

Janet Prentice Paton
English War Bride
Drottingholm
August 12, 1945



My husband Cpl. James

Reid Paton arrived two days ahead of me on the Ile de France, a troop ship. I sailed from Liverpool. The day after I got on the train to go to the ship the railroad went on strike in Scotland. They took us to military barracks for about three days before we left. It was mayhem with crying children, parents of the war brides crying, disorganization everywhere.

I volunteered to be an escort for a little boy named Johnie, age 3. He was coming to Canada to be with his father who was a Canadian soldier in the European campaign. His mother had abandoned him. It was a traumatic crossing because I was a stranger to Johnie. The Red Cross nurses were very helpful during the crossing. On board our ship there were 32 soldiers who had volunteered to fight in Japan. Fortunately for them the Japanese surrendered when we were two days off the coast of Canada. There was great hilarity in their portion of the ship, singing and guitar playing and much merriment.

The food aboard the ship was superb and the menus something we could only imagined had existed after being on war time rations for so long. This was the first trip the ship had made since before the war. It was a beautiful ship, spotlessly clean and in wonderful condition. It was an uneventful crossing in beautiful weather.

The first stop was St John's to allow some war brides to disembark. Then we sailed to Halifax. This was another traumatic experience as I had to give up Johnie to an army officer and a Red Cross nurse to be taken to his father. I hope Johnie had a happy life with his father.

Because of the influx of troops coming home at that time who were transported CPR we were put on trains and sent CN north. We saw nothing but trees and lakes. Not a living soul along the way, only fishing shacks along the lakes. There were only war brides and children on the train. When we got closer to inhabited areas, little towns etc. the locals would come and wave to us. Sometimes the train would stop and some of the girls would run to a store to buy fruit or candy. We arrived in Winnipeg Friday August 18. There were only a few of us left on the train by this time. We were met by Red Cross representatives. Only two of us went on to Brandon. Unfortunately, I would miss the train in Brandon to take me to Glen Ewen, SK by two hours. The conductor phoned ahead

and held the train so I would not have to stay in Brandon waiting for the next train which was scheduled for Monday. I was impressed with the Canadian's tolerance and kindness towards us. I was glad to see my husband in military uniform at the station because I had never seen him in civilian clothes.

I would not like to live anywhere else. I have been happy in Canada. I raised four children here who have been an asset to their community. It is a great country and I have always admired Canadian people.

I am a member of the Saskatchewan War Brides Association as well as the Alberta War Brides Association. We enjoy our reunions and we have a bond that can't be broken. It is an unusual friendship that we have.

I would just like to close by saying the Canadian boys that went overseas to aid in the conflict gave up their youth and had to face situations that were not normal for men of their age. There will never be a body of men like them again. The war brides love the veterans and have been honoured to share their country and their way of life on farms, rural settings that were foreign to us.