

Margaret Tarbuck
English War Bride
Letitia
June of 1946



I am a Canadian War Bride, and very proud of it, as I am part of history. My small daughter Heather (2 ½) and I left Manchester, England on June 17 1946 and after 19 days of traveling arrived in Vancouver, BC on July 3, 1946. We sailed from Liverpool to Halifax on the Letitia in convoy, as there were still mines lurking in the ocean. During our voyage, we had some very rough weather and we were held up 3 days on account of fog. However, on a warm, sunny Friday evening we reached Halifax, and the first memory was seeing the Citadel up on a hill. Some war brides left us there, but the rest of us stayed on ship. That night it was delightful to take a bath, with only the bathwater moving and not the ocean as well!!

The next day we left Pier 21 by train to eventually get to our destination. It was a very long train with many coaches, but gradually as War Brides left the train, a coach would be taken off, so that when we reached Jasper there was only one coach of War Brides left. At this point we were hooked up to a CNR Passenger train. Also the Red Cross came aboard with baths, so that the children and adults could be spanking clean to meet their new relatives in BC.

As we were rationed for clothing and there were very few coupons, my father gave me his so I was able to get a new outfit for my daughter and myself to arrive in Vancouver BC. In those days there were no drip-dry clothing!! By now most of the clothing and anything else were utility.

Naturally over our long journey we had many official's asking questions and checking things over, so on arrival by CNR at Vancouver, it just seemed natural to have one more, and as the steps are so deep to get down, I was backing down, and making sure Heather didn't fall, when a voice beside me said "Don't you know your husband?" and for a brief minute I didn't, as he was in civies and a Trilby hat. He worked in the offices of the CNR and I had only seen him in his kilt and uniform, of the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada.

Vancouver is a beautiful city, with a beautiful climate, very much like England, except we have no winter at all, so it was very easy to adjust. I lived there for 42 ½ years. Our son was born in Vancouver in 1948. Our husband passed away in August 1975 and my son in 1979. My daughter

and her husband and the grand children wanted me to come and live in Kingston and be nearer to them so I have lived in Kingston, Ontario for 12 year's now.

One of my granddaughters visited Pier 21 in the summer of 2000 and brought back souvenirs for me. Also one of my grandsons and his wife visited Pier 21 at Thanksgiving 2000 and brought me back a framed photograph of the ship Letitia. She was a hospital ship.

We were well taken care of on our journey to Halifax and across Canada. The food was excellent. A vivid memory on the ship, of our first breakfast, was seeing the WHITE bread. I had actually forgotten what white bread looked and tasted like.

Since living in Kingston I have attended a War Bride's re-union. I have three special friends here and we are all War Brides.

It is amazing when, where and how, you meet your future husband and of course not knowing it at the time. My parents and my husband's parents all grew up together in Liverpool Bootle to be correct. There were three sons in my husband's family and 3 daughters in my family. After the first world war, my husband's family left to live in Vancouver BC but both families always kept close with letters. So when the Second World War came the youngest son joined up and was one of the first to leave Canada. When he had to leave he came to visit us in Manchester and somehow kept coming. It must have been love!!

He was a Captain when we married on February 7th 1942. He later obtained the rank of Major. He was one of the first to be returned to Canada in August of 1945. It was 10 ½ months later when my daughter and I would be on our way to Vancouver. So it was a long wait, but worth it. His full name was Major Colin Campbell Tarbuck, Seaforth Highlanders of Canada.

