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In Mortal Combat: Korea, 1950-1953

John Toland

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John Toland : In Mortal Combat: Korea, 1950-1953 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised In Mortal Combat: Korea, 1950-1953:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The Forgotten war is not forgotten!By Neil SlocumToland is a fine writer. This book is a wonderful description of what is now known as "the forgotten" war." It is not forgotten. I knew many officers and men who fought in Korea as I entered into an Army career. They personified the best in America and who did an outstanding job in Korea. I was a bit to young to serve (I had to wait until Vietnam) but I learned a great deal from the Korean vets. Toland definitely told the story as it really was. This book should be read by anyone with a yen for history but also by young people who have no idea what citizenship means to those who lay down their lives for our Country. This war should never be forgotten.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent and essentialBy M. KnightVery well written and informative with stories from all sides of the conflict. It gave me a much better understanding of the politics, fundamental mistake of dividing Korea at the end of WWII, missed opportunities by the USA to end the conflict early, the dangers of superstar military commanders, and the ineffectiveness of nuclear deterrence against China or NK. The suffering of our troops, the unheralded heroism of French, AUS, ROK and UK units is well portrayed as is the experiences of POW's and Chinese "Volunteer" troops. This war seems to be a forgotten chapter of our history by most Americans but is worth reviewing, if only to provide insight to Cold War era events and how they have shaped current events.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Don't forget this warBy Richard CarlsonA forgotten but brutal conflict. Brave soldiers led by often inept

generals somehow forced a stalemate against overwhelming odds. Good combination of individual stories and strategic review.

Part One Of Two Parts This brilliant examination of America's first limited war breathes fresh air on a conflict in need of re-examination. Toland comes up with fascinating revelations. . . Mao's prediction of the date and place of MacArthur's Inchon landing, the true nature of Mao's relationship with Stalin, Russia's indifference to the war after planning the initial attack, Mao's leadership of the Chinese volunteers and the sorry story of both sides' treatment of POWs. "Panoramic, gripping and original in its insights." (The New York Times)

From Publishers Weekly In this Korean War history, Toland (*Infamy*) makes skillful use of material gathered in Chinese and North Korean archives and through interviews with Chinese and North Korean veterans of the 1950-1953 war. In crisp, lucid prose he relates the familiar chronology from Pusan to Panmunjom, personalizing the course of events through well-chosen anecdotes and quotes, examining from a fresh perspective the controversial aspects of the conflict, including Chinese allegations that the Americans used germ warfare, the Truman-MacArthur confrontation and American brutality against Korean civilians. The relatively static last half of the war, usually given short shrift, is here fully developed, with Toland explaining how critical the POW issue was for both sides during the truce talks. In a book full of impressive features, the most noteworthy is this: Toland has gathered previously inaccessible material enabling him to describe Mao Zedong's direct role in the war as well as that of his field commander Peng Teh-huai. The "forgotten war," in which four million people perished, has never been described more interestingly. Photos. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Toland, author of *Adolf Hitler* (LJ 12/15/78), *Infamy* (LJ 3/15/82), and *The Rising Sun* (LJ 3/1/71), applies his skills as a popular historian to the Korean War. There is little historical background; some of the ongoing analysis is weak and poorly documented (e.g., when dealing with Chinese motives and policy-making); and there are also a few omissions and errors. Of the almost 20 maps, many are confusingly drawn and not very helpful. These problems are generally minor, however, and the story is well worth reading. Toland makes good use of participants' interviews (from both sides) to enrich the secondary literature in a lively, moving, and at times disturbing presentation. He covers strategic and tactical maneuvers, correspondents, political struggles, behind-the-lines activities, prisoners of war, and numerous acts of combat and leadership heroism (and failure) in a fluid style certain to hold the reader's attention. Highly recommended for public libraries and subject collections. Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 6/1/91.- Kenneth W. Berger, Duke Univ. Lib., Durham, N.C. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus s For an ostensibly forgotten war, the Korean "police action" has commanded a lot of literary attention in recent years. Unfortunately, Toland (*Infamy*, *Adolf Hitler*, *The Last Hundred Days*, etc.) does not add a great deal to available lore. In fact, though he draws on some fresh sources, there are no new or startling perspectives in this readable, if sometimes perverse and portentous, narrative overview of the conflict. A diligent researcher, Toland makes a generally good job of putting the war's first year into human-scale focus, documenting the murderous battles that raged from the mid-1950 Communist invasion of the South through the Pusan, Inchon, Chosin, and allied campaigns. He's equally competent, if often elusively contrarian, at capturing the big picture, offering short-take interpretations of the war's causes and course. He shows, for example, how the US failed to heed China's clear warnings that it required North Korea as a buffer state. Despite a conspicuous (and admitted) lack of evidence, however, Toland leaves open the question of whether the Allies employed biological weapons. Along similar lines, he taxes Truman with prolonging the stalemated fighting by virtue of his insistence on voluntary repatriation of all POWs. Like most annalists, Toland concludes that the Korean War ended when peace talks began at Kaesong. As he nonetheless makes clear in his summary coverage, it took two more years to negotiate a cease-fire, during which time American and Chinese troops engaged one another, sustaining tens of thousands of casualties in the bloody, purposeless process. A less-than-balanced accounting of what was won and lost in a clash of arms that aroused precious little interest, much less passion, on the home front. Among other superior alternatives, Bevin Alexander's *Korea* (1986) and Max Hastings's *The Korean War* (1987) stand out. The sparsely annotated text has 55 photographs and 18 helpful maps. -- Copyright ©1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.