

Joan Jones
English War Bride
Stavangafjord
January 14, 1946



Joan Jones was a War Bride who arrived from England to Pier 21 on January 14th, 1946 on the ship S. S. Stavangafjord.

Joan M. (Sigsworth) Jones. British War Bride 1946.

In 1944 I was a Women's Auxiliary Air Force member stationed in Sopley, a few miles away from Bournemouth in the south of England. Bournemouth was the centre for entertainment, especially the dance hall called the Pavilion. Bournemouth was also the holding depot for troops coming from overseas – the Australians and Canadians. It was at the Pavilion that I met RCAF Flying Officer, Tom Jones, my husband to be. He escorted me to the train station and on the way we laughed and teased one another and fell in love. We saw as much of one another as our duties allowed and decided to get married.

The inevitable happened and Tom was posted to Germany to fly Typhoons on strafing sorties. It was on one of these missions that Tom was shot down and became a prisoner of war. Luckily, this was toward the end of the war and he was released and flown back to England after six weeks. We were married on May 24th 1945 and had a blissful Honeymoon in the Lake District and in a cottage on the Yorkshire Moors.

On our return to Bournemouth, Tom was notified that he would be returning to Canada in a few days. We said our goodbyes not knowing how long we would be separated. I was demobbed and returned to my home in Leeds.

Not long after, I discovered that I was pregnant, and Tom was overjoyed, as was I. The Canadian government was very good, supplying books about Canada and what I could expect when I arrived there. I remember getting a chuckle over the following advice from one of the pamphlets: "When you ask your husband what he would like for dessert, the answer will always be 'pie'". How true!

After several long months, I received a letter informing me that I would be sailing on the S. S. Stavangafjord on January 7th, 1946. This was just in time because pregnant women couldn't sail if they were more than six months along and I was pushing it. The day of departure came and I

said a sad goodbye to my mother, father, and little sister. I took the train to Liverpool, where I met another group of War Brides sailing to Canada. We spent the night in a hotel and then were ferried down to the docks to board the ship. I shared a cabin for two with a lady who was kind enough to take the top bunk. I returned the favour later on by keeping her water bottle filled during the very rough crossing.

A group of us struck up a friendship and would take deck chairs up onto the deck, put them with their backs to the galley, which was nice and warm, and there we stayed until time for dinner. We also took a blanket for added warmth. This prevented me from getting seasick. The mothers traveling with small children had a difficult time as the crossing was so rough and many of the little ones were very sick. Luckily, there were six Red Cross nurses traveling with us and they were a great help, especially with the babies.

Finally, we reached Halifax, dropping anchor in the harbour during the night. The next morning, we were all anxious to see our new home. We all rushed on deck to be met with a freezing mist and a temperature of zero! What a shock!

After breakfast, we gathered on the deck with our belongings, waiting for our instructions. The trains were waiting for the cross-country travelers – they had a few more days before they saw their loved ones.

As for me, there was a slight glitch. Tom had been told that he couldn't come on board until I was 'claimed' by my husband. He solved that dilemma by sneaking on board when no one was looking!

Finally, off we went to my new home. I was very impressed with Tom's new car, my family never having owned one. I was fascinated by the different colours of the houses, and not a brick in sight. Tom was brought up on a farm and I was a city girl. What would they think of me? Would I fit in? I didn't need to worry, Tom's mother was welcoming and supplied me with a foot warmer at bedtime - two hot bricks wrapped in layers of cloth! A warm welcome to Canada.

