

**AUSTRALIAN WWII WAR BRIDES  
IN AMERICA:  
THEIR MEMORIES AND EXPERIENCES**

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This thesis is dedicated to 15,000 Australian WWII war brides  
of American servicemen, especially those who generously  
shared their stories and made this study possible.

## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis is the first in-depth study of the experiences of Australian WWII war brides of American servicemen who went to live in post-war America. By drawing on the oral testimony of 60 of these women, their narrated memories create a rich archive which allows this cohort to articulate their individual wartime experiences and to place them within the context of the national wartime arena where their voices have not previously been heard.

This study examines the power of public perceptions during wartime, and challenges the gendered myths and stereotypes relating to young women who married American servicemen. These women were thought to have married hastily before embarking on an adventurous journey to an exciting future in a new land. In extracting evidence from recorded interviews, this thesis reveals the stark realities the Australian war brides faced when they decided to marry an American serviceman, and clearly demonstrates how the experiences of this particular group of women differed greatly from the contemporary stereotypes.

The archive created for this study shows the diversity of this cohort, and reveals how their migration experience differed from that of other war brides and other female immigrants to America. The war brides' testimony uncovers the motivations which influenced their decisions to become US citizens, and the thesis examines their resourcefulness and pro-active approach in dealing with this, and many other challenges they faced, both in Australia and in America. The war brides' maintenance of strong links with Australia over a sixty-year period shows an enduring attachment to their families and the land of their birth.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>List of Appendices</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>List of Photographs</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>List of Abbreviations</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Meeting and falling in love: myths and romance</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Chapter 2: Red tape</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>Chapter 3: ‘Ladies in waiting’: the long wait to join husbands and fiancés</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>Chapter 4: Sailing to America</b>	<b>134</b>
<b>Chapter 5: Arrival in America</b>	<b>169</b>
<b>Chapter 6: Living in America – immigrants in a new land</b>	<b>208</b>
<b>Chapter 7: Links with Australia</b>	<b>243</b>
<b>Chapter 8: US citizenship for Australian WWII War Brides</b>	<b>279</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>313</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>319</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>340</b>

## LIST OF APPENDICES

	Page No.
<b>APPENDIX 1: Australian WWII war brides who participated in this study</b>	<b>319</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2: Profile of war brides</b>	<b>324</b>
<b>APPENDIX 3A: Questionnaire</b>	<b>327</b>
<b>APPENDIX 3B: Consent form</b>	<b>334</b>
<b>APPENDIX 4A: Map of Australia showing original locations of WWII War Bride Participants</b>	<b>335</b>
<b>APPENDIX 4B: Map showing state distribution of participants in this study</b>	<b>336</b>
<b>APPENDIX 4C: Map showing distribution of all members of The WWII War Brides' Association at 2 April, 2009</b>	<b>337</b>
<b>APPENDIX 4D: List of us states, abbreviations and capitals</b>	<b>338</b>
<b>APPENDIX 5: Marriage and divorce rates &amp; ex-nuptial births</b>	<b>339</b>

# LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS and ILLUSTRATIONS \*

**Frontispiece:** Shirley June NICHOLLS and Robert Leslie NORTON on their wedding day, at St Stephens, Sydney, on 11 August, 1943.

## Introduction

No. 1 – Childhood in the twenties and thirties

BETWEEN PAGES  
3 and 4

## Chapter 1 – Meeting and Falling in Love

No. 2 – *GI War Brides, June 1954*

48 and 49

No. 3 – Dancing with Americans

50 and 51

No. 4 – ‘*The Dugout*’

51 and 52

No. 5 – Australian Women Volunteers

“ “ “

No. 6 – Romance in wartime

55 and 56

No. 7 – Women’s contribution to the war effort

62 and 63

No. 8 – Meeting and falling in love

70 and 71

## Chapter 2 – Red Tape

No. 9 – Permission to marry

84 and 85

No. 10 – Bridal fashions in wartime

92 and 93

No. 11 – ‘A glorious wedding

93 and 94

No. 12 – Traditional white weddings’

96 and 97

No. 13 – Married in America

101 and 102

## Chapter 3 – Ladies in Waiting

No.14 – Australian war brides waiting for passage on a ship

107 and 108

No.15 – ‘Supply line cut’

108 and 109

No.16 – Off to the USA

121 and 122

## Chapter 4 – Sailing to America

No. 17 – Saying farewell

149 and 150

No. 18 – Mothers and babies on board Bride Ships

152 and 153

No. 19 – Sea voyage to America

154 and 155

No. 20 – ‘Bride Ship’ manifest

163 and 164

No. 21 – Time for Reflection

166 and 167

## Chapter 5 – Arrival in America

No. 22 – America at last!

170 and 171

No. 23 – Travel by train in America

175 and 176

## Chapter 6 – Living in America

No. 24 – Living in America - early years

223 and 224

No. 25 – Facilitating learning and community involvement

228 and 229

No. 26 – Settled in America

234 and 235

## Chapter 7 – Links with Australia

No. 27 – Revisiting Australia in later years

253 and 254

No. 28 – Magazines and journals

257 and 258

No. 29 – Visits to Australia

264 and 265

No. 30 – Mementos and exhibits

270 and 271

No. 31 – War Bride Reunions

274 and 275

No. 32– Australian WWII war brides meet in different locations

277 and 278

## Chapter 8 – US Citizenship for Australian War Brides

No. 33 – Citizenship

308 and 309

No. 34 – Tribute to Australian WWII War Brides, 24 April 2007.

309 and 310

No. 35 – Australian WWII War Brides at Australian Embassy, 24 April 2007.

310 and 311

\*[Photographs have been taken by the author or received from war brides, with permission to reproduce images. Otherwise an acknowledgment of the source is noted in the caption.]



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AMF</b>	<b>Australian Military Forces</b>
<b>APO</b>	<b>Army Post Office</b>
<b>ARC</b>	<b>American Red Cross</b>
<b>ARCNA</b>	<b>Australian Red Cross National Archives</b>
<b>ARCS</b>	<b>Australian Red Cross Society</b>
<b>AWAS</b>	<b>Australian Women's Army Service</b>
<b>AWM</b>	<b>Australian War Memorial</b>
<b>CPO</b>	<b>Chief Petty Officer</b>
<b>GI</b>	<b>General or Government Issue</b>
<b>NA</b>	<b>The National Archives, London</b>
<b>NAA</b>	<b>National Archives of Australia</b>
<b>NARA</b>	<b>National Archives and Record Administration (US)</b>
<b>NSW</b>	<b>New South Wales</b>
<b>US</b>	<b>United States</b>
<b>USAT</b>	<b>United States Army Transport</b>
<b>USN</b>	<b>United States Navy</b>
<b>USSO (USO)</b>	<b>United States Service Organization</b>
<b>VAD</b>	<b>Voluntary Aid Detachment</b>
<b>WAACS</b>	<b>Women's Auxiliary Army Corp Services</b>
<b>WAAFS</b>	<b>Women's Australian Air Force Services</b>
<b>WAAFS</b>	<b>Women's Auxiliary Air Force Services</b>
<b>WRANS</b>	<b>Women's Royal Australian Navy Services</b>
<b>WWIWBWA</b>	<b>WWII War Brides Association</b>