

Eunice Mollie  
Dodsworth nee Walton  
English War Bride  
1944



Editor's Note: The following memoir is based on an interview that was conducted by Elinor Maher and Beverly MacLellan for the Colchester Historical Society Museum & Archives as part of the museums Year of the War Bride research and exhibit of 2006. The Pier 21 Society would like to thank Ms. Maher, Ms. MacLellan and the war brides that contributed to this collection by sharing their experiences and impressions of the war years and their early days in Canada.



Name:

Eunice Mollie (nee Walton) Dodsworth

Parents:

Ida Ellen (nee Briggs) and John Walton

Home:

Dunston-on-Tyne, North East England

Birthdate:

February 18, 1920

What are some of your war time memories:

Eunice grew up with four sisters and one brother, who now lives in Australia. Her father was a crane driver who worked six and a half days a week. He rode a bicycle to work.

There wasn't much bombing in that part of England but blackouts were carefully observed.

Husband:

William (Bill) Burpee Dodsworth from Nappan, Nova Scotia.

Petty Officer Dodsworth was one of the first divers in the Royal Canadian Navy and was part of a team of ten divers who cut through four feet of ice to repair a damaged corvette. For this he received the British Empire Medal for diving in extreme conditions.

Bill made thirty-eight trips across the Atlantic on 'destroyer escort' duty, searching for German submarines on corvettes.

How did you meet your husband?

Eunice was a student nurse when she met her future husband. One quiet Sunday afternoon she was working, tidying a linen closet in the hospital, when Bill came along and said, "Can I help you?" She said, "No, you must be that Canadian." He was the first one she had met.



Wedding date:



February 2, 1942

What was your family's reaction to the news you were marrying a Canadian?

"They thought Bill was a very nice man."

Can you tell us about your wedding?

They both needed permission to get married. Eunice needed paperwork signed by the hospital and Bill, like all servicemen, needed permission from the Commanding Officer. The wedding took place in a small church in Dunston and some sailors, friends of Bills,

attended.

Following the wedding Eunice and Bill went to London for a week's honeymoon and stayed in a friend's apartment.

How did you come to Canada and what are your memories of the trip?

Eunice didn't think she'd be so homesick. After the trip she discovered Winston Churchill had been on the ship with her but they kept it top secret for security reasons.

What was the date and memories of your arrival?

1944

Children?

Christine was born in the Grace Hospital in St. John's, Newfoundland on September 17, 1944.

They went on to have four additional children after they moved to Nova Scotia: Roger, Jim, Peter and Katherine.

Where did you live when you first arrived in Canada?

Eunice joined her husband in St. John's, Newfoundland, where he was stationed. However, it wasn't part of Canada in 1944. She was back and forth several times between Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. After Christine's birth Eunice felt very much alone with no family or friends there and Bill away a lot. When Christine was three months old they came to Nova Scotia to be with his family. They lived in Wittenburg with Bill's brother Layton and his wife Bessie Dodsworth, who later started the Wittenburg Greenhouse. Eunice enjoyed helping out on the farm and had a grand time.

Bill was stationed in Halifax for many years and the family moved to Old Barns and stayed there for ten years. Later they moved to Great Village.

Tell us about the adjustments you had to make.

Eunice was surprised at the good adjustment she made.

Did you have trips home?

When Christine was four she and her mother went back to England by ship and stayed three months. Eunice had to leave her two younger sons in Nova Scotia. Later she flew over several times to visit.

Did your family come to Canada to visit?

Eunice's sister Millie had been a nurse in the RAF and moved to Ontario after the war. Then she moved to Baddeck and worked in a small hospital there. She married a local man and the families were able to visit back and forth.

"Mother came out and visited both Millie and I. She didn't like Nova Scotia's weather. She thought it was too cold. She stayed quite a long time but went home because father was ill."

Did you or your children have difficulties obtaining Canadian Citizenship?

No.