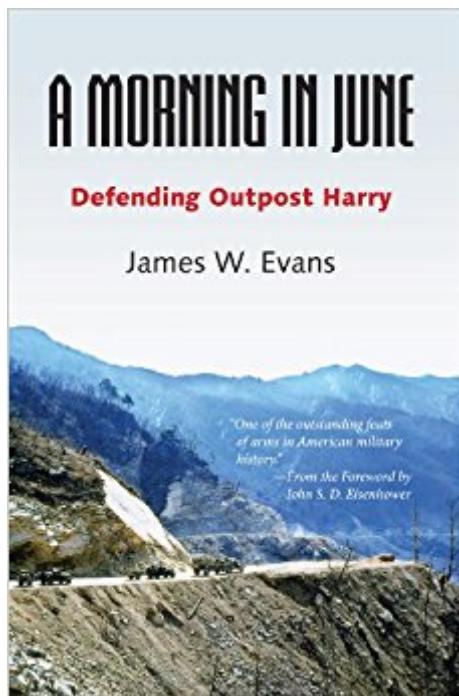


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A Morning In June: Defending Outpost Harry



Synopsis

By June 1953 the Korean War, marked at the outset by extremely fluid advances and retreats up and down the peninsula, had settled into position warfare very near the original pre-war demarcation line between North and South Korea. At this point both sides were fighting to win a peace, to achieve incremental advantages that could be translated into gains at the peace negotiations in Panmunjom. These last days of the war saw savage battles for control of important local terrain features, and in the trench warfare of the Chorwon Valley a young U.S. Army lieutenant was assigned to lead an infantry company charged with holding Outpost Harry against a determined Chinese assault. The battle devolved into hand-to-hand combat during a period of constant, intense fighting that lasted two days. The author, although seriously wounded that night, refused evacuation and remained on the hill to successfully lead his company in defense of the outpost. It wasn't romantic; it wasn't chivalrous; and many died or were badly wounded. Some of the survivors never fully overcame the mental and physical damage they suffered during the nightmare. With this book, one of those scarred by that experience recounts the events of the battle and his lifelong efforts to deal with the residual horrors. The Korean Conflict may be called "the forgotten war" by some, but not by those who were on the front lines.

Book Information

Hardcover: 248 pages

Publisher: University Alabama Press; 1St Edition edition (April 27, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0817316698

ISBN-13: 978-0817316693

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 0.9 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 7 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,848,916 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #50 in Books > History > Military > Korean War > Personal Narratives #142 in Books > History > Military > Korean War > Campaigns #166 in Books > History > Asia > Korea > South

Customer Reviews

"A heartfelt, honest work. Mr. Evans writes in a humble, straightforward style reminiscent of some of the best Civil War soldier memoirs. He gives the reader a "you-are-there" feel in the book. Indeed, through the author's narrative I could almost feel the cold of

bone-chilling winds coming down from Siberia; hear the shrill whistles, burp gun bursts, and yells of the sea of Chinese infantry surging toward Company A's positions on Outpost Harry. . . . A Morning in June is not for the faint of heart; it pulls no punches in its description of raw hand-to-hand combat almost prehistoric in its savagery. •Richard D. Goldblatt, retired Army Intelligence Officer

James W. Evans served as a U.S. Army infantry officer in Korea in 1952-53 and received the Silver Star for his leadership of Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Regimental Combat Team, which also earned the Distinguished Unit Citation for their defense of Outpost Harry. Following a civilian career in the computer industry, he currently resides in Williamsburg, Virginia. John S. D. Eisenhower attained the rank of Brigadier General in the U.S. Army before retiring in 1975 and then served as U.S. Ambassador to Belgium under President Nixon. The son of Mamie and Dwight D. Eisenhower, he is best known for his military histories, especially *Bitter Woods* (on the Battle of the Bulge) and *So Far from God* (on the Mexican-American War).

Even as a well-educated Infantry Officer, I had never heard of Outpost Harry. In short, Outpost Harry was Pork Chop Hill times ten. This book is about the Korean War experiences of the author, culminating in the horrific experience in defending OP Harry for one night, and losing practically his entire company doing it. The amount of firepower directed at that hill by both sides was incredible: at times artillery rounds hitting every half second. Thousands of Chinese troops assaulting and dying. The carnage unbelievable. The courage of the men on both sides unbelievable. The book is not smoothly written, so don't look for a Pulitzer Prize. It is a good read, though. The content, however, is stunning and riveting; and begs the question: why have we forgotten the bravery of the men in this conflict? Every veteran should read this. If every American read it, they would better understand why veterans feel as they do; and Americans; no matter how deep their patriotism, would have an even deeper respect for their veterans.

A Morning in June is a great read. After a couple pages you learn the military acronyms and delve into military life during the Korean Conflict. James Evans stays away from dry recounting of events by inserting his own opinions and observations. The events of Outpost Harry were brutal and the reader truly gets an understanding of what kind of war this was. Highly recommend for military as well as history buffs.

I WAS A LIEUTENANT OF ARTILLERY IN THE THIRD INFANTRY DIVISION IN KOREA AT THE TIME THAT THE BATTLE(S) FOR OUTPOST HARRY OCCURRED. I WAS IN CHARGE OF A GROUP OF M-39s (TRACKED PERSONNEL CARRIERS ON LIGHT TANK CHASSIS) WHICH PROVIDED SUPPORT FOR THE INFANTRY UNITS ON OUTPOST HARRY. I WENT TO THE OUTPOST SEVERAL TIMES DURING THESE DAYS IN JUNE, AND FROM MY VIEW THE BOOK IS VERY ACCURATE AND REFLECTS THE CONDITIONS ON THAT SMALL HILL IN GREAT DETAIL. IT WAS A HORRENDOUS STRUGGLE FOR THOSE INFANTRY AND ENGINEER UNITS COMMITTED TO THE BATTLE, AND RESULTED IN EXTREMELY HIGH CASUALTY RATES ON BOTH SIDES. IT DEFINED MY COMBAT EXPERIENCE IN KOREA, AND IT IS OFTEN IN MY THOUGHTS THESE MANY YEARS LATER.

I'm not sure I can write a review that says it better than Joseph W Parker's review (see this page). I don't have military experience myself but I am the son of a Second World War army vet and have a son who saw combat in Afghanistan. What I like about this book is the fact that it's a first person account written about the less well known latter stages of the Korean War. Evans clearly served his country with honor and seems to write honestly about his experiences in Korea. He also deals candidly with the after effects of his war service, now known as PTSD. At the same time, I did not feel that the writing was all that engaging and Evans seems to repeat his thoughts at times. I listened to the Audible Audio version of this title and I also found the narration to be somewhat distracting. In fairness to the narrator, I believe part of my dissatisfaction with the narration was due to the author's frequent use of radio transcripts inserted throughout the account of the fighting for Outpost Harry. I would recommend the book, which also includes a number of maps and photos, over the audio version of this book.

The author, James Evans, writes about his ordeal as commander of Able Company of the 5th RCT attached to the 3rd ID in the defense of Outpost Harry in the closing days of the Korean War. Outpost Harry was on ridge near the village of Chorwon, 60 miles northeast of Seoul. It was part of a series of outposts along this ridgeline that the Chinese had been attacking in past weeks. The US had given up a number of posts recently but 3rd Division was ordered to defend Harry at all costs. It was a relatively small engagement compared to earlier days but it was a vicious one where both sides would not retreat. It's claimed that at the height of the battle in a 24 hour period more 105mm artillery shells were fired than in any other day of the war from a single location. Outpost Harry wasn't much of an outpost containing only a trench outline which the Chinese had already gauged

the range and a sandbag enclosure. It was old fashion trench warfare where the invading Chinese will penetrate the line and the men of Able and the supporting Dog companies will have to fight hand to hand for survival. James Evans was a lieutenant who had just arrived in Korea in March and before describing the battle discusses his initiation period with his company, the RCT and Division. The author has a slow and deliberate style of writing which will get mixed reviews. Some will like it and some won't. For me, the opening chapters were a little tedious but when describing the battle his deliberate prose was appreciated as he describes the eight day battle in June. Able Company was greatly outnumbered by a determined Chinese force who wanted the outpost and ridgeline for strategic reasons and the author describes the harrowing experience that he and the rest of the men went through on top of that hill for those eight days. The Chinese were also trying to intimidate the UN forces at the negotiation table for more beneficial terms for the Communists. There are a few simple maps but what really helps the reader are the many great photos that show the battle area and surrounding area. These photos show the wilderness and low mountainous area and clearly show that without the strong support of artillery this isolated outpost might have fallen. In the closing chapters, the author states the costs of the battle and since it was within a month of ceasefire he also describes the difficulties that some men experienced in coping with the war and going home and transitioning back to civilian life. Enclosed is an Appendix, Notes section, a Bibliography and Index. The Bibliography contains a few general purpose books on the war but most of the titles concern the 5th RCT. This is a very personal telling by the author; it doesn't have the precision or scale of a David Glantz book but anybody interested in the Korean War or near suicidal missions should consider this book.

The character of a hero. This book about the American defense of Outpost Harry near the end of the Korean War in 1953 is a gem. The author won the Silver Star for his leadership of a U.S. Army infantry company. He demonstrated real courage in writing this book, sharing the complex struggle he faced during the conflict and after his return to civilian life. Any politician who plans to send our young men and women into harm's way should first read this book and ponder. The prose is a mildly sluggish at times, but the stark candor of the narrative of life on the front lines makes up for any short comings. This story really makes one grateful for the sacrifice of our nation's defenders. John A. Anderson III Author of *The JÄger Journal*

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