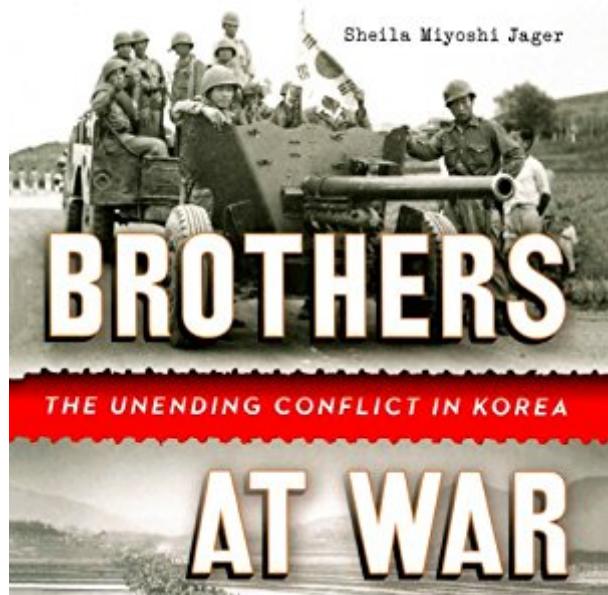


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Brothers At War: The Unending Conflict In Korea



Synopsis

A major historical account of the Korean War, its origins, and its evolving impact on the world. Sixty years after North Korean troops crossed the 38th parallel into South Korea, the Korean War has not yet ended. Sheila Miyoshi Jager presents the first comprehensive history of this misunderstood war, one that risks involving the world's superpowers - again. Her sweeping narrative ranges from the middle of the Second World War - when Korean independence was fiercely debated between Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill - to the present day, as North Korea, with China's aid, stockpiles nuclear weapons while starving its people. At the center of this conflict is an ongoing struggle between North and South Korea for the mantle of Korean legitimacy, a "brother's war," which continues to fuel tensions on the Korean peninsula and the region. Drawing from newly available diplomatic archives in China, South Korea, and the former Soviet Union, Jager analyzes top-level military strategy. She brings to life the bitter struggles of the postwar period and shows how the conflict between the two Koreas has continued to evolve to the present, with important and tragic consequences for the region and the world. Her portraits of the many fascinating characters that populate this history - Truman, MacArthur, Kim Il Sung, Mao, Stalin, and Park Chung Hee - reveal the complexities of the Korean War and the repercussions this conflict has had on the lives of many individuals, statesmen, soldiers, and ordinary people, including the millions of hungry North Koreans for whom daily existence continues to be a nightmarish struggle. The most accessible, up-to date, and balanced account yet written, *Brothers at War* will become the definitive chronicle of the struggle's origins and aftermath and its global impact for years to come.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Sheila Miyoshi Jager does an excellent job of showing the role Korea played in the Cold War, both during the Korean war and in its aftermath. She suggests, in fact, that the Korean war began the Cold War although its roots really go back to the Soviet usurpation of eastern Europe. But the book describes well the difficulties the United States faced in dealing with South Korea's leaders, and problems the Soviets and Chinese encountered in dealing with North Korea's leader. While the leaders of the two Koreas were intent on unifying the country on their terms, the Americans, Chinese, and Russians were trying to maintain stability in Korea, even if that meant keeping it divided. Especially interesting is the chapter on Jimmy Carter's naive plan to remove American forces from South Korea--an idea opposed by everyone except Kim Il-sung. Even the Russians and Chinese opposed the removal of American troops from South Korea because they knew that would embolden Kim Il-sung to begin another war, which neither the Russians nor Chinese wanted. This book is well worth reading for those who are interested in Asian history.

I bought this book as a gift for my husband. He likes to study WWII and its aftermath, especially the history of the war in the Pacific theater. He loves this book, and he said it fills a gap in his knowledge. It's well-written and thoroughly researched. I wouldn't be surprised if he reads it more than once so as not to miss the details.

Somewhat patchy for the post-1953 period, but a great read for the war itself, one of the best books on the Korean War.

I liked the section regarding the actual Korean War a lot, but felt that after that section was over, it meandered a little too much in getting to the present. History doesn't always provide a "story arc" that's easily translated into narrative, but I've seen it done successfully in other histories. There is a large section in the middle of the book which - while super interesting - was more about China than Korea. Still, a recommended read.

This insightful perspective on the Korean War brings to life the global politics of the 1950s and the decades that follow. For the Koreans, the conflict is personal and deeply cultural leading to a state of paranoia, violence and acts of unconscionable atrocities. For the global powers, the USA, USSR

and the PRC, the Korean Peninsula becomes a proving ground and a quagmire. Yet the lessons of Korea are barely learned and history inevitably repeats itself in Southeast Asia. This book reveals the Machiavellian talents of Stalin, the foolishness of Mao and the inner workings of US foreign policy. The question remains, however, how is the growing power of South Korea currently dealing with the starkly different suffering of the people of North Korea? What is the future of North Korea? Is it possible for the global powers to end the Kim dynasty and bring North Korea into the modern world?

The author does an excellent job integrating political, military, and geopolitical interplay in this ongoing conflict. She describes both North and South Korean politics and how they play off each other; as well as Soviet, Chinese, American and other interests. Her information on the large role Republic of Korea's military played ... and whyin Viet Nam was new to me. There was, however, one glaring error on the very first page of the text, following the Introduction. The author states: "In 1943, in the middle of World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Premier Joseph Stalin, and Primer Minister Winston Churchill discussed the fate of Korea at the Cairo Conference..." Stalin pointedly did not attend this Conference. Stalin met with them shortly after this Conference, in Tehran, I'm surprised an editor didn't catch that. Also, I was looking for a little more discussion of the Korean launching of mid and long range missles... seemed to get in a hurry there and skip over this. However, the Addendum did mention the irony of the Park and Kim family dynasties again facing off as leaders of North and South. That's pretty current. Altogether .. a good synthesis of a lot of material, with perspectives I had not seen before.

This is a comprehensive look at the political circumstances surrounding the Korean war both before the war and the reverberations after the war. The book is more about the political decisions and machinations that are still felt today. I highly recommend it; just don't buy it if you're looking for a blow by blow description of Korean war battles.

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