

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 72--COMMEMORATING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UNITED STATES CADET NURSE CORPS AND VOICING THE APPRECIATION OF CONGRESS REGARDING THE SERVICE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES CADET NURSE CORPS DURING WORLD WAR II -- (Senate - October 03, 2003)

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Mr. DASCHLE submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. Con. Res. 72

Whereas the United States experienced an extreme shortage of nurses and medical personnel during World War II, and this shortage was filled in part by the 180,000 women of the United States Cadet Nurse Corps;

Whereas the United States Cadet Nurse Corps was under the jurisdiction of the Public Health Service, a branch of the uniformed services of the United States;

Whereas the United States Cadet Nurse Corps was established pursuant to the Act of June 15, 1943 (Chapter 126; 57 Stat. 153), commonly known as the Bolton Act in honor of Congresswoman Frances Payne Bolton who introduced the legislation;

Whereas the members of the United States Cadet Nurse Corps were required to undergo training that involved 12-hour days in hospitals followed by classes, with specific standards for admission into the Corps;

Whereas the members of the United States Cadet Nurse Corps made a pledge upon entrance into their post to be available for military, governmental, or essential civilian services for the duration of World War II;

Whereas the members of the United States Cadet Nurse Corps wore uniforms with patches certified by the Secretary of the Army and served under the authority of commissioned officers;

Whereas members of the United States Cadet Nurse Corps were charged with the reception of sick and wounded members of the Armed Forces and performed other duties in promotion of the public interest in connection with military operations;

Whereas the United States Cadet Nurse Corps was responsible for saving civilian hospital nursing services by providing 80 percent of the nursing staff for civilian hospitals during World War II;

Whereas some members of the United States Cadet Nurse Corps left their families and served all across the Nation in various hospitals, occasionally substituting for doctors; and

Whereas the United States Cadet Nurse Corps remains unrecognized as a military organization and its members remain unrecognized as veterans of the United States Army: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That Congress--

(1) Recognizes the members of the United States Cadet Nurse Corps for their patriotism and civic activism in a time of emergency during World War II; and

(2) Honors the 60th Anniversary of the creation of the United States Cadet Nurse Corps.

Mr. DASCHLE: Mr. President, today I am submitting a concurrent resolution to honor a special group of women who served their Nation during World War II, veterans of the United States Cadet Nurse Corps.

During World War II, 250,000 nurses were sent to the front lines to care for Allied troops. By 1942, there was such a shortage of civilian nurses in the United States that many immunizations were cancelled and hundreds of clinics were closed. An alarmingly high number of babies were being delivered at home, without the assistance of medical professionals, and some hospitals were forced to shut wards.

To alleviate this shortage, nearly 180,000 young women answered the call of government recruiters to join the [US] Cadet Nurse Corps. These young women staffed domestic hospital wards while the overseas nurses cared for wounded troops on the front lines.

The Cadet Nurses comprised nearly 80 percent of the nursing staff for civilian hospitals during World War II, and, without their service, our Nation could not have afforded to make such a tremendous commitment to providing medical attention to our troops overseas.

Recently, a number of former Cadet Nurses who trained at St. Luke's Hospital in Aberdeen, SD, gathered for a reunion. This year, as you may know, marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Cadet Nurse Corps. The reunion drew about a dozen former members of the Corps, including several who now live out of State.

Among the participants was Esther Roesch Buechler, and her story provides insight into what it was like to serve as a Cadet Nurse.

Esther, now 78 years old, grew up in Roscoe, a small community in north-central South Dakota. She was born with a number of medical problems that have inspired her to help others in need. With great support from her father, she was determined to devote her life to medical care. Upon her graduation from high school in 1943, Esther joined the Cadet Nurse Corps. Assigned to St. Luke's, she recalls long, arduous hours at a clinic whose nursing staff had been decimated by the war. Later in her training, she was sent to the VA nursing home in Des Moines, Iowa, where she treated World War I veterans, as well as new veterans from the World War II campaign. Following her Cadet Nurse Corps experience, Esther served in various hospitals for nearly 10 years before she retired to raise her children. And she passed her commitment to medical service on to her children--her oldest son currently works as a paramedic.

Cadet Nurses like Esther were an essential part of our military force. They were members of the Public Health Service, one of our Nation's seven uniformed services. They served under the authority of commissioned officers, wearing patches certified by the Secretary of the Army. And they treated the injuries of troops returning home from the war front. Despite their dedicated service to our Nation, it is unfortunate that the Department of Defense has elected to block efforts to recognize these women as military veterans.

During the existence of the Cadet Nurse Corps, more than 124,000 Cadet Nurses graduated from 1,125 schools operating nurse training programs around the country. Without the Cadet Nurses, our battlefield medical services, as well as our health care here at home, could not have carried on with the same proficiency. For their tremendous service to our nation, I salute the Cadet Nurse Corps, and I ask you to join with me in supporting this resolution honoring their patriotism.

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