

NOT FOR PUBLICATION, BROADCAST IN OVERSEAS BULLETINS OR USE ON CLUB TAPES BEFORE 23.30 B.S.T. ON SATURDAY DECEMBER 25, 1943
NOT TO BE BROADCAST IN THE MIDNIGHT NEWS OF DECEMBER 25/26
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WARD BY NIGHT

By an Army Chaplain in the Middle East

In a great hospital so many people work really hard without getting any praise or publicity. Everybody knows about the doctors, surgeons and nurses, and they deserve all the kudos they can get, but who ever thinks about the cooks, clerks, sanitary men, orderlies, store-keepers, post corporals, electricians, barbers, engineers, or even chaplains? Not that they ask for limelight.

Take the case of a night orderly whom we will call "Charlie". He is not very romantic and not at all soldierly. He wears slacks, gym shoes, a pullover when it's cold, and he has a ragged moustache and a slightly bald head. Very English he is. Quiet, and quick on his feet when men call "Orderly" He gets no dances or dinners or rides in Jeeps. Charlie may be talking to you in the Rest Room and then he just isn't there he was wanted in the ward.

You've all seen a hospital ward by day. At night it's different, quiet and rather mysterious. Out here in North Africa it looks like a vast nursery, with muslin-curtained cots! Mosquito nets to cover these grown-up children, so helpless. "Charlie" is there, with a lantern that gives a soft yellow gleam. "Get me a bottle, Charlie" "Help me Charlie, my leg hurts." "Some water, Charlie."

Everybody in need calls for "Charlie". And "Charlie" is there to aid them every night.

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