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The Korean War

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effect than the polished marble produced by another? The less graceful language sometimes contributes to an aura of first-person authenticity. Particularly vivid is O'Kane's painstaking reconstruction of *Wahoo's* final patrol. O'Kane assumes that *Wahoo* was struck and seriously damaged by a circular run of her own erratic torpedo, just as *Tang* was later lost. While it is more likely that the initial damage came from shore batteries, there is no doubt about the subsequent details of her final agony, which are documented from Japanese sources. Successive waves of attack on the gravely wounded submarine were launched by an overwhelming combination of shore batteries, antisubmarine air and surface forces, dropping sixty-three depth charges or large bombs and forty smaller bombs before the final destruction of this gallant ship and her incomparable crew. O'Kane asks in her memory that, based on the evidence of the four additional ship sinkings on her final patrol, not known until after the war, Morton's Navy Cross be upgraded to a Medal of Honor and the gallant ship be awarded another Presidential Unit Citation. Few would disagree; more has been given for less.

Both of these books add to the lore of the deadly game played beneath the seas. Over the years many valuable lessons learned in combat have been too largely forgotten by a new generation in a new era. Dramatic accounts such as these preserve unique records of resource-

fulness and great courage for the edification of us all.

PAUL SCHRATZ
Captain, U.S. Navy (Ret.)

Hastings, Max. *The Korean War*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987. 389pp. \$22.95

Max Hastings is a writer who obviously stayed awake during English composition class. His book reads smoothly and its meaning is immediately clear. Both are essential attributes when covering the Korean war in 344 pages.

The Korean War is not so much about tactics, strategy, and logistics as it is about feelings. The dust jacket picture (an exhausted, weeping soldier) sets the reader on course for the entire book. Mr. Hastings has avoided parroting the books, papers, and news releases of the principals of that war. Instead, he has brought to print, through extensive personal interviews, the individual experiences of enlisted men, NCOs, and unit officers of many nations and both sides. Few of these participants ever would have written a book, and fewer still would have been widely read. However, their words and emotions are preserved here.

A strong cement of solid history backed by a 103 book bibliography and references to numerous military museums, archives, and institutions hold it all together. He does not allow the interviews to overwhelm, but rather, to act as flavoring or

exclamation points. Recounting the feud between the Marines at Chosin and their Army commander, General Almond, he depicts the inability of Almond to appreciate the Marines' predicament. Almond, while touring the ranks, confronted a group of enlisted Marines with the comment, "When I got up this morning there was a film of ice on the glass by my bed." The reply, "That's too ----ing bad, General," succinctly stated the feelings of a combatant who is freezing to death in the open.

There are chapters on intelligence, in which the toddlerhood of the CIA is related; the war in the air; and prisoners.

Generally, *The Korean War* is not the definitive book on the conflict, nor is it a reference work. It is a book of sensation and insight, evaluating the war through the comments of the combatants. In the final chapter, "Hindsight," the effects of the war are considered and a positive conclusion is drawn:

"We went into Korea with a very poor Army and came out with a pretty good one."

"We stopped Communism. Didn't we?"

"No Korean liked the war. It was worthwhile. I like our life very much now."

"The war revitalized NATO. It caused us to drop the tradition of demobilizing. . . . It hastened the schism between China and the Soviets. It saved Formosa. It contributed greatly to Japanese recovery. It probably saved the Philippines for a time."

A few technical notes are in order. It is expertly printed and easy to read. There are only five maps, but they are clear, concise, and located in the right places (a rarity); and

seventy-five black and white photos (some from the Chinese Army Museum), which are well-chosen and reinforce the text. There is also an interesting appendix which details the military contribution of various U.N. members. A few word errors exist, but not enough to detract from this fine, readable, and thought-provoking book.

CLINTON B. JOHNSON
Captain, U.S. Naval Reserve (Ret.)

Kaufman, Burton I. *The Korean War: Challenges in Crisis, Credibility, and Command*. New York: Knopf, 1986. 381pp. paper \$8

Do not look for a military, naval, or aviation history of the Korean war in this book. The author glosses over the war's background in deference to his interest in the contemporary politics of the period and its relation to the general topic of the war.

Kaufman's book emphasizes reasons why the United States became involved, when for five years it was uninterested in Korean affairs; how the United States behaved internally and externally in a coalition war; and just how politics influenced the battlefield. It is an excellent overview of the war from the viewpoint of the capital, SCAP in Tokyo, the U.N. Command in Korea, and the capitals of the participants. The majority of the book deals with the Washington and U.N. Command—crises, credibility, and command.

Before June 1950 the problems between Korea and the United