

# Parer romance proves that journeys still end in lovers meeting

## Ace war photographer marries on leave from the Admiralties

The wedding of ace Australian cameraman Damien Parer to brown-haired Maria Carter, of Sydney, is a romantic proof that journeys, even in the hazards of war, do still end in lovers meeting.

Without any idea that they were travelling toward their own wedding, Damien and Maria each planned a journey in the third week of March. Maria was in Canberra, Damien in the Admiralty Islands.

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Damien was in the Admiralty Islands as war cameraman for Paramount News, with the aim of the infantry landing safely secured.

Then, Maria decided that she must be at home in Wollombong, Sydney, on Friday, March 11, because it was her husband's birthday, and as she had extended weekend leave.

Damien, at the beginning of that same week, realised that his film equipment needed recharging and decided on a flying trip to Canberra.

Damien intended to be in this country only long enough to get the camera.

It was in Sydney when he learned that Maria Carter—formerly christened Elizabeth Miller—would be arriving on the Canberra train that night.

When Maria got out of the train, Damien was waiting for her on the platform, and as she walked toward him, he thought of the first time he ever saw her—nothing in mind but a pleasant, pre-war suburban street in Sydney.

She had the story the day before

"I was with my uncle Joseph, and he saw this young man coming in, about 22—I looked at him, and in the way you do when you are very young, thought 'Oh, how nice!'"

"Then he came up to me, and I heard my uncle calling 'Hello, Damien,' and he stopped, and we were introduced.

"Joseph had had him at a house party, a few days before."

It is one of those comradely jokes between Damien and Maria now, however, that he really took his first good look at her through a camera in 1940.

Damien, who had come to Sydney in 1939 from his previous temporary Melbourne home, was there simply watching his wife's ambition—in his film cameraman.

He had got his first job, a very minor one, with Charles Gair as an "untrained."

### Grecian profile

So Maria thought he would be a good person to take her photographs.

"Damien was developing the print, and took a very long look at it, then remarked, 'It very good Grecian profile, if I may say so!'"

Between that day and the meeting on Central Railway Station on March 11, 1944, intervened the war, separation, bitter heartings, and separations again. The romance was temporary then.



MR. AND MRS. DAMIEN PARER, leaving the church after their wedding. Wife of the ace war film photographer was Mrs. Maria Carter.

and Damien and Maria, when they talked about it, emphatically refused to go into long, sentimental details.

"I met her at the train on Thursday," Damien freely brought the story very to Maria.

"The next day we were engaged—and we got the ring."

The following few days were a briefs of preparations.

But the most important thing was a cable and a telegram.

A cable was sent to Damien by his New York assignment editor, Ted Drake, asking for a week's leave from home.

The telegram was sent by Maria to the Sydney—Canberra Department in Canberra, asking if her weekend-off could be extended to 10 days.

When the wedding day came, Maria's leave had been granted—but Damien, his cable unanswered, might still have to leave Australia again at the end of the week.

Damien and Maria were married with a Special Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral Church, Bridge Street, North Sydney.

When they entered the church it was the sun was shining. The bride wore a Wedgwood-blue silk jacket suit, with cherry-red velvet caplet, veils on the shoulder, which she had bought ten days before in a shop in Sydney.

The bridegroom wore his uniform—which he had managed to get back from the officers' only at 1.10 pm, the day before.

But Damien could not be free of time, even on his own wedding day. He did indeed, Chester Wilton, A.M.C. War Correspondent, was finishing the manuscript for the Australian

film, "Home of Heroes," in which a study of Damien's war heroisms were used.

When he re-joined Damien he took an omen of the new camera, Mary—and the job was also shared, as they had hoped, on the wedding eve.

Maria, however, was happily able about it.

Indeed, Maria is very proud of having picked out Damien's wife in a room of the Cape Government building, where she came out and appear.

Damien Parer's "Home of Heroes" as presented by Channel 7, and the 1944 Academy Award for being the best documentary short film of the year.