



## North Carolina Chiefs Of The United States Army Nurse Corps

By: Olivia Jenkins, RN, MSN & Phoebe Pollitt, RN, PhD

### Abstract

The Spanish American War of 1898 was the first war in which the US Army hired graduate nurses to serve on a contract basis. Their work saved many lives and in 1903 the US Congress established a permanent US Army Nurse Corps (USANC). Thousands of nurses have served USANC, at home and overseas, during times of war and peace. Three nurses from North Carolina have directed the USANC as Chief Nurse, overseeing thousands of nurses in hundreds of hospitals, clinics, and battlefield MASH units across the globe. Brief information about each one, in chronological order, is given below.

Jenkins O, Pollitt P. North Carolina Chiefs of the United States Army Nurse Corps. *Tar Heel Nurse*. 2015;77(5):15. <https://login.proxy006.nclive.org/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rzh&AN=109423759&site=eds-live&scope=site>

---

# North Carolina Chiefs of the United States Army Nurse Corps

By NCNA Members *Olivia Jenkins, RN, MSN and Phoebe Pollitt, RN, PhD; Nursing History Council Chair and Vice Chair*

The Spanish American War of 1898 was the first war in which the US Army hired graduate nurses to serve on a contract basis. Their work saved many lives and in 1903 the US Congress established a permanent US Army Nurse Corps (USANC). Thousands of nurses have served USANC, at home and overseas, during times of war and peace.

Three nurses from North Carolina have directed the USANC as Chief Nurse, overseeing thousands of nurses in hundreds of hospitals, clinics, and battlefield MASH units across the globe. Brief information about each one, in chronological order, is given below.

Longtime NCNA member **Mildred Irene Clark** was born on January 30, 1915 in Elkton, North Carolina. In 1938, after earning her Nursing Diploma from the Baker Sanatorium Training School for Nurses in nearby Lumberton, Clark enlisted in the USANC. The USANC sent Clark to anesthesia school at the Jewish Hospital in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. After graduating in 1940, Clark was ordered to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii for service at the Army Hospital at Schofield Barracks.

When the Japanese attacked US Forces at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Clark ran from her barracks to the hospitals and did not leave the hospital for almost three weeks. During that time she delivered anesthesia to hundreds of men prior to their surgeries and nursed the wounded postoperatively.

Clark was appointed as Chief of the Army Nurse Corps in 1963, and soon established the USANC's requirement that all nurses earn bachelor's degrees. Under Clark's leadership, male nurses began receiving commissions in the Army.

In 1999, the US Army dedicated the Mildred I. Clark Health Clinic, its first building named in memory of a woman, at Fort Bragg, NC.

**Clara Mae Leach Adams-Ender** was born on July 11<sup>th</sup>, 1939 in Willow Springs, North Carolina to a family of sharecroppers. In the fall of 1956, Adams-Ender entered the North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College (NCA&T) in Greensboro, NC. While there, she joined the Army ROTC to help pay her nursing school expenses. Adams-Ender participated in the "Sit-In" movement for racial integration while a student at NCA&T.

Upon graduation in June 1961, she decided to make Army nursing her career. In 1969, she earned an MSN from the University of Minnesota and in 1976 she became the first African American to earn a Master's Degree in Military Arts

and Sciences from the Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, KS.

Adams-Ender became Chief of the Army Nurse Corps in 1987, the second African American to hold the post. She retired in 1993 as the commanding general of Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

---

***She was an NCNA member when she became the first nurse to serve as Surgeon General and Commanding General of the United States Army Medical Command.***

---

Major General **Patricia Dallas Horoho** was born in 1960 to a military family in Fayetteville. She was an NCNA member when she became the first nurse to serve as Surgeon General and Commanding General of the United States Army Medical Command. Horoho earned her BSN at UNC-CH in 1982 and soon entered the USANC. Ten years later she earned an MSN from the University of Pittsburgh and another Master's Degree in National Resource Strategy from the Army's Command and General Staff College.

Horoho's bravery, leadership skills and nursing skills were evident while she cared for disaster victims at both the "Green Ramp" disaster at Fort Bragg in 1994 and during the 9/11 attack on the Pentagon. She served as the Chief of the USANC from 2008-2011. She is the first nurse to become a Surgeon General and Commanding General of the United States Army Medical Command.

Each of the Chiefs of the USANC from NC has been honored by many civilian and military organizations. NCNA is proud of all the Tar Heel nurses who have served the country and its troops. •