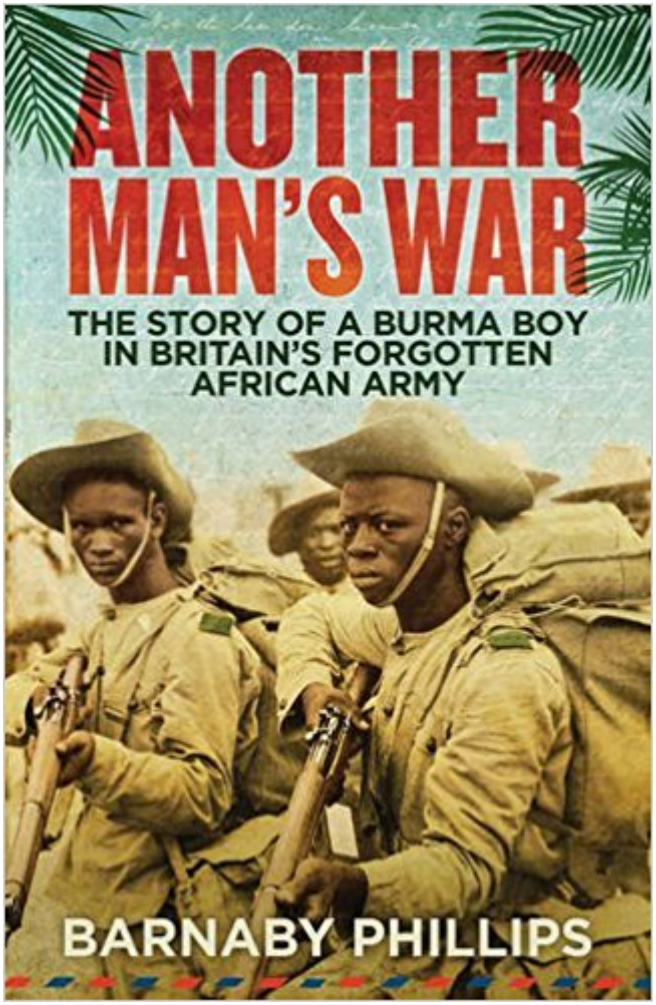
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Another Man's War: The Story Of A Burma Boy In Britain's Forgotten African Army



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Synopsis

At age 16 Isaac Fadoyebo ran away from his West African village to join the British Army. The Second World War was raging, and Nigeria's colonial masters were desperate to find men to defend India and the Empire. He was taking breakfast deep in the Burmese jungle when the Japanese ambushed his unit and left him for dead. With the help of a Muslim family he survived, but in every other way Isaac was forgotten, all the more so as Nigeria struggled to come to terms with its newfound independence. Yet Isaac could not forget the debt he owed to the Burmese family, now trapped in a simmering sectarian conflict. In Another Man's War, veteran foreign correspondent Barnaby Phillips shares the gripping, unforgettable story of a Burma Boy in the Second World War and the legacy of colonial rule.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

'Barnaby Phillips has uncovered a tale which touches the world in every sense. The story is a deceptively simple one, of a lanky boy who runs away from his dusty Nigerian village to join the British Army and is left for dead thousands of miles from home in the Burmese jungle. The miraculous sheltering and survival of Isaac Fadoyebo not only make an irresistible human drama. They also illustrate the terrifying global swirl of the conflict. Told with warmth and colour, this account of a forgotten soldier in a forgotten army in a forgotten war will not itself be easily forgotten.' -- Ferdinand Mount, author of The New Few 'Dramatic, moving, often shocking, painstakingly researched and brilliantly told, Another Man's War is a story the world should hear, not just so that West Africans may know the part they played in the Burma campaign and in the Second World War,

but so that Britain and the world knows it too.' -- Aminatta Forna, author of The Hired Man and The Memory of Love 'Another Man's War is a testament to the kindness of strangers and the power of memory. Meticulous research is matched by profound human emotion.' -- Lindsey Hilsum, International Editor, Channel 4 News 'A rich story, richly told. An inspiring instance of common human deceny, handled brilliantly by a writer whose research is as dogged as his touch is fine.' -- Tim Butcher, author of Blood River and Chasing the Devil 'The hard-won victories of the Second World War define British identity to an extraordinary degree. Phillips illuminates vividly, through a very human story, how that ostensible struggle between democracy and fascism was experienced and interpreted by a large majority of the world's population. Another Man's War admirably complicates and deepens our sense of history.' -- Pankaj Mishra, author of From the Ruins of Empire 'An enthralling human story of soldiers whose sacrifice has been too long neglected... This book deserves to become a classic of war history.' -- Fergal Keane, BBC Foreign Correspondent and author of Road of Bones 'Brimming with facts, anecdotes and pathos, this page-turner is a must-read for anyone interested in military history and Nigeria's transformation in the mid-twentieth century.' -- Noo Saro-Wiwa, author of Looking for Transwonderland: Travels in Nigeria 'Two young West African soldiers shipped halfway across the world in 1943 to fight for the British in Burma find themselves abandoned - wounded, starving and sick - in the unmapped jungle of the Arakan. Their astonishing adventures are reconstructed here in gripping detail... A real-life thriller with sobering implications for the British reader - but I found it impossible to put down.' -- Hilary Spurling, author of Burying the Bones 'Excellent... such a gripping and valuable contribution to the literature... fascinating' African Arguments 'Impressive... Phillips is a confident narrator... a gripping military history which brings African witnesses to the dying days of the British Empire out of the shadows' TLS 'Remarkable...spellbinding' Mail on Sunday 'a heroic tale of survival' Cotswold Life

Barnaby Phillips is a senior correspondent for Al Jazeera English, which he joined at the time of its launch in 2006. His documentary Burma Boy won the prestigious CINE Golden Eagle Award. Previously, he was a correspondent for the BBC for 15 years, reporting primarily from Africa. Phillips grew up in Kenya and now lives in London.

This book tells at least two stories, each wondrous and moving. In the first, Isaac, a young Nigerian, joins the British Army in World War Two. Frustrated by his inability to continue his education, he ends up fighting for the Empire half a world away as a medic. He is injured and left for dead after his first contact with the enemy: the Japanese in the jungles of Burma. But he is saved by the kindness

of a Muslim villager, Shuyiman. He risks his own life and that of his family by hiding him, and a fellow African, in his home. Long months later, the British re-take the area. Isaac goes home to a family who thinks he is ghost when he re-appears. After the celebration, he gets that education, a career as a civil servant, finds a wife and has many daughters whose success is a constant joy. But there's a hole in his life: now in his eighties, Isaac would like to thank Shuyiman. However he has no idea how to find him in modern-day Myanmar, a military dictatorship.And so story "two" begins. It's the story of the humble narrator, who has hidden himself thus far. Barnaby Phillips discovered Isaac's dusty memoirs in the Imperial War Museum. Phillips was a long-time Africa correspondent for the BBC, and is fascinated by the story. In the British public's imagination, the World War Two was fought by white men and women: the English, Scots, and Welsh, and maybe a Canadian and Aussie or two, until the Americans and Russians were attacked and joined in. But Burma, in reality, was fought largely by Africans and Indians. Phillips seeks out, finds and befriends Isaac. And, with his reporting skills, thirst to find the truth, and need to figure out a mystery, he takes up the old man's mission.These two stories - quests almost mythical in their structure - end in self-discovery. There is a meaning in Isaac's story bigger than the War, the Empire, than racial and religious conflict. It starts with the miracle of the kindness of strangers.But what makes this book unforgettable, what makes you want to recommend it to friends, is the fine writing and scholarship. The book builds with a novelistic rhythm, and the bread crumbs that keep you wandering through the jungles of Burma with and streets of Lagos with our heroes, are the sharp sketches of wartime history and society, and re-considerations of what World War Two should mean to us all.Phillips' self-effacing tone comes in sharp contrast to so many books written by journalists, who often make even the most momentous world events about themselves. Not so for this reporter. His is a story of a global Everyman who overcame the odds. A man to whom the author brings closure, and the feeling of a debt repaid. Old Isaac is also a man Philipps helps overcome, in the act of writing this book, the official History that wanted an African village boy and his fellow soldiers forgotten.

For me it was magically refreshing to read the story of an African, a Nigerian soldier, in this war. The book had a special significance to me because my Grandfather was General C G (Kit) Woolner who commanded the 81st Division. As I child we'd beg him to take my sister and I for walks in the woods near Sissinghurst Castle in Kent and play at hiding from snd stalking Japs.

The action scenes were compelling. The background socio cultural and military history of the conflict and it's impact-- while important to know-- we're told in a dry and rather tedious fashion,

disconnected from the action.

An intense story about a miraculous series of unlikely incidents that changed many lives in far flung places. Told in gritty detail that leaves the reader sad but in wonder of the bonds that tie human kind

A high school friend, Barnaby Philips, wrote this book and I was excited to read it long before it became availableÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Â| it has proven to be even better than anticipated. Amazingly well researched and beautifully written, it is an enthralling historic novel that is one of the best books I have read for a while. And though I may be biased since I know Barnaby from school days, I have to HIGHLY recommend this book.

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