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## Cadets get hands-on experience during Nurse Summer Training Program

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By **Alexandra Kocik**  
U.S. Army Cadet Command Public Affairs

JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD, Wash. – While typical Cadets run, jump and work together through LDAC courses, ROTC nursing students put in IVs, give medication and work late-nights in the ER inside Madigan Army Medical Center on the other side of Joint Base Lewis-McChord. Many of these interns already completed LDAC or will do so after their time at the hospital.

The 29-day Army Nurse Summer Training Program was once a mandatory activity for all ROTC nursing students, but is now optional and competitively selected. Nursing students apply for their top three choices of Army hospitals to work in. The two most requested locations are Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, which accepts the top 10 applicants, and the Tripler Army Medical Center in Hawaii, with room for three interns.

Applicants' Army Physical Fitness Test scores and grade-point average account for 40 percent of their application score during the review process. Only those with the highest scores in these two areas will be given their top choice.

"This whole program is to let you learn how it is to be an Army nurse," Lt. Col. David Cassella, deputy chief nurse said. "It's a lot like other nursing programs except, our interns get hands-on experience by following an Army nurse."

The one-on-one relationship between interns and nurses allows students to do things such as attach IVs and give medication under the supervision of someone responsible for the students. This differs greatly from civilian nursing programs, where one nursing teacher is in charge of many students and cannot always give them individual attention, Cassella said.

"A lot of nursing schools just teach you how to put in IVs, but here we show them and then the intern does it," he said. "Here they can make mistakes in a stress-free environment because someone is always with them."

Interns are rotated to different sections of the hospital they are interested in, including working with specialists such as an on-site allergist or cardiologist, to gain more knowledge of every level of medical care.



First Lt. Jordan List oversees nursing Cadet Megan King putting in an IV for a patient. U.S. Army photo by Alexandra Kocik

The Leader Development and Assessment Course, also known as Operation Warrior Forge, is the capstone exercise on the way to becoming a U.S. Army lieutenant.

-Forging Professionals

### Top APFT Scores, 2012

**398: Aimee Moores**, 11th Regiment  
University of Virginia

**396: Bradley Lagemann**, 8th Regiment  
Weber State University

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For student nurses, such as Cadet Mailee Wilson from Gonzaga University, the hands-on experience is what drew her to Madigan for the summer.

"I am able to get a good idea of other areas of the hospital such as the intensive care unit and emergency room, which has been a really great experience," Wilson said. "I wouldn't be able to do that in other programs."

Army nurses who want to teach an intern must pass special training before the nursing student arrives. This involves learning advanced nursing concepts RNs may not be familiar with, such as information on the nervous system, the pros and cons of IVs and what's involved with ultrasound.



Captain Penny Los gives directions for the day to nursing Cadet Mailee Wilson. U.S. Army photo by Alexandra Kocik

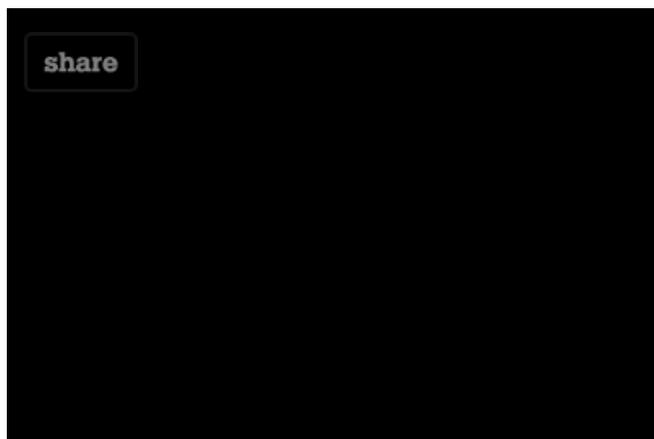
This program is not just for those who want a military career. It also fulfills the requirements for experience needed to enter a civilian hospital position.

Amanda Jennings from Texas Christian College plans to use this internship to get a civilian nurse job at another hospital.

"A lot of nursing students are given the chance to intern at a military hospital," Jennings said. "I'm so glad I did this since it's an optional thing now."

While civilian nurses compete for attention in a classroom and read about techniques in huge books, Army nurses learn how to help patients by participating in hospital activities over a month-long period.

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