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A Very Long Weekend: The Army National Guard in Korea, 1950-1953

William Berebitsky

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Korea 1950. Days after an ill-prepared, under-strength, United States Army went into combat, the call went out for the nation's premier reserve force, the Army National Guard. This is their story. The story of combat veterans and underage boys who comprised the forty-three Guard units that served in Korea. Given little or no unit training, the first Guard units arrived at Pusan in January 1951, still wearing their summer uniforms. When the Chinese launched their massive spring offensive that April, the Guard was there. Eight Guard artillery battalions played a crucial role in stopping the Chinese at the outskirts of Seoul. As the Guard's artillery poured tons of steel on the advancing enemy, Guard truckers kept moving over roads and bridges built by Guard engineer units. Meanwhile, fearing a Russian invasion of Japan, General Douglas MacArthur had requested National Guard divisions to defend the islands. Rushed to Japan, the 40th and 45th Guard divisions were the only major units on the islands for nine months. From there, they went into combat in Korea at such places as Outpost Eerie, T-bone Hill, and Old Baldy.

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