

Mabel McKenzie
English War Bride
Britannic
May 23, 1945

CANADA'S IMMIGRATION MUSEUM
PIER 21



I met my husband in 1940. He was a soldier in the Royal Canadian Artillery 6th field 2nd Division. Stationed in Farnborough Hants, we were married in 1942 and had our first daughter in 1944.

My hometown was Farnborough, Hampshire, England. I left my home on May 10th 1945 and arrived at Liverpool, England on May 11th 1945 where we all boarded the liner Britannic for our trip to Canada. I was so excited at the time that the realization I was leaving my family did not sink in - that came later.

The trip took 12 days, with all the food we had not seen for years and seasickness, it was not really a bad voyage. We arrived at Pier 21 Halifax on May 23rd and what a welcome we received. It was great; everyone was so kind and helpful. Here I was, a 14 month old daughter in my arms, clutching my landing card in the other hand; our luggage piled under the initial of our surname. After clearing customs, we boarded a C.N. train for the west. I changed to C.P. at Winnipeg, arriving in Exshaw, Alberta at 1 a.m. on the 27th of May 1945. The trip was great and at every stop people gave us cookies and fruit etc.. Mind you, we thought the end of the journey would never end not realizing how vast Canada was. So Pier 21 gave me the start of a new life, for which I am thankful.

The people in Exshaw were so kind and still are as all Canadians have been. In return I hope I have passed on that kindness but I will let others be the judge of that. My husband



returned to Canada on July 2, 1945 and what a welcome that was, my



father-in-law (a wonderful Scotsman) and sister-in-law could not understand why I did not rush to greet my husband but I had seen him a few months earlier and it had been 5 years for them, but my turn came.

From that day on (after his discharge) our married life began. We lived with his family until we got our own home. Then along came another daughter, followed 7 years later with a son. In the years following, we all survived a house fire (complete) followed by two flooded basements but the good times surpassed the bad times, even after my husband's passing in 1989. In my years, I have started Girl Guides in Exshaw and stayed with them for 14 years. I joined the Ladies Auxiliary to the Canadian Legion at start in

Exshaw today. I am the last Charter Member, I helped in every way I could, when ever asked, in my way. That's my way of saying "Thank you Pier 21 and Canada for giving me a new life."