



The Man Behind The Iconic Kiss

by Dustin Durrett

Glenn Edward McDuffie is best known as the sailor kissing the nurse in Times Square on August 14, 1945. This moment, captured by Alfred Eisenstaedt's iconic photograph, became a symbol of the end of World War II and was featured in Life magazine's Victory Celebrations edition. Born in 1927, McDuffie demonstrated an early determination to serve his country. In 1942, at just 15 years old, he forged his mother's signature to enlist in the U.S. Navy.

His service during World War II placed him at the heart of one of the most defining moments in American history. Following his military service, McDuffie built a life away from the battlefield. He worked as a mail carrier and pursued his passion for baseball as a semiprofessional player. In 1960, he relocated to Houston, Texas, where he remained until 2009 before moving to the Dallas area to be closer to his daughter.

After the iconic photograph's publication with nurse Greta Zimmer Friedman, numerous men stepped forward, claiming to be the sailor in the embrace. It wasn't until 1980 that McDuffie came forward with his own claim. However, it took nearly three decades for his identity to be confirmed. In 2007, a forensic artist in Houston conducted an extensive examination of the bone structures of all 11 claimants and conclusively identified McDuffie as the man in the historic image.

Embracing his place in history, McDuffie remained active in speaking engagements and public appearances, sharing his story and experiences. His final public appearance took place on February 21, 2014. McDuffie passed away on March 9, 2014 at the age of 86 following a heart attack and was laid to rest at DFW National Cemetery, leaving behind an enduring legacy tied to one of the most celebrated photographs of the 20th century.

Alfred Eisenstaedt's Photograph



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