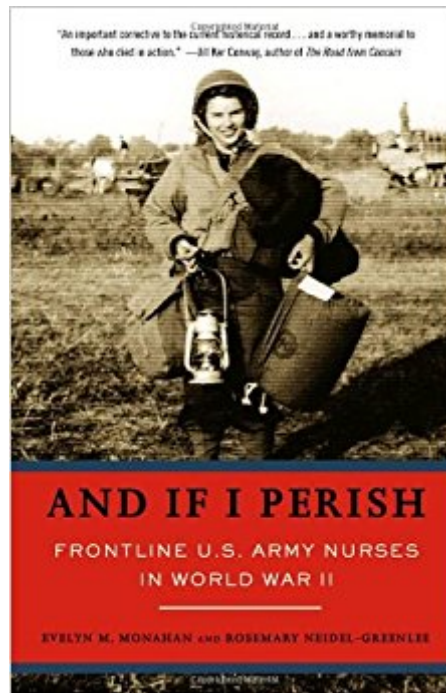




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And If I Perish: Frontline U.S. Army Nurses In World War II



Synopsis

In World War II, 59,000 women voluntarily risked their lives for their country as U.S. Army nurses. When the war began, some of them had so little idea of what to expect that they packed party dresses; but the reality of service quickly caught up with them, whether they waded through the water in the historic landings on North African and Normandy beaches, or worked around the clock in hospital tents on the Italian front as bombs fell all around them. For more than half a century these women's experiences remained untold, almost without reference in books, historical societies, or military archives. After years of research and hundreds of hours of interviews, Evelyn M. Monahan and Rosemary Neidel-Greenlee have created a dramatic narrative that at last brings to light the critical role that women played throughout the war. From the North African and Italian Campaigns to the Liberation of France and the Conquest of Germany, U.S. Army nurses rose to the demands of war on the frontlines with grit, humor, and great heroism. A long overdue work of history, *And If I Perish* is also a powerful tribute to these women and their inspiring legacy.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee, two former military nurses who have co-written previous books about American nurses in World War II Japan and Albania, have collaborated again to produce this popular account of the Army nurses who served in the war against Germany. Based on interviews, correspondence and diaries, as well as on published sources and archival material, this book employs a descriptive, matter of fact style that makes a nice foil to its vivid use of reconstructed dialogue and primary source quotations. Though the book is divided into chapters that recount

individual campaigns (e.g. "Chapter 5: Nurses in the Sicilian Campaign," "Chapter 6: The Sinking of the HMHS Newfoundland"), Monahan and Neidel-Greenlee do follow the experiences of several nurses throughout their history, bringing a narrative cohesion to what might have otherwise been a fragmented series of anecdotes. Particularly fascinating are their graphic descriptions of medical conditions, like gangrene and malaria, and of hospital procedures, such as the then-cutting-edge operation of transfusing whole blood into wounded soldiers. Though the extensive background material explaining battles and campaigns can sometimes threaten to swamp the narrative, overall this volume provides a valuable account of an often-neglected historical topic: the frontline experience of the women of the Greatest Generation. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Their valor was unrivaled, their patriotism undeniable, but their contribution to the war effort was largely unacknowledged. Long before there were women in the military, flying sorties and commanding tanks as they do today, there were women in combat zones: more than 59,000 voluntarily served their country as U.S. Army nurses during World War II. Yet their story has seldom been told, for no veterans groups nor military bureaucracy ever claimed them. Witness to the abominations of the war's most gruesome battles, from the D-Day invasion of North Africa to the triumphant V-E Day defeat of Nazi Germany, they endured the horrors of the battlefield alongside their GI counterparts, eluding death by sheer luck and split-second timing. Forced to work under primitive conditions with insufficient supplies, they nonetheless tended soldiers' physical and psychological injuries with unflagging grace and unwavering dedication. Battle by battle, in vivid, newsreel-like fashion, the authors dramatically portray the heroic efforts of courageous women who experienced the war at its most horrific and heartrending levels. Carol HaggasCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Absolutely superb book. I was amazed to read how the US did not have nursing staff at the beginning of the war. As an RN, a truly inspiring story of what nurses can and will do to give their patients the care they need, even under such horrific conditions. But the nurse were treated as second class service people, with their "pseudo" rank. I could not put the book down. Every nurse should read this. The British have had the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corp (Nursing Sisters) in place as part of the frontline care. The Americans soon caught up. These nurses deserve such a well researched book that is never boring. As a WWII survivor from England and a nurse, I

felt privileged to belong to a profession that produced such amazing women. Notice I did not say men; men were not allowed to be active nurses until after WWII. Field Marshall Montgomery said the nurses were the biggest and best morale boosters for injured soldiers.

Detailed, inspiring, sometimes chilling tale of how young American nurses, most with no military experience, dove into the thick of battle in WWII, and played key roles in saving our soldiers' lives. The women are allowed to tell their own stories in many places, with humor and humility. It can be hard to keep straight the many numbered medical units, battles, and locales, but if one just reads on, everything becomes clearer. The story is not for the faint of heart or weak of stomach; battle injuries, bodies, blood, and decay are described frankly. But the reader should come away impressed by and grateful for the nurses' accomplishments, endurance, and bravery in the face of death. Even the worst depictions in the TV show "MASH" did not come close to showing how tough war can be in the medical units.

My beloved Aunt Rita Murphy was a nurse in WWII and received a Silver Star for the Battle of the Bulge. The courage of the Nurses in WWII, along with the need for them to make do with what they had describes Aunt Rita to a T. Imagine her shock when she is in triage and looks down and discovers one of her brothers. This story is beautifully told. I've always said that if I had half of her tenacity, then I'm good. Following the war, she was in charge of the ER and OR in Richland, Washington....where one of the nuclear components for the atomic bomb was made. She took care of McCluskey after one of the gll've boxes he was working in blew up. She was a nurses nurse and I miss her terribly. Thank you for telling the Nurse's stories

Awesome book, I also gave it to my Mother for her 91st birthday. It arrived a few days after "A half Acre of Hell" and was the perfect follow up. It has the stories of many Army nurses and has a more global view. Fascinating page-turner it does not pull any punches. Horrifying and fascinating at the same time. Still working my way through it as is dense, exhausting and never dull.

A thoroughly researched book about the battles of WWII - from northern Africa, to Anzio, Mt.Cassino, southern France, Normandy, the Ardennes Forest, Dachau and Germany. One can only admire the women who served the troops (sometimes so ill-equipped), and nursed those who suffered such horrific injuries. The "greatest generation" is so apt for these U.S. Army nurses and the brave men who endured so much in the name of freedom. The book helps us to be better informed and more

appreciative of these wonderful, dedicated and giving women. Their service went far "beyond the call of duty." It's a pity that our government was so belated in its appreciation and recognition of the services of 59,000+ women who served in WWII!

At last, the story of American military nurses who served our country during WW II is being told. This is an amazing account of the critical work these U.S. Army Nurse Corps women performed throughout the European and North African battles of WW II. Their selfless contributions to saving the lives of American and Allied troops have never been described as vividly or as accurately. They worked under unbelievable conditions on or near the front lines, waded ashore under fire with the allied soldiers in the landings in North Africa, at Anzio, and 2 days after D-Day at Normandy, kept their hospitals running and cared for the thousands of sick and wounded, assisted in the OR as bombs exploded and shrapnel flew--often for two or three days with scarcely an hour's break every 12 or 16 hours. Many of these nurses were wounded and significant numbers were killed in action, as well. And all this was done with little acknowledgement of these women by the U.S. government. As women, they were ranked as "relative" officers (mostly 2nd lieutenants and for the duration of the war, only) at half the pay and almost none of the benefits of a regular equivalent male army officer. On return to the U.S. after the war, they were almost completely ignored by the V.A. and by the military. I found this book fascinating and almost impossible to put down. Having served as a nurse in Vietnam during the height of the war, I especially appreciate the detail provided in this book, which includes stories of individual nurses as well as several different unit/organizational hospitals and surgical teams. I now understand how little appreciation or recognition they received and am deeply saddened that many/most of them are now gone and that it is too late for us to tell them how grateful we are for their amazing service and contributions. Everyone should read this book to gain a better historical perspective of World War II and the American nurses who did so much to help us win and end that horrible war. M. Mullin

excellent and informative book. I was fascinated to learn the extent of involvement of the nurses in ww2. History has never done this justice. They were under the same horrible conditions as the men and never got the credit for it.

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