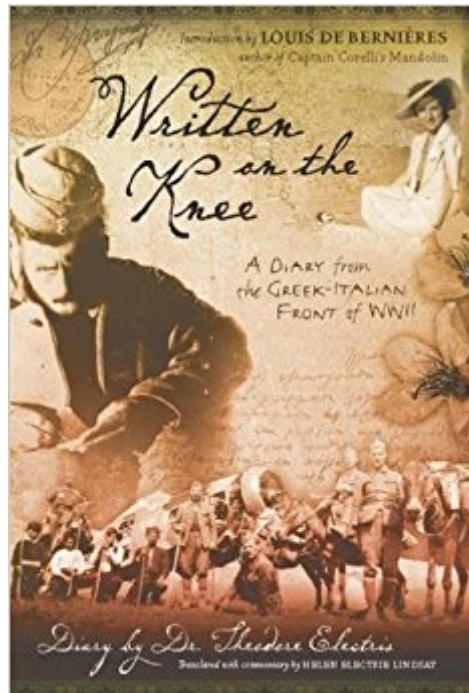




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# Written On The Knee: A Diary From The Greek-Italian Front Of WWII



## Synopsis

During the Greek-Italian conflict of World War II, Dr. Theodore Electris, newly married and idealistic, was called up to the Greek-Italian front in the remote mountains of Albania. Homesick, hungry and desperately missing his young wife, Chrysoula, he kept an intimate journal to preserve his experiences for her. Translated by his daughter, Helen Electrie Lindsay, Electris's entries and letters come together in *Written on the Knee*. Fully illustrated and accompanied by supporting reference material, the collection serves as both an authentic historical document of Greek involvement in WWII and a story of love, separation and family ties threatened and strengthened by war. Often overlooked in the scope of WWII, Greece's six-month conflict with Mussolini's forces played a pivotal role in the war's outcome. The small country's fierce resistance against the Italians delayed Hitler's move into the Soviet Union, which many historians believe turned the war in favor of the Allies. From Dr. Electris's first entry to his last, *Written on the Knee* captures the true story of love and war during a crucial time in modern history.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gold Medal Winner of the 2012 Branson Stars & Flags Book Award in the autobiography/memoir category "In these pages the warm heart of a dead man beats again, his passions are re-lived, his pleasures, hardships and irritations unfold for us as if they were in the present." —Louis de Berni res, from his introduction "Romantic and endearing, simple and unassuming, *Written on the Knee* is a beautiful memory of a period that should not be forgotten." —Compass Book Ratings (formerly Squeaky Clean Reads) —fascinating —a must read for history fans. •

&#151; Breeni Books"...this is a love story, albeit, told in the context of a terrible war...From the pen of a most cultured and humane individual with a great eye for the wonders of nature, Written on the Knee deserves a wide readership..." &#151; Athens News"Written on the Knee offers an inside view of a campaign that became a watchword for Greek courage." &#151; Athens Plus

This is not a book about war. It is more of a romance-not what i was looking for.

At this time I am editing my wife's grandfather's diary, written when he was a Major in the 9th Alipini Regiment, during the Italian/Greek war. Same time, same mountains, shelling each other!! This book is a must read to understand an almost forgotten segment of the World War2. It is very possible that today we are free men because of the heroic actions of both Greeks and Italians during this conflict!!

Written on the Knee is a fascinating look at life on the Greek side of WWII when Greece confronted Italy. Helen Lindsay's father, a physician, kept a daily diary of his experiences and his desire to return to his new bride fills many entries. She has wrapped the diary in the context of the war and what happened after his return giving him credit as the author.

good

"Written on the Knee" is a war diary with related letters, photos, and maps included. There are also sections giving a brief history of the time before, during, and after the diary to put the diary in context. It's an interesting, personal look at what WWII was like on the Greek-Italian front. Since it's a diary, he often writes a lot about some aspects (like the travel, finding food, finding ways to send letters, interpersonal relations, air raids) and less on others (actual patients and wounds treated and the fighting going on). After the diary section of the book, the editor has included information about the overall war movements on this front which helped put the doctor's experiences in context. I understand why it was put afterward--so the reader could share in the not knowing the big picture that the doctor experienced--but some readers might find it more useful to read it first. The nice black and white photos show the doctor at the various camps and villages and help show the people and places that he describes in his diary. One of the included maps shows the doctor's travels with the dates he wrote about entering the town or area so the reader can track his movement. There are other maps showing the lines of war and such, but there was so much information on the black-and-white maps that I had a hard time figuring out where the doctor was and how the map

related to what he was describing. People used to these types of maps will probably find them useful, though. I'd recommend this book to WWII history buffs and to those of Greek descent who are interested in that nation's history. This review is also posted at [Different Time, Different Place](#) book reviews.

Whenever I read about a major event in history, I wonder what the regular people involved thought about it. For example, there are plenty of documents explaining what Roosevelt, Churchill, and even Hitler thought about World War II. But what about all the ordinary people who found themselves in the middle of a war unlike anything they had seen before? Those ordinary people were simply swept up into the tide of history. For the most part, their stories are ignored or relegated to sidebar status. Fortunately, individual accounts are growing in popularity. *Written on the Knee* provides one man's perspective from the Greek-Italian front of World War II. *Written on the Knee* is the World War II diary of Dr. Theodore Electris. The diary opens with the mobilization of Dr. Electris's unit. He was drafted soon after his marriage to his beloved Chrysoula. Dr. Electris's diary covers his time at the front as well as his journey home. Most of the diary is devoted to his daily activities. Dr. Electris always had numerous patients. Unfortunately, the medical staff was quite small, and the number of wounded was large. All of the soldiers struggled with the shortages of food and supplies, as well as the challenge of fighting in unfamiliar terrain. The diary does not focus on the details of particular battles. Instead, it covers the daily life among the troops. Obviously, they were not always involved in battles. Much of their time was spent in transit or in camp. When the unit is in camp, it is easy to forget that they are fighting a war. The men settle into daily routines and form friendships. Dr. Electris does a beautiful job of describing his unit's activities, both on and off the battlefield. The diary is very detailed. It also includes various photographs that Dr. Electris took along the way. The photos help the reader attach faces to the names mentioned throughout the diary. The addition of the photos is a nice touch since this is such a personal account of the war. It really feels as if the reader is there with Dr. Electris. As a soldier and a physician, Dr. Electris faced an internal conflict. He was a physician first, but he was also a soldier. On some levels, Dr. Electris seems to be a reluctant soldier, yet he wants to protect his country. He fulfills his duty by tending the wounded. One thing that I found very interesting was the number of civilians he also treated. As word spread throughout the villages the unit occupied, civilians also asked Dr. Electris for help. At times, it sounds as though he was running a civilian practice and fulfilling his military duty. Dr. Electris's love for his country and his profession appear throughout the diary. They are among the driving forces of his life. Dr. Electris's diary ends with his return home during the Nazi occupation of Greece, but that

is not the end of *Written on the Knee*. Dr. Electris's daughter, Helen Electrie Lindsay, includes a wonderful Epilogue and an extremely informative appendix. The epilogue includes details of the family's life during and after the Nazi occupation. There is also an amazing family story regarding how Chrysoula got her house back from the Nazis. The appendix provides valuable information regarding Greece's involvement in World War II. The appendix also contains some great political cartoons from the war. *Written on the Knee* is a fascinating look at the Greek-Italian front of World War II. It offers one man's perspective of an often overlooked portion of history. This is a must-read for history fans as well those who simply like snapshots from history.

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