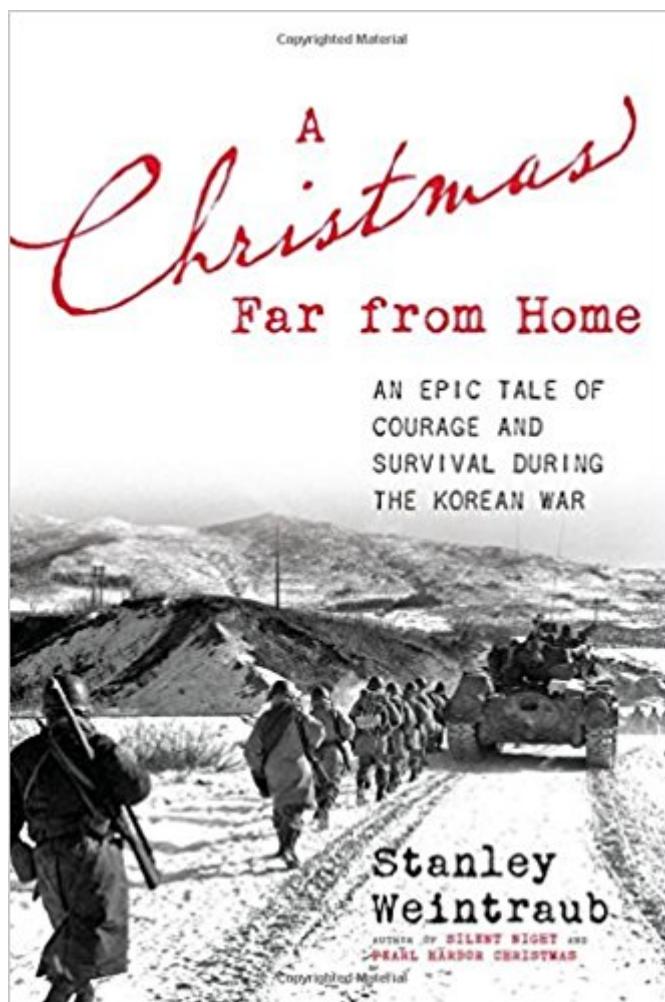


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# A Christmas Far From Home: An Epic Tale Of Courage And Survival During The Korean War



## Synopsis

The day after Thanksgiving, five months into the Korean War, General Douglas MacArthur flew to American positions in the north and grandly announced an end-the-war-by-Christmas offensive, despite recent evidence of intervention by Mao's Chinese troops. Marching north in plunging temperatures, General Edward Almond's X Corps, which included a Marine division under the able leadership of General Oliver Smith, encountered little resistance. But thousands of Chinese, who had infiltrated across the frozen Yalu River, were lying in wait and would soon trap tens of thousands of US troops. Led by the Marines, an overwhelmed X Corps evacuated the frigid, mountainous Chosin Reservoir vastness and fought a swarming enemy and treacherous snow and ice to reach the coast. Weather, terrain, Chinese firepower, and a 4,000-foot chasm made escape seem impossible in the face of a vanishing Christmas. But endurance and sacrifice prevailed, and the last troopships weighed anchor on Christmas Eve. In the tradition of his *Silent Night* and *Pearl Harbor Christmas*, Stanley Weintraub presents another gripping narrative of a wartime Christmas season. A Military Book Club main selection

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Praise for Stanley Weintraub's previous wartime Christmas books *Pearl Harbor Christmas* "Erudite, sweeping, and contemplative"; *Classic Weintraub*; *Kirkus Reviews* "A fascinating account of Churchill's history-making visit"; *Norfolk Virginian-Pilot* "An authoritative account...[Weintraub's] ability to meld together so many disparate elements...in such a short, swift-moving book is exemplary." *Richmond Times-Dispatch*

Stanley Weintraub is an award-winning author of notable histories and biographies, including the bestselling books on wartime Christmas seasons Pearl Harbor Christmas and Silent Night. A National Book Award finalist and Guggenheim Fellow, he earned a Bronze Star as a young officer in the Korean War. He lives in Newark, Delaware.

There have been a number of accounts of this classic battle in the early part of the Korean war, and I've read all, or at least most of them. It's an account of some huge mistakes by General MacArthur and his "fair haired boy", Major General Almond, that resulted in what could have been a disaster for the First Marine Division but due to the leadership of it's Commander, Major General O.P. Smith, did not. This one doesn't go into as much detail as some of the others, but I still read some facts here that I hadn't read before. It is, IMHO, very well written and well worth the price and the time it takes to read it, for anyone who is interested.

This book is just a rehash of what some other authors have written. Several of them glossed over how crucial this Task-force was to saving Hagaru and the 1st Marine Division and only interviewed people that didn't complete the mission. Weintraub makes the same mistake. He calls the Marines that fought through 12 roadblocks and thousands of Chinese that held all the high ground survivors that bulked up the defenses at Hagaru. Well these survivors attacked and held East Hill the next day against a regiment of Chinese. I was a machine-gun squad leader in this battle and suggest the readers read Give Me Tomorrow and view Bloody George at the Chosin Reservoir on the American Heroes channel for the real story.

Weintraub may be a respected military historian, but his writing is atrocious. I'm not sure how he made it through freshman English. His prose is dense and convoluted. He never met a comma he didn't like. His writing reminds me of the academic style where the writer is bursting with the desire to tell you everything he knows and show you how smart he is. Here is an example from this book: "As night fell on the 28th, the Chinese, as a light snow came down, attacked Hagaru, fourteen miles below Yudam-ni, from all sides." (page 91) This guy needs to read a little Hemmingway before writing anything else - or perhaps, he might consider, among other things, not the least of which would be a purchase of Strunk and White, long recognized as a great tutorial for writers, getting a more competent editor. Needless to say I won't be buying any more of his books.

Enjoyed this read, I'm a Korean Veteran.

this story has been told many times but I find this to be the best written thus far. I don't know why I continue to read of this debacle because my blood pressure rises along with the number of stupid decisions made by Senior members of the military. My one complaint is that the author mixes up the leadership of the fifth and seventh marines at times. Murray commanded the Fifth and Litzenberg commanded the Seventh.

This is a tick-tock style of reporting, I didn't get a real sense of story or a great narrative structure. Kudos to Mr. Weintraub for collecting and sharing this history, but it wasn't a particularly fascinating or engaging read. Sorry.

It came fast and was what I expected.

Weintraub has written several war accounts from various conflicts where each is centered around Christmas time. I enjoy that theme, if you will, but most of all I find his books very well researched, interesting and genuine page turners.

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