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Catholic Physicians' Guild

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FLYING HOSPITALS EVACUATE 30,000
Giders With Operating Rooms Also Will be Used by Army

Helicopters equipped with litters for the evacuation of our wounded from inaccessible spots on far-flung battlefields are nearly ready for our troops, poised to invade Axis-dominated lands, it was revealed recently at the annual meeting of the house of delegates of the American Medical Association by Brig. Gen. David N. W. Grant, air surgeon, Army Air Forces.

Whereas until now the helicopter could carry only one pilot, the Army-designed helicopter-hospital will be equipped to carry two litters in addition to the pilot and medical personnel, General Grant said. Furthermore, the problem of the four-litter helicopter is "pretty well licked," General Grant added.

The helicopter can manoeuvre better than any other plane that can attack them, though they are not as speedy, General Grant pointed out.

Another revolutionary departure in war medicine described by the air surgeon is the development of gliders equipped with operating rooms. These could land on any air field, General Grant said. They are not yet in use, however.

The tremendous role played by the airplane in bringing medical aid was illustrated by General Grant when he told of the recent shipment by air of a fully equipped twenty-five-bed hospital to Nome, Alaska, after a hospital there was destroyed by fire. He also told of the air transport of two tons of sulfanilamide and large quantities of disinfectants to China in ten days from an eastern area.

One of the most important things now being done in medical aviation, General Grant said, is the training of air evacuation units. Each unit consists of five doctors, twenty-five specially trained nurses, and nineteen enlisted men trained as "surgical technicians."

ONLY TWO OF 30,000 LOST

The Army Air Forces, he stated, have flown 30,000 wounded men from all theatres of war with the loss of only two in transit. The seriously wounded receive treatment on the plane. This includes the administration of plasma and of oxygen.

So far, General Grant disclosed, we have not been using special hospital planes. Instead, all transport planes that deliver supplies to the front are converted on their return trip into temporary flying hospitals for evacuating the wounded. Specially designed flying hospitals, however, are now being built, he added.

Special air evacuation units, he added, are being formed at the field, Louisville, Ky.

The Air Forces are also deve-
opining a new idea in hospitalization, General Grant revealed—the use of the hospitals as schools for convalescents. The patients, when recovering, are given interesting studies and light exercises under instructors, the work depending on the patient’s degree of recovery.

At present, he stated, Air Force physicians are using the school idea to train men who are temporarily invalided by illness from the regular air training course. This treatment fills in valuable hours with courses pertinent to their training and also has reduced the number of men who had to return to the hospital because resumption of training jarred them into a relapse.—New York Times.

MEDICAL CLIPPINGS

ANTI-INFLUENZA WEAPON—Inhalation of immune serum sprayed from an atomizer may be of use against influenza before and after an attack. So says Commander Albert P. Krueger, at the University of California, director of the Naval Laboratory Research Unit No. 1. Treatment with the immune serum was effective in mice when given as long as forty-eight hours after the mice got influenza. Repeated treatments twenty-four hours apart were significantly more effective than one treatment.

NEW SULFA DRUG—Phthalysulfathiazole has been introduced by Dr. Edgar J. Poth and Dr. Charles A. Ross (University of Texas Medical School) to the Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics. It promises to be a more potent weapon against intestinal infections, such as dysentery, than other sulfa drugs. It has two to four times the germ-checking power of succinylsulfathiazole. Doses by mouth at four-hour intervals have not caused any toxic symptoms in dog or man.

NEW PREGNANCY TEST—A new pregnancy test that works with 97 per cent accuracy was demonstrated by Drs. Udall J. Salmon, Samuel H. Geist, Charles S. Poole and A. Austin Salmon of Mount Sinai Hospital, New York City, at last week’s meeting of the New York State Medical Society. Older pregnancy tests required from forty-eight to ninety-six hours; this one only two hours. The new test is made with rats instead of rabbits, since the latter now bring $3.50 because they are wanted for meat. Rats cost only 40 to 60 cents apiece, and there is no shortage. In the test the urine of a pregnant woman is injected into an infant rat. The blood vessels in the rat’s ovaries enlarge within two hours. The new test has been used in 948 cases.—New York Times.