

WORLD WAR I NURSES FACT SHEET

History

- › Army Nurse Corps (ANC) was established in 1901.
- › When the war started there were 403 nurses on active duty and another 170 on reserve. In comparison, there were 8,000 nurses in the American Red Cross.
- › 1914-1916: American civilian nurses volunteered with the American Ambulance Service in Paris.
- › 1915: American Red Cross sailed on the "Mercy Ship" expedition to France and staffed base hospitals in France and in Belgium.
- › April 1917: The U.S. entered the war.
- › May 1917: the U.S. War Department organized six Red Cross Base Hospitals to be shipped to France ahead of American soldiers.
- › October 1917: 1,100 American nurses were serving in France at nine Base Hospitals.
- › October 1918: 2,000 Regular Army and 10,186 Reserve nurses were on active duty at 198 stations around the world.
- › By the war's end in November 1918, 10,000 of the 21,480 Army Nurse Corps members served overseas.

Nursing Qualifications (1917)

- › Female
- › Unmarried
- › Between 25 and 35 years old
- › Caucasian
- › Graduates of nurse training school

Working Conditions

- › Nursing shortages led to a high patient to nurse ratio, sometimes as high as 70 nurses for 5,000 patients.
- › Nurses worked 14 to 18 hour shifts for weeks at a time.
- › Nursing in surgical, psychiatric, and orthopedic units was particularly needed.
- › Blackouts made night shifts dangerous.
- › Cold, damp weather led to health issues, including pneumonia, influenza, and tuberculosis.

American Nurses recognized for their war contributions

- › 28 nurses received the French Croix de Guerre.
- › 69 nurses received the British Royal Red Cross.
- › 2 nurses received the British Military Medal.
- › 3 nurses received the U.S. Distinguished Service Cross.
- › 23 nurses received the U.S. Distinguished Service Medal.

Adapted from:

Colonel Elizabeth Vane and Sanders Marble, "Contributions of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps in World War I"
The Army Nurse Corps Association

<https://e-anca.org/History/Topics-in-ANC-History/Contributions-of-the-US-Army-Nurse-Corps-in-WWI>