

Two Journeys Become One

Canada, September 1940

We have gotten the letter to leave behind our mothers and sisters to go fight overseas. My three brothers and I have said our long awaited goodbyes. As we embark on this journey, we are reminded as to why we decided to volunteer and fight for our country as we wave goodbye to our loved ones.

Ireland, September 1940

I feel overwhelmed with guilt as a woman during war times. I feel like there must be more I can do to help with the war efforts. I joined the ATS with the Nursing Sisters of London to help out in any way that I can. I couldn't imagine saying goodbye to a loved one at such desperate times.

Europe, October 1940

We have just finished training camps and just hit land, my brothers and I are split up and sent across Europe. War is not as patriotic as the posters make it seem but still we must fight for our freedom and the freedom of our children.

London, October 1940

When I arrived at the hospital on the outskirts of the city, no one could have prepared me for the damage people can do to each other. We all work long hard days helping sons, brothers, fathers and heroes all get better one day at a time. We remind them who they're fighting for.

Italy, January 1941

I've been hit in my right shoulder! At first it feels hot like someone poured warm water on your arm and you're still in shock so the pain hasn't hit you yet but once it does, the pain is indescribable. An emergency nurse patches me up as best she can and gets me ready for transport to a Hospital in London.

London, January 1941

We are getting more and more patients everyday, we're running out of space. We've asked other hospitals to help take some of our long term patients in order to make space for more soldiers.

London, January 1941

I finally arrived at the hospital. The nurse I have is very patient and kind to me. I try to get to know her. I ask about her family and if she's married. She tells me she's from Dublin and that she was orphaned as a young child. She spent a lot of her childhood moving from relative to relative. She also tells me that she isn't married and she just joined the nursing sisters to help out as much as she could.

London, January 1941

I've made a new friend, a Canadian soldier wounded in action that has arrived at the hospital. He's very kind to me and I often wonder in a world filled with so much death and darkness how are some able to continue to shine so bright, even though tomorrow is never guaranteed.

London, February 1941

I'm still in the hospital in London. At least I have good company though. My nurse is like a ray of sunshine, something I desperately need these days. I wonder if she knows how fond I am of her.

London, February 1941

A letter has come about my Canadian soldier, he must go back to battle now that his shoulder is healed. I am happy to see him better but sad to think about not getting the chance to see him again.

London, March 1941

The time has come for me to return to battle. I have to say goodbye to my nurse and before I even think the words "will you come back to Canada with me?" are out of my mouth and to my absolute shock she says "YES"!

London, March 1941

My Canadian soldier has asked me to come to Canada and I said yes! A chance to have a family and see a whole new world.

Ireland, September 1943

After many visits and hundreds of letters we got married. We were wed in Dublin. There were only a few things left to do before I could go back home.

Over the Atlantic September, 1943

I was on the Queen Mary heading to Pier 21 in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The boat was extremely dirty and I couldn't wait to see the new world. Once I arrived it was not what I expected the new world to be. The house I'm staying at has no electricity or roads. When is my soldier coming back?

London November, 1943

I'm officially discharged from active duty and can finally reunite with my wife in Canada. After a long trip over the Atlantic I'm finally back home with my lovely nurse. I'm working on getting us a house so we can start our family together. Who knew that the thing that pulled us together caused so much tragedy in the world?

- Bridget Murphy

This story is inspired by the journey of my great grandparents who met in Europe during the war. My grandmother was a war bride