

A red book cover with a pink fabric ribbon bookmark on the left side. A white rectangular label is pasted on the cover, containing the text "HOW I WISH TO BE REMEMBERED" written in blue ink.

HOW I
WISH
TO BE
REMEMBERED

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No. 5. In 1941 I was gazetted Honorary Junior
 Commander (Captain) ATS.

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I would like to be remembered for being the
only Lady Welfare Officer in Bedfordshire.

I was gazetted an Honorary (unpaid) Captain
(Junior Commander) in the ATS and looked after 20,000
troops, a great many in secret Air Force Stations.

The women in the Services in Bedfordshire
were often depressed and miserable because they were
allowed only twelve coupons a year for ordinary clothing,
which was taken up mainly in stockings and handkerchiefs.

Then I discovered a loop-hole in the rules
regarding Handicrafts and that I could buy any amount
of pretty materials for about two shillings a yard from
Peter Jones without coupons.

The girls measured it up on the floor of the Welfare Office and made themselves cami-knickers. Every Senior Officer agreed that I had raised morale.

Next the women came to me in tears saying that they could not be married in their uniforms.

I therefore went to the War Office to ask if they could be allowed some extra coupons for their Bridal gowns.

The answer was:

"Don't you know there's a war on?"

However, I said to the rather fierce-looking women Generals:

"I think perhaps I could get the gowns without coupons."

"You must have," one remarked sarcastically, "a touching faith in human nature."

To prove my point I advertised in 'The Lady' and was delighted when I was able to buy two beautiful wedding-gowns complete with veils and wreaths, one costing seven pounds, the other eight.

I sent them to the War Office with my compliments.

They replied that they would create a pool of Wedding-Gowns for Service brides - if I would provide them.

By the end of the war I had bought over a thousand white wedding-gowns which could be borrowed for a pound for the day, not only for the A.T.S. but also for the WAAF and the WRENS.

I can still remember the delight on the women's faces when they knew they could be married in white and feel they were 'a real bride'.

When in 1989 I was the first person ever to be twice the subject of "THIS IS YOUR LIFE", a bride appeared who had been married in one of my Bridal Gowns. She has been very happy with her husband for 40 years.

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No 6 In 1974 I was made a Dame of Grace of The Order of St. John of Jerusalem.