

## **Week 6 Discussion: Reflection on 19th and 20th Century Nursing**

*With Responses*

Reflect on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>-century nurses and events discussed this week. Which nurse or event from that time period will best guide your current professional nursing practice? Why?

**Hello Professor and classmates,**

Before World War II the United States military had little interest in nurses being used for evacuating wounded soldiers from battlegrounds. Due to the extent of the war, the U.S. Army transformed the use of nurses for aeromedical evacuation. The rapid expansion of air medical transportation made it possible to fly wounded American soldiers to military hospitals. The need for aeromedical nurses was critical after the invasion of North Africa in 1942 (National Museum of the United States Air Force, 2015). In 1943 the United States Army Nurse Corps graduated their first flight nurses from Bowman Field in Louisville, Kentucky (National Museum of the UNAAF, 2015). A challenge to flight nursing was uniforms. Back then, nurses wore dresses; flight nurses were the first to be able to wear trousers. Flight nurse uniforms were first just cut down army uniforms. The nurses who work as flight nurses in the frontline areas travel on aircraft, which would be used to rescue and bring emergency supplies, which meant they could be marked with the Red Cross insignia, making them more susceptible to enemy attack. Many of these nurses were not paid and were volunteers due to the danger of an enemy attack. Flight nurses had to be physically fit just as the soldiers and nurses were prepared by learning crash procedures, survival training, and flight physiology. Flight nurses during this time were called "Winged Angels." One such nurse was Mary Hawkins.