

Anne Hodgkinson
English War Bride
Franconia
April 10, 1945



I met my husband Dick at a dance in early March of 1941. We were married in October of the same year. My son Ricky was born in November, 1942. I lived with my parents in London and my husband was stationed in Surrey. Dick left England early in 1943 and served in the Italian campaign. I made application for travel orders for my son and myself on February 8, 1945, after receiving a letter from my husband advising me that he would soon be sent back home to Canada.

When departure time arrived we were told to report to a local church hall alone, I said good-bye to my family and friends and remember them standing on the street waving as I left with my son. We arrived at the hall about tea time and there were many other wives and children. It was dark when we boarded buses, were taken to the railway station and then the next morning boarded a train for Liverpool.

On March 29, 1945 we boarded a huge liner, the Franconia, and moved out of port in the late afternoon. At dinner time I went down to supper with my son who was now 28 months old and quite a handful - all of this wonderful food after years of rationing, it looked so good - but we were too seasick to eat! Eventually, we did get used to the motion of the ship and were able to eat again. We were traveling in convoy and the trip took 12 days, I remember some of the Canadian troops on board would offer to amuse the children so we could have a break. I celebrated my 22nd birthday two days before we arrived in Halifax on April 10, 1945 - part of our journey completed. At Pier 21 Canadian soldiers were waiting to help us board the train, a man for the luggage and another for each child, I remember there were a few chuckles when one mother had three soldiers waiting to assist her and her two teenage girls.

Next, we boarded a train to cross Canada, the journey to Vancouver took 7 days. I thought that was the end of my trip, but not so, the Red Cross volunteers advised me that we had another boat trip to take - I really began to wonder just where we were going! We eventually arrived in Victoria, B.C., where I was met by my in-laws. My husband returned home in May of 1945, we stayed in Victoria and had two more children.

I was homesick for awhile and upset that I never saw my father again, he died just 22 months after I left, I did return to England a couple of times to see my mother and siblings.

In 1947 the I.O.D.E. formed a new chapter for British War Brides were I met other women with similar experiences of coming to Canada. I now belong to the Vancouver Island War Brides Association.

I have never regretted coming to Canada and am proud to be a Canadian!