

Maureen Kelly

BY LYNNE SHRUBSOLE MATHIEU (MAUREEN'S DAUGHTER)©

I am exceedingly proud to relate that my mother was a war bride. In 1921, Maureen Cecilia Kelly was born in Burnley, England, to an Irish father and a British mother. Her father moved the family to Ireland to run one of his father's general stores in Dun Laoghaire. The youngest in the family, Maureen's brother, Eddy, was born in Sallynoggin (a subdivision of Dun Laoghaire in Co. Dublin) in 1924. Eddy was the first boy born to the area, so he was dubbed with the title "The Cock of the Noggin." The family returned to England while the children were still young.

When war broke out Maureen was employed in a factory and worked there

MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND NATIONAL SERVICE.
Essential Work () Order(s), 1944
Date: 10 JUL 1945 CHADDERTON Local Office
Employer: AC Conn. Co.
Address: Mrs. Maureen Cecilia Shrubsole
Worker's Address: 28 Whitfield St. Cheltenham Glos. 3
Worker's Dept: P. Radio Assembly Check No. 3386
Occupation: Radio Assembly
I, the undersigned, a National Service Officer, hereby give permission
1. TO THE ABOVE-NAMED EMPLOYER
† a. to terminate the employment in his undertaking of the above-named worker.
† b. to cause the above-named worker to give his services to the undertaking of
at
2. TO THE ABOVE-NAMED WORKER
to leave the employment of the above-named employer
† Delete as appropriate
E.D. 340A (SEE NOTES OVERLEAF) National Service Officer.

Maureen's wartime work permit

an attractive young lady—by chance in a pub in Manchester not long after he arrived in England. He was then sent overseas and was captured in Italy, where he spent time in a prisoner of war camp till the end of the war. In June 1945, after my father was released and arrived back in England, he and my mother married. However, as was often the case for Canadian servicemen, he was sent back to Canada long before my mother got her passage.

Maureen was eight months pregnant with my brother when she finally arrived in Canada in March of 1946 on the SS *Letitia*. The port of Halifax was so full that day that customs officers from Pier 21 came out to the ship to clear everyone through Customs and Immigration. They were then transported by boat to the shore. Trains were waiting at the train station to transport the war brides and their children to various destinations across Canada. Fortunately for Maureen, her journey lasted only a couple of days.



Maureen Shrubsole's military passport

Source: family photos, author

for the duration of the war. The card showing her employer was amongst documents of hers that were

kept by my father. Growing up I learned little of the horrors of war and more of the better times spent with friends and family. Maureen kept in touch with her best friend throughout their lives, and I was fortunate to spend some wonderful times with her and her husband.

My father, William Frederick Shrubsole—a handsome figure in uniform—served in the Royal Canadian Regiment. He met my mother—



Maureen and William on their wedding day

Other brides who were heading to places further west had a much lengthier trek facing them.

Maureen had a train ticket to St. Marys, Ontario, where she would once again be united with William. Ironically, at the Halifax train station she was told there was no such place as St. Marys, Ontario.



St. Marys, Ontario / Source: Michael Contant

Eventually someone did confirm that there was such a town. Much to her delight when she arrived in Toronto, Ontario, William was there to meet her.

Their life together began with living on a farm that had originally been owned by my great-grandparents, then my grandparents and then my father. My mother had left her family and friends to come to a country she knew little about and went from being a city gal to living on a farm just outside a small town. I think she was very courageous.

My sister and I were born while the family was still living on the farm. But in 1954 William enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force. We were posted to Portage La Prairie, Manitoba, then Zweibrücken, Germany, and then Ottawa, Ontario. While living in Germany, we finally met our Kelly side of the family.

We arrived in Liverpool and stood on the deck of the ship looking at all the people waiting to greet passengers. Being only 10, I picked out many gentlemen and asked, “Is that Grandpa, Is that Grandpa?” We had arrived in early June and stayed with Grandpa in Manchester till school was to start. Maureen was once again united with her family. She had only gone home once before, in 1959, for a short visit when her mother was ill. Getting to know that side of the family was so rewarding—to actually see my mother with her father and her siblings was heartwarming.

Our family was a military family—we moved when Father was posted and made new friends. Our family had the rare opportunity to see Europe and Great Britain. It was a life that molded all of us. Mother enjoyed living in each place, and once Father retired completely the decision was made to move back to the Ottawa area—first to Morrisburg and then to Nepean. Maureen worked in the PX (Post Exchange) store in Germany and again at Uplands in Ottawa; then she went to TMC Electronics, where she worked as a line worker. Once they moved to Toronto, Maureen retired.

Two of my father’s chums from the Army also lived in southern Ontario. One was in London and one in Kitchener, and they both married women from Great Britain—one a Scottish lady and the other an English lady. They frequently visited back and forth. This gave each of these ladies a tie to their homeland, and their friendships lasted their entire lifetimes. I grew up with my best friend being the daughter of one of these couples.



The loving couple in later years

My parents had 3 children, 10 grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren and 1 great-great-grandchild. Maureen told me after William died that she would not have changed anything in her life. She had made the right decision to follow the man she loved to a new country and a new life. Maureen died in 2013 at the age of 92. Her life story lives on with our family. All of us are extremely proud of our heritage and the resolve it took for Maureen to come to Canada.