



NAVY NURSE CORPS LEGENDS



NURSES IN THE VIETNAM WAR

- In the Vietnam War, Navy nurses served at **Station Hospital Saigon** and **Naval Support Activity (NSA) Hospital Da Nang**, with a **surgical team** supporting humanitarian efforts, aboard the hospital ships **Repose** and **Sanctuary** as well as **Military Sea Transportation Service (MSTS) vessels** ferrying troops into theater.



- Navy nurses cared for **tens of thousands** of wounded service personnel while in theater.



BRINKS BARRACKS BOMBING

- Navy medical personnel first reported to Saigon in **1963** where they established a station hospital. For a time, this **100-bed hospital**, located in a 5-story building, was the sole naval medical facility in theater. Many of the officers assigned there were quartered in the **Brinks Hotel (Brinks BOQ)**.
- On **Dec. 24, 1964**, the BOQ was targeted by a Viet Cong car bomb. Sixty-five officers were wounded in the blast, among them **4 Navy nurses**: Lts. Frances Crumpton, Ruth Ann Mason, Ann Darby Reynolds, and Barbara Wooster.
- Despite their own injuries, these nurses refused medical attention until every wounded service member had been treated. They were later **awarded Purple Hearts**, marking the first time Navy nurses received this honor.

At the time of the explosion I had just returned from Christmas shopping and was in the lobby of the BOQ. It seemed for a few seconds that the sky had fallen on us, but then, running outside of the building I realized for the first time the full impact of the situation, as men came from the building wounded and bleeding. My first concern was for the other Navy nurses still in the building and when I found them to be alright, we decided we had much work to do—and so went the remainder of the evening.

~Lt. Ruth Ann Mason, NC, USN





NAVY MEDICINE *FAST FACTS*



There was no clock as long as the patient care needs were there. A team would go 24, 36, or 48 hours if needed. We used common sense and allowed staff who could go no longer some time to rest. Somehow we managed. No one ever complained.

*~Capt. Marie Joan Brouillette, NC, USN
Naval Station Hospital Da Nang*

THE NAVY'S COMBAT HOSPITAL

- As troop deployments surged and the Vietnam War escalated into a brutal and pervasive conflict, Navy medical personnel began reporting to **Da Nang** in central Vietnam to stand up a station hospital.
- By the summer of 1966, the NSA hospital in Da Nang had become a **sanctuary of advanced medical care** boasting a concentration of specialties unmatched elsewhere in Vietnam, save for the two hospital ships offshore.
- Between September 1966 and May 1970, **95 Navy nurses** were assigned there. These nurses were a constant presence amidst the trauma, providing not only essential medical care but also crucial comfort and support to the wounded. Their efforts were an indispensable part of the hospital's ability to function and offer hope in the face of immense suffering.



HOSPITAL SHIP NURSING

- By 1967, the recommissioned **USS Repose** and the newly arrived **USS Sanctuary** significantly bolstered Navy Medicine's capabilities in Vietnam. Each ship was a state-of-the-art medical facility strategically positioned off the Vietnamese coast to provide crucial and immediate care.
- Each ship was equipped with helicopter landing decks enabling swift patient transfers—some within an hour of injury. During the war, these ships collectively accommodated over **29,000** helicopter landings.
- Aboard each of these mobile medical centers, there were up to **30 skilled nurses** at a given time, delivering cutting-edge nursing care, and directly impacting the survival and recovery of thousands of service members.
- Repose and Sanctuary served as essential pillars of medical support during the war. These ships collectively admitted / treated over **41,000 patients** during the war.