
Phyllis Irene Cormack (nee Chamberlain)

A few Highlights of WWII.

I was born in Glasgow on 24 April 1924 being the youngest of six children. When World War II was declared in 1939 it wasn't long before my brothers and sisters were conscripted to the Armed Forces.

The difference in Britain, from Australia, was, all females on their 18th birthday had to register for war service. It was now 1942 and the war had been in progress for three years. This left the situation with no vacancies in the armed forces.

I was offered land army, bus conductress, or work of National importance. With five family members all on active duty I decided to stay at home to help my parents. I chose to do work of National importance.

I was sent to Slowe College in Shamrock Street, Glasgow, where I did eight weeks training as a Machine Operator. We turned brass and cast iron valves for the steam ships using both brass and cast iron.

We also used a micrometer, which was used to measure the final cut of the valve. This instrument measured very accurately. It was quite funny really as the women did this eight weeks training, but the young men had to serve a five-year apprenticeship!

However, as the boys were mostly all serving their country, the girls were the next best thing. After the eight weeks training the Government found us suitable employment.

I started work in Dawson & Downie in North Elgin Street, Clydbank and travelled daily to work by bus. This allowed me to stay at home with my parents. I enjoyed the work and I was there for more than two years when I left to get married on July 8th 1944.

I met my husband at this factory where I worked. My first child, Phyllis Irene Cormack was born on 4 June 1946 and my son Kenneth Gordon on 10 January 1948.

In 1948 it was then, the Government set the migration in progress. My husband was very keen to come to Australia. With my blessing and approval, he sailed on the S.S. Cameronia on September 28th 1948. My son was only 10 months old and my daughter seventeen months old.

My husband came to Australia first as due to the housing shortage in Australia they were unable to give us a house. This was the case in most countries after the war, there was no money.

This is as far as I can go with my story, as I hope to write a book on the next fifty one years in Australia, as I didn't get here with my two children till 1954. I am almost 81 years old.