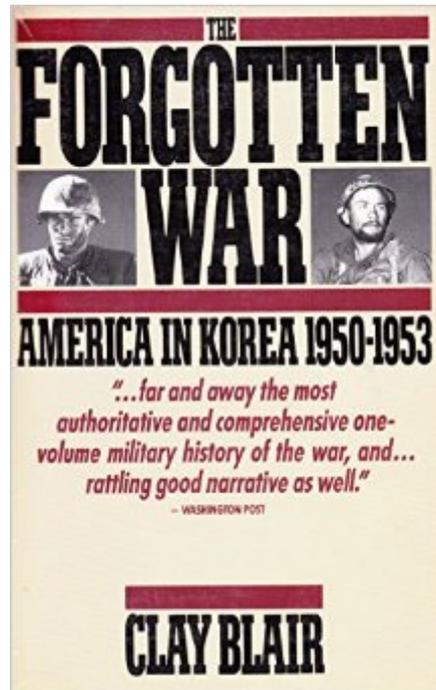


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The Forgotten War: America In Korea 1950-1953



Synopsis

Heralded as an imposing and important work when first published in 1987, this history of the Korean War offers a complete and detailed portrayal of the conflict. Clay Blair, a highly respected military writer, is credited with taking a close and blistering look at high-level defense policy and ground-level leadership of the U.S. Army. He supports his analysis with official records and interviews with participants as well as his own deep knowledge of Washington personalities and politics. Blair's book captures the intensity of the conflict through the eyes of senior officers, explaining defeats and victories from the perspective of the U.S. battalion, regiment, and division commanders responsible for the progress of the war. As a collective portrait of the American officer corps at war, the book is uniquely valuable. Highly critical of Gen. Douglas MacArthur's leadership during the period, Blair also takes President Truman to task for his misjudgments and occasionally faults the conduct of corps and division commanders while offering unstinting praise for Gen. Matthew Ridgway's turn around of a demoralized field army. This day-by-day, unit-by-unit account of what went on provides details unmatched in other books on the subject. 1152 pages. 128 photos. 12 line drawings. Paperback. 6 x 9 inches. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Forgotten War: America in Korea is an exhaustive study of command level combat in Korea. While the title claims to cover the war for 1950 thru its conclusion in 1953, in reality only perhaps 25 pages cover the last two years of the war. Blair states in his introduction that he was especially

interested in command level decisions, and the influence of West Pointers in specific. There is very little detail of 'soldier's stories' or any popular or oral history. To some degree, this renders the book a bit sterile although the combat descriptions, especially quite early in the conflict during the retreat to the Pusan perimeter, are thrilling. Further, every time a new commander is introduced, Blair gives a short biographical sketch. I found these redundant and annoying later on in the book. Further, Blair is not shy about criticizing political decisions behind the policy decisions. In particular, his treatment of Truman, many of Truman's political appointees, and MacArthur is scathing. To be fair, while Blair shows eventual Eighth Army commander and MacArthur's replacement, General Ridgeway, as a true hero, to the author's credit he does not refrain from criticizing Ridgeway for dangerously obstructionist behavior during the eventual peace talks. True or not, a lot of this criticism would be more effective had some attempt been made to give a 'man in the trench' perspective. Blair gives a lot of detail of Medal of Honor recipients, but not much besides that. The basic criticism of the book is that Korea was not a vital part of America's strategic design, and that the decision to intervene was done without thought to preparedness or ramifications. According to Blair, Truman resented, mistrusted and then gutted the military...

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