

The Korean War in American Feature Films

By Kelly Ann Long

Wars have been a significant factor in U.S. involvement in Asia. A study of these wars helps to reveal roots of present day relations with Asia. Once labeled “forgotten,” the Korean War (1950–1953) is a subject of growing interest. Early official histories and scholarly assessments focused on diplomatic, strategic, or tactical aspects, and individual battles within the war. Recent historical debates query whether the war was a civil war, a struggle between two superpowers using Koreans as their proxies, an exercise in collective security, a limited war, or a total war. While these approaches are essential, such accounts often lack the human face, the individual experience through which students might learn about themselves and others. Feature films augment study of the Korean War, its historical context, and its aftermath by inviting vicarious experience, thus engaging affective understanding of the personal and public costs of war.¹

The films surveyed in this essay—*Steel Helmet*, *Retreat Hell!*, *Battle Hymn*, *Men of the Fighting Lady*, and *Pork Chop Hill*—span a decade of a pivotal period in the Cold War. Appearing at an important juncture, as the war in Korea developed, or before full U.S. engagement in Vietnam, these films had precautionary potential.² These films are useful in examining key events and turning points in the war. Additionally, they explore important themes: individual loss of innocence, denigration or elevation of the human spirit in response to war, an inability to discern between combatants and civilians, and the clash of national and global agendas. The films followed common WWII film formulas. Some replaced a Japanese enemy with North Koreans or Chinese communists, reinforcing stereotypes and longstanding patterns in the depiction of Asians. Some portrayed Koreans as mere pawns in the larger game of power politics. Yet the films surveyed here also employed Asian actors in Asian character roles, and a few probed more deeply into questions of individual and cultural distinctiveness.

Because film powerfully shapes popular conceptions of the past, it is important to scrutinize its historical accuracy. Using “accuracy” as the only measure, however, can elide deeper questions about a film’s intent. As an artistic medium, film seeks to comment upon war. As propaganda, film strives to “convince others,” to shift or reinforce “existing shared opinions.”³ To those ends, film uses license in depiction of the past. Film employs narrative strategies or techniques such as convoluted chronology, flashbacks, collapsing of characters, narrator

overstatements, and varied viewpoints. Examining film technique—from camera angles to scripting—can elicit critical assessments rather than passive reception. Exploring how meanings are shaped can help students become more discerning consumers of media.⁴

Films based on historical events can engage students in considering the processes involved in reconstructing the past. Like other media accounts, film draws upon varied sources and reflects personal biases, intuitive leaps, and decision-making about inclusions and exclusions. Film segments can be used to compare accounts of specific battles, and to illustrate historical concepts such as multiple perspectives, causal relationships, and contingency.

While these films have a place in courses on Pacific Wars, they can also enhance the study of U.S.-Asian relations, U.S. history, and the Cold War. They helped to shape public memory and inform American assumptions about Asia, Asians, and America’s role in the world. In the heated anti-communist climate of the 1950s, American depictions of the Korean War upheld or questioned the underlying assumptions of that time: the threat of monolithic communism and the necessity of U.S. leadership against that threat. Study of popular Korean War films as reflections of or critical comment on prevailing political currents has relevance today as we encounter contemporary patriotism and nationalism, and media presentation of debates on international security, national alliances, United Nations prerogatives, and the possibility of new wars.

THE HISTORICAL SETTING

Korean War films emerged in a fraught international and domestic climate. Debates about the use of nuclear weapons continued even as the USSR gained nuclear capacity in 1949. Reflecting U.S. aspirations to lead the “free world,” the Truman Doctrine of 1947 expressed the idea that the U.S. must “support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities and outside pressures.”⁵ The subsequent Containment policy articulated a need to limit expansion by the Soviet Union. Although the policy conceived of political means of containing perceived threats, it also advised vigilant use of “counterforce at a series of constantly shifting geographical and political points.”⁶ Fear of communist expansion directed from Moscow grew when Chinese Communists established the Peoples Republic of China in October 1949. Two vast communist countries near the vulnerable Korean peninsula made those fears seem plausible.⁷ Events that unfolded in the summer of 1950 heightened those concerns.

As the occupation of Japan continued, Vietnam and Korea, “temporarily divided” in the aftermath of World War II, struggled in the quest for self government. Most Americans knew little about Korea, divided at the 38th parallel to allow Soviet “protection” in the north and the U.S. “supervision” in the south. On June 25, 1950, North Korean forces’ incursion across the parallel provided the spark for war. President Harry Truman unsuccessfully tried to stop the invasion with U.S. forces. Truman requested and received the approval of the UN in U.S. efforts in Korea, although the overwhelming majority of UN forces were American. President Truman’s decision to use American forces “produced almost unanimous support in the country.”⁸ U.S. occupation forces from Japan were the first called to action in Korea. American popular accounts depicted the situation as an “international war organized and plotted by Stalin.”⁹ The anticipated swift action turned into a protracted engagement that tried U.S. public patience, while devastating Korean cities, villages, and lives.

In the first months, North Korean troops pushed UN forces back to the Pusan Perimeter. United Nations Commander General Douglas MacArthur planned a daring September invasion at Inchon, behind enemy lines, that temporarily turned the tide. The UN granted permission for forces to pursue North Korean troops beyond the 38th parallel. The Chinese communists sent “volunteer” troops into North Korea. They mounted a surprise attack that overwhelmed UN forces approaching the Chosin Reservoir. By January 1951, communist forces once again pushed the UN forces south of Seoul. In April 1951, General MacArthur and President Harry Truman clashed in a battle of wills about the conduct of the war. MacArthur was relieved of duty and replaced by General Mathew Ridgway. In June 1951, discussion of a cease-fire began, yet the negotiations dragged on for two years while fighting continued. By March 1953, negotiators agreed upon an armistice, began repatriation of prisoners of war, and established the demilitarized zone, very near the original 38th parallel, between the still divided North and South Korea.



Steel Helmet © 1951 Deputy Corporation. Renewed © 1979 Weiss Global Enterprises.

THE FILMS

Steel Helmet (1951)

Samuel Fuller’s *Steel Helmet* opens on an atrocity in which a squadron of American Prisoners of War was found bound and shot in the head. It moves to a common war narrative of a lost patrol guided to victory by a stalwart leader. WWII veteran Sergeant Zack (Gene Evans) leads an unlikely ensemble to a Buddhist temple to stand their ground against overwhelming North Korean troops. The low-budget, quickly-made film conveys an urgent drive to comment upon the unfolding war. It praises

the nobility of individual soldiers, not the institutions and systems that place them in battle. Fuller, a WWII infantryman, dedicated the film to the U.S. infantry.¹⁰

Clearly an art film, *Steel Helmet* does not aim for realism in scale or location. Low light and fog effects reinforce a dark tone that corresponds to the film’s message. Stage sets and iconic “Asian” props such as a shrine, a Torii gate, and a statue of Buddha establish an “Asian” locale. Given that it is not a central aim, Fuller does a credible job of depicting Korean culture and religion as worthy of regard.

As the film begins, eyes peer out beneath a helmet to cautiously survey the scene. The camera follows as the soldier belly-crawls, hands tied behind his back, past bodies of bound, dead comrades. The sound of approaching feet draws attention. The camera picks up feet, calf-length white pants, and a rifle pointed toward the ground. The soldier plays dead as the camera moves upward to a close focus on head and eyes—Asian and youthful. A boy (William Chun) releases the soldier and announces that he is “South Korean.”



Steel Helmet © 1951 Deputy Corporation. Renewed © 1979 Weiss Global Enterprises.

Sergeant Zack surveys a field of fallen comrades.



Having released Sergeant Zack, Short Round introduces himself as "South Korean."



To the tune of Auld Lang Syne, Short Round sings the South Korean National Anthem.



Short Round angrily informs Sergeant Zack that he is no "gook."

In the first five minutes, the film establishes hierarchies and reinforces emerging conceptions of a proper world order. The South Korean boy is the subservient, vulnerable seeker after Sergeant Zack's approval. Zack reluctantly becomes the fatherly mentor for the boy, just as the U.S. assumed a paternalistic role toward South Korea. The boy tends to Zack's leg, pronounces that he is not a "gook," and explains that he must follow the soldier because his Buddhist beliefs tell him "when you save a friend, his heart is in your hands." Zack tells the boy to pick up boots and a helmet from a dead soldier. The boy puts on the external trappings of an American soldier. Prophetically, Zack names the boy Short Round, for a bullet that does not go all the way.

Yet other Korean characters reinforce long-standing racial stereotypes of Asians as inscrutable, sly, and treacherous. At ten minutes in we see two supplicants at a local shrine. Actually two North Korean soldiers, they pull guns from beneath their disguises and shoot. Later, the communist enemy appears en masse, save for one communist spy. Such traits had only years before been attributed to the Japanese.¹¹

Zack and Short Round meet up with soldiers from other platoons. The battle-hardened Zack begrudges serving again so soon, yet assumes leadership. He gathers a group that includes a

black medic (James Edwards I), a WWII conscientious objector, a Japanese-American WWII veteran (Richard Loo), a graduate of officer candidate school, and a mute man. This racially, politically, and ethnically mixed ensemble allows Fuller to offer probing social commentary, rather than platitudes about the war.

The common soldier's lack of understanding of the endeavor in Korea is reflected in several scenes. A comment that he cannot tell friend from foe touches upon a soldier's inability to distinguish differences among Asians. Zack replies: "He's South Korean when he's running with you, and North Korean when he's running after you." The former conscientious objector (Robert Hutton) plays Auld Lang Syne on the accordion. Short Round sings along in Korean. The men are surprised to learn that the words he sings are the South Korean National Anthem.



Temporarily safe in a temple, Short Round offers prayers to Buddha.

The major action of the film takes place in a Buddhist Temple. Upon entering, the men are directed not to disturb anything. It will be the communists who bring about the defilement of the temple. The men are not alone in their haven. At about 50 minutes, a North Korean stabs a night guard in the back. The men must shoot-up the temple to find the spy. Taken prisoner, "The Red" (Harold Fong) announces that he is not Russian, but North



"The Red" questions the Japanese-American veteran of WWII about why he would fight for the U.S.

Korean Communist. His dialogue with the men probes sensitive social issues. He asks the black medic why he fights for a country that has yet to extend full rights to his people. He appeals to the Japanese-American who looks like him, claiming that whites hate Asians, so they should stick together. He ridicules that soldier for serving in Korea in light of the internment of Japanese-Americans during WWII. The Japanese-American proudly announces that he fought in the 442nd Battalion in WWII.

Communists are portrayed as despicable and threatening. Short Round is killed when a communist sniper shoots him in the back. When the enraged Zack retaliates by shooting the POW, the film touches on the difficult issue of the treatment of prisoners of war, which will become a key issue in prolonging the armistice talks. Reinforcing fear of unchecked communism, a soldier announces that there are a "million reds out there," revitalizing an old fear of Asian "hordes." The former CO mans a machine gun before he dies. Explaining why he serves in Korea but did not in WWII, he says, "I got news for you buddy. If you love your home and it is threatened, you fight for it." U.S. reinforcements arrive before the entire group is wiped out. In the closing scene, Zack places his battered helmet on the grave of a now-worthy fallen commander. The closing frame states: "There is no end to this story."

The first half-hour evokes U.S. domestic scenes and establishes lead characters. We meet a 17-year-old enlistee, Jimmy W. McDermid (Russ Tamblyn). A major theme pertains to his transition from an innocent youth to a hardened warrior. We meet Lt. Col. Steve L. Corbett (Frank Lovejoy) and Capt. Paul Hansen (Richard Carlson), veterans of WWII, pulled from the security they fought to preserve, only to fight again. The haven of family tranquility and abundance is disrupted as men are forced to "remember war." Characterizations and relationships advance as the troops move by ship to Korea. The men learn of their mission—to take Inchon and then Seoul. Actual battle footage is interspersed with reenactments of the massive bombardment of Wolmi-do Island.

Asians appear en masse, not as individuals. At fifty-five minutes in, unidentified soldiers exchange fire with the American squadron. Captain Hansen pronounces, "These soldiers are Chinese," and then asks, "What are they doing here?" The central battles begin about one hour in. Bugles sound, and Chinese emerge over a hill, coming in waves despite the responding gunfire. Baker Company is low on ammunition; fog prohibits air support. The men are ordered to withdraw. Corbett speaks the oft-quoted line: "Retreat Hell. We're just attacking in the other direction."

The last twenty minutes detail the Marines battling back, carrying out their dead and wounded, along sixty-five miles laced with relentless Chinese snipers. The Marines struggle on, frostbitten and wounded. Greeted at last by newly arrived British and U.S. reinforcements, a soldier proudly announces that they are "The 1st Battalion of the United States Marines." Music of the Marine Hymn swells as the film ends.

This film can be used to consider how an event is interpreted and recounted at specific times for different purposes. Later interviews with combat veterans indicate that the episode had a serious demoralizing effect. The documentary *Korea: Our Time in Hell* includes interviews of soldiers involved in the battle. Army veteran Jim Wilson's book *Retreat, Hell!* is based on interviews with veterans forty years after these events.¹³



Retreat, Hell! © 1952 Richard Feiner and Company, Inc. Renewed in 1980.

Retreat, Hell! (1952)

Directed by Joseph H. Lewis, *Retreat, Hell!* also hit the screen as battling continued in Korea.¹² Confidence that the war would be over by Christmas was dashed when Chinese "volunteers" mounted a counter-offensive and pushed U.S. troops into retreat in November 1950. The film depicts a critical change when Chinese Communists' entry roused fear of global escalation. The film draws focus away from the U.S. retreat by setting that event between the successful invasion at Inchon and the "moral victory" of the Marines' return to Hagaru.



Men of the Fighting Lady © 1982 Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Film Company.

Men of the Fighting Lady (1954)

Contrasts between the "guerilla" tactics of the communist combatants and the advanced technology of the United States forces marked the Korean War. *Men of the Fighting Lady* exposes the destructive capability of that technology and poses important questions about its use. The story brings author/narrator "Michener" (Loius Calhern) aboard the aircraft carrier *Fighting Lady*. Val Johnson, Walter Pidgeon, and Frank Lovejoy play lead roles. A narrator voiceover asks why the men are in Korea. Responses include to stop the next bigger war, to act as policemen to control the spread of communism, to act as firemen

to slow the spread of a fire. Whatever the reason, these pilots' job is to bomb the Wonsan railway, yet twenty-six consecutive runs have not put it out of commission. The Koreans rebuild whatever the pilots destroy.

Praise for technological advancements is tempered by other concerns about the cost and devastating potential of weapons of mass destruction. New aircraft are better than the old "flying fortress," yet are more expensive. A mechanic points out that planes and bombs cost more than the targets they destroy. The potential destruction of humanity through technologies of mass destruction is a repeated theme. The mechanic asks of a plane after the death of a pilot, "What good are you without the men to fly you?" In the second story, a pilot guides a blinded pilot in another plane back toward the ship. He compares the scene below to Santa Monica, back home. Yet he notes, "But the people down there aren't people—they're targets. And we aren't men—we're bombs." In demonstration, a horse-drawn cart is blown apart, and a small village is blasted.¹⁴



Battle Hymn (1957)

The subject of civilian suffering and orphans of war is treated in *Battle Hymn*, starring Rock Hudson as Dean Hess, on whose 1956 autobiographical account the film is based.¹⁵ The story was also widely recounted in popular magazines. General Partridge offers U.S. Army endorsement in an introduction to this "true story" of the United Nations mission in Korea. The theme of repentance and redemption are explored within a Christian framework. The film engages consideration of the evocation of religious concepts

and metaphors or images of U.S. nationalism and patriotism.

Douglas Sirk's film revolves around a WWII pilot turned minister who re-enlists to train pilots for the Republican Army of Korea. A good man driven to brutal acts, he seeks absolution for inadvertently bombing a German orphanage during WWII.¹⁶ Focused on the impact of war on Korean civilians and American soldiers, early scenes show friendly, grateful South Korean civilians. Later, a group of orphan children raid a garbage pail in the army camp. Hess directs his men to feed them. The old woman accompanying them is later revealed as a North Korean spy.

The film offers rationalizations for why innocent people are harmed in war. During an air strike, an African-American pilot (James Edwards I) inadvertently shoots a group of refugee women and children, believing they are North Korean combatants. Comfort is offered to the distraught pilot Maples: one cannot really tell from the air what is on the ground. Maples is reconciled that it was God's will. Hess sees the hand of providence when he encounters an old Korean man (Philip Ahn), a Christian, accompanying two orphans to a Buddhist shrine. There they find En Soon Whang (Anna Kashfi) caring for orphans. Hess' path to redemption is clear. He rallies his men to transport the orphans from his camp to her care. Battle-hardened veterans return to themselves by assuming roles of nurturer. Eventually, an orphan-

age is established on the island of Cheju-do and dedicated to the memory of En Soon Whang. The film ends when Hess takes his wife to visit the orphanage after the war.



Pork Chop Hill (1959)

Pork Chop Hill offers a scathing critique of the prolonged armistice talks that dragged on from summer 1951 until 1953, while fighting continued. Lewis Milestone's film criticizes political maneuvering and lack of concern for soldiers' lives. The story involves the men of King Company sent to "mop up" on Pork Chop Hill. It comments on the futility of that final battle in light of the impasse between American and Chinese negotiators at the table in Panmunjom. Gregory Peck produced and starred as Lt. Clemons in the film

based an account by S.L.A. Marshall (USAR). The production had the cooperation of the U.S. army. The film seeks to redress a disservice done by not commemorating the efforts of those who fought and died in Korea, especially in the final battle.

The first twenty minutes establish the major tensions of the film: battling continues as men talk; soldiers are antagonistic and unwilling to die in the last battle. The first voice heard is that of a Chinese Psychological Propaganda Operations Specialist (Viraj Amonsin). Broadcasting by loudspeaker, he later taunts King Company as they begin ascent of Pork Chop Hill, telling them of Easy Company, "a Company wiped out for a political whim." He says, "This is not your fight, but only one to please the politicians." He plays taps in honor of the dead—of the past, present and future.

Minutes twenty through fifty cover the efforts to take the hill, and touch on issues such as fragging, desertion, and friendly fire. A soldier wonders where the push-button war is, and Clemons responds that they are the push buttons. Clemon's request for food, water, and medical supplies is not received. Battalion headquarters determines that they have the hill wrapped up and refuses to reinforce the company.

At an hour in, the camera pans the field of dead GIs. Clemons converses with the commander of George Company, who has been ordered to withdraw his men. He notes that one cannot put a higher value on something than a man dying for it: "The values change sometimes, maybe when the first man dies." Clemons asks about negotiations and learns that they are still at it. Ironically, a U.S. public relations specialist arrives seeking cheerful news for the folks at home.

References to home pervade the dialogue from beginning to end. At an hour and twenty minutes, Clemons talks to Franklin (James Edwards I), an African-American soldier, who tries to flee the battle and asks why he should want to die for Korea when he has little at home worth protecting. He returns to battle when he learns that only twenty-five King Company troops remain alive. The Chinese propaganda specialist plays an American tune to stir longing for home.

Pork Chop Hill © 1959 Gregory Peck



Members of the U.S. Negotiating team show their frustration at the negotiation table in Panmunjom.

Pork Chop Hill © 1959 Gregory Peck



Chinese negotiators respond with cool disdain to charges from the U.S. team.

Pork Chop Hill © 1959 Gregory Peck



U.S. soldiers gather for mess in front of a barracks described as the Korean Hilton Hotel.

Pork Chop Hill © 1959 Gregory Peck



The Chinese Psychological Propaganda Specialist threatens the men of King Company with stories of another company "wiped out for a political whim."



Clueless about the dire circumstances on Pork Chop Hill, a Public Relations Specialist asks for some good news for the "folks back home."

Pork Chop Hill © 1959 Gregory Peck

At one hour twenty-five minutes, Clemons informs headquarters that “Unless we can be reinforced we should be withdrawn.” He is informed that battalion headquarters does not have the authority to order withdrawal or reinforcement. The scene segues back to Panmunjom, and the paradox unfolds. The Chinese and U.S. troops battle over a piece of ground that has meaning only symbolically, as a bargaining tool during the negotiations. An American Admiral (Carl Benton Reid) notes of the Chinese negotiators that “These aren’t just Orientals, they’re communists.” The fight has become a test of wills; men die as “politicians” continue the impasse. The Chinese will expend human lives just to claim Pork Chop Hill, yet admit it has no real value to them.

The question is whether Americans will do the same. The sad answer appears to be yes, because this Korean soil has become emblematic of nation and home. The enemy there threatens the security and values of home.

Near the end, Clemons is heard in a voiceover, comparing the battle to those commemorated at Bunker Hill and Gettysburg. This battle will not be commemorated, yet the men who fought there know what they have done: “Millions live in freedom because of what they did.” Ironically, within the U.S., the war in Korea became known (or unknown) as the Forgotten War. Sadly, as Koreans continue to struggle toward reunification, for portions of that population, freedom remains elusive. ■

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

Film questions:

These films present themes that move beyond the Korean War. Consider the following questions with regard to current issues in international relations.

1. How do these films depict America’s role in the world?
2. How are other nations represented?
3. How might these films have cautioned against or supported U.S. engagement in Vietnam?
4. What human rights should be extended to prisoners of war?
5. In what ways did national alliances complicate or escalate this war?
6. How has the inconclusive armistice shaped modern day circumstances in the two Koreas?

Steel Helmet

1. How does it depict the relationship between Koreans and Americans?
2. In what ways is the film supportive, antagonistic, or ambivalent toward this war?
3. The film closes with the message: “There is no end to this story.” Does that imply that war is inevitable?

Retreat, Hell!

1. McDermid changes in these battles. Has the change been for better or worse? Explain.
2. Consider the intended audience and time of release. Why is the story of a defeat recounted in this manner?

Men of the Fighting Lady

1. What are the consequences of using technologies of destruction?
2. Does superior technology assure victory in war?

Battle Hymn

3. How does the film explain civilian casualties?
4. How does it encourage international understanding?
5. Students might want to investigate the topic of war orphans and adoption.

Pork Chop Hill

1. The major antagonists are not only on the battlefield. Who are they and how are they portrayed?
2. Does the film support the idea of a growing Communist threat? Or, is another type of threat suggested?

Questions about film techniques:

1. How and when is music used in the film?
2. Who is telling the story?
3. What icons or symbols are used to depict Korea or America?
4. What words are used to describe friends or enemies?
5. When are close-ups used?
6. When is a wide angle lens used?

FILM PRODUCTION DETAILS

Steel Helmet (1951) 84 minutes
Screenplay and direction by Samuel Fuller
Writers Guild of America award for the best low-budget film of 1952¹⁷
Lippert Pictures Inc.

Retreat, Hell! (1952) 95 minutes
Directed by Joseph H. Lewis
Screenplay and story: Ted Sherdeman and Milton Speerling
U.S. Marine Corp cooperated in the production
United States Pictures: Warner Bros. Distributors

Men of the Fighting Lady (1954) 80 minutes
Directed by Andrew Marton
Based on “The Case of the Blind Pilot” by Comdr. Harry A. Burns, USN, and “The Forgotten Heroes of Korea” by James Michener.¹⁸
Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer

Battle Hymn (1957) 109 minutes
Directed by Douglas Sirk
Based on an autobiographical account of Dean Hess, also technical adviser



U.S. Army cooperation
Golden Globe Award in 1957 for promoting international understanding
MCA/Universal International Pictures

Pork Chop Hill (1959) 98 minutes
Director Lewis Milestone (*All Quiet on the Western Front*)
Based on a book by Brigadier General S.L.A. Marshall

Screenplay by James R. Webb
Producer: Gregory Peck, Melville Productions
United Artists Distributors

The Korean War: Our Time In Hell (1997) 101 minutes
Executive Producers: Chris Wheeler, Sonny Hutchinson
The Discovery Channel

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NOTES

1. For an illuminating discussion of the historical debates, unclear aims, and the often difficult issue of recognizing friend from foe, see Steven Hugh Lee, *The Korean War* (London: Longman, 2001).
2. The feature film and TV series M*A*S*H employed the historical setting of the Korean War to critique U.S. engagement in Vietnam. Because they appeared after the U.S. had committed itself again to war in Asia, they are beyond the scope of this essay.
3. Brock Garland, *War Movies* (New York: Facts on File Publications, 1987), 12–13.
4. See Lary May, *The Big Tomorrow: Hollywood and the Politics of the American Way* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 262, 264.
5. The doctrine originated as a means of extending financial and military aid to Greece and Turkey, but was also employed in other areas of the world.
6. *Encyclopedia of American History*, 7th ed., Jeffrey B. Morris and Richard B. Morris, et al, eds. (Harper Collins Publishers, 1996), 441, 1060.
7. Peter Lowe, *The Origins of the Korean War* (London and New York: Longman, 1997), 18–25.
8. Colin Shindler, *Hollywood Goes to War: Films and American Society 1939–1952* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979), 132.
9. Steven Hugh Lee, *The Korean War* (London: Longman, 2001), 49–57.
10. Steven Jay Rubin, *Combat Films 1945–1970* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1981), x.
11. See John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986).
12. The film was also known as *We Came Out Fighting and You Can't Stop the Marines*. See internet movie database, www.imdb.com.
13. See Jim Wilson, *Retreat, Hell!*, New York: Morrow, 1988.
14. Many of these stories were featured in the popular press. See, Comdr. Harry A. Burns, "The Case of the Blind Pilot," *Saturday Evening Post*, November 29, 1954, vol. 225, 42, 66–69; and James Michener, "Forgotten Heroes of Korea," *Saturday Evening Post*, May 10, 1952, vol. 224, 19–21, 124–128.

15. The story of Hess was also serialized in the popular press. See, H. H. Martin, "Pious Killer of Korea," *Saturday Evening Post*, July 21, 1951, 26; B. Stapleton, "Little Orphan Island: Cheju-do, Korea," *Colliers*, Sept. 20, 1952, 15–18; N.K. Perry and W.J. Lederer, "Operation Kid Lift: Korean Orphans," *Ladies Home Journal*, Dec. 1952, 46–49.
16. Dean Hess, *Battle Hymn* (Buckeye Aviation Book Co, 1987), 5, 7.
17. Ernest Gigilo, *Here's Looking At You*, (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 164.
18. Comdr. Harry A. Burns, "The Case of the Blind Pilot," *Saturday Evening Post*, November 29, 1954, vol. 225, 42, 66–69; and James Michener, "Forgotten Heroes of Korea," *Saturday Evening Post*, May 10, 1952, vol. 224, 19–21, 124–128.

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Editor's Note: The feature films discussed in this article are available at www.amazon.com and can be currently purchased for less than \$20.00.