

conditions at some small, poorly funded African American nursing schools. The Corps found that not only small schools had poor libraries, but often large, prominent schools did as well. The Corps helped to remedy this problem through Federal funding. In addition to assisting schools with poor libraries, the Corps pushed non-affiliated schools to seek affiliations with universities, hospitals, and medical clinics which enabled the schools to provide additional training and to increase enrollment.

### *The Cadet Nurse Corps Recruitment Campaign*

The Office of War Information and its private counterpart, the War Advertising Council, assisted the Recruitment and Public Relations Section of the Division of Nurse Education in its recruitment efforts. Under the auspices of the War Advertising Council, the prominent New York advertising firm, J. Walter Thompson Company, directed the recruitment campaign in the commercial sector.

The Corps also enlisted the help of the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses (NACGN) to recruit African Americans. The Cadet Nurse Corps was required by law to accept African Americans. Consequently, the Corps not only welcomed black women but actively recruited them. Under the guidance of the NACGN, the Corps utilized the black press to entice African Americans to join the Corps. With assistance from the NACGN, the Public Health Service produced many publicity photographs and pamphlets that featured black Cadets. Recruitment efforts aimed at African Americans, however, were not as extensive as those targeted to white audiences, and the Corps enrolled only 3,000 black Cadets.

Two other organizations, the American Hospital Association and the National Nursing Council for War Service, facilitated recruitment for the Corps, with the former establishing



*A Cadet Nurse Corps recruitment poster.*



recruitment centers in all member hospitals that operated nursing schools and the latter serving as a clearing bureau for the Corps. Unlike the War Advertising Council, these two groups worked under Federal contracts. The Public Health Service allocated a total of \$602,979 to these organizations. The Public Health Service also detailed personnel to the National Nursing Council. Utilizing these individuals as well as its own members, the Council reached women through state and local nursing councils by recruitment campaigns at high schools and colleges. The Council also instituted a College Field Program to recruit college women for the Corps. Thirty-three outstanding nursing representatives visited colleges across the country and spread the word about the benefits of the Cadet Nurse program.

Both the American Hospital Association and the National Nursing Council for War Service distributed PHS and OWI publications such as "Nurses are Needed" and "Enlist in a Proud Profession" to high schools, colleges, hospitals, and libraries across the country. According to the Corps' recruitment records, DNE featured three themes in these brochures—"obtain the benefit of a free professional education," "nursing is a proud profession," and "render an essential wartime service

to the Nation." In 1944, the DNE added a new theme, "the girl with a future", to its brochures and posters.

In addition to these organizations, local garden clubs, the Boy Scouts, and several fraternal clubs assisted the Corps with recruitment. The Parents Teachers Association, the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the General Federation of Women's Clubs also provided assistance. In addition, the Rotary International, the Kiwanis, the Lions, the Auxiliary of the American Legion, the Fraternal Order of the Moose, and the Elks donated time and support to the Corps.

Corporate, cinema, radio, and magazine sponsorship of the Corps were the most influential and visible elements of the recruitment campaign.



*This image of a Cadet Nurse receiving her cap was used in the recruitment campaign for the program.*



Millions of newspaper and magazine readers, radio listeners, and movie-goers were exposed to the Cadet Nurse Corps through ads, articles, shows, and films. The Corps' birthday was celebrated on nation-wide radio broadcasts, and over 300 national radio programs broadcast information about the Corps. Film stars posed with "pretty Cadets in Hollywood" and "Cadets in Washington were photographed with notables." Companies such as the Eastman Kodak, Pond's Cold Cream, Kotex, Pepsi-Cola, Old Spice, Sanka Coffee and National Biscuit Company, ran ads featuring Cadet Nurses.

Vanguard Films produced a ten minute film, "Reward Unlimited," starring Dorothy McGuire as Cadet Nurse Peggy Adams, and co-starring popular screen artists, Aline MacMahon, Spring Byington, and James Brown. The film was distributed to 16,000 theaters and viewed by an estimated audience of 90 million. Actresses donning Cadet Nurse uniforms were also featured in other films such as Shirley Temple's "Kiss and Tell," "Lady on a Train," and "The Blonde from Brooklyn."

The Office of War Information distributed several million leaflets and 2,800,000 car cards to towns and cities across the country. Thousands of department stores, post offices, pharmacies, hospitals, and schools prominently displayed Cadet Nurse Corps Posters. Articles and ads about the Cadet Nurse Corps appeared in Collier's, Harper's Bazaar, The Ladies Home Journal, Vogue, and hundreds of other magazines. Cadet Nurses were on hand at the launching of liberty ships and at war-bond rallies. They marched in patriotic parades. Jean Henderson, recruitment officer for the Corps, claimed that "the nursing profession had never received so much public attention."



*Dorothy McGuire starred in the recruitment film "Reward Unlimited," produced and directed by David O. Selznick, which promoted the advantages of joining the Cadet Nurse Corps.*





*A Cadet Nurse feeding a baby at Alexandria Hospital, Virginia.*



*A Cadet Nurse in her winter uniform.*

The Cadet uniforms were an important element of the recruitment campaign. The uniforms were an obvious sign of the Cadets' commitment to the war effort. On August 16, 1943, the Public Health Service held a luncheon at the fashionable Hotel Waldorf-Astoria. Leading fashion designers brought fashion models to the hotel to show their rendition of the Cadet Nurse uniform. The Corps had enlisted the help of fashion editors to choose the most attractive summer and winter uniforms. Fashion editors choose a summer uniform of gray and white stripped cotton including a jacket suit with red epaulets and large pockets, simple round neck white blouse, and a gored skirt. The winter uniform was a guard's coat of gray velour belted in the back with pockets and red epaulets, a single-breasted gray suit with button pockets, and a white round neck blouse.

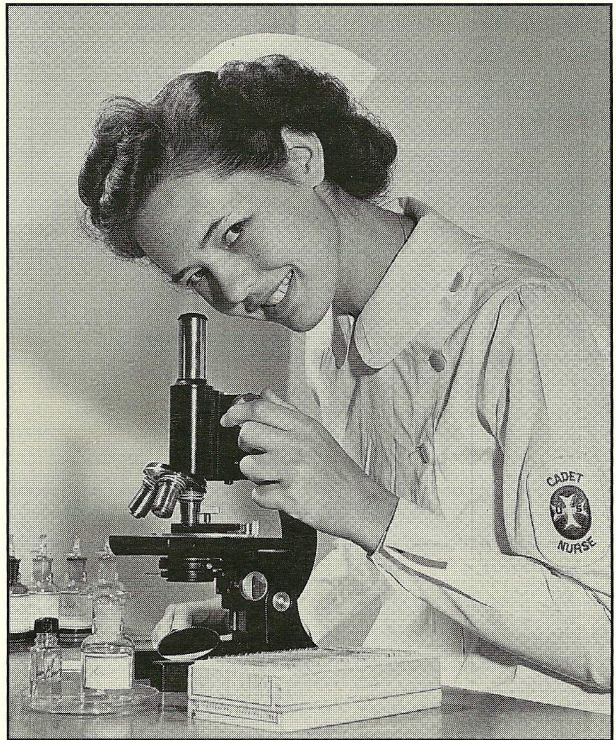
The Corps also sponsored a high school pledge program. High school juniors and seniors applied to become a pledgee of the Corps by filling out a questionnaire endorsed by a high school principal, guidance counselor, or teacher and a nurse representing a state of local Nursing Council for



War. If she qualified, she received a pledge pin and membership card bearing a facsimile of the Surgeon General's signature.

The recruitment campaign was an immense success. For three years, the Cadet Nurse Corps fulfilled its yearly quota of 65,000 nurse recruits. In 1943, the Corps actually surpassed the quota and was forced to circumscribe the campaign plans for 1944.

The end of the war brought with it a decision to terminate the Cadet Nurse Corps program. October 15, 1945 was established as the final date for new admissions to the Corps, and the last Cadets graduated in 1948.



*A Cadet Nurse examining a slide under the microscope in a chemistry class.*

### *Lasting Contributions of the Cadet Nurse Corps*

Reconstituting professional unity was an important contribution that the Cadet Nurse Corps made to American nursing organizations and schools. The Corps also fostered a more academic approach to nursing over an apprenticeship-type training. Expansion of course offerings and increases in faculty size can be attributed to the work of the Cadet Nurse Corps. Further, the Corps and circumstances created by the war helped to introduce nurse instructors as lecturers on disease which had previously been taught by physicians. The Corps also prompted widespread attention and Federal aid to postgraduate studies for nurses.

In addition to these contributions to nurse training, the Corps with funds from the Lanham Act helped to improve and enlarge classrooms, housing quarters, and libraries of nursing schools across the country. Cadet Nurse Corps scholarships enabled more women to attend university nursing schools than ever before. The





*Cadet Nurse adjusting traction for a patient at Freedmen's Hospital, Washington, D.C.*

echelons of the Federal government for Estelle Massey Riddle (a member of the original Division of Nurse Education Advisory Committee) and the National Association for Colored Nurses to voice their concerns about the conditions of black nursing schools and the limited career opportunities for African American nurses.

The Corps Nurse Corps also established a prominent place for nursing in the Public Health

*The cover of *Figuratively Speaking*, a "posture handbook" designed to teach Cadet Nurses how to use their bodies "effectively and healthfully" while nursing and to develop the Cadets into "the trimmest, smartest group of uniformed women to be seen today."*

Corps also encouraged more varied nurse training in such fields as convalescent care, public health, pediatrics, tuberculosis nursing, and psychiatric nursing.

Importantly, the Corps and the exigencies of the war helped to integrate nursing programs that had accepted only white students before the war. The Corps also provided a forum at the upper





Service. During the period 1944–1946, 46 per cent of the Public Health Service's budget was devoted to the Corps.

The Cadet Nurse Corps represents one of the few examples in American history where the Federal government allocated large sums of taxpayer's money for nursing education. It may well have helped to pave the way for later Federal grants to educational institutions to increase and improve health manpower.

On a national level, the attention and the organizational support given to the Cadet Nurse Corps was phenomenal and has never been repeated with such fervor. Lucile Petry fittingly remarked, "without the tumult of World War II, we might have waited more decades to open our eyes to the bigness of nursing."

### *Acknowledgements*

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*Cadet Nurses of the  
Kabler School of  
Nursing, Rochester,  
Minnesota taking  
their oath in 1944.  
(Photograph  
courtesy of Ruth  
Lyons.)*





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