



Photo for the Tribune by Doug Kanter

Aly Rose (left) of Texas and Ye Bo of China rehearse in Beijing for "Nanjing 1937," a dance about Chinese women and girls who were tortured during the Japanese invasion.

China salutes Illinois hero of massacre by Japanese

By Russell Working

Tribune staff reporter

BEIJING—When Japanese troops stormed into Nanjing in 1937, murdering 300,000 Chinese and raping thousands of women and girls, an Illinois woman was among a handful of foreigners who stood against the tide.

Minnie Vautrin, a missionary educator from Secor, near Bloomington, hung an American flag outside her missionary college, declared a safe zone and sheltered 10,000 women and children



Minnie Vautrin, a missionary from Secor, saved thousands of Chinese women and girls in the invasion.

from death by gunfire, sword and bayonet. She held her ground when imperial troops aimed rifles at her, slapped her face, threatened her with death.

"How many thousands were mowed down by guns or bayoneted we shall proba-

bly never know," wrote Vautrin, whom massacre survivors called a goddess of mercy. "For in many cases oil was thrown over their bodies and then they were burned."

This summer and fall, in a rare turn of events, Beijing is commemorating the victims of Japanese war crimes through the eyes of a foreigner: Vautrin. In a communist country where the United States is often attacked in media and the arts, an official dance drama tells of the

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