



In this documentary of the publicity campaign of the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps, the Cadet Nurse was the "girl with a future" who was urged to "enlist in a proud profession."

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NIGHT falls on Smalltown, U.S.A. It is 7:30 P.M., March 1, 1944, and the Jones family has settled back to relax after their evening meal. Their youngest daughter Mary is in her room as the radio blares: "Do you want to be a girl with a future? Enroll in the Cadet Nurse Corps of the United States Public Health Service and have a war job with a future!"

About the same time, the elder daughter Sally, a high school senior, is viewing a short motion picture, "Reward Unlimited," starring Dorothy McGuire as Cadet Nurse Peggy Adams, at the Main Street movie theater. After the show the gang stops at the drugstore to hash over the latest gossip under a compelling poster above the soda fountain which proclaims: "Be a Cadet

Nurse—The Girl with a Future." Later that evening the whole family talks about the possibility of Sally's becoming a nurse. Their conclusion is positive; the Cadet Nurse Corps fills the bill.

Smalltown and the Joneses, of course, are composites, drawn from the hundreds of communities and thousands of families that sent girls to nursing school from 1943 to 1945. The story of their exposure to nursing via the Cadet Nurse Corps informational services offers valuable insight into how publicity and advertisement can foster a better image of nursing and improved public relations for schools of nursing.*

Before the Cadet Corps, nursing received little attention from the general public. Like medicine and certain other professions, nursing had shied away from publicity, viewing it as unprofessional, undesirable, unethical, and undignified. In addition to this fear, nurses lacked the skills necessary to present themselves and their cause effectively. But the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps, established by Congress on June 15, 1943 (the Bolton Act) as an emergency program to provide an adequate supply of nurses at home and for the military, was to change all that.

From July 1943 to October 1945, some 132,000 girls were admitted as Corps members to 1,125 of the 1,295 schools of nursing. Federal grants were made to schools of nursing that met the provisions of the act, which required that the school provide a 24- to 30-month accelerated program and that students admitted to the Corps pledge to "engage in essential nursing, military or civilian, for the duration of the war." In return for this moral obligation on the part of the student nurse, the government paid all reasonable

* Documentary validation of the facts in the article is derived from several primary sources: the proceedings of the meetings of the advisory committee to the Division of Nurse Education, USPHS; publications of the Federal Security Agency, USPHS, Division of Nurse Education; administrative memos and records of the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps; personal interviews with Frances Payne Bolton, Minnie Pohe Creasey, and Lucile Petry Leone; and miscellaneous sources. A detailed bibliography is available from the authors upon request.

tuition, fees, and other training costs and provided a distinctive uniform. The Corps was administered through a new Division of Nurse Education within the U.S. Public Health Service, headed by Lucile Petry (now Lucile Petry Leone), who was aided by an advisory committee of representative nursing and hospital leaders. By the time the last students were graduating from the Corps in June 1948, total federal expenditures had amounted to more than \$160,000,000.

VALUES OF VISIBILITY

The Corps' public relations section was headed by Jean Henderson, with five publicists in the Washington office and six others attached to each of the regional USPHS offices. Another significant segment of the public relations work was contracted to the National Nursing Council for War Service, which—in addition to other coordinating activities—served as the official clearing house ("Write to Box 88") where interested candidates could write for information about the Corps. The American Hospital Association also received funds to cover some of the cost of maintaining information centers about the Corps in all member hospitals.

One of the greatest publicity boosts came from the War Advertising Council, working through the federal Office of War Information. The Council, made up of all the major advertising companies, donated its services to publicizing important war causes, planning and organizing the work, persuading thousands of firms and individuals to donate time and space for publicity, and getting solid governmental backing. Through the framework of this voluntary organization, the services of the well-known J. Walter Thompson advertising agency were made available to the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps. Thus nursing, with Madison Avenue's skills and some \$13,000,000 worth of donated service, set out to attract unprecedented numbers of new students

within the shortest possible time by utilizing all available media.

POSTERS AND PAMPHLETS

Some three million posters were distributed during the Corps' first year. Tens of millions of Americans were presented with a somewhat glamorous image of nursing through illustrator Jon Whitcomb's poster depicting the so-called "girl with a future." This and other posters (another popular slogan was "Enlist in a Proud Profession!") were placed throughout the country in such diverse locations as theater lobbies, women's shoe stores, beauty shops, high schools, YWCA's, public libraries, and churches. Downtown shoppers were confronted with Cadet Nurse window displays, and billboards greeted city and highway drivers—those who had gas enough to drive in those days! Prominent local businesses were usually the donors.

Pamphlets and leaflets were placed nationwide in high schools, physician's offices, schools of nursing, and drugstores. Car cards with such proclamations as "Only 5,416 more opportunities to enlist this month, join the Cadet Nurse Corps," and accompanied by a sheaf of throw-away leaflets describing the opportunity in detail, were placed in streetcars and buses for ready grabbing. In Los Angeles one week, 100,000 street car passengers goggled at the sight of a pretty Cadet Nurse on their pass who invited them to "Be a Cadet Nurse—the girl with a future."

Teenage girls pored over the four-color recruitment publication, *Enlist in a Proud Profession!* This 16-page brochure contained photos of Cadets in winter and summer uniforms, attractive portraits and messages from USPHS Surgeon General Dr. Thomas Parran and Lucile Petry, numerous pictures and descriptions of nurses working in various parts of the world, qualities needed for entering a school, and, finally, the immediate and long-range benefits of Corps membership.

Until this time the quality of nursing school catalogs had been almost universally poor and unappealing. But since one of the requirements for school participation in the Corps was the publication of an annual catalog, tremendous gains were effected in this medium. Consultants from the Division of Nurse Education encouraged schools to incorporate illustrations of uniformed Cadets into their publications and to describe the advantages of nursing in some detail. After a new brochure featuring the Corps was developed at one school of nursing, the school's director wrote to the Division of Nurse Education:

... the results which we have obtained from sending this publication to schools and colleges, have been far beyond our expectations and ... it has done more to put nursing ... before the public than any other project of our school of nursing.

RADIO AND MOVIES

From July 1943 to early June 1944, one and a half million dollars worth of radio time representing 700 million listener impressions was donated to the Corps. Network programming made it possible to present Cadet Corps messages on all types of national radio broadcasts, including soap operas, variety shows, symphony concerts, and documentary programs. Radio appeals were usually very intense during the two- and four-week period preceding class

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admission time. At both the network and local station level, interviews with Cadets and dramatizations about the Corps were utilized. The popular radio serial, "One Man's Family," even wrote in a Cadet Nurse in the presence of Teddy, the adopted daughter of Paul Barbour.

To capitalize on the record attendance at movie theaters during 1943 and 1944, the Corps, through the facilities of the Office of War Information, incorporated news items into several motion picture newsreels. One clip, for instance, showed President Roosevelt signing the Bolton Act, and another featured the modeling of the new Cadet Corps uniform on August 17, 1943 at the Waldorf Astoria in New York. Other newsreels carried an

appeal for girls to join the Corps.

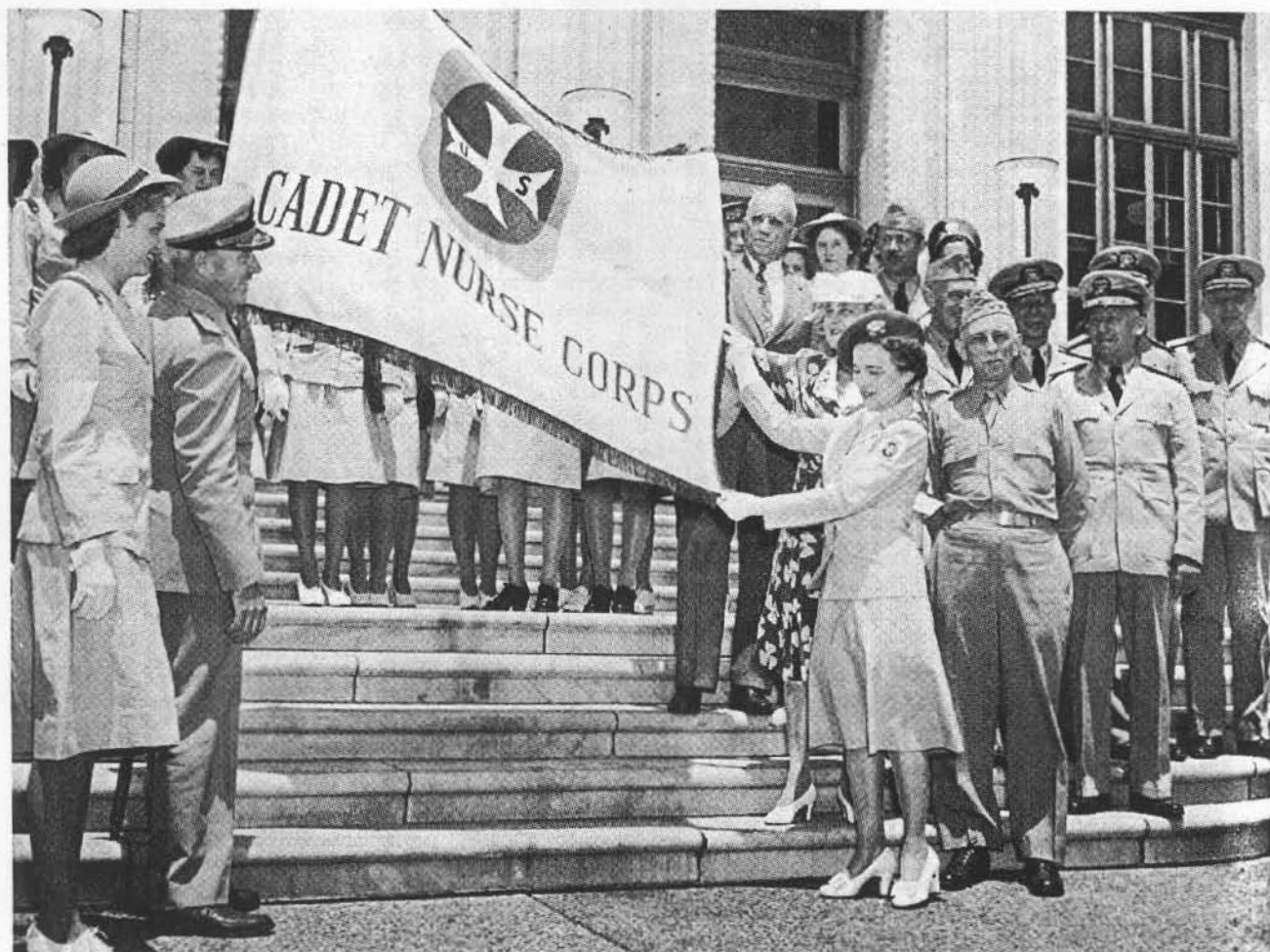
To appeal to the prime theater audiences, the majority of whom were in their teens, *Reward Unlimited* was produced for the publicity effort by Vanguard Films. Starring Dorothy McGuire as Cadet Nurse Peggy Adams and co-starring such other screen favorites as Aline MacMahon, Spring Byington, and James Brown, the film was heralded as the finest recruitment film of 1944 and was presented at 16,000 theaters with a potential audience of 90 million. Later, 16-millimeter prints were made to be used by such organizations as Y.W.C.A.'s, parent-teacher associations, church groups, civic clubs, and high school and college assemblies.

Another effective medium was

live drama. Several short dramatizations were written about the Corps for presentation by theatrical groups at "Little Theaters," women's clubs, high schools, and colleges throughout the country. One of these sketches, entitled "This Is Our War," revealed the inner conflicts of a young care-free girl named Sally Kimball who eventually recognized her responsibilities to her nation and joined the Cadet Nurse Corps. The sketch was praised as one of the best special purpose plays written during the war.

UNIFORMS

In time of all-out war, uniforms are highly valued as they publicly demonstrate that the wearer is doing his or her part in the national effort.



The Cadet Corps flag is proudly displayed by Surgeon General Parran and Corps Director Petry.

Thus, a distinctive outdoor uniform was quickly selected for members of the Cadet Nurse Corps at a well-publicized fashion show luncheon in New York City. Four prominent designers competed with their creations. The winning uniform was a two-piece gray wool suit topped on each shoulder with handsome regimental red epaulets; the sleeve insignia was a silver Maltese cross on a red background. A bouncy Montgomery beret, set off with the official cap device of the U.S. Public Health Service, completed the eye-catching outfit.

When General Bernard L. Montgomery, commander of the British troops in Normandy, heard about "a group of American girls copying my beret," he asked for details. Lucile Petry responded with a complete description of the uniform and beckoned him to "recall the adage about imitation being the sincerest form of flattery!"

THE PRINTED WORD

During these two years of intense activity, there was generous newspaper publicity for events connected with the Corps. Division of Nurse Education publicists sent out scores of publicity releases. Human interest stories about Cadets, along with photographs of Cadet nurses for inclusion in Sunday supplements, were widely distributed. At the same time, individual schools were urged to strive for publicity in their own communities, aided by suggestions to feature, for instance

... a baby born in your hospital on July 4, with a Cadet Nurse, both celebrating birthdays.

... a local veteran of World War II congratulating Cadet Nurses, to emphasize the importance of graduate nurses on the war front.

There was also a considerable amount of editorial and columnist coverage. For example, the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* ran a column under the headline, "She's a Cadet Nurse," which raved about how

Her red and blue becomes her. She sports her beret smartly, tipped low on

her brow, and she walks in pride of the gray blue, red accented uniform she wears. She's a Cadet nurse.

Her silver buttons mark her straight and tall as her red epaulets square her shoulders to her job of study. Straight ahead she looks to her future healing role. She's an important link in the chain of victory.

There are over 100,000 of these Cadet nurses in the United States.

It's a lucky thing for your boy and mine and for our sick at home that so many young women have chosen for their war service the red insignia of the United States Public Health Service and taken their pledge to the Cadet Nurse Corps.

Articles on the Corps appeared in such popular magazines as *Mademoiselle*, *Charm*, *Tomorrow*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Click*, *Coronet*, and a host of others, totalling 100 pages in the first year of the program alone. Even such pulp escapist literature as *Real Romances* gave excellent coverage and a good story. Striking photos of good-looking Cadets appeared on the covers of the *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Harper's Bazaar*, and *Colliers*. And, of course, the various hospital and nursing periodicals did their bit. Features were run in *Modern Hospital*, *Hospital Progress*, and *Hospital Management*, and the American Hospital Association War Service Bureau devoted two of its issues to the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps. The *American Journal of Nursing* faithfully recorded all activities of the Corps and provided editorial support for it.

Magazine advertising, in spite of the war, reached a new high of 888 million dollars worth of business in 1944, and the Cadet Nurse Corps got its share. In cooperation with the War Advertising Council, the Eastman-Kodak Company sponsored a series of full-page color ads that were placed in 15 of the nation's leading magazines with a combined circulation of about 12,000,000. Each ad contained a coupon which the reader could send to Box 88 for additional information. The single largest return was in response to the late February, 1944, installment, when some 33,000 inquiries were received. Of the more than one million dollars in advertisements do-

nated during the July, 1943-June, 1944 year, one-fourth was contributed by Eastman Kodak.

There were letters, too—all kinds. Of the thirty-three million pieces of mail sent in 1943, a fair share of them carried information about nursing. For example, 5 million mailings of dependency checks to servicemen's families carried inserts about the Corps during the fall of 1943. Numerous letters, too, were sent out to publicize the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps and urge membership. For example, in July 1945 Lucile Petry wrote as follows to each of 25,000 selected applicants who had asked for information about the Corps:

Dear Miss Brown:

This is a rather personal letter.

I thought I would write you myself to see if we had answered all your questions about the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps, when we last were in touch with you.

I remember when I became a nurse: at first, there were a few doubts in my mind which made me hesitate. But when those questions were answered—well, it made me wonder why I had hesitated at all.

Perhaps you have some questions like that in your mind. If you do, I hope you will let me know what they are . . .

Lucile Petry

SPECIAL EVENTS

Every opportunity to be involved with a special ceremony was seized. For example, at the christening of a cargo vessel in Richmond, California, the master of ceremonies proclaimed that "the largest shipyards in the world pay tribute to the largest group of women in uniform—the United States Cadet Nurse Corps." Starring in the event were Minnie E. Pohe, associate director of the Corps, Cadets from the Bay area schools of nursing, and the popular comedian, Joe E. Brown. Brown played the role of triggerman while a Cadet nurse christened the ship with champagne.

Induction and birthday ceremonies received nationwide attention. The 1943 and 1944 induction ceremonies were broadcast over nationwide radio networks, and individual schools were encouraged to



Join the
U.S. CADET NURSE CORP
YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU
Apply to Superintendent · Any Hospital

Miller Bros Co

The publicity was largely hospital oriented, but many Cadet Nurses chose baccalaureate programs.

use the broadcast as a nucleus around which to recruit for their own programs. The first ceremony on May 13, 1944 was broadcast from Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. Participants included Mrs. Franklin Roosevelt, Frances P. Bolton, Congresswoman from Ohio, sponsor of the Act creating the Corps; Helen Hayes; and some 750 Cadets from Washington, D.C. area schools. There were 250 local ceremonies that tied into the national event, with at least one in every state.

The birthday ceremonies were also highly publicized. On the first anniversary of the Corps, Surgeon General Parran presented the new white, silver, and scarlet Cadet Corps flag to Miss Petry. On the Corps' second birthday, President Truman reviewed the plans for the Cadet Corps and Mrs. Truman cut a Corps birthday cake. Simultaneously, in New York City, a group of 500 Cadets gathered in Times Square

where they sold slices of "The Largest Birthday Cake in the World" as part of a bond drive rally.

RECRUITMENT

In an effort to attract and hold the attention of potentially qualified candidates for the Cadet Nurse Corps, a pledge program was instituted for high school juniors and seniors. Using a poster showing a Cadet nurse pinning a pledge pin on the sweater of a high school girl, along with a leaflet "Pledge Yourself," this campaign turned into quite a success. The names of those who pledged were turned over to state and local councils who carried out a follow-up campaign. Publishers of *Senior Scholastic* and *Education for Victory* included releases on the pledge pin program and recommended it as a worthwhile school activity.

In an effort to enroll more college women in nursing programs, a college guidance program, under the

joint sponsorship of the Division of Nurse Education and the National Nursing Council for War Service, was organized in late 1943. Thirty special Corps representatives—all college graduates themselves—visited 600 colleges and talked to some 60,000 college women and 800 faculty members at over 2,000 student conferences. The representatives stayed in dormitories overnight in order to have informal evening sessions with the girls and get a better chance to talk with sorority groups, meet parents, and confer with various college personnel. The fact that this type of publicity cleared up misconceptions about nursing is evident in the following excerpt from a college field representative's report:

I had a long conference with President _____ He was terribly uninformed as to modern nursing and of course the cadet program. Evidently, the majority of what he knew about nursing was learned from the school nurses he had employed . . . I hope by

the time we finished our discussion he understood more about modern nursing and will from now on feel satisfied to lead his students into our profession.

FRINGE EFFECTS

Whenever a potential demand for a product exists, some manufacturer is likely to take advantage of it. Thus, the Lenthier cosmetic company created a special kit of lipstick and rouge just the color of the trim on the Cadet uniform, named it "Rocket Red," and marketed it especially for purchase by Corps members. These cosmetics were packaged in a gray plastic container with an eight-point Maltese cross in red as the motif.

Naturally, some criticisms of this Madison Avenue publicity program were heard. Occasionally one could open a magazine or newspaper and find the Cadet Corps being advertised by a liquor or cigarette company, even though this was greatly discouraged by the Division of Nurse Education. Now and then an unfavorable editorial about the federal government running nurse education would appear in a newspaper

somewhere, or news would be reported incorrectly. Certain individuals felt that there was too much emphasis on "free education with pay" and not enough on "if you qualify," attracting less capable people into nursing. Highly traditional nurses complained that too much glamour was used in selling the Cadet Nurse Corps; they complained about "hair touching the collar" and "rings on their hands." In response, one advertising agency replied:

Perhaps we should run the campaign saying that nursing is very poorly paid, that the working conditions are terrible and that, if you are really very silly, you might like to go to a very second rate nursing school where you will live in the most uncomfortable surroundings.

Whether one thought mass advertising for nursing education was an embarrassment or a dynamic service, a blessing or a curse, it was successful.

Criticisms were rare, though, considering the magnitude of the program, and the overall reaction of nurses to the publicity program was positive. The total evaluation of the Corps' effect should not be measured solely in terms of the number of students attracted into nursing, although it certainly passed this test with flying colors. Admission quotas for the Corps were met all three years, and so attractive were the incentives that it was not until 1970 that admissions to all schools of nursing surpassed the landmark 67,051 who entered in 1944; of these, over 57,000 were Corps members. Perhaps of even more significance was the "loosening up" of the thinking of nurses about the advantages of publicity; positive aspects were openly acknowledged and fears of gaining public attention began to dissipate. Along with this change in attitude, numerous nurse educators gained knowledge of some of the basics of good public relations.

The success of this huge publicity campaign is accounted for in part by the professional use of sophisti-

cated and highly skilled advertising methods. After making an inventory of the desires, hopes, and dreams of their market, which consisted of all women 17 to 35 years of age living in all areas of the country in all socioeconomic groupings, the Division of Nurse Education skillfully projected these pre-existing desires into the Cadet Nurse Corps. Dreams of obtaining an education, preparing for the future, being a nurse, helping with the war, and being glamorous were tapped, rather than any attempt to create new desires or to educate the audience. In a way, it was not too difficult to promote the Corps because it did offer a great deal in the way of benefits to those who joined, even though these were of a long-term nature in contrast to the immediate benefits of working in a war plant for good wages.

ON THE WHOLE

Those associated with the Corps realized that an effective publicity campaign needed first to determine the level of awareness of the audience. The public was generally cognizant of the fact that nursing existed, but didn't know much about it; many potential Cadets and their families weren't aware that the profession offered so many advantages or that it was so readily available to young women. By linking existing knowledge of nursing with knowledge of a new service, the Corps, the publicity campaign reinforced the prospect's desires, sharpened her mental picture of how this action would help fulfill her hopes, and offered a means for her to satisfy those desires. A stuffy attempt to educate the girls into choosing a career in nursing would not have been nearly as effective.

In the end, the cost of recruiting each Cadet came to a total of \$92, of which \$87 represented donated space, time, and service. Given the magnitude of the task and the competing forces present at that time, it was a remarkably low amount with an impressively high return. ■



"We feel awfully good about Mary's joining the U.S. CADET NURSE CORPS"

There's a new education... I feel awfully good about Mary's joining the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps. I feel awfully good about Mary's joining the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps. I feel awfully good about Mary's joining the U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps.

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