

# Mary Dover

and

Her contributions to Alberta

By

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## **Introduction**

There are many Albertans who have changed the way we live, think, and act day-to-day. They have made us safer in many ways. There are so many people I could mention, but I chose to write about Mary Dover, granddaughter of James F. Macleod, female role model, and brave contributor to World War II.

## **Meet-and-Greet**

It was a cool October morning, in 1963, leaves blowing lazily outside my window. I bolted upright in my bed. I remembered that day was the day of our class field trip to a real general's house! And I was running late! I did my morning routine and hurried out the door, but not without my lucky Mary Dover photo. I barely made it to the schoolhouse. My shirt was very rumpled. I really hoped my teacher would not notice, but that was not important. My classmates were already lining up for the bus.

Some hours later, we arrived at the house. It looked like a typical 1960s home on the outside. It was no different inside either. Ranch style, decorated with bright, flashy colours, shag carpets in the living room and large sectionals. "Stay together everyone," my teacher warned. "Our special tour guide will be here in a moment". Ignoring this, I wandered off, hoping to find something interesting. Luckily, after a few minutes, I discovered a small room with the door slightly ajar. It did not seem like anyone was inside, so I went in. It was a quaint little room with a sofa to the side and a table against a wall, with papers placed very neatly. It looked normal enough. But out of the corner of my eye, I spotted a journal, not very well hidden under some documents. Being the curious child that I am, I opened it to check it out. It read:

## **My Biography**

*Born on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1905, the same day Alberta joined confederation, I was born into what's best described as "Albertan royalty". But I didn't really care about that. I never really embraced fame but to serve, though I did have my share of it when I became queen at the Banff winter carnival and also landed the role of a stunt rider in the movie "His Destiny", one of the first Hollywood films that were filmed in Calgary. After that, I married Melville Dover, an auto executive. We travelled all southeast Asia and had a child in Ceylon named David. Sadly, we had to stop travelling because of World War II. I moved back to Calgary with my son while my husband went to fight overseas. I didn't want to sit and sew or cook while the world was fighting a war, so I got into volunteer work as a recruiting officer for the Canadian Women's Army Corps (CWAC). In 1942, it finally became an official militia corps and I served during the blitz, getting promoted to Lieutenant Colonel commanding the training base in Kitchener, Ontario...*

That was as far as I got because a loud, female voice startled me. "What, in the name of Macleod are you doing here?!" She yelled, making me jump. Her hair, graying, was tied into a bun at the back of her head. Her face, which looked like it wasn't used to being angry, was twisted into a failed attempt at a grimace. She was dressed in a plaid blue and white button-down shirt and tan Capri pants. I was about to respond when I realized she looked familiar. I pulled out my lucky Mary Dover picture -a perfect match! "It's you" I whispered. "It's you," I said, louder "You are Mary Dover!" "Yes, child," she replied calmly, "now please tell me why you're in my room and not with your class" I froze. How was I going to explain that? "Um..." I started. She cuts me off "You know what? Just be quick about why you are here before your teacher knows you are missing ". Dejected, I turned to go, but I called out "Wait!". She swivelled her head around. I could see the bags under her eyes. "What?" she asked sternly. "I didn't get to finish your biography, maybe you can tell me more" I replied. She softened, "You don't give up do you?" She said, grinning. I smiled back. She sat on the sofa and patted the spot beside her, telling me to sit. We talked for probably a few minutes, but it felt like hours. She told me that after being promoted to lieutenant colonel, she led multiple programs during her service. She has won many awards including "Order of the British Empire" for her military service, the "Order of Canada", and an "Honorary Doctorate" from the University of Calgary. When she retired, she ran for a seat in the government, she became an alderman, and after that, she ran for the liberals in 1947. A preservationist who has inspired countless women to pursue their dreams and achieve great things. Personally, Mary Dover has

inspired and encouraged me to put in as much effort and love into my passions and help my community, as she did in the military. For example, when I was in grade 5, I would help my classmates with math which was a contribution to my class community. Also, in my religious community, I chose to lead the junior choir in an international performance which benefited my church community. In the future, I wish to donate money and my time to a non-profit organization as a contribution to the community. I realize that I can strive to accomplish leadership that would shape society. Her ambition to make a change even though she had everything she wanted shows that hard work pays off in any and every situation. She was a change-maker, an embodiment of humility, bravery, tenacity, integrity and so much more. She is who every Canadian should strive to be.

#### **References:**

<http://albertachampions.org/Champions/mary-dover-1905-1994/>

<https://changemakerbios.weebly.com/mary-doverby-taryn.html>

