

THEMATIC PRESENTATION PROPOSAL

The Diamond Jubilee of the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps: A Legacy of Service

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Purpose of exhibit. The purpose of this exhibit is to deepen participants' understanding of the meaning for Cadet Nurses of the World War II-era U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps as we celebrate its 75th anniversary in 2018.

Rationale and significance. The U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps was an innovation for its time that addressed an acute healthcare delivery crisis during World War II. This exhibit draws from the voices of those who participated in the program or were otherwise inheritors of its legacy. Through discussion of these experiences, participants will learn about the meaning of being Cadet Nurses through their experiences during and after World War II.

Description of methodology. This exhibit will draw from arts-based social historical approaches that examine historical events through the eyes of those who experienced them. Included will be uniforms and other Cadet Nurse artifacts and archival documents, including musical scores, poetry, and scripts about the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps. The recruitment film, *Reward Unlimited*, will be screened and discussed, as well as recently recorded video-recorded interviews with Cadet Nurses. We will invite Cadet Nurses able to travel to the conference to participate as discussants in this living exhibit and highlight the U.S. Public Health Service's and Adelphi University's involvement with and reflections on the program. We envision an exhibit available for the duration of the conference, to which we could refer during a presentation about this exhibit, or the speakers could be scheduled for short talks during the exhibit in lieu of a formal presentation. This exhibit will also be a test model for a traveling exhibit that could be installed in other venues, including other conferences, museums, and libraries. We are open to collaborating with additional partners interested in this topic.

Major primary and secondary sources:

Szecsy, E. (2017). *The U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps Guidebook: A History of a Program and Legacy of its People*. Kindle Direct Publishing.

Szecsy, E. (2016). *The Cadet Nurse Corps in Arizona: A History of Service*. Charleston, SC: History Press.

U.S. Public Health Service. (1950). *The United States Cadet Nurse Corps [1943-1948] and other Federal nurse training programs*. Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office.

Findings and conclusions. The U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps met its goals during World War II, but its effects on Cadet Nurses and the nursing profession far surpassed these goals. Cadet Nurses entered post-World War II adulthood with a professional credential, which many used to support their families and as a springboard to other activities that furthered the nursing profession or otherwise contributed to community and society.