

CAPTAIN NELLIE JANE DeWITT, NC, U. S. NAVY
DIRECTOR, NURSE CORPS, U.S. NAVY

NAVAL HISTORY DIVISION

Captain DeWitt was born in Susquehanna, Pennsylvania and was graduated from the Stamford Hospital Training School, Stamford, Connecticut, before entering the Navy Nurse Corps during World War I. Her first station of duty was at Charleston, South Carolina. During this period she also had duty aboard the USS MARTHA WASHINGTON, a transport engaged in carrying dependents and military personnel.

After World War I she was placed on inactive status in October 1920 but was reappointed to active duty in October 1922. She was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant, May 1, 1943, to Lieutenant Commander, October 1, 1944, and to Commander in December 1945. The position of Superintendent of the Nurse Corps carries with it the rank of Captain, to which rank she succeeded upon termination of the final leave of her predecessor, Captain Sue S. Dauser, NC, USN, on April 1, 1946.

From the time of her reappointment in October 1922, the record of Captain DeWitt is an unbroken succession of service at naval medical installations all over this country and overseas, including Newport, Rhode Island; Portsmouth, Norfolk, and Quantico, Virginia; Mare Island, California; Bremerton, Washington; Brooklyn, New York; and Washington, D.C. During that time she also took postgraduate work in Dietetics, under Navy affiliation, at the George Washington University, Washington, D.C., and also at Miss Farmer's School of Cookery in Boston.

In April 1937, Captain DeWitt was promoted to the grade of Chief Nurse and in that capacity served at U. S. Naval hospitals in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; Norfolk, Virginia; the Hospital Corps School, San Diego, California; and at Corona and Mare Island, California. In September 1944 she went to the Hawaiian Islands to be in charge of nursing activities at the U. S. Naval Hospital, Aiea Heights, with special duties as Senior Nurse on the Islands. She continued her duties in Hawaii until November 1945, when she came to the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Navy Department, Washington, D.C.

She reported to the Nurse Corps Office in the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery on November 9, 1945, to assume duty as Superintendent, Nurse Corps, U. S. Navy, with the rank of Captain succeeding to that rank on April 1, 1946. Act of Congress of April 16, 1947 made the Navy Nurse Corps a staff corps of the U. S. Navy and gave its members permanent commissioned officer status, with commensurate pay and allowances. In accordance with this legislation, Captain DeWitt's title was changed from Superintendent to Director.

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Captain DeWitt has the Victory Medal, the American Defense Service Medal, the Asiatic-Pacific Area and American Campaign Medals and the World War II Victory Medal.

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