

Geraldine Tozer nee
Dean
Canadian War Bride
Bayano 1945



My story began the month of May 1944. A Royal Navy submarine, H.M.S/M. Seawolf, was assigned to be operated by C. in C. Halifax. There were three or four other submarines also assigned to his command. The duty that those boats were assigned to assist in the practical training of the ASDIC (now know as SONAR) operators who would be serving in the North Atlantic convoy escort ships on completion of their training programmes.

The largest naval training establishment in the British Commonwealth was created in Cornwallis, a small community in the Annapolis Basin off the Bay of Fundy and ASDIC operators received their training at that establishment. The above submarines would be deployed in the Bay of Fundy and trainees would get practical experience in 'hunting' for the enemy.

At low tide it is well known that the Annapolis Basin becomes essentially a mud flat except near where the tidal flow runs through Digby gap. Hence the submarines could only be tied up at the wharf in Digby. Instead of the submarine crews being housed in the naval Base they were billeted in a converted hotel and was know as the 'hotel'. This facility contained a ballroom and Saturday evening local ladies were encouraged to act as hostesses. The hostel was open to any of the commonwealth service men.

It was at one of these dances that my husband and I met. We were married in January 1945 and as a result I became a war bride. The Royal Navy made all the arrangements for me to join my husband in England. In September 1945 my mother and two sisters came with me to Halifax from Digby. The next day we went to Pier 21 and I began my great adventure of going to England, sailing in the S.S.Bayano. The ship arrived in Liverpool on the 15th September 1945.

The crossing was uneventful except for a small ship in rough seas; the tablecloths had to be wet to assist in keeping the cutlery and dishes on the table. Even so I enjoyed the trip.

My husband was not able to meet me in Liverpool but his parent came from Corydon in his place. They had been told that I did not drink tea or

coffee so they save their ration and brought it up for me, unfortunately it had soured! When I left the ship we went to a corner restaurant to eat; we then caught a non-stop express train with two engines to London, we could see the engines as we went round some of the curves. We arrived at Euston Station, caught the underground train to London Bridge and traveled on the eclectic suburban train to west Corydon station, quite a day for a girl from Digby!!

Seeing all the bombed out areas, learning the rationing system, pound, shillings and pence money was quite an experience. Two other things I shall always remember was the chilblains on my legs from the cool of the first winter, coal was severely rationed and did not allow for much heat from the fireplace. Second was the loving received from my mother and father-in-law.

I lived in England for seventeen years before returning to Canada in 1962. My husband was hired by a Canadian Company and flew over. Our two children and I entered Canada, not through Pier 21, but disembarked in Montreal from the R.M.S. Ivernia, 4th July 1962.

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