Army Nurse Writes Lack of Sleep Biggest Problem

"I often think of our calm black-outs at home, and compare them to our nights spent in foxholes with the guns going off continuously, and the drone of planes overhead," writes plucky Capt Elizabeth Hay of Hampton, N.H., who, at 42, is probably the oldest nurse to serve on the American invasion front. She is the wife of James E. Hay, president of the James E. Hay Leather Company of Lowell, and has served in the New England Hospital for Women and Children in Roxbury, before joining the Army a year ago.

"I have learned to sleep in naps between the serenade of heavy artillery," writes Capt Hay, in her cheery letters home. "I have learned to love my helmet, and treat it as my best friend." Capt Hay is constantly on the move, being in charge of three hospitals which follow closely behind the front lines. She is kept busy, too, for in two rooms seven operating tables are in use constantly.

For a brief interval, Capt Hay was stationed in a Normandy castle near St. Max-Egle. She compared the rolling countryside to updated New Hampshire, but the war-wrecked villages marked a tragic difference. As a special treat, Capt Hay, with 11 New England nurses, cooked a breakfast of canned ham and eggs, and insisted that she was not starving, although the inevitable K rations became tedious.

Aside from keeping clean—a feat that is accomplished with cold water dumped into a helmet—sleep or the lack of it is the greatest problem. "I am so glad that I sleep with my lipstick," said one nurse jokingly. "At least it goes on easier when it is warm."

All that Capt Hay desires at the present moment is food and clothes, are six brown hair nets, curlers and hubby pin. She is grateful for being able to serve in the invasion, and writes, "Morale is good, but we certainly don't look like glamour girls!"

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