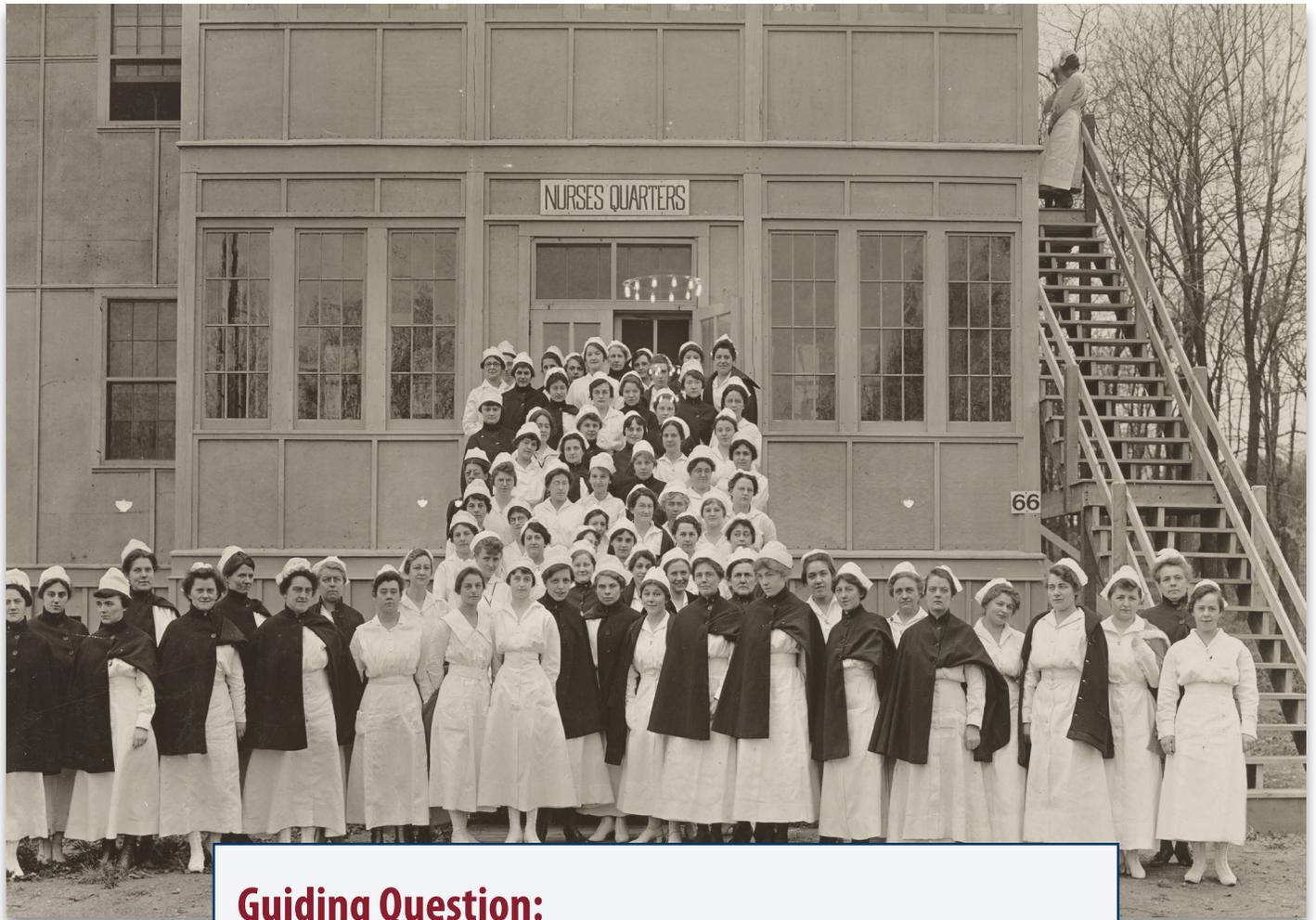




# Answering the Call:

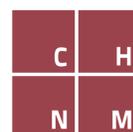
## The U.S. Army Nurse Corps in World War I

DEVELOPED BY WHITNEY JOYNER



### Guiding Question:

How did women serving in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps impact the outcome of World War I and alter the future course for women serving in the military?



**ROY ROSENZWEIG**  
Center FOR  
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## Overview

In this lesson, students will actively participate in a jigsaw activity that allows them to explore the integral role nurses serving in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps played during World War I. As a culminating activity, students will also work in teams to create a memorial or monument to honor the service and sacrifice of nurses from Tennessee who served in World War I.

## Objectives

At the conclusion of this activity, students will be able to:

- Describe the role a nurse with the U.S. Army Nurse Corps played in World War I; and
- Evaluate the impact World War I nurses had on the future of women serving in the military.



*When looking at service and sacrifice in war, it is common to think of the hundreds of thousands of soldiers who fought on the battlefields.*

*Unfortunately, we do not always remember the nurses and other medical personnel who served and sacrificed alongside them. The story of Mary Gertrude Smith inspired me to learn more about nurses serving in World War I. This lesson allows students to look deeper into a lesser-told story of war and understand the vital role nurses played in the war effort.*

— Whitney Joyner

**Joyner teaches at Northeast Middle School in Clarksville, Tennessee.**

## Spotlight: Nashville National Cemetery

Most of the land for Nashville National Cemetery was acquired shortly after the Civil War. In July 1866, 45 acres were transferred to the United States from Morton B. Howell, master of the Chancery Court of Nashville, in accordance with the decree of the court. During the first few months of 1867, another 17 acres were conveyed in the same manner. The final portion, about 1-1/2 acres, was purchased by the United States in 1879 from J. Watts Judson.

The original interments were the remains of soldiers removed from temporary burial grounds around Nashville's general hospitals, as well as the Civil War battlefields at Franklin and Gallatin, Tenn., and Bowling Green and Cave City, Ky. There are 4,141 unknowns interred at Nashville National Cemetery.

### VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM

# Standards Connections

## Connections to Common Core

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.4** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9** Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

## Documents Used

### Primary Sources

Emma Elizabeth Weaver, *Journal of E. Elizabeth Weaver, Army Nurse Corps, World War I, 1917-1919*, 1996 (excerpt)

Women for Military Service in America Memorial

<https://www.womensmemorial.org/exhibits/detail/?s=world-war-i-nurses-the-journal-of-emma-elizabeth-weaver>

### Secondary Sources

"African American Army Nurse Corps Officers" (excerpt)

U.S. Army Medical Department, Office of Medical History

<http://history.amedd.army.mil/ancwebsite/articles/blackhistory.html>

"Army Nurse Corps" (excerpt)

U.S. Army Medical Department, Office of Medical History

<http://history.amedd.army.mil/booksdocs/wwi/VolXIII/ANCCCh01rev.htm>

Colonel Elizabeth A.P. Vane and Sanders Marble, "Contributions of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps in World War I" (excerpt)

U.S. Army Nurse Corps Association

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

"Highlights of the History of the Army Nurse Corps, Beginnings to 1940"

U.S. Army Nurse Corps Association

<http://e-anca.org/history/anc-eras/1901-1940>

"Nashville National Cemetery"

U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, National Cemetery Administration

<https://www.cem.va.gov/CEMs/nchp/nashville.asp>

"Section V - Operations Contemporaneous with the Meuse-Argonne Operation"

U.S. Army Medical Department, Office of Medical History

<http://history.amedd.army.mil/booksdocs/wwi/fieldoperations/chapter35.html>

Veteran Profile, Women's Army Auxiliary Corps Nurse Mary Gertrude Smith

National Cemetery Administration

<https://www.cem.va.gov/legacy/>

# Materials

- Introductory Activity: Fact or Fiction Game Teacher Instructions
- Step by Step Guide for Jigsaw Activity
- Jigsaw Cards One to Six
- Jigsaw Assessment
- Veteran Profile for Mary Gertrude Smith
- Memorial/Monument Design Activity Instructions
- Memorial/Monument Design Summary
- Memorial/Monument Design Rubrics
- Paper and pencils

# Activity Preparation

- Make one copy of the following for teacher use:
  - Lesson Plan
  - Introductory Activity: Fact or Fiction Game Teacher Instructions
  - Step-by-Step Guide for Jigsaw Activity
- Make one copy of Jigsaw Cards One to Six to distribute to student teams during activity. Each team will receive one card.
- Make one copy of the following for each team of four to six students:
  - Jigsaw Assessment
  - Veteran Profile, Mary Gertrude Smith
  - Memorial/Monument Design Activity Instructions
  - Memorial/Monument Design Summary
  - Memorial/Monument Design Rubrics
- Assemble paper and pencils for Memorial/Monument Design Activity.

# Procedure

## Activity One: Introductory Activity: Fact or Fiction Game (15 minutes)

- Follow the Introductory Activity: Fact or Fiction Game Teacher Instructions to read ten statements about nurses in World War I. Students will read and determine for themselves whether each statement is fact or fiction. After they make a decision about a particular statement, the teacher will read the answer and explanation, and proceed on to the next question. Follow the instructions to guide students through this activity.

## Activity Two: Jigsaw Activity (45 minutes)

- Divide students into six teams of four to six students each.
- Using the Step-by-Step Guide for Jigsaw Activity, direct students to read read about and evaluate six different topics related to the Army Nurse Corps during World War I:
  - The History of the Army Nurse Corps and Qualifications
  - Minorities and Civilians
  - World War I Nurses
  - Life for Nurses
  - Rank and Pay
  - Retirement and Impact
- Follow the steps outlined in the Step-by-Step Guide for Jigsaw Activity to guide students through the activity.

## Activity Three: Visit to Nashville National Cemetery (30 minutes)

- Walk with students to the grave of Women's Army Auxiliary Corps Nurse Mary Gertrude Smith found in Section MM, Site 153 of Nashville National Cemetery.
- Ask students to group back into their Expert Teams and distribute a copy of the Veteran Profile for Smith to each team.
- Ask students to read the Veteran Profile within their team.
- Lead a whole group discussion using the following questions:
  - *What key events in Smith's life stand out to you the most?*
  - *What surprised you most about Smith's story?*
  - *After reading Smith's story, what questions do you still have about her life?*

- Walk with students to the grave of U.S. Army Nurse Corps Nurse Inez M. Crigler found in section OO, site 662 of Nashville National Cemetery. Read the following aloud to the whole group:

*There are seven women, including Mary Gertrude Smith, who served in World War I and are currently buried here at the Nashville National Cemetery. Of those seven, six were members of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps. The seventh was a Yeoman with the U.S. Navy. Of the seven, one U.S. Army Nurse Corps nurse, whose story I would like to highlight, is Inez McCullough Crigler. Crigler was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee, on February 15, 1904. Her story is unique because Crigler was one of approximately 800 African American women certified by the American Red Cross to serve with the U.S. Army Nurse Corps during World War I. Of those, only a handful were allowed to actually serve. While we do not know much of Crigler's service as a nurse during the war, another African American nurse during World War I, Aileen Cole Stewart, recalled, "The story of the Negro Nurse in World War I is not spectacular. We arrived after the Armistice was signed, which alone was anticlimactic. But each of us contributed quietly and with dignity to the idea that justice demands professional equality for all qualified nurses."*

*As you read about earlier today in your jigsaw activity, and in contrast to Ms. Stewart's words, the story of African American nurses during the war is one of courage, honor, and perseverance. In spite of segregation and discrimination, African American nurses answered the call to serve their country, even though their government did not provide them with equal rights or benefits. In serving, they paved the way for others and served as pioneers in the medical field. Inez Crigler died on November 24, 1996, at age 92 and is buried next to her husband, Edmond Crigler, who served as a private in the U.S. Army during World War I and World War II. May their service and sacrifice be remembered.*

## Activity Four: Memorial/Monument Design Activity (60 minutes)

- Lead a whole-group discussion of the following question: *What does it mean to commemorate and how do we commemorate those who have served and sacrificed in war?*
- Assign students to Commemoration Teams.
- Distribute a copy of Memorial/Monument Design Activity Instructions and the Memorial/Monument Design Activity Rubrics to each team.
- Review the task and instructions with students, fielding student questions as needed.
- Allow students time to brainstorm, plan, research, and complete their design and summary.
- *Optional:* Following the completion of this activity, teams can present their design to their peers.

**Teacher Tip:** *This activity could either be completed by students during their visit to the cemetery or could be completed as a post-site activity.*

## Assessment

- Assign the Memorial/Monument Design Activity.
- The Memorial/Monument Design Activity Rubrics can be used to score the activity.

## Methods for Extension

- Students with more interest in the role of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps may research their role in World War I and World War II, comparing and contrasting U.S. Army Nurse Corps policy and procedures across the span of the two wars and tracking changes made.
- Students can also research other female military organizations and groups and trace the evolution of women in the military from World War I to the present day.

# Fact or Fiction Game Teacher Instructions

**Step 1:** Line up students in a horizontal line for the start of the activity.

**Step 2:** Read the following directions prior to playing the game: I am going to read a statement about nurses in World War I. If you believe this statement is fact, you will take one step forward. If you think that the statement is fiction, you will stay in place.

**Step 3:** Read each statement below one at a time, giving students time to think and move forward or stay in place. Following their movement, take time to discuss the correct answer and talk through the provided explanation. Ask students to return to the original line before going on to the next question.

**Statement 1:** The Army Nurse Corps was established in 1901.

**Fact:** The Army Nurse Corps (ANC) was established in 1901, following the Spanish American War. However, nurses have cared for the wounded and sick in wars in the United States dating back to the Continental Army in 1776.

**Statement 2:** Thousands of women joined the Army Nurse Corps upon its establishment.

**Fiction:** At the time of its establishment, the Army Nurse Corps was a small organization of 100 nurses. This number did not change until World War I. At the start of that war, there were 403 nurses serving on active duty and 170 in reserve. However, by the end of the war Army Nurse Corps numbers exploded to 21,480, with 10,000 having served overseas.

**Statement 3:** Nurses during World War I were considered enlisted personnel and were given military ranks.

**Fiction:** Before and during World War I, nurses were considered part of the U.S. Army, but were not enlisted or commissioned personnel. It was not until June 4, 1920, that the Army Reorganization Act authorized relative rank for Army Nurses. It authorized granting of the status of an officer with relative rank to Army nurses from second lieutenant through major. Although the act allowed Army nurses to wear the insignia of their rank, the Secretary of War did not give them full rights and privileges, such as base pay, equal to that of a male officer of comparable grade.

**Statement 4:** No member of the Army Nurse Corps was assigned to overseas service against her will.

**Fact:** No Army Nurse Corps member, active duty or reserve, was assigned to overseas service against her will. It was up to the individual nurse to decide whether or not she wanted to volunteer to serve overseas.

**Statement 5:** Those wishing to join the Army Nurse Corps had to be U.S. citizens, female, unmarried, and between 20-40 years of age.

**Fiction:** At the beginning of the war, those wishing to join the Army Nurse Corps had to meet the following requirements: They had to be U.S. citizens. They were required to be female, Caucasian, and unmarried. They had to be between the ages of 25-35. They needed to have graduated from training schools that offered theoretical and practical nursing. They had to undergo a physical examination to determine eligibility.

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## VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM

**Statement 6:** The intent was that nurses would work in the rear and not face dangerous conditions near battlefield.

*Fact:* While the intent was that nurses would work in the rear and not face dangerous conditions close to the battlefield, this became unrealistic. As new medical groups were formed and surgical and gas treatment teams were organized, nurses were needed on these teams, where care had to be provided closer to front lines.

**Statement 7:** It was common for nurses to work 14-18 hour shifts for weeks at a time.

*Fact:* It was common for all medical personnel to work long shifts with little time for rest and recuperation. Nurses were not exempt from these long hours. Throughout the war, hospitals were often understaffed and overcrowded with the wounded. In addition to this, medical personnel worked with limited supplies and in less than ideal conditions.

**Statement 8:** African American nurses were not admitted to the Army Nurse Corps during World War I.

*Fiction:* At the beginning of World War I, administrative barriers existed in both the Army Nurse Corps and American Red Cross that prevented African American women from joining as nurses. As political and public pressure around the issue developed, plans were created that allowed for the acceptance for African American nurses. However, it was not until the last few months of the war, during the influenza epidemic, that these organizations began accepting African American nurses for active service. More than 1,800 African American nurses became certified to serve, yet only a handful were given the opportunity. Even as policy changed, none of those who served received benefits or pensions since they did not arrive until after the Armistice was signed and therefore did not serve in wartime. They also faced segregation and heavy discrimination, despite their qualifications and desire to serve.

**Statement 9:** Nurses who were reported missing or held as prisoners of war were entitled to pay during the period of their absence from duty.

*Fiction:* A decision was made by the government on July 16, 1918, that held that nurses who were reported missing or held as prisoners of war were not entitled to pay during the period of their absence from duty. Following protest and anger surrounding the issue, this decision was modified in September 1918 to rule that if an Army nurse was held as a prisoner of war, through no fault of her own, she would receive full pay.

**Statement 10:** Members of the Army Nurse Corps who died during their army service were buried with military honors.

*Fact:* Members of the Army Nurse Corps who died during their army service were buried with military honors. In November 1918, a plot in Arlington National Cemetery was assigned for the burial of Army nurses.

# Step by Step Guide for Jigsaw Activity

**Step 1:** Divide students into six teams of two to six students each. This activity works best when there are an even number of students on each team.

**Step 2:** Read the following overview of the activity to students:

*Today, you will work in teams to complete a jigsaw activity. The team to which you are currently assigned, also known as your Expert Team, will be given a jigsaw card. This card contains both primary and/or secondary source information about a specific aspect of nursing during World War I. Your team will study the information on this card and become experts on this information. Next, you will be divided into a new team called your Jigsaw Team. This team will be made up of one student from each Expert Team. Each member of the Jigsaw Team will then present the information from their card. As the information is being presented, each Jigsaw Team will need to complete the provided handout. Are there any questions?*

**Step 3:** Appoint one student from each Expert Team as the team leader. The team leader will be responsible for reading the jigsaw card and leading a group discussion of the information.

**Step 4:** Distribute one jigsaw card to each team. Each team should have a different card.

**Step 5:** Give students time to read their card and process the information. They should take notes to help them prepare the information they will present in the next step of this exercise. Students may also wish to practice presenting their information within their Expert Team.

**Step 6:** Break students into their Jigsaw Teams. As explained in the overview, Jigsaw Teams are made up of one student from each Expert Team.

**Step 7:** Ask each student to present her or his information to their team. Encourage others in the team to ask questions for clarification. While students are making presentations within their teams, the teacher should circulate from team to team, monitoring and observing the process.

**Step 8:** Distribute one Jigsaw Assessment Handout to each team. Teams will need to use their new collective knowledge to complete the assessment together.

# Jigsaw Card One:

## The History of the Army Nurse Corps and Qualifications

*Colonel Elizabeth A.P. Vane and Sanders Marble, "Contributions of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps in World War I" (excerpt)*

### Army Nurse Corps

"The Army Nurse Corps (ANC) was established in 1901 and was seventeen years old at the time the U.S. entered WWI on April 16, 1917. The Corps was small (403 nurses on active duty and 170 reserve nurses). At this same time, there were 8,000 nurses in the nursing service reserves of the American Red Cross. From 1914-1916 American civilian nurses volunteered with the American Ambulance Service in Paris and as nurses at a French Army field hospital in Belgium. American nurses also sailed to France with the American Red Cross 'Mercy Ship' expedition in 1915. Some of these nurses returned to France again with the Red Cross or with the ANC in 1917- 1918 when America officially entered WWI. These forces had already been actively working in France for three years and had 900 or 1000 patients in each hospital."

"Vashti Bartlett sailed to France with the American Red Cross in March 1915 shortly after the outbreak of WWI. She worked in Pau at the foot of the Pyrenees as the head nurse and there she described treating the wounded soldiers so that they could return to the front: 'If they are not so badly wounded we bring them back and heal them and send them forward again to the firing line that they may go through this agony once more- but such is the ...bravery of these ordinary French men.' The idea of triage had been solidified in the American Civil War but nurses had to experience the idea of conserving the strength of the Army by first treating those who could continue the fight – something counterintuitive to nursing school lessons."

"American reserve hospital units had been established across the nation in 1916, affiliating civilian hospitals with the Army. Red Cross nurses, doctors and medical corpsmen worked together at these hospitals and volunteered to work overseas in the event of war. By May 1917 the War Department called upon the American Red Cross to mobilize six of these base hospitals for immediate shipment to France to serve with the British Expeditionary Forces. Thus U.S. military and Red Cross nurses arrived in France before the American combat troops of the American Expeditionary Forces."

### Nurse Qualifications

"In the beginning, U.S. Army nurses were U.S. citizens, female, unmarried, between 25 and 35 years of age, Caucasian and graduates of training schools offering theoretical and practical nursing. As the war went on, some of these requirements were expanded. Before and during WWI, nurses were part of the Army, but were neither enlisted or commissioned personnel and they were not trained as soldiers. They were appointed by the Surgeon General with the approval of the Secretary of War. Nurses were not given military ranks at this time. There are diary accounts of how the enlisted men grew to appreciate and follow the instructions of these women without rank when it pertained to patient care, especially when the women exhibited stamina, creative problem solving, and a sense of humor while suffering similar deprivations of war. The British and French governments requested that only graduate trained nurses be sent overseas as they did not wish for nursing aids to replace these nursing requirements."

"All nursing applicants had to be individually considered especially regarding physical examinations before and after appointment. No member of the ANC, either regular or reserve, was assigned to overseas service against her will."

"Six months after the U.S. entered WWI nearly 1,100 nurses were serving overseas in nine base hospitals. One year later 2,000 Regular Army and 10,186 Reserve nurses were on active duty serving at 198 stations worldwide. By the end of the war the ranks of the Army Nurse Corps would swell to 21,480 with over 10,000 having served overseas. This was an increase of 3800% from before the war."

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#### VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM

# Jigsaw Assessment

## Jigsaw Card One: The History of the Army Nurse Corps and Qualifications

**Directions:** Using the knowledge you have gained from your peers' jigsaw presentations, complete the following chart with your Jigsaw Team.

Presented by:

In your own words, write a three to five sentence summary of the information presented.

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What fact surprised your team the most during this card's presentation?

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What questions does your team still have regarding the information presented?

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## Jigsaw Card Two:

### Minorities and Civilians

*"African American Army Nurse Corps Officers" (excerpt), U.S. Army Medical Department, Office of Medical History*

#### African American Nurses in World War I

"The performance of nurses during the Spanish American War led to the establishment of the Army Nurse Corps on 2 February 1901. However, African Americans continued to fight for acceptance as nurses both in civilian and military venues. At the onset of World War I, administrative barriers existed within the Army Nurse Corps and the American Red Cross that prevented African American nurses from joining the war efforts. With political and public pressure building for acceptance of African American nurses for the war cause, plans were made to permit them to apply to the Army Nurse Corps. It was not until the last months of World War I, during the influenza epidemic of 1918, that the Army and the Red Cross began accepting these nurses who were so willing to serve."

"As the nursing shortage became critical, the War Department consented to the authorization of 18 African American nurses into the Nurse Corps. One of these pioneering women, Aileen Cole Stewart, served at Camp Sherman, Ohio. The difficulties these nurses experienced did not prevent them from serving with great honor. Stewart recalled, 'The story of the Negro nurse in World War I is not spectacular. We arrived after the Armistice was signed, which alone was anticlimactic. But each of us contributed quietly and with dignity to the idea that justice demands professional equality for all qualified nurses.' Greater than eighteen hundred African-American nurses were certified by the American Red Cross to serve with the Army Nurse Corps during World War I, yet only a handful were allowed to actually serve. None of those who serve received benefits or pensions as they did not serve in wartime."

*"Army Nurse Corps" (excerpt), U.S. Army Medical Department, Office of Medical History*

#### Civilian Nurses in World War I

"For many years the employment of civilian nurses in Army hospitals had been authorized by regulations, and during 1918, this authorization was used in the employment of nurses under contract, to supplement the Army Nurse Corps. They were employed in large numbers by the commanding officers of Army hospitals during the influenza epidemic of 1918. At that time, in response to many inquiries, the Surgeon General sent telegrams to all general hospitals, base hospitals, department surgeons, and surgeons at ports of embarkation, which stated that to meet the emergency conditions, civilian nurses might be employed locally at \$75 per month, with a subsistence allowance of one ration a day, lodging, laundry, transportation, and \$4 a day in lieu of traveling expenses on joining their first station and on returning home from their last station. Nurses who were not graduates, and nurses' assistants who might be employed during the emergency, would be given from \$30 to \$50 a month, according to their experience, with the same allowances as the graduate nurses."

"Besides these contract nurses, there were certain others who, because of their experience in civilian hospitals and special qualifications, were authorized to make inspection trips to various cantonment hospitals."

"A number of other nurses served under contract as instructors in the Army School of Nursing. Many of them left important positions in civilian schools of nursing to enter these contracts."

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#### VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM

# Jigsaw Assessment

## Jigsaw Card Two: Minorities and Civilians

**Directions:** Using the knowledge you have gained from your peers' jigsaw presentations, complete the following chart with your Jigsaw Team.

Presented by:

In your own words, write a three to five sentence summary of the information presented.

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What fact surprised your team the most during this card's presentation?

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What questions does your team still have regarding the information presented?

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## Jigsaw Card Three:

### Scope of Practice for World War I Nurses

*Colonel Elizabeth A.P. Vane and Sanders Marble, "Contributions of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps in World War I" (excerpt)*

"Nurses were intended to work in the rear and not face dangerous conditions near the battlefield. However, the plans had to be discarded when new medical groups were organized. Surgical and gas treatment teams were organized to take specialty care closer to the patients; nurses were key elements of those teams. These female nurses challenged conceptions of how close women could be to battle and how they could face danger"

"Ultimately, U.S. nurses worked on surgical teams, hospital trains, hospital ships, and in all sorts of hospitals: field hospitals, mobile units, base hospitals, evacuation hospitals, camp hospitals and convalescent hospitals. The formula of nurses required for war time had stayed unchanged since the American Revolutionary War at one nurse for every ten hospital beds. At first, the Army estimated that 10,000 nurses would be needed, but by the end of March 1918 the surgeon general asked for 40,000 nurses."

"The first Army nurses in France worked in the six hospitals of the British Expeditionary Forces, and nine additional base hospitals arrived in France within six months after the American declaration of war. Even with this build-up of medical care, by midsummer 1918, allied casualties had greatly increased and a shortage of nurses resulted because shipping was used for combat troops rather than medical personnel. At one hospital 70 nurses cared for 5000 patients. It was common for the nurses working in the AEF [American Expeditionary Force, U.S. forces in Europe] to work 14-18 hour shifts for weeks at a time. Base Hospitals were designed as five hundred-bed hospitals and they were to provide definitive treatment for patients transported from the field and evacuation hospitals. 46 female nurses were originally thought to be sufficient for staffing. An example of what actually happened was that Base Hospital #10 received 1400 patients during its first week of operations with most of them being surgical patients and mustard gas cases. Emma Elizabeth Weaver worked at Base Hospital #20 where "the maximum number of patients in the hospital at one time was 2275 [in a hospital staffed for 500 beds]... Grand total of patients admitted was 8703."

"Nursing experience and skills in the administration of anesthesia, psychiatric nursing and orthopedic work was especially needed. American nurses served on shock, gas, orthopedic and surgical specialty teams where they could be moved to the front lines in groups of five or six. Shock teams administered whole blood and fluids; surgical teams included neurosurgical, orthopedic, chest and maxillofacial specialties. Gas teams were also sent to care for patients at the front lines."

"WWI introduced the terror of chemical weapons; in the AEF 31.49% of all casualties were related to gas exposure. Nursing activities included decreasing patient activity, giving oxygen by face mask, keeping the environment free of dust and smoke, providing liquid diets, preserving body warmth and helping with oral hygiene for those with lung irritants. Nurses cleaned vesicants from the skin, and protected intact skin, especially from the blisters that would open. They irrigated patient's eyes and gave them eye shades. The gas specialty teams that traveled to the front lines gave supportive care as well to include rest, oxygen, morphine and stimulants."

"Open battle wounds required laborious care in the pre-antibiotic time of WWI. Extensive wound irrigations were needed. Battle wounds are inevitably contaminated with the soil of farm fields fertilized with manure. Emma [Elizabeth] Weaver described 'All day long from morning until night I went from bedside to bedside doing dressings. I had an orderly to assist me. ....strenuous days. These patients were rushed directly from the front. I always dreaded removing bandages for fear of hemorrhage. I never knew what I was going to find, there were many missing limbs, horrible deep wounds.' Julia Stimson, Chief Nurse at Base Hospital #21, described 'our surgical hut looks like a carpenter shop. We have about ten beds under a wooden canopy frame to which poor shattered legs of our blown-to-pieces men are fastened.'"

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#### VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM

# Jigsaw Assessment

## Jigsaw Card Three: Scope of Practice for World War I Nurses

**Directions:** Using the knowledge you have gained from your peers' jigsaw presentations, complete the following chart with your Jigsaw Team.

Presented by:

In your own words, write a three to five sentence summary of the information presented.

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What fact surprised your team the most during this card's presentation?

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What questions does your team still have regarding the information presented?

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# Jigsaw Card Four:

## Life for Nurses

Colonel Elizabeth A.P. Vane and Sanders Marble, "Contributions of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps in World War I" (excerpt)

"Environmental and logistical factors could make life difficult for Army nurses working in France. The cold, damp weather, mud, wound drainage, and blood mixed with the scarcity of clean, hot water and laundry facilities made wearing the white, cotton, starched duty uniform impractical. The nurses switched to a gray crepe and then a gray jersey dress in order to have a warmer more durable uniform. Lighting was also difficult to maintain for work or recreation especially when long periods of enforced blackouts were needed. In the summer of 1918 members of the ANC were given War Department authority to wear wound and service chevrons under the same conditions as officers, field clerks, and enlisted men."

Emma Elizabeth Weaver, *Journal of E. Elizabeth Weaver, Army Nurse Corps, World War I, 1917-1919, 1996* (excerpt)

Emma Elizabeth Weaver (1878-1966) of the University of Pennsylvania Base Hospital served in France and Germany between 1918 and 1919 and kept a journal of her service. Here, excerpts from her journal are transcribed as she wrote them.

*"If the wind came in a certain direction, we could hear the roar of the big guns. We were in constant danger of gas attack & always slept with our gas masks at the head of our bed."*

*"Nurses at the hospital] had suffered intense hardships the preceding winter, suffering intensely from the cold. They had chilblains & frozen feet. Many of them were ill with the flu. One of them died (Miss Maria Bowles) from scarlet fever."*

Returning to the Parc Hotel Chattel Guyon, [Emma] Elizabeth treated patients who arrived in waves by Red Cross trains. Each train seldom carried fewer than 300 cases. She reported the numbers and types of wounded and described medical treatment that the nurses provided.

*During Miss Williams absence on Surgical team I had charge of Ward A. At this time the doctors were busy in the Operating Room practically day & night, consequently the nurses had to do the dressings on the ward. All day long from morning until night I went from bedside to bedside doing dressings. I had an orderly to assist me. He wheeled the dressing carriage, removed bandages, etc. Strenuous days. These patients were rushed directly from the front. I always dreaded removing bandages for fear of hemorrhage. I never knew what I was going to find. There were many missing limbs, horrible deep wounds...*

In January 1919, [Emma] Elizabeth's unit transferred to Germany to join the Army of Occupation at Coblenz. She traveled throughout Europe during rare periods when nurses were granted leave, at one point, stopping at the battlefields of Soissons.

*It was a harassing sight, ruin & destruction everywhere. It was very dangerous for so many unexploded shells lay about. (2 sailor boys had been killed the previous day by unexploded shells) Machine guns & machine gun bullets & hand grenades lay everywhere. A pair of boots lay on the ground. I stooped to see to what country they belonged, but, I could not turn them over the feet were still within them & steel helmets lay strewn about, Oh, the horrible war with its carnage & bloodshed.*

# Jigsaw Assessment

## Jigsaw Card Four: Life for Nurses

**Directions:** Using the knowledge you have gained from your peers' jigsaw presentations, complete the following chart with your Jigsaw Team.

Presented by:

In your own words, write a three to five sentence summary of the information presented.

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What fact surprised your team the most during this card's presentation?

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What questions does your team still have regarding the information presented?

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# Jigsaw Card Five:

## Rank and Pay

*Colonel Elizabeth A.P. Vane and Sanders Marble, "Contributions of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps in World War I" (excerpt)*

### The Question of Rank

"Early in the war, a need of rank for members of the Army Nurse Corps was felt. It was believed that a number of unfortunate occurrences could have been avoided, had nurses been given a definite status. While in many instances regulations regarding rights and privileges, etc., stated that nurses in those regards were to be treated as officers, as, for example, in matters of transportation, it frequently happened, especially in traveling, that because persons in charge of details of transportation did not know the regulations, and also because the facilities for transportation requested were not always forthcoming, under pressure of circumstances, nurses were assigned to transportation accommodations which were neither suitable nor proper. Moreover, to the thousands of new members of the Army there was no indication upon the uniform to show to what class the nurses belonged, and on account of this in many cases they were not accorded the respect commensurate with the dignity and responsibility of their position. Such experiences during the war demonstrated that a different status and a recognition of it would have to be awarded Army nurses in order to interest future desirable nurses in the service and also to retain those already there, but the main argument for rank was the need of a definite status.

"During the early part of 1918, the matter of increased pay occupied the more immediate attention of Nurse Corps members than did the question of rank, and while agitation was afoot for the passage of the pay bill, nursing organizations outside the Army brought before Congress a bill conferring relative rank on Army nurses. This bill was referred both by the Senate and the House of Representatives to the Committee on Military Affairs, but the passage of the bill did not occur until the summer of 1920."

### Pay

"At the time of its establishment by law in 1901 the pay of members of the Army Nurse Corps was \$40 per month and maintenance, and \$50 per month and maintenance when on duty without the limits of the United States. A chief nurse received \$25 a month in addition to her pay as nurse. This pay table had been established at a time when graduate nurses in civilian hospitals were receiving \$25 a week for private duty and \$60 and \$65 a month for institutional work as floor nurses. In 1910 the pay was increased to \$50 a month, with \$5 increase for every three years' completed service, for a period of nine years, making the maximum pay \$65 a month after nine years' service. The act of July 9, 1918, increased the base pay to \$60 per month and maintenance, with \$5 per month increase for each completed three years' service, and an additional \$5 increase after 12 years' service. This act also provided for \$30 per month additional pay for all chief nurses and \$10 per month extra for foreign service. At this time nurses in civil life were receiving \$35 and \$40 per week for private duty and at least \$75 a month as a minimum wage for general duty in hospitals. Laundering of uniforms was included. This act also raised the pay of the superintendent of the Army Nurse Corps from \$1,800 per year to \$2,400 per year, and authorized the appointment of not more than six assistant superintendents at an annual rate of \$1,800, and for each army or separate military force beyond the continental limits of the United States one director at \$1,800 per year and not exceeding two assistant directors of nursing service at \$1,500 per year."

# Jigsaw Assessment

## Jigsaw Card Five: Rank and Pay

**Directions:** Using the knowledge you have gained from your peers' jigsaw presentations, complete the following chart with your Jigsaw Team.

Presented by:

In your own words, write a three to five sentence summary of the information presented.

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What fact surprised your team the most during this card's presentation?

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What questions does your team still have regarding the information presented?

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# Jigsaw Card Six:

## Retirement and Impact

*“Army Nurse Corps” (excerpt), U.S. Army Medical Department, Office of Medical History*

### Retirement

“Both before and during the World War, nurses, although a part of the Army, were considered as neither enlisted nor commissioned personnel. They were appointed by the Surgeon General with the approval of the Secretary of War. Just prior to our entering the World War, in 1917, it was foreseen by members of the Nurse Corps that retirement for them after a specified period of service would eventually become an important issue. Therefore, on January 18, 1917, in a memorandum to the Surgeon General, concerning the Army Nurse Corps, the superintendent of the corps set forth her reasons why retirement was such an important measure. At this time it was proposed that 302 members of the Army Nurse Corps who had served 16 years in the corps be retired on 51 percent of the rate of pay that they were receiving at the time of retirement, with an additional 2 percent for each year of service in excess of 16, but not to exceed 25 percent of such pay, provided that members of the corps who were incapacitated for service by disability incurred in line of duty be allowed 75 percent of the rate of pay they were drawing at the time of retirement. It was proposed further that retirement be compulsory at the age of 55 years. Though the Army appropriation bill which was sent to Congress in the fall of 1917 provided for increase of pay and for retirement at the expiration of 25 years' service on three-quarters pay, the clause pertaining to retirement was eliminated before the bill became law.

“A later bill, seeking retirement privileges for members of the Army Nurse Corps after 20 years' active service at 75 percent of their pay at the time of retirement, exclusive of foreign-service pay, was introduced in both Houses of Congress in the summer of 1919. It passed the Senate but failed to reach the floor of the House before the closing of Congress.”

*Colonel Elizabeth A.P. Vane and Sanders Marble, “Contributions of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps in World War I” (excerpt)*

“The U.S. nurses who served in WWI proved they could save lives and make a difference in patient care close to the battlefield. They proved skilled nursing care improved patients' morbidity and mortality. Women could not only handle adverse conditions but that they were necessary, and the Army recognized that with medals and rank.

“France bestowed the Croix de Guerre on 28 American nurses for their service in WWI. Great Britain awarded the British Royal Red Cross to 69 American nurses and the Military Medal to 2 of them. The U.S. awarded the Distinguished Service Cross (the second highest gallantry medal) to 3 nurses and the Distinguished Service Medal (the highest decoration in noncombat) to 23 more.

“Julia Stimson summed up the perseverance she saw: Nurses ‘at the front are having such wonderful times. They are working terribly hard, sleeping with helmets over their faces and enamel basins on their stomachs, washing in the water they had in their hot-water bags because water is so scarce, operating fourteen hours at a stretch, drinking quantities of tea because there is no coffee and nothing else to drink, wearing men's ordnance socks under their stockings, trying to keep their feet warm in the frosty operating rooms at night, and both seeing and doing such surgical work as they never in their wildest days dreamed of, but all the time unafraid and unconcerned with the whistling, banging shells exploding around them. Oh, they are fine! One need never tell me that women can't do as much, stand as much, and be as brave as men.’

“The women who served in the Army Nurse Corps ‘rendered service “beyond expectations” at a time when women were not even allowed to vote’ in the U.S.”

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### VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM

# Jigsaw Assessment

## Jigsaw Card Six: Retirement and Impact

**Directions:** Using the knowledge you have gained from your peers' jigsaw presentations, complete the following chart with your Jigsaw Team.

Presented by:

In your own words, write a three to five sentence summary of the information presented.

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What fact surprised your team the most during this card's presentation?

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What questions does your team still have regarding the information presented?

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# Memorial/Monument Design Activity Instructions

**Task:** Your team has been tasked with designing an original monument or memorial to be placed at the Nashville National Cemetery. The monument or memorial you design will need to commemorate World War I nurses from Tennessee who, like Mary Gertrude Smith and Inez M. Crigler, served their country with the U.S. Army Nurse Corps. Your team should consider the background knowledge you have gained about the Army Nurse Corps itself. Your team is allowed to conduct research, if needed, to complete this task. In addition to completing a sketch of your design on paper, your team will also need to write a detailed summary of your design choices to describe your design and its meaning to your intended audience.

**Team Brainstorm:** Before you begin your design, take time with your team to answer the following questions. Include the answers to these four questions in the detailed summary you will turn in with the sketch of your design.

What message do you want your monument/memorial to convey? How will the monument/memorial communicate your ideas/message?

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Who is the audience for the monument/memorial?

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From what specific materials will the monument/memorial be made?

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What images, symbols, or words will it include?

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## VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM

# Memorial/Monument Design Summary

In the space below or on a separate sheet of paper, write a detailed summary of your design choices to describe your design and its meaning to your intended audience.

Your team's design summary should answer and expand upon the following questions:

1. What message does your monument/memorial convey? How does your monument/memorial communicate your ideas or message?
2. Who is the intended audience for your monument/memorial?
3. From what specific materials will your monument/memorial be made?
4. What images, symbols, or words will your monument include?

# Memorial/Monument Design Activity Rubric

	Advanced	Proficient	Basic	Emerging
Design of Memorial / Monument	<p>Design is clear, organized, highly detailed, and exceeds expectations.</p> <p>Message is clear and striking to the audience.</p> <p>Design shows an advanced understanding of the task.</p>	<p>Design is clear, organized, and detailed.</p> <p>Message is clear to audience.</p> <p>Design shows a proficient understanding of the task.</p>	<p>Design is clear but lacks detail.</p> <p>Message is vague and unclear to audience.</p> <p>Design shows a basic understanding of the task.</p>	<p>Design is unclear, unorganized, and lacks focus and detail.</p> <p>Message is lost by audience.</p> <p>Design shows little understanding of the task.</p>
Design Summary	<p>Design Summary contains all required components and is exceedingly clear.</p> <p>Design Summary shows an advanced understanding and reflection of information covered in prior research and activities.</p>	<p>Design Summary contains all required components and is clear.</p> <p>Design Summary shows a proficient understanding and reflection of information covered in prior research and activities.</p>	<p>Design Summary contains some of the required components and is clear but lacks detail.</p> <p>Design Summary shows a basic understanding of information covered in prior research and activities.</p>	<p>Design Summary lacks clarity, organization, and detail.</p> <p>Design Summary does not demonstrate understanding of information covered in prior research and activities.</p>



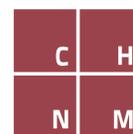
# Nurse Mary Gertrude Smith Boaz

RESEARCHED BY WHITNEY JOYNER



October 26, 1880 - January 21, 1956

**Hometown:** Friendship, Tennessee  
**Entered Service:** May 21, 1918  
**Unit:** Base Hospital 87  
**Rank:** Nurse, U.S. Army (Women's Army Auxiliary Corps)  
**Cemetery:** Section MM, Site 153,  
Nashville National Cemetery  
Madison, Tennessee



ROY ROSENZWEIG  
Center FOR  
History AND  
New Media

## Before the War

Mary Gertrude Smith was born on October 26, 1880, in Friendship, Tennessee to Dr. Richard Filmore Smith and Mrs. Alice Buckley Smith. She was one of nine children, five of whom died in infancy and one of whom died when he was 26 years old. Her father was originally a farmer, but decided to pursue a career as a doctor. In 1888, Richard Filmore Smith attended Vanderbilt Medical College.

Smith's mother was a gifted musician, very well-educated, and came from a prominent family in Henderson County, Tennessee. Throughout her life, Mary Smith went by the name of Gertrude.

In 1885, when Gertrude was five years old, her father purchased the family home where he had been born. In family records, Gertrude's sister, Irene, described it as a "stately old home, with great roomy rooms, cool porches, and galleries." One night, their home caught fire and burned to the ground. There was no insurance. Dr. Smith built a small cottage on the property in its place.



A photograph of Mrs. Alice Buckley Smith, Gertrude's mother. Courtesy of Richard Bradford.

When Gertrude was ten, her family moved to Deport, Texas where her father practiced medicine. The Smith children grew up in a loving home, surrounded by books, music, and horses. As a small town physician, Dr. Smith often worked at all hours, and gave medical care to those less fortunate, regardless of their ability to pay.

In 1897, tragedy struck the Smith family, when Gertrude's father, died. According to an account written by Gertrude's sister, "We moved to Texas on May 2, 1891 and located at Deport, Lamar County. After six years of very successful practice, in which he gave all his time and strength to his profession, his health failed. His family persuaded him to go to Paducah, Kentucky, for a visit and rest with his parents. He became worse and at the home of his parents he lingered for some weeks and died January 27, 1897." Following Dr. Smith's death, the family relocated to San Antonio, Texas.

Gertrude traveled to Cuba as a missionary from 1902 to 1910. In 1910, she returned home from her mission work in Cuba due to health reasons, and once recovered, took up nursing. She was the third generation in her family to pursue a career in the medical field. While studying nursing, she lived with her mother in San Antonio, and enlisted as a U.S. Army Nurse on May 21, 1918.



**Left:** Smith family home in Friendship, Tennessee. Courtesy of Richard Bradford.

**Right:** A photograph of Dr. Richard Filmore Smith, Gertrude's father. Courtesy of Richard Bradford.

# Military Experience

## The Army Nurse Corps

The Army Nurse Corps (ANC) was established in 1901, following the Spanish American War. During the Spanish American War, nurses were recruited to help combat disease and epidemics. The contributions of these nurses made it apparent that there was a need for a permanent nurse corps.

By the time the U.S. entered World War I in 1917, U.S. Army nursing assignments had expanded from three locations to six, including adding a base in San Antonio, Texas, where Smith lived. To increase their numbers, articles ran in newspapers and publications across the country, describing an urgent need for nurses to serve in Army hospitals.

By November 1918, ANC numbers exploded from just over 400 nurses, to over 21,000 officers, 10,000 of whom were serving overseas. According to the Army Nurse Corps Association, "it is estimated that one-third of all American nurses had served in the Army." These nurses included African Americans, though segregation policies delayed their service until after the armistice was signed.

Nurses in World War I served in a variety of venues, including: base hospitals, aviation stations, recruitment camps, and general hospitals. Smith was stationed at base hospitals and mobile stations including Fort Sam Houston, Texas (March to September 1918), Camp Beauregard, Louisiana (October 1918), a mobile station in New York (November 1918).

## Toul, France

As noted in military records, Smith served overseas at her own request. She sailed from Hoboken, New Jersey to France on November 28, 1918 on the *SS Mongolia*, a vessel reconfigured at the start of the war to transport troops and medical personnel. Though the armistice was signed November 11, 1918, sick and wounded soldiers continued to arrive at base hospitals through November and December.

86.	SMITH, M. GERTRUDE	ISS.	NURSE ANC	MRS. ALICE SMITH	MOTHER	409 SOUTH HAMILTON AVE., SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS.
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Passenger list of the *SS Mongolia*, which transported the 70<sup>th</sup> Base Hospital from Hoboken, New Jersey to France, France, November 28, 1918. Courtesy of Ancestry.

### VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM

Smith served alongside other medical personnel at Base Hospital 87 in Toul, France. During the war, two crucial operations took place in this sector: the St. Mihiel Offensive and the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. Patients at Base Hospital 87 ranged from slightly wounded to seriously wounded, and included psychiatric cases, influenza patients, and men suffering gas exposure. In June 1919, Smith returned home, continuing her service at Fort Sam Houston and Fort Bliss, Texas, before being discharged on May 1, 1920.

<b>Smith, M. Gertrude</b>		OFFICER—ORC	
(Surname)	(Christian name)	White	
Residence <b>409 S. Hamilton Ave. San Antonio</b>		<b>Texas</b>	
(Street and house number)	(Town or city)	(County)	(State)
• Born in	<b>Friendship, Tenn. Oct. 26/80</b>		
† Called into active service as	<b>Nurse May 21/18 fr CL.</b>		
Promotions:	<b>None</b>		
Organizations and staff assignments:	<b>Base Hosp. 1 Ft. Sam Houston, Tex. to Sept. 29/18; Camp Beauregard, La. to Oct. 28/18; Mob. Sta. NY to Nov. 28/18; Base Hosp. 87 to June 11/19; Base Hosp. Ft. Sam Houston, Tex. to Jan. 9/20; Base Hosp. Ft. Bliss, Tex. to Disch.</b>		
Principal engagements:	<b>None</b>		
Wounds received in action:	<b>None</b>		
§ Served overseas	<b>Nov. 28/18 to June 11/19 (at own request)</b>		
Hon. disch.	<b>May 1/20</b>		
Was reported	<b>XX</b> per cent disabled on date of discharge, in view of occupation.		
Remarks:	<b>RESERVE NURSE BELIEVED FROM ACTIVE DUTY; NOT DISCHARGED.</b>		
Form No. <b>51c-2</b>	* Give place and date. † Insert (a) grade; (b) arm or staff corps or department; (c) date; (d) source, civil life (CL), RA, NG, ORC, NA; and (e) designation of training camp attended, if any. ‡ Strike out if he did not attend a training camp. § Give dates of departure from and return to the United States.    Give date.		
A. G. O. Mar. 17, 1921.	3-591		



**Left:** U.S. Army World War I Service Card for M. Gertrude Smith, 1918-1920. Courtesy of Ancestry.

**Right:** Two ambulances bringing in wounded to the Red Cross in Souilly, France, April 25, 1919. National Archives and Records Administration (165-WW-47A-004)

## Veteran Experience

Following the war, Smith continued her work as a nurse in San Antonio, Texas. In 1922, Gertrude's mother, Alice Buckley Smith, died. Following her mother's death, Gertrude moved to Delhi, California and worked as a nurse. Sometime between 1922 and 1940, she moved to Los Angeles, California, becoming an evangelist and missionary in the area. It is unclear as to why she moved to Los Angeles, but she did have an aunt living in the area who was a prominent businesswoman and social figure.



Siblings Irene, Richard and Gertrude Smith, 1935.  
Courtesy of Richard Bradford.

In 1941, Smith still lived in Los Angeles, California, where she applied for Social Security.

### VETERANS LEGACY PROGRAM

In 1950, she returned to her birth state and married Reverend John Luther Boaz, in Dickson, Tennessee. Reverend Boaz was a widower who pastored a local Nazarene Church. According to their wedding announcement, John and Gertrude has been acquaintances for many years, having first met at Trevecca College and later during missionary work in Cuba.

On February 6, 1954, after only a few short years of marriage, tragedy struck Smith again when her husband died. Following the death of her husband, Smith remained in Dickson, eventually residing at the Brownwood Nursing Home until her death on January 21, 1956. She died of a heart blockage.



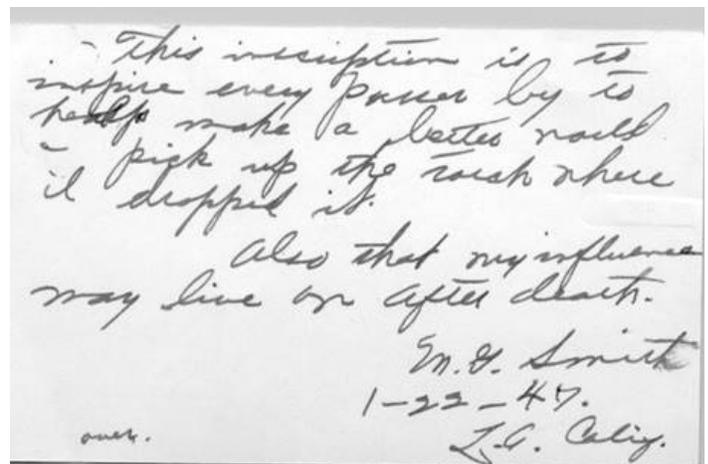
Marriage announcement of Reverend John Luther Boaz to Miss Mary Gertrude Smith, 1950. Courtesy of Richard Bradford.

Almost nine years to the day prior to her death, on January 22, 1947, in Los Angeles, Smith wrote out an inscription for her grave marker that she wanted her family to file away. In it she wrote,

*"M. Gertrude Smith.  
1880-  
Missionary to Cuba 1902-10.  
Veteran W.W. I A.N.C. 1918-20.  
Missionary U.S.A. 1921-*

*This inscription is to inspire every passer by to  
help make a better world -  
pick up the trash where I dropped it.  
Also that my influence may live on after death.*

*M.G. Smith  
1-22-47  
L.A. Calif."*



Note written by Mary Gertrude Smith describing her preferred inscription for her grave marker, January 22, 1947. Courtesy of Richard Bradford.

## Commemoration

When looking at service and sacrifice in war, it is common to think of the hundreds of thousands of soldiers who fought on the battlefields. Unfortunately, we do not always remember the nurses and other medical personnel who served alongside them. Medical staff often worked under extreme conditions. They treated wounds, infections, and burns, and they cared for patients suffering from emotional and psychiatric conditions.

Nurses in World War I played a vital role in the placement and future advancement of women in the military. They served as pioneers who demonstrated that women were not only as capable as their male counterparts, but also an invaluable asset to the military and their country.



Grave of Mary Gertrude Smith in Nashville National Cemetery in Madison, Tennessee, 2018. Courtesy of Whitney Joyner

While the story of Nurse Mary Gertrude Smith Boaz may be one of the forgotten ones, it is important that she be remembered for the crucial role she and countless other nurses played during World War I. Upon her death, Smith was buried at Nashville National Cemetery in Madison, Tennessee. She is one of only six nurses from World War I interred there.

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