

# HOW THE HERCULES POWDER COMPANY MANS ITS OWN — POST —

One of the most unique posts of the Ground Observer Corps of the I Fighter Command is that built and manned by the Hercules Powder Company in Morris County, New Jersey, where armed guards of the company's special police force maintain a continuous vigil from the catwalk of a 50-foot glass-enclosed tower.

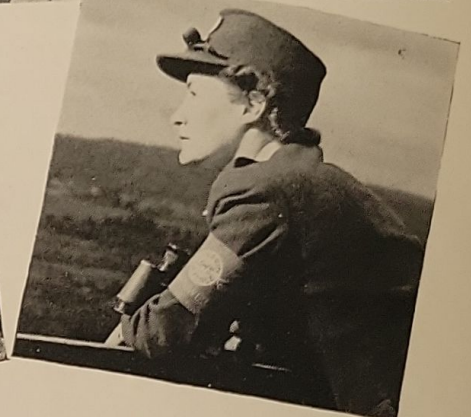
Unbroken rows of gold stars adorn the post's rating chart, for this unit of the Ground Observer Corps has never been unattended since its establishment in September, 1942.

Let's let Major J. D. Felsenheld, District Civil Director of the Seventh District, New Jersey, tell the story:

"With the draft depleting our male observer personnel faster than we could replace them and war industries gathering up women observers in bus loads, we were hard pressed to keep our Berkshire Valley Observation Post manned. 'Get 'em today and lose 'em tomorrow' became the nightmare of our supervisory forces.

"Then like a revenue cutter to a ship-wrecked crew in a life-boat came an invitation from Mr. J. A. Struthers, General Manager of the Hercules plant to come and discuss the establishment of an Observation Post within the reservation. Yes, the Company would build a suitable tower on the highest point in the reservation and man it 24 hours a day with its armed guard force. Would we train the guards as observers? We would! And did. The perfect solution of the Director's number one problem."

As a further evidence of the Hercules brand of co-operation in the war effort, the company at its own expense sent a guard to the Wing Aircraft Recognition School in New York to become the post's recognition officer. Selected by Captain of the Guards Frederick W. Bloecher, who acts as Chief Observer, Mr. Frank R. Sickler took the recognition course and to date has gradu-



Top: The "guardettes" who take their turns as Observers at the Hercules Powder Company Post in New Jersey. Left: The Post. Right: A "guardette" on watch.

ated all of the regular guard-observers of the post as well as some twenty-five Hercules employees who were permitted to attend the classes on company time.

Incidentally, the Hercules Powder Company is the proud possessor of the Army-Navy "E" for excellence in production.

## A Well Deserved Testimonial to Chief Observers

Someone writes, "How about giving our hard working Chief Observers a little well-earned praise and, at the same time, a little help in the matter of keeping watches manned?"

An excellent suggestion, and we can't think of a better or more apt way of doing this than by reprinting the following eloquent testimonial which appeared in "Eyes Aloft," IV Fighter Command's interesting publication. It's titled "Hail the Chief!" (And you know who they mean.)

"God bless our Chief Observer—a hero on the Home Front. His job is to get us Spotters organized so we can be depended on to sweep the skies with our eyes—to keep them clear—and safe to live under. That's a big job.

"Good, patient old Chief! He hurries all day, worries all night, wonderin' if things at the post are all right. He gets bawled out, balled up, mixed up, tied up, walked on and run over. He gets stuck for transportation, stuck for gas, stuck for tires and stuck for observers. Yes, even stuck with those thumb tacks, tackin' up posters on BLACKOUTS, DIMOUTS, LOOK-OUTS—and the 1,000,000,000 letters from HEADQUARTERS.

"And that's something else! Those letters have to be read, reread; the cows and the pigs have to be fed. Then—it's time for bed. Tired? Just plumb dead. War news and things run through his head.

"He tries to sleep, his tired nerves creep; he tries that game of countin' sheep. Then comes the rumble of an Army JEEP. He groans and curls into a weary heap. At last he dreams, dreadful, fitful, nightmare dreams, filled with wood and lights—and new post schemes. Then at 12 o'clock the phone-bell screams.

"Our hero holds his tongue in a vise-like bite as he reaches wildly for the light. He feels around from left to right, gets so mad he just could fight. The phone rings loud and urgent. He decides to grope his way in the dark and he grumbles and mumbles, stubs his toe and stumbles, all the while prayin' that the relief at the post hasn't failed to show up. It has. It often does.

"So our good old Chief gives in, drives to the Post and fills in. It's a SIN! It's up to us to all pitch in, to be ON WATCH—and HELP TO WIN."