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Pollock is 22nd Army Nurse Corps Chief

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HONOLULU—Maj. Gen. Gale S. Pollock, FACHE, became the 22nd chief of the Army Nurse Corps and went from colonel to major general all in one day – July 26th. It was a momentous moment in time when Maj. Gen. Kevin C. Kiley, acting commander, U.S. Army Medical Command, issued the oath of office and promoted her at the Women in Military Service for America Memorial at Arlington National Ceremony, Wash., D.C.

It is unusual but not unprecedented to be promoted two ranks up, Pollock said, adding she is the first chief of the Army Nurse Corps to do so since Congress passed a federal law in 2003 requiring a two-star general to be chief.

Pollock is the first Army nurse who has “benefited” from the law.

This gives Pollock “more responsibilities and the opportunity to keep taking care of Soldiers. I’m in the Army to take care of Soldiers,” she said.

“I had an older brother – kind of an adopted big brother – who was at Fort Monmouth near where I grew up in New Jersey – and (he) was very instrumental in being an emotional support for me when I was growing up.

“...they sent him to Officer Candidate School, and Airborne and Ranger School and to Jungle Training...and then they sent him over to Vietnam. Robin had his leg blown off in Vietnam, and I decided at that time because they brought him home alive to me that I would make sure that that happened for somebody’s else’s brother or sister or mom or dad.

“So it doesn’t matter what kind of headaches I’m facing as far as challenges – I will not lose that focus...because I am here to take care of Soldiers,” she said.

Pollock’s brother, Robin, died three years ago.

She had decided to become a nurse at age five. “When my Mother asked me ‘So what are you going to do when you grow up?’ ‘I said I’m going to be a nurse because I have to take care of God’s sheep and I never gave it another thought.’”

“When I was about 12, a family friend who was already a nurse said to me ‘Gale, nursing is changing, and if you want to be successful in nursing you must get a baccalaureate degree in nursing. You cannot go to a hospital for a diploma.’

Pollock was never one of those kids who worried about whether she would go to college after receiving this advice. In high school, she learned about the Walter Reed Army Institute of Nursing Program.

Pollock was selected for the Walter Reed Army Institute of Nursing (WRAIN) scholarship program and received a bachelor’s of science in Nursing from the University of Maryland, and a direct commission in the Army Nurse Corps in 1976.

She has attended the U.S. Army Nurse Anesthesia Program and is a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA), and a Fellow in The American College of Healthcare Executives (FACHE). She received her master’s in Business Administration from Boston University, a master’s in Healthcare Administration from Baylor University, and a master’s in National Security and Strategy from the National Defense University.

Pollock believes she “has had fabulous opportunities in the past” that have prepared her for her new role as chief of the Army Nurse Corps.

“I have been a hospital commander now twice at Fort Benning (Ga.) and at Fort Drum (N.Y) with the 10th Mountain Division,” she said. “I’ve worked on the Department of the Army staff at the Pentagon, I’ve worked for the Department of Defense as a health policy analyst,” she said. “...I was in a strategic think tank for (Lt. Gen. Ret.) Gen. Blanck when he was the Surgeon General, ...I’ve worked with Mr. Principi, now the director of the VA, and my most recent experience was serving as the liaison between the information management community (who) are building the new computer systems for the military and the providers who have to use the systems that are provided.”

Pollock wants to promote the fact that the Army Nurse Corps is the “premier nursing organization in the world, and I’m going to work on keeping our fabulous nurses in, and drawing in civilians who have been practicing in the civilian world for a tour or a career.”

“It’s just a fabulous way to give back to our nation,” she said, “and to care for the people who are working very hard to maintain our freedom.”

Army nurses in uniform are the best-educated nurses in the nation and are very focused on continuing education. There is also a tremendous amount of job satisfaction among them, Pollock said.

Currently, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNA), operating room nurses and intensive care nurses are in the most demand. And, they are doing great things in support of the Global War On Terrorism (GWOT).

“You need people who can keep you pain free and alive, and then you need the intensive care nurses to get them through the initial recovery period before we send them out to Landstuhl – which is the main receiving hospital for those who are injured or ill from the theater,” Pollock said.

Currently, the two most important issues identified by nurses deployed in Iraq are expanding the understanding of burn care with the different weapons systems causing so many injuries to Soldiers, and identifying that the traditional litters we use are excellent for transportation but not necessarily excellent

as beds in hospital, according to Pollock.

Nurses in Iraq have been very actively collaborating with the Surgical Research Institute in San Antonio where most burn patients are sent, she said.

With the litters used as beds, Soldiers can develop pressure sores. To prevent them, they're working to modify materials used – to make litters softer with more cushioning, Pollock said.

“Army nurses are here to take care of all of our beneficiaries,” Pollock said, “whether they’re deployed Soldiers in harm’s way or if they (are Soldiers’) families and retirees and their families...”

“I don’t think there’s any better nursing opportunity in the world than as an Army nurse,” Pollock said smiling. “Now the Navy and Air Force would challenge me on that one but I would be inclusive to say there’s no better opportunity than military nursing.

“The reward for taking care of the people that we do – the Heroes that we care for – there’s just nothing that feels better than working with these Soldiers,” she said.



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Comments or suggestions to the [Public Affairs Officer](#)

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