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**Kit Harington, Keira Knightley, Toby Jones and Emeli Sandé Explore Their Families’ Pasts in Season 2 of *My Grandparents’ War***

*Four-part World War II history-genealogy series returns on Tuesdays, April 11-May 2 on PBS (*[*check local listings*](http://www.pbs.org/tv_schedules/)*),* [*pbs.org*](http://www.pbs.org/) *and the* [*PBS App*](https://www.pbs.org/pbs-video-app/)

Returning for a second season of compelling personal stories set during some of the most dramatic moments of World War II, ***My Grandparents’ War***takes a fascinating journey into the past to understand the extraordinary impact of global conflict on the families of four British international stars. Kit Harington (*Game of Thrones*), Keira Knightley (*Atonement, Pride and Prejudice*), Toby Jones (*Captain America*) and Emeli Sandé (“Next to Me,” “Our Version of Events”) each host an episode that explores their family’s unique stories. Discoveries are made and secrets revealed as they travel to historic locations — from the Scottish Highlands, all the way to Kenya and Zambia, where the British colonial wars were being fought — to retrace their grandparents’ footsteps during the events that changed their lives forever. ***My Grandparents’ War*** premieres Tuesdays, April 11-May 2, 2023, at 9 p.m. on PBS (check local listings), [pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org/) and the PBS App.

The four stars featured in Season 2 were mostly unfamiliar with their grandparents’ experiences during wartime. Some of their grandparents were instructed not to discuss what happened during their service; others remained silent, not wanting to revisit a painful past. Season 2 reveals that romance was often ignited in the dramatic circumstances of war, as couples met, fell in love and married in record time. Themes of courage, self-sacrifice and resilience emerge, as ordinary people caught up in the chaos of war continually rose to the challenge and accomplished extraordinary things.

**“Kit Harington”**

*Premieres Tuesday, April 11 at 9 p.m.*

Kit Harington, who has been cast as a soldier, a spy, and, in *Game of Thrones*, a warrior, discovers that his grandparents played comparable roles in their real lives during World War II.

His maternal grandparents, Mick and Pippa Catesby, fell in love during a bombing raid in a hospital where she was a nurse and he was a patient. Awarded a military cross for bravery, Captain Catesby never talked about his experiences.

Kit’s paternal grandparents, John and Lavender Harington, were stationed in the Caribbean, where they met and then married a few days later. John served in British Intelligence Services, keeping an eye on the Duke of Windsor, the former king of England and a Nazi sympathizer. Harington is delighted to learn author Ian Fleming was also serving in Jamaica at the time, and speculates that perhaps his grandfather might even have inspired the character of James Bond.

“I’m so proud of all four of my grandparents,” said Harington. “Across the globe, they put their lives on the line during World War II. There was a huge war effort on their part, what they risked. And they did it for a greater good for their country and for a cause.”

**“Keira Knightley”**

*Premieres Tuesday, April 18 at 9 p.m.*

Keira Knightley has acted in several films about World War II yet admits she never knew much about her grandparents’ wartime experiences. In this episode, she discovers her grandfather fought in some of the Navy’s deadliest battles and her grandmother played a secret role in the D-Day landings. But both were struck by tragedy as their brothers went missing in action.

Keira’s maternal grandfather, Mac, served on the *HMS Wolverine*, which was sent to fight the Germans after they invaded Norway. Although the British were defeated, the crew of the *Wolverine* rescued around 700 Irish Guards from a nearby sinking ship. In the summer of 1942, both Mac and Keira’s grandmother Jan worked in Greenock, Scotland, preparing for the arrival of some 1.5 million American forces. Keira learns that Jan was engaged in the efforts to secretly move troops in preparation for the D-Day landings, receiving praise from her superiors.

There was one story about Keira’s grandparents that had been passed down in her family. When Glasgow was hit by Nazi planes, Mac braved the bombs to make sure he wasn’t late for a date with Jan. “This is a generation of youth that were constantly exposed to violence and the prospect of death,” said Keira. “And yet, what they managed to do may be the most important thing there is. If you’ve got a date with a girl, you grab onto that. You grab onto the excitement of life and love and laughter. Even when there is death — maybe especially when there is death falling from the sky.”

**“Toby Jones”**

*Premieres Tuesday, April 25 at 9 p.m.*

Toby Jones uncovers the remarkable World War II stories of his maternal grandparents, Reggie and Dorki, whose love endured despite the trauma and hardships they faced. He learns about his grandmother’s dramatic escape from the Nazis in Northern France and solves the family mystery of how his grandfather was shot while fighting the Japanese.

Toby learns that Reggie joined the Royal Artillery as a gunner after Hitler invaded Poland. A performer, Dorki became part of the Entertainment National Service Association (ENSA) and traveled with a company of actors to Northern France to lift the spirits of British soldiers. On May 10, 1940, the Nazis invaded France. Thousands of British soldiers and hundreds of ENSA performers, including Dorki, were soon evacuated by the Royal Navy, departing as bombs fell.

In February 1942, Reggie left for India, now facing an invasion from the Japanese on the border with Burma. On March 8, 1944, the Indian Army, including Reggie, confronted 100,000 Japanese soldiers. Under siege for months, the 20th Indian Division finally prevailed, inflicting the biggest defeat the Japanese Army had ever suffered.

On the ship returning home, Reggie was explicitly instructed not to talk about his wartime experiences. Reggie and Dorki’s children and grandchildren knew little about their experiences until now.

**“Emeli Sandé**

*Premieres Tuesday, May 2 at 9 p.m.*

Award-winning singer-songwriter Emeli Sandé explores her grandparents’ remarkable stories, which span World War II, the Mau Mau insurgency in Kenya, and the fight for independence in Zambia. With grandparents split across fault lines, she faces a mix of emotions. “Both sets of my grandparents were involved in violent struggles in Africa,” she said. “One, tasked with upholding the British Empire. The other: trying to overthrow it.”

Emeli’s maternal grandfather Bob served in the British Army during World War II, while grandmother Betty joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service, the women’s Army. Just months after Bob returned home from Egypt in 1943, Bob met Betty, and they were married. In 1953, he was sent to Kenya to help quell an insurrection by the Mau Mau, a secret militia fighting to get their land back from the British. Her paternal grandfather, Saka Sandé, also became involved in the British colonial wars, fighting for independence against the apartheid regime in Zambia, then known as Northern Rhodesia. Saka, who worked in the copper mines that provided 70% of British copper, lived in crowded townships with other Black miners and made less than one-tenth of what white miners earned.

“I now understand how colonialism divided us,” said Emeli. “The racism it generated still exists today, but as my family has shown, there is a way to move forward together.”

***My Grandparents’ War*** is a production of Wonderhood Studios for Channel 4 Television, in association with The WNET Group. Presented by Kit Harington, Keira Knightley, Toby Jones and Emeli Sandé. Directed by Francis Hanly, Erica Gornall and Tom McCarthy. Executive Producers are Tom Anstiss and Samantha Anstiss. For The WNET Group: Lesley Norman is Executive Producer and Stephen Segaller is Executive-in-Charge.

Original production funding for Season Two of ***My Grandparents' War*** was provided, in part, by MyHeritage and PBS.

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**About The WNET Group**

[The WNET Group](http://wnet.org/) creates inspiring media content and meaningful experiences for diverse audiences nationwide. It is the community-supported home of New York’s [THIRTEEN](http://thirteen.org/) – America’s flagship PBS station – [WLIW21](http://wliw.org/), THIRTEEN PBSKids, WLIW World and Create; [NJ PBS](https://www.mynjpbs.org/), New Jersey’s statewide public television network; Long Island’s only NPR station WLIW-FM; [ALL ARTS](http://allarts.org/), the arts and culture media provider; newsroom [NJ Spotlight News;](https://www.njspotlightnews.org/) and FAST channels Arts TWG+ and PBS Nature. Through these channels and streaming platforms, The WNET Group brings arts, culture, education, news, documentary, entertainment and DIY programming to more than five million viewers each month. The WNET Group’s award-winning productions include signature PBS series ***Nature***, ***Great Performances***, ***American Masters*** and ***Amanpour and Company*** and trusted local news programs ***MetroFocus*** and ***NJ Spotlight News******with Briana Vannozzi***. Inspiring curiosity and nurturing dreams, The WNET Group’s award-winning Kids’ Media and Education team produces the PBS KIDS series ***Cyberchase***, interactive ***Mission US*** history games, and resources for families, teachers and caregivers. A leading nonprofit public media producer for more than 60 years, The WNET Group presents and distributes content that fosters lifelong learning, including multiplatform initiatives addressing poverty, jobs, economic opportunity, social justice, understanding and the environment. Through Passport, station members can stream new and archival programming anytime, anywhere. The WNET Group represents the best in public media. Join us.