

# Selling The Korean War: Unveiling the Untold Story

The Korean War, also known as the "Forgotten War," holds a significant place in the history books. It was a conflict that shaped the geopolitical landscape of the world, yet it somehow failed to capture the same level of attention as other major wars. Many things contributed to this phenomenon, but one aspect stands out – the expertise in selling the war.

As with any major military operation, the Korean War needed the backing and support of the general population. Government officials, the military, and the media had to work together to rally public opinion behind this cause. The Korean War was, in a way, sold to the people, packaged in a way that would make it more palatable and easier to justify. This article sheds light on the various strategies employed to sell the Korean War and exposes the untold stories behind it.

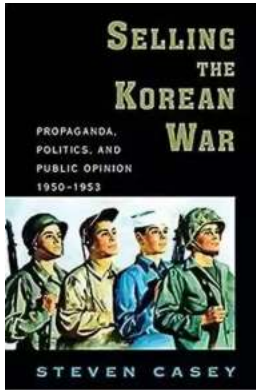
## A Propaganda War

In any war, propaganda plays a pivotal role in influencing public opinion. The Korean War was no exception. It became a battle of words, images, and ideas. The government, determined to secure American support, utilized various tools to sell the war. Films, posters, newsreels, and even comic strips were all used to paint a specific picture of the war, one that would evoke strong emotions and stir patriotic fervor.

### **Selling the Korean War: Propaganda, Politics, and Public Opinion in the United States, 1950-1953**

by Steven Casey(1st Edition, Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5



Language	: English
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Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
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The media became a powerful vehicle for shaping public opinion. Journalists and photographers were embedded with the troops, capturing images and stories that were specifically selected and presented to the public. These stories were often crafted to evoke sympathy and generate support, showcasing the bravery of soldiers or the plight of innocent civilians.

One notable example was the case of Private Eddie Slovik, the only American soldier executed for desertion since the American Civil War. His death was heavily publicized, serving as a deterrent to potential deserters and reinforcing the idea of patriotism and duty.

## **The Role of Hollywood**

Hollywood, known for its ability to shape narratives, was heavily involved in selling the Korean War. Movie studios produced numerous films that depicted the conflict as a just cause and showcased the heroism of American soldiers. Titles like "The Steel Helmet" and "Men in War" transformed the war into a thrilling display of bravery, sacrifice, and determination.

Stars like John Wayne, who had played crucial roles in World War II movies, jumped on board to further promote the war. Wayne starred in the film "Jet Pilot" and actively supported the war effort, becoming a symbol of patriotic duty. His influence reached far and wide, leaving an indelible mark on public perception.

## **The Booming Economy and the Military-Industrial Complex**

The Korean War had another aspect that made it easier to sell – the economic climate at the time. Post-World War II America was experiencing a booming economy, and the conflict provided an outlet for continued growth. The military-industrial complex saw the war as an opportunity to produce more weaponry, thus stimulating economic growth. This dynamic further drove the narrative that the war was necessary for national security and prosperity.

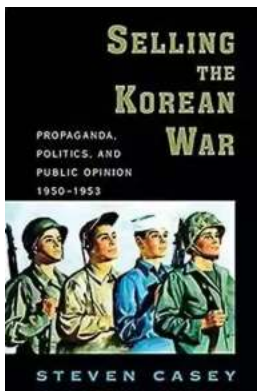
The government actively promoted the economic benefits of the war, encouraging citizens to support it for the sake of their own financial well-being. The prospect of job creation and economic growth proved influential in rallying public support.

## **The Aftermath**

As the war progressed and the casualties mounted, public support began to wane. The constant images of violence and the rising death toll made it harder to maintain the narrative that the war was just and necessary. The Korean War had been sold effectively, but the reality on the ground started seeping into public consciousness, challenging the carefully crafted image.

Eventually, the war ended with an armistice and a stalemate, leaving a divided Korean Peninsula that still stands today. The Korean War may have been forgotten to some degree, but its impact remains profound. The strategies employed to sell the war set a precedent for future conflicts, highlighting the power of propaganda and media manipulation in shaping public perception.

The Korean War was not only a military and political struggle; it was a battle to win the hearts and minds of the people. The selling of the war was a carefully orchestrated effort employing various propaganda techniques. The role of Hollywood, the media, and the expectation of economic growth all played crucial roles in shaping public opinion and support. Although the Korean War may have been forgotten and overshadowed by other conflicts, its significance lies not only in the battles fought, but also in the lessons learned about the art of selling wars.



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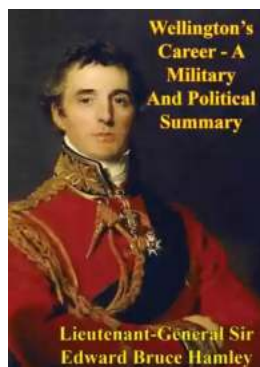


How presidents spark and sustain support for wars remains an enduring and significant problem. Korea was the first limited war the U.S. experienced in the contemporary period - the first recent war fought for something less than total victory. In *Selling the Korean War*, Steven Casey explores how President Truman and then Eisenhower tried to sell it to the American public.

Based on a massive array of primary sources, Casey subtly explores the government's selling activities from all angles. He looks at the halting and

sometimes chaotic efforts of Harry Truman and Dean Acheson, Dwight Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles. He examines the relationships that they and their subordinates developed with a host of other institutions, from Congress and the press to Hollywood and labor. And he assesses the complex and fraught interactions between the military and war correspondents in the battlefield theater itself.

From high politics to bitter media spats, Casey guides the reader through the domestic debates of this messy, costly war. He highlights the actions and calculations of colorful figures, including Senators Robert Taft and Joseph McCarthy, and General Douglas MacArthur. He details how the culture and work routines of Congress and the media influenced political tactics and daily news stories. And he explores how different phases of the war threw up different problems - from the initial disasters in the summer of 1950 to the giddy prospects of victory in October 1950, from the massive defeats in the wake of China's massive intervention to the lengthy period of stalemate fighting in 1952 and 1953.



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