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The Korean War (Pan Military Classics)



Synopsis

On 25 June 1950, the invasion of South Korea by the Communist North launched one of the bloodiest conflicts of the last century. The seemingly limitless power of the Chinese-backed North was thrown against the ferocious firepower of the UN-backed South in a war that can be seen today as the stark prelude to Vietnam. Max Hastings drew on first-hand accounts of those who fought on both sides to produce this vivid and incisive reassessment of the Korean War, bringing the military and human dimensions into sharp focus. Critically acclaimed on publication, *The Korean War* remains the best narrative history of this conflict.

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Customer Reviews

The interpretations of the Korean War are varied and number almost as many as the pages that have been devoted to the conflict's history. *The Korean War* is an attempt by the British author Max Hastings to paint a portrait of the war, focusing upon some human and military aspects less familiar to readers on both sides of the Atlantic. From the outset, Hastings does not purport to give a comprehensive account of the war and cites the works of David Rees (*Korea: The Limited War*, New York, 1964) and Bruce Cumings (*Origins of the Korean War*, New Jersey, 1981) as the best in these categories. The author also professes his belief in the rightness of the American commitment to Korea in 1950. One of the more interesting passages in *The Korean War* is the author's coverage

of the Inchon operation. Hastings defends the decision of General MacArthur to maintain X Corps as a separate tactical unit from Eighth Army: ... there was an entirely legitimate case for placing the conduct of the Inchon landing in hands other than those of General Walton Walker. MacArthur well knew the low morale that existed in Eighth Army headquarters.... [Although] Walker had conducted a stubborn defense of Pusan.... there was grave reason to doubt his ability now to lead the sort of imaginative and dynamic operation MacArthur planned. MacArthur considered, and rejected, the possibility of relieving him [Walker] of his command.... MacArthur's compromise was to entrust the amphibious operation to Almond. The author's argument is plausible, but he fails to cite his references. One of the strong points of the Korean War is the author's analysis of the Chinese and their intervention in the war.

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