red

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154HDS to family, 30 April 1951, Meyner Papers.

Cross women represented mothers to the patients, the sexual women they symbolized for the men were neither cheap nor glamorous. They were respected.

Helen often made fun of her own ability to represent American women, for when "the mud is up to our knees and we are covered with brown dust from head to foot....[‘tis] hard to hold on to your femininity."\(^{156}\) During the Korean "‘Rainy Season’" she mused that the "GIs must take one look at me and say 'UGH that can’t be an American Girl. Do I really have to go home to that?" Despite running make-up and uniforms caked with doughnut flour, it was important for the ARC workers to represent the girls from back home.

Regardless of the women’s grooming problems, the men returning from the front "went wild" over Helen and her peers. "They would look at us once, blink their eyes and then take a second look and yell 'My God, a real live white woman.'"\(^{157}\) As in World War II, the racial dimensions of the war in Korea were fairly pronounced. American fear and distaste for Asians was addressed in two ways through the

\(^{156}\)HDS to Ruthie Fuller, 20 July 1951, Meyner Papers.

\(^{157}\)HDS to family, 22 May 1951, Meyner Papers.
use of Red Cross women. First of all, the men appreciated seeing their beloved white women. Secondly, the military appreciated any distraction that would prevent sexual relations between a white soldier and an Asian woman. That the Red Cross women fit an image of femininity that women from Korea or Japan could not was an essential facet of Red Cross recreational work.

Following the Thanksgiving program at the club in Pusan in 1950, Provost Marshall Colonel Wayde L. Shankle commented that the military's "greatest concern always is with the so-called borderline soldier...who through boredom or influence may make improper choices. These borderline cases gain great good from such wholesome activities as Red Cross" provided.158 While the Red Cross women's stated purpose was the uplift of soldiers' morale and their temporary relief from war, the images these women represented, even the sexual images, had a moral imperative.

Though Helen did not comment often on this function, she was aware of the moral implications of her job. In

Japan, the Red Cross women provided a more mature entertainment outlet for the men, for which there were good reasons. "Determined to give these boys a good time before they left for Korea Saturday night," Helen and a group of five other women took several recuperated patients out for dinner and "dancing and 'chewing the fat' until the wee hours. I think the old Red Cross really came through for those boys who rarely get the chance to be with women other than Japanese 'bad girls.' We got terrific satisfaction out of the evening." Though social in nature, this was work for the Red Cross women, and it was important work. There were even the practical considerations of keeping down the occurrences of sexually transmitted diseases which are common among during wartime. Even though the women were supposed to serve as sexual distractions from Asian women, the soldiers and the Red Cross women were not permitted to engage in sexual relations. Therefore, the problems were more complicated.

According to Helen, when morale was low, so was morality. She believed that as a "last resort (and their

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159HDS to family, 2 December 1950, Meyner Papers.
only resort) [the soldiers] turn to the Korean gals, who on the whole are a revolting lot." Helen had first hand knowledge of this, as "right next to the club is a house of prostitution." Though bizarre, the presence of a brothel next door to the club served as a daily reminder that the soldiers' morality depended on the women's ability to sustain their morale.

It is entirely possible that the men patronized both the brothel and the Red Cross club. As the military controlled most of the buildings in Pusan, it is interesting that the brothel was permitted to remain in such proximity to the Red Cross club. The Korean prostitutes were obviously there for sexual release only. This was the one release the Red Cross women could not provide. While many soldiers may have had more emotional relationships with South Korean women, neither the military nor the American people would have endorsed such relationships. Conversely, there is no way the military, the country, or the Red Cross would allow the female club workers to officially satisfy

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160 HDS to family, 15 June 1951, Meyner Papers.

161 HDS to family, 30 April 1951, Meyner Papers.
the sexual needs of the men. The Red Cross women and the South Korean women handled different kinds of morale.

Morale was not only tied to the sexual urges of fighting men but also to the soldiers' ability to deal with the more horrific aspects of war. Coffee, doughnuts, and polite conversation make light of the deeper, more emotional functions of the Red Cross recreational workers. The women often helped the men cope with the more tangible events that are part of the war experience, such as the death of a friend. Helen recounted the story of two pilots "just in from a jet mission" who entered the canteen and "burst into tears because half an hour before their buddy had been shot down." After listening to them "pour it out," one pilot,

with tears rolling down his face asked the question we've all heard a hundred times. 'What makes you girls come over here and get into this mess?' Suddenly, because they had cried in front of us and we had listened to them they knew the answer to their own question.162

Having a woman to talk to, to unburden themselves to proved the importance and value of having the women in the war theater. The men were clearly vulnerable, had no fear of exposing their emotions, and found comfort in the fact that the women were there for them.

While it is impossible to determine the precise impact the Red Cross recreational workers had on the average soldiers and the degree to which they sustained GI morale, as well as morality and health, Helen's letters are

162HDS to family, 24 October 1951, Meyner Papers.
testaments to the fact that the women were a welcome sight everywhere they went. The fact that the Red Cross women could not make it to all the men did not stop one soldier who "hitch-hiked thirty miles down to the Club cause a buddy told him there were two girls in the Club from Ohio. He just had to talk to us." Though only a few women at a time could greet hundreds, even thousands of men, the soldiers appear to have been anxious for their company.

Donald Paul noted in his correspondence that the men’s reactions to the presence of women in Korea "was nothing but positive," and he believed they "helped morale quite a bit." His memories of the Red Cross women were vivid forty-five years after the war. Mr. Paul was compelled to post his memories on a web site in 1997, which attests to the importance of Red Cross recreational workers, and their impact on soldier morale.

While the soldiers' appreciation often motivated the

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163 HDS to family, 22 April 1951, Meyner Papers.


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women, demoralizing events and conditions had the potential to undermine the women’s work. Helen often wrote home of situations or specific soldier behavior that concerned her. She disparaged some of the GIs, who were a "pain in the neck," or "mean and uncooperative as the very devil."\textsuperscript{166} She wrote, as well, of their low morale and their lack of pride in what they are doing.\textsuperscript{167} Frustrating as they could be, she understood that "they are human beings just like anyone else...[and] I love 'em."\textsuperscript{168} These complaints reveal the stresses associated with being constantly in demand. Her attitude is realistic and indicative of an open-minded, unashamed view of the soldiers.

One of the more interesting issues about which Helen wrote concerned the "many patients whose wounds are self-inflicted." Helen at first was "revolted...to see so much of what we call 'gold-bricking' or 'goofing off,'" but upon further consideration attributed the problem to "the lack of spirit there is in this war. So many of the boys will do

\textsuperscript{166}HDS to family, 26 December 1951, Meyner Papers.

\textsuperscript{167}HDS to family, 5 January 1951, 15 June 1951, 7 July 1951, Meyner Papers.

\textsuperscript{168}HDS to family, 26 December 1951, Meyner Papers.
anything to get out of Korea and they will even tear open their wounds...and hold their thermometers under matches to keep from going back to duty." Her final assessment that if she were in combat she may very well have done the same thing was reinforced by her belief that "no one wants to die...especially when you are about to die for nothing, as seems to be true in Korea." Her increasing closeness to and understanding of the soldiers helped assuage her initial revulsion with their behavior.

In Korea, the ARC women were confronted with a problem that was at once personally offensive, as well as detrimental to the organization's reputation. She wrote that "a terrible rumor started here among a large Negro outfit that the Red Cross girls were prostitutes. We have all had some very nasty experiences and many propositions lately." It is unlikely that Helen's parents, having the

169HDS to family, 18 February 1951, Meyner Papers. Helen's parents submitted some of her letters to their hometown paper, the Oberlin News-Tribune. One reader responded to this letter in particular. He found her accounts "very disturbing" and suggested that perhaps her ignorance of the "big picture" in Korea caused her inability to understand the value and importance of this military operation. From "Miss Stevenson's Morale Disturbing to Reader," Oberlin News-Tribune, 22 March 1950.
personal knowledge of war and soldier behavior they did, would have allowed her to work for Red Cross if she were in any real physical or emotional danger from the soldiers. Helen realized this too. She wrote that though she had "been subjected to things that I never thought I could face," and that her letter "sounded very grim," she "wouldn't trade this experience for anything in the world. I'm only afraid that nothing I do after this will seem as important or as terrific as this experience." She realized she must take the good with the bad and did not allow it to interfere with her work.170

Her candor when relating her opinions to her family indicates that Helen did not romanticize her job nor did she view soldiers through rose-colored glasses. She was aware of the reality of the war situation and its impact on people, and her ability to overcome these concerns and continue to do her job is testament to the uniqueness and strength of Red Cross workers, as well as their dedication to their jobs.

Clearly, fourteen hour workdays, during which the women

170 All quotes from HDS to family, 15 June 1951, Meyner Papers.
constantly had to be "on," and dealing with soldiers, who were not only needy, but also selfish, cruel, and cowardly, created stressful situations. Yet the women chose to continue their work, as they considered their sacrifices small compared to those of the fighting men.\textsuperscript{171} As the investigation of Red Cross workers during World War II indicated, the women's unfailing strength and kindness were essential to soldier morale. However, the women of the Red Cross did not have the same emotional outlets and coping mechanisms as they provided for the soldiers. Except for the occasional week long Rest & Recreation visit to Japan, there were no formal provisions through which the women could unburden themselves in times of personal crisis.

However, ARC women and military men engaged in informal social relationships that served as coping mechanisms for both. Consideration of Helen's social life while in both Japan and Korea reveals the deeper relationships that developed between the Red Cross women and the men they

\textsuperscript{171}Despite the Red Cross workers' strains during the Viet Nam war, none of the cases Firestone and Robinson studied rejected their roles by quitting, though they were aware of other women who did. It does not appear that any ARC women in Korea quit their jobs.
served. While often considered an extension of their work, these relationships were symbiotic and were therapeutic for the women. These relationships allowed the women to shed some of the symbolic importance they wore during the day and become more compatriots in the war theater.

The ample nightlife offered in Japan played a part in Helen's active social life. Soon after she arrived, she went to "the main GI club...and I have never seen such a beautiful place. Room after room and swankier than any place I have ever seen in the states. I was overwhelmed." As there was "plenty of liquor and it is cheap," there was no reason not to indulge.

The "terrible scarcity of women," coupled with the reputation of Red Cross women as the "perennial 'Good Joe,'" insured Helen's active after hours schedule. She admitted that "almost anything that wears skirts" had an "excellent" social life, but her sense of obligation to attend the parties meant that "you never feel you can say no," even

172HDS to family, 8 November 1950, Meyner Papers.
173HDS to family, 8 November 1950, Meyner Papers.
174HDS to family, 23 January 1951, 19 February 1951, Meyner Papers.

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after a long day in the hospital.  \(^{175}\)

Helen easily distinguished her work life from her social life while in Japan. At the Special Services Club one evening Helen "danced about every dance known to mankind and with countless numbers of GIs," and holding "many sweating paws" in her right hand.  \(^{176}\) Though social in nature, this dance is work, something she is doing for the boys. Helen had no personal interest in the GIs, and each one, while important, was interchangeable with the next. Helen, to them, remained a symbol of home, an American girl with whom to dance. Interestingly, an evening out with a specific man or group of men after hours was a release for Helen, even if dancing was involved. She formed personal, off-duty relationships that helped her forget work.

Helen's social activities served as coping mechanisms. After fourteen hours with the patients, she wrote, "you just gotta take a couple of drinks to get feeling normal."  \(^{177}\) The women and men discussed "the war and the world situation for

\(^{175}\)HDS to family, 19 February 1951, Meyner Papers.

\(^{176}\)HDS to family, 4 December 1950, Meyner Papers.

\(^{177}\)HDS to family, 19 February 1951, Meyner Papers.
hours on end....We talk and argue and just go around in circles." The men and women gathered to address a world event that impacted their lives directly. Their shared experiences formed a basis for personal relationships. The women, as symbols of home and as inspirations for the GIs, would never be able to let their guards down when on the job. The literal relationships allowed them to do that.

As stated previously, the exigencies of war created situations in which traditional social mores were relaxed in regard to male-female relationships. Between November 1950 and January 1951, Helen dated Tom Moore, an officer who was "married and has a daughter" in the United States. Helen's honesty with her family regarding this issue, "which has become a new problem for me," indicates her conclusion after a great deal of consideration, that there was nothing wrong with spending time with a married man as long as the relationship "stays strictly on a 'pal' basis." She quoted her father's opinion that "it is the married man who

178HDS to family, 19 February 1951, Meyner Papers.
179HDS to family, 20 November 1950, Meyner Papers.
180HDS to family, 10 December 1950, Meyner Papers.
is the loneliest because he is the one used to having a woman around." The validation she needs for this personal relationship, interestingly, is tied to her role as a Red Cross recreational worker.

Tom's return to the United States prompted some philosophizing from Helen, in which she attempted to sort out the reality of her relationship and the conflict between her work and her personal life. She placed the onus of the relationship on Tom. She admitted that "in a strange sort of way he loved me." The possibility of loving someone you should not was "why wars and separations are so bad." Though in the her letter home she assures her family that she "never loved him but was so fond of him," her diary entry indicates that she "hated to see him go" and found herself "resenting his wife." While there is no indication that Helen and Tom ever had a sexual relationship, it is clear that Helen allowed herself to get

181 HDS to family, 10 December 1950, Meyner Papers.
182 HDS to family, 29 January 1951, Meyner Papers.
183 HDS to family, 29 January 1951, Meyner Papers.
184 HDS to family, 29 January 1951; HDS diary, 11 January 1951, Meyner Papers.
into a situation that could have been disastrous personally and professionally. The fact that her relationship was not sexual is perhaps indicative of the time.

Firestone and Robinson's article on the Red Cross women in Viet Nam reveals that there were sexual relationships between Red Cross women and soldiers, which were often emotionally meaningless and occurred because of the "life and death situation" they were in. They also identified incidences of what the women considered sexual harassment. Interestingly, but not surprisingly, a comparison between Helen's attitudes and behavior and those of women during the Viet Nam era indicate a strong differences in the social mores of each period.

While the therapeutic and personal color Helen's relationships in Japan, these elements only veil the reality of the situation. The availability of clubs, cheap liquor, and good bands facilitated the social relationships between Helen and her male friends. The atmosphere in Occupation Japan was conducive to a good time, which Helen could not easily resist. The deeper, therapeutic need for social

\[185\] "Enacting Traditional Roles," 55.
relationships between the Red Cross women and the men was considerably greater in Korea.

The off duty relationships between ARC women and the men in Korea were marked by a mutual need for release from their work. Often, their social lives were extensions of their work, but the women were able to relax and relieve some of their own stress. Helen addressed the issue of sexual relations, or a "love life," as she put it, and it appears that comradely relationships were more useful personally and professionally.

The women never forgot their status as Red Cross workers, as they were "watched every minute and if we were to spend our free time with one man the others wouldn't like it and we know it."\(^{186}\) The women had "many buddies, but no sweethearts," because they understood that the men did not necessarily love the women, as much as they loved what the women represented in wartime.\(^{187}\) There was also the problem of becoming "brass happy" or catching "officeritis." Helen, as well as most Red Cross women, were well aware of the

\(^{186}\)HDS to family, 20 November 1951, Meyner Papers.

\(^{187}\)HDS to family, 20 November 1951, Meyner Papers.
sensitive status relationships between soldiers and officers. The enlisted men were the real reason why the women were there, and they purposefully avoided spending too much time with officers, which would have alienated the soldiers. In Japan, when she was with Tom Moore, she always refused "to walk through the hospital...so afraid am I that one of the GI patients in the hospital will see me with an officer." Finally, Helen felt the effect of the postwar boom in marriages in Korea. She often commented that most of the officers were married, and that it was so bad she was going to call her book "I Knew Your Husband."  

The women, of course, were in high-demand because of the scarcity of female companionship, and they were "forever being called upon to go to parties....and the men want us to come so badly, and dead tired as we by the end of the day we usually go." They went for the men, as well as themselves. She indicated the more personal nature of her relationships, writing "You make friends fast over here and

188HDS to family, 10 December 1951, Meyner Papers.  
189HDS to family, 18 September 1951, Meyner Papers.  
190HDS to family, 22 April 1951, Meyner Papers.
get to know people so well." The war made them grow closer more quickly, yet she continued to emphasize the platonic nature of these relationships.

Personal tragedy, as well, was assuaged through her insistence on having "Buddies" and not getting "all emotionally involved with some guy." Several of Helen's close friends who were Air Force pilots died in combat missions. Though Helen insisted that she was "learning to be very philosophical about death," undoubtedly she needed a release and companionship in order to cope with her losses. As they men and women engaged in a buddy system, so to speak, each loss was felt by the entire group. Their mutual reliance on each other facilitated the mourning process and reinforced the belief that they were all in the war together.

Helen admitted in a letter home that "it would be better for us all if we didn't have so much" of a social

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191 HDS to family, 22 April 1951, Meyner Papers.
192 HDS to family, 30 April 1951, Meyner Papers.
193 HDS to family, 30 April 1951, 20 November 1951, Meyner Papers.
Men constantly "stream[ed] in and out" of the women's quarters, stopping by "just to talk." They would "drink beer and whiskey." "Our quarters are always full of people," she wrote. "We have gotten so that we literally throw people out at eleven but then there are the parties." The women were as anxious as the men to engage in social activity and to escape their work and the war.

Helen recounted numerous tales of gatherings in which liquor was a key component. Helen was close to a group of Marine pilots who visited the women after working hours "about once a week." After a Clubmobile run, the women "hurried home and all our Marine pilot friends from K1 arrived and we had a party." They had become "very close to these men," who always brought "beaucoup whiskey."

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194HDS to family, 22 May 1951, Meyner Papers.
195HDS to family, 30 April 1951, 22 April 1951, Meyner Papers.
196HDS to family, 30 April 1951, Meyner Papers.
197HDS to family, 22 May 1951, Meyner Papers.
198HDS to family, 15 June 1951, Meyner Papers.
199HDS to family, 15 June 1951, Meyner Papers.
200HDS to family, 15 June 1951, Meyner Papers.
Going through unorthodox channels, the men were able to procure the "impossible to get" whiskey to share with the women.\textsuperscript{201} She wrote that they "usually get quite rowdy but we sing and sing and really feel very gay and spirited after they leave."\textsuperscript{202} The combination of liquor and good friends helped alleviate their stress and helped them forget the war and their work.

Helen also spent time in the British Officers’ Club, where she and some of her male friends would "sit and drink warm British ale and sing and talk in the evenings" for hours.\textsuperscript{203} For a private party, Helen went through channels and got two cases of scotch for the event."\textsuperscript{204} At this particular "party to end all parties...we had a couple of fist fights and a full colonel passed out....It was a good party, believe me."\textsuperscript{204} Liquor helped alleviate the pressure and appeared to have been a staple in social relations in Korea.

Again, Donald Paul recalled the socializing that

\textsuperscript{201}HDS to family, 30 April 1951, Meyner Papers.
\textsuperscript{202}HDS to family, 30 April 1951, Meyner Papers.
\textsuperscript{203}HDS to family, 7 July 1951, Meyner Papers.
\textsuperscript{204}HDS to family, 18 September 1951, Meyner Papers.
occurred in Korea. On his return from working on the flight line, where he supervised the loading of ammunition on the aircraft, he noticed "there were always some officers' jeeps parked outside" the women's quarters. He recalled that "they always seemed to be having a good time in there...[and] there were always some empty booze bottles laying around outside the building."205 This is interesting because Mr. Paul was stationed at K2, outside of Taegu. Helen never worked at this air base, yet it appears that her letters paralleled the social experiences of the other ARC women stationed at different bases. This further reinforces the fact that Helen's experiences can be used as a model for those of ARC women in general.

Luckily, social engagements did not hinder Helen's ability or desire to do her job. Helen's capacity to separate her work from her social life is indicative of the two different types of relationships the ARC women had with the men. With no formal outlets or escapes from war, she established more personal relationships, and she considered

the men her "special friends," not merely soldiers or GIs.\textsuperscript{206}

While the presence of women in the war theater had a positive effect on the men with whom they socialized, much like it did on the enlisted personnel who frequented the clubs and Clubmobiles, the women undoubtedly benefitted emotionally and psychologically from these relationships. The playing field was leveled, so to speak, and the women could forget the images and symbols they represented and reassume their individual identities.

\textsuperscript{206}HDS to family, 18 September 1951, Meyner Papers.
Conclusion

As very little has been written about the participation of women within the war theater, scant evidence attesting to the importance and uniqueness of female ARC recreational workers is available. However, the similarities between Helen Stevenson's personal impressions and responses to her work with the Red Cross paralleled those experiences of the women from the World War II era. Helen's letters and diaries indicate more deeply the women's dedication to service and the importance of their presence to the men in a war theater.

Helen's vivid and often unabashed accounts of her professional and personal lives while in Japan and Korea provide original insights into aspects of wars and the lives of soldiers previously ignored. Most intriguing, perhaps, are the behavioral changes in the soldiers sent to fight the war. The presence of women elicited youthful, often juvenile responses in the men that allowed them to cope more easily with both the boredom and homesickness, as well as the daily life and death situations into which they were thrust.

The ARC women's roles transcended the prescribed use of
women as morale builders, as symbols of home and country, mother and sweetheart. While the relationships were symbolic in many ways, those that were personal reveal a dependency and mutuality between the men and women as played out in the traditionally all-male venue of war.

The combination of Helen's letters, her parent's ARC experiences, the writings of ARC women from World War II, the history and motivations of the organization, and the memories of only one Korean War veteran reinforce the validity of studying this topic. The work of the ARC women was unique, and its importance to the understanding of male-female relationships as played out in the war theater is obvious. This work, however, merely scratches the surface.

Further investigation can reveal the complexities of gender roles and relationships, the function of morale to the military, the roles of women in American society in general, and perhaps even new insights into the roles and behaviors of soldiers engaged in warfare. This topic abounds in historical and cultural richness and should not remain uninvestigated.
Epilogue

Helen continued to work for the American Red Cross upon her return from Korea in January 1952. She attended many fund raising events and spoke on behalf of the organization's work. She recounted stories from her own experiences that reinforced her belief that it "means so much to them just to see and to talk to an American girl."\textsuperscript{207} She recounted the story of one soldier who, upon helping Helen out of an aircraft, said he "didn't remember that the girls back home were so soft."\textsuperscript{208} Another soldier, she told audiences, walked "fifty miles to see us, and he was disgusted when he did," as he had traveled that far "to see a pair of American legs," and the girls had covered theirs with long pants.\textsuperscript{209} They rolled their pant legs up to make his trip worth while. Clearly, Helen believed very strongly in the organization, and in the value of female Red Cross recreational workers to morale of the fighting men.

\textsuperscript{207}Article from \textit{Greenwich Times}, 17 April 1952, in HDS scrapbooks, Meyner papers.

\textsuperscript{208}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{209}Article from \textit{Baltimore Sun}, 24 November 1952, in HDS scrapbooks, Meyner papers.
Helen also continued to work directly with soldiers after her return to the states. She served at Camp Breckenridge, Kentucky until September 1952, and then at a military hospital in Philadelphia. She resigned from the American Red Cross in January 1953.

Helen worked as a guide for the United Nations until late 1953, when she obtained a position with Trans World Airlines. Helen worked as the company’s national Consumer Advocate, under the name "Mary Gordon." In 1955, she resigned from Trans World to work on the last presidential campaign of her distant cousin, Adlai Stevenson.

Helen married Robert Baumle Meyner, Governor of New Jersey, in January 1957. Establishing their residence in Princeton, Helen served as First Lady of the state until the end of Bob’s second term, in 1962. The couple was eager to start a family, and after four years of fertility treatment, Helen became pregnant in 1969. Unfortunately, a son was stillborn in February 1970, and the couple remained childless.

Following her husband’s death in 1990, Helen relocated to Captiva Island, Florida. She and her family established the Robert B. Meyner and Helen S. Meyner Center for the
Study of State and Local Government at her husband's alma mater, Lafayette College, Easton, Pa.

After a long illness, Helen Stevenson Meyner passed away on 2 November 1997. She was sixty-nine years of age.\textsuperscript{210}

\textsuperscript{210}All biographical information above can be found in Meyner papers, Stevenson papers, and Obituaries, New York Times, 3 November 1997.
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<td>ANRC</td>
<td>American National Red Cross</td>
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<td>ARC</td>
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<td>Eleanor Bumstead Stevenson</td>
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<td>EUSAK</td>
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In June 1991, Ms. Stewart received a bachelor of arts degree from Lafayette College, Easton, Pa., where she majored in American Studies and English.

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END OF TITLE