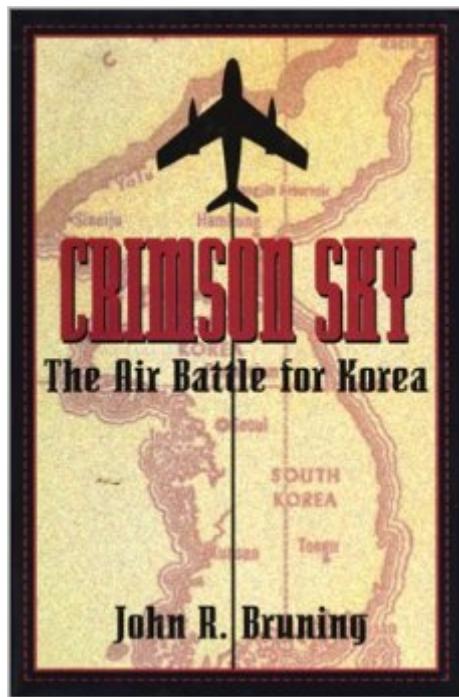


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# Crimson Sky: The Air Battle For Korea



## **Synopsis**

Based, in part, on recently revealed interviews with Soviet pilots, this account examines 20 of the most interesting aerial actions of the Korean War - a war which was the proving ground for a new generation of tactics and technology.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

If you enjoy reading gritty, in your face, first person accounts of pilots in life and death struggles then this is your book. As I was reading this book it became clear to me that the author had spent a tremendous amount of time in research and conducted extensive interviews with Korean War pilots and it shows in the detail and depth of his accounts. I read a great deal of history and it is always refreshing to find a historian who explores new angles and ideas. As a real bonus Bruning makes this an exciting book to read, I laughed at some parts and nearly cried in others. If you have an interest in the air war over Korea or just in air warfare in general do not hesitate to add this book to your library. I certainly enjoyed this book.

The author stated that he wrote "Crimson Sky" to remember Korean War aviators as the United States approached the 50th anniversary of the conflict's beginning. Mr. Bruning has done a good job. He has interviewed veterans and put their stories into the book in a fast-paced, you-are-there style. Bruning used episodes from the war to point out important chapters in the history of military aviation. For example, Bruning's first and second chapters are entitled "The First Jet Kills" and "The Birth of Combat SAR," respectively. Particularly worthwhile is the author's penultimate chapter,

which deals with Soviet involvement in the Korean air war. At times, Bruning's episodic approach causes the narrative to seem disjointed. In addition, the author could have said more about the night air war, and some mention might have been made of UN pilots who were not American. Those things are the worst things that can be said about "Crimson Sky," however. The book is well-thought out and well written--well worth four stars.

The first person accounts of the action are riveting. Being new to studying the Korean War the book helped me get a better understanding of the conflict and what our pilots faced. If you like first person accounts, then this would be a good book for you. The only disappointment I had was not enough "big picture" information and I felt that at times the book skipped through the war, just focusing on a few random battles. It left me wanting more, which is both good and bad.

Not much has been written about the Air War in Korea, and is it even more difficult finding a book that at least tries to cover the complete spectrum of air warfare that happened during these very long and hard four years between 1950 and 1953, and which encompasses so much more than the Sabre v/s MIG 15 dogfights. Accordingly, this book was actually a nice surprise, since the author presents in episodes the stories of veterans he interviewed in a fast-paced, you-are-there style. The stories are well chosen, in that as a whole they show the full spectrum of the many very different aspects of air warfare in Korea, some of which were actually invented there. The drawback in this format is that at times it feels rather disjointed, and some interesting issues are only passingly mentioned if at all (like the Navy air attacks on ships and other naval targets). The book itself is printed in the cheap paperback format, with a few small B&W pictures that actually do not add much to the book, but which is consistent with the rather cheap price. The text is printed in a rather small font size, and using small page margins, thus the page count does not really reflect the content (I would estimate 300+ pages printed in a regular format). This book is not the definitive history of the aerial warfare in Korea, for it also completely leaves out the contribution made by other UN Air Forces, but it is a very good and commendable attempt at showing a more general view of the fierce fighting over Korean skies, a history that is all but forgotten these days, eclipsed mainly by the huge amounts of publications related to the Vietnam war - as such, this is a highly recommended addition to your Korean Air War library.

This book offers a very informative exposition on air battles that happened during the Korean War, a conflict of which most Americans know very little. Although the book may be small in size, it is big in

terms of explaining the air war from a combat aviator's perspective and further expands on how combat aviation evolved and adjusted to deal with the Communist threat that proved to be both formidable and lethal to the US pilots who fought in the conflict. This exposition is further balanced by the human element of the brave pilots who overcame hardships and put themselves in harms way because they felt it was the right thing to do. The author pulls no punches in explaining the fate of many of the pilots who, after being shot down, were killed, captured, and tortured by an enemy that placed little value on human life. It is a very compelling book that doesn't glorify war, but shows that when Americans are pushed, we push back, but do so honorably.

First, I commend the author for writing a book about a little explored topic. Many books tell of the land warfare in Korea, but few detail the air battles involving Mig 15s and Sabrejets F-86s. This book attempts to do this, and I think succeeds in showing the violence of the air war. The author breaks his book into chapters detailing the exploits of individuals waging this battle. Unfortunately, it tries to cover too much in a very short book. One gets a good sense of the first year of the air battles, but nothing of the last two years. This is a good, though average read. The material covered is unique. I just think the author tried to be too broad in his historical approach and personal stories, and didn't do either very well. An average read about a little written part of the Korean War.

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