



## Nursing Sisters Video Transcription

AT2023.013.009

More than 2,800 nurses served in the Canadian Army Medical Corps as officers. Canada's Nursing Sisters saved lives by caring for wounded and sick soldiers. My name is Cadet Corporal Mba from the Royal Canadian Air Cadets, 340 Griffin Squadron.

At least 51 women, with a connection to Bruce County, served in the military during the First World War. This is the story of three Bruce County Nursing Sisters.

Born on March 21, 1892, in Bradford Ontario, Luella Blanche Lee chose a career in nursing. She graduated from Toronto Western Hospital as a nurse in 1916.

Luella served 2.5 years with the British and Canadian military as a Nursing Sister, with a rank of Lieutenant. Canada was one of the first of the allied countries to give nurses relative rank and equal pay to men.

She started with the British Queen Alexandra Imperial Military Nursing Sister Reserve in 1916, and a year later, she enlisted in the Canadian Army Medical Corps.

She was stationed in Malta, Italy, England, and France with #13 and #3 Canadian General Hospitals, and with the Bearwood Convalescent Hospital.

Nursing Sisters were nicknamed "bluebirds" because of their blue uniforms and white veils. They faced many challenging experiences, like sleeping in a tent, sometimes with rats and fleas, shifting to new postings on short notice, and working with limited supplies.

Luella returned to Canada after the war in May 1919.

On June 22, 1922, she married Dr. James Fraser. He practiced medicine in the Port Elgin/Southampton area for 51 years.

Mrs. Fraser lived in Port Elgin/Southampton with her husband for the rest of her life.

She was a member of local churches and was active in the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, the Port Elgin Legion, and the Canadian Association of Nursing Sisters.

She died at the age of 87 on Feb. 21, 1980.

Mabel Stauch was born on October 30th, 1893 to a farming family in Saugeen Township. She was the fourth of 5 children.

Mabel decided to pursue a career in Nursing. With the war raging in Europe, and after graduating, at the age of 23, she travelled to England.

When she arrived in 1916, she joined the British Queen Alexandra Imperial Military Nursing Sister Reserve.

On October 17<sup>th</sup>, 1917, she enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force as a Nursing Sister and was assigned to #16 Canadian General Hospital in Metro London. This Hospital had more than 1,000 beds for wounded Canadian soldiers.

As wounded soldiers arrived, nurses were often the first to meet them. They would give the soldiers pain medication or tetanus vaccines, clean wounds, and offer comfort. Nurses assisted in surgery and cared for wounds by re-bandaging injuries.

On August 12, 1918, Mabel went to France with #1 Canadian General Hospital. In 1919, she returned to work at the large Canadian General Hospital in Metro London.

Lucky for her, she got a 14 day leave in February 1919 and got to visit and tour Italy.

On June 26, 1919 she boarded the S.S. Baltic to travel across the ocean to return to Canada. She was discharged on July 9, 1919 and came back home to Port Elgin. She died at the age of 82 on October 8th, 1976.

Elizabeth Nora Campbell was born on June 28, 1884.

Nora attended school in Port Elgin before going to Toronto to begin her nursing training at the Toronto General Hospital. By 1910, she had graduated and was working at that hospital.

On April 7, 1915, she decided to enlist in the Canadian Army Medical Corps and served much of her time with the #4 Canadian General Hospital unit.

Nora arrived in France in June 1915 and worked in France and England until October.

Then she left for the Mediterranean due to violent fighting in North Eastern Greece. Nora served in Greece for over a year until December 1916.

The soldiers she would have been caring for there were not only suffering from battle injuries. She was also helping soldiers suffering from dysentery, trench fever, pneumonia and influenza. Some of these illnesses were contagious and life-threatening at that time. They didn't have the antibiotics and other drugs we use today prevent infections.

Unfortunately, Nora was stricken with bacillary dysentery and became very ill. Her condition wasn't improving so she was taken to Malta. On February 2, 1917 she was well enough to return to England.

After a period of rest, she was assigned again to the #4 Canadian General Hospital which was using a new civilian hospital in Basingstoke, England.

In June 1918, Nora received a 2nd class Royal Red Cross military award at Buckingham Palace. This award was given to nurses who showed exceptional devotion and skill in performing nursing duties over a long period, or who performed an exceptional act of bravery and devotion in their work.

After the war, on December 10, 1919, Nora married Dr. John Mcleod. They both worked at the Christie Street Military Hospital in Toronto after their marriage.

Sadly, Nora passed away at the age of 47, from pneumonia following surgery, in March 1932.

More than 2,800 Canadian nursing sisters served served in the First World War. At least 58 died as a result of enemy fire, disease, or drowning on hospital ships.

These three women are only some of the many women who showed courageous commitment that many Bruce County families showed, sacrificing, and serving, fighting, and dying, for our freedom. We thank you, and we salute you.