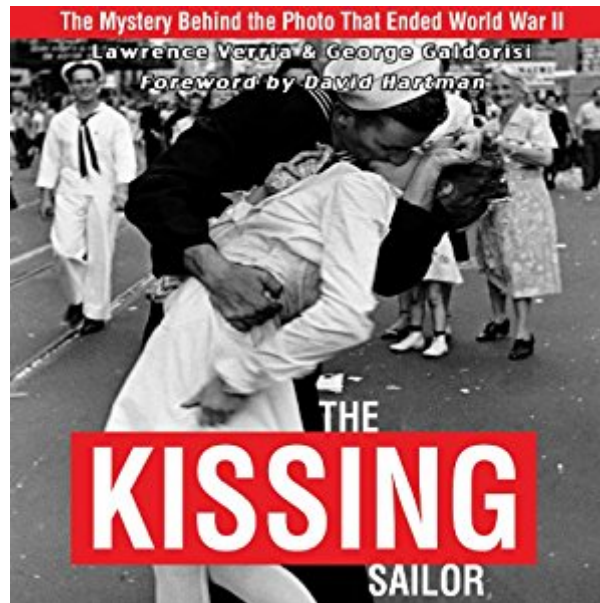




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Kissing Sailor: The Mystery Behind The Photo That Ended WWII



Synopsis

On August 14, 1945, Alfred Eisenstaedt took a picture of a sailor kissing a nurse in Times Square, minutes after they heard of Japan's surrender to the United States. Two weeks later LIFE magazine published that image. It became one of the most famous WWII photographs in history (and the most celebrated photograph ever published in the world's dominant photo-journal), a cherished reminder of what it felt like for the war to finally be over. Everyone who saw the picture wanted to know more about the nurse and sailor, but Eisenstaedt had no information and a search for the mysterious couple's identity took on a dimension of its own. In 1979 Eisenstaedt thought he had found the long-lost nurse. And as far as almost everyone could determine, he had. For the next 30 years Edith Shain was known as the woman in the photo of V-J Day, 1945, Times Square. In 1980 Life attempted to determine the sailor's identity. Many aging warriors stepped forward with claims, and experts weighed in to support one candidate over another. Chaos ensued. For almost two decades Lawrence Verria and George Galdorisi were intrigued by the controversy surrounding the identity of the two principals in Eisenstaedt's most famous photograph and collected evidence that began to shed light on this mystery. Unraveling years of misinformation and controversy, their findings propelled one claimant's case far ahead of the others and, at the same time, dethroned the supposed kissed nurse when another candidate's claim proved more credible. With this book, the authors solve the 67-year-old mystery by providing irrefutable proof to identify the couple in Eisenstaedt's photo. It is the first time the whole truth behind the celebrated picture has been revealed. The authors also bring to light the couple's and the photographer's brushes with death that nearly prevented their famous spontaneous Times Square meeting in the first place. The sailor, part of Bull Halsey's famous task force, survived the deadly typhoon that took the lives of hundreds of other sailors. The nurse, an Austrian Jew who lost her mother and father in the Holocaust, barely managed to escape to the United States. Eisenstaedt, a World War I German soldier, was nearly killed at Flanders.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a wonderful history piece of U.S. and World War II history and brings so many memories back from my childhood during World War II. The authors show outstanding skill. I hate to have to put the put the book down. Well researched, expertly written, a real treasure. Should have been at the top of the best seller list. I don't know when I've enjoyed reading anything this much!
Outstanding. I love it!

My older daughter and I both read this book and had the same reaction. There was some interesting information in the beginning of the book, but then it just went on and on a became redundant and boring. My daughter stopped reading at page 92 because it was too boring for her. I have a horrible habit that once I start a book, I must finish it, so I did. The interesting material could have be condensed down into about 50 pages - the rest was boring or redundant.

First of all this book gives great tribute to our WWII veterans. It was a fun read and very thought provoking. I enjoyed all the effort put into finding the Kissing Sailor and the Nurse. It was quite a journey to find them. I would recommend this book to anyone.....you just may learn something.

Okay, so I'm a little biased... Mr. Verria was my US History teacher last year, and we got the whole synopsis of the book in one epic day where he presented it like the most amazing detective story ever. I swear he's on par with Sherlock Holmes. The book is very well written. So many people hate historically-based books, but everyone should give this book a chance. It is so artfully written and totally draws the reader in. I have seen one review complaining about the "disorganization," but I wouldn't call it that. I would call that a well-written detective story. Isn't the whole point of the book to discover the identities of the sailor and nurse? The book is written in such a style that recreates Verria's journey through the history and photographs and interviews and stories. It recreates the helter-skelter way in which he came to his discovery. It isn't disorganized; it's artfully woven so as to

leave the reader curiously following the author's tale to the very end. Who ever thought a book about a photograph could be so interesting? Sure, I suppose those of us in his US history classes weren't surprised, after he had devoted an entire hour-and-a-half class to a presentation that "just scratched the surface," as he said. And he was right. There is so much more to the story than who's who in that famous picture. I don't normally like historical books, but I can't recommend this book enough. And it's not just because I'm biased.

Gift. They seem to like it.

I interviewed George Mendonsa, the REAL kissing sailor, for the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress and he gave me a kiss on the cheek. He has mellowed in the past 60+ years. This book is great and really proves his identity.

First, let me tell you I really like WWII stories and mysteries. I thought I was getting both when I bought this book. I was mistaken. I'd always seen the Sailor Kissing the Nurse WWII photo over the years... had even seen the beautiful statue at the harbor in San Diego and loved that... but this book was real letdown. What could've been a good short story... perhaps in a history magazine... was stretched out to the point to where I skipped entire chapters. NOT worth the time OR money!

Finding who this iconic couple really were makes for a very interesting read.

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