

Cadet Nurse Corps



MISS LUCILE PETRY,
Dir., Cadet Nurse Corps.

YOUNGEST and largest of the women's uniformed services, the U. S. Cadet Nurse Corps has made nursing history in the brief span of its existence. Created by the Bolton Act, passed unanimously by Congress in June, 1943, the Corps includes more than 112,000 women between the ages of 17 and 35 who enrolled to help meet the emergency demand for nursing service and at the same time prepare themselves for a post-war profession.

The Bolton Act made it possible for the U. S. Public Health Service to provide all-expense scholarships and allowances for qualified candidates in accredited schools of nursing. The students thus enrolled formed a reserve to relieve critical shortages in government and civilian hospitals, health agencies and war industries, and to replace the thousands of nurses being called into the armed services. Graduates under the Cadet Nurse program pledged themselves to remain in essential nursing throughout the war and many chose to go into the Army or Navy Nurse Corps on completion of training.

Cadet Nurses were urged to consider, too, that the demand for their services would grow after the war, especially in the fields of veterans' care, public health and industrial care. Nursing will play a tremendous rôle in the rehabilitation of tomorrow's



Above: Calm and dependable in emergencies, a student nurse threads a suture needle for a tracheotomy.

world, Miss Lucile Petry, Director of the U. S. Cadet Nurse Corps, pointed out.

The appeal of the program was amply proved by the fact that the Corps exceeded its recruitment quota for the two consecutive wartime years of its existence. That expanded student enrollment permitted the release of thousands of graduate nurses from civilian hospitals for military services, as well as providing a pool from which military and civilian health agencies might draw.

According to the American Hospital Association, the Corps prevented what would have been a tragedy of major proportions—the collapse of civilian nursing service. Student nurses, 83 per cent of whom were Cadets, were giving more than 80 per cent of the patient care in all hospitals with schools of nursing, according to figures released September, 1945.

The Corps provided an accelerated study program of 24 to 30 months, plus a six-month Senior Cadet period during which student nurses assumed the duties of graduate nurses under supervision. Senior Cadets remained in their home hospitals or were released from their schools of nursing to five Federal services—Army, Navy, Veterans' Administration, Public Health Service and Office of Indian Affairs—and to civilian hospitals and nursing services without schools of nursing.

Cadet Nurses studied their profession in more than 1,000 schools of nursing. Carefully organized and administered by the Division of Nurse Education of the U. S. Public Health Service, the Cadet Nurse Corps graduated more than 28,000 nurses by October 1, 1945. All of them stepped into jobs, whether military or civilian, where their expert skills were desperately needed. Bound only by a moral pledge, Cadet Nurses patriotically met their wartime obligations and, as an investment for future national health, are expected to pay untold dividends by staffing expanding hospitals and agencies.

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