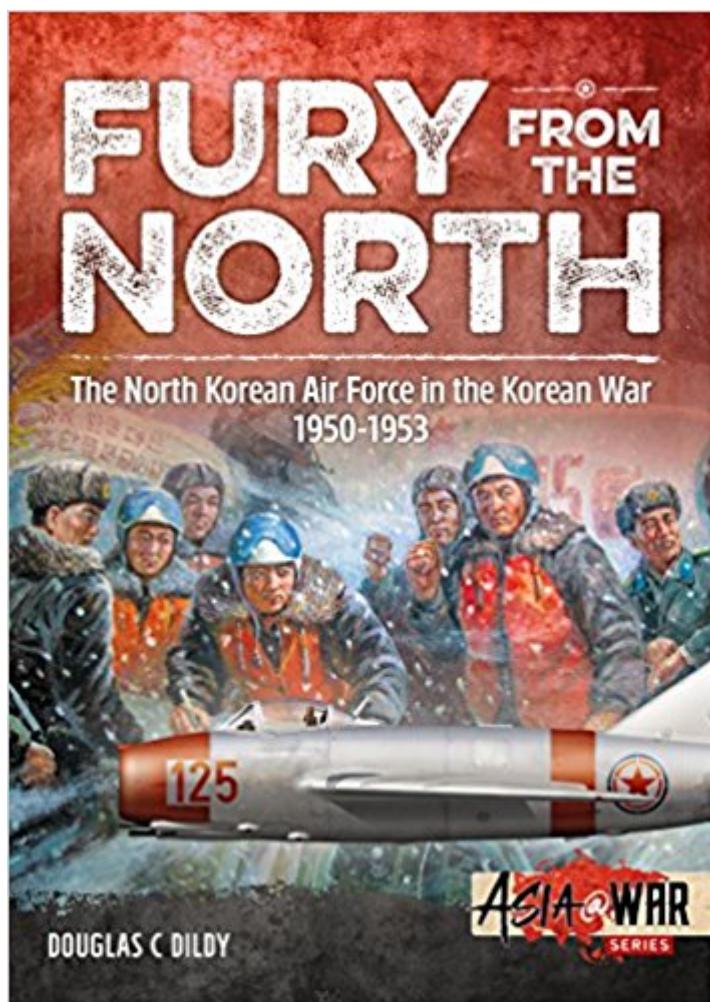


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Fury From The North: North Korean Air Force In The Korean War, 1950-1953 (Asia@War)



Synopsis

It was almost exactly 15.00 hours local time, on 25 June 1950, when nine Yakovlev Yak-9P fighters of the North Korea’s Korean People’s Air Force (KPAF) simultaneously attacked Seoul International Airport and the Kimpo Airfield outside Seoul, the capitol of South Korea. In the course of their attacks, the Yaks shot up ground installations and strafed one of Douglas C-54 transports of the US Air Force involved in evacuation of US citizens from the war-stricken country. The Yaks returned to finish off the C-54 at Kimpo around 19.00. Thus began the aerial component of the Korean War, which was to last until mid-1953. While dozens of accounts about this air war have been published over the time, nearly all of these are concentrating on its most spectacular segment: air combats between jet fighters of two primary belligerents: North American F-86 Sabres of the US Air Force (USAF) and Mikoyan i Gurevich MiG-15s of the Soviet Air Force (V-VS). On the contrary, the story of KPAF’s coming into being and its involvement in the Korean War remain entirely unknown. Certainly enough, the small service was virtually wiped out of the skies in a matter of few weeks after the start of that conflict. Therefore, the impression is that it never took part in the Korean War again. Actually, the KPAF – the backgrounds of which can be traced back to the times only three months after the Japanese capitulation that ended the World War II – was rebuilt and even made a comeback: re-equipped with piston-engined fighters of Soviet origin already by the end of 1950, it went a step further and converted to jets just a year later. This is a story of the often problematic coming into being of the KPAF. Clearly, building a modern, effective air force was always a daunting undertaking – even in the late 1940s when there was abundance of combat aircraft left over from the World War II. Nevertheless, the communist government of North Korea and its airmen never stopped trying. Surprisingly enough – especially for a military service of a staunchly communist and underdeveloped country of the 1940s – it was greatly bolstered by efforts of a single wealthy man that provided installations necessary for education of future pilots and ground personnel.

Book Information

Series: Asia@War

Paperback: 88 pages

Publisher: Helion and Company (May 19, 2018)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1912390337

ISBN-13: 978-1912390335

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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Douglas C. Dildy retired from the US Air Force (USAF) after 26 years of service, during which he flew McDonnell Douglas F-15 Eagle interceptors, commanded the 32nd Fighter Squadron and was vice-commander of the 33rd Fighter Wing. A graduate of the USAF Academy as a history major, and having a masters degree in Political Science, Dildy has written a dozen of books on aerial warfare. He is a feature writer for Aviation Classics, an associate editor of Logbook and a regular contributor to the Small Air Forces Observer magazine. Doug lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

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