

Jean Morton nee Cheyne
Scottish Evacuee Child
Bayano
August 6, 1940



In 1939 my name was JEAN CHEYNE - C.O.R.B. 3617. I was 8 years old and my brother George was 11. We were evacuated to Gargunnoch, Stirlingshire along with the rest of our school. We were there until Feb. 1940. Our parents took us home as nothing much was happening there. The R.A.F. had taken over our Primary School and we were transferred to the Y.M.S.A. We had 2 hours schooling a day. I went from 11 AM - 1 P.M. Then the bombing started and we seemed to spend a lot of time in the Air Raid Shelters. When the C.O.R.B. scheme started my parents applied and much to their surprise they were accepted.

My brother George was allowed to choose partly because he didn't want to go. He chose CANADA as it was the closest and besides they had Indians, (He watched a lot of films). We were soon ready to go in July. We said goodbye to my elder brother, too old to go, and to my parents and we were loaded onto buses with the blinds pulled down. About 100 of us all Scots and all wearing our kilts.

We drove around for some time eventually arriving at a large red school. My brother recognized it. He climbed out the window at night and ran home to tell my parents where we were. My dad and elder brother took him back and pushed him through the window. I think this made it difficult for my parents. We were there for some days going out in buses nearly every day fully loaded. This was to confuse the enemy and perhaps us. One day we drove to Greenock and climbed aboard the tug which took us out to a much larger ship the S.S. BAYANO one of the Fyffes banana boats.

We sailed out of the Firth of Clyde and joined the convoy. We were told there was over 30 ships but I don't remember seeing them. They were heading for Halifax and probably "Pier 21". This was 6th Aug 1940. We separated from the convoy and sailed off round Newfoundland the coast of Labrador and into the St. Lawrence. We were wakened during the night to see the Aurora Borealis Beautiful. Tied up at Quebec very early in the morning. The dockers opened crates of oranges and got chocolate from the machines and threw them to us. We sailed on to Montreal arriving 28.8.40. It seemed longer. From Montreal overnight by train to Hail House - Toronto.

My brother and I eventually ended up in Niagara Falls with complete strangers, but not for long. A Mr. and Mrs. R.A. Dickson and their two children Joan and Jack. We called them Aunt Muriel and Uncle Dick. I was 9 Joan was 8, Jack 6, my brother 12.

We stayed in Niagara falls very happily for 2 ½ years and making many friends. When Uncle Dick was promoted we all moved to Toronto. George went home late in 1944. He was nearing calling up age. He sailed from New York. For the first time I felt a little bit homesick. The war was going very much our way and my parents requested my return. It all happened very quickly, one minute I was happily growing up now 14 and enjoying my life in Toronto. Scotland seemed far away. The next I was leaving Toronto station bound for home. Overnight to Montreal, then overnight to Halifax. We duly arrived at 'Pier 21.' There were not so many children but a lot of war brides. I thought they were from the West Indies. We boarded the S.S. CAVINA sister ship to the BAYANO, now converted with guns, blackouts etc. and it was time to say goodbye to Canada. There were some children about 8 from Scotland and a lot of war brides and what appeared to be dozens of crying babies. This time we joined a huge convoy about 78 ships.

At times there were ships as far as the eye could see and sometimes nothing. We were more than halfway home on V.E. Day. The U-Boats had been ordered to surrender and we were ordered, no lights showing and a curfew at 6 P.M. They were worried they might take one last pot shot. We celebrated with a packet of crisps, a bottle of Coke and a bar of chocolate. We saw the very green grass of England as we sailed into the Thames. I think there were 4 U-Boats in tow. We stayed a few days in London until a suitable train finally took us back home to Scotland.

This ended 5 wonderful years as a war guest in Canada, a wonderful and very beautiful country.

Aunt Muriel and Uncle Dick took a chance with 2 strange children, and my parents must have known they might never see us again. For me it was an adventure and wish I'd been a little older, to understand and appreciate all the strange things that happened to me. I kept in touch but it was 49 years before I returned to Canada.