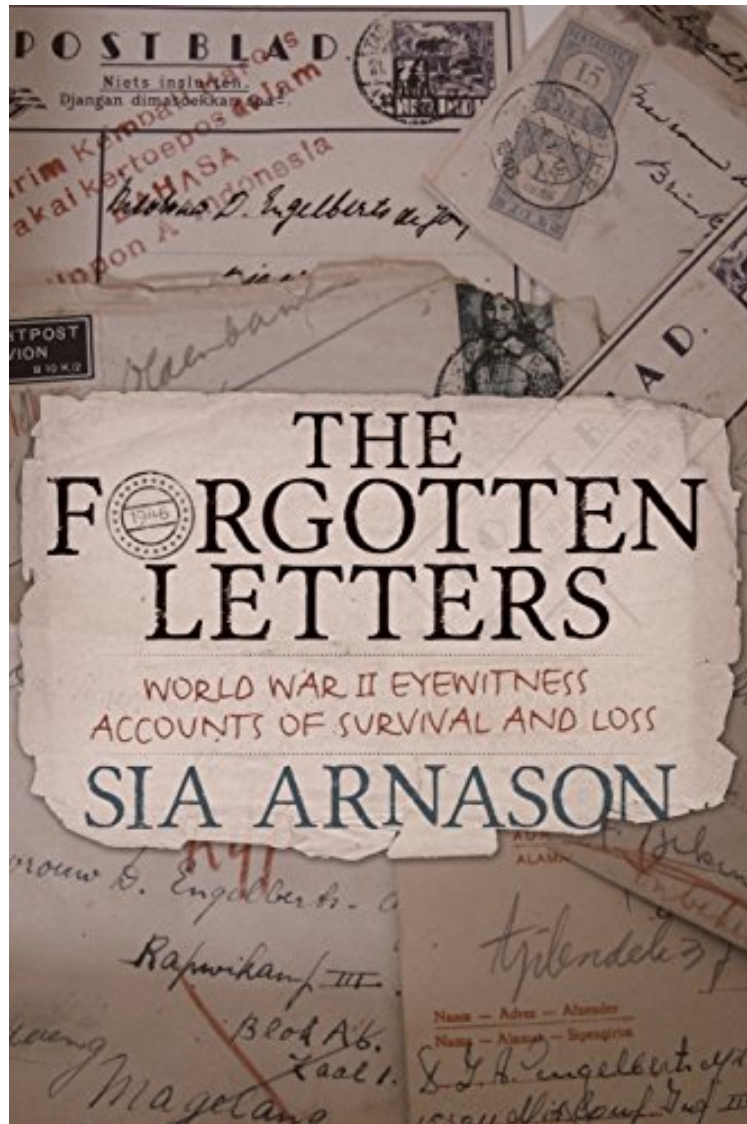


The Forgotten Letters: World War II Eyewitness Accounts of Survival and Loss

Sia Arnason

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from such a personal perspective. Enlightening, thank you!

Long-forgotten, dusty cardboard boxes reveal an amazing legacy: letters from World War II that tell stories of courage and fear, survival and loss. The letters, mainly written by the author's mother Didi and grandmother-- separated by war -- tell of the war years in the East Indies and in the Netherlands, time in an interment camp during the Japanese occupation in Java and life in Holland during the German occupation. Although the letters tell of loss, such as the death of the author's father (a Japanese prisoner of war) who dies in a bombing raid by our Allies in 1944, the memoir includes missives of hope, written as the author's mother waits for her new love Jan, a man who had been her best friend before the war and who she will soon marry, as well as stories of the lighter moments of living in camp. The beautifully descriptive narrative by author Sia Arnason and letter excerpts chronicle an amazing tale of her newly married parents' life in the Dutch colonies, the rigors of preparing for a worldwide war, a harrowing attempt to escape the enemy by venturing into the jungle, and living in POW and interment camps. When the war ends, the struggle to survive continues as Indonesia faces its own violent struggles to become an independent nation. Sia's words create a moving and unforgettable account of the harsh realities of war as seen through the eyes of those who soldiered through it. Sia Arnason arrived in the United States as a twenty-two year old interested in yet more challenges in a new country. She was a guide in the United Nations for a few years and then earned a Masters in Social Work. She was employed for more than 25 years at the Brookdale Center on Aging of Hunter College in New York City. Sia's mother, Didi, remained in Holland and lived to be 95. Sia Arnason resides near the Berkshire Mountains with her husband Jon and five cats.