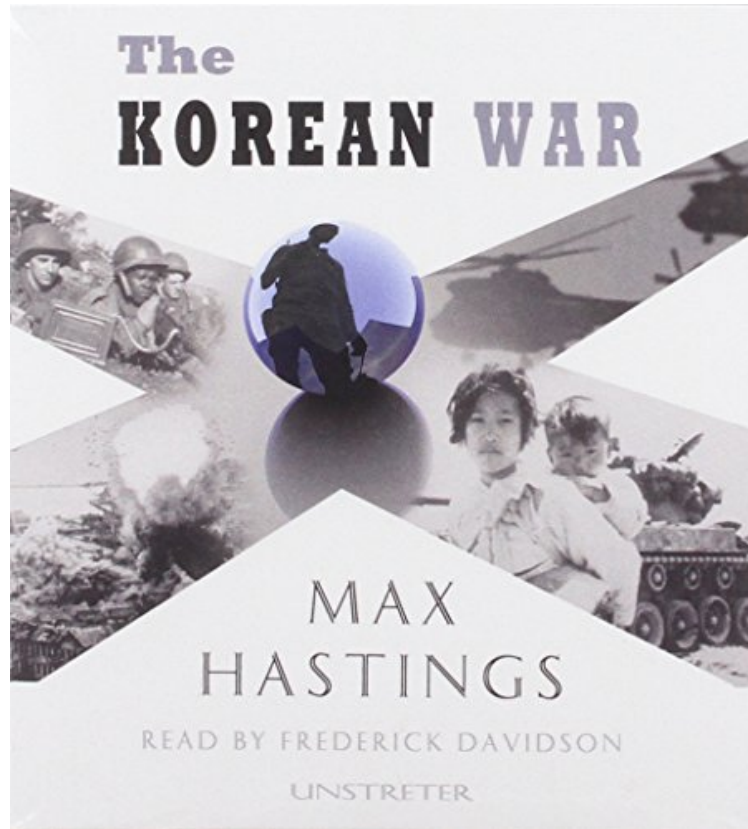


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The Korean War

Max Hastings

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Max Hastings : The Korean War before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Korean War:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A very well researched read on the Korean War. Well worth it. By Steve
The Korean War has always been one of those events in history that I have been aware of to some extent, but not to the level that I know of the second world war, space race, or roman history. I've always been somewhat interested in the Korean War though, it just doesn't get the same amount of coverage that other similar or proximate events receive. I'm a big fan of Max Hastings writing, I've read and or listened to most of his books, and this writing on the Korean War is just as in depth and well researched as I have come to expect from my previous experiences from his works. This book is well worth the read
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Flawed but truthful in acknowledging American failings in Korea
By vburns
Way too British-centric a history of the Korean War. Little from the North Korean side or China. Too much from Britain. That said, a serviceable, but flawed, history of the conflict.
3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Not too compassionate to MacArthur!
By Kamiyahagi
It was quite a sad story but, vividly told and expertly written by Hastings. It would have to be THE reference for anyone researching or just wanting to know more about the Korean war. It totalled 476 pages in length with sections on the origins of the dating way back as far as the turn of the century with plenty of references to the Japanese and the march into

Manchuria during the thirties. It showed, even in the 'early days' before WW2 that Korea was a very torn country indeed. It had the story of significant individuals that saved the country from becoming completely Chinese communism by describing some of the heroics of General 'Bulldog' Walker, Paul Freeman and 'Iron Mike' Colonel John Michealis that should never be forgotten. Hastings, rightly pointed out that if wasn't for a few quite heroic US officers, the outcome of the Korean war would have been quite different indeed. It also discussed MacArthur persistence to not only reach to reach Seoul but, then to the go on and cross way over to the "38th parallel" with the intent to push all the way back to China! There's the predicted and underestimated response by the US when the Chinese retaliated and the eventual dismissal of MacArthur in 1950. Hastings gave good credence to the Intelligence service, the air force, the prisoners taken on both sides and also to many civilians that were involved in the war. He gave amazing surreal narrative accounts of the poor civilians during that time. It was so realistic that it felt that you were walking side by side next to that person on the road behind the front line. But, his descriptions of MacArthur were very disturbing indeed. Not because Hastings was trying to castigate MacArthur, but because MacArthur himself became obsessive, delusional and out of touch. There were disturbing strategies of using the atomic bomb again and creating a radioactive no-go area between the communists and western Korea. It came from a leader that had supreme commander who became out of touch with his own troops, his government and his country. There could have easily been yet another military, moral and historical global disaster again in Asia, after Nagasaki and Hiroshima. If it wasn't for a few staunch peace activists in the UN then, God help us all because there could have been yet another human disaster on the scale that Japan suffered in '45. The world had tilted on the side of oblivion only to be saved at the very last minute. According to Hastings, the Korean war was full dress rehearsal and a repeated failure by the US to learn from it's failings when it finally gave up the war to the Chinese mid-year of 1953. Not only did the US eventually give up on the war, but the same mistakes were then repented again some ten to fifteen years later in Vietnam (which occurred in '64 to '75). In the case of Korea, the recent world war had literately tired people out. The US government, for example, were sick of funding the forces after the second world war and had dramatically cut funding for the Korean war that very few wanted. So, as Hastings had put it, "Spending was down from \$82 billion to \$13 billion.... nearly every unit in the army was under-strength, under trained and under-equipped" p.53. Perhaps it would be fair to say that the army was also very unmotivated as well. There was 'bug out' fever where, upon heavy fire, the army would fall back, retreat and in more simple terms just run away from the front line. Particularly, at the beginning of the war there was a yearning to escape the peninsula of Korea and get away from a thankless war where victory or some sort of glory seemed remote or out of the question. 'Under training' was also a large part of the problem in the war too. It wasn't unusual for a soldier to shoot himself or someone else because they even manage their weapon properly. They didn't even know how to load, unload or store a weapon properly. There was so much to talk about in Hastings book that this writer had more that four pages of comments on paper, but this is not an essay but a simple book review. So, in keeping with brevity, the writer would like to say that some of the best works (fiction or non-fiction) can provoke a tremendous response that needs to be tailored suitably to a brief summary of thoughts. With that in mind, this book easily deserves five stars. Thank you for reading the review. This was review of a (very old, 1988) hardcover edition found in a box of books.

[Read by Frederick Davidson] It was the first war we could not win. Using personal accounts from interviews with more than two hundred Korean War veterans, including the Chinese, Hastings follows real soldiers through battle while also brilliantly capturing the Cold War crisis at home.

About the Author Max Hastings is the author of more than twenty books. He has served as a foreign correspondent and as the editor of Britain's Evening Standard and Daily Telegraph. He has received numerous British Press awards, including Journalist of the Year in 1982 and Editor of the Year in 1988.