



Joan Montgomery MONTGOMERY, Joan Alice After a lengthy illness, Joan passed away peacefully surrounded by her family on September 3, 2010. Predeceased by her loving husband, Albert "Monty" Montgomery, she will be sadly missed by her children, Carol Milligan (Dave), Bill, Diane Hankewich (Kelly), Robert (Traci), Joanne, ten grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, and lifelong friend Patricia Zimmer. Joan was born February 3, 1923 in Woolwich, England and grew up with two brothers and two sisters in Charlton. Joan was a sergeant in the

Woman's Air Corps in London during World War II, and came to Canada as a war bride with her daughter Carol in 1946, living in Wetaskiwin before moving to Edmonton. She married Monty Montgomery in 1950, and together they were pioneers in the Edmonton theatre and entertainment community. Joan was also a life member of the Royal Canadian Legion Ex-Service Women's Branch 215 in Edmonton. Her kind, generous spirit gained her many friends from all walks of life, and in her retirement years, she loved hearing from old friends and spending time with her extended family. The family would like to thank the staff at Unit 5E4 at the U of A Hospital for their kindness and dedication in making Joan comfortable in her final days. Cremation has taken place, and a date for a Celebration of Joan's life will be announced shortly. In lieu of flowers or donations to charity, please gather your own family together, enjoy a nice dinner, and cherish each others company. Condolences: [www.serenity.ca](http://www.serenity.ca) Serenity Funeral Service, North Central Chapel Edmonton, (780) 477-7500 Your Community Owned, Not For Profit, Funeral and Cremation provider

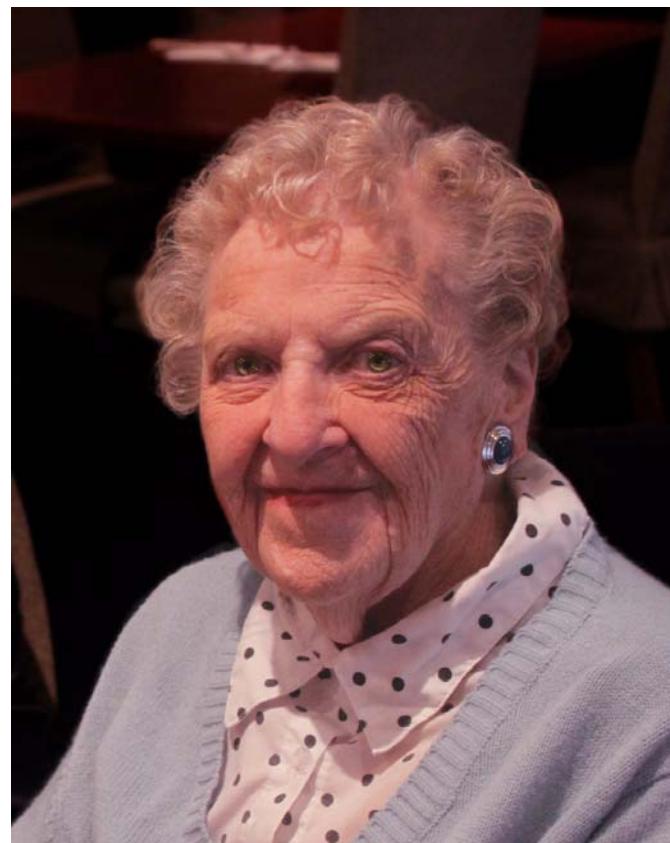


## 23 Psalm

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he  
leadeth me beside the still waters.  
He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of  
righteousness for his name's sake.  
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow  
of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy  
rod and thy staff they comfort me.  
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of  
mine enemies: thou anointest  
my head with oil; my cup runneth over.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the  
days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the  
LORD for ever.



## *Celebrating the Life Of*



*Joan Alice Montgomery*

*February 3 1923 - September 3 2010*

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## **Program**

**Opening Remarks**

**Eulogy**

**Bill Montgomery**

**Video Presentation**



**Royal Canadian Legion Branch  
Ex-Service Women's Branch 215**

**Eulogy**

**Robert and Jessica Montgomery**

**23rd Psalm - Pat Zimmer**

**Video Presentation**

**Guest Remembrances**

**We invite you to share your  
memories**

**Closing Remarks**

Joan Alice Montgomery was born on February 3, 1923, at home in Woolwich, England. She was the youngest of five children born to Caroline and Joseph Beech. Her siblings were Ethel, Jack, Louisa, and a brother (Joseph), who died in infancy. She was named after her aunt Alice, who, along with her uncle Joe, became her godparents when she was baptized in Charlton, England, the town where Joan was to spend her childhood years. The family lived in a bungalow, where background music was a constant companion. They had a wringer washer and clothesline, were visited weekly by the iceman, milk man and the ragman, who collected items for charity, much like today's goodwill and Salvation Army. They had indoor plumbing, and were the first house on the block to get electricity.

Joan played with her family and friends in a picturesque English garden that included a sandbox and swings. The family grew raspberries, gooseberries, apples and tomatoes, which thrived amongst abundant wildflowers and trees filled with robins, sparrows and chickadees.

Joan was very much a tomboy who loved to play Snakes and Ladders, marbles and jacks. She put on her first uniform as a young child when she joined the Brownies, and she loved to ride her bicycle with her friends. She shared a bedroom with her sister, Louisa, also known as Aunt Sis, who would also play a vital and loving role in all of our lives.

In short, Joan grew up surrounded in the love and beauty that would define her kind and generous spirit for the rest of her life.

Joan joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force in April of 1942. Like the rest of England, and its allies, she was concerned with the volatile world situation at that time. It was in the Air Force that she met her life long friend, Pat Zimmer, as they worked together in recruitment at Victory House in London. The uniform they had to wear, was, in Pat's words, "ghastly" - it was air force blue with impractical wool skirts instead of pants. Joan and Pat hitchhiked in uniform everywhere across England, and it was perfectly safe in those days. Joan, in keeping with her love of cycling, tried to teach Pat how to ride a bike in the Orderly Room at Victory House. Their commanding officer walked in just as Pat was falling off the bicycle, and both she and Joan were put up on charges, which, Pat says, was definitely not a good thing.

Joan taught herself how to drive a car, and she was an excellent and careful driver all of her life. She did hit ditches on occasion, and she knocked down a telegraph pole while driving Pat to work one day, but, she wasn't a bad driver, she simply took it upon herself, as her civic duty, to clear away poorly placed communications equipment.

Joan married a Canadian soldier named Tom Palfrey on June 14, 1942, and together they moved into Joan's family home, which, naturally, was a place where friends often gathered. She spent her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday with Tom, Tom's brother Bill, and other soldiers who were stationed near by. It was a great celebration, amid the heartbreak of war, filled with the laughter of family and friends in the armed forces.

Their daughter, Carol was born on January 2, 1945.

The war years were frightening and somber, but on occasion, youthful exuberance would win out over the gloom of the era. Joan once told a story of spending the evening at an English pub, then tripping over the blackout curtains that filled the doorway, and landing in a tangled heap on a pitch dark London sidewalk!

Also, Monty, who spent the war years in the muddy trenches of Europe, loved to tell people that his bride actually out ranked him in the military! He would have had to salute to her if she ever insisted, though I don't believe she ever did.

When the war was over, Joan and her 18 month old daughter, Carol, boarded the ship "Leticia" on September 4, 1946. They set sail from Liverpool, England, and landed in Halifax Harbor with many other war brides, where they were processed before boarding a train for the trip across Canada. The rail trip was very uncomfortable, since they sat and slept on hard wooden benches, as they bounced and bumped along the tracks in their new country.

Anyone who has raised a child can only imagine what it must have been like to cross both the Atlantic Ocean and the width of Canada with an 18 month old baby! Amazing. The trip across Canada alone lasted anywhere between 3 to 5 days.

The train arrived in Edmonton, via Wetaskiwin, and Joan and Carol went to live with Carol's grandparents. They stayed there while Joan tried to find a job as a stenographer in Edmonton. (She had already attended secretarial

school, where she learned shorthand, among other administrative skills). Unfortunately, at this time, the war had changed Joan's Canadian husband, and they divorced. Joan was left in a foreign country to fend for herself and her small child.

To make ends meet, Joan worked for an insurance adjustment company in Edmonton during the week, then she would travel back to Wetaskiwin on the week-ends to spend time with her daughter.

Eventually, Joan and Carol moved to a little shack in Jasper Place, with their friend, Pat Zimmer, who had also made the long journey across the Atlantic to live in Canada.

The Jasper Place shack had no indoor plumbing, so an outhouse was used, (imagine that on a -40 degree night!) and their water was delivered to them once a week. Carol remembers getting sponge baths when the water arrived.

Joan and Pat joined the Montgomery Legion, where they met a woman named Jeannette Lakevold. Jeanette was happy to introduce them to her son, Bill, her daughter, Lil, and her youngest son, Albert "Monty" Montgomery.

As we all know, love flourished between Joan and Monty, and they were married on August 18, 1950. There was a small reception at the Hotel MacDonald downtown. They celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary right here at the ACT center, and Joan and Monty remained together until his death in 2006.

Joan and Monty moved to their first house in Riverdale, and their son, Bill, was born the following year.

Milk was delivered by horse and buggy.

Monty worked for the Edmonton Public School board, and he owned a Model T Ford, the family's first car.

It was soon decided that they needed a larger home, so they moved to 107<sup>th</sup> street and 106<sup>th</sup> avenue, where they lived with Monty's mother and stepfather. Also residing here were a menagerie of pets, including a duck that Joan adopted.

Monty built a suite for his mother and stepfather upstairs in the house, and Bill thrived as the apple of his Nana's eye.

Diane was next on the scene, and they moved to Tower road, again with Monty's parents, who had a suite in the basement. Robert was born in 1958, and Joanne followed in 1961.

The family now lived in the Parkdale area, in a two storied house that holds a lot of memories for many who are here today.

Joan set out on the greatest career of her life, which was as mother to her own 5 children as well as a wide assortment of her children's friends, who all called her "mum". If you didn't have a place to go, you were always welcome, day or night, in the Montgomery home. Dinner was always offered, but you had better be prepared to lose some money later on during a game of Rummoli!

Towards the late 1960's Joan and Monty established the stage lighting company, Lighting By Monty, which had its first corporate office inside the family's Parkdale garage, though theatrical gel was often cut and sold at the dining room table.

Before and during this time of business, family and friends, Joan also found



time to volunteer with the home and school association (in the Riverdale area after Carol started school), and with the Girl Guides, where she also worked as a lifeguard at Alberta Beach. She even named one of the girl guide camps, "Tangle Trees", which exists, with that name, to this day. The business eventually moved to a warehouse with offices on 91<sup>st</sup> street and Yellowhead Trail, where many careers in show business were launched. Joan worked in the office keeping track of finances and guarding the comings and goings of the equipment and all the young workers. A strobe light would never leave the building without a firm warning to the customer of its abilities to bring on an epileptic seizure if left on for too long. Their St. Bernard Brutus, with his uncanny internal clock, would always mark the end of the work day for them by going to lie in the back seat of Joan's cream colored Acadian.

Joan had a great love of travel, and the family often had winter vacations in Hawaii. In the 1970's, she took a large group of family back to England to meet her elderly father. She always had a creative flair for seeking out and booking interesting trips, such as a bus tour to Spokane for the Lilac festival. Bill acted as chauffer, and in his words, bodyguard, on many road trips to the States, including San Diego and Yuma Arizona, where they enjoyed its remarkable flea market.

Surrounded by the love of her children and her children's friends, Joan was soon to experience even more happiness in the form of her beloved grandchildren. Carol and her husband Dave had Sandra, Leslie and Tim, Bill presented her with grandson, Shawn, Diane and Kelly had Jared and Calyn, Robert and Traci were parents to Jessica and Allie, and Joanne was mother

to Morgan and Sara. Great grandchildren Chelsey, Emma and Jack completed the family that was to bring so much life and joy into Joan's world.

Joan loved to play Bingo, and could be quite rabid if some stranger tried to point out a number she might have missed. "I'll daub your hand", she would mutter, and that person would never try to help her again.

She was terrified of clowns and cows, which always seemed to sense her fear as they zeroed right in on her like a homing device whenever she saw them.

She loved to enter contests, many of them radio phone ins, and she enjoyed mystery shows like Matlock, Iron side and Murder She Wrote. Her favorite author was British mystery writer P.D James.

Also, there was another little obscure favorite of hers, a relatively unknown TV soap opera called Coronation Street!

She loved gadgets, and was the first to buy anything new on the market. The family owned one of the first color TV's, and she bought the largest, most awkward VCR you have ever seen, simply because it was the new sensation. At that time, there was only one video store in Edmonton, A1 Video rentals, on 111<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Rob used to carry around a cell phone with a body so big you had to have a shoulder strap, and the receiver was bigger than your hand. I wonder though, if it was one of the first on the market, who did he call?

She took to the computer like a fish out of water, and used it to email many of her life long friends like Kath Brooks in England, and her cousin Betty in Australia. She even had her own Facebook account!

Her later years were marked by poor health that, more than anything, were annoyances to her. Whenever something would knock her down, she would dust herself off, and, in her words, “get on with it.”

We all know that she loved to drive, and she was very proud to pass a road test and renew her license in her early 80’s. Unfortunately, her poor health prevented her from hitting the road again.

During these periods of physical rehabilitation, in keeping with her true spirit, she made new friends named Bea, Audrey and Victoria. She was a source of great strength to them, these women in their 80’s and 90’s. While at the Gerald Zetter center on the south side, she roomed with a woman who was a tournament Crib player. Joan got tired of losing all the time, so she sharpened her own skills to the point that it ceased to be fun for the rest of us to play against her. We not only got beaten, we were skunked and double skunked!

Her humor and sardonic wit never dulled throughout her life. She quit smoking when the packs went up to the outrageous price of 40 cents, her favorite saying was “keep your peckers up”, and the pole that was installed by her bed to assist with getting in and out was her “stripper pole”.

She loved to knit, and there are many in the world today who spent their infancy warm, snug and secure in one of her beautiful baby blankets. She knitted them with love by the dozen.

There are just so many things to say. How do you stop sharing the life and history of one who lived so vibrantly and richly? Of one who was so very dearly loved? I suppose you don’t. You can’t. That is what memories are for, and they come alive when spoken and shared with one another. We,

the family who cherished Joan Montgomery, and were in turn deeply cherished by her, would love it if you took some time to share your memories amongst yourselves, or here at the microphone for all to hear. We invite you to come up now.

#### Conclusion

We thank you so much for coming today. Your presence offers great comfort to all of us and we are so appreciative.

Please feel free to get up and mingle and enjoy some of the refreshments we have provided for you today.