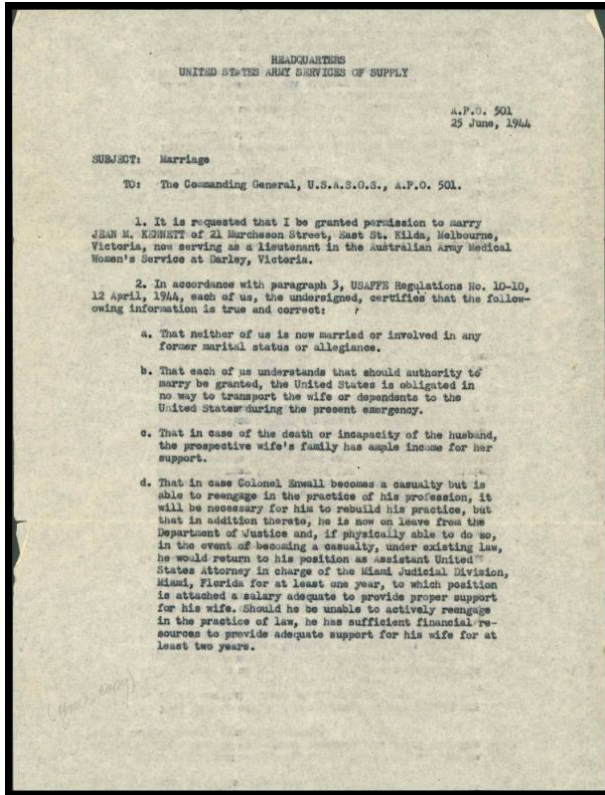


Basic Detail Report



ANMS0148[023]

Title

Letter to Commanding General, United States Army Services of Supply, requesting permission for Hayford Enwall to marry Jean Kennett

Date

25 June 1944

Name

Letter

History

Jean Mavis Kennett (1912 – 1990) met and married American Colonel Hayford Enwall (1905 – 1993) in 1944 while she was serving as a Lieutenant in the Australian Army Medical Women's Service. The AAMWS developed out of voluntary medical organisations such as the VADs

(Voluntary Aid Detachments). Jean Kennett was one of some 8,500 Australian women who served in the AAMWS in WW2, working alongside army nursing sisters in hospitals. During her time as a member of the AAMWS Jean posed for respected war artist Napier Waller. The sketch that Waller took of Jean was published in The Australasian (December 5, 1942) and used in a wartime recruitment poster that read: 'Do a worthwhile job / Join the Australian Army Medical Women's Service' (see ANMS0148[001]). Jean's husband Colonel Hayford Enwall worked a barrister and assistant US district attorney in Florida in the years before the outbreak of war. As a reserve Army officer Enwall was called to active duty in 1941 and sent immediately to Australia, serving there and in New Guinea and the Philippines for three and a half years. In the Army Enwall worked as the Chief Legal Officer of the US Army Services of Supply. During his time in Australia, Enwall was involved as prosecutor in the highly publicised 'Leonski' case. Edward Leonski was an American soldier who, while stationed in Melbourne, strangled and murdered three Australian women. In the press the deaths became known as the 'Brownout Murders', referring to the unpopular wartime practice of reduced street lighting in Melbourne. The case made headlines around the country and marked the end of a 'honeymoon' period for American forces stationed in Australia during WW2. Around the time of the murders some 150,000 American servicemen were based in Australia, and tensions were high due to disagreements between Australian and US forces over issues such as pay rates (the Americans earned more), food rations, women and race relations. Unusually, Leonski was tried in Australia by a United States Courts Martial where he was declared sane and found guilty on 17 July. It was the first time that any person had been tried in Australia by a military tribunal for a crime which violated civil law and also the first time a citizen of another country had been tried under the laws of his own country. Jean Kennett and Hayford Enwall were married on 25th August 1944 at Christ Church, South Yarra. In 1946, at the end of the

war, Jean left Australia on the bride ship MONTEREY to meet her husband and begin their life together in Florida. Jean's experience is representative of the 12,000 - 15,000 Australian women who married American servicemen during WW2. Some migrated and lived in the USA, while others returned to Australia in the years following the war, with or without their husbands. These women often encountered public scrutiny and disapproval for their decision to marry with many Australians, specifically men, resentful of Americans 'taking their wives'. For many women, American servicemen filled the vacuum created by Australian men stationed overseas. During the campaign in the Pacific thousands of American troops were stationed in Australia, at a time when many of Australia's young men were fighting in Europe and the Middle East.