

## 1917 – 1918

**C**elebrating its 100th anniversary this month, the Navy Nurse Corps currently comprises 2,700 active duty nurses and 1,300 reservists. These photographs and the timeline, compiled by navy historian André Sobocinski, highlight some of the most memorable moments in its history, from “The Sacred Twenty” to the most recent “Bronze Star Nurse.” All photographs are courtesy of the U.S. Navy.

**On the cover,** Navy Nurse Corps nurses sit below an American flag aboard the USS *Solace* in 1945. The *Solace* survived the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941; the ship’s 13 nurses helped to treat 327 burn cases that day.—*Alison Bulman, senior editorial coordinator*

### World War I, 1917–1918

Navy nurse Hazel Herringshaw stands beside a war amputee in 1918. During World War I, trained nurses are in short supply. Superintendent Lenah H. Sutcliffe Higbee is awarded the Navy Cross for her ability to recruit and train new nurses: under her leadership, by 1918 the corps grows from 160 to 1,034 nurses.



## 1922

### Knickerbocker Theater, 1922

The roof of the Knickerbocker Theater in Washington, DC, collapses during a snow storm on January 22, 1922, killing 97 patrons. Navy nurses Anne K. Harkins and Florence M. Vevia provide aid to victims, initiating the Navy Nurse Corps tradition of providing disaster relief (a tradition on display in New York aboard the USNS *Comfort* after the terrorist attacks in 2001 and along the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina in 2005).

# Navy Nurses: 100 Years of Service



### The First Navy Nurses, May 1908

“The Sacred Twenty” are the first cadre of navy nurses, selected from applicants who traveled to Washington, DC, for the oral and written examinations required to apply. Among them are the first superintendent, Esther Voorhees Hasson, on the middle step in the center, and the chief nurse, Lenah H. Sutcliffe Higbee, in the front row, center, with dark hair. They pose here on May 13, 1908, the day the Nurse Corps becomes an official part of the navy.

## 1908

### World War II, 1941–1945

Nurses serve with distinction, often under the same dangerous conditions that the sailors endure. And nurses become prisoners of war: the first are taken on Guam at the war’s beginning, and 11 navy nurses are among the 77 nurses held captive by the Japanese for 37 months in the Philippines. By war’s end in 1945, the ranks of the nurse corps grow to 10,968 (up from 439 in 1939), serving on hospital ships, in naval hospitals, and as flight nurses, earning more than 300 commendations.

In this photograph, Ensign Jane Kendeigh, the first Navy flight nurse to serve on a Pacific battlefield, prepares a patient for a medical evacuation on Iwo Jima in 1945. She will evacuate 1,700 battle casualties from Okinawa in the first three weeks of operation.



## 1941 – 1945

### First African American Navy Nurse, 1945

Commissioned in the Navy Nurse Corps on March 8, 1945, Phyllis M. Daley serves at the Naval Dispensary in Boston until the end of the war. (Today, nearly 14% of the corps is African American.)



A lieutenant makes her rounds among the stacked bunks aboard the USS *Consolation* in



On April 11, 2003, Lieutenant Dallas Braham, a navy nurse reservist, cares for an Iraqi woman

## 2007

### Bronze Star Nurse, 2007

In her eight months as commander of a surgical company in Iraq, Commander Maureen Pennington achieves a 98% survival rate of severely wounded sailors under her care, earning her the Bronze Star. California's First Lady Maria Shriver also awarded her the 2007 Minerva Award for extraordinary contributions to the state of California. ▼

## 1983

### Nurse in Command, 1983

Captain Mary Hall becomes the first nurse to serve as the commanding officer of a medical facility, when she is appointed to this post at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, on July 20, 1983.



## At its centenary, a look back at the Navy Nurse Corps.

### Korean War, 1950–1953

Navy nurses serve in 93 naval and station hospitals and aboard hospital ships and military transport ships. By the war's end, there are 3,218 active-duty nurses.

## 1950 – 1953



A nurse makes the rounds of a naval hospital in

### Vietnam War, 1965–1975

The U.S. Navy creates the largest medical facility in Vietnam in Danang in October 1965; 18 navy nurses are on staff. In a bombing of officer's quarters in Saigon in 1965, four navy nurses are among the injured—and the rescuers. They were the first women to receive the Purple Heart in the Vietnam War.

## 1965 – 1975



### First Male Navy Nurse, 1965

On August 25, 1965, Ensign George M. Silver becomes the first man to be commissioned in the U.S. Navy Nurse Corps reserves.