



Canadian War Brides and Families

Winter 2014

Greetings from President Jean

Although we are well into the month of January, I would like to wish everyone a very happy, healthy and prosperous year ahead. Our winter here in Saskatchewan has been very cold with temperatures well below zero for more than 100 days which broke records. We did however get a few days this past week which actually melted quite a lot of the snow. Now we look forward to the longer days and the coming of spring. I do hope you are planning to go to London, Ontario for our reunion in August, I am for sure. The committee is planning a special weekend and if it is as good as the last one in Victoria, it will be another one to remember with fond memories. I am still here in Saskatoon as my Condo has not sold yet.

Take Care and God Bless,

Jean

Save the Date - Reunion 2014 - August 8 - 10, 2014

*Canadian War Brides
& Families*

Reunion 2014

Will be held in beautiful
London, Ontario
August 8,9,10, 2014



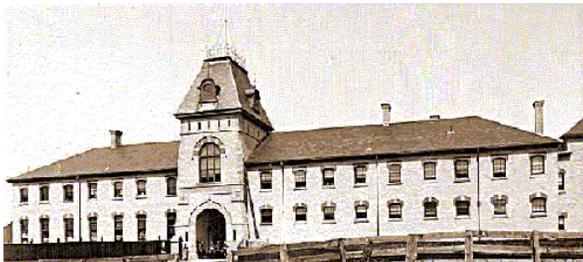
At the historic Delta Armouries

For more information

Email: Canadianwarbride@netidea.com

or call War Bride Grace

@ (519)285-2617



Individuals planning to attend the reunion can book their rooms directly with the hotel. The rate we have been offered is \$119 per night. The hotel can be reached as follows:

Phone: 519-679-6111

Fax: 519-679-3957

Reservations: 800-668-9999

<https://www.deltahotels.com/Hotels/Delta-London-Armouries-Hotel>

War Brides, family members & friends should identify themselves as being with the *Canadian War Brides & Families Reunion*

The Reunion Registration package will go out with the Spring 2014 Newsletter

AN AMAZING STORY

1st Newspaper Article - Canadian war bride meets Mountie of her dreams



A Port Alberni, BC Mountie fulfilled a lifelong wish of a local senior citizen by visiting her at the Ty Watson Hospice House on June 28, 2013. Jenny Stewart, 88, now a resident at Ty Watson House, saw her first RCMP officer dressed in his Red Serge in 1938, at the Empire Exhibition in Edinburgh, Scotland. She was 11 years old and she remembers that moment as the one that sealed her decision to one day become a resident of Canada. She received this opportunity in 1945 when she married a Canadian soldier in Scotland, and six months later sailed on the ocean liner RMS Aquitania to Halifax, Nova Scotia. Stewart was one of nearly 44,000 war brides to immigrate to Canada from Europe between 1942-48. Through the years Stewart never forgot that parade in Edinburgh. When she mentioned to the nursing staff at the hospice that she had always wanted to meet a Mountie dressed in formal Red Serge, staff members contacted the RCMP to set up a meeting, Const. Jen Allan related in a press release. While sipping tea at Ty Watson house, Macleod listened with great interest as Stewart talked about her late husband and their life together in their newly adopted homeland. Photographs were taken to mark this exciting moment in Stewart's life, and both she and Macleod smiled proudly in every photograph, Allan noted. As Macleod left Ty Watson House hours later, he marveled once again at the impact his iconic and historical red uniform continues to have on Canadians and those around the world.

... and what happened as a result of the first newspaper article

Two childhood friends were reunited Wednesday after 65 years when one of them was featured in a newspaper article. Jenny Stewart, 84, and Jenny Dafoe, 88, grew up in the same village in Scotland. It wasn't until last week that the war brides discovered they now live a couple communities away from each other. The friends believe fate brought them together.

Last week, Dafoe received a Globe and Mail newspaper clipping from her cousin who lives in Vernon, BC. The article, which also ran in the Alberni Valley Times, was about a Port Alberni woman from Crosshouse, Scotland whose lifelong dream came true when she met a Mountie dressed in full red serge earlier this month. That woman was Stewart.

"My mom has a sister in Vernon. She sent her a clipping from the Globe and Mail. The Crosshouse connection was in the article," said Dafoe's son, Alan Dafoe, who brought his mom to Port Alberni from Comox to visit her friend. "With the Internet, I had it all wrapped up in about 6.5 minutes."

The gathering took place at Stewart's residence, the Ty Watson House. "It's the first time they've seen each other since they came to Canada," Stewart's daughter, Janet Williams, said. As the women reminisced about their childhoods and filled each other in on the events of their lives that they missed, they discovered their lives mirrored each other in many ways.

First of all, the women are both called Jenny, but their names are Janet.

While chatting, they discovered that they both married a Walter and they were married in the same church in Crosshouse, Scotland about eight months apart.

"I remember meeting my future husband. This Canadian soldier walked into a fish and chips shop and asked, 'Can you get tea here?' I said, 'no.' After, I went up to him and said, 'I don't want to appear forward, but I live up the street and I'm sure my mom would make you a cup of tea,'" Dafoe said. Soon after, they became a couple.

Only three weeks later, Walter was sent to Sicily for the war. It was when he returned that they were married.

"He was a good husband," Dafoe said.

When it was time for their husbands to return to Canada, the women stayed behind and followed a couple months

later. They both sailed away from their hometown on the RMS Aquitania in 1946. Stewart moved to Saskatoon before moving to B.C. in 1958, and Dafoe moved to Vancouver where she lived until six years ago when she moved to Vancouver Island.

"Of the three Canadian war brides from Crosshouse, I was the first to come to Canada and get married," Dafoe said. "When I got the OK to sail, I went running to Jenny's house to tell her."

Dafoe had two children. Her son was born in Scotland and her daughter was born in Canada. Stewart had four children, all of which came along after she moved to Canada. Their only daughters are both named Janet.

Growing up, Alan only remembers one reference that his mom made to Stewart.

"She would say, 'I'm so glad I got off in Vancouver because I remember Jenny Milliken went to that godforsaken place (Saskatoon)," Alan

said. Although Stewart was a little apprehensive to reunite with her friend, they hit it off instantly and spent very few minutes in silence. They took a walk down memory lane as they remembered teachers, classmates, landmarks and the places they used to hang out.

"She was quite apprehensive because it's been so many years. But, as you can see, it's going well," Williams said. "Two years ago, mom wouldn't talk to anyone. Ever since she's been in here (Ty Watson House), she's blossomed."

Alan said the visit has been a good thing for his mother because it gave her something to look forward to.

"She was pretty excited and this is a blessing. She is very happy," he said.

For the staff at Ty Watson House, the visit has also touched their hearts as they've grown very fond of Stewart.

"The connection and the coincidences, it just seems meant to be," said a Ty Watson House volunteer.

Both Articles were published in the Alberni Times newspaper

Reflections of a Radar Operator

Transcript of a presentation made by War Bride, Grace Shewan for Remembrance Day 2013

I was asked to tell you what I did during World War 2. When I was 19 years old, I was notified, as were all others my age in England, to attend an interview to decide what I would be doing to help the war effort. There were choices like factories, government office jobs, land army, the military and more. I decided to join the Royal Air Force and after some tests was asked if I would like to become a Radar Operator. I said 'what's that' as I imagine most people did since Radar was not in our vocabulary and was entirely secret! There was no explanation given just that I would find it interesting, and I did.

I was sent on a 6 week course to learn all about it. One drawback was that you could not go over your notes in the evening or study for a test as you were not allowed to take a paper or note book out of the building where the lectures were given – it was locked up tight – so secretive.

I was then posted to a small Radar station on the east coast of Scotland - a small fishing village. The air force station was up on the hill with an antenna that turned 24-7, all shrouded in secrecy, and in the village there were many rumours of what went on up there! The antenna was transmitting its beams out to sea and when the range of the beam was weakening in strength the transmission from another station down the coast was doing the same thing and covering its part of the coast. These stations were built around the coast of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland so the whole coastline of the British Isles was transmitting these beams out to the North Sea, English Channel, Irish Sea, and Atlantic Ocean.

When a plane or planes hit the beam, we operators immediately saw its position on the grid on our screen, read it into our mouthpiece which was heard in the filter room. When planes were identified as enemy, filter room immediately notified fighter squadron and fighters were airborne very quickly. When the Germans started their bombing raids in earnest, the stations in the southeast coast were kept very busy. Fighters were sent to intercept and they stopped some of the bombers but there were not enough fighters so some always got through. This defence system around the coast was a crucial part of the war effort but of course was never acknowledged until after the war. Even then, Radar Vets were sworn to an oath of secrecy which was not fully lifted for 50 years.

Can you imagine in this day and age, something involving so many people being kept a secret at all?!! **The 'Secrets of Radar' Museum** in our London, ON has a great deal to show. There was quite a Canadian connection since 5000 Canadian Airmen trained, at the request of the British Government, to become Radar Mechanics (my husband was one of them). On reaching England they were attached to the RAF and finally sent to the coastal stations.

After a year in Scotland I was sent on another radar course; this one very different as it was radar on the offensive. This radar was called Oboe. Our equipment was radio connected to Mosquito fighters which flew ahead of the Lancaster bombers. When the Mosquito was within a certain range of the target they would switch on their special equipment and would hear a note (in someone's mind similar to an Oboe) and the note would change if he wavered off course. At that moment we would be busy in the Operations room working out when he would be over the target, taking into account the speed of the aircraft, the wind velocity etc. I must mention here that all this was worked out on a slide rule, something unheard of these days and how much easier it would have been with the modern calculator. I may still have a slide rule at home but have no idea now how to use it! At the precise moment of being over the target we would signal the aircraft, by cutting off the sound or tone, to drop his flares. They were a special type of flare that could not be replicated by the Nazis. The Nazis had been setting dummy flares to deceive our bomber pilots. Since the bombers were being bombarded with guns and fighters, the flares made it easier, enabling them to do precision bombing. It was said that Oboe was the most accurate bombing system used in the war.

My lasting memory of the Oboe connection was in the early part of '45. The people in the Netherlands had been surrounded by the German army for months with no food getting through to them. I understand they were eating raw beets, tulip bulbs, and I had read where cats and dogs had disappeared. The exiled Dutch Government, the British Government and the Red Cross were desperate to get food flown in to the people and had been trying to negotiate a treaty with the Germans to let planes fly in supplies. This had not yet been signed when one Lancaster was sent in, flying very low to drop slings of food and see if the Germans would be shooting. They didn't shoot, and lots of planes followed. The treaty was signed a few days later.

I'll finish with 2 quotes from newspapers:

The 1st is from April 1945 in London England. The headline reads "**RAF "bombs" Holland with tons of food"**.

We Radar operators were responsible for telling the (quote) "Pathfinders (where to drop) their coloured markers in the target areas and the Lancaster, flying at less than 500 feet, followed with food".(unquote)

The article goes on to say " Every Lancaster was equipped with special slings carrying bags of food...some carrying enough to nourish 3000 people for a day." This went on for days and although the radar operators only had a small part it was a wonderful feeling of having helped.

The 2nd article is from our **London Free Press**, April 30 1998:

It shows a picture of a 'reunion' dinner for the members of the 1st Lancaster bomber crew to fly food into Holland during '**Operation Manna**'. That flight was the test run.

I quote: "A 15 year old boy, on the brink of starvation, sees the plane and, fearing it's there to drop bombs, throws himself into a ditch. He lifts his head and watches as the plane drops not bombs, but bundles of food. The plane's so close he can see a crew member waving at him.....That boy, now living in Canada, held a dinner in London Ontario to honour 5 members of the crew of that plane."

One of the crew says in the article, "Everybody in the crew was relieved we had done something to help the Dutch people. It's one of my happiest memories of the war."

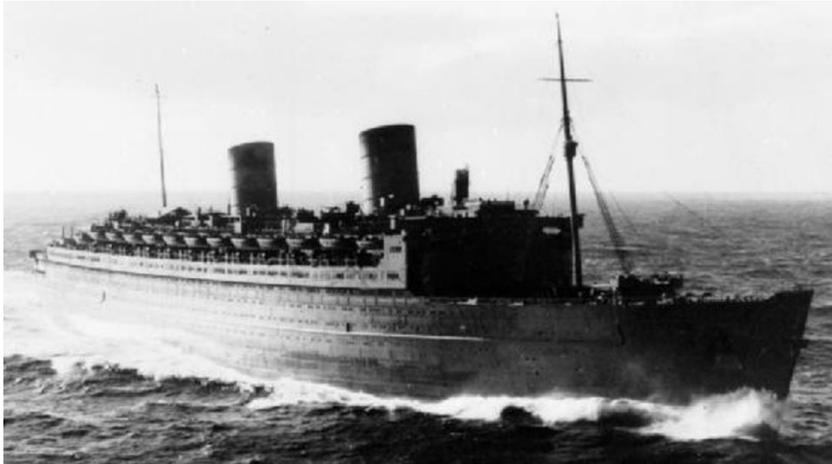
Each member of this crew was between the ages of 18 and 21 - very similar to many of the VETS we remember on this Remembrance Day.

Grace Shewan: REMEMBRANCE DAY Nov.10, 2013



**Radar Operator marrying
Radar Mechanic (1944)
Arnold & Grace Shewan**

The Ships You came on . . . RMS QUEEN ELIZABETH

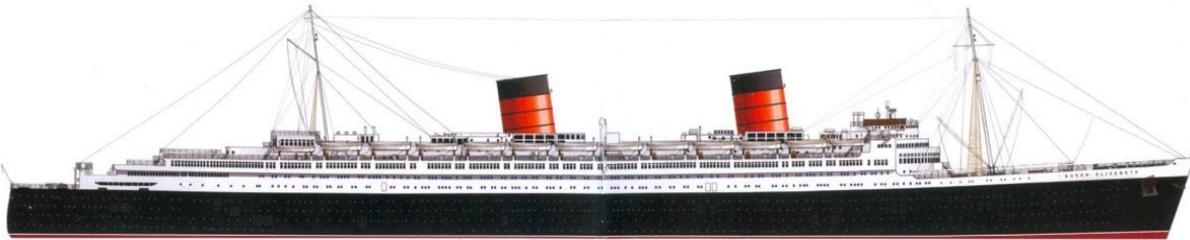


Royal Mail Ship QUEEN ELIZABETH was launched in 1938 by Queen Elizabeth King George VI's consort and named in her honour. At 1031 feet in length and displacing more than 83,000 tons, she was the largest passenger ship built, remaining so for the next 56 years. Being fitted out at the outbreak of World War II, she sailed in secret instead of undergoing sea trials. Still carrying the Southampton harbour pilot, after zigzagging to avoid U-boats and under radio silence, the untested vessel arrived in New York. She was berthed between Queen Mary and Normandy. Her sailings as a troop ship commenced from Singapore serving Asia and Africa. After 1942, she relocated to the North Atlantic carrying American troops to Europe. With her speed of more than 30 knots, she could outrun U-boats and usually travelled alone, not as part of a convoy. During the war she sailed half a million miles with more than 750,000 troops.

Most of her war bride sailings seem to have patriated American women through New York. However, she landed in Halifax during the war (wb **Patricia Hickey**, 1943) and at least once in 1945 carrying war brides (wb **Yvonne Wiseman**). Some Canadian war brides landed in New York; travelling to Canada by train (wb **Elizabeth 'Betty' Boxall** arr Dec, 1946).

Other Canadian war brides who report travelling on the Queen Elizabeth include: **Joan Jewell** nee Telford, **Ethel Miller**, and **May Nichols**.

Queen Elizabeth ended up as a derelict in Hong Kong harbour where she burned and foundered during refitting as a sea-going University. You may have seen her hulk in the James Bond Movie "*Man with the Golden Gun*" serving as a covert MI6 headquarters.



-Terry Lyster

Winston Churchill Sailing on the Queen Elizabeth?



There is an enquiry about a sailing of the Queen Elizabeth which carried Winston Churchill in January of 1946. Were there Canadian war Brides aboard? Were they addressed by Churchill?

Churchill regarded the Queen Mary as his "flag ship" and usually travelled in her. However, the press photograph on the left, shows the former Prime Minister and Mrs. Churchill disembarking in New York from the Queen Elizabeth January 14, 1946.

If you have any information, please let Terry Lyster know at tlyster@shaw.ca or **War Bride Project, 602-32440 Simon Ave, Abbotsford, BC V2T 5R3** Many thanks

QUEEN MARY 2 REVISITED

Some of you may recall the Sentimental Journey War Bride cruise on the Queen Mary 2 in April 2011. Our group of 15 War Brides along with 40 family members & friends boarded the Queen Mary 2 in New York City for our Trans-Atlantic crossing to Southampton, England. As we waited in the Embarkation Lounge to board the ship, we were joined by Sir Alan Collins who was then the British Ambassador to New York City. Sir Alan chatted with each & every War Bride and even our War Bride Baby Sandi! As we all boarded the ship we were welcomed by Captain Wright and Sir Alan. Many photos were taken and some of our War Brides were interviewed by David Common from CBC TV! The Sentimental Journey was an amazing experience and I'm confident that everyone had a wonderful & memorable crossing.

My husband and I were lucky enough to revisit the Queen Mary 2 this past October for our 12 day New England & Maritimes cruise from New York City to Quebec City. Sir Alan & Captain Wright were no longer British Ambassadors to New York City or Captains of the Queen Mary 2 so were not there to welcome us on board BUT we soon discovered that Sir Alan and his wife Ann were fellow guests on this particular sailing. We 'bumped' into each other many times while on board and were always struck by their friendliness and interest in the War Brides.

Sir Alan was a guest lecturer while on board and gave 2 presentations – the first on the 'Role of the Monarchy' and the second on the 'Queen's Diamond Jubilee'. In both presentations he spoke about the impact that World War 2 War Brides had on North America and also shared a beautiful colour photo in his slide show of our Sentimental Journey War Brides as they posed on the Grand Staircase with Sir Alan back in April 2011. At his 'Queen's Diamond Jubilee' lecture, Sir Alan introduced me to the 'packed house' as the daughter of one of the War Brides pictured and also shared that Mum was honoured with the presentation of her very own Queen's Diamond Jubilee medal!

Reconnecting with Sir Alan was definitely a highlight of our cruise on the Queen Mary 2. However, I have to say that our visit to Halifax & Pier 21 took 'top spot' on our highlights list. Early in the morning as we sailed into Halifax Harbour and as Pier 21 came into view we were suddenly struck with the significance of this skyline. Although some of the buildings may have changed and new high-rises added, this was the view that my War Bride Mum would have seen on May 24th, 1946 as she arrived in Canada. Mum had left her family and all that was familiar to her back in Richmond, Surrey to embark on a new life in a foreign country with her Canadian Soldier who was anxiously awaiting her arrival in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Submitted by
Janet Leahy
Proud Daughter of War Bride Joan Reichardt



Remember When

Remember when we wore a suspender belt to keep our stockings up? Stockings were fully fashioned pure silk - if you were lucky - artificial silk - that were cheap and cheerful - or cotton lisle. I wore the latter as part of my school uniform. They started out light beige but after umpteen washings were almost white - but were very durable. I remember darning the toes in those and carefully trying to repair ladders in my one pair of pure silk. It is no wonder we resorted to painting our legs! I also remember wearing ankle socks, the thought makes me think of the French Resistance girls in Hello, Hello, but I know I knitted a pair of bright red ones, with cables on the cuff!

Of course, older ladies always wore a corset. My grandmother had a carefully graded wardrobe of these very substantial garments. The newest was for special occasions, the next for going out or to church, and the next for around the house and the last for wearing to the Air Raid shelter. I was delegated to wait for her before we went to the shelter and there were times when I thought her ruddy corset would be the end of us! Our other under garments were rigidly defined - At school we wore bloomers, in the summer time it was cotton frocks with matching knickers, in my case, unfortunately, well and truly starched! Later on we graduated to french knickers and cami-knickers - which served as both petticoat and knickers (saving clothing coupons). If we went swimming we wore a bathing costume, and a matching jacket and skirt was also a 'costume'. I had two when I came to Canada, a grey pin stripe and a brown herringbone tweed - very classy.



Do you remember 'jigger jackets', they were sort of 3/4 length and had a bit of swing in the back, as I recall. Of course, we all wore hand knitted jumpers and cardigans, you could make the coupons go further if you knitted them yourself. I remember knitting a pale yellow, short sleeved jumper in 2ply wool and with spider stitch stripes - all in an effort to get more for less! I remember after I arrived in Saskatoon my husband taking me to Eaton's and The Bay to shop for clothes - what an experience that was! Now my choice is pretty colours and comfortable - never mind style.

Joan Reichardt

If you have a story/photos you would like to share in the newsletter, please email to canadianwarbrides@netidea.com or mail to 215 W. Beasley St., Nelson, BC V1L 3K4