



Combat Ready?: The Eighth U.S. Army on the Eve of the Korean War (Williams-Ford Texas A&M University Military History Series)

Thomas E. Hanson

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In the decades since the “forgotten war” in Korea, conventional wisdom has held that the Eighth Army consisted largely of poorly trained, undisciplined troops who fled in terror from the onslaught of the Communist forces. Now, military historian Thomas E. Hanson argues that the generalizations historians and fellow soldiers have used regarding these troops do little justice to the tens of thousands of soldiers who worked to make themselves and their army ready for war.

In Hanson's careful study of combat preparedness in the Eighth Army from 1949 to the outbreak of hostilities in 1950, he concedes that the U.S. soldiers sent to Korea suffered gaps in their professional preparation, from missing and broken equipment to unevenly trained leaders at every level of command. But after a year of progressive, focused, and developmental collective training—based largely on the lessons of combat in World War II—these soldiers expected to defeat the Communist enemy.

By recognizing the constraints under which the Eighth Army operated, Hanson asserts that scholars and soldiers will be able to discard what Douglas MacArthur called the "pernicious myth" of the Eighth Army's professional, physical, and moral ineffectiveness.

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