



## REMEMBERING

# Joan Elizabeth Dearden

May 10, 1926 - November 8, 2020



Joan was born in Montreal to two WW1 veterans. Her mother was a front-line nurse and her father was an infantry officer who was severely wounded at Passchendale where he won the Military Cross. He died of his war wounds when Joan was four years old, leaving her mother to work as a nurse and raise two young children as a single mother throughout the difficult years of the Great Depression. Joan and her sister, Beatrice, spent their childhood summers with their grandparents in the Laurentians where Joan developed her love of the great outdoors which lasted her whole life.

Joan, and her mother, were always adventurous and did not always follow the "normal" rules for women. When she was sixteen years old Joan quit school, lied about her age and joined the Royal Canadian Air Force in the middle of WW2 (with her mother's agreement). She had basic training in Rockcliffe, Ont., and was posted to Montreal to complete a six-month course as a wireless operator. After that, she went operational at No. 1 Ground Reconnaissance in Summerside, P.E.I., and then in the summer of 1944, she was posted to Yarmouth, N.S. to another coastal command station. Her job was to communicate with aircraft patrolling the coast to watch for U-boats and enemy ships, as well as air-sea search and rescue operations. She often remembered the "wonderful times with the pilots, they were a good bunch. There were sad times too, when aircraft went missing or crashed. Some of the lost pilots were friends of mine." She did many interesting things during the war, including going on a Royal Navy submarine, flying around the USA on USAF aircraft, and going aboard the USS Tucson courtesy of the United States Navy.

When the war in Europe was over she volunteered to serve in the Pacific to fight

the Japanese, but did not have to go since they surrendered in August 1945. Joan was discharged in November 1945 and applied to the DVA for a course as a commercial wireless operator where she was the only woman "amongst oodles of men"! She met Barney Dearden there and they were married in March 1946, when she was still only nineteen years old. The family military tradition continues until today with her son (Patrick) and her granddaughter (Kellie) both having served in the Canadian Forces.

In 1948, Joan and Barney left Quebec and moved to Campbell River, B.C. where their two children, Patrick and Molly were born. While in Campbell River, Joan was a Girl Guide leader as well as a volunteer with the Ground Observer Corps and the St. John Ambulance Brigade.

Joan, Barney and young children moved to the East Kootenays in 1959 where they bought and operated a cattle ranch at Mayook. After their children left home, they moved to the West Kootenays (New Denver and Kaslo). They began going on their numerous trips in Canada and abroad.

Both Joan and Barney lived life together on their own terms which was reflected in their globe-trotting adventures. One of these trips was a two-month bus journey from London to Kathmandu, going through some politically unstable regions. Another trip in 1980, found them travelling across the USSR on the Trans-Siberian Railway.

When Joan wasn't busy travelling and hiking in the mountains with Barney, she found contentment with simple pleasures - canoeing lakes and rivers with Pat or walking in the Community Forest with Molly looking for the first crocuses of the season. Joan had a special kinship with all animals. She would pet every dog that she happened to meet and rescued many cats and dogs over the years.

Joan was pre-deceased by her parents, her sister Bea and her beloved husband of 69 years Barney. She is survived by her children Patrick (Ellen) and Molly (Derald Cloarec), six grandchildren Kristy (Ryan Comishin), Jennifer (Steve Kelly), Sean, Diana (Scott McInnis), Kellie (Joseph Fowler), Tania (Alberto Renteria); as well as five great grandchildren - Brennan, Sadie, Clea, Luke, and Lyndon.

We would like to express our gratitude to the nurses, care aides, and activity staff at the FW Green Home for their wonderful, loving care of our Mum and Grandma. At Joan's request there will be no funeral service.

Mum and Grandma we will miss your, kind, loving, caring support of all of us. Cheerio, our precious Mum and Grandma. We love you and you are forever in our hearts.

