
From RANCA to ANCA

*Thirty Years of
Camaraderie and Service*



The History of the Army Nurse Corps Association:

Bringing Army Nurses Together to

Preserve the Past,

Focus on the Present,

and Build the Future

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By

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Foreword

I am delighted to present the history of the Army Nurse Corps Association (ANCA) as written by Colonel (Ret.) Mary Sarnecky, DNSc, RN, FNP. We are very fortunate to procure the services of the Army Nurse Corps' most preeminent historian to write this monograph, since her perspective is invaluable to provide the discussion of the major trends and processes of the organization. This work documents the 33-year story of this organization from its inception to current times. The lessons of Army Nurse Corps Association's history are rooted in the uniqueness of the members' ongoing commitment to their military profession.

It is my hope that those who read this account will find both practical information and inspiration. I urge all who read the history to reflect on the dedication, focus, and fun of the collective experience of this group. I hope this absorbing history will enhance your appreciation of the Army Nurse Corps Association.

Jeri Graham, Colonel, U.S. Army (Retired)
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The year was 1976. The bicentennial United States was commemorating its 200th birthday. At the same time, the country was lingering in the doldrums of the Cold War. The Army was undergoing a renaissance in the traumatic wake of the recent Vietnam Conflict. The daily existence of Army nurses was marked by predictable doses of stress and strains tempered by a prevalent atmosphere of spirited camaraderie, patriotic duty, and professional fulfillment. On balance, life was good. Nonetheless, that way of life as an Army nurse always came to a conclusion with the inevitability of military separation or retirement. But often after unwelcome endings come fresh and amazing beginnings.

Genesis

The year was 1976. At that time, a small enclave of retired Army Nurse Corps officers resurrected a previously discussed idea—the creation of a formal alliance of retired colleagues. And in the final analysis, what began as a simple, informal aspiration grew with time into a powerful and effective partnership--the Retired Army Nurse Corps Association (RANCA).

Many years before RANCA's actual founding, however, another attempt to shape a similar coalition proved largely unsuccessful. And several years after that, another savvy collection of retired Army nurses once more proposed forming a military nurse association that would embrace retired nurses from all three military branches—the Army, Navy, and Air Force. That proposal also faltered prior to becoming a reality. Planners decided that such a group would have the potential to become too large, unwieldy and less sociable; could require costly paid staff; and might needlessly replicate efforts of other already existing, more generic military retiree organizations such as The Retired Officers Association. In 1976, a third attempt to form a union of retired Army nurses took root and ultimately blossomed.

Early Days

The origins of RANCA as we know it today can be traced to a meeting held at the Windcrest Methodist Church in San Antonio, Texas, in the autumn of 1976. General Madelyn N. Parks, then chief of the Army Nurse Corps, arranged the small gathering with the assistance of General Lillian Dunlap, a retired Corps chief. Attendees included retired Colonels Jeanne Treacy and Doris M. Cobb, and

about 46 other retired Army nurses living in the local area. The primary item on General Parks' agenda was the disposition of a number of valuable artifacts, memorabilia, and important corps chiefs' formal portraits that had been on display at Delano Hall, the home of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Nursing (WRAIN) at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC. General Parks expressed her concern that with the imminent institutional closure of WRAIN these valuable elements of the Army Nurse Corps heritage might at worst be lost or at best be rendered inaccessible in some remote Army repository. She suggested that the Army Medical Department (AMEDD) Museum might be an appropriate venue for their permanent display. But the museum's location at that time was in a dark, cramped area of the basement in Blesse Hall, building 2264, on the former Medical Field Service School quadrangle at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. For the AMEDD Museum to be an adequate, appealing location for the Army Nurse Corps historical memorabilia, it would require additional square footage and need to be more accessible.

After some discussion of these and other topics, the small but determined ad hoc group finally decided to form two related but distinct organizations of retired Army nurses to meet two separate objectives. In the beginning, they envisioned the first alliance, RANCA, as a permanent social group dedicated to maintaining a spirit of comradeship and amity among its members. Its primary purpose would be to facilitate communication across the membership and keep retired Army nurses in contact with one another by such means as a membership roster, a quarterly newsletter, and a biennial convention. Other original organizational objectives were to facilitate dissemination of information from the chief of the Army Nurse Corps to its retired members and to support the Army Nurse Corps Foundation in its mission of preserving the Army Nurse Corps history. Since the founders intended RANCA to be first and foremost a social entity and one that deliberately steered clear of dealing with issues and causes, they envisioned the sole intent of the second provisional federation, the Army Nurse Corps Foundation, as spearheading and supporting the creation of a new, more powerful AMEDD Museum at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. These ambitious plans involved establishing a bigger AMEDD museum in an all-new purpose-built building at a prime location on-post at Fort Sam Houston. This then was the genesis of the contemporary AMEDD Museum, a reality of today that never would have come to fruition without the vision, influence, and diligence of a legion of determined retired, former, and active Army nurses.

— The Army Nurse Corps Foundation —

The state of Texas chartered the Army Nurse Corps Foundation in September 1977. The group's original board of directors first met in December 1977. Its organizational objectives were to collect memorabilia and to seek and amass funds for the construction of an enhanced AMEDD Museum to safeguard and exhibit objects that showcased the AMEDD tradition. The Army Nurse Corps Foundation's existence as a tax-exempt organization spanned a short period, only ten years. Nonetheless, those few years were highly productive.

A number of retired Army Nurse Corps officers committed themselves to achieving the group's objectives. Colonel Rita Cleveland led the foundation as its first president with Colonel Edith Whitelaw serving as vice-president and Colonel Marian Kennedy acting as the first treasurer. Other foundation board members included a representative of the National Bank of Fort Sam Houston, twenty Army Nurse Corps officers, two civilian advisory members, and the former chiefs of the Army Nurse Corps. Colonel Cleveland, whose dignified bearing masked a cheerful personality and a delightful sense of humor, recalled that she was not present at the foundation's first organizational meeting. She later discovered that, in her absence, the group had elected her as its president. In that capacity, she organized a large group of Army Nurse Corps retirees in San Antonio who then collected names and addresses and prepared thousands of solicitations for donations that were mailed out to AMEDD active and retired personnel, other military members, and interested civilian benefactors.

Lieutenant Colonel Margaret Canfield's active participation typified the contributions made by many of the early, hard-working volunteers. She served on the foundation's executive board, addressed and mailed fund-raising correspondence, performed various types of data entry such as recording donations and registering supporters, deposited funds at the bank, and later volunteered for countless hours of service at the museum's gift shop—a small retail boutique that featured military medical books, items of interest to members of the AMEDD, and other artifacts. The profits from the gift shop added considerably to the museum's coffers.

As scores of Army nurse retirees carried out various similar and other assigned responsibilities associated with the foundation, the curator of

the existing AMEDD Museum investigated earlier efforts undertaken by various Army corps to build branch-specific museums at other far-flung Army posts. He discovered that active and retired soldiers and the particular branch's benefactors originally financed almost all these museums. When construction of the particular facility reached completion, the group then deeded the museum building to the local Army authorities who subsequently undertook responsibility for maintenance and staffing.

Simultaneously, General Dunlap was working behind the scenes to gain the backing of a few powerful allies. She conferred with General Spurgeon Neel, the commander of Health Services Command, with the Brooke Army Medical Center hospital commander, and with General Charles Pixley, commandant of the Academy of Health Sciences, soliciting their support. General Pixley in turn wrote the surgeon general asking for his approval and that of the AMEDD corps chiefs. He also asked that land be made available for the new museum at the corner of Harry Wurzbach and Stanley Roads on post at Fort Sam Houston. That request met with approval.

At the 1982 RANCA convention in San Diego, California, RANCA members in attendance voted to support a pledge totaling \$50,000 for the museum's building fund. They specified that the money be used to defray expenses incurred in erecting a library within the museum complex. At the time of the 1982 reunion, the foundation already had collected \$21,000, the bulk of which they invested pro tem in two Certificates of Deposit. For a while thereafter, only a few small donations trickled in. To elicit more contributions, RANCA mailed out a special request letter in November 1983 asking individual members to donate to the RANCA pledge. The mailing resulted in a bountiful response. In March 1984, the foundation realized its goal of raising the entire sum of \$50,000.

On 1 May 1984, Colonel Cleveland passed the president's gavel to Colonel Virginia Brown. Assisting Colonel Brown as vice-president, secretary, and treasurer respectively were Colonel Ellen Gann, Lieutenant Colonel Regina Schiffman, and Mr. F.R. Kirkpatrick. In the more than seven-year period of Colonel Cleveland's tenure, the group also collected almost 200 Army Nurse Corps-related historical heirlooms destined for future display within the museum. At the same time, the foundation had a healthy account balance of \$31,000. It subsequently resolved to contribute another grant of \$25,000 to the AMEDD Museum Foundation for the design and planting of a display area called the Army Nurse Corps Memorial Garden. This serene setting on the facility's grounds was dedicated to the memory of all deceased Army nurses. The intent was that, "a tranquil garden area

seen immediately by visitors as they enter the museum [would] be a reminder of all Army Nurses who have given so much over the years.” In donating \$50,000 for the library and \$25,000 for the display garden, the Army Nurse Corps Foundation was the first group to step forward and realize their original fund-raising goals and finalize their pledges to the AMEDD Museum. However, the foundation made more donations to the AMEDD Museum as time passed. From 1984 to 1987, additional contributions totaled \$42,327. Clearly, Army Nurse Corps volunteers did not only reach but actually exceeded their pledges. And their contributions were not limited to monetary gifts and historical artifacts. Also included in their endowment were their very personal and special gifts of time and talent.

After one decade of the foundation’s existence, the board of directors deemed the work of the trailblazing Army Nurse Corps Foundation complete and the organization was formally and legally disbanded in 1987. The board declared that the goals of the foundation had been accomplished. Moreover, its purposes had been fulfilled above and beyond expectations. Consequently, the foundation’s remaining financial assets were subsequently transferred to the AMEDD Museum Foundation. Future fundraising became the exclusive responsibility of the AMEDD Museum Foundation. Colonel Brown, the final president of the Army Nurse Corps Foundation, wrote:

Those who worked so hard to get the organization started and then continued to work throughout the years to ensure its success should be commended for a job well done. Also, many thanks to all the Army Nurse Corps officers and friends who have supported the organization with their time and money. The Army Nurse Corps members should be very proud of their contributions toward making an Army Medical Department Museum a reality.

Years later General Dunlap revealed her motivation to work so assiduously for the preservation of AMEDD history and the creation of the new AMEDD museum. Her sentiments echo those of all the Army Nurse Corps officers who helped to make the museum a reality.

I realized the importance of trying to preserve [our] history and make it known... But so much of it is lost and it won’t be found if we don’t do something about it, because the people who made it are going to be gone.

I think this is one thing that General Spurgeon Neel and I have talked about related to our museum. We feel an obligation to try to get that history, that we were part of making, recorded and available to the museum...

We have talked about lessons learned. We learn from our history, and we have to have it available to us.

At the same time these Army nurse retiree-activists were working tirelessly to establish the Army Nurse Corps Foundation and implement their charter goals, they also were launching RANCA in an equally expeditious manner.

The Founding of RANCA

Following the autumn 1976 get-together at the Windcrest Methodist Church in San Antonio, the small but motivated band of retirees decided to form a fact-finding committee to ascertain the feasibility of forming an organization of retired Army nurses. They selected Colonel Cobb to act as the group's president with Colonel Marian A. Tierney serving as secretary and Colonel Sally Rawlins Hayes as vice-president and treasurer. Other members of the initial board of directors who served prior to the first biennial election of officers included Lieutenant Colonels Alma B. Anderson, Ann B. Cost, and Augusta L. Short and Colonel Whitelaw. The original cohort resolved to discover the level of popular interest among retired Army Nurse Corps officers in creating a formal association. To answer this question, Colonel Cobb devised a questionnaire in November 1976 while working in a little room at the back of her house that she jokingly dubbed "the first unofficial RANCA office." She mailed her survey to over 2,400 retirees. It asked the retirees if they would support and participate in the proposed RANCA organization. Over 1,100 replies filled Colonel Cobb's mailbox and they were overwhelmingly positive. Of those responding, 1,053 favored forming a retiree organization while 28 opposed the idea. Of the total number of Army nurses who wrote back, 928 sent contributions of from \$1 to \$20 to subsidize the costs involved in the original mailing.

Encouraged by the survey results, Colonel Cobb implemented the next step of the developmental process, the creation of RANCA's by-laws. Lieutenant Colonels Cost and Anderson teamed up with Colonel Cobb on this project. The trio received advice and backing from Lieutenant Colonel Anderson's husband, a Judge Advocate General (JAG) officer. The Fort Sam Houston JAG office added their recommendations after studying the document and the U.S. Army JAG Association and the Women's Army Corps Association shared facsimiles of their constitutions to serve as writing templates. Soon, this industrious threesome finished writing RANCA's initial

version of organizational by-laws.

The original document outlined a number of fundamentals. It established San Antonio, Texas, as the site of the corporation's main office. It specified two levels of membership—regular and associate. Regular members were those who had retired from active or reserve service as Army nurses. Associate membership applied to two sub-categories of Army nurses. First it included those still on active duty who were eligible for retirement and secondly, those former Army Nurse Corps officers who had served previous tours on active duty and were honorably discharged. The legal directives also made provision for annual membership dues, set soon thereafter at \$5 per year. They directed that a biennial meeting take place as well as any necessary special meetings called by the president, board of directors, or more than ten percent of the voting members. Additionally, the by-laws vested authority for managing the corporation in the hands of a board of directors—the president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and no less than five directors representing various geographical regions of the country. These areas represented Army nurses residing in the northeast, the middle states, the southeast, the central, and the western states. The by-laws named all former chiefs of the Army Nurse Corps as honorary members of the board, serving in an advisory capacity. They also provided guidelines for the formation and conduct of committees, detailed necessary financial points, and identified a process for amending the by-laws. The final organizational step involved forwarding the document to the state of Texas for its seal of approval. State officials promptly chartered RANCA and issued a certificate of incorporation in August 1977.

The First Biennial Conventions

The board then turned their thoughts to organizing the first biennial convention, set to take place in 1978. Lieutenant Colonel Alice Weinstein and Colonel Erna Thompson volunteered to serve as the convention co-chairs and this proved an onerous responsibility because of the limited time available to plan the meeting. In spite of many challenges, the duo met with great success. They organized the first biennial convention to coincide with Fiesta in San Antonio on 14 and 15 April 1978, thinking that this would allow those attending the convention to also take part in the Fiesta celebrations. However, the city was entertaining throngs of visitors at the same time and that made finding a large block of accommodations

difficult. The committee searched and located lodging for most of the attendees at the Broadway Plaza Hotel on Loop 410 where a single room for one person was available for \$26 a night. RANCA arranged for buses to transport the attendees to various activities. The Academy of Health Sciences hosted the convention meetings in the Blesse Auditorium at Fort Sam Houston where 326 enthusiastic registrants converged. Colonel Treacy described the opening ceremonies as “solemn, colorful, and inspiring, [and] befitting our organization.” Opening speakers included the San Antonio mayor and Major General Kenneth Dirks, the Academy of Health Sciences superintendent; both welcomed the attendees. General Parks, the chief of the Army Nurse Corps, presented a contemporary update on the status of the Army Nurse Corps. Colonel Cleveland, president of the Army Nurse Corps Foundation; Major General Kenneth D. Orr, chair of the Steering Committee of the AMEDD Museum Foundation; and Colonel Teresa Touroney, representing Army Nurse Corps recruiting, all addressed the group. Thirteen of the Army nurse Prisoners of War (POWs) in the Philippines during World War II were the honored guests at the first conference. They shared with the group memorabilia from their years of detention including a number of items they had crafted out of the scarce resources available to them while prisoners. They used the articles to sustain themselves throughout their internment at the hands of the Japanese Army. One such item, for instance, was a knitted undergarment that one of the nurse POWs fashioned with improvised bamboo knitting needles, substituting string for yarn. Other elements of the convention program included a luncheon honoring the POWs and a reception paying tribute to the current and past corps chiefs.

A nominating committee composed of one member from each geographical area had conferred and prepared a slate of candidates earlier for the first election of RANCA officers. The committee included Major Martha L. Lark, Lieutenant Colonels Elizabeth M. Breitung and Evelyn V. Kay, and Colonels Margaret A. Ewen, and Mary C. Quinn. The first officers and directors elected at the convention in accordance with the organization’s by-laws included Colonels Jeanne Treacy, president; Stella Bryant, vice-president; Catherine Betz, secretary; and Doris Cobb, treasurer. Comprising the team of elected regional directors were Major Edith Aynes, Colonels Nellie Henley and Mildred I. Clark, and Lieutenant Colonels James Downey and Marion Steinhilber. At the post-convention board meeting, the board appointed a number of committee chairpersons. Those accepting the appointments included Colonel Louise Rosasco, Constitution and

Bylaws; General Dunlap, Nomination; Colonel Ewen, Newsletter; Colonel Kennedy, Finance and Budget; Lieutenant Colonel Margaret Connolly, Membership; Colonel Doris Frazier, Historian; Colonel Erin Cannon, Memorial Blanchfield Army Hospital; and Lieutenant Colonel Anderson, Assistant Secretary.

Colonel Rosasco served as the first chair of the Rules and Amendments Committee. In that capacity, she put forth several suggestions for amending the by-laws. The first, originally submitted by Colonel Clark, proposed that the membership consider a provision for honorary membership status for civilians who had made important contributions to the cause of Army nursing. The second submission asked that Army Nurse Corps officers still serving on active duty but eligible for retirement be included in the regular membership category as opposed to the associate group. Another proposal raised the question of establishing a category for lifetime membership. Those in attendance considered all of these submissions during the proceedings of the 1978 convention. However, they took no action, deciding that the points merited more extensive study and reflection. They recommended that the ideas be re-considered at the 1980 convention.

In retrospect, Colonel Treacy affirmed that the groundbreaking 1978 RANCA convention “was a magnificent and memorable occasion.” She noted that spending so much time with dear old friends “was a special treat. . .!” It was a unique opportunity “to renew old acquaintances and to get caught up-to-date” with former comrades in arms. Colonel Treacy aptly concluded that for her and all the attendees, the first biennial convention “was a dream come true.”

The second biennial RANCA convention took place at the La Mansion del Norte Hotel in San Antonio from 27 to 29 April 1980. It also was a well-attended meeting. A total of 630 members registered for the event while approximately 600 actually were present at the gatherings. Attendance at the luncheon, featuring a presentation by former Philippine POW and retired Army nurse Lieutenant Colonel H.R. Brantley, totaled 730 participants. The meeting’s celebrated guests were ten Army nurses who served during World War I. At the convention banquet, an emotional high point occurred when mistress of ceremony Colonel Betz introduced these honored veterans and provided details of their wartime experiences and personal backgrounds. The membership honored each of the ten with a spirited standing ovation. “There was hardly a dry eye in the audience” as each rose to acknowledge the audience recognition.

The membership voting to select new officers and the incoming board of directors designated Colonel Rose V. Straley as the new RANCA president with Colonel Barbara E. Earle serving as vice-president, Colonel Betz functioning as secretary and Colonel Marjorie J. Wilson assuming the responsibilities of treasurer. Among the new regional directors were Colonels Katherine R. Jump, Margaret E. Weydert, Julia E. Decker, and Edith M. Nuttall, and Lieutenant Colonel Elsie G. Reap. Those accepting appointments as committee chairpersons were Colonels Elizabeth A. Blomer, Constitution and Bylaws; Jennie Caylor, Nominations; Maurice Hensley, Finance and Budget; Mary Quinn, Historian; Mildred I. Clark, Memorial, Blanchfield Army Hospital; Margaret A. Ewen, Public Relations-Newsletter; Marian Waterhouse and Gladys Johnson, 1982 Convention; Lila Bosch and Becky Glisson, Assistant Secretaries; and Lieutenant Colonel Agnes Thompson, Membership.

One noteworthy resolution generated from the membership at the 1980 convention involved a donation to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to be erected in the future on the mall in Washington, DC. RANCA voted to contribute \$140 to this fund in lasting homage to the nine Army Nurse Corps officers who died in the Vietnam War. The sum would be used to inscribe the names of the nine fallen Army nurses on the monument's memorial, the structure designed to spring from the ground as the Vietnam Veteran's Wall.

In 1982, the third biennial convention took place in San Diego, California. A total of 507 RANCA members participated in the conference. The extensive program involved a number of speakers, including Brigadier General Hazel W. Johnson who represented the Army Nurse Corps, Colonel Clara L. Adams-Ender who spoke about recruiting matters, Colonel Maude Smith who paid tribute to deceased Army nurses, Colonel Ewen who shared reminiscences about the evolution of the Connection newsletter, Lieutenant Colonel Madeline Ullom who briefed the audience about POW and veteran's health care, General Dunlap who updated on the status of the AMEDD Museum Foundation, Colonel Cleveland who outlined progress within the Army Nurse Corps Foundation, and Colonel Clark who presented a slide show showcasing on the new Blanchfield Army Community Hospital. The reunion's theme focused on all things Hawaiian and those attending the festivities celebrated the 35 Army nurses in attendance that served in Hawaii on the Day of Infamy, 7 December 1941. At the gala banquet, aloha attire and tropical flowers were very much in evidence and the décor and menu followed an island motif. Colonel Katherine R. Jump, mis-

dress of ceremonies, shared excerpts from letters and memoirs written by the Pearl Harbor veterans, emphasizing “the humor in an otherwise very stressful day.”

Installation of RANCA's new officers and board of directors also took place at the 1982 reunion. Those accepting their new responsibilities included Colonels Mercedes M. Fischer, Gladys E. Johnson, Alice M. Metzger and Virginia L. Brown, who respectively would serve two-year terms as the organization's president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. Among the directors were Colonels Mary C. Quinn, Gertrude I. Mahn, Ramona E. Delaney, and Barbara Costello, and Lieutenant Colonel Eleanor L. Gordner. The members appointed to serve as committee chairs were Lieutenant Colonel Henrietta Pfeffer, Constitution and Bylaws; Colonel Nellie Henley, Nominations; Colonel Hensley, Finance and Budget; Lieutenant Colonel Agnes Thompson, Membership; Colonel Clarine Weighill, Historian; Colonel Clark, Memorial Blanchfield Army Hospital; Colonel Ewen, Public Relations, Newsletter; Lieutenant Colonel Steinhilber, 1984 Convention; and Colonels Bosch and Glisson, Assistant Secretaries. The 1982 Convention was a fun-filled, poignant, and informative event.

Initial Organizational Activities

In the months after the first biennial convention, RANCA continued to develop in both scope and sophistication. Many of the slowly but steadily increasing body of members convinced their friends to join and the organization's numbers multiplied. By July 1978, RANCA boasted a membership of 1,573. After a year and a half of existence in February 1979, it claimed 1,635 members. In May 1980, it tallied a cohort of 2,006 dues-paying RANCA members. In years to come, the numbers stabilized around the 2,000-member mark and rarely deviated by more or less than 300 members. In spite of this seemingly robust numerical strength, the organizational leadership had abiding concerns about the long-term viability of the group. They gloomily observed that “If this [RANCA] lasts for 20 years, we'll do well.” The astute founding officers and board of directors recognized that a sizable contingent of the group represented World War II era Army Nurse Corps veterans, almost all of whom were moving into elder status and each year a significant number of these heroes were passing away. Clearly it was imperative that new blood step forward to fill the steadily depleting ranks of the charter generation of members. To that end, they once again encouraged each and every RANCA member to

recruit just one more participant to swell the existing ranks.

A handful of structural changes evolved as the organization matured. In December 1983, the Board voted to grant voting privileges to associate members and decided to create an executive board—the RANCA president, vice-president, treasurer, and secretary—who could implement official actions between regular board meetings.

In the organization's infancy, editor Colonel Ewen produced and mailed the first commercially printed newsletter, volume 2, number 1. Its heading featured the organization's handsome new logo designed by Major Dorothy Baltzo, an orb enclosing the Army Nurse Corps caduceus superimposed on a representation of the oil lamp Nightingale used in the Crimea to illuminate her way on the battlefield. The tail of a large "R" spun out as the origin of the circle's border that enclosed the organization's title—Retired Army Nurse Corps Association. And for the first time, the newsletter included a section labeled "Personal Items" that listed requests for information from various individuals seeking the whereabouts of former Army nurse associates. For instance, Marzelle Beavers Moore was searching for Trinidad Gamez. And another correspondent sought clues in her quest for an Army nurse nicknamed "Hoboken" who served at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base Hospital in 1951. Another section of the newsletter called attention to the deaths of six former Army Nurse Corps officers. Later this section would evolve into "Parade Rest." Finally, Colonel Ewen noted that, "we need a catchy title for this publication," announcing that, "your suggestions are welcome." The best idea quickly came from Colonel Clark who proposed calling the newsletter, "The Connection," inasmuch as it actually served to connect the membership. On that note, Lieutenant Colonel Edna F. Stappenbeck of Whitesboro, New York, wrote that even though "I'm 'up here' in the northeast, I now have 'a connection' to the past, present, and future" of the Army Nurse Corps.

The second issue of the Connection's volume 2, distributed in November 1978, incorporated several additional improvements. It included a "Roundup Time" with newsy items from various members in the assorted geographical regions, a section devoted to membership and address changes, and another that offered snippets of information from the board meetings. This issue also represented the beginnings of an enduring association with Carolyn D. Putnam as the publication's editorial assistant. A long-time friend and supporter of the Army Nurse Corps who also was executive secretary for the Brooke Army Medical Center commander and General Dunlap's close friend and sister, Ms. Putnam assumed the chal-

lence of doing the final typing of the manuscript and delivering it for printing. Some years later in March 1985, Lieutenant Colonel Canfield joined the original editorial duo and lent her efforts and expertise as co-editor. And early in 1993, Lieutenant Colonel Sheila McCann added her literary voice to the Connection as an assistant editor. Colonel Ewen concluded the Volume 2, Number 2 issue of the newsletter by sharing that she had encountered some glitches in the “computerized mailing list,” confiding in her witty, down to earth fashion that she “never did trust those new-fangled gadgets.” She further advised all members to inform RANCA if they moved or changed their name, reminding readers that we “are working on it, but right now none of us can read your mind!!!”

— The Colonel Florence A. Blanchfield — Army Community Hospital

Early in 1978, General Parks resolved to honor Colonel Florence A. Blanchfield, the respected chief of the Army Nurse Corps during the challenging World War II era, in a meaningful way. General Parks wished to commemorate Colonel Blanchfield’s special contributions to the Army by naming the newly erected Fort Campbell, Kentucky, hospital in her memory. She asked for RANCA’s assistance. The organization enthusiastically responded after Colonel Cobb initially contacted about 125 members, who in turn notified their Army friends and acquaintances asking all to petition the authorities to name the facility after Colonel Blanchfield. The letter-writing crusade snowballed and an avalanche of letters filled the mailboxes of the surgeon general, Lieutenant General Charles Pixley; the Fort Campbell post commander, Major General John A. Wickham; and numerous congressmen and senators. General Wickham, who would make the final decision to name the hospital, could not ignore the deluge of requests. As he told the hospital commanding officer, he received so much mail from Army nurses that he would be terrified to call the institution anything but the Blanchfield Hospital. General Wickham did decide in March 1978 to dedicate the hospital as a permanent memorial to Colonel Blanchfield. This was not the first instance of an Army hospital bearing the name of an Army nurse, but it was the only existing facility so named. Army nurses, both active and retired, then raised funds to subsidize a portrait and a bust of Colonel Blanchfield for the military treatment facility’s lobby. The contemporary surgeon general, Lieutenant General Bernhard

T. Mitemeyer, and a host of dignitaries and Blanchfield family and friends officially dedicated the Colonel Florence A. Blanchfield Army Community Hospital on 17 September 1982. The state-of-the-art facility remains today in living testimony to the contributions of Colonel Blanchfield and all Army Nurse Corps officers who have served across the ages.

More Progress

Indications of healthy organizational growth and change continued to emerge as the board of directors continually fostered essential innovations. In 1980, the RANCA membership continued to total slightly over 2,000 but the increasingly complex work of the association could no longer be reasonably accommodated within the confines of anyone's private home. The miniscule RANCA office had moved previously from Colonel Cobb's back room to Colonel Wilson's garage. But after a time, even the space afforded in a garage became inadequate. Accordingly, the board rented a small 300 square foot office in the NCOA building on IH 35 North at Weidner Road in San Antonio that served as a central business point, a dedicated work place, and the prescribed location for the consolidation of records and office materials. Several board members donated items to furnish the space—a large desk, chairs, and electrical devices—a typewriter, letter opener, and clock. Since the office did not function as a typical business office with regularly scheduled hours, its exact whereabouts was not widely publicized. Neither was any mail received at that location. Instead all association mail arrived at the permanent RANCA Post Office Box 39235, Serna Station, in San Antonio. Nonetheless, the office was consistently busy. Almost daily, Colonel Wilson processed dues there while other volunteers and assistant secretaries spent countless hours preparing the membership roster, packing the printed version in mailers, applying address labels, and sorting the parcels into mailbags by zip code. The Connection editor, Colonel Ewen, assisted in these and other efforts in the company of her much-loved puppies, "T.R." and a "fat white, sassy" canine, "Punkin," who functioned as the team's official "watchdog and protector." Almost three decades later in 2008, the ANCA office moved once again. The new facility was located at 8209 Roughrider, Suite #100E, in the Windcrest area of San Antonio. With virtually equal rent, the new office offered three rooms, plenty of parking, and a superbly convenient location.

Also in 1980, the board voted to increase annual dues from \$5 to

\$10. This doubling of dues was based on the December 1979 budget that revealed an operating income of \$9,000 that equaled the operating expenses of \$9,000. Ever-escalating expenses also triggered the change. For example, costs involved in printing and mailing the Connection and the membership roster increased twofold within a two-year period. While formerly the total outlay for publishing the Connection was \$500 per issue, in 1980 the expenditure grew to \$1,000 to \$1,200 quarterly. Producing and mailing the much-heavier membership roster and the attached, updated by-laws called for an expenditure of an estimated \$10,500. The board noted that without the typing that was done by volunteers in the labor-intensive process, the price tag for all of the printed outreach publications would be prohibitive.

The board of directors meeting in San Antonio in September 1984 was an exceptionally productive gathering. The board decided to authorize a two-month study to determine the feasibility of using a computerized system to manage RANCA's administrative operations. One year later, the Connection revealed that RANCA's records were in the process of being "computerized by purchasing computer services from the National Bank of Fort Sam Houston." Once the process was complete, it reported, "statistical information can be made readily available." The computerization was fully implemented in December 1985. However, a few glitches remained. In March 1986, several members who were not actually delinquent with their dues received erroneous notices that they were in arrears. The Connection addressed these difficulties, stating that, for "this and other errors that have not yet happened, we apologize. We are continuing to perfect our data and the resultant output of the computer. Please bear with us."

The 1984 board also resolved to study the possibility of funding and updating the Army Nurse Corps "Highlights in the History of the Army Nurse Corps" history pamphlet. This proposal never achieved fruition. The board also agreed to examine and clarify the nature of its future relationship with the Vietnam Nurses Memorial Project that would evolve into the Vietnam Women's Memorial on the mall in Washington, DC. Several months later the executive committee of the board voted to grant a financial contribution to the project. Also in 1984, the board of directors approved the funding for an annual medal to recognize the outstanding Army Nurse Corps graduate of the AMEDD Officer Advanced Course. This medal had been in existence for over 20 years but the original financial support for its purchase was exhausted in 1984. On 14 December 1984, Colonel Ewen presented the first RANCA-supported version of the medal

to that year's honor graduate Captain Patricia Saulsbery. A number of RANCA members attended the award ceremony at the Academy of Health Sciences and congratulated the recipient of the first "RANCA medal." In 1997, the award underwent a metamorphosis. At that time, the Advanced Course ceased to be a permanent change of station assignment and became a temporary duty course. Along with this change came another modification as students no longer earned a numerical grade at the time of course completion. Thus, no one student was named the outstanding graduate. Consequently, the RANCA Medal evolved into a formal recognition bestowed on a distinguished Army Nurse Corps officer who excelled in the realm of nursing practice while serving at the level of a major or lieutenant colonel. The medal was renamed the RANCA Advanced Nursing Practice Award. Its first recipient was Major Donna Hunt, clinical head nurse at Brooke Army Medical Center's Medical Intensive Care and Coronary Care units. Major Hunt's "commitment to the nursing research process and to scientific-based nursing practice, her teaching expertise, and her spirit of volunteerism" were the basis for her recognition. The second, 1999, RANCA Advanced Nursing Practice Award recipient was Lieutenant Colonel Gemryl Samuels, the chief of Community Health Nursing at Brooke Army Medical Center.

RANCA sponsored other awards to recognize excellence in the performance of Army nurses. In 1987, the board voted to sponsor the Colonel Katherine F. Galloway Distinguished Nurse Award. Presented annually at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC, the recognition honored the exceptional service of a nurse assigned to that institution. That year, Lieutenant Colonel Jude Larkin won the distinction for his "integrity, dedication and competence" and his contributions "to the advancement of nursing practice." The RANCA director of Region 2, Lieutenant Colonel Connie Ferebee, presented the commendation. RANCA underwrote the expenditures for the purchase of the Galloway Award plaque that displayed the engraved name of each year's award winner.

Officers attending the October 1985 meeting of the board of directors were equally ready to implement needed change. They voted to charge a \$15 initiation fee for those applying for first-time membership. The board also decided to levy a \$15 charge for delinquent renewals from continuing members. These charges would partially offset escalating mailing costs. The latter penalty for overdue renewals also would demonstrate recognition of the extra time and attention required of the volunteer office staff to process the late renewals and to mail reminders to those whose fees were

overdue. Then-president Colonel Frazier reasoned that it was “only fair that these costs be borne by the responsible member.” A second major modification that resulted from this meeting had to do with the RANCA by-laws. The group voted to open associate membership to all active duty Army nurses with at least 16 years of active federal service. This, the board believed, would “tend to ensure [a] continuing influx of members in the future.” The RANCA board was always anxious and apprehensive about the continued survival of the organization and intended to “reach the active duty Army Nurse Corps Officers by involving them [well] before retirement.”

Social Endeavors

From the organization’s earliest days, RANCA’s guiding organizational principles stressed the importance of its social role. The emphasis on this priority continued as years passed. In 1984 when she accepted the RANCA presidency, Colonel Frazier wrote, “RANCA exists to celebrate and commemorate our mutual experience as Army Nurses.” The organization’s philosophical preferences clearly favored activities geared to sponsoring reunions, preserving old friendships, facilitating congenial communication, sharing memories, and maintaining interpersonal connections as the group’s pivotal standard. Other functions such as supporting advances in personal and professional knowledge, bolstering worthwhile programs, taking stands on controversial issues, and delving into internal Army Nurse Corps concerns assumed a far distant second place in RANCA’s order of priorities. On one occasion in 1986, the board addressed the apprehensions of several members “who asked what RANCA is doing to stop the ‘erosion of retirement benefits’.” The governing body reminded these members “that RANCA, the organization, is not, repeat, not a lobbying group.” The board advised those who were disturbed about the current state of retirement benefits might well “react as individuals” to this issue. Obviously, the organization declined to involve itself, as a group, in that controversy. There were a few exceptions to the purely social focus, however, that were exemplified in the organization’s patronage of the AMEDD Museum through the mechanism of the Army Nurse Corps Foundation, the drive to have the Fort Campbell Community Hospital named in a tribute to Colonel Blanchfield, the support organized to recognize fallen Army nurses on the Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial in Washington, DC, and the sponsorship of the RANCA medal for the outstanding AMEDD Advanced Course graduate.

In 1983 however, RANCA set out on another venture that expanded their previously set activity horizons. It floated a suggestion that RANCA members help to recruit Army nurses in a period when the Corps was experiencing acute personnel shortages. At that time, the Connection published an entry under “Miscellaneous Items,” that delineated a “Proposal of Assistance Which May be Provided by RANCA Members in Army Nurse Corps Recruiting.” It simply proposed several channels for giving assistance to Army Nurse Corps recruiters such as (1) visiting college and university campuses with Army Nurse Corps recruiting personnel, (2) providing mentorship for potential or new Army Nurse Corps accessions, (3) acting as centers of influence at nursing functions, and (4) disseminating world-wide education obtained via travel.

— The Biennial Conventions Continue —

The fourth RANCA convention convened in sunny Orlando, Florida, on 15 April 1984. A total of 568 members enjoyed the opportunity to meet with their companions from earlier days. They listened attentively to the presentations of speakers at the meeting. Among those addressing the reunion were Brigadier General Connie L. Slewitzke, Colonel Maude Smith, and Colonel Robert J. Allen, USAF, a representative of the National Security Briefing Team. Colonel Cobb discussed a proposal to grant RANCA life memberships and the organization voted on the amount of dues such an option would entail. The issue then went to the board of directors for approval and the board ultimately voted against implementing the change. It concluded that the bookkeeping and clerical complexities involved in dealing with such a system would place an onerous burden on its small staff of office volunteers. At the 1984 reunion, General Johnson installed the new slate of officers—Colonel Frazier, Lieutenant Colonel Downey, Colonels Hensley and Bosch—respectively as president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. The newly elected regional directors included Lieutenant Colonel Ferebee, and Colonels Ernestine Bolduc, Virginia Nellis, Kathryn Nellis, and Lacadia Clarke. In addition, the president announced her choice of appointees to chair the various committees. They included Colonels Thompson, Galloway, Ewen, Althea Williams, Marian Barbieri, Clarine Weighill, Costello, Margaret Bailey, Weydert, and Glisson who each assumed responsibilities for the Membership, Nominating, Public Relations, Bylaws, and Finance-Budget committees and who served as Historian, Convention, Convention '86 chairperson and Assistant Sec-

retary. Colonel Frazier summarized the spirit of the reunion, writing that it “was, as always, a phenomenal experience to see old friends, to make new ones, and to refresh old memories.” Another attendee, Wooda Nicholas Carr, enlarged on these sentiments when he recalled:

RANCA Convention '84 will probably linger in my mind for a long time. For one thing, there were more men present. At the banquet on our final evening, three of us were at the same table. From my past, there emerged three Army Nurses with whom I served in Tokyo, Japan, at the 8167th Army Hospital back in 1952. Those three Angels of Mercy had not changed one bit in my mind's eye. We spoke of Big and Little Switch, of fireworks on the smelly Sumida River, and of walks along the Ginza. Also during my military career I met several high-ranking officers, but this was the first time in my life I ever shook hands with a charming one star lady general [Connie Slewitzke]. Despite all medical warnings, I really didn't wash my hands until later that same evening.

It was a time again to renew friendships which emerged from the past; to walk the corridors of time in retrospect, yet being fully aware of the present. Amid the clinking of glasses, the laughter, the greetings, one also heard the sound of gunfire as it echoed across a cornfield in France, one caught the mournful cry of a train whistle beyond a rice paddy in Korea; the snap of a drill sergeant's voice on the parade grounds at Fort Sam Houston; the scratch of an instructor's piece of chalk on a blackboard. Thanks again RANCA, for allowing me into your inner circle.

The 5th Biennial RANCA convention assembled from 11 to 13 April 1986 during cherry blossom time in the nation's capital. Colonels Bailey and Weydert managed all the local arrangements. The Marriott Crystal Gateway Hotel in Arlington, Virginia, provided the hospitality, meeting areas, and lodging for the 533 registrants. The RANCA president, Colonel Frazier, opened the meetings with a tap of the gavel followed by the Army Color Guard of the 3rd Infantry (Old Guard) posting the colors. Next Colonel Cobb led the audience in the pledge of allegiance and Colonel Quinn offered an invocation. There then followed introductions and greetings by Lieutenant General Quinn Becker, the surgeon general; General Slewitzke, chief of the Army Nurse Corps; Eunice Cole, president of the American Nurses Association, and other local officials. After the conclusion of the business meeting, a mini-film festival took place. Attendees viewed several short movie features including “We Were There,” a video that inspired pride in the Army Nurse Corps, and “They All Came Home,” that vividly portrayed the austere experiences of the World War II nurse POWs

in the Philippines. That Saturday afternoon, the attendees explored the area's many cultural offerings and historical monuments. One spellbound visitor commented on the Vietnam Memorial Wall, finding it "so very well done, simple, dignified, and beautiful. It did bring tears to my eyes." Another shared her observation that "getting caught in D.C. traffic brought back many memories....It hasn't improved with age."

On the second day of the meeting, Colonel Brown updated attendees on the Army Nurse Corps Foundation while General Dunlap spoke about the AMEDD Museum Foundation. Representatives from the Army Distaff Foundation and the Army Retirement Residences in San Antonio and Potomac, Maryland, also briefed attendees on their institutions. Colonel Adams-Ender, chief, Department of Nursing, gave a slide-tour of Walter Reed Army Medical Center. The Honorable G.V. (Sonny) Montgomery, U.S. Representative from Mississippi, was the featured speaker at that day's luncheon. Brigadier General Anna Mae Hays subsequently installed the newly elected officers. They included Colonel Sally Travers, president; Lieutenant Colonel Downey, vice president; Colonel Amy D. Geissinger, secretary; and Colonel Bosch, treasurer. The new regional directors were Lieutenant Colonels Charlotte Matthias, Connie Ferebee, and Rose Munchback and Colonels Ruth Satterfield and Joanne Farrell. The new nominating committee consisted of Colonels Elizabeth Rogers Ballew, Miriam Gately, and Lieutenant Colonels Mary L. Pritchard, Kathryn Nellis, and Robert Burton. Following the 1986 reunion, Colonel Travers selected a number of new committee chairpersons and re-appointed a few seasoned veterans to their previously held positions. Those who accepted special committee responsibilities were Lieutenant Colonels Elizabeth Kewley and Kathryn Nellis who served as membership and nominations chairs respectively. Colonel Ewen and Lieutenant Colonel Canfield continued their service as editors of the Connection and as public relations chairs. Rounding out the panel of committee chairpersons were Colonels Barbieri, Weighill, Costello, Helen Mackey, and Joan Hickman each of whom assumed their individual roles spearheading groups dealing with finance and budget, history, convention, amendments and by-laws, and assistant secretary.

Introduced with the catchy title of "Washington State in '88," the 1988 RANCA convention took place in Seattle at the Seattle Sheraton Hotel from 13 to 14 May. Colonel Sybil Mercer and Lieutenant Colonel Elizabeth DeLamater served as co-chairpersons of the sixth biennial event. A large crowd of 345 registered members attended the convention. The opening meetings led by president Colonel Travers featured greetings proffered

by local Seattle officials and representatives from Madigan Army Medical Center. Brigadier General Clara L. Adams-Ender then addressed the group in a video-tape presentation. As mistress of ceremonies, Colonel Leanna Clutter led the festivities of the Saturday evening banquet and the occasion's musical accompaniment involved entertainment by vocalist, pianist, and accordion player Lucy Mitchell. The Sunday morning business meeting dealt with committee reports and foundation updates. Finally, Colonel Cobb led the installation of new officers. These elected officials included Lieutenant Colonel Downey, the new president, and Colonels Jeanne Hoppe, Geissinger, and Barbieri, the new vice president, secretary, and treasurer respectively. Regional directors newly installed were Lieutenant Colonels Esther Bongiovanni and James Sokoloski and Colonels Martha Johnson, Mary Rose Troniar and Ruth Satterfield. The attendees all were in accord that each convention was a decided improvement upon its predecessor and that this Seattle meeting was unsurpassed among all the biennial conventions.

The setting for the 7th Biennial convention that met from 25 to 27 May 1990 was the Radisson Hotel in the Mile High City of Denver. Attendees numbered 377. A trio of co-chairmen was instrumental in planning the event. They were Lieutenant Colonels Dave Bartelt, Marge Varner, and Jan Bachmeyer. The Friday night Icebreaker set the meeting in motion and one attendee wrote, "we ate, we drank, and we chatted. Now, what more could we ask?" The Saturday morning business meeting commenced with drill and ceremonies, greetings, and speakers. The treasurer's statement affirmed that RANCA continued to operate in the black. The membership chair counted membership at a high of 2282. That evening Colonel Hoppe served as the mistress of ceremonies at the Saturday banquet. Those attending savored fine dining to the accompaniment of pianist Bud Kreuzer who later led a sing-along session featuring old favorites and new tunes. The evening ended with a rousing chorus of the Army Nurse Corps Anthem. More committee reports ensued on Sunday morning followed by an address given by the chief of the Army Nurse Corps, General Adams-Ender. Lieutenant Colonel Downey subsequently installed the newly elected officers. They included Colonels Rosemary McCarthy, Barbieri, Waterhouse, and Patricia Silvestre as the new president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. Regional Directors assuming their new mantles were Major Mary Miner, Colonel Martha Johnson, Lieutenant Colonels Ruth Kulvi and Schiffman, and Colonel James Herman. Colonel Barbieri was the mistress of ceremonies at the Sunday luncheon marked by more "good fellowship

and camaraderie.” The convention concluded after the luncheon. “Good-byes were said, but also was heard, ‘See you in Philadelphia.’”

The Sheraton Society Hill Hotel in Philadelphia hosted the 8th Biennial RANCA convention 22-24 May 1992. Colonel Lena M. Tague and Lieutenant Colonel Charlotte Matthias served as co-chairpersons of the reunion. The first official component of the convention involved a mixer. It featured, “hugs, tears and happy greetings. . . as folks would spot someone not seen in years.” The next day began with the opening ceremonies including a welcome by the reincarnation of Ben Franklin. Next Brigadier General Nancy Adams, chief of the Army Nurse Corps presented a briefing, “the Army Nurse Corps. . . Today and Tomorrow.” The business session followed. Lieutenant Colonel Al Streilein was the Saturday night’s banquet master of ceremonies with background and dancing music provided by the Greater Kensington String Band. Sunday morning another business meeting took place with various briefings and committee reports. Faithfully attending all the sessions was Skippy, Lieutenant Colonel Dorcus Irwin’s hearing ear dog. Skippy especially enjoyed the banquet, decked out in an elegant black bow tie. Another special guest was Lieutenant Colonel Laura Goodale Ridge, a 1936 Army School of Nursing graduate who had attended every RANCA convention to date. A first-ever mail-in ballot was the instrument used for electing the new RANCA officers and directors. The incoming officers were Colonels Barbieri, Mary Lou Spine, Bolduc, and Barbara Kishpaugh, who would be serving as president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. The regional directors were Colonels Betty Antilla and Doris James and Lieutenant Colonels Jean Houghton, Kulvi, and Martha Baker. RANCA’s new president summed up the fun-filled convention, declaring it was the “perfect combination of greeting old friends and reminiscing about the good old Army Nursing days.” It made “for a great time.”

The 9th Biennial convention was held from 8-10 April 1994 in the Hyatt Regency Hotel on San Antonio’s Riverwalk. Coordinators for the convention were Lieutenant Colonels Mary Cavagnaro and Schiffman. Members in attendance numbered 419. The Saturday morning business meeting opened with the “rousing martial music” played by the Fifth Army Band. After the official greetings and welcomes offered by local dignitaries, General Adams provided an update on the contemporary status of the corps and introduced the newest Army Nurse Corps Reserve general officer, Brigadier General Marilyn Musacchio. An evening of fine dining and dancing followed, highlighted by chanteuse Colonel McCarthy’s “sultry

vocal rendition” and her lively dance movements. Sunday morning’s business meeting concluded all the committee reports and thereafter Colonel Cobb installed the new panel of officers and directors. They were Colonels Spine, Maryrose F. Tronier, Bolduc, and Kishpaugh, newly elected to the offices of president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. Incoming regional directors were Major Miner, Colonel Antilla, Lieutenant Colonels Nancy M. Christ and Larry W. Moss, and Colonel Alyce J. Frelin. A humorous and poignant presentation by guest speaker Dr. Amy Freeman Lee thoroughly captured the attention and tickled the funny bones of all in attendance at the Sunday luncheon. Dr. Lee noted that when she views Army nurses she sees “epoxy” because “there is an obvious and perceptual bond between all present.” She also explained that, in her view, Army nurses demonstrated heroism because they “sacrificed in the service of their country.” Members were in overall agreement that the biennial convention was a huge success. “There were many hugs, a flood of tears, and an over abundance of love and friendship visibly and emotionally perceptible” to all present for the 1994 Convention. One unique feature at this reunion was the participation of the members of the Retired Army Medical Specialist Association in some of the activities, notably the social events, for the first time.

Supporting Collegiate Education, Research, and Scholarship

The autumn of 1986 marked the inauguration of the RANCA Educational Fund. At that time, the board of directors voted to set up a fund whose resources would be awarded “to established scholarship, research and/or chair projects” existing at various collegiate schools of nursing. The first such scholarship to benefit from this outreach was the Lieutenant Colonel Augusta Short Scholarship Fund at Incarnate Word College School of Nursing in San Antonio, an educational institution attended by many past and contemporary Army Nurse Corps officers. Lieutenant Colonel Short was a friend to all and a highly esteemed Army nurse who had retired in San Antonio. Such a tribute seemed an appropriate acknowledgement of her lengthy, dedicated service both to the Army Nurse Corps and to RANCA.

In 1987, a very generous but anonymous donor contributed a substantial sum to the RANCA Educational Fund in memory of an Army nurse.

That contribution put the fund on a sound financial footing and blazed the trail for future financial support of nursing scholarship. In its first year, the fund awarded two additional grants in accordance with its objectives. The first award of \$1,000 was earmarked for the Phyllis Verhonick Nursing Research Conference held annually at the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, Virginia. The second donation, also totaling \$1,000, went to the Theresa S. LaPlante Research Support Fund at the University of Utah College of Nursing in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Also in 1987, RANCA established the Army Nurse Corps Scholar Fund at the University of Texas to promote nursing scholarship and research. Over the years, the fund made significant contributions to the advancement of nursing science. From 1987 to 1995, it supported a number of investigations undertaken by eleven participating nurses. The recipients of the award in 1991 were the Harriet H. Werley Nursing Research Fund at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee School of Nursing that received a grant of \$1,000 and the School of Nursing Scholarship Fund at the South Dakota University in Brookings, South Dakota, whose grant totaled \$2,000 and was designated to subsidize scholarships for basic nursing students. Up to this point in time, the education fund had awarded \$13,000 for nursing scholarships, research and/or chair projects, or efforts to recruit Army nurses. The 1992 research grant went to Margaret H. Brackley and Ann Duffy-Kajs to subsidize their investigation entitled "Content Analysis of a Caregiver Intervention." Both researchers were faculty members at the University of Texas, Health Science Center in San Antonio. In 1995, the scholars fund award went to two other faculty members at the University of Texas, Health Science Center—Doctors Mary Anne Matteson and Adrienne Dill Linton. The grant was intended to finance data collection for their study of chronic pain experienced by dementia patients.

In 1992, the RANCA education fund refined and clarified their purpose, goals, and criteria. The fund's newly stated purpose was to offer fiscal support to established nursing scholarship funds, research projects, or chairs paying tribute to Army nurses. Its updated goals were to award at least \$2,000 as a yearly minimum. The maximum annual award would be based on the interest earned by the corpus funds and the donations received from benefactors. The monetary stipend would initially go to the school that, in turn, would select the best candidate for the award. The school had to (1) operate an approved baccalaureate nursing program, (2) have been receptive and supportive of Army Nurse Corps recruitment efforts, (3) provide access to an established ROTC program, and (4) have

tax-exempt status. That same year, two donations of \$1,000 each were made to the Mary F. Jeffries Award at the University of Arizona School of Nursing in Tucson, Arizona, and to the Pam Demaree and Mike McGinnis Memorial Scholarship Fund in Nursing at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina. Lieutenant Colonel Mary Jeffries was an Army Nurse Corps officer serving at Tripler Army Medical Center just prior to her death from leukemia. The latter two nurses, Department of the Army civilians, perished in an air crash while on duty.

The 1993 chairman of the education committee, Colonel Spine, recommended providing scholarship awards to three institutions that year. Grants in the amount of \$1,000 each went to the University of Virginia, Phyllis J. Verhonick Nursing Research Conference Fund; the University of Texas, Health Sciences Center at San Antonio, School of Nursing, the Army Nurse Corps Scholars Fund; and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, School of Nursing, Harriet H. Werley Nursing Research Fund.

The 1994 education committee directed that three scholarships be awarded in the amount of \$1,000 each. Recipients included the University of Nebraska at Omaha, the Smith Scholarship Fund at Austin-Peay College in Clarksville, Tennessee, and the George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. Also, the board voted to award a \$500 runner-up award to the 1st Army Region Cadet Command for educational expenses incurred by outstanding ROTC nurse cadets.

Over the years, the RANCA scholar fund continued to provide significant financial assistance to a number of nursing research projects. In 1990, the RANCA scholar fund supported research implemented by Joyce Taylor Harden. Her study was entitled "The Effect of Movement Therapy on Depression, Morale and Self-Esteem in Aged Women." The fund also supported the scholarly efforts of five doctoral and five masters students in nursing at the University of Virginia in 1991.

During 1995, a number of benefactors made noteworthy contributions to the RANCA Educational Fund. The fund used these monies to further support nursing education. Colonel Blanchfield's sister, Ruth Orndorff, donated more than \$17,000 to the endowment in her sister's memory. The Greater Washington, DC, members attending their 1995 RANCA spring luncheon shared the first of their annual monetary gifts, this one amounting to \$450 in support of the fund's purposes. These gifts and the ongoing contributions made by a long list of donors served as the basis for the financial aid provided. By 1996, out-going chairperson of the education committee and RANCA vice-president, Colonel Troniar, noted that the fund's principal had risen to a substantial total of \$80,000.

In 1995, the RANCA Educational Fund dispersed \$12,500 in scholarships to a myriad of recipients. The awards went to the University of Alabama, the University of Wisconsin at La Crosse, Brigham Young University, the College of St. Scholastica in Minnesota, East Central University of Oklahoma, the University of San Francisco, and the ROTC 1st Region Cadet Command.

The organization also set aside \$1,000 in 1995 to fund a scholarship to memorialize two Army Nurse Corps officers who died on active duty—Captains Patrick and Rosemary Smith. These two Army nurses, assigned to the Florence A. Blanchfield Army Community Hospital, were victims of murder during a robbery in their Clarksville, Tennessee, home in January 1987. The scholarship stipulated that the educational subsidy should go to a nursing student “with military ties and a love for medicine and nursing.” Among the first to receive the award were students at Clarksville, Tennessee’s, Austin Peay State University--Michael Linkus, Alayne Skinner, and Janet Graham. Lieutenant Colonel Joann Matteson, a friend of the deceased couple, presented the scholarship.

In 1996, the education committee allocated \$12,000 as scholarships to six recipients. One year later in 1997, the board sanctioned the education committee’s proposal to award scholarship grants in the amount of \$8,000 to five schools of nursing. The committee recommended allotting the sum of \$2,000 each to Marymount, Florida State, and Columbus State Universities and \$1,000 each to South Dakota State and Yale Universities.

Steadily arriving donations added to the principal held in the education fund. The fund netted \$2,000 from the raffles and auctions held at the 1998 Biennial Convention in Orlando, Florida. In 1999, the RANCA board of directors authorized an injection of cash that brought the corpus of the fund to \$105,000. That same year, the education committee budgeted a total of \$10,000 to be given in scholarships. However, only two universities applied for the grants. As a result, those two schools, Texas Christian University and the University of Texas at El Paso, received \$2,000 each.

In December 2000, the scholarship committee granted an award of \$2,500 to the University of Portland in Oregon and \$2,000 each to the University of Texas, Health Science Center and the University of Incarnate Word, both in San Antonio, Texas. The 1st ROTC Region was the recipient of \$1,000 in January 2001 with the winning cadet a ROTC student at the University of Vermont. At the same time, ANCA awarded the Universities of Colorado and San Francisco scholarships of \$2,000 each.

The education fund awarded a grand total of \$30,000 in scholarships

in 2003. That was the maximum total approved by the board of directors to be dispersed annually. Each specific award amounted to \$3,000 and recipients included students at Austin Peay State University, Duke University, University of Florida, Howard University, Loyola University, Montana State University, Northern Illinois University, University of the Incarnate Word, University of Portland, and the University of Texas, San Antonio. Lieutenant Colonel Moss, chair of the education committee, clarified the award process in 2003. He explained that the school applied for the grants and subsequently selected the beneficiary of the scholarship. As years passed, more and more of the student recipients had some type of connection with the Army Nurse Corps. Lieutenant Colonel Moss added that the need for that connection was “an issue with a number of members,” and expressed his hopes that this trend would continue.

Early in 2004, the education committee reiterated their criteria for awarding scholarships. First priority went to those who planned to enter the Army Nurse Corps in any component--Active, Reserve, or National Guard. Next in descending order of priority were those who previously served in any Army component, Army Nurse Corps officers attending nursing programs not funded by the Army, AMEDD enlisted members working for an unfunded baccalaureate degree in nursing, nursing students with an immediate family link to the Army, and lastly, those who had served previously in the Army Reserve or National Guard. That same year, the committee awarded \$27,000 in scholarships to nine schools of nursing. The schools receiving the grants were Howard University, Washington, DC; Barry University, Miami Shores, Florida; the University of Portland, Oregon; Curry College, Milton, Massachusetts; Bellarmine University, Louisville, Kentucky; Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, Tennessee; the University of Texas Health Science Center, San Antonio, Texas; the Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana; and Lewis University, Romeoville, Illinois.

In July 2005, The Army Nurse Corps Association’s (ANCA) education committee, then chaired by Colonel Gerry Goethals, awarded \$3,000 in ANCA scholarships to five schools—the University of Alabama-Tuscaloosa, Alabama; the University of Texas, San Antonio, Texas; the District of Columbia’s Howard University; the College of Saint Scholastica in Minnesota; and the University of Portland in Oregon. One year later in 2006, ANCA awarded scholarships of \$3,000 each to ten schools. President Colonel Janet Southby noted that, “sound program and fiscal management and donor generosity continue to support this major endeavor.”

The education committee awarded ten scholarships worth \$3,000 each in 2007. In all, the committee received 21 applications. That same year, several collegiate schools appeared on the list of successful grant applicants for the first time. Among the newcomers were Milwaukee School of Engineering, School of Nursing, in Milwaukee; Seattle Pacific University, Lydia Green Nursing Program, in Seattle; Drexel University, College of Nursing & Health Professions, in Philadelphia; Nebraska Methodist College of Nursing, the Josie Harper Campus, in Omaha; and Montana State University, College of Nursing, in Bozeman. The remaining recipients of the 2007 scholarship awards were Brigham Young University in Provo; Ashland University in Ashland, Ohio; Mercer University in Atlanta; Milligan University in Tennessee; and Kennesaw State University in Georgia.

The board voted to increase the annual total payout of scholarship money in 2008 from \$30,000 to \$35,000. It also directed that all ten scholarships awarded in 2008 be given in memory of Captain Maria I. Ortiz, an Army nurse who perished in Iraq in 2007 as a result of indirect enemy fire. In 2009, the board gave instructions that all ten scholarships worth \$3,500 each be awarded in honor of another Army Nurse Corps officer who died from wounds incurred in Afghanistan, Lieutenant Colonel Richard Berretini, of the Pennsylvania National Guard. Once again, scholarships for \$3,500 each went to ten institutions of higher learning for specific students with links to the Army that matched the education committee's previously set criteria.

With the advent of 2009, the education committee resolved to implement several modifications to its scholarship program. A modicum of confusion about the application and selection process existed in the minds of the ANCA membership, the board of directors, the academic institutions intending to apply, and interested students. These widespread uncertainties seemingly led to a decline in the overall quality of applications. Consequently, the board of directors made changes to clarify the entire process in June 2009. Modifications involved explicitly spelling out the application requirements. These obliged the student to complete an extensive application and mandated the selected school to offer considerable written documentation about the proposed educational curriculum. Additionally in 2009, the board voted to grant fourteen scholarships for \$3,000 each in the upcoming year 2010. All of the scholarships awarded in 2010 were to be bestowed in honor of Army nurse Captain Gussie M. Jones who died in Iraq on 7 March 2004 of non-battle related causes.

Changes in The Connection

RANCA's newsletter, the Connection, underwent a sweeping change in its leadership staff in 1994. At that time, Colonel Ewen, Lieutenant Colonel Canfield, and Carolyn Putnam announced that they were "giving up the pleasure of working with the membership in the production of the Connection." The brilliant and dedicated trio then stepped down to take a well-deserved rest from their editorial labors of almost seventeen years. In leaving the newsletter and becoming an "editor emeritus," Colonel Ewen wrote, "we leave with regret but there comes a time when oldsters (who's old?) must step aside and we... do so willingly." She concluded that it had been "a rare privelege [sic] to have been in on the birth of The Connection. But after 16 years, it is time to cut the umbilical cord!" Replacing the not-so-old guard were newly appointed editor Colonel Walter Mika, his daughter Rosemary who volunteered her services as typist, and assistant editors Lieutenant Colonels Theresa A. Washburn and Clare M. Karabasz. In 1998, Colonel Mika passed the editorial baton to Colonel Nickey McCasland who agreed to assume the ultimate responsibility for the Connection. In 1998 and 1999, Colonels Mary M. Messerschmidt, Marie K. Moore, and Catharine R. Carpenter each joined the staff to function as assistant editors. By 2002, Colonel Moore left the Connection staff as assistant editor and was replaced by Colonel Alice Demarais and Lieutenant Colonel Wynona Bice-Stephens. Colonel Demarais edited regional news and Lieutenant Colonel Bice-Stephens wrote expanded news articles and features.

In 2005, Colonel Andrea Caldwell Berndt joined the Connection staff and began writing her extremely popular column, "The ANCA Network." The purpose of Colonel Caldwell Berndt's regular contribution was to profile ANCA members' exploits in the civilian community and serve as a source for networking. The first rendition of the column featured Colonels Barbara Penn and Jane Hudak and Lieutenant Colonel Brenda Roup.

Another intriguing column appeared in the Connection in June 2006. The author entitled this column, "Lean on Me." Under Colonel Sharon Richie-Melvan's byline, the feature presented the content of oral histories recorded by Army nurses who were currently serving in combat or had served in hostile circumstances in the past. The June 2006 piece highlighted the experiences of two active duty nurses—Captains Clifton Tavares and Francisco Dominicci. The Connection editor, Colonel McCasland, continually introduced special innovations to improve the publication. In

September 2006, he added a helpful information box recapping recent articles in the Army Nurse Corps Newsletter. This feature allowed readers to easily access fascinating information from current and past issues.

Another exciting addition to the Connection occurred when Colonel Claudia Bartz' column, "Research, Literature, and Arts Corner," made its debut in 2009. The first iterations of this feature summarized and reviewed recently published volumes and articles related to military nursing and health care. The resource also identified several websites for locating in-progress or finished research with a military perspective.

In another improvement, the Connection became available in 1998 in an audio format for members who were visually impaired or for those who simply preferred that method to access the information. Volunteer readers, Colonels Pat Sylvestre and Lucy Jarma, narrated the Connection issues for the audiocassette version. In 2008 after ten years of faithful service, both of these helpers relinquished their recording tasks. Lieutenant Colonel Rhonda Morris subsequently stepped forward to become the new reader.

More Biennial Conventions

The 10th biennial RANCA convention took place in San Francisco, California, from 24 to 26 May 1996 with 215 members of the organization in attendance. The location of the convocation was the San Francisco Airport Marriott Hotel. All attending were extremely pleased with the arrangements made by the "two Jims"—Lieutenant Colonels Jim Downey and Jim Sokoloski—who successfully planned and coordinated the entire event. The pre-convention board meeting convened on the first day, 24 May 1996. The second day's meeting opened with remarks from Brigadier General Bettye Simmons, chief of the Army Nurse Corps, and greetings from Colonel (promotable) Patricia Anderson who represented the Army Nurse Corps reserve elements. Additional presentations followed with each outgoing board member offering a summary of their activities over the previous two years. On Sunday, 26 May 1996, the general membership meeting assembled and the committee chairpersons gave their reports. Colonel Beverly Glor outlined plans for convention 1998 in Orlando, Florida, and Colonel Antilla discussed the tentative arrangements for convention 2000 which was to be located in the Washington, DC, area. General Slewitzke announced the 18 October 1997 grand opening of the Women in Military Service for America monument and encouraged every-

one to mark the date and plan to attend the celebrations. Colonel Cobb, the first RANCA president, installed the new officers and Colonel Spine then passed the gavel to the new president, Colonel Beverly Greenlee-Davis. Other newly elected board members included Colonels Darlene K. McLeod, Eily P. Gorman, and Marian J. Walls who accepted their assignments as vice-president, secretary, and treasurer, respectively. Those selected to serve as regional directors were Colonels Anna K. Frederico and Mary V. Frank (later replaced by Colonel Antilla), Lieutenant Colonels Christ and Moss and Colonel Frelin.

Two short years later, 142 RANCA members attended the 11th biennial convention in Orlando. The locale chosen for this exceedingly warm but fun-filled 21 to 24 May 1998 reunion was the Buena Vista Palace Resort at Florida's Disney World. The Saturday business meeting opened with a number of committee and officer reports. Since the number of attendees did not reach a quorum, no voting took place. Nonetheless, several issues came under animated discussion and were postponed for deliberation at the autumn board meeting. One recurring concern had to do with the continuing survival of RANCA whose membership rolls at that time stood at 2,037. Two Disney World Production ensembles, the Brooklyn Skyline and Four for a Dollar, entertained those attending the banquet on Saturday evening with a collection of memorable musical renditions. On Sunday, General Dunlap shared the latest information on the progress of the AMEDD Museum fundraising and construction efforts and the upcoming Washington, DC, convention committee briefed the group on future reunion plans. Colonel Cobb formally installed the new and returning RANCA officers who included Colonels Greenlee-Davis and McLeod as president and vice-president, Lieutenant Colonel Moss, secretary, and Colonel Walls, treasurer. The new regional directors were Lieutenant Leon Deisering, Colonel Mary K. Gwaltney, Major Carole Mussler, Colonel Robert Guida, and Lieutenant Colonel Sandra McLeod. Following the reunion's concluding luncheon, the attendees disbanded and returned to their homes, having thoroughly enjoyed an excellent experience planned and carried out by the convention committee—Chairman Colonel Glor and Majors Carol Mussler and Joyce Weigand and Colonel Barbieri.

The nation's capital was the locus for the 2000 biennial convention. This 12th reunion meeting took place 24 to 29 May at the centrally located J.W. Marriott Hotel in downtown Washington. The meeting was dual featured welcoming both RANCA and the Walter Reed Army Insti-

tute of Nursing (WRAIN) attendees. This was the first reunion to offer two sessions that awarded continuing education credits. The convention's theme was "yesterday, today, and tomorrow," with a vintage 1776 town crier who announced the founding and history of the Army Nurse Corps and represented "yesterday." The greetings signifying "today" came from an official of the District of Columbia. And lastly a brief homily by First Lieutenant Angela Serronico who described future challenges symbolized "tomorrow." Next, Brigadier General William Bester, the new Army Nurse Corps chief, addressed the general membership, discussing issues and the status of the Corps. Brigadier General Dorothy Pocklington served as the mistress of ceremonies for the Saturday night banquet that was relished to the accompaniment of the Soldiers Chorus of the U.S. Army Chorus and the Army Field Band's Volunteers combo. The Sunday morning business meeting witnessed a general membership vote on two pending actions, both of which passed. Henceforth, the organization's title would be "The Army Nurse Corps Association" and the organizational logo dropped its large distinctive "R" and the word "Retired" from its exterior border. This resolution and a second by-laws change both passed by a decisive margin. The second action had to do with the mechanism for dissolving the organization, should such an option became necessary in the future. Founding president Colonel Cobb then installed the newly elected officers, Colonels McLeod, Audré J. McLoughlin, Spine, and Walls, who each would serve as president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. Also installed were Colonels Lucille Smith, Catherine Call, Jane L. Hudak, Robert A. Guida, and Carole A. Burke, all regional directors. The convention concluded with a Sunday luncheon and an address by Lucille Joell, past president of the American Nurses Association. An impressive total of 691 attendees took part in the 2000 biennial convention. Of these, 253 were WRAIN graduates or former WRAIN faculty or staff.

Boston, Massachusetts, was the site for the 13th biennial convention that took place over Memorial Day weekend, 23-27 May 2002. The Boston Park Plaza hotel hosted the event and Colonels Frederico and Bolduc oversaw all the arrangements along with their hard-working committee. Many of the 149 attendees enjoyed the popular tours of Boston, its harbor, Lexington, Concord, and other historic sites, that took place prior to the ANCA meetings. The Saturday morning business meeting opened with a color guard in the garb of Minute Men. Colonel McLeod then presented awards to two long-serving members--Colonels Cobb and Kishpaugh--for their lengthy service and contributions to the organization. General

Bester addressed the meeting, presenting an overview of the current day Army Nurse Corps. Lieutenant Colonel Moss served as master of ceremonies for the Saturday night banquet while the Heritage String Band provided entertainment in the form of Revolutionary and Civil War music. The Sunday morning meeting set the stage for the changeover to newly elected officers. Colonel Cobb conducted the induction ceremony of the new president Colonel McLoughlin, president-elect Lieutenant Colonel Moss, secretary Colonel Spine, and treasurer Major Patricia Prellwitz. Colonels Lucille Smith, Gerald Goethals, Gail Croy, Barbara Sullivan, and Carole Burke also accepted their new or continuing responsibilities as regional directors.

Sporting a theme of "As Big As Texas," the 14th biennial ANCA convention met on 27-30 May 2004 at the Adam's Mark Hotel on the Riverwalk in San Antonio. Colonels Greenlee-Davis and Donna Wright served as co-chairs for the 2004 reunion. The meeting captured the attention of 188 registrants. After the opening ceremonies, Colonel McLoughlin presented awards to Colonels Antilla, McCasland, and Quinn for their lengthy support to ANCA. General Bester presented an update on major changes and challenges confronting the Army Nurse Corps. Colonel Carol Reineck served as the Saturday evening banquet's mistress of ceremonies and opened the dinner with a memorial reflection candle lighting ceremony. The Alamo Metro Chorus provided harmonious entertainment. In keeping with long-standing tradition, Colonel Cobb installed the new slate of officers and directors at the Sunday morning business meeting. The newly elected officers were Lieutenant Colonel Moss, president, Colonels Janet R. Southby, president elect, Robin Hightower, secretary, and Walls, treasurer. Regional directors included Colonels Sandra F. Stabingas, Goethals (through May 2005, with Claudia Bartz serving from June 2005-May 2007), Jeri I. Graham, Judith R. Pesetski (through May 2007), and Sharon F. Bystran. The newly installed president, Lieutenant Colonel Moss, presided over the Sunday luncheon. The meeting adjourned and attendees made their way back home with fond memories of another successful meeting.

In October 2004, the board of directors met and decided to alter certain aspects of the template previously used to plan biennial conventions. The origins of this change were twofold. The declining number of attendees at the biennial meetings was one prime area of concern. The other impetus for making a change was feedback obtained from former attendees. In accordance with the majority of their suggestions, the board voted to build more social occasions into the conference program, allowing great-

er opportunities for interaction and visiting with old acquaintances and friends. This would allow less scheduled time for business meetings and speakers. With this change, the board announced, the conference would transition from being strictly considered a convention to assuming the format and tone of a reunion. Another consensus was to avoid the Memorial Day weekend in scheduling the biennial meeting. Excessive heat, scheduling conflicts, and greater competition for facilities on the three day holiday weekend led to this decision. Additionally, the board resolved to hire a convention planner for the first time to manage the upcoming Las Vegas reunion.

The 15th biennial convention/reunion met on the strip in fabulous Las Vegas, Nevada, at the Flamingo Hotel from 2-4 May 2006. To obtain the very best hotel rates, the board and convention committee intentionally scheduled the reunion for mid-week as opposed to the weekend. ANCA members in attendance totaled 153. Less like a convention and more of a reunion, the three-day meeting featured extra time for socializing. At the opening event, members gathered for an informal mixer followed by a tour of the Las Vegas Boulevard strip. On Wednesday morning, president Lieutenant Colonel Moss offered his "State of the Association" address. He then presented Colonels Messerschmidt and Walls with the ANCA Distinguished Service Awards for "their selfless, generous service." Next, Colonel Cobb installed the newly elected officers—Colonels Southby, Graham, Hightower and Gerta Howell as new incumbents for the offices of president, president elect/vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Newly elected regional directors also were installed and included Lieutenant Colonel Norma Small, Colonel Claudia Bartz, Lieutenant Colonel Amy Johnston, Major Catherine Oakley, and Colonel Stan Jacques. The grand Wednesday evening reception and dinner also were relaxed, informal events "with plenty of opportunities to mingle, renew old friendships, and swap war stories." Thursday morning featured regional breakout meetings followed by brunch, a program led by Colonel Bystran, and a briefing by the chief of the Army Nurse Corps-- Major General Gale Pollock. Shortly thereafter, the 15th ANCA biennial reunion adjourned.

The 16th biennial reunion, with a theme of "Army Nursing Around the World," gathered in Tacoma, Washington, from 31 July to 2 August 2008. At the elegant Hotel Murano, 145 registered for the reunion organized by Colonel Southby and Alice Conway, CSEP. At the business meeting, Major General Pollock delivered the keynote address, Colonel Graham presented a progress report on the ANCA strategic plan, and a Distinguished Ser-

vice Award was presented to Lieutenant Colonel Canfield. Major General Patricia Horoho presented a “stirring and informative talk” at the gala banquet; a “Tell Your Story” presentation collated by Colonel McCasland highlighted many ANCA members’ recollections about unique, significant episodes during their careers that illustrated the reunion theme; a successful silent auction arranged by Colonel JoEllen Vanatta; and tours to Madigan Army Medical Center hosted by Colonel Paul Kondrat, the Glass Eye Studio and Blake Island State Park in Seattle were included. Colonels Gail Ford and Judy Lee and Major Andy Price recounted their experiences in Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom on a panel entitled “It’s Not Your Mother’s War.” The audience was very moved by their emotional, compassionate presentation. The U.S. Army Freedom Team Salute Program took the opportunity to present a number of well-deserved awards to members for their exceptional service. These included Colonels Cobb, McLoughlin, McCasland, Ruth Ray, Luciana Jarma, Maude Smith, and Lieutenant Colonels Moss and Canfield and Major Joan Lankford. Colonel Cobb graciously agreed to maintain a long-held ritual by installing the new officers, namely, Colonels Graham, president; Bartz, vice-president/present elect; Hightower, secretary; Colonel Caroline Rakiewicz, treasurer; and regional directors Colonels Roy Harris and John H. Sherner; and Lieutenant Colonels Norma R. Small, Amy L. Johnson, and Margaret M. Kulm.

The 17th biennial convention/reunion is to be convened from 23-25 July 2010 at the Crystal Gateway Marriott in Arlington, Virginia. The theme of “Army Nursing Around the World” once again is to serve as the theme for the reunion’s program. A capital area team of ANCA members led by Colonel Sharon Feeney-Jones expects to plan and coordinate the reunion activities. Highlights of the meeting will emphasize “networking, reminiscing, and visiting with old friends.” All expect to take pleasure in a splendid, memorable reunion!

Ways and Means

At the October 1992 board of directors meeting, those present cast their votes to print an organizational financial section annually in the March issue of the Connection. This change was intended to keep all informed of RANCA’s “fiscal capability” and explain the organization’s “three pronged fiscal design.” The three financial elements were (1) the operating fund, generated from annual dues, (2) the education fund, used to finance scholarly awards, and (3) the convention fund, “a hedge against any

unforeseen shortfall in biennial convention budgeting.” The March 1993 issue of the Connection incorporated the first rendition of the organization’s financial spreadsheet.

Those present at the October 1993 board meeting analyzed a motion to increase RANCA’s dues as recommended by Colonel Eugenia Vineys, chair of the Financial and Budget Committee. The board discussed and unanimously approved the motion to raise the dues from \$10 to \$15. This hike represented the first increase in dues since 1981. The fact that RANCA was expending \$11 per member in operating costs, predominantly in printing and mailing the Connection, was the rationale for the uptick in dues. Adding to the impetus was the fact that interest on the organization’s investments was trending down while all expenses were rising steadily.

RANCA continued to balance its income versus its expenditures in the 1993-1994 timeframe. During that two-year budget cycle, it recorded an income of \$50,224 and matching expenses of \$50,224. Printing and mailing of the Connection accounted for the greatest outlay of funds, creating costs of \$23,807 over the two years. The next highest disbursement fell into the category of administrative costs—office rent, insurance premiums, telephone bills, supply needs, and charges for a safety deposit box—which all totaled \$9,097. Travel expenditures incurred by the board of directors and committee chairpersons represented the third biggest charge of \$7,486. This order of priority for expenses remained fairly consistent across the span of the organization’s fiscal history.

From 1994 through 1995, the organization prospered all the more. The treasurer tabulated RANCA’s income at \$76,494 and listed expenditures of \$29,755. This overage yielded a carryover balance of \$46,839 into the new two-year budget cycle, in the 1996 budget year. Once again the greatest expenditures were the costs involved in producing the Connection at \$11,877 for the two-year period. The convention fund money market account posted assets of \$11,988 while the education fund had \$80,000 on hand. RANCA also claimed a reserve fund of \$22,075. By 1997, RANCA’s net worth was approximately \$200,000. The characteristic frugality and the conservative, money-wise approach, so typical of Army nurses, were reflected in the organization’s overall financial status.

In 1996, a new Compaq computer became a part of RANCA’s office equipment. It’s presence greatly facilitated administrative and financial tasks. The organization partially purchased the computer, its peripherals, and furniture, with funds graciously donated by General Dunlap. The Connection noted that Colonels Messerschmidt, assistant secretary; Kathy

Deuster, chair of the membership committee; and Walls, treasurer; were deriving the most use from the new system while simultaneously having the “most fun!” Second Lieutenant Christopher Rivera, an active duty Army nurse and an acclaimed “computer whiz,” installed the hardware and loaded the software, transforming the whole system into a functional unit. The new computer’s antique predecessor, an old word processor, was consigned to retirement, “creaking with age!”

RANCA’s calendar year 1999 balance sheet once again revealed a financially solvent organization. On the positive side of the ledger, it counted a sum of \$107,312 on hand. Expenditures totaled \$55,173. The separate education fund showed an income of \$20,996. Additionally, the fund held a certificate of deposit worth \$110,000. The convention fund demonstrated a balance of \$3,854. Finally, RANCA’s Reserve Fund claimed a certificate of deposit whose value was \$26,382.

With the turn of the new millennium, RANCA/ANCA became the beneficiary of several deceased former members’ last wills and testaments. In the year 2000, the group welcomed a legacy from the estate of Colonel Rose Kudletz. The organization deposited that gift into a special education fund managed by a financial management group. The intent of that decision was to utilize the bequest for future dissemination in the form of collegiate nursing scholarships. A second inheritance came to ANCA in 2001 from benefactor Lieutenant Colonel Maracine Perreault. A nurse anesthetist and veteran of World War II, Lieutenant Colonel Perreault was a charter RANCA member. She passed away in August 2000. Both of these substantial gifts further empowered ANCA in its quest to subsidize nursing education and scholarly activity.

The 2001 treasurer’s report once again verified the growing financial stability of ANCA. The general operating fund had a comfortable income of \$274,916 with expenditures of \$47,860. The education fund reported assets of \$202,859 and the convention fund counted a balance of \$14,520. ANCA also claimed solid investments totaling \$707,691.

In 2004, the organization’s treasurer and the Edward Jones account representative overseeing the group’s investments examined the annual financial report. They concurred that, based on their audit, ANCA’s overall fiscal status was rock solid. This assessment of the organization’s fiscal standing was reaffirmed in 2005 when the treasurer reported to the membership that ANCA’s total net worth at \$1,082,622.49.

In 2007, ANCA posted its first dues increase in fourteen years. The higher cost of running the organization precipitated the escalation from

\$30 to \$40 for a two-year membership. This was yet another example of ANCA's prudent fiscal approach and keen business sense. Across its three decades of existence, ANCA's overall financial picture developed not only in the value of its assets and but also in the stability of its portfolio.

Activism and Vitality

The actions taken by the board of directors at their December 1991 meeting also demonstrated the steady rate of organizational progress that had become a hallmark of RANCA. They approved implementing a mail-in ballot to allow all members, not only those attending the convention, to vote for the slate of candidates running for RANCA offices. They agreed to subsidize enrollment of the former Army Nurse Corps POWs in the Women in Military Service of America Memorial but limited the maximum amount to be expended to \$2,500. They approved the motion that Army nurses who were World War I veterans or World War II POWs have their RANCA dues waived.

In 1992, outgoing president, Colonel McCarthy, advanced four recommendations. She suggested (1) creating a position in RANCA for an executive director, (2) transforming the vice-president's position into that of president-elect, (3) involving the regional directors in raising funds for the educational fund program, and (4) nominating RANCA members for appointments to the AMEDD Museum board and forming a small cadre of RANCA members to advocate for nursing in the AMEDD museum's archives and displays. The board of directors reviewed and ultimately disapproved all these motions at that time. However the board did approve altering the vice-presidential role, combining it with that of president-elect at a later date.

In 1996, members of the organization raised the idea of soliciting the U.S. Postal Service to issue a commemorative stamp in recognition of the Army Nurse Corps centennial in February 2001. The board of directors voted to support this initiative. It asked all RANCA members to correspond with their friends, relations, neighbors, veteran's groups, civic organizations, sororities and fraternities, alumni associations, and church membership, soliciting their support in a letter writing campaign. The board acknowledged that, without extensive popular backing, the Postal Service would not view an Army Nurse Corps stamp as marketable. Sadly that prediction contained more than a grain of truth. In the spring of 1998, the U.S. Postal Service authorities rejected the Army Nurse Corps

request. Refusing to accept such a stunning defeat, RANCA renewed their efforts and initiated a drive to reverse that decision through a second letter-writing crusade. Regrettably, that effort also ended in failure and the campaign for an Army Nurse Corps postal stamp was conclusively abandoned.

Also in 1996, the board approved certain by-law changes. It agreed to eliminate the customary pre-convention board meetings and authorized changes in the structure of committees. Additionally, the directors sanctioned the purchase of AMEDD Museum bricks to recognize former and current Army Nurse Corps chiefs. They also began scrutiny of the by-laws governing the requirement for active duty Army nurses to have completed ten years of service to be eligible for RANCA membership. Those in favor of changing this prerequisite reasoned that former but not retired members of the Army Nurse Corps did not have to meet such a time-in-service criterion. They simply had to have served for any period of time and been discharged honorably. After considerable discussion and study, the board decided to amend the by-laws to allow active duty members to join RANCA at any time in their career.

The autumn board meeting in 1998 was the venue utilized to debate several other crucial issues. The first was an ongoing concern regarding the viability of the organization and its failure to recruit new members much beyond the usual watermark of approximately 2,000 members. The board acknowledged that an increase in membership must come from the active duty ranks and voted to expand the membership by eliminating the associate membership category, in favor of regular membership for all members. Thereafter, all RANCA members were regular members and eligible to run for office. Another change in the by-laws combined the office of vice-president with that of president-elect. As a consequence, the chairmanship of the education committee, formerly a responsibility of the vice-president, became a free-standing entity, no longer a major element of the vice-president's responsibilities.

In 2001, the board voted to fund an ANCA chair for the Women in Military Service for America Memorial auditorium in Washington, DC. One year later, the 2002 board meeting met in San Antonio on 12-13 October. The group conferred and decided at that point to develop a strategic plan for ANCA, concluding that this analytical process would evaluate the organization's existing status and offer a vision for future growth. The board thus scheduled a strategic planning conference for 27-29 June 2003 at Lazy Hills Guest Ranch in Ingram, Texas. The leadership created three

committees to prepare for the meeting—a Retreat Planning Commission chaired by Colonel Wright, a Vision-Mission Committee led by Colonel McLoughlin, and a Survey Development Team organized by Lieutenant Colonel Moss. Attendees at the strategic planning conference formed a working group of 24 members including ANCA board members, committee chairs, past presidents, and Active, Reserve, and National Guard component Army nurses. The general membership offered their input through the means of a survey posted to all ANCA members. Colonel Herb Coley, a retired Medical Service Corps officer, led the assemblage as facilitator. The ad hoc group examined ANCA's mission and purpose and then identified initiatives. They used a SWOT analysis format, identifying organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Next, the planners formulated strategic objectives—to provide social and educational prospects, to preserve ANCA's history, to support and preserve the Army Nurse Corps legacy, to foster literary, educational, research, and artistic ventures, and to disseminate information for and maintain a liaison with the chief of the Army Nurse Corps. Small, breakout teams developed strategies to achieve these objectives.

At the same fruitful 2002 board meeting, Colonel McLoughlin also appointed Lieutenant Colonel Debora R. Cox as the ANCA historian. Among Lieutenant Colonel Cox's first efforts were the planning, interviewing, recording, and transcription of oral histories concentrating on ten ANCA's charter members. The board of directors approved several other motions to improve ANCA's efficiency and productivity. They also voted to design, produce, and sell shirts with the ANCA logo, to amend the by-laws to open honorary advisor positions for all Army Nurse Corps components, to convert Connection issues to a PDF format for online access, to incorporate links to the portraits of former Army Nurse Corps chiefs and superintendents on the website, to conduct orientation for new officers and directors of the organization, and to contribute \$100 to the Cathedral of the Pines in Rindge, New Hampshire, to support renovation of the Women's Bell Tower.

In 2006, ANCA conceived and began implementation of another worthwhile effort—the Mentoring Program. Colonels Bartz, Hightower, and Eileen Malone volunteered to lead the effort. They formalized the process for ANCA members to sign up and act as mentors to active duty Army nurses. They suggested composing and publishing an Army Nurse Corps Mentoring Handbook and video. Additionally, they constructed a survey to solicit interest in the program and mailed the questionnaire to

all ANCA members. Over 250 ANCA members consented to participate as mentors for those serving as active duty Army Nurse Corps officers around the world. In 2007, Colonels Bartz, Hightower, and Malone participated in several videoconference discussions with active duty Army nurses in the Army Nurse Mentoring Special Interest Group and resolved to create an expert contact list, develop a user-friendly brochure on mentoring and initiate a column focusing on mentoring issues in both the Army Nurse Corps and ANCA newsletters. Before long, such a column appeared in both the newsletters. It utilized a question/answer format for topics and dilemmas that cropped up frequently. The first column dealt with retirement questions pertaining to useful resources, the active duty to retirement transition, and the pursuit of post-retirement employment. Subsequent features discussed questions about company grade professional development and graduate school opportunities for Army nurses.

In a similar vein, ANCA provided significant support in the Veteran's Resiliency Program that met on 1-2 May 2009 at the Fort Fisher Air Force Recreation Area in North Carolina. This meaningful program, proposed by ANCA and approved by both Colonel Susanne Clark and General Horoho, represented a weekend of activities to assist Army nurses with the challenges of reintegration following duty in Iraq and Afghanistan. Twelve active duty Army Nurse Corps officers from five military treatment facilities met with five in-country Vietnam Army nurse veterans and shared experiences and observations under the benevolent guidance of two facilitators. Feedback from the program's attendees was enthusiastic and uniformly positive.

The board of directors appointed Colonel Constance J. Moore as ANCA historian in 2008. Colonel Moore followed in the footsteps of Lieutenant Colonel Cox in this position. Both officers advocated for the cause of historical endeavor and contributed original, enlightening columns with a historical focus to the Connection. Both made immense contributions to the writing and publication of the ANCA history.

Finale

This then is the story of the group that began its life as RANCA and later transformed itself into ANCA. In 1977 its charter members managed to incorporate, in spite of several unsuccessful attempts to form an organization in the past. RANCA then was able to thrive in a climate where challenges such as inadequate financial assets and membership numbers were a persistent source of concern. It provided a medium for Army Nurse Corps officers to rekindle and maintain very special social relationships forged in earlier lives. It afforded members the opportunity to espouse the foundation and development of the AMEDD Museum, to promote the designation of the Army hospital at Fort Campbell in tribute to Colonel Blanchfield, to encourage and sustain various memorials to honor veterans, to support the highest level of nursing scholarship, to champion contemporary Army Nurse Corps objectives, and to mentor and encourage active duty Army Nurse Corps officers. Like filaments of gold woven through a tapestry, social activities and service projects were themes interlaced throughout the three-decade long saga of RANCA/ANCA. In short, a vital blend of camaraderie and altruism characterize the general membership and form the unique essence of the Army Nurse Corps Association.



