

South Wales **GI** Brides Magazine

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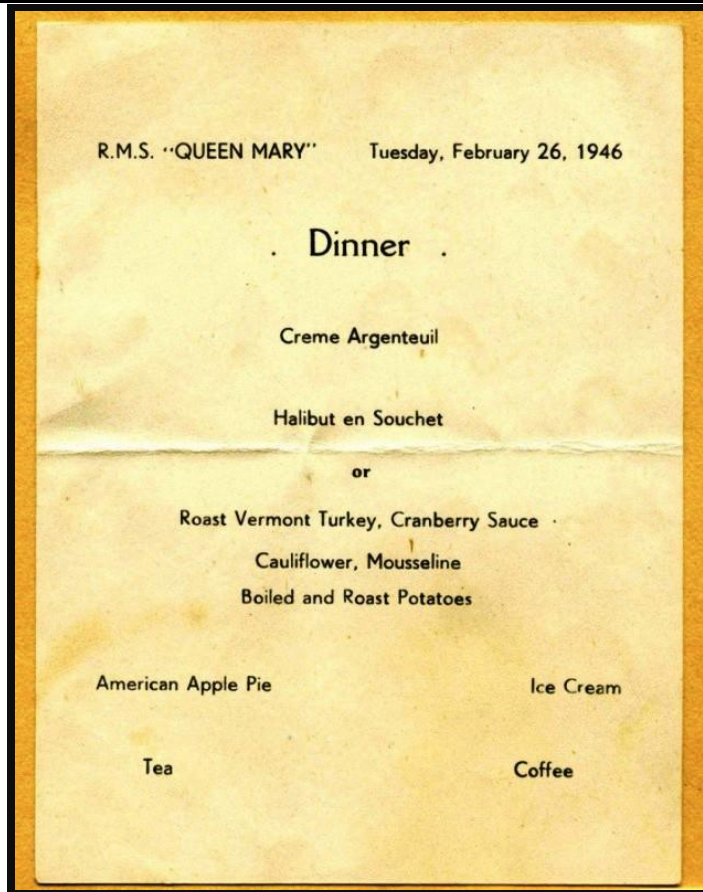
RMS Queen Mary, Long Beach California, USA

August 2011



This August I was privileged to tick off an item from my: “List of Things To Do Before You Die,” that is, visit the RMS Queen Mary now moored @ Long Beach, California, which is just south of Los Angeles. One of the reasons I wanted to see her was, of course, several thousand War Brides (and children) made their first crossing of the Atlantic to their new Homes on this great British iconic passenger liner.

Between 5th February and 30th April 1946 the Queen Mary made five round trips from Southampton to New York carrying in total almost 12,200 GI Brides and their children. From May to September that year she transported a further 18,900 War Brides and their babies to Halifax, Nova Scotia, to take up their new lives in Canada. The Queen Mary was not the only liner to be engaged in this shuttle but she was probably the grandest.



BACK TO THE KENEFICKS - as mentioned last month...



St Helens Church, Barry, October 1945



St Helens Church, Barry, 1983



Harold Yates Doreen Kenefick

St Helens Church, Barry, 1985

Doreen Kenefick of Quarella Street, Barry, married Harold Yates, US Army, in October 1945. Thirty eight years later they made a(nother) return visit to Barry. More about Harold and Doreen in the October Issue...

Continued this month:

CLIFF AND DOREEN LEMASTERS...

From NEWPORT, SOUTH WALES, to PRINCEVILLE, ILLINOIS



Wedding Day, Oct 22nd 1945 at St. Paul's Church, Newport

(NB 75th Infantry Division shoulder patch)

Last month we left Doreen on a US Army base in Germany...

CHRISTMAS IN GERMANY

When Christmas came around I could not envision Christmas without my family. Carol was a baby and too young for it, so my friend Molly and I decided to give a good

Christmas to some of the German children. The Military had asked if anyone would like to take a child or two for Christmas day. So we applied for **ten** children. Our apartments were across from each other and we went all out – had a huge tree hauled in and we had great fun decorating it and buying lots of gifts at the **PX (Post Exchange)** and wrapping them. We made a huge turkey dinner with the help of two young German girls, who loved it also acted as interpreters as, of course, the children all spoke German. But they understood Christmas all right with lots of food, presents under the tree and fun and games. It was wonderful to see all those happy faces. At the end we divided up all the leftover foods, cakes, candy, fruit etc. for them to take home to their parents. There were ten very happy children that got back on that bus. We were well satisfied – it was a good Christmas after all.

GROWING FAMILY

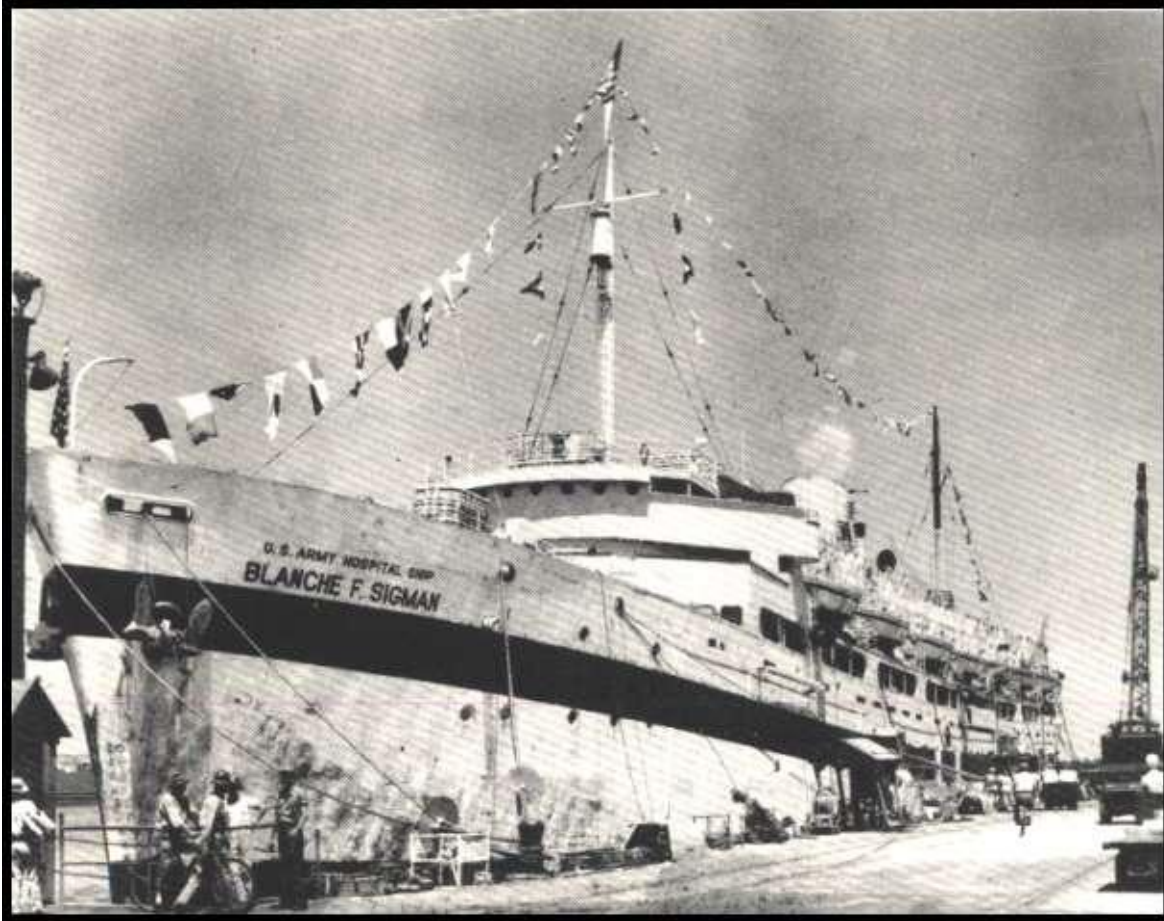
Our second daughter was born in **August 1947** in the US Military Hospital in Munich – **Janice**, a sister for **Carol**.

UNCLE SAM'S CALL

By **November 1947** we were ready to come to the States on orders. Originally we were supposed to fly back, but due to some mishap we were ordered to Bremerhaven for a boat. It turned out to be a military hospital ship, the "**Blanche F Sigman**," not exactly an ocean liner! It took us twelve days to cross the Atlantic in December. Not smooth sailing. I spent Christmas on the boat but was too sea-sick to participate.

DAVID LEMASTERS:

My Mother was sick the whole trip over. It was a hospital liberty ship, but it was a small up & down, up & down, up & down, up & down, spin around, up & down, spin around, up & down, loose your breakfast over the side, change a diaper (two small daughters (Carol, date of birth 1946; Janice, date of birth 1947) smell the mess, spin around, up & down. She said it was a BAD trip for her. She said she remembers every wave and minute.



<http://www.merchantnavyofficers.com/liberty3.html>

Doreen: Cliff was stationed at **Chanute Air Force Base, Illinois, (south of Chicago)** and I lived with his parents and brothers and sisters until we rented a little house in Elwood. Cliff was demobilized in **July 1948**, just before our first son **John** was born at Methodist Hospital in Peoria, Illinois, in **August 1948**.

In **December 1948** we returned to England on the **Queen Mary**, a very different voyage. It was so wonderful to be back home again! We got a four bedroom house and our family increased – another son in **1950**. Then identical twins in **1955**, **David** was sixth born just five minutes after his brother **Stephen**. Our final child, **Brian**, was born in **1959**.



There's that ship again... this time in her post-WW2 livery...

DAVID LEMASTERS...

In November 1948 they returned to Newport where her father, Sidney William Rugg of No.2 King Street Newport, Monmouth, had a job lined up for my father at the "Tommy Hill" concrete & bricks works in Newport. I do know he worked at the **Boardmills & Whiteheads** later because he crossed the Transporter Bridge carrying his bike...up the metal steps & over the top of the Transporter structure.

BACK TO THE STATES

Doreen: Cliff's mother and sister came to visit us in **1963** ending up with him going on a four week visit back to the States, resulting in him wanting to stay and him wanting both me and the children to come back over. After much discussion and with many misgivings we finally came back, much to the older children's reluctance, in **October 1964**. Those first years were not happy ones. We were all very homesick and many times I was filled with regret.

DAVID LEMASTERS: THE BEATLES

were all the rage when the LeMasters moved back to the Peoria area in 1964. Because Stephen and David had English accents in the third grade, Stephen said, "The sixth grade girls would come up to us and ask, 'Do you know the Beatles?' I said, 'Oh, yeah, I shook hands with them.' and they'd go 'ahhhhhh!' We were popular."

IDENTITY

Doreen: I always think of myself as English, not Welsh. Both my parents came from Bristol, only moving to Newport for his job. I was here in the United States for thirty-eight years before becoming an American citizen.

TO AND FRO

Over the years we have made a good home here. We have all flown back to Britain many times, the first time in **1966**. All of my children have returned as children and as adults. I think I must have made the journey about 12 or 13 times in the 42 years we have been back here. Also, I was also fortunate to have my family from Newport and Bristol make repeated trips, including my mother before she died in **1978**, and my sisters and brothers-in-law many times, and cousins, too. We joke that we could have bought our own jet with all the transatlantic visits we've paid for.

Because we came over as a family, and only really had each other, we have always been very, very close. It is truly wonderful to be surrounded by so many people who love each other. We really have a wonderful family: Children, in-laws, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

CLIFF AND DOREEN'S CHILDREN

1. Carol	1946	in Germany
2. Janice	1947	in Munich, Germany
3. John,	August 1948	in the Methodist Hospital, Peoria, Illinois.
4. Robert	1950	in Newport, south Wales.
5. & 6. Stephen and David		
	1955	in Newport, south Wales
7. Brian	1959	in Newport, south Wales

MEMENTOES AND SYMBOLS FROM HOME...



On one of my early trips I carried home in my arms a huge Welsh Dragon that still has prime place on top of my china cabinet. Also, there are brass Welsh plaques on the walls. Brass Welsh miners in the china cabinet, and many bone china ornaments from visits, also crystal bowls from the local area, not just in my home but everyone's, collected during visits. Many of my tea towels in use are Welsh patterned and my cooking aprons are the same. There will always be a part of England here. We have many pieces of music, Welsh choirs, etc and listen often. So, yes, we think of Newport as going home. Our last trip was in **2004**.

- **DOREEN LEMASTERS**

OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS**BY DAVID LEMASTERS**

My British Grandfather died in 1960 and my Nana in 1977.

My Nana, **Louisa Rugg**, of Number 2 King Street, Newport had four daughters:

Ivy Rugg (Ivy Joenn), living, had two sons, both living.

Doreen Rugg (Doreen LeMasters, deceased) had two daughters and five sons, all living.

Joan Rugg (Joan Francis, deceased) no children.

Barbara Rugg (Barbara Snelling) had one son and one daughter, both living. I am remembering now that my Nana lost more than half of her grandchildren to a far away place... When we came back to this country (USA) in **1964**, my Nana joined the UK CLUB – I am not sure what the real name was? My Nana came over to the US only one time (alone.) Her visit was the last two weeks of March, April and May **1967**, ten weeks in total. She came over on a privately chartered Boeing 707 from London. The BOAC 707 private flight was booked out of London by a club called "**Mothers of British War Brides**"(?) stopping at New York, Chicago and Los Angeles International then returning at the end of May **1967** with the same passengers.

PS: DON'T MENTION THE WAR

When I was growing up in the UK and Stateside, the War was NEVER Mentioned. Ever. Except some of the things my Mother told me about what Hitler did to Twins during the War, never in detail. She did say experiments and death, probably stories after the War coming out of Lansburg & Munich.

**NEXT MONTH: MORE PICS FROM THE LEMASTERS FAMILY
ALBUM...**



COURSES, LECTURES AND WORKSHOPS IN CARDIFF

Saturday Schools at St Davids Hall

What was a GI bride? How many were there? What were they like? What stories can they tell? What was their significance? What effect did their marriages have on their own families, and the American families they married into? This session will consider all of these questions, and more!

Tutor: Glenn Booker

Saturday 12th November, 2011

10am to 2pm

Cost: £20

That's all for now, folks!

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