Victory!

FAREWELL
FRANCE.

Farewell to France

"November 11, 1918: Monday—The Armistice has been signed, for sure this time. The beginning of the end of this awful war. Everyone was officially requested to remain sane, no demonstration as of last Friday, no drinking!

When the news became official at 11 AM the Mayor, through the town Crier, declared a Holiday, flags were immediately displayed and there was much rejoicing and many tears were shed. [Some of] the local people were sick at heart to realize their sons would never return. Our firing squad fired the twenty-one volleys as an Honorary Salute. The Mayor kissed Col. Clark on both cheeks, and their was much hand shaking, no shouting, no band and very little drinking, many of the local homes, lawns doorways and roofs are decorated with colored lights and the whole town was lighted for the first time since our arrival. Everything looks festive, I was on duty, all day but made some divinity [fudge] in evening to celebrate." *(Maude Frances Essig)*

"During the first portion of the war, nurses were not allowed to socialize with enlisted men. In the spring of 1919, the policy inexplicably changed. Stimson reported that 'the result was well-nigh disastrous.' At one embarkation center . . . at Vannes, the nurses were so overwhelmed with enlisted men's attentions that they requested an immediate reinstatement of the ban forbidding fraternization between enlisted men and nurses. In May 1919, it was reinstated and 'no further trouble was experienced.'" *(Sarnecky, p. 117)*

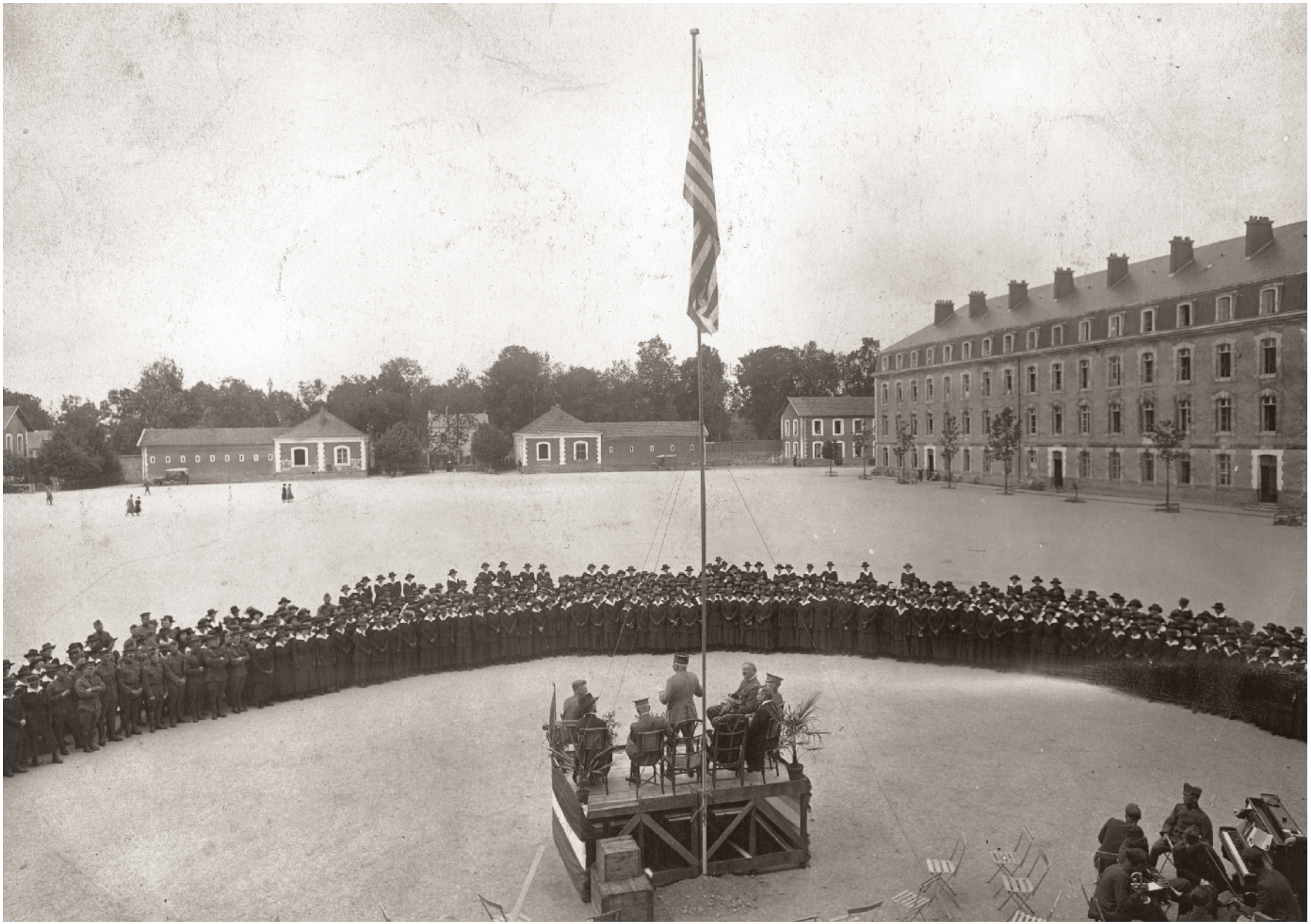
(Opposite) *Farewell party at Base Hospital No. 45.*

La Baule and St. Nazaire

"To facilitate the return of nurses to the United States, beginning in January, 1919, Camp Hospital No. 91, La Baule, functioned as a centralization point for the Army Nurse Corps under orders to return to the United States. The location was chosen because La Baule is a seaside resort not far from the Savenay Hospital Center and the port of St. Nazaire, and but a short distance by train from Brest. The nurses who were sent to La Baule to prepare for return to the United States were housed in four large hotels, built of brick or stone, of excellent construction, but without arrangements for central heating.

The average length of stay for the units at La Baule was from 10 to 15 days, as it required much time to complete the records and make arrangements for the journey to the United States. Frequently, the four hotels were taxed by the many units reporting there simultaneously. Entertainment was provided by the American Red Cross and also by the administrative staff of the hospital in the form of bus rides to St. Nazaire, auto trips, dances twice a week, and moving-picture shows." *(The Medical Dept in the World War, Vol. XIII, p. 347)*

(Opposite) *Nurses' dining room at the Hotel Royal, La Baule, Loire Inferieure, France.*



"Another important concentration camp for nurses was at the Vannes Hospital Center. At Vannes the one hospital, Base Hospital No. 136, was in old French buildings which formed three sides of a quadrangle and which previously had been French barracks. The buildings were very dirty and required an unusual amount of work to convert them into a decently liveable place. There were no proper toilet arrangements, no electricity, and gas in but a few of the buildings. The only advantages of the place were an abundance of room, plenty of potable water, and freedom from mud. This hospital was the nucleus of the center. On May 30, 1919, there were 1,157 nurses at Vannes awaiting orders to return to the United States." *(The Medical Dept in the World War, p. 348)*

(Opposite) *General Foch and other dignitaries speaking before a large group of nurses preparing for departure to the United States during Memorial Day services at Vannes, France, 1919.*

(Above) *The Signal Corps photograph caption states: "Nurses of 30th Hospital Unit on board transport at Brest, France. May 5, 1918." [probably Base Hospital 30]*

Awards and Citations

In the summer of 1918 the War Department gave ANC members the authority to wear wound and service chevrons under the same conditions as officers, field clerks, and enlisted men. Nurses who served honorably in the Army Nurse Corps for a minimum of 15 days during a period of the war were entitled to the Victory "Button," issued for wear in the lapel of civilian clothes.

"For their exceptional service during the period of the war, three Army nurses received the Distinguished Service Cross. The Army recognized the contributions of twenty-five other Army nurses with the Distinguished Service Medal. France bestowed the *Croix de Guerre* on twenty-eight members of the Army Nurse Corps and Great Britain acknowledged sixty-nine American Army nurses with the British Royal Red Cross and gave two the British Military Medal." *(Sarnecky, p. 131)*

"We have been officially notified to provide ourselves with service strips (2) for our one year of foreign service; 'V' gold to be worn on our left sleeve just above the cuff." *(January 19, 1919, Maude Frances Essig)*

(Opposite) *Nurses of Base Hospital No. 41 wearing new service stripes on their sleeves, on board USS* Cartago, *St. Nazaire. March 18, 1919.*

160112

The War of 1914-1918.

American Nursing Corps.

Nurse Miss H. G. McClelland. Philadelphia Unit.

was mentioned in a Despatch from

Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig. K.T. G.C.B., G.C.V.O., K.C.I.E.

dated 7th November 1917

for gallant and distinguished services in the Field.

I have it in command from the King to record His Majesty's

high appreciation of the services rendered.

Winston S. Churchill

Secretary of State for War.

War Office
Whitehall, S.W.
1st March 1919.

Distinguished Service Cross

Possibly the most decorated woman in military service to date, Helen Grace McClelland of Fredericktown, Ohio, was a graduate of the Pennsylvania Hospital School of Nursing. McClelland served as a reserve nurse with the Army Nurse Corps in France and Belgium for Base Hospital No. 10, where her distinguished service on the front lines earned her a citation from General Sir Douglas Haig, the Royal Red Cross First Class from Britain, and the Distinguished Service Medal and Distinguished Service Cross from the United States.

The Distinguished Service Cross is the nation's second highest military decoration. The first army nurse to be awarded the Distinguished Service Cross was Beatrice MacDonald.

In July 1917, MacDonald left the comfort and safety of her unit, Evacuation Hospital No. 2, to move forward on the battlefield as a member of a small surgical team to augment the British No. 61 Casualty Clearing Station, operating in the British area at the time. On the night of August 17, MacDonald was awakened by bombs. While reaching for her tin hat, she was struck by shrapnel in the right eye and cheek. Her tent mate, Helen McClelland, immediately began to care for her. MacDonald was placed on a stretcher, taken to the operating tent, and later transferred to the ophthalmic center in Boulogne. (During World War I, before high-speed evacuation and treatment were available, convalescence from devastating injuries was conducted in theater.) After her recovery, MacDonald, now sightless in her right eye, returned to duty. She remained in Boulogne and assumed chief nurse duties at Evacuation Hospital No. 2 for nine months, until January 1919.

Upon returning from the war, MacDonald was called to Congress, and received the Distinguished Service Cross on February 27, 1919. (Helen McClelland also received the Distinguished Service Cross for her actions that day.)

(Opposite) *Beatrice MacDonald, post-injury, in France.*

"Isabel Stambaugh, Reserve Nurse, Army Nurse Corps, Base Hospital No. 10 (Philadelphia) while with a surgical team at a British Casualty Clearing Station during the German drive of March 21, 1918, in front of Amiens, France, was seriously wounded by shell fire from German aeroplanes." *(Distinguished Service Cross General Order no. 70)*

Stambaugh was a graduate of the Presbyterian Hospital, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and later served for two years as head operating nurse at the same hospital.

Stambaugh served with one of the six U.S. hospitals lent to the British army. She saw most of her service in the evacuation hospital (known as a clearing station to the British army) at Le Treport, behind the Somme sector in France. On March 21, 1918, a shell dropped in the operating room where Stambaugh, a surgeon, and an anaesthetist were working. She was cited by Field Marshal Haig for bravery under fire and was later awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

Silver Star Medal (formerly Citation Star)

During the latter months of World War I, the Citation Star was authorized by Congress to be conferred for gallantry under enemy fire. It consisted of a small (3/16-in. in diameter) silver star device worn on the World War I Victory Medal. In 1932, the Citation Star became the Silver Star Medal. Three World War I Army Nurses were the first known women to receive the Citation Star.

(Opposite) *Isabel Stambaugh [pictured on the far left] with other Red Cross Nurses, date and place unknown.*

(Right) *Isabel Stambaugh in uniform.*

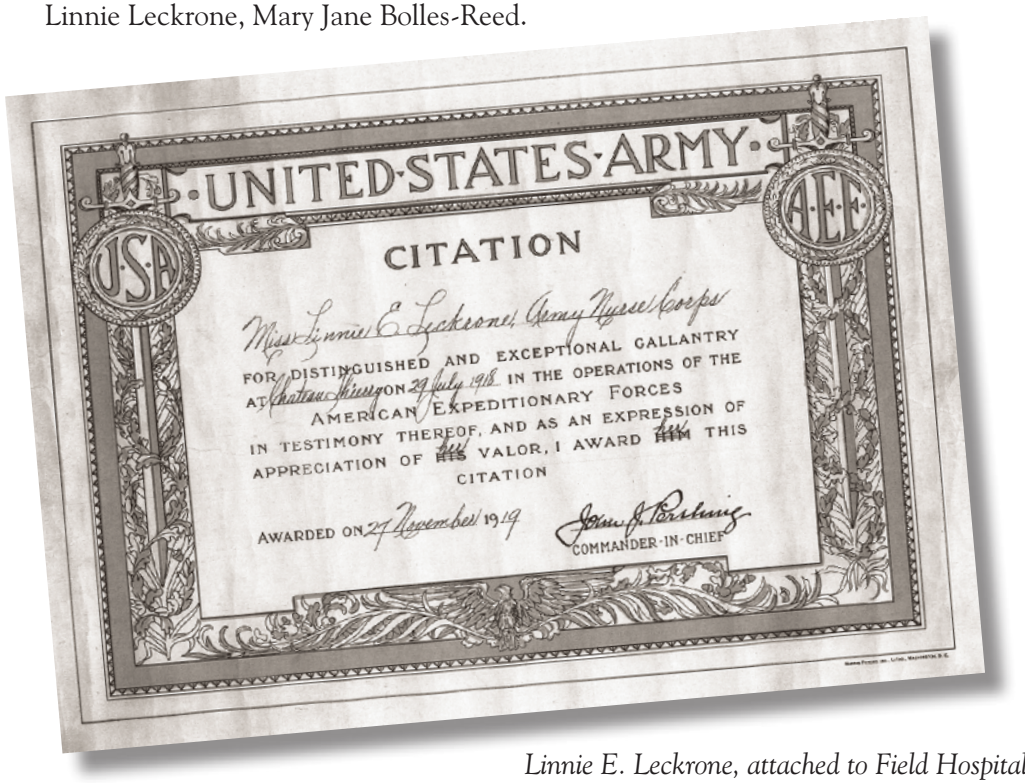
Jane I. Rignel, the chief nurse of Mobile Hospital No 2, was awarded the Citation Star for gallantry in "giving aid to the wounded soldiers under heavy enemy fire" on July 15, 1918, in Bussey-le-Chateau, France. Despite heavy artillery fire that destroyed parts of the hospital, Rignel and other staff continued providing patient care at the front.

(Above) *Jane I. Rignel (holding dog), chief nurse of Mobile Hospital No. 2, was awarded the Citation Star for gallantry in July 1918.*

(Opposite) *The certificate awarding the Citation Star to Linnie Leckrone, Army Nurse Corps, for gallantry in battle, signed by AEF Commander-in-Chief General John Pershing. Female pronouns were used so infrequently in this document that the clerk simply lined through the male ones.* (Photograph courtesy of Mary Jane Bolles-Reed)

The two other recipients, Linnie E. Leckrone and Irene Robar, both of the Army Nurse Corps, were attached to Field Hospital No. 127. They were awarded the Citation Star for gallantry while "attending to the wounded during [an] artillery bombardment" on July 29, 1918, in Chateau-Thierry France. Leckrone and Robar were volunteer members of a six-person shock team that provided resuscitative care to trauma patients by augmenting a forwardly deployed hospital.

The three women likely never knew the significance of their awards, for the Citation Star was usually posted in orders over a year after the event and never formerly presented to the recipients. In 1932 all three women were authorized to exchange their Citation Stars for the Silver Star Medal in a paperwork process that was considered a formality. In July 2007, the acting Surgeon General of the U.S. Army presented the Silver Star Medal to the daughter of Linnie Leckrone, Mary Jane Bolles-Reed.


UNITED STATES ARMY

U.S.A. A.E.F.

CITATION

Miss Linnie E. Leckrone, Army Nurse Corps

FOR DISTINGUISHED AND EXCEPTIONAL GALLANTRY AT Chateau Thierry ON 29 July 1918 IN THE OPERATIONS OF THE AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES

IN TESTIMONY THEREOF, AND AS AN EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION OF ~~HIS~~ her VALOR, I AWARD ~~HIM~~ her THIS CITATION

AWARDED ON 27 November 1919

John J. Pershing
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

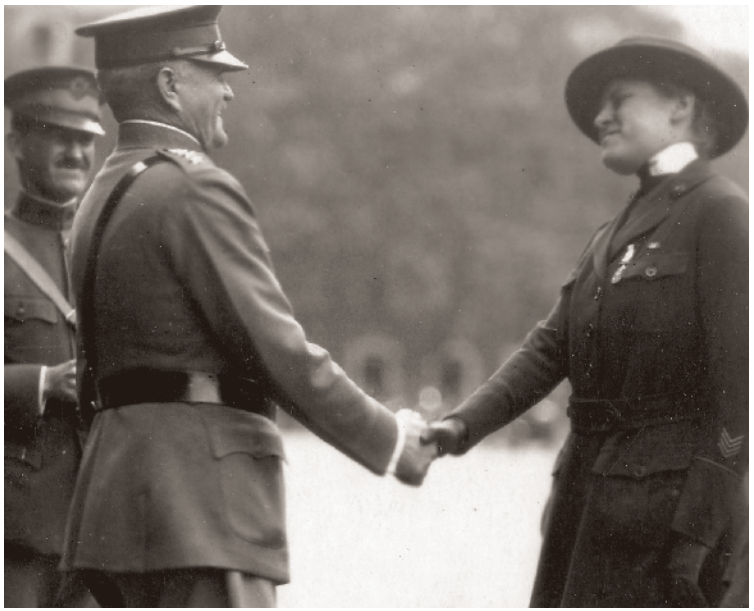
Linnie E. Leckrone, attached to Field Hospital No. 127, who was awarded the Citation Star for gallantry in July 1918.

Irene Robar, Army Nurse Corps, attached to Field Hospital No. 127, was awarded the Citation Star for gallantry while tending to the wounded during an artillery bombardment on July 29, 1918.

Distinguished Service Medal

"Stimson was recognized by the United States, Great Britain, and France for her tireless efforts during the war, which contributed to reduced mortality rates in military hospitals. She was awarded the American Distinguished Service Medal; the British Royal Red Cross, 1st Class; the French *Médaille de la Reconnaissance Française*; the *Médaille d'Hygiéne Publique*; and the International Red Cross Florence Nightingale Medal for her services during the war and recovery period." *(Pocklington, p. 32)*

(Left and Below) *Julia C. Stimson, Chief of Army Nurse Corps, being decorated with the Distinguished Service Medal by General John J. Pershing, Tours, France. June 5, 1919.*



Summary

On the day the armistice was signed, November 11, 1918, there were in the service, or under orders to proceed to their first station, 3,524 regular nurses and 17,956 reserve nurses, making a total of 21,480. All were experienced professional women who volunteered to serve a draftee army.

Army nurses came from all over the United States to take care of their brothers and neighbors. Twenty years earlier, during the Spanish-American War, nurses were kept safe in camps far from the lines, but by 1918 nurses sought out service on the front lines. With little idea of the conditions they would face, these brave and dedicated nurses proved themselves capable of acting heroically under fire, as well as serving essential roles as members of healthcare teams whose dedication and skills significantly reduced the morbidity and mortality rates of the soldiers in their care. Although remaining largely unrewarded for their service, the accomplishments of World War I nurses would forever change the Army Nurse Corps.

When the influenza pandemic peaked in 1918, nurses were asked yet again to serve in hospitals across the nation, providing care for those stricken and training the next generation of nurses. By the war's end in 1918, the total capacity of the 153 base hospitals, 66 camp hospitals, and 12 convalescent camps operating was 192,844 normal and 276,347 emergency beds, of which 184,421 were occupied.

The 1920s brought Army nurses a rudimentary rank system endorsed by the Army leadership, the soldiers they cared for, the Army Medical Department, and the civilian nursing community. From 1918 on, military nurses were an essential element in the provision of medical care at the front.

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