

Lt. Col. Rae D. Landy (1885-1952) Nursing Pioneer



Rachel D. Landy was an early recruit to Hadassah's district nursing service in Jerusalem, Mandate Palestine and later rose through the ranks of the American Army Nurse Corps to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Born in Lithuania, "Rae" as she was nicknamed, was one of seven children born to Rabbi Jacob and Eva (Gross) Landy. The family immigrated to Cleveland in 1888. Landy's father was a Torah scribe and established Hebrew Books, the first Jewish book store in Cleveland. Landy's mother was instrumental in the founding of the Hebrew Orthodox Old Age Home in Cleveland.

In 1904, Rae graduated with the first class of nursing students sponsored by the Jewish Women's Hospital Association (precursor to Mount Sinai Hospital). She became an assistant superintendent at Harlem Hospital in New York in 1911, where she was recruited by Hadassah founder Henrietta Szold. The 28-year-old arrived in Mandate Palestine on February 2, 1913.

In Palestine, Landy and fellow nurse Rose Kaplan started a district visiting nurse program for immigrants suffering from malaria, typhoid, and dysentery. The two women launched a clinic and nurse's settlement house where young Jerusalem girls received training in nursing, first aid, and hygiene. When Hadassah suspended its activities during the First World War, Landy returned home to the United States in 1918.

Upon her return, Landy entered the United States Army Nurse Corps. She served in Germany, Belgium, France, and the Philippines. She continued her career with the Army Nurse Corps, and in 1944 was named Chief of Nurses at Crile General Hospital in Cleveland. She lived in Cleveland Heights with Lena and Morris Freeman, her sister and family.

Until her death on March 5, 1952, Landy worked with the Cleveland Red Cross and recruited nurses for Mount Sinai Hospital. The only Jewish woman in American history to achieve the rank of colonel in the U.S. Army, second highest in command in the U.S. Army Nurse Corps, Landy was buried in Arlington Cemetery with full military honors.

More on Lt. Col. Rae D. Landy

“Landy, Rachel (Rae) D.” *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*.
<https://case.edu/ech/articles/l/landy-rachel-rae-d>

Winds Over Jerusalem: The Story of Rae Landy, Pioneer Nurse of Hadassah by Debbi Perkul

Official website of Debbi Perkul, author
<https://www.debbiperkul.com/copy-of-home>

“Nursing Zionism: Rae Landy and Hadassah in the Holy Land” by Libby Barnea
<https://www.hadassahmagazine.org/2017/10/18/nursing-zionism-rae-landy-hadassah-holy-land/>

“100 Years of Nursing Education” by Wendy Elliman
<https://www.hadassahmagazine.org/2018/04/16/100-years-nursing-education/>

“Advocacy and Education: Hadassah’s Nurses Council” by Hilary Danailova
<https://www.hadassahmagazine.org/2020/09/02/celebrating-advocacy-connection-hadassah-nurses-council/>

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www.ClevelandJewishHistory.net