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By Charles E. Folsom

Right up in the front row overlooking the parade of war,  
~~are the last girls to wave good bye as the soldiers go overseas, their~~  
~~number growing - as more and more women pay for these choice seats in the~~  
~~good coin of hard work to speed men and munitions through the Boston Port~~  
of Embarkation.

These devoted women are no mere spectators. They are a part of the show whether in the offices or out doing a man's job. A press tour around the ship and rail terminal, through the vast warehouses, shops, wharf and pier sheds, disclosed what an industrious crew they are. It was easy to understand the enthusiasm of their commander, Brigadier General C. H. Kells, who likes their work and wants more of them, to relase men for sterner duties.

Here is thrill aplenty for the girls, the excitement of sending transport or cargo ships away on time, preparing the shipping lists, making equipment storm proof and bringing up sling loads of goods for ship's booms to hoist into place. An acre of girls keep typewriters clicking, platoons of them charge at freight trains and whisk supplies away on chisel trucks, to stack them up with the fork lift for future shipment.

The heavy vehicles used in battle are piloted through the bustling traffic of the great Port of Embarkation by whisps of girls. Soldiers

who later will fight with these machines would appreciate the experienced skill of these girl drivers. Their ability comes the hard way, step by step in learning how to handle rolling war equipment without a mishap.

Actually the women workers are greatly outnumbered by the men and compose about 30 percent of the civilian force. ~~There are none of them at Camp Donald McKay, housing unit for troops of the Transportation Corps under training for service in handling war cargo at overseas combat ports.~~ They are much in evidence at <sup>the</sup> railhead garage in Roxbury, at the automotive shop near the army base where vehicles are packaged with wooden shields, waterproofing and paint, ~~at Castle Island~~ and at the tremendous pier and supply base that juts out into the harbor.

The Port of Embarkation is built around this great facility built during the first World war at a cost of \$23,800,000, comprising an eight story warehouse and two story wharf shed, each about a third of a mile long, together with three story pier sheds, public service buildings and rail trackage.

Vast as this initial unit was, needs of expansion for war activities on every continent led to new construction ~~at Castle Island,~~ materially increasing berthing facilities for ships, providing temporary storage for cargo in transit sheds, trackage for a railroad terminal and miscellaneous other buildings for operation and administration.

And this is but a part of the picture. Properties have been leased, various commercial piers in Boston harbor, schools for quartering troops stationed here for training, undeveloped land for transit storage of boxed cargo. ~~Staging areas have been built. Camp McKay has been raised on the Cow Pasture, a wholly self-contained unit that bloomed in the short space of a few weeks since the last hardy bathers quit Carson Beach on the opposite shore.~~

As a link in the army's youngest service, the Transportation Corps, the Boston Port of Embarkation is a sort of mammoth ferry slip connected with similar installations the world around. Added importance above and beyond feeding the war machine with material things, has been given in routing letters and Christmas gifts from loved ones to their service men overseas through the Port of Embarkation. ~~This honor it now shares with New York, to speed the precious missives of faith and encouragement to the front line fighters.~~

Were the War Department to decide to ship an infantry division through the Boston Port of Embarkation it would require 65 trains, a total of 1338 cars, to roll the division onto the South Boston pierhead. For an armored division it would require 15 Liberty Ships for the equipment alone in addition to transports for troops.

But the mission of the Transportation Corps is constant, having to do with the movement of all War Department rail, highway and ocean traffic. The organized troop movement requires the continuous use of half of all the Pullman cars and a quarter of all the railroad coaches in the United States. This is the programme in which the Boston Port of Embarkation is integrated.

Floating derricks lay in the stream alongside cargo ships. Barges are moved up by tugs and the cranes steadily hoist equipment aboard. From the pier side other cargo is loaded. So smoothly and rapidly do these crews operate that a ship gradually settles in the water before your eyes.

Women drivers tooling tow tractors to draw other vehicles up to waiting ships, wind through the traffic lanes on the pier, keeping up with army locomotives which are switching cars ceaselessly back and forth.

There are women with paint brushes and spray guns, girls with hair securely folded under cloth hats who climb in and under automobiles as grease monkeys. The mystery is how neat and tidy these girls in slacks manage to keep themselves. Smudges and goo would cover the average man in no time.

Take, for example, Mrs. Theresa F. McCarthy, revealed <sup>an Army shop</sup> hard at work at ~~the Forsyth~~ garage. She is 24, lives at 54 Weld Hill Street, Forest Hills and is backing up two men in service, her husband Coxswain Lawrence S. McCarthy, somewhere with the Navy in the Pacific, and her brother, Fireman, 1st class, Anthony Cataldo, also with the Navy.

To qualify for her work she took the automotive course at the Brighton High School. The motor vehicles arrive direct from the factory and are unloaded from the railroad siding, direct from flat cars and box cars to the service garage. One of these claimed Mrs. McCarthy's attention. She had to grease it, inspect the battery, oil, anti-freeze, tires, wheels and in short make certain it was ready and in perfect condition for immediate service. She was high up, astraddle of a big engine, pumping grease in with a force gun. It looked like fun and must have been, for she said with a smile, "I love it."

All tools are packaged and securely fastened to vehicles with bolt and strap. Then they are ready for preparing for shipment. Miss Ethel Smith, 22, of 16 Piggott Road, Medford Hillside, was the temporary skipper of such a vehicle, in this instance a 7-ton amphibious "duck." She studied 10 weeks for her job and now feels on a par with her fiance of a year, Master Sergeant Neal C. Matchett, a Boston boy now overseas.

Men workers team up fine with the girls for there isn't a laggard among them. They are earnest and do not spare themselves at the hard work. For it they are adequately paid, 80 cents an hour and well worth it, the

shop officer, ~~Captain~~ Black, averred. This amounts \$41.60 a week, counting in the eight hours overtime on Saturday for which they receive time and a half.

Heroes of the girls are four overseas veterans of this war, honorably discharged and employed as civilians. Wives, sisters and others of service men are included. The list includes Mrs. Vesta K. Uloth, 48, of 166 Mountain Avenue, Malden, mother of Corporal Charles C. Uloth, in training at Fort Benning, Ga., who is chief dispatcher.

Mrs. Eileen Twomey, 30, of 42 Regent Street, Roxbury, is a clerk-typist in the parts department, wife of Private Joseph P. Twomey, now at Fort Eustis, Va. Miss Helen DeAngelis, 30, of 23 Beachview Road, East Boston, is a parts requisition clerk. Her brother Robert is at naval officer candidate school and her brother-in-law Francis Sherwin is a chief petty officer two years overseas with the navy.

Mrs. Helen R. Shomsky, 27, of 59 Lodge Street, Milton, a stock record clerk, is the wife of Private, 1st class, Michael R. Shomsky, attending radio school at Sioux Falls, S.D. Mrs. Frances Brickett, 41, of 44 Cranston Street, Jamaica Plain, driver and parts runner, has four children as her personal stake in the war.

Out on the army base pier, businesslike with her tally sheets checking cargo, was Miss Margaret Kane, of 140 Calumet Street Roxbury. Practically in disguise was a Back Bay deb, Miss Barbara Paine, of 18 Charles River square, who confessed to 106 pounds, which she demonstrated was quite adequate to the job of easing a 4-ton truck into the desired space.

Numbers assigned at Washington give individual identity to each wheeled vehicle. This number is the only sign not painted out in the final processing for shipment. In this garage, right at the portal to

the piers, all vehicles are "killed." Women convoy drivers bring them in, 10-ton wreckers, heavy cargo trucks or whatever is ready.

They draw off the gasoline, disconnect batteries, circulate rust preventative through motors. A girl with a spray nozzle covers the motor and wiring with a waterproofing plastic which stays on permanently and will permit the engine to run, even under water. Doors are sealed and even exhaust pipes. Radiators are protected with a plywood shield to keep out moisture. All glass is covered.

Girls wind adhesive tape around exposed parts, such as breather, starter, generator, carburetor, magneto or gas pump. Over all goes the paint. Salt seas breaking over a vehicle thus protected cause no damage. After doing 75 percent of this work the women turn the vehicles over to the tow car girls who haul them to the waterside.

A year ago there were no women in the transportation division other than as clerks. Now they are everywhere, including 13 percent of the "tallymen" and 37 percent of the tractor operators. Girls driving the chisel trucks make play of their work. Supplies are unloaded from freight cars or highway trucks onto wooden frames, of "pallets", into which the two horizontal arms of the fork lift fit and permit raising of a ton of stacked cartons at a time.

A partial roster of women workers is like a cross section of war. In <sup>one plant</sup> ~~the D Street~~ garage is Miss Margaret Tirone, of 134 Marion Street, East Boston, with three brothers in the army, First Lieutenant John J. Tirone and Private Carl C. Tirone, both of the Air Corps and Private Louis J. Tirone of the infantry. Mrs. Marie Shippee, of 87 St. Stephens Street, lost her only brother, Andrew Joseph McLaughlin, in air combat over Italy a year ago. Her son, First Lieutenant John H. Shippee is at Maxwell Field.

Miss Marguerite Larkin, of 26 Upland Road, Brookline, is waiting to wed First Sergeant John O'Brien on his return from ~~New Guinea~~ <sup>overseas</sup> where he has been 18 months, and he has had a letter a day all this time from her. Her brother Christopher is ~~in Sicily~~ <sup>also overseas</sup>. The sisters Margaret and Connie Petrillo, of 147 Webster Street, East Boston, have a navy brother at Bar Harbor, both have army boy friends, Margaret's in England and Connie's in Tennessee.

Mrs. Margaret Weaver, of 582 McGrath Highway, Somerville, saw her husband off to war two years ago. He has been in Africa 15 months with the Sea Bees. A brother is in the army and another in the merchant marine. Miss Ethel Sematones, of 68 Hancock Street, Dorchester, Miss Josephine Feeney, of 97 Richdale Avenue, Cambridge and Mrs. Helen Berg, of 51 Exchange Street, Lawrence, each has brothers in service.

Sisters of service men include Miss Lillian Cullen, of 382 McGrath Highway, Somerville, Miss Rita Furlong, of 8 Newhall Street, Malden, Miss Catherine White, of 16 Home Street, Malden, Miss Anna Kelly, of 36 Whitney Street, Roxbury, and Miss Catherine Donahue, of 208 Brookline Street, Cambridge. Mrs. Ida Mullan, of 150 Pearl Street, has an army son training in South Carolina.

As blood donors, Red Cross workers and at their army jobs they all keep very busy. For many it was the first work they ever did and they get a thrill in doing it. This they are agreed on.

There are 1,600 women on the classified civil service list at the Port of Embarkation. The girls declare it's impossible to get a word out of any one of them, off the job. ~~There has been no mention bruited about, of such a harmless subject as "International Fill," which in years to come will be a favorite spot for sightseers.~~

The "Fill" is a spot at the Castle Island installation, where land has been made over the tidal flats with dirt brought from the four corners of the earth. It is carried as ballast in the holds of cargo ships returning for more war supplies. Every continent contributes its share of soil, which is discharged upon arrival.

~~With spring, landscaping already started at Castle Island will be extended, Camp McKay will have its fringe of shrubs and trees to blunt some of the summer heat. They hope to have the whole place blooming when the boys start<sup>t</sup> coming home from war. Arrangements are already under way for receiving incoming troops, who will trickle back even before the flood tide starts. A delousing station has been constructed. Many plans are under way.~~

General Kells, commanding such vast affairs as pertain to the Port of Embarkation, is sold on the natural advantages of Boston's harbor, its deep water, safe anchorage, proximity to European ports and its easy accessibility by rail, plane and highway to industrial New England.

He paid tribute to the women workers, declaring they are so immersed in their war service that they have no time left over for social life scarcely. Telephone operators, clerks, machine operators, they all love their work, he said. "We can use more women in both kinds of jobs, office administrative workers and the skilled women who take over a man's job. We need them to release men. The time may come when we may use them on transports, to do cooking and jobs they can do better than men," he declared.

If there ever was a <sup>u</sup>business that has to be 100 percent perfect, it is the operation of the Port of Embarkation. Every man and bit of equipment on every ship has to be accounted for with strict accuracy. Every letter, every invoice, all must<sup>be</sup> exactly right. Producing this perfection gives the Port of Embarkation an atmosphere of supreme confidence in victory.