



Lieutenant Georgina Fane Pope
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Lieutenant Georgina Fane Pope: a woman of firsts

P.E.I. born Georgina was one of eight children of Father of Confederation William Henry Pope. As lawyer, newspaperman, politician and judge, Pope expected a great deal from his children.

Georgina delivered. She trained as a nurse at Bellevue Hospital School

of Nursing in New York City—when nursing was a young profession. In 1899 when Canada answered the call to help Britain with the Boer War, Georgina was the senior nursing sister of the four who went with the first Canadian troops to South Africa. With the rank, pay and benefits of a lieutenant she worked in hospitals north of Cape Town and then took charge of a military field hospital at Kroonstadt. Most of the 230 patients suffered from typhoid as well as their wounds. Not daunted by a harsh climate and dangerous conditions, Pope did a second tour of duty serving in Natal until the end of the war in 1902. In 1903 she received the Royal Red Cross in recognition of exceptional military nursing service. She'd nursed and led while facing all the war and South Africa had to dish out. While working at the Garrison Hospital in Halifax Georgina became a regular member of the Canadian Army Medical Corps becoming its first Nursing Matron-in-Chief in 1908. At 55 years-of-age Georgina accepted a tour of duty during WWI serving near Ypres. Her words say it all, "My hair is now white ... but the sight of soldiers or sailors marching, a bugle call, the sound of the drums or military band has power still to stir in me the old enthusiasm and once more I long to minister to such cheery, grateful patients as the Soldiers and Sailors of the King." Georgina Fane Pope was a trail-blazer in military nursing in Canada.