



Keepers of the Flame

NURSE CADET CORPS

by Barbara Dahl, BSN, RN, HTCP/HTCI

With our country at war and facing a critical nurse shortage, the President has proposed drafting nurses for military service. Sounds like the plot for a fiction novel but the year was 1945, the President, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and his proposal actually went to Congress for a vote.

An acute shortage of nurses during WWII was averted by the Bolton Act, establishing the Nurse Cadet Corps. Proposed by Congresswoman Frances Payne Bolton of Ohio, this legislation passed in 1943 and over 180,000 women enlisted. For a free education at an accredited school, they pledged to engage in essential military or civilian nursing for the duration of the war. They served under the Public Health Service and comprised 80% of the nursing staff for civilian hospitals. Without them our health care delivery system would have collapsed.

Sixty-percent of the senior Nurse Cadets in 1945 responded to the President and the nation's crisis, choosing the army instead of civilian employment and thus eliminating the need for a draft. Thelma M. Robinson began her distinguished nursing career as a cadet nurse and has written three books about the Corps: *Cadet Nurse Stories* coauthored by her sister, Paulie M. Perry, also a Nurse Cadet; *Nisei Cadet Nurse of World War II: Patriotism in spite of Prejudice*, and the just published *Your Country Needs You: Cadet Nurses of World War II*. (thelma@cadetnurse.com) The Bolton Act was the first non-discriminatory legislation of its day at a time when the U.S. was grossly segregated; when, for example, white nurses were not allowed to care for black soldiers and many nursing schools did not admit qualified black applicants.

WWII was a turning point in our culture for women who served in many essential roles during the conflict; from Rosie the Riveter building airplanes to the Women's Airforce Service Pilots, WASP, who ferried them from manufacturer to military bases in the U.S. thus freeing men for combat. Just this year President Obama awarded the Congressional Gold Medal to the WASPs, giving long overdue recognition to this group of courageous and dedicated women.

Modern day nursing began in a war setting with Florence Nightingale in the Crimea. Nurses in the U.S. have served their country in every military conflict and always voluntarily. Today we are once again engaged in war and facing a critical nurse shortage. The military is deploying nurses in the Reserves, repeatedly giving them barely enough time at home to return to their civilian jobs and thus putting a strain on civilian hospitals.

Surviving Nurse Cadets are now in their 80s and 90s and like other female groups have waited for their considerable contributions to be recognized. While other members of the U.S. Public Health Service received discharge papers and veteran status, the women of the uniformed Cadet Nurse Corps received neither.

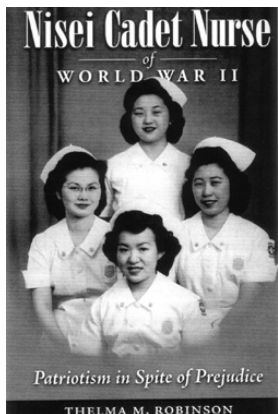
Congresswoman, Nita Lowey (D-NY) has once again introduced legislation, H.R. 1522, the Cadet Nurse Corps Equity Act of 2009, to acknowledge and thank the Nurse Cadets as active military veterans.

As Nurses and Healers pioneering a new paradigm in health care, we salute the Nurse Cadet Corps in this Veteran's Day issue of *Energy Magazine* and encourage support of H.R. 1522 by contacting your Representative in Congress and asking them to become a co-sponsor.

Healing Touch Program recognizes and honors THE NIGHTINGALE INITIATIVE OF GLOBAL HEALTH (NIGH):

a grassroots, nurse-inspired global public awareness about the priority of health and to empower nurses and concerned citizens to stand for a healthy world everywhere. The core of NIGH's Initiative is the Nightingale Declaration Campaign. This Campaign is being created step by step through individual signatures and you are invited to sign by going to www.nightingaledclaration.net. So far more than 19,000 people from 106 nations (not including the United States as yet) have signed the declaration. To commemorate the Centennial of Florence Nightingale's death, the NIGH team is proposing that the United Nations declare 2010 as the International Year of the Nurse, launching a United Nation's decade for a Healthy World, 2011-2020.

Barbara Dossey, PhD, RN, a trailblazer in holistic nursing, writes that Florence Nightingale was a modern mystic in the Western religious tradition. "Understanding her mysticism in its full context is the key to understanding the fabled 'Nightingale power' and how this legendary healer brilliantly illuminated and forever changed human consciousness, the role of women, and nursing and public health systems in the middle of the 19th century." www.nightingaledclaration.net/barbara-dossey



From Japanese-American Internment Camps to the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps This is the story of Nisei cadet nurses -- of their experiences in wretched camps, of people who risked public scorn to support Japanese Americans, of prejudicial difficulties in entering nursing schools, and of a government that reversed its policy against a people of Japanese descent.

The Nisei Nurse Telling Project received the 2002 Cadet Nurse Award from the American Association for the History of Nursing. Order at: <http://cadetnurse.com/niseiorder.html>

Our Nightingale Prayer

Today, our world needs healing and to be rekindled with Love. Once, Florence Nightingale lit her beacon of lamplight to comfort the wounded and her Light has blazed a path of service across a Century to us, through her example and through the countless Nurses and Healers who followed in her foot-

steps. Today, we celebrate the flame of Florence Nightingale's Legacy. Let that same Light be rekindled to burn brightly in our hearts. Let us take up our own Lanterns of Caring, each in our own ways, To more brightly walk our own paths of service to the World. To more clearly share our own Noble Purpose with each other. May Human Caring become the Lantern for the 21st Century. May we better learn to care for ourselves, for each other and for all Creation. Through our Caring, may we be the Keepers of that Flame That our Spirits may burn brightly to kindle the hearts of our children and great-grandchildren as they follow in these footsteps.

By Deva-Marie Beck, PhD, RN, from her Keynote Address at "An International Tribute to Florence Nightingale;" Featured in the June 1998 issue of the Journal of Holistic Nursing.

About the author:

Barb is an Elder in the Healing Touch Program. She studied with founder, Janet Mentgen, in Denver in the 80's and was in the first group of HT Instructors. She has taught extensively in the U.S., Canada, and The Netherlands, and presented twice at annual HT Conferences.