



Chiselbury Publishing

Advance Information

A Soldier's Wife

Margaret Ford

Description

Margaret Ford lived a long and inspirational life. From humble beginnings in a terraced house in Blackburn in the 1920s, she has witnessed nine decades of change and challenge in contemporary Britain.

She has also travelled the world and been part of an era that is now gone: army life in Britain's colonies, the end of a mighty empire, and the tensions of the Cold War.

After a chance meeting in Blackburn, a whirlwind romance and an avalanche of impassioned letters, Margaret married Jim Ford in 1947.

Jim was a British Army veteran of one of the Second World War's most ferocious campaigns, against the Japanese in Burma, and fought at the legendary Battle of Imphal.

For six decades, Margaret became an army wife in Africa, Asia, and Europe. But she also forged her own career in finance and voluntary service.

Their marriage was full of fun and frolics but ended in sadness when Jim came back from service in Northern Ireland a broken man.

Biography

She had been described in 2019 as the world's oldest debut author after penning her first book at the age of 93. Written when she was 96, her second book tells the full story of her long and fascinating life. From humble beginnings in a terraced house in Blackburn in the 1920s, she has witnessed nine decades of change and challenge in contemporary Britain and its once mighty Empire.

As a teenage girl during the Second World War, she had to come to terms with the tragic death of several boyfriends. She watched them join up and leave to fight for King and Country, only to be told that they wouldn't be coming home.

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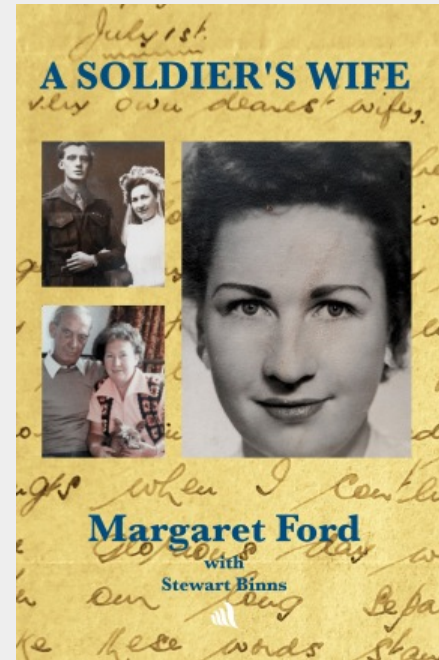
She then travelled the world and became part of an era that is now long gone: army life in Britain's colonies, the end of an Empire, upon which the sun never set, and the disturbing tensions of the Cold War.

Jim's many letters home to Margaret offer us a detailed account of the trials and tribulations faced by its soldiers as Britain's power waned.

Then, for six decades, Margaret became an army wife in Africa, Asia, and Europe. She was in Egypt in the early 1950s, where she faced not only the heat and dust of British Army quarters but got caught up in the Suez Emergency. She witnessed the bitter conflict at close quarters, when, more than once, she had to duck as bullets flew overhead.

Margaret then returned home to Blighty when Jim was posted to Korea, which was only just coming to terms with the anguish of the tragedy of the Korean War. Jim wrote hundreds of letters, each of them a melancholy mixture of love, loneliness and misery.

Fortunately, Jim was then posted to Singapore where Margaret was able to join him. She lived in Singapore when it was very different from the modern city of today and where, briefly, she enjoyed the good life of a Brit abroad.



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Unusually for an army wife, Margaret also had her own career throughout her life. She became a trusted accounts specialist for several companies, opened bookshops and ran leisure facilities for military personnel, and later in life worked extensively as a charity volunteer, especially for the Women's Royal Voluntary Service.

When Margaret and Jim finally settled in England, life wasn't always happy. Margaret had to face the trauma of a failed pregnancy. Then, worst of all, with just twenty-four hours' notice, Jim was sent to Northern Ireland in the middle of the Troubles.

Why Jim was sent to Belfast, and what happened to him there, to this day, remains a mystery to Margaret. What she does know is that Jim came back a broken man. So, a marriage that had been full of fun and frolics ended in sadness, with Jim dying slowly in mental and physical distress.

In 2019 Margaret wrote her first book, the bestselling "*A Daughter's Choice: A True Story of Hardship, Heartache and Hope*", published by Pan Macmillan. She was heralded at the time as the becoming the world's oldest debut author after penning her first book at the age of 93. It was described by the Daily Mail as "achingly poignant... intensely passionate" and The Herald "poignant and heart-warming".

Margaret Ford died on 27th February 2024