



The Persistence of Doris



Doris married Canadian soldier Albert Madder September 27, 1941 and had two children in wartime Sutton. Sutton missed London's pummeling but still had nearly 200 civilian casualties from bombing. From 1940 to

1944 the Germans fired 434 bombs on Sutton and Cheam. In 1947 Doris packed up the kids, braved the Southampton-Halifax route on the former Cunard liner *Aquitania* and arrived in Canada with five dollars in her pockets. After a long, chilly train ride, the "war bride with children" rejoined her husband in Sudbury. "It was 47 F below when we arrived," Doris recalled, "but the kids were okay. My mother had made them jackets from heavy blankets." Albert Madder then worked in the Sudbury Police Department.

Doris and Albert followed employment from Sudbury south, living on the Danforth, at Pickering Beach and in Highland Creek before settling into Ajax. The family grew to six children and later added grandkids. Doris said, "Some weeks we didn't know if we had a dollar or a dime with our full house." But, all was well until Albert passed away in 1986. That's when Doris' troubles began. The records on the Canadian Health Card she'd been issued in Halifax showed her as an immigrant. It took numerous discussions with her MPP and three trips to government offices in Oshawa before she was issued a new Health Card and recognized as a citizen.

In spite of the red tape with the Health Card, Doris took on another cause. Why didn't she receive a pension as the widow of a Canadian serviceman? Albert had served in Iceland and Sutton during WWII, served and been a lifetime member of Ajax Legion. For 25 years Doris visited MPPs, and various Legion branches.

She wrote countless letters to Veterans Affairs, yet, no pension. Doris persisted in spite of the rebuffs.

An ad in July 2012's *Salute*, issued by Veterans Affairs, caught Doris' eye. The new Ombudsman offered help. Doris was hopeful—but her troubles were not over. She still had documentation and verification as hurdles.

In November 2012 Doris received a letter. She had qualified for the pension! She would receive the Memorial Cross on behalf of Albert's service and there would be a settlement. Doris Madder had struggled for 26 years and was now 91-years-old.



Doris Madder 2014

This, however, was not the end of Doris' persistence. There is a new monument for Albert Madder in the Brighton cemetery recognizing his service. Doris told a friend, "I wish I could dig him up and tell him we finally won and thank you for your service."

In recognition of Women's History Month, we thank Doris Madder for her service to Albert, her family and the community.

N.B. In 2005 Doris received the Senior of the Year Award from the City of Pickering for her influential work with Durham Transit to have a community bus for seniors. She continues to advocate for seniors in her community.

