FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

b. May 12, 1820 – d. August 13, 1910

"I think one's feelings waste themselves in words; they ought all to be distilled into actions which bring results."

Florence Nightingale burst into the public consciousness during the Crimean War (1853-1856). Serving as the superintendent at the Institute for the Care of Sick Gentlewomen in London from 1853-1854, she learned of the horrible conditions soldiers faced during Britain's Crimean War with Russia. Using her friendship with politician Sidney Herbert to gain official approval, Nightingale trained 38 nurses and traveled to Turkey, arriving at a hospital in Scutari (modern-day Istanbul) in November 1854.

The Scutari hospitals had the highest mortality rates in the region. Overcrowding, defective sewage systems and poor ventilation contributed to soldiers' illnesses and death. Yet, while a sanitary commission sent by the British government took over six months to arrive, Nightingale and her nursing crew cleaned up the hospital and delivered an unprecedented level of nursing care. By the time she left, Nightingale had earned the military's admiration. She returned to Britain as a hero in 1857.

Confined to bed by fever upon her return, Nightingale refused to let illness diminish her work. She helped establish the Royal Commission on the Health of the Army and wrote its first report, a document that facilitated an overhaul of army medical care and record keeping. "Notes on Nursing," her instructional guide published in 1860, continues to influence nursing schools across the globe. Nightingale founded The Nightingale Fund and the Nightingale Training School. Nurses she mentored and trained spread throughout England and Australia and conducted pioneering work in America and Japan.

A brilliant mathematician and writer, Nightingale used her unique ability to simplify complex statistics to communicate her findings to government officials. Historians consider her book "Cassandra" (1928) a major feminist work.

Queen Victoria awarded Nightingale the Royal Red Cross in 1883. In 1907, Nightingale became the first woman to receive the Order of Merit.

Hospitals, foundations and other organizations in her name continue to advocate for improved health care. The Florence Nightingale Museum in London commemorates the life of the modern world's first great health-care provider.

> **Florence Nightingale founded the modern nursing profession. Her work in hospital sanitation during the 19th century revolutionized medical care and saved countless lives.**

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