

## Ellanore June Parker (1878–1965)

by John Azar



**Ellanore June Parker** was born in Ireland to English parents in 1878. We don't know when she arrived in Canada, so our story begins with Ellanore graduating as a nurse at the Winnipeg General Hospital in 1910. She joined the First Contingent of the Canadian Army Medical Corps (CAMC) as a nursing sister and went to the Second Canadian General Hospital at Dieppe, France as a First Lieutenant in 1915.

Parker and her lifelong friend and companion Murney Pugh served with the First Canadian Division at the Battle of Mons, where she treated gas cases from the battle of Vimy Ridge and the Somme. Parker suffered from mustard gas poisoning herself and returned to Canada as a patient on a hospital ship. She was not expected to live and later nearly died several times from bouts of pneumonia aggravated by the gas damage.

Parker went to California for her health in 1919, where she contributed many columns to the *Los Angeles Times* and wrote two books about her First World War experience. She had a flair for inventing and developed a magnetic detector which was a forerunner to radar. She also designed a water cannon that was used to fight fires in London during the Blitz in the Second World War.

Parker returned to Victoria in 1948, when she was 70, and she died at the Sandringham Private Hospital on October 10, 1965 at the age of 87. Her file in the B.C. Provincial Archives includes congratulatory letters from King George V, Prime Minister Anthony Eden, General Charles de Gaulle, T.A. Crerar, Prime Minister Holland of New Zealand, Cristobel Pankhurst, and Colonel Carne V.C.

---

*Source: St. Luke's Prescription, Easter 2015*