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The Forgotten War: America in Korea, 1950-1953

Clay Blair

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Clay Blair : The Forgotten War: America in Korea, 1950-1953 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Forgotten War: America in Korea, 1950-1953:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A necessary read but shouldn't be your only one on the subjectBy CampbellGuyA roller coaster of an effort. Blair's detailed retelling of battalion level combat in the first year+ of the conflict is exhaustive and provides the reader with quite a good understanding of the ebb and flow of action. This is not narrative history and the guys holding the guns make few appearances other than some of the Medal of Honor recipients. Blair's intent rather is to portray the command level decisions which helped define the nature of the conflict. In this he is only moderately successful at best. He clearly has a low opinion of many of the high-level players including Truman, Walker, and MacArthur. He also faults a great deal of the mid-level Army leadership, especially in the earlier parts of the conflict. Whilst many of those he criticizes do fail to hold up to close examination, there exists a certain air of shrillness to Blair's critiques that strongly suggests he has an axe to grind and is guilty of a rather skewed perspective. He also frequently lets Almond off the hook for his egregious failures as a person and a commander which is rather strange given Blair's willingness to skewer others. I will say that to his credit Blair's attitude seems to come from a sincere desire to protect the folks who had to pay the price for others poor decisions so it is not simply criticism for its own sake.I also have some issues with the maps as there are not enough of them and the ones provided frequently do not display the same depth of detail as his narrative. The book is huge, why not enhance it with another

10 or 12 pages of meaningful cartography? Overall this is a book you should read if you desire to develop a deep understanding of the Korean conflict but it should not be taken as a definitive account and should by no means be the only book you read. Pick up Halberstam and Millet to see some other perspectives as well. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A monumental history By KMcKay A monumental, meticulously researched and footnoted history that exposes the shocking failures of the Truman Administration--criminal, treasonous failures that almost destroyed the US military and our nation's ability to defend itself and our national interests. The Administration lied over and over to the American people about the Soviet threat, and even denied at first that South Korea had actually been invaded by a tough, disciplined, USSR-trained and -equipped, Red Chinese-supported NORK army in overwhelming force that swept away the pathetically armed and trained ROK constabulary force. After having publicly declared that Korea was irrelevant to US interests, Truman and his Defense Department threw away thousands of American lives in a disorganized, ill-supported, ill-equipped, piecemeal attempt to save South Korea that wasted green troops led by heroically competent and grossly incompetent officers. Ammo shortages, defective weapons that didn't fire, obsolete weapons that fail against enemy tanks, shortages of boots and uniforms, confusion at the top, conflicting orders, deceit by both the Truman Administration in DC and MacArthur in Japan. Blair writes in a crisp, fluid style that reads like a novel, putting the reader in the foxhole, looking down the barrel of a bazooka, sitting in a Washington conference room with senior officials, feeling the raw terror of facing a merciless enemy overrunning defenders, exhausted by tropical heat and sickened wading through night-soil-fertilized rice paddies, fleeing on frozen feet from a tsunami of enemy who bayonet the wounded left behind...it's raw, visceral reality. Critics of the War On Terror who scourge George Bush ought to read this book. All Americans ought to read this book. It is extremely relevant to today's issues and events. "Those who do not remember history are doomed to repeat it." Korea is a "forgotten war" only because of politics and a politician who insisted it wasn't a war, only a police action. It is not forgotten by those who fought and suffered and lost loved ones in this very brutal, crucial and unfinished war. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Unforgettable By Richard I. Pervo As usual, B. describes every action and stays close to the ground, battalion level and up. Everything and Everyone gets due attention. The author pays particular care to the black units and the prevalent racism in the U.S. Army. Korea is where integration began. Among the reputations that suffer are those of Harry Truman, Douglas MacArthur. and Ned Almond. Although he does not cover the home front, B. is attentive to the political milieu and its profound effect upon the war. An additional revelation was the poor approach to negotiations. Properly handled, they could have brought down the curtain in 1951. Ridgway, who did a splendid job with the Eighth army, was a hardline hawk in negotiating policy and gave his superiors almost as much trouble as did MacArthur.

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.

From Publishers Weekly Blair takes a close and blistering look at high-level defense policy and ground-level leadership of the U.S. Army in Korea from the opening of the war in 1950 through the first year the "pendulum period" before the final battle lines were drawn then summarizes the subsequent "talking war" period, which lasted for two years. That first year, the author amply demonstrates, was a ghastly ordeal for the Army, partly because of President Truman's untimely strip-down of the armed forces, and partly because of incompetent leadership in the field. No historian has been more critical of General Douglas MacArthur's leadership during this period than Blair is in these pages. He also faults corps and division commanders, especially General Edward Almond of X Corps. On the other hand, his admiration is unstinting for General Matthew Ridgway, who took over a demoralized field army and quickly turned it into a fighting force. Military buffs should not overlook this one. Blair collaborated with Omar Bradley on *A General's Life*. Photos. Military Book Club main selection; Literary Guild alternate. Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Deserves an important place in the historiography of the Korean War." -- *New Republic* "Military buffs should not overlook this one." -- *Publishers Weekly* "We are in debt to Clay Blair for this book." -- *New York Times Book Review* This masterwork of history combines battlefield-level and command-level action with domestic and international politics. Using official Army records and hundreds of interviews, best-selling military

historian Clay Blair tells the whole story of the Korean conflict.