

More than Books

A new reason to “Just ask for it!”

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Chances are we’ll either want to either buy it for our library or we can borrow it on your behalf through the statewide interlibrary loan system. Just ask for it! Customer requests are our highest priority.

On my television stand

I am watching “Chosin,” a documentary about the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir, fought in the winter of 1950 over some of the roughest terrain and the coldest winter weather of the Korean War. Both the film’s director and co-writer are former Marines. In addition to searching through 300 hours of non-too-well organized archival footage in the National Archives in Washington D.C., the pair spent 14 months traveling around the United States interviewing survivors of the Battle of Chosin.

To my mind, it is the personal narratives, accompanying the combat footage, that make “Chosin” both harrowing and riveting viewing. The film was supported by a number of veterans’ groups. It was shown here in 2010 at the Freeport Eagles Club, and I had hoped to catch it then.

Thanks to Library Board Member Scott Haugh, who donated a new DVD of “Chosin” to the library, I’m able to view it now, as Memorial Day approaches. I also recommend “Korea, the Forgotten War.” It is a 56-page book – lots of photographs, statistics, maps, and stories - put together by members of the Illinois Korean Memorial Association.

If you ever wanted to tick off my ex-husband, and I’ll admit I occasionally wanted to do so, the quickest way to accomplish it was to refer to “the Korean conflict.” I thought of my no-longer-dearest last Memorial Day when I read in the “New York Times” the mini-history lesson of the day on the editorial page. It was a little Memorial Day factoid: *“On May 30, 1958, unidentified soldiers killed in World War II and the Korean conflict were buried at Arlington National Cemetery.”*

How he hated the decades-long journalistic practice of calling the Korean War a “conflict” instead of a war. I can hear him now: “You don’t say The Revolutionary Conflict or The Conflict of 1812! How about The Mexican-American Conflict? Or The Indian Conflicts? The Cold Conflict?”

What criteria determine the difference between a war and a conflict? Beats me. Of course, Korea followed so quickly on the heels of World War II, and then, it was overshadowed by Vietnam. Hence, its soubriquet, “the forgotten war.”

My recommendation? Watch “Chosin.” You won’t forget it!