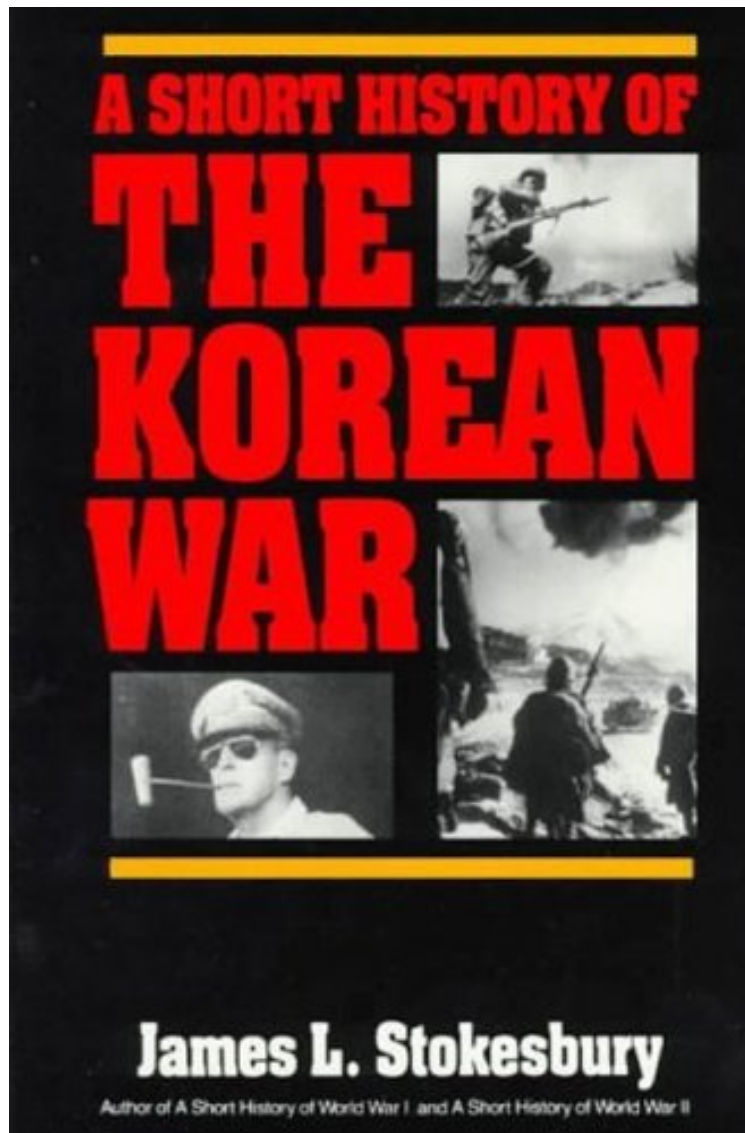


(Download) A Short History of the Korean War

A Short History of the Korean War

Von James L. Stokesbury

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Von James L. Stokesbury : A Short History of the Korean War before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Short History of the Korean War:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A Good Survey of the Korean WarVon James Gallen"A Short History of the Korean War" provides the reader with an excellent overview of the War, without becoming bogged down in details. Stokesbury adequately covers all aspects of the war, including political, military, naval, air and the peace negotiations.The Korean war is portrayed as one into which both sides, essentially, blundered. Numerous American officials had sent the message that Korea lay outside the

United States' Asian perimeter of defense. In response to these signals, the Communists took what they thought was an easy pick and were surprised when the U.S. did respond militarily to the invasion. The pre-war situation in South Korea under the Rhee administration is amply covered. One reason that South Korea was so ill-prepared to respond to the invasion was that the U.S. had deliberately limited the Republic of Korea (ROK) forces because of a fear that President Rhee would launch his own invasion of the North if the ROK was strong enough to do so. The initial North Korean invasion led to a rout of South Korean defenders and, initially, the Americans sent to their aid. Ultimately, the build-up of United Nations' Forces, the bombardment of Communist forces by U.N. air power and the limitations of the North Korean supply system saved the U.N. forces from being driven into the sea. The weakness in the Communist supply system was an inability to maintain the supply of the troops once an offensive was begun. When a Communist offensive exhausted its stored supplies it tended to run out of steam. This was the situation at the time of the Inchon landing which led to the collapse of the North Korean invasion and the U.N. advance to the Yalu. At this point the U.N. was at a critical juncture. Despite Chinese warnings, the U.N. continued its drive to unite Korea all the way to the Yalu. The unanswered question remains as to whether a more modest advance which occupied some of North Korea, while allowing a remnant North Korea to remain as a buffer between South Korea and China would have permitted the war to have ended much sooner and on terms more satisfactory to the U.N. Restraint was not the rule of the day and the Chinese did enter the war and, again, threatened to drive the U.N. into the sea. Again, it was U.N. determination and air power which stemmed the tide and allowed the war to degenerate into a stalemate which led to the commencement of peace talks. Unfortunately, the talks were to drag on for two years while men froze, and bled and died over No Name hills. Eventually the peace talks became bogged down over the issue of repatriation of POWs. The problem was that many of the Communist POWs did not want to be repatriated to North Korea or Red China. Many, ultimately, were repatriated to South Korea or Nationalist China. Stokesbury gives the reader an introduction to the role of air and naval power as well as the contributions of other U.N. members. The truth is that about two-thirds of U.N. members contributed to the war effort in some way or another. The political problems arising out of this international effort are also explored. At the end of this book I felt that I had a good, general understanding of the Korean War and a whetted appetite to read more.

1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. An Engaging Read on Military Tactics and History Von Haiyu "The wrong war, at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and with the wrong enemy." - General of the Army Omar Bradley This book is a testament to the fact that historical works need not be a long, dry succession of innumerable statistics and facts. This book reads like a well-written novel, having all the literary elements which captivate a reader: character development, climax of events, and finally resolution. Though one may argue, as the demilitarized zone separating North and South Korea was established, if there was any resolution at all in the case of the Korean War. "[T]he cease-fire brought not jubilation, triumph, and ease after toil, but rather a mingled sense of relief and frustration, and unhappy awareness that if things were not going to get worse, neither were they going to get much better," Stokesbury writes. A "short history" of a war in which casualties on both sides totaled at least three million does not mean that Stokesbury wrote only of the major events of the Korean War. Significant attention is paid to the period between the end of the Second World War and 1950. The stage is set for the beginning of the Korean War by Stokesbury's description of the "state of the world" at the time: "The basic antagonism of [democracy and capitalism in the West and the totalitarian Communists in the Soviet Union] had been submerged by the common danger of Nazi Germany, and the temporary necessity of alliance to defeat Hitler and his followers in World War II. But once the menace was removed, the old differences surfaced again, and within a tragically short time after 1945, it was obvious that the world had entered on the old and dangerous paths once more." Under these conditions, Stokesbury argues, the war in Korea was unavoidable. The succession of events and the personalities involved made the war inevitable. In trying to answer the question of whether or not the United States should have intervened in Korea, Stokesbury writes that it is more important to consider whether the U.S. could have avoided intervention, and concludes that the answer is probably no. "In the context of the time, and given the perceptions, preconceptions, and predilections of the men who made the decision, intervention probably could not have been avoided, and probably should not have been avoided. However unpalatable they are, and however many residual doubts they leave, some things just have to be done." Like pieces on a chessboard, Stokesbury describes with clarity the movements of divisions, regiments, battalions, and even artillery batteries. Many of the chapters are prefaced with a map of the area to be discussed, allowing the reader to "see" the movements of the armies, to feel the tension as the North Korean Army approaches the Pusan perimeter, the last bastion of free Korea, or the despair as Communist Chinese forces flood over the Yalu River and into the conflict to meet already weary American, South Korean, and UN forces. The amphibious assault on Inchon provides an excellent example of the movement of forces and the coordination and planning that is necessary to conduct an effective operation. For both strategic and psychological reasons, it was necessary to retake Seoul from the North Koreans. Because Seoul is approximately twenty miles inland from the Yellow Sea, the port Inchon was chosen for attack first. As Stokesbury points out, "It happens that the highest tides in the world rush into two similarly shaped bodies, the Bay of Fundy on Canada's east coast, and the Yellow Sea between China and Korea." This means that the tidal range at spring tides is thirty-three feet. Added to this is the fact that these tides create a current of six knots, making for "a navigator's nightmare." There

was a small island called Wolmi-do also, from which the enemy could have produced heavy flanking fire following the amphibious assault. Because of the tide fluctuations, the plan was as follows: "Wolmi-do and Inchon had to be first bombarded, then the island taken on a high tide, and then the main landing made on the next high tide." This meant that the troops that took and held Wolmi-do would be isolated for at least twelve hours, an operational nightmare. Bombardment of Wolmi-do first by Marine aircraft, then Navy vessels, turned it into a "burned husk" and resistance was nominal once the landing was made. With the next tide, Inchon was taken. The operation resulted in less than 200 casualties, including 20 deaths. Despite the victory, Stokesbury says, "The major contributors to the victory were surprise and the weakness of the enemy in the area." At numerous times in the course of the Korean War, the outcome could have been very different indeed. It was essentially a race for the Pusan perimeter: either the fortification of it by UN and American forces, or the utter destruction of it by North Korean forces. And later, a race to gather more troops to meet the growing numbers of Communist Chinese. Furthermore, there was always the looming specter of the direct commitment of Soviet troops to the war. When the war ended, between 1.25 and 1.5 million Communists were missing, imprisoned, wounded, or killed. U.S. forces' casualties were 33,629 dead, 103,284 wounded, 5,178 prisoners or missing; a total of 142,091. Over 50,000 South Korean soldiers are believed to have been killed. Stokesbury speaks of an option considered by UN forces early in the war, to stop at the 38th parallel, ending the pursuit of the retreating North Koreans. It is ironic that at the conclusion of the war, the peninsula continued to be divided at the 38th parallel. A division which exists 46 years later.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Should be called "History of the AMERICAN Korean War" Von Ein Kunde This book by Stokesbury is considerably shorter than his other "Short History"-titles. Again, no pictures. And again, he generally tells the events in a mix of chronological and topic-oriented order. A fitful account is given on the general state of the political world in which this war was embedded and of which it also was a symptom. The author does not detail his work with accounts of individual battles (except naming the most famous), tactics or technical data. Rather, he hyperpolates these into a general moving of the bomblines and - if at all - sticking to corps-size movements. On historical facts that are a matter of debate he never fails to voice and conclude his own opinion, trying to be as objective as possible. His style of writing is once more enjoyable and very readable, though almost on the verge of being too ironic-humoristic (on convincing the S.Korean president of cooperation: "and finally Rhee agreed to behave, in return for American promises to love, cherish, and support Korea for the foreseeable future" p.248) and casual for the subject of, after all, a war, and sometimes short of being of a primitive beat-em-up hooray-patriotism ("Again they (...) gave the odds to the enemy, and still beat him cold." p.184). Still, this style serves to let even people who wouldn't read a sole non-fictional account read on this important part of history. To illustrate this style some quotes: "The gunners had also been given one-third of all the high-explosive antitank ammunition available in the Far East Command (...) Unfortunately, one-third of the available HEAT ammunition consisted of only six rounds (...)" p.46 "The problem here, which seems to cause armies perpetual surprise, is that casualties are always higher among riflemen than they are among truck drivers and clerks; therefore, any army that engages in combat (...) will soon run low on riflemen" p.60 "(..General McArthur being neither in sympathy with nor entirely understood national foreign policy..) Part of the difficulty arose, certainly, from the fact that the government was not sure itself exactly what its policy was" p.123 A MAJOR fault is, however, that he tells the whole story almost exclusively from an American point of view. In fact, he becomes so focused on the American view of the war that he not only neglects other nations, especially the Koreans themselves, but makes raw mistakes that I'm sure he wouldn't when reflecting objectively, e.g. he claims F-86 pilot J.Jabarra to have become "the first jet ace in the world" (p.183), totally forgetting that there were actually many before, namely German Me262 pilots of WW II (Buchner, Schuck, Steinhoff etc.pp.). This may be just a detail, but it is typical for the overall, solely American-minded approach of the author: What have got the topics integration of blacks into the army, McCarthy, the Democratic presidential candidate election or the elaborately covered issue of how the Korean war influenced the US Military for the future DIRECTLY have to do with the Korean war to warrant telling them extensively in favor of the missing precise, factual combat and battle accounts? This book is unfortunately a little too much a book of American politics and view of the Korean War. As it is written nicely, reading it is not a waste of time, though.

Kurzbeschreibung As pungent and concise as his short histories of both world wars, Stokesbury's survey of "the half war" takes a broad view and seems to leave nothing out but the details. The first third covers the North Korean invasion of June 1950, the Pusan perimeter crisis, MacArthur's master stroke at Inchon and the intervention by Chinese forces that November. At this point, other popular histories of the war reach the three-quarter mark, ending often with a cursory summary of the comparatively undramatic three-and-a-half years required to bring the war to its ambiguous conclusion on July 27, 1953. Stokesbury renders the latter period as interesting as the operational fireworks of the first six months: the Truman-MacArthur controversy; the political limitations on U.S. air power; the need for the Americans to fight the war as cheaply as possible, due to NATO commitments; the prolonged negotiations at Panmunjom over the prisoner-exchange issue; and the effect of the war on the home front. Whether the United States

could have/should have stayed out of the war in the first place comes under discussion: "no" on both counts, according to the author. Kurzbeschreibung As pungent and concise as his short histories of both world wars, Stokesbury's survey of "the half war" takes a broad view and seems to leave nothing out but the details. The first third covers the North Korean invasion of June 1950, the Pusan perimeter crisis, MacArthur's master stroke at Inchon and the intervention by Chinese forces that November. At this point, other popular histories of the war reach the three-quarter mark, ending often with a cursory summary of the comparatively undramatic three-and-a-half years required to bring the war to its ambiguous conclusion on July 27, 1953. Stokesbury renders the latter period as interesting as the operational fireworks of the first six months: the Truman-MacArthur controversy; the political limitations on U.S. air power; the need for the Americans to fight the war as cheaply as possible, due to NATO commitments; the prolonged negotiations at Panmunjom over the prisoner-exchange issue; and the effect of the war on the home front. Whether the United States could have/should have stayed out of the war in the first place comes under discussion: "no" on both counts, according to the author. ber den Autor und weitere Mitwirkende James L. Stokesbury is the author of *A Short History of World War I*, *A Short History of World War II*, *A Short History of the Korean War*, and *A Short History of the American Revolution*. Before his death in 1995 he was a professor of history at Acadia University in Nova Scotia, Canada.