Two recent publications offer different assessments of the career of the famous British nurse Florence Nightingale. A book by Anne Summers seeks to debunk the idealizations and present a reality at odds with Nightingale's heroic reputation. According to Summers Nightingale's importance during the Crimean War has been exaggerated: not until near the war's end did she become supervisor of the female nurses. Additionally, Summers writes that the contribution of the nurses to the relief of the wounded was at best marginal. The prevailing problems of military medicine were caused by army organizational practices, and the addition of a few nurses to the medical staff could be no more than symbolic. Nightingale's place in the national pantheon, Summers asserts, is largely due to the propagandistic efforts of contemporary newspaper reporters.

By contrast, the editors of a new volume of Nightingale's letters view Nightingale as a person who significantly influenced not only her own age but also subsequent generations. They highlight her ongoing efforts to reform sanitary conditions after the war. For example, when she learned that peacetime living conditions in British barracks were so horrible that the death rate of enlisted men far exceeded that of neighboring civilian populations, she succeeded in persuading the government to establish a Royal Commission on the Health of the Army. She used sums raised through public contributions to found a nurses' training hospital in London. Even in administrative matters, the editors assert her practical intelligence was formidable: as recently as 1947 the British Army's medical services were still using the cost-accounting system she had devised in the 1860's.

I believe that the evidence of her letters supports continued respect for Nightingale's brilliance and creativity. When counseling a village schoolmaster to encourage children to use their faculties of observation she sounds like a modern educator. Her insistence on classifying the problems of the needy in order to devise appropriate treatments is similar to the approach of modern social workers. In sum, although Nightingale may not have achieved all other goals during the Crimean War, her breadth of vision and ability to realize ambitious projects have earned her an eminent place among the ranks of social pioneers.

1. The passage is primarily concerned with evaluating  
(A) the importance of Florence Nightingale's innovations in the field of nursing   
(B) contrasting approaches to the writing of historical biography   
(C) contradictory accounts of Florence Nightingale's historical significance   
(D) the quality of health care in nineteenth-century England   
(E) the effect of the Crimean War on developments in the field of health care

2. According to the passage, the editors of Nightingale's letters credit her with contributing to which of the following?  
(A) Improvement of the survival rate for soldiers in British Army hospitals during the Crimean War   
(B) The development of a nurses' training curriculum that was far in advance of its day   
(C) The increase in the number of women doctors practicing in British Army hospitals   
(D) Establishment of the first facility for training nurses at a major British university   
(E) The creation of an organization for monitoring the peacetime living conditions of British soldiers   
  
3. The passage suggests which of the following about Nightingale's relationship with the British public of her day?  
(A) She was highly respected, her projects receiving popular and governmental support.  
(B) She encountered resistance both from the army establishment and the general public.  
(C) She was supported by the working classes and opposed by the wealthier classes.  
(D) She was supported by the military establishment but had to fight the governmental bureaucracy.  
(E) After initially being received with enthusiasm, she was quickly forgotten.  
  
4. The passage suggests which of the following about sanitary conditions in Britain after the Crimean War?  
(A) While not ideal, they were superior to those in other parts of the world.  
(B) Compared with conditions before the war, they had deteriorated.  
(C) They were more advanced in rural areas than in the urban centers.  
(D) They were worse in military camps than in the neighboring civilian populations.  
(E) They were uniformly crude and unsatisfactory throughout England.  
  
  
5. With which of the following statements regarding the differing interpretations of Nightingale's importance would the author most likely agree?  
(A) Summers misunderstood both the importance of Nightingale's achievements during the Crimean War and her subsequent influence on British policy.  
(B) The editors of Nightingale's letters made some valid points about her practical achievements but they still exaggerated her influence on subsequent generations.  
(C) Although Summers' account of Nightingale's role in the Crimean War may be accurate, she ignored evidence of Nightingale's subsequent achievement that suggests that her reputation as an eminent social reformer is well deserved.  
(D) The editors of Nightingale's letters mistakenly propagated the outdated idealization of Nightingale that only impedes attempts to arrive at a balanced assessment of her true role.  
(E) The evidence of Nightingale's letters supports Summers' conclusions both about Nightingale's activities and about her influence.