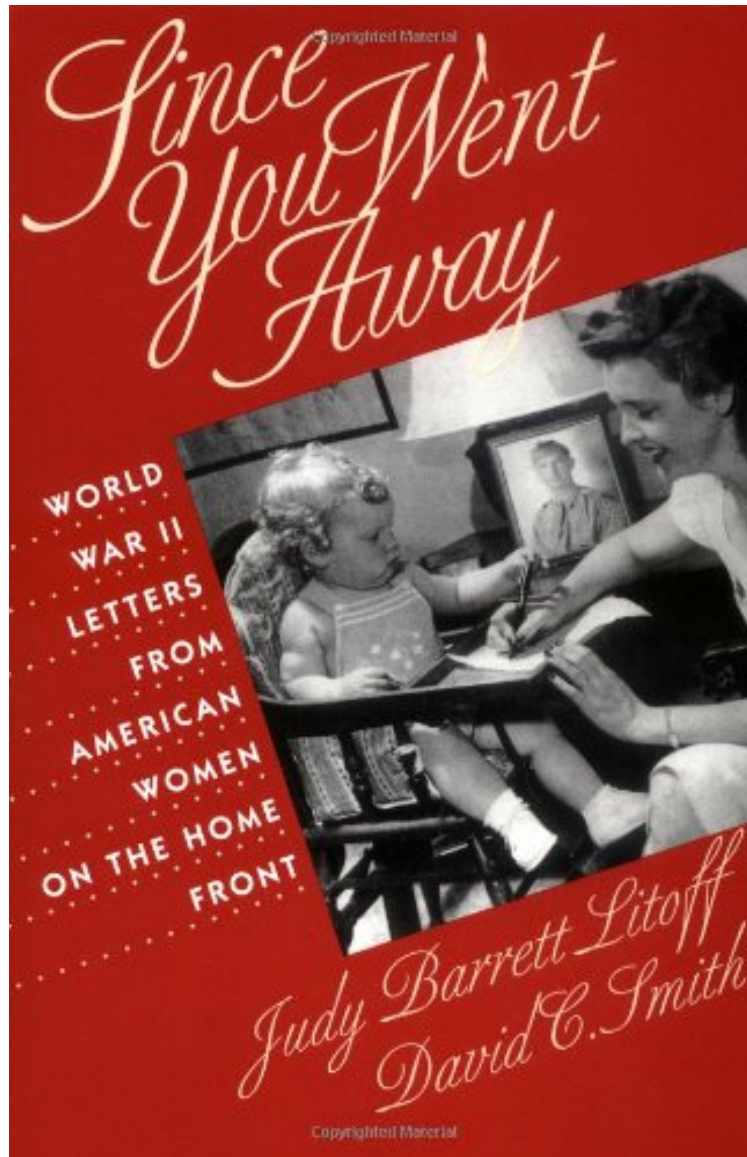


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Since You Went Away: World War II Letters from American Women on the Home Front

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From Brand: University Press of Kansas : Since You Went Away: World War II Letters from American Women on the Home Front before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Since You Went Away: World War II Letters from American Women on the Home Front:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Big Hit! By AJI bought this book for my daughter to read on a trip

overseas, hoping it would be a nice distraction on the long trip. She absolutely loves it!. She feels like she gets to know the "characters" both from the author's description of the individuals and their relationships as well as the letter that are included in the book. She has an interest in this era, so it was a perfect choice; a book she could pick up and put down easily but also become engrossed in when she had the time. 10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. A marvelous glimpse at "the home front" during WWII. By doc peterson Compiling 400 letters, Litoff and Smith give readers a very personal look at what World War II was like for American women at home. Reading them is an almost voyeuristic experience, as these women share their thoughts, struggles, personal victories and tragedies. The book is divided topcially rather than chronologically, giving the reader an opportunity to focus in on one aspect of the war. For example, "I Took a War Job" focuses exclusively on the liberating and empowering experience women felt in working in the defense industry (and making a man's wages.) The most touching and strongest chapter, "The Price of Victory" dealt with the loss of a loved one - husbands, brothers, lovers. The letters are from all social classes, races and parts of the country, providing a representative view, and speaking to the commonality of experiences. It is a remarkable resource, a fantastic read, and a rich collection of primary documents. For the professional historian, I highly recommend it. For the lay reader, it is as insightful as it is fascinating. Recommended. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Interesting but not spectacular. By Customer TN It seemed to be a jumble of letters by different couples. I was hoping it was a series of letters between just a few couples where you could actually follow and see their hardships and feelings develop over a time frame. These are more snippets of letters on specific topics such as the infamous Dear John letter, for example. It was interesting look into our history on the home front during WWII but didn't have the flow I was hoping for.

"Last night Mel and I were talking about some of the adjustments we'll have to make to our husbands' return. I must admit I'm not exactly the same girl you left-I'm twice as independent as I used to be and to top it off, I sometimes think I've become 'hard as nails'. . . . Also--more and more I've been living exactly as I want to . . . I do as I damn please." [These tough words from the wife of a soldier show that World War II changed much more than just international politics.] "From a fascinating collection of letters, filled with wonderfully distinctive human stories, Judy Barrett Litoff and David C. Smith have shpaed a rare and brilliant book that transports the reader back in time to an unforgettable era."--Doris Kearns Goodwin, author of *The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys* and *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream*. "This is a wonderful volume, full of admirable women struggling in a difficult situation, doing their best for their families and their country. Ah, the memories it brings back! Highly recommended for those who lived through the war, and for those who want to understand it."--Stephen E. Ambrose, author of *Eisenhower and D-Day, June 6, 1944* "Offering a remarkable view into the lives of ordinary women during wartime, this book will enlighten and catch at the hearts of general readers and cause historians to reconsider how women experienced World War II."--Susan M. Hartmann, author of *The Home Front and Beyond*. "From among 25,000 of an estimated six billion letters sent overseas during World War II, Litoff and Smith have culled and skillfully edited a sampling by 400 American women. These letters, starting with one to a seaman wounded at Pearl Harbor, are compelling documents of home-front life in varied ethnic, cultural, and financial milieus. Tragic, touching, and funny, the correspondence is full of prosaic news and gossip about jobs and neighbors, along with accounts of births and intimate allusions to love-making. The stress of separation was intensified for women whose loved ones were hospitalized, or imprisoned as either conscientious objectors or security risks. Some women wrote General MacArthur and others for news of missing men or to obtain details of their deaths. Many of these heartrending documents also express acceptance-and even pride-in the sacrifices required by war."--Publishers Weekly. "Other scholars of WW II have published letters written home by servicemen, but this is the first collection sampling the letters written by sisters, sweethearts, wives, and mothers, saved by thousands of servicemen. Chapters are organized around themes that were important to these women: courtship, marriage, motherhood, work, sacrifices. . . . What women tell readers in these letters about their concerns and their wartime feelings will cause historians [readers?] to rethink what has been written about the homefront."--Choice. "Despite the popular appeal of Rosie the Riveter, nine out of ten mothers with children under six were not in the labor force, which helps to account for the vast outpouring of mail from the home front to 'our boys' in the European and Pacific theaters. Some couples wrote every day for four years. This is the rich historic documentation that the authors have drawn upon to create a panoramic pastiche of indefatigable, energetic, patriotic female letter writers in the war years. . . . One is struck by the hard-headed practicality of many of the letters-stories of plucky, sometimes even grumpy, coping. There are letters of growing independence, with strong and at times explicit indication that the boyfriend or husband will be facing a very different woman upon his return from the one he 'knew' when he disembarked for his own, often terrible, venture. .

From Publishers Weekly From among 25,000 of an estimated six billion letters sent overseas during World War II, history professors Litoff (Bryant College, Rhode Island) and Smith (University of Maine) have culled and skillfully edited a sampling by 400 American women. These letters, starting with one to a seaman wounded at Pearl Harbor, are compelling documents of home-front life in varied ethnic, cultural and financial milieus. Tragic, touching and funny,

the correspondence is full of prosaic news and gossip about jobs and neighbors, along with accounts of births and intimate allusions to love-making. The stress of separation was intensified for women whose loved ones were hospitalized, or imprisoned as either conscientious objectors or security risks. Some women wrote General MacArthur and others for news of missing men or to obtain details of their deaths. Many of these heartrending documents also express acceptance--and even pride--in the sacrifices required by war. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal "They made it possible for me to retain my sanity in an insane world," wrote one pilot about the letters his wife sent him throughout World War II. The letters contained in this collection explain the soldier's sentiments. Whether full of passionate longing for a missing sweetheart or merely detailing domestic gossip, the letters offer a rich introduction to how American women experienced the war. Since military authorities ordered soldiers not to keep any letters written them by their loved ones, the authors have done a magnificent service in obtaining letters that soldiers either surreptitiously hid or whose authors copied them before sending them on. The "G.I." generation seems to be growing aware of its mortality, and two couple's collections have appeared recently (Robert and James Eastons's *Love and War*, LJ 4/15/91; and Charles and Barbara Woodall's *Miss You*, LJ 4/1/590). Because of its inclusiveness and sensitivity, however, most libraries will want to buy this.- Ann H. Sullivan, Tompkins Cortland Community Coll., Dryden, N.Y. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. "From a fascinating collection of letters, filled with wonderfully distinctive human stories, Judy Barrett Litoff and David C. Smith have shaped a rare and brilliant book that transports the reader back in time to an unforgettable era."—Doris Kearns Goodwin, author of *The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys* and *Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream* "This is a wonderful volume, full of admirable women struggling in a difficult situation, doing their best for their families and their country. Ah, the memories it brings back! Highly recommended for those who lived through the war, and for those who want to understand it."—Stephen E. Ambrose, author of *Eisenhower* and *D-Day, June 6, 1944* "Offering a remarkable view into the lives of ordinary women during wartime, this book will enlighten and catch at the hearts of general readers and cause historians to reconsider how women experienced World War II."—Susan M. Hartmann, author of *The Home Front and Beyond* "One is struck by the hard-headed practicality of many of the letters—stories of plucky, sometimes even grumpy, coping. There are letters of growing independence, with strong and at times explicit indication that the boyfriend or husband will be facing a very different woman upon his return. . . . Every war leaves mothers with broken hearts. What this volume most remarkably demonstrates is just how prepared American women on the home front were for that dread eventuality."—Jean Bethke Elshtain in the *Journal of American History* "Sometimes a single book can make a historic difference. It was the pen of Dickens, of course, that put Britain's sweatshops out of business. It was a single book that brought slavery into focus. But no book of the several which tried has yet convinced us of the absurdity and futility of war. With enough readers, this one might."—Paul Harvey, Paul Harvey News, WBZ Radio, Boston.