



Media Release

Embassy of Australia
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Historic gathering of Australian World War II war brides in Washington DC.

On April 24 and 25, the Embassy of Australia will host what is believed to be the largest gathering of Australian World War II war brides since the 1940s. Around 90 Australian war brides and more than 200 of their relatives will gather in Washington DC to mark ANZAC Day – Australia’s most significant day of national commemoration.

Between 1942 and 1946, up to 15,000 Australian women married or became engaged to U.S. servicemen stationed in Australia. They subsequently traveled, mostly by ship, to be with their partners in the United States, where the vast majority settled and raised families. These war brides represent the largest group of Australian women ever to live in the United States — and the largest group ever to leave Australia permanently. They now have over 40,000 children and grandchildren.

“We are proud to be able to pay tribute to this unique group of Australia-Americans and are very excited that so many are able to participate in the Embassy’s ANZAC Day events,” Australia’s Ambassador to the United States, Dennis Richardson, said.

ANZAC Day – April 25 – marks the anniversary of the dawn landing at Gallipoli, Turkey, by allied forces in 1915. It was the first major military campaign in which Australian and New Zealand forces operated as an identifiable national entity. ANZAC Day is a day of great significance for all Australians. It is marked by a public holiday, dawn services and marches by veterans and or their descendants in all cities and towns – however small – across the country. ANZAC day honors all Australians who have fought for their country and all those, including our allies, who have died in conflict.

This month, also marks 90 years of Australia and the United States being allies in conflict. Australian and U.S. soldiers joined together as allies on April 6, 1917, and we have fought together ever since – in WWII, Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf War, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Activities on the April 24 and 25 will include a lecture by war brides historian Robyn Arrowsmith, a formal reception hosted by the Ambassador at the Embassy of Australia, a traditional dawn service at the Korean War Memorial, and a commemoration service at the Washington National Cathedral featuring Australian soprano Rachelle Durkin, and Australian virtuoso violinist Holly Piccoli.

For a more detailed schedule of ANZAC Day events, or to arrange to speak with one of the war brides, please contact Megan Doughty at (202) 797-3237.