



Canadian Women of Valour Challenge:

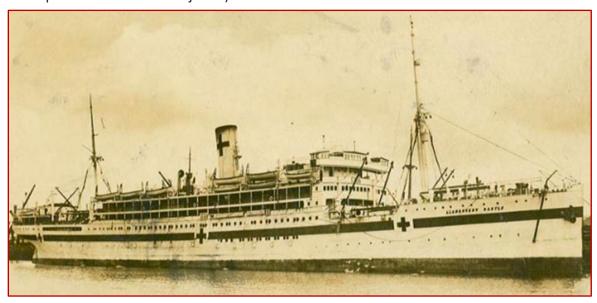
## ALEXINA DUSSAULT, Nursing Sister

On June 27, 1918, the Canadian hospital ship the HMHS Llandovery Castle was torpedoed off the coast of Ireland. The ship was properly marked as a hospital ship, not a war ship. Its appropriate lighting and the red cross painted on its hull were clearly visible to friend and foe alike. As the ship sunk, one of the lifeboats was pulled into its whirlpool and all fourteen nursing sisters onboard that smaller vessel drowned. After the Llandovery Castle had completely sunk, the German Uboat that had shot the torpedo surfaced and opened fire on the remaining lifeboats. Over two hundred Canadians were killed in the sinking, including Nursing Sister Alexina Dussault.

Alexina Dussault of the Canadian Army Medical Corps, lost on June 27, 1918, during the sinking of the Llandovery Castle. (Credit: Imperial War Museum WWC-H22-17-1)



A trained nurse from Quebec, Alexina joined the Canadian Expeditionary Force on September 25, 1914, shortly after the war was declared. Alexina was considered too old to join, so in a brave and selfless act she told the recruiters that she was younger than her real age. The ruse worked and Alexina was sent to France where she was posted to a casualty clearing station (Due to the excellent medical care provided at these stations ninety-five percent of soldiers who made it to one of these medical outposts survived their injuries).



The ill-fated HMHS Llandovery Castle. (Credit: Nova Scotia Archives, date unknown)





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In February 1916, Alexina volunteered for hospital ship service and was granted that posting. She proceeded to spend the next two years caring for soldiers on the long voyages from England to Canada until that fateful day, June 27, 1918.

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| CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE.  | (To be determined according to the instructions given in the Regulations for Army Medical Services.)   | peculiarities or previous disease.   |
| QUESTIONS TO BE PUT BEFORE ATTESTATION.  | (6)  | (Should the Medical Officer be of opinion that the recruit has serve<br>before, be will unless the man asknowledges to any previor<br>service, attach a slip to that effect, for the information of th<br>Approving Officers.  |
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Alexina's attestation papers. These were completed upon her enlistment (28 Sept. 1914). (Credit: Library and Archives Canada)

The sinking of the Llandovery Castle was considered one of the worst atrocities perpetrated in the war and was used as a rallying cry for Canadian soldiers during the last Hundred Days.

For more on Alexina Dussault's experience as a nurse, visit the Imperial War Museum's "Lives of the First World War".

## Key Vocabulary:

U-boat: a German submarine. U-boat is short form for the German word, unterseeboot, aka under sea boat

Attestation: a declaration of truth. In this case, Alexina is testifying to her identity, health, and skills.

Atrocities: an unacceptably horrific act, particularly in war

Perpetrated: to carry out, do, or commit, a harmful, illegal, or immoral action



