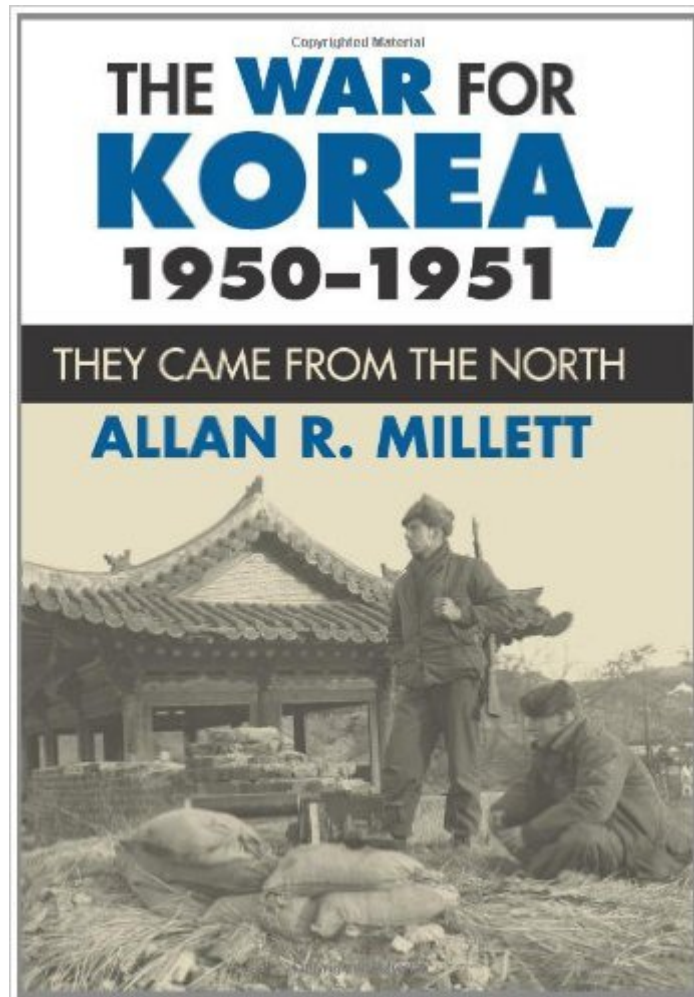


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The War For Korea, 1950-1951: They Came From The North (Modern War Studies (Hardcover))



Synopsis

In *The War for Korea, 1945-1950: A House Burning*, one of our most distinguished military historians argued that the conflict on the Korean peninsula in the middle of the twentieth century was first and foremost a war between Koreans that began in 1948. In the second volume of a monumental trilogy, Allan R. Millett now shifts his focus to the twelve-month period from North Korea's invasion of South Korea on June 25, 1950, through the end of June 1951—the most active phase of the internationalized "Korean War." Moving deftly between the battlefield and the halls of power, Millett weaves together military operations and tactics without losing sight of Cold War geopolitics, strategy, and civil-military relations. Filled with new insights on the conflict, his book is the first to give combined arms its due, looking at the contributions and challenges of integrating naval and air power with the ground forces of United Nations Command and showing the importance of Korean support services. He also provides the most complete, and sympathetic, account of the role of South Korea's armed forces, drawing heavily on ROK and Korea Military Advisory Group sources. Millett integrates non-American perspectives into the narrative—especially those of Mao Zedong, Chinese military commander Peng Dehuai, Josef Stalin, Kim Il-sung, and Syngman Rhee. And he portrays Walton Walker and Matthew Ridgway as the heroes of Korea, both of whom had a more profound understanding of the situation than Douglas MacArthur, whose greatest flaw was not his politics but his strategic and operational incompetence. Researched in South Korean, Chinese, and Soviet as well as American and UN sources, Millett has exploited previously ignored or neglected oral history collections—including interviews with American and South Korean officers—and has made extensive use of reports based on interrogations of North Korean and Chinese POWs. The end result is masterful work that provides both a gripping narrative and a greater understanding of this key conflict in international and American history.

Book Information

Series: Modern War Studies (Hardcover)

Hardcover: 664 pages

Publisher: University Press of Kansas; First Edition edition (April 27, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0700617094

ISBN-13: 978-0700617098

Product Dimensions: 6.4 x 2 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.5 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (4 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #661,409 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #62 inÂ Books > History > Military > Korean War > Campaigns

Customer Reviews

This book is the second volume of a planned trilogy of the Korean conflict. The first volume deals with the post WWII friction that began after the super powers carved the country up in August 1945. Its about the Communist faction in the south stirring up anarchy and revolt in order to unite the two halves into one Communist state. In this second volume, after a brief summary of the first volume, the author quickly moves into the first year of war which will turn out to be the busiest military wise. The story begins with Kim Il-sung, with the help of Stalin, mobilizing for war with the south. Stalin didn't expect much of a response from the US and thought the war would be over in weeks but as it turns out this war will escalate more than he or probably anyone else expected. In addition to the battles between the NKPA and the ROK, there will be the war between the US and her Allies and China. And there is the political war between Stalin and Truman, Communism against Democracy. It will cover the lead up to war in early 1950, the invasion in June and the subsequent battles on and off the battlefield through July 1951 when the first peace conference is attempted at Kaesong. This overview, this worldview will cover both political and military history of the two Koreas and all the key international players that will be involved in the conflict. In the political arena there are many people discussed, probably a hundred. The list includes Stalin, Mao, MacArthur, Rhee, Kim, Atlee and especially Truman. President Truman and his administration play by far the biggest part in this story. While Stalin and Mao are included their roles are much smaller in this book.

A subordinate of the Duke of Wellington at Waterloo is supposed to have said of Napoleon that "he moves his cannon with the likeness of a pistol." Allan Millett with similar agility and deftness maneuvers from the tactics and battlefield engagements of this internationalized Korean War to the strategic and policy debates that raged more or less continuously in Moscow, Beijing, Washington, (and to a lesser extent in coverage) in Seoul and Pyongyang. Dr. Millett has been immersed in the Korean War for over twenty years and it shows with his command of every conceivable source -- memoirs, operational reports, political reports and cables, letters and journals, official studies and books, and a vast secondary literature in Korean, Chinese, Russian, and English. The writing style is crisp, engaging, at times humorous, but always incisive in detail and analysis. Dr. Millett's greatest contribution perhaps is to lay out the full context of the War. In this second of three volumes, the

"what" is always accompanied and explained by the "how" and "why." The focus of this volume is the internationalized war beginning with the North Korean invasion in June 1950 and terminating with the initial tentative feelers for a negotiated settlement a year later. The intervention of foreign powers (North Korean, United Nations/United States, and the People's Republic of China) in the southern civil war is fully assessed with a comprehensive analysis of the military impact and the delicate political maneuvering that all parties had to manage. The deliberations of the Truman administration ought not to occasion much surprise; more notable perhaps is the policy wrangling on the Communist side.

Millet has provided a fine detailed overview of the Korean Conflict as it became, for a time, the centerpiece of struggle between Russia and China, on the one hand, and the United States, with modest help from some other nations, on the other. To Stalin, whose Will was crucial, on the one side, and Truman, who was in a similar position on the other, this was the first shooting war test of the contest between the expansionary drives of the Communist World Revolutionary Movement and the still ill-defined premises of what came to be known as The American Containment Policy. The major contrast between the two leaders, guided only in part by their advisory staffs, was that Stalin did not intend that his troops would bear any part of the burden, fighting was to be done by Koreans, in the first instance, with China being the essential troop back-up when, and if, needed, while the Americans were driven by South Korean ineptitude in leadership and troop organization, to see early in the period covered by this book, that they would be required to put American bodies on the line. Millet allows us to see that whatever differences arose within each coalition, all saw more than Korea, itself, as the stake in the struggle. Moving ably between diplomacy and combat, strategy and tactics, Millet allows the average reader to see a larger part of the picture than more detailed studies allow. His access to documents in the hands of the Communist nations, gives a clearer picture than is common, of the strengths and weaknesses of civilian and military leadership.

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