



NAVY NURSE CORPS LEGENDS



THE SACRED TWENTY



- On **May 13, 1908**, President Theodore Roosevelt signed the Naval Appropriations Bill that authorized the establishment of the Nurse Corps as a unique component of the Navy.
- The new Nurse Corps was comprised of **20 experienced nurses**—a superintendent (Esther Hasson), two chief nurses (Martha Pringle and Victoria White) and 17 others who together would be remembered as the **"Sacred Twenty."**



"We learned rapidly the naval standards and the jargon of the Navy; we became adept in diplomacy, which, as you all know, is the art of letting someone else have your way.

Slowly our numbers increased and little by little our influence extended and our own standards of nursing and administration were incorporated in the Navy hospitals."

~Lenah Sutcliffe Higbee on the beginnings of the Navy Nurse Corps



HOW TO BECOME A NAVY NURSE IN 1908



- Prospective Navy nurses were required to travel to the Naval Hospital Washington, D.C., at their own expense and take an **oral and written examination** assessing their professional knowledge, moral character and physical fitness.
- Requirements included: **nursing school graduates; experience in medical and surgical care; and treating patients with communicable diseases.**



DEMOGRAPHICS



Average age: 34 years old
(youngest =25, oldest =49)

Average length of naval service: 11.15 years

Places of Origin: Maryland (5), Pennsylvania (3), Canada (3), Washington, D.C. (1), Indiana (1), Iowa (1), Michigan (1), New Jersey (1), New Hampshire (1), New York (1), Tennessee (1) and Wisconsin (1).



NAVY MEDICINE *FAST FACTS*



SACRED TWENTY MUSTER



**ESTHER
HASSON**

Hasson was the first individual appointed to the Navy Nurse Corps (**August 1908**). She served as nurse superintendent from 1908 to 1911.



**MARTHA
PRINGLE**



**VICTORIA
WHITE**



**J. BEATRICE
BOWMAN**



**SARA
COX**



**CLARE
DECEU**



**MARY
DEBOSE**



**ELIZABETH
HEWITT**



**LENAH S.
HIGBEE**



**ESTELLE
HINE**



**DELLA V.
KNIGHT**



**ELIZABETH
LEONHART**



**FLORENCE
MILBURN**



**MARGARET
MURRAY**



**SARA B.
MYER**



**ETHEL R.
PARSONS**



**ADAH M.
PENDLETON**



**ISABELLE
ROY**



**BONIFACE
SMALL**



**ELIZABETH
WELLS**

