

MAN WHO SAVED MANY LIVES HAS DIED IN SERVICE

Dr. Norman Bethune Succumbs of Blood Poisoning in China

Romantic Career Marked By High Endeavour—Relatives in Hamilton

(By Ted Farah, Canadian Press Staff Writer)

Toronto, Nov. 27. — (CP) — In strange places there was mourning to-day for Dr. Norman Bethune, the picturesque Canadian surgeon who saved hundreds of lives on foreign battle-

grounds with his famous blood transfusion service and died of blood poisoning while ministering to the Chinese 8th route army in far-off Shansi province. A cable from China received during the week-end said Dr. Bethune died in Wupai-shan of an infection received after he cut himself with a surgical instrument while operating. His age was 49.

An intimate friend here, who went through the Spanish Civil war with Dr. Bethune, on learning what happened, said: "It's just like him to cut himself and not bother to sterilize it."

Dr. Bethune's best friends were not those you might expect for a brilliant surgeon.

Children Saddened

Boys and girls in Montreal who extended their means of self-expression at the children's art centre he founded and equipped, were saddened at the passing of the man with the iron-grey hair, the sideburns and piercing eyes who was so happy in their presence.

Soldiers of the first Great War, the Spanish Civil war and the Sino-Japanese conflict who owe their lives to his surgical skill had reason

for sorrow.

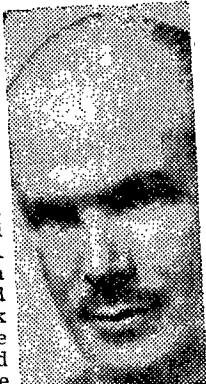
Dr. Bethune resigned a couple of important posts in Montreal at the outbreak of the Franco revolt and made medical history by organizing a blood transfusion service operating with blood that was bottled, sent to points near active fronts and preserved in refrigerators for periods up to two weeks for emergency use. Lives of hundreds of soldiers who might have died of shock were saved by prompt availability of blood for transfusion, which could not otherwise have been obtained in time to be of value. The same principle is being developed for use in the second Great War.

Was Anti-Fascist

Militantly anti-fascist, Dr. Bethune made little effort to be popular with his co-workers.

When he was appointed chief of the division of thoracic surgery at Sacre Couer hospital in Montreal, he spoke no French and 22 doctors and nurses in his department spoke virtually no English. At the end of two years Dr. Bethune still was unable to speak French, but the 22 members of his staff all spoke English.

Dr. Bethune claimed he had no flair for languages. In Spain, when he worked with foreign doctors, he communicated with them through



Dr. Norman Bethune, F.R.S.C. (Eng.)

signs or interpreters until they learned English.

"If they want to talk to me, they'll have to learn English," he said.

It is not known definitely, but presumably he followed this same policy in China, where he went early in 1938 to establish a medical mission under the sponsorship of the American League for Peace and Democracy. He was accompanied to China by Nurse Jean Ewen, of Winnipeg.

Noted Inventor

Several months ago he was reported missing, but turned up safely and it developed he had simply been out of communication with his base.

Dr. Bethune was a surgeon considerably more than ordinary. He was inventor of several surgical instruments which to-day are widely used. At one time, he practised fancy needlework to develop the dexterity of his fingers.

When this reporter met Dr. Bethune in the summer of 1937 in Paris, he was on a furlough from Spain. Friends said his nerve were bothering him and he needed a rest. Dr. Bethune indicated during a day of loafing at sidewalk cafes and attending the French tennis championships, that everything was running smoothly with the "blood trust" in Madrid and he was itching to move on to something new. He was restless unless some problem absorbed all his energy.

His adventurous spirit was indicated by the story he told of being the first Canadian soldier to visit Paris. He went overseas as a stretcher-bearer in the first Canadian contingent, took French leave

almost upon arrival and headed for Paris. He was there for a couple of days, spent all his money and took six more days making his way back to camp.

Family of Physicians

Dr. Bethune's ancestors were hereditary physicians to Lords of the Isles (Skye). His grandfather was a prominent Toronto surgeon. Dr. Bethune was born at Gravenhurst, Ont., son of Rev. Malcolm Nicholson Bethune, Presbyterian minister.

He studied medicine at the University of Toronto, went overseas before his course was completed, but was wounded at Ypres in 1915 and returned to be graduated in the spring of 1916. He then enlisted in the Royal Navy and served until the armistice as surgeon-lieutenant aboard H.M.S. Pegasus. He was appointed provincial medical officer of the Royal Canadian Air Force in 1920. He later went to Edinburgh university, obtained his F.R.C.S., studied in Vienna and returned to Canada in 1924.

He suffered a breakdown in 1926 and, because he had a lung condition, he studied thoracic surgery and became a specialist. He also treated himself successfully.

He was a member of the council of the American Association of Thoracic surgery and author of more than a score of articles which appeared in medical journals. He married once and was divorced.

Dr. Bethune was last in Hamilton visiting his mother, Mrs. E. A. Bethune, at her home, 515 Dundurn street south, on June 14, 1937. At that time he had just returned from Spain. Other immediate relatives who survive him are his brother, Malcolm G., manager of the Sovereign Life Assurance company, who lives with his mother, and a sister, Mrs. T. K. Styles, of Kitchener.