



# HUMANS OF THE ROYAL

## Eleanor Elizabeth Bourne (1878-1957)

**Eleanor Elizabeth Bourne was the first Queensland woman to study medicine, and Brisbane Hospital's first female resident medical officer.**

She was one of only 15 women doctors in Australia who volunteered for service during World War I.

Always an outstanding student, Eleanor Bourne topped the state's scholarship examination of 1891 and entered Brisbane Girls' Grammar.

Keen to study medicine and unable to find the prerequisite subjects at Girls' Grammar, she completed her secondary education at Brisbane Grammar School for boys.

Bourne was awarded the Sydney University Exhibition in 1896 which enabled her to become the first Queensland woman to study medicine.

In 1903, Bourne was appointed the first female resident medical officer at the Brisbane Hospital, by the unanimous vote of the all-male Brisbane Hospital Committee. She subsequently had a distinguished career as the first Medical Inspector of Schools in the Department of Public Instruction and travelled extensively through regional Queensland establishing principles and implementing practices for the medical examination of children.

Undeterred that the Australian Army did not admit female doctors, and determined to support the Allies, Bourne travelled to England at her own expense, and enlisted in the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1916. As a Lieutenant she served in the Endell Street Military Hospital, London. In 1917, Bourne was promoted to Major and transferred to Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps and appointed Medical Controller, Northern Command until the end of the War.

Bourne obtained a Diploma of Public Health in 1920, and continued her career in Britain. She returned to Queensland after retiring in 1937 where she lived until her death in 1957.

