



Nurses marching, Fort Custer 1942



# RECRUITMENT, STAFFING, & TRAINING

In July 1940, Dr. Michael Mason began to recruit Northwestern campus doctors and other Chicago colleagues for the 12<sup>th</sup> General Hospital. While initial responses to recruitment efforts were muted, several medical officers volunteered following the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Chief Nurse Katherine Baltz recruited 96 nurses in a mere three weeks. Every Army nurse had to be a member of the American Red Cross, under the age of 40, single, a U. S. citizen, a graduate of an accredited school of nursing, and able to comply with Army physical standards. These doctors and nurses, along with enlisted men, Red Cross employees, prisoners-of-war, and local staff teamed together to treat more than 29,799 patients over the course of the War.



Shelter-tent pitching drill, Fort Custer 1942



Above: Making sidewalks, Fort Benjamin Harrison 1942

Below: Recruitment letter, 1942

Civilian practitioners were transformed into military medical personnel at three locations: Fort Custer (Michigan), Fort Benjamin Harrison (Indiana), and Camp Kilmer (New Jersey). Staff preparations for deployment included ordering supplies, receiving inoculations, executing drills, attending lectures, viewing War Department films, and working at local Army medical facilities. The time spent preparing also fostered group bonding.

Michael L. Mason  
Erie St.  
Chicago, Ill.

Dear Dr. Mason:

This letter is to make a further record of my desire to be admitted into the Northwestern U. Hospital Unit as an officer in surgery. I have discussed this with you personally at your office about a year ago and recently conversed with you about it over the telephone-- a few days ago.

I will appreciate your effort to have me admitted to the unit.

Yours sincerely,

Ernest D. Bloomenthal  
Ernest D. Bloomenthal, M.D.