

Summary Article: **Kerr, Deborah**

From *Chambers Biographical Dictionary*

originally

Deborah Jane Kerr-Trimmer

married name

Viertel

1921-2007

Scottish actress

Born in Helensburgh, Strathclyde, she trained as a dancer, before deciding to take up acting. Work on stage was followed by roles in *Major Barbara* (1941), and other British films, notably *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* (1943) and *Black Narcissus* (1947). Moving to Hollywood, she was almost invariably cast in ladylike roles, and played numerous governesses and nuns, sensationally straying from her established image to play an adulterous wife in *From Here to Eternity* (1953) for which she received an Academy Award nomination. She received further nominations for *Edward My Son* (1949), *The King and I* (1956), *Heaven Knows Mr Allison* (1957), *Separate Tables* (1958) and *The Sundowners* (1960). She retired from the screen in 1969 but continued to appear on the stage in such plays as *The Day After the Fair* (1972), *Seascape* (1975), *Candida* (1977) and *The Corn Is Green* (1985). She appeared on television in *Witness for the Prosecution* (1982) and *Reunion At Fairborough* (1985) and made a one-off return to the cinema in *The Assam Garden* (1985). In 1994 she received an Academy Honorary Award and in 1998 was appointed a CBE.

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