

# Noble Tradition, History of Excellence

*Caring for our Nation's veterans evolved from an unexpected necessity into an honored tradition. As nursing matured into a formal clinical profession, and modern practice standards were developed, VA Nursing Service became an integral element in VA health care delivery.*



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<p><b>1930</b> VA Nursing Service started with 2,500 registered nurses and took its present shape when three Federal agencies responsible for veterans programs consolidated into the new Veterans Administration.</p>	<p><b>1976</b> RNs outnumbered nursing assistants for the first time in VA.</p>
<p><b>1942</b> World War II – More than 7,000 VA employees, 1,000 of them nurses, left to join the armed forces. VA staff shortages became so acute that the Army detailed enlisted men to VA hospitals as attendants.</p>	<p><b>1990</b> Congress passed the Nurse Pay Comparability Act, the first major restructuring of VA nurse pay since 1946. The act gave VA medical centers authority and flexibility to establish locally competitive, nurse pay rates to deal with nurse shortages.</p>
<p><b>1946</b> VA RNs were given new professional status and compensated financially, based on experience, education, and competencies, independent of position. Nurse Professional Standards Boards (NPSB) were created to provide professional, peer review recommendations for appointments, promotions, special advancements, and disciplinary actions.</p>	<p><b>1990s</b> VA provided clinical experience to one out of every four professional nurses in the country (nearly 30,000 student nurses a year) through affiliations with 461 nursing schools.</p>
<p><b>1950s</b> Education became the hallmark of VA nursing, stressing the importance of advancing nurses' skills and knowledge in order to provide high-quality care.</p>	<p><b>1950s, 1960s, 1990s, 2000s</b> VA nurses continue to answer the call to serve during wartime.</p>
<p><b>1963</b> VA Nursing Service was the first health care organization to establish a position for doctorally prepared nurse researchers, formalizing the research function within VA Nursing Service.</p>	<p><b>2002</b> The Office of Nursing Services was organizationally elevated, reporting directly to the Under Secretary for Health.</p>
<p><b>1973</b> Nurse Practitioners were appointed as primary providers of patient care. The use of Clinical Nurse Specialist roles also expanded.</p>	<p><b>2003</b> The Nurse Executive position in all medical centers was endorsed by the VHA National Leadership Board as a full member of the senior management team.</p> <p>VA (Tampa VAMC) received the first ever Magnet Prize Award for Exemplary Innovation, from the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC).</p>

