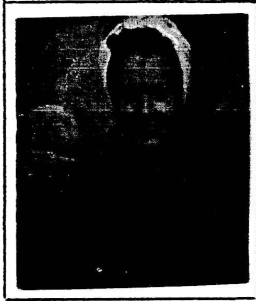


WE WERE MARRIED IN WARTIME!

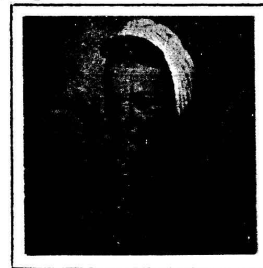
I often kid Etta that she got me by deceptive and deceitful means. We met in early June 1940 on a boat on Lake Ontario, that is true, and we also missed taking that same boat home, that also is true, but the rest is not so well remembered as it once was however mostly true. Very quickly I was deeply in love with the most beautiful girl I had ever met, and she with me.



The first weekend that I was in the manning pool of the RCAF at the CNE horse stables in Toronto was when we met. There was a note on the Canteen notice board that there was to be an excursion across the Lake to Port Dalhousie and Niagara Falls. I don't remember reading further, but the airman standing beside me suggested that this might be fun. Grandmother had always talked of Niagara Falls as her folks were married on Goat Island. I said sure, anything to get away from these stables.

The next morning along with my new found friend, we arrived by streetcar at the boat dock. He was Al Lowe, we became great pals, eventually my best man, and God-father to my child, and dear friend up to the time of his death several years ago, but back to my story. This trip was organized by a group of girls that worked in the Ontario Parliament Buildings, they called themselves "The Health and Beauty League". They each had a picnic hamper for two and were to be our hosts for the day. This was done regularly in wartime where everyone tried to help to entertain and make life more enjoyable for those of us in uniform and away from home and friends. It was a great time to be young and alive.

The boat was the old Kiuga, I am no longer sure of the spelling, and we soon cast off. Al and I were not quite sure what the form was, but most aware of the number of girls on board. I remember picking my way along the rather narrow deck, most people were sitting with backs to cabins on a long bench, facing the water. I can't say say if it was just a foot stuck out or if I was tripped, but it soon transpired that Etta and her friend had a picnic lunch that they might share with some lucky airman. It turned into a lovely day.



At the end of June I was posted to the Initial Training School at the Hunt Club in North Toronto, and once again found myself in another horse stable. Toronto was big on horses in those days. I was three weeks in the ITS prior to being posted to Vancouver and managed to spend time with Etta whenever I could get a day pass on weekends. The time went all too quickly.

My elementary flying training was done at Sea Island in Vancouver, then sent to Saskatoon for training on Harvard aircraft and to receive my wings. On the 20th of December I was back in Trenton, Ontario, just in time to be with Etta for Christmas, and again at New Years, and anytime that Al and I could get a 48 hour pass.



Al and I always stayed at the Royal York Hotel when we were in Toronto, It was close to the train station, and the room rates were tailored to the airman's rate of pay, which wasn't very much, and Al and I would share the room. Life was grand!



Etta and I became engaged, I knew that I would be posted away from Trenton but there were lots of new stations being constructed close by. On February 25th, I was posted to Moncton New Brunswick, and again my world fell apart. Moncton in those days was three days away by train. Al and I risked one last trip to Toronto to see Etta and Jeanie, and left the next day with \$1:73 to see us to our new assignment. Thank goodness, the service paid our meals and births on the train.

Moncton that winter was very cold and the snow deep. We were worked hard, and it seemed after a couple of months that we would be flying instructors for the duration of the war. Some of the instructors were married men who lived off the station, theirs was an eight to five job and when not flying, with weekends and extra days off, a vast improvement over my situation. They also received a marriage allowance !

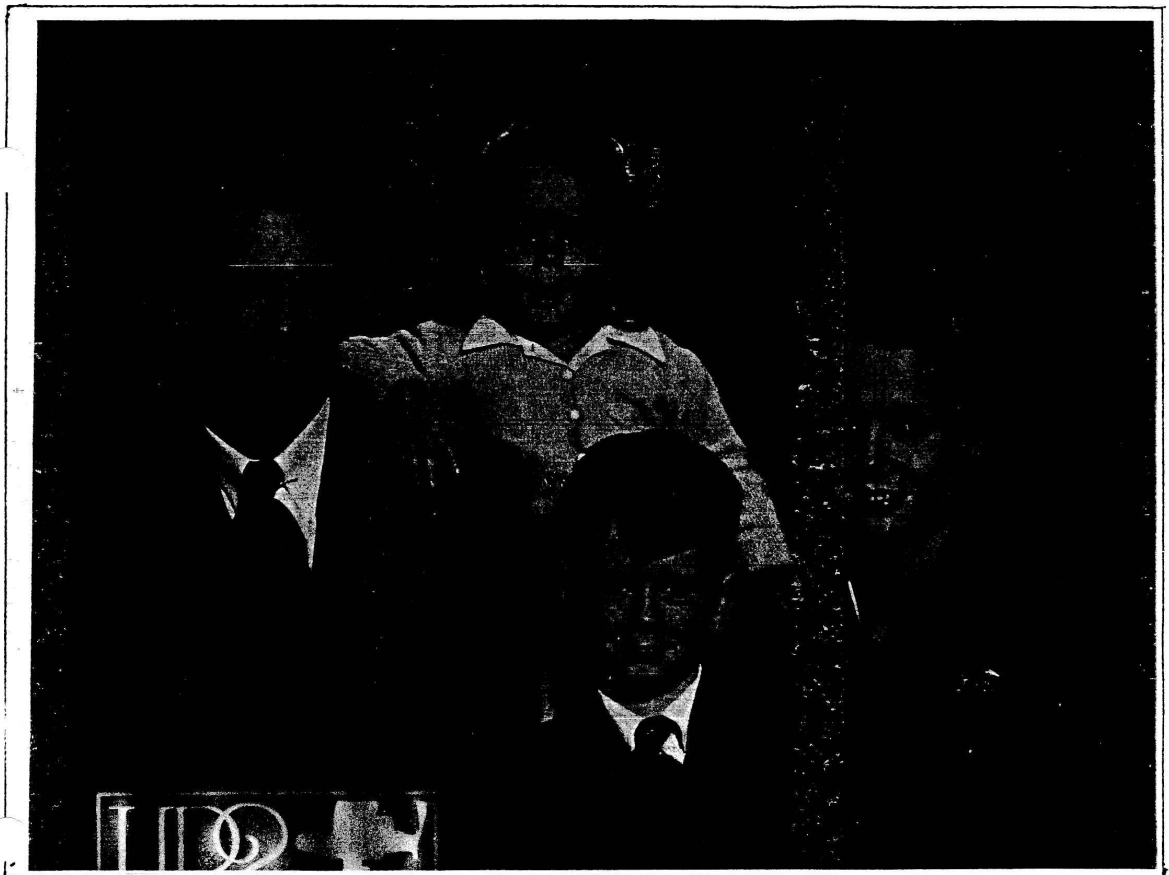
I was lonely and terribly in love, and Etta never far from my mind. I wrote and asked if she consider comming to Moncton to marry, and I remember the long agonizing wait for her reply. No one ever used the phone to call that far in those days, we wrote letters.

We were married in Moncton on April 4th, 1941, it seems a long while ago, in fact almost $\frac{1}{2}$ a century. Our first apartment was a single room up over a theatre, it could have been our last as the place caught fire one night and we slept until morning, fortunately they had a good fire department. I had rented this room from a pilot, Whitey Dahl, a hero of the Spanish war, and quite a character. A few weeks later we were able to share a nice home on a quiet street, and we settled into a new and happy married life.

We have lived together with less than a normal amount of friction and frustration. Etta was always a delight to live with, her beauty lasted well into these latter years and some still comes through. Being Irish gave her lots of sparkle, a great loyalty to friends, wide ranging likes and dislikes and lots of firmly held opinions on every subject. Always an active, healthy and energetic person, and one that loved her home and family. I have been waited on, hand and foot all my life; -it has been said many times that a marriage had to be a 50/50 proposition to work, Etta has always given 75% in every way.

We have been married from '41 to '89, almost half a century, it was a wonderful day that we met, and many wonderful days since that has made for a great life together. I pray that it will continue for yet a few years.

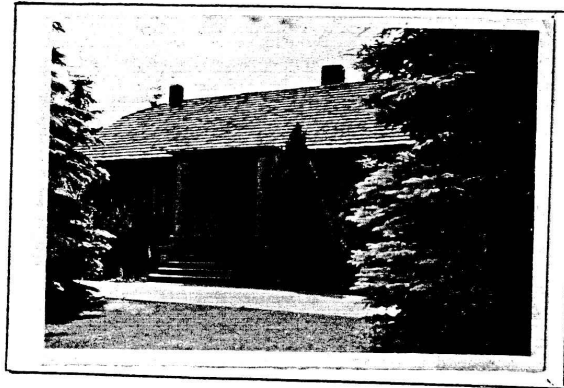
W.L.M. - 1989



Marr Family, - New Westminster, B.C. - 1948.

I flew very long hours, both day and night, Etta decided that she should go back to work to help the family finances, she was able to find work, but almost immediately had a fainting spell, pregnant! -our lives were changing. One thing about the Air Force in wartime, everything changed. The Visiting Flight came through the station later in the year and gave me a very good flying assessment, and so on October 2nd, we were back in Trenton. This time I was on the Central Flying School staff. We lived in several rather poor rental places, three in fact, before I was commissioned as a Flying Officer and my salary improved so that we could rent part of a nice house, and again we settled into a happy routine for a few months while the rest of the world was falling apart. On October 12th, 1942, I was posted overseas.

They gave me leave to get my affairs in order, time to go to Vancouver, and then to report to Halifax. It was now that I made one of my lifes' great mistakes, and it has affected our lives even until now. I took Etta and the baby to Fort Langley and left them with Grandmother. She was a good sport and remained at the Fort for over three years until I returned, but she was lonesome, away from friends, ignored by many people, and hurt by a few, after all I had been away a short time, or so it would seem, and here was a 19 year old wife and an eight month baby. Etta should have gone back to Bess and Jean in Toronto, but I never really thought it out, except there was a darn good chance that I might not get back. She was more than willing to do what I wished of her, and I never realized what I had done until I had returned home. Years later when I should have relocated in Langley, Etta would have no part of it, she hated Langley with a vengeance that has lasted to this day, and perhaps with good reason.



Our first home, after training in Winnipeg with Trans-Canada Airlines, was a lovely little bungalow in New Westminster. We lived here for the next five years, and it was here that we got Ann, and she was almost ready for school when we moved to Toronto in 1951. We came back to Vancouver again in 1968, not many moves for people in my profession, and by now the children are both on their own.

DATE

14/3/41

To:

Office Commanding

8 S.F.T.S.

RCAF, Moncton, N.B.

From:

Sgt./Pilot Wm L. Marr.

Subject: Permission to Marry

1. I respectfully request permission to marry Kenneth McAtamney on or about April 15 1941, under the provisions of Para. 1360 (4) K.R.O. for the R.C.A.F. and to be placed on the Married Establishment as from the date of my marriage which will be notified by the production of my marriage certificate.

2. Statement of moral character and disposition of Kenneth McAtamney from Rev. S. Milton Beach of 1231 Yonge St Toronto attached hereto.

3. I have no debts or other financial obligations except as hereunder:-

nil

4. I am satisfied that I will be able to maintain my family in a manner befitting my station as an airman.

5. I am aware that, should I contract debts which I cannot liquidate, I am liable to be discharged from the Service.

W. L. Marr. x

11 C.O. RCAF. STATION
Moncton, N.B.

I have interviewed Sgt. Pilot Wm L. Marr. concerning the above application and recommend that he be granted permission to marry.

E. R. Austin Flt.
O.C. 8th Flight #2 Squadron UNIT

DATE: 14/3/41

111 J.C. #2 Squadron UNIT

Approved

W. W. Brown Wing Commander

Commanding RCAF. Station,
Moncton, N.B.