



Canadian War Brides and Families

Spring 2015

Greetings from President Jean

Hurry, hurry, hurry!

Your host city of Calgary is ready and waiting! I hope the ones who were in London last August will remember what a wonderful time we had!

This will be the final newsletter before we gather at Calgary at the end of May. I do hope you have your registration in or are getting ready to send it.

A great weekend is planned with lots of entertainment for you. We hope to still see increases in numbers as I am sure there are War Brides who have yet to attend our fun weekends. Each year (as you know) we have criss-crossed our great country, therefore allowing for more War Brides and families to attend.

Our winter is, I hope, finally coming to an end. Perhaps you like I will be glad to see some greenery around again. I am looking forward to our Reunion, so please come and join us in Calgary for a great weekend!

As ever,

Jean

REUNION 2015 CALGARY, Alberta – Coast Plaza Hotel May 29, 30, 31, 2015

Your Registration forms are slowly trickling in and we would appreciate it if those of you that are planning on attending Reunion 2015 could complete your registration forms right away and mail them to our Secretary Lorna Staten. We need to confirm our numbers for the meals, tours, and hotel rooms.

We have a busy week-end planned including 2 optional tours - The Military Museums in Calgary on Saturday afternoon which is free and the Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel for Afternoon Tea on Sunday afternoon at a cost of \$95 CAD per person which includes your round trip transportation from our hotel and Afternoon Tea!

War Bride Daughter Lynn Martin & Joan Beaton have been very busy working on the guest speakers, invited dignitaries, wonderful entertainment, and the Reunion program. For the Gala Banquet on Saturday night we have the Royal Artillery Jazz Task Force confirmed to entertain us with all the old songs everyone loves.

Registration fees are only \$75 for Canadian War Brides, \$115 for CWB&F members, and \$130 for non-members which covers 3 meals, entertainment, and unlimited conversation & fun!!! And don't forget that we will have our usual & much enjoyed Hospitality Suite serving copious amounts of Yorkshire Tea, Dutch Coffee, and goodies! You also need to secure your hotel rooms at the Coast Plaza too.

Hope to see all of you in Calgary in May!



CANADIAN WAR BRIDE MAKES 78 WAR-TIME CROSSINGS

Wait a minute! War Brides usually made one crossing; sometimes two if things didn't work out. Let me tell you a story...



The **M/V MOSDALE** was a Norwegian 3022 ton refrigerated fruit carrier built in Copenhagen in 1939. In late 1940 her first mate, **Gerner Sunde** was made Captain. In June 1941, the Mosdale was delayed in Montreal when the radio operator quit. Second Class Wireless Operator F. Blodgett was hired sight unseen. Imagine the skipper's surprise when the new radio operator arrived as 24 year old former stenographer **Fern Blodgett**. Imagine Fern's delight when the Captain turned out not to be a grizzled old mariner but a handsome 31 year old blond Nordic type. Fern embarked as the first female telegrapher (or "Sparks") on a wartime merchant ship. Fiercely seasick, she stuck to her duties with a strategically placed bucket. For \$170 a month, she relayed SOS's from torpedoed ships and dodged minefields hauling fruit to the UK. Sometimes the 12 war-time passengers included Canadian war brides assigned to faster transports; MOSDALE could make 15 knots; faster than the U-Boats.

Our Canadian war bride turned out to be Fern. After a year, Captain Sunde proposed and they were married in Saint John, NB. Her accommodations improved dramatically. *"The captain's cabin was not only an office, with the captain's roll-top desk, typewriter and filing cabinet, but also a homely sitting room with flowers, Dresden china shepherdesses and gaily embroidered cushions,"* according to a 1942 story in the Montreal Gazette. In 1943, King Haakon VII decorated both Captain & Mrs. Sunde, for their wartime service. Six months after the war ended they settled in Kjorestad, Norway where they had two daughters. Fern Blodgett Sunde, a bride, and a Canadian who married in war time; died in Norway in 1991.

22 Canadian women served aboard Norwegian vessels during World War 2. All 5 of MOSDALE's sister ships were destroyed during the war.



Fern Blodgett Sunde aboard MOSDALE

Respectfully submitted: Terry Lyster

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

REUNION 2016 – Halifax, Nova Scotia

May 20, 21 & 22, 2016, Westin Nova Scotian Hotel

We're just so excited about celebrating the 70th Anniversary of when most of our War Bride Mums arrived in Canada, that we've started planning the PARTY!!! And of course, what better place than Halifax and Pier 21. So mark your calendars and look for your Reunion Registration form for Halifax 2016 in our Fall newsletter.

Thank You Canada Dutch Liberation Festival in Toronto

Saturday, May 2, 2015
Nathan Phillips Square



“CANADA AND THE NETHERLANDS: TWO COUNTRIES-ONE SPIRIT 1945-2015”

During the month of May, we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War and thank the Canadian Armed Forces for their contribution to the freedom of the Dutch people. Because of Canada's invaluable role in liberation of the Netherlands, a close friendship between the two countries remains 70 years later. To show our appreciation and to honor the veterans who served during the Second World War, the Consulate General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, together with Dutch-Canadian community organizations, presents the 'Thank You Canada' Dutch Liberation Festival on Saturday May 2nd in Toronto.

A parade with military vehicles will start at 12:00 noon from Moss Park Armoury (130 Queen Street East) and will ride north on Jarvis Street, then west on College Street to south on Yonge Street, west on Queen Street and into Nathan Phillips Square at City Hall.

At 2:00 pm, the opening ceremony will kick off the festivities at Nathan Phillips Square by raising the Dutch flag. Several bands will provide musical entertainment on the main stage, such as the Toronto All Star Big Band, the Weston Silver Band and the déVah Quartet. A lot of Dutch activities are being organized: buy Dutch goods at the Dutch market or play some old-fashioned Dutch games at the kid's zone. An exhibition with photos of the liberation in Holland 70 years ago is also planned.

We not only invite all veterans who served during the Second World War to participate, warbrides are also most welcome! If you are interested in riding with us in the parade and joining the festivities on Nathan Phillips Square, please contact:

Ms. Fien Verheij at the Consulate General of the Netherlands
fien.verheij@minbuza.nl
416-595-2407

Website: www.thankyoucanada.nl (it's also possible to fill in an online form here to sign up!)
Facebook: www.facebook.com/thankyoucanada
Twitter: www.twitter.com/dutchliberation

70th Anniversary VE Day

Victory in Europe Day, generally known as **VE Day** was the public holiday celebrated on 8 May 1945 (7 May in Commonwealth realms) to mark the formal acceptance by the **Allies of World War II** of Nazi Germany's unconditional surrender. It marked the end of World War II in Europe. To commemorate the 70th Anniversary of **VE Day**, three of our War Brides share their stories. Thanks to Olga Rains, Holland; Jeanne Pfannmuller, France; and Joan Reichardt, England.





The Liberation Of Holland

By Olga Rains



The events of the past have a direct impact on the world we know today. The warm relationship that exists between Canada and The Netherlands can be traced back to the difficult days at the end of the Second World War, when Canada played a major key role liberating the people of The Netherlands.

The Second World War influenced the lives of countless millions of people, including those who left home to fight in uniform and those who endured great suffering when the fighting took place in their homeland.

In Europe, country after country had fallen to the advances of Hitler's Germany. By mid-1940, much of the rest of the continent, including The Netherlands, was under German control. On June 6th, 1944, the Allied forces embarked on the struggle to liberate "Fortress Europe." This would become known as D Day! The Allies would soon advance north and east out of France. Holland, with its challenging terrain of canals, dykes and flood lands, coupled with the determined German occupiers, would prove to be a punishing place to do battle.



In the fall of 1944, the Allies launched "Operation Market Garden", a daring land and airborne attack behind enemy lines in the eastern Netherlands. The goal was to bring the war to a rapid end by dividing the German positions in western Europe. The German resistance was fierce however and the bold offensive failed. It became apparent that the war would not end in 1944.

This would mean more and more months of suffering for the Dutch, who had already endured years of German occupation. After three months of holding the front lines in The Netherlands, the Canadian 1st Army joined the final push to liberate the country. In February 1945, the Canadians joined other Allies in a fierce push through mud and flooded ground to drive the Germans eastward out of The Netherlands and back across the Rhine.

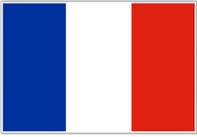
In early April, the 1st Canadian Army consisting of 200,000 Canadians soldiers with tens of thousands of soldiers from other countries under its command turned its attention north to clear the Germans from the northeast of the country. Often aided by information provided by the Dutch resistance fighters, Canadian troops rapidly moved across The Netherlands. They were able to recapture canals and farmland as they drove to the North Sea. The Canadian troops also began to advance in the western Netherlands which contained the major cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague. Canadian and British forces cleared the city of Arnhem, where "Operation Market Garden" had failed earlier. This was accomplished in just two days by fighting a house-by-house- battle. Days later they cleared Apeldoorn.

Through the hard work, courage and great sacrifices of Canadian and other Allied soldiers, the remaining German forces in the country surrendered on May 5th, 1945. The next day was declared 'Victory In Europe,' or V-E Day, marking the official end of the Second World War.



In honour of their gift of freedom, the Dutch people have donated tulip bulbs to Canada annually since the end of the Second World War. In Ottawa, one may see this symbol of our enduring connection as the tulips bloom each spring. From the flower fields of Holland to the capital city of Canada, this delicate flower which appears only for a short while in the Spring, is a reminder of how beautiful and yet fragile life can be. The free tulip moves gently in the wind. A picture of freedom. But the freedom of the Dutch was bought with such a heavy price, the shedding of blood, the sacrifice of so many young men and women, both Dutch and Allies alike. As the saying goes, "Freedom isn't free!"

Submitted by Olga Rains



France



1945... A memorable year for many

By May 1945 death, misery and devastation had spread throughout Europe after six years of warfare. France had been occupied since its surrender in June 1940. During those years I stayed with my grand-parents in Tours, a city on the Loire river. My parents lived in the country, too far for me to attend high school.

After the Allies landed in Normandy on June 1944, it was only after a fierce combat that Paris was liberated in August. During the rest of that year, allied troops put up an arduous fight to expel the German troops out of northern and eastern France, Belgium and the Netherlands. My grandmother did not gather much news as to the progress of the troops. My grandfather has been the one intent on keeping well informed but he had died three months before D Day, to my chagrin, he who had been so convinced throughout the occupation that someday the Allies would liberate us. "Just wait!" he'd say. The fighting stretched on throughout the winter of 1944-45.



Aside of an end to the curfew, no more arrogance from the occupant and no more wailing of sirens in the middle of the night, little had changed. But rationing was still in effect; French prisoners of war were still in camps somewhere in Germany. Life in general was quite dull. Besides, I was quite busy preparing my final exams in my last year of high school.

Spring of '45 came and the war was still going on. Everyone felt the burden.

Did the French population hear of Hitler's suicide on April 30th? I cannot recall anyone talking about it, not at home, not at school. But when the shrill, continuous wail of the sirens ripped the air of our city one morning, we knew something momentous had happened. Then all the bells joined in the din, all the bells, of all the churches, pealing joyfully just as they had been used to at one time, announcing a wedding or a christening. For six years the knell, mostly, had tolled.

Was it the 7th of May when the Germans signed their surrender in Reims, or on the 8th when they signed another document in Berlin? I can only remember that when we heard the sirens everyone stepped out onto the streets to ask their neighbours what it all meant. What is it about? Was it finished? Was it over? Was it the end of a long, long dreary war? Someone must have known; someone must have said "yes" and the word ran down the block, around the corner, down another street and spread like a forest fire. Soon it seemed that no one was a stranger any more. Everyone seemed to know one another, talked to one another, shook hands with one another. My grandmother, on her crutches, was more reserved. It was with tears that she greeted the news.



For everyone emotions were overwhelming. Some laughed. Some cried. The thought of young lives lost in battle, of husbands or sons held somewhere in some camps, or simply the sudden relief of a long-suppressed tension could only draw tears. Personally, I regretted that my grandfather had not lived to see the day. He would have said, "I told you so!"

I don't know if many people worked that day, or the next. I don't remember going to classes the rest of the week. One of my friends came. We went over to some other friend's. The whole city was in effervescence. Everyone was loud, unrestrained, screaming and jumping for joy. Groups would gather at street corners around accordionists and street dancing carried on most of the night and the next day. Being my grandmother's caregiver I could not partake in the general merriment. My girlfriend spent the night with me but we hardly slept. There was so much to talk about... now that France was free, now that a great burden was lifted off our hearts and souls, now that we could think of our future.

How little did we know that the war would not yet end, not until after the horrendous carnage ensuing the drop of two ignominious bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6th and 9th. The war would not be over until the treaty with Japan was signed on September 2nd. But we did not know that. The whole city and probably the rest of France lived in a state of complete euphoria for the rest of that week and in total oblivion of the fate of the rest of the world.

Nowadays, Victory in Europe celebrated on the 7th of May over there and known as VE Day is for most people a historical date marking the end of the hostilities in Europe. But to a few of that era, survivors like us War Brides, it does indeed really mean the end of a very long period of gloom and doom.



Remember When



Remember when we knew the war in Europe was nearly over? When we knew our troops were advancing, now in Germany, and the end was in sight? Remember when, on May 7th, the announcement was made that May 8th was to be VE Day, and a public holiday? Wasn't that amazing? In Richmond, my home town, a benefit dance was being held at the Castle Barn, to help returning prisoners of war, now coming home in increasing numbers. I had a ticket, so when it was also VE Day, of course, off I went. My Canadian boyfriend was in camp in Borden, so I did not expect to see him. That was one joyful dance! Everyone was so happy and excited that, for us, the war was over! I was young and foolish (some would say 'stupid') so when I won a bottle of gin, in the middle of a dance, I gave it to a sailor to hold! Guess what - I never saw the sailor or the bottle of gin again!



At some point later in the evening, my Canadian boyfriend appeared and joined in the celebrations. When the dance ended we carried on out in the streets, linking arms and singing Rule Britannia etc at the tops of our voices. As we headed for home, we passed a street party still in full swing, and when they spotted the Canada flash, they shouted 'Come over here, Canada' and off went my shy Canadian to find himself doing Knees up Mother Brown, with a little (about 4foot 8) lady, with more enthusiasm than skill! I should mention here that my boyfriend was 6ft 6in tall! Truly a night to remember.

The next day was unreal. We knew the war in Europe was over, although we still had to deal with the Japanese, but for us, it was total euphoria! I was working in London, on Farringdon Street, and the V1 doodle bugs and the V2 rockets kept coming until the end of March, so we were still not feeling safe. Towards the end of March a V2 Rocket hit Smithfield Market, very close to where I worked. My boss may have saved my life that day! There was a stall in the market that sold sausages that were a bit better than what we usually got from the butcher. Remember how those sausages would sometimes explode when being cooked? And the joke was they had so much bread in them you weren't sure whether to put mustard or jam on them? Anyway, back to the story. People in the office - and there were quite a lot - would order sausages and one of us young ones would be sent to queue up for them. It was my turn, but my boss had work that I had to finish, so someone else went in my place. That poor girl was killed, along with about 130 others



I remember the Saturday after VE day, I could take you to the exact spot, I was walking home having done the shopping, when it hit me! No more bombs, no more air raid shelters, no more doodle bugs and rockets, no more death, raining from the sky, no more fear of invasion, no more fear of 'secret weapons'. We had beaten the Germans, and survived to tell the tale! We could make plans, we could look forward to a life ahead, for those of us planning to marry our Canadian sweethearts, and we could look at a future far from war ravaged England. I remember how proud I was of being a Brit!

Submitted by Joan Reichardt

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Canadian War Brides and Families will be held on Saturday, May 30, 2015 at 10:00am in the Garden Court 1 at the Coast Plaza Hotel, Calgary, Alberta. Meeting is open to all members.

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