



# Etta Sparks - WW1 Nursing Sister

By: Liza Logale & Taylor Barrett

# Identification Information

- Name: Letitia (“Etta”) Sparks
- Born in Ottawa, ON – Britannia Bay on May 28, 1879
- Father: John Sparks & Mother: Sarah Gamble
- Physical characteristics:
  - 5ft 8 inches, white fair skin, brown hair, blue eyes, 175 lbs.
- Religious denomination: Methodist
- Service trade: Nurse with previous military force experience
  - No.7 Canadian General Hospital





## Timeline of Spark's Service

- May 5, 1915 – Embarkation in Kingston, ON
- May 25, 1915 – deployed to France as a Nurse
- Transferred to Egypt to continue her work as a Nurse
- July 26 – evacuated to England due to illness
- July 30, 1917 – disease was detected in England, at Queens Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service (QUAIMS), England
- August 3, 1917 – Etta was deemed unfit for duty and was instructed to seek medical assistance due to deterioration from illness



# Timeline of Etta's Service from Archive Files

Rank and Name **SPARKS, ETTA,** Nursing Sister. 70/11 7/1/17

Regimental No. \_\_\_\_\_ Name and Address of Next-of-kin **Mrs John Sparks, Britannia on the Bay, Ont. (mother)**

Unit **No. 5 Stationary Hospital,** A.F.B. 103 11/16

Date of enlistment **May 5<sup>th</sup> 1915.**

Place of birth **County Carleton, Ont.**

Married (Yes or No) **No** Date and place of discharge \_\_\_\_\_

If in Permanent Force \_\_\_\_\_ Reason for discharge \_\_\_\_\_

Promotions or appointments **Left Egypt 11<sup>th</sup> 16 arrived France 21<sup>st</sup> 16** A.F.B. 103

Report \_\_\_\_\_

| Date                | From whom received | Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, etc., during active service. The authority to be quoted in each case. | Place            | Date     | REMARKS<br>Taken from Official Documents |
|---------------------|--------------------|--|------------------|----------|--|
| 30-5-15             | Gen. Hp.           | Taken on strength  | Staples          | 25-5-15  | Part in orders 32                        |
| 3-8-15              | Dms.               | overseas with<br>to Dardanelles  | NS 50. Staty. H. | 1-8-15   | CO 746                                   |
| 31-7-15             | Dms                | To No 2 Gen Staty Hosp   |                  | 1-8-15   | Stat Hosp No. 29 7/1                     |
| 7-8-15              | C.G. H/p           | Struck off strength  |                  | 29-7-15  | CO 228                                   |
| 19 <sup>th</sup> 16 | D.H.S.             | attached No 16 Brit Gen. Hosp  |                  | 29-7-15  | Part in orders 11                        |
| 14 <sup>th</sup> 16 | -do-               | Rejoined unit No 7 Gen. C. H.  |                  | 1-5-16   | C.O. 849                                 |
| 19/9/16             | Y.B.G/H            | Attached for temp duty No 36 C. G. H.  |                  | 22/5/16  | C.O. 1040                                |
| 13-11-16            | Y.C.G.H            | rejoined unit from temp duty at 36 C.G.H.  |                  | 30/10/16 | CO, 2043                                 |
| 9-12-16             | No 7 C. Gen. H     | Granted 14 days leave from   |                  | 14-9-16  | Period. 146. C.O. 1886.                  |
| 31-7-17             | Dms.               | Posted to Camp, Depot.   |                  | 31-10-16 | Period 164                               |
| 2-8-17              | C.R.O.             | admitted   |                  | 18-12-16 | Period. 1. 4-17.                         |
| 6-8-17              | B.R.O.             | admitted   |                  | 2-12-16  | Period. 172.                             |
|                     |                    | admitted   |                  | 29-7-17  | CO. 948 Period. 49. Y.C. Gen.            |
|                     |                    | admitted   |                  | 30-7-17  | C. L. 742. 3/17/17. Break.               |
|                     |                    | admitted   |                  | 30-7-17  | C. L. 741 Tunis maly                     |
|                     |                    | admitted   |                  | 30-7-17  | C. L. 744. N.Y.D. P.                     |

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# Etta's Illness

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- Symptoms – unpleasant smell from the right breast with solid lump the size of a walnut, swelling and pain in the right arm, crustation and dark blue skin of the right breast.
- Diagnosed with breast carcinoma (malignant tumor) at the Kitchener Mill Hospital Brighton, London England
- Carcinoma deemed inoperable.
- Died August 20, 1917, at 38 years old.
- Etta's grave is located in Brighton City (Bear Road) Cemetery, Sussex, England. Grave ZIY. 95.





Etta Sparks  
was one of  
the many  
heroes from  
World War 1

## NURSING SISTER SPARKS ILL ONLY THREE WEEKS

The death of Nursing Sister Etta Sparks occurred at Kitchener Hospital, Brighton, England, after an illness which only lasted three weeks. Miss Sparks resided at Britannia Heights previous to taking her nursing course at Hartford, Conn.

The deceased had spent most of her time in the United States after graduating, but a year ago this spring she became attached to a Kingston medical unit. Miss Sparks was the only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Sparks, of Britannia Heights.

# Medical Documents

- This document notates her medical condition at the time of her death
  - Carcinoma of Breast (right breast)
- The disease spread fast and led to her death
  - Within period of 4 months
  - Location: London, England (Expired)
- Next of Kin
  - Mrs. / Mr. John Sparks

| Rank.   | Sparks               | Unit.    | Etta | 38                |
|---|----------------------|----------|------|-------------------|
| N/sister  |                      | C.A.M.C. |      | Service.<br>27/12 |
| and   |                      |          |      |                   |
| Disease   | Carcinoma of breast. |          |      |                   |
| First noticed a lump in right breast<br>in April last. It was about the size of<br>walnut and situated in the right<br>upper quadrant. No pain at that time.<br>Present condition - Large cancerous mass<br>involving whole of right breast. Skin<br>also involved and dark purple over<br>skin for some distance beyond breast<br>margin. Right arm slightly swollen and<br>painful. Axilla severely invaded.<br>Liver hard with thick edge and down<br>as far as the umbilicus. Chest<br>on affected side evidently invaded as<br>there is some dyspnoea and cough.<br>Nausea is a prominent feature and<br>appetite very poor. |                      |          |      |                   |
| J. M. Lewis   |                      |          |      |                   |
| Aug 20th Patient died at 2.30 am.   |                      |          |      |                   |
| J. M. Lewis   |                      |          |      |                   |





# Cemetery Location

BRIGHTON CITY CEMETERY  
(BEAR ROAD)  
Sussex, United Kingdom



# References (APA)

- Canada, V. A. (2022, February 22). *Canadian Virtual War Memorial*. Letitia Sparks - The Canadian Virtual War Memorial - Veterans Affairs Canada. Retrieved March 24, 2022, from <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/Detail/659356>