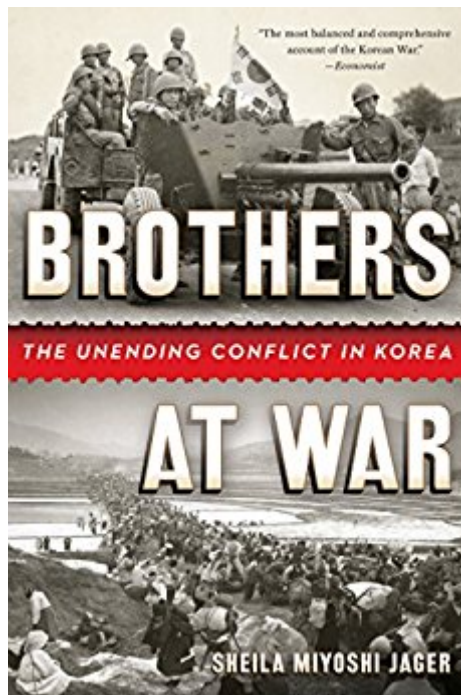


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# Brothers At War: The Unending Conflict In Korea



## Synopsis

“The most balanced and comprehensive account of the Korean War.” —The Economist  
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” 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 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, illustrated with dozens of astonishing photographs and maps, *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

File Size: 9674 KB

Print Length: 625 pages

Page Numbers Source ISBN: 0393348857

Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company; 1 edition (July 1, 2013)

Publication Date: June 24, 2013

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00AQ3VV00

Text-to-Speech: Not enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #212,205 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #22

in Kindle Store > History > Asia > Korea > South #25 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > History >

Military > Korean War #28 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > History > Asia > Korea

## Customer Reviews

As a history enthusiast with a special interest in the Korean War, Sheila Miyoshi Jager's "Brothers At War" is one of the most important and forward thinking books published about this important yet misunderstood conflict. Her analysis of events beyond 1950-1953 and the focus on the concept of the battle of legitimacy between the two Korea's provides context to the ongoing situation in the Korean peninsula. Impeccably researched, Jager's prose and attention to detail makes this an easily understood and fascinating read. Anyone who wishes to understand Korea more thoroughly needs to read this book.

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 why ... in 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.

Dr. Jager did a great job in weaving together the various elements and viewpoints to create a compelling insight into the Korean War and its continuing impact on Korea and the international community. She starts from the Korean War where she vividly portrays the palpable tension between President Truman and the mercurial General MacArthur, the ever-present danger of escalation with China, and, of course, the traumas suffered by soldiers and Korean civilians. Then she continues to trace the rise of the modern Korean from the ashes of war under the leadership of President Park Chung-Hee and his successors. Also deftly woven in are the domestic situations in China, Russia, and the U.S. that influence their relationships with the two Korean regimes. Very well-researched and eminently readable. For those interested in the Korean War, I also recommend David Halberstam's *The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War*.

Until I read *Brothers at War* by Dr. Jager, I considered David Halberstam's *The Coldest Winter* the best ever coverage of the Korean War. The extensive research Dr. Jager did on this book coupled with her perceptive analysis brings the conflict itself into perfect focus. What a fantastic contribution Dr. Jager has made to not only the conflict itself, but to both the events leading up to the war and to the far-reaching implications for the future. Having seen the event first-hand, I especially appreciate the grasp this author and scholar reflects in *Brothers at War*.

Although as a kid I was vaguely aware of the Korean war, when I realised my country (New Zealand) was involved in pushing back the North Koreans and Chinese I started reading bits about the war. This book, however has shown what the cost of that war really was. What it has meant to our Global village. We can buy lots of Korean products, because of halting and pushing back more than once, the determined soldiers from the North. The difference now between the two countries North and South, is so extreme one would wonder why the North cannot see they have lost their proper heritage. Yet, even now, they would try to do it all again. They tunnel, fire missiles, progress their nuclear status, create incidents, etc all to let the West know that they still exist and want to be a force to be reckoned with. The clear culprit behind North Korea was Russia, and then Mao stepped in and flexed his warlike muscles as well. And millions of people died. Both sides created atrocities sometimes because of confusion, at other times because they were not certain where people's alliances lay and killed them just to save time. That way was certain they said. The problem did not come back. It is historically a great read, but the human cost, in lives and suffering that was inflicted

was simply awful. The South has largely recovered, but the North still lives in terrible oppression. It is hard to "like" a book that is recounting such past evils, but it should be a necessary political science read to understand the present and why we still have to line drawn separating both parts of Korea. Both sides made mistakes in underestimating the other and General Douglas MacArthur was no exception.

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