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Nursing at the Nation's Service

"NURSING AT THE NATION'S SERVICE"! This theme was chosen for the biennial convention many weeks before bombs fell on Pearl Harbor.

Will the stimuli of a great convention, the impact of mind on mind, the mental and spiritual give and take essential to the co-ordination of many units of activity into a workable program, transmute that "nursing" into "nurses"?

Will the privileged nurses who have attended the meetings take home with them an inspiring concept, which they can convincingly share with thousands upon thousands of individual nurses, of the nation's need for the service which nurses, and only nurses, can give? Themes, shibboleths, slogans, are meaningless until translated into action. *The times call for decisive action now* by individual nurses everywhere. America, our America, is calling her nurses.

Forms for this magazine were locked in preparation for the press the very day the convention opened in Chicago. This *Journal*, therefore, although mailed after the convention closed, contains no report of it. The July number will be the very special convention *Journal*.

"We stand at Armageddon" and must battle for those things in which we believe in these most momentous days in all history. Since the last convention the profession has faced the stark fact that, like the rest of the nation, nursing was not prepared for war. It is unthinkable that we could do "too little and too late."

Mechanisms have been set up through which the government and the profession are working toward a definite goal; they are equally concerned that the standards of nursing service must be maintained for both military and civilian needs with the proviso that the armed forces are rightfully granted priority. Two manuals for use in setting and maintaining standards are available. They are the *Manual of Public Health Nursing* and the *Manual of the Essentials of Good Hospital Nursing Service*. It is significant that the Subcommittee on Nursing of the Health and Medical Committee of the Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services urgently requests hospital authorities to consider and put into effect the personnel policies recommended in the manual in order that graduate nurses may not be lost to institutional employment.

Some of the special features of the war-time nursing program are:

Recruitment of graduate nurses by the Red Cross for service with the Army and Navy has been accelerated and the new Student Nurse Reserve is in process of organization now (see the news pages).

The allocation of federal funds for nursing education has provided incentive and encouraged initiative in accelerating the whole educational process.

Principles and policies for guidance in the basic preparation of nurses in the war situation have been formulated.

Centralized and other summer courses for preclinical students are an outstanding feature of the war effort.

Federal funds and special summer courses provide extremely attractive opportunities for graduate nurses to prepare for specific and so more effective service.

Scholarships made available through allocation of federal funds have encouraged other efforts to secure financial assistance for desirable students who are unable to enter good schools without such aids.

The program of recruitment of student nurses on an inclusive, national basis, places special emphasis on efforts to interest college women in nursing. This does not mean that only college women are being recruited.

Two units of the soundly conceived war-time program are producing a fairly rapid increase in available service. These are (1) refresher courses which have been arranged for inactive graduate nurses to enable them to replace eligible nurses eager to enter military service, and (2) the recruitment, teaching, and supervision of volunteer nurse's aides and other auxiliary workers.

A course in Red Cross Home Nursing for "every woman" is an important part of the total effort which calls upon registered nurses for many hours of teaching.

Methods of accelerating the preparation of thousands of additional nurses were the first factor to be considered in the total nursing program for total war. "Principles and policies" were formulated for the guidance of those undertaking such programs.

Recruitment, on the several fronts, followed closely. The preparation and distribution of "recruitment kits" containing suggestions and informative material provide the basis for a program which is making use of all the media available for informing the public of the nation's need for nurses.

Distribution of nursing service during war, the third element, has now come into the limelight, with emphasis on the organization of state and local councils. The first publication of the National Nursing Council for War Service, published just in time for the convention, is the pamphlet, *Distribution of Nursing Service During War*. Red Cross enrolment for service with the armed forces has first place.

Nursing is always at the nation's service, but America, today, is asking each and every nurse these questions: "Are you, a registered nurse, at the nation's service? Are you giving the most useful service you know how to give, where it is most needed, and without disrupting the work of others?"

How many of America's thousands can conscientiously answer, "I am."?