CALL FOR WARTIME NURSES’ STORIES

To the Editor:

I would like to let JPN readers know about an exciting project being carried out at the Brigham Young University College of Nursing called “Nurses at War.” Nurses rarely tell their stories. They assume they are just doing what they had to do or what they are expected to do, and that it is nothing special. However, I know that nurses have great stories to tell. Those of us who served in a military organization during a period of armed conflict are a special group who made a special contribution to the profession. We have exciting experiences to share. Many of these stories have already been lost, as nurses from former wars have become unable to tell them. What a loss to our profession.

The goal of the “Nurses at War” project is to record the experiences of nurses who have served during armed conflict. These stories will be archived in the L. Tom Perry Special Collections department of the Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University. Archiving in a permanent location assures the accounts will not be lost and will be available for study by students in nursing, history, and women’s studies, as well as other interested individuals. The project has already collected approximately 125 accounts of nurses from both World Wars, Korea, Vietnam, Operation Desert Storm, and Iraqi Freedom; Red Cross volunteers who assisted after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001; nurses who were benefited by the Cadet Nurse Corps program during World War II; and nurses who served in the Japanese internment camps in the United States during World War II.

Although archiving the accounts is the most important goal of the project, the materials have also been used in presentations and publications, to share these accounts and thus help the general public better understand the role of nurses in wartime and enrich the nursing profession. A book including the accounts received early in the project has been published and can be ordered online through http://deseretbook.com/ or http://seagullbook.com/.

I would like to invite JPN readers who may have served in any capacity in any branch of the U.S. military or any other nation’s military organization during a time of war to share their stories with the “Nurses at War” project. If a reader did not personally serve but knows someone who did serve or has letters, diaries, accounts, or memorabilia from nurses who served but are no longer able to share their own accounts are also invited to contact the project. For more information about the project or to share your stories, please contact me by e-mail (Patricia_Rushton@byu.edu) or telephone (801-422-5375) or access the project’s Web site at http://nursing.byu.edu/nursesatwar. Accounts can actually be placed on the Web site, as well.

Thank you in advance.

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