

## Scope and Content

This collection of microfilm, devoted to the operations of the U.S. Army during the Korean War, is drawn from the files of the U.S. Army Center of Military History. It consists of materials created and collected by Army historians in support of the publication of volumes in the series *U.S. Army in the Korean War*, and to support numerous scholars working on that important period.

The editors have organized the bulk of the collection chronologically by year, and then by functional area (Engineers, Signal, Transportation, etc.). The remaining documents include studies extracted from the Far East Command, Military History Section, *History of the Korean War*, followed by a small group of miscellaneous studies that did not fit neatly into any other category.

Shortly after the war began, the U.S. Army began the activation and development of eight historical detachments to prepare and collect historical materials throughout the theater. It conducted after-action interviews with soldiers of all ranks and prepared historical manuscripts documenting Army activities throughout the war. Three teams, the 4th, 6th, and 7th were attached to I Corps. Two others, the 5th and 8th, worked with X Corps. The 2d and 3d Historical Detachments operated at large, under the control of the 1st Detachment, which served as an administrative headquarters for the other seven. U.S. Army combat historians assigned to the detachments included such familiar names as Martin Blumenson and Bevin Alexander.

On 24 January 1953, the eight Military History Detachments were inactivated and replaced by the 8086 Army Unit. Personnel and duties remained unchanged, but now seven historical teams all worked directly underneath one detachment headquarters. Throughout the war, personnel from the Eighth Army Military History Section and the Far East Command Military History Section also produced studies on selected topics of interest to those commands. At the end of the war, these studies were forwarded to the Office of the Chief of Military History to serve as the basis for the official history of the U.S. Army in Korea.

Approximately 50 percent of the materials in this collection consists of combat operations after-action reports and interviews prepared by the Eighth Army Military History Section and by the Military History Detachments attached throughout the theater. They include operations plans, interviews, after-action reports, maps, sketches, and photographs pertaining to specific company, battalion, and regimental operations between July 1950 and April 1953. These reports offer a detailed look at small-unit combat in Korea, and are unmatched by any other collections of primary source material.

Most of the remaining documents also were prepared by the historians of the Military History Detachments and describe activities of combat support and combat service support units throughout the war. Some consist of after-action reports from specific support operations, while other documents present historical analysis on a theme or organization across a broader time span. The extracts from the Far East Command's *History of the Korean War* highlight administrative issues that perplexed the staff throughout the war. Although these documents are by no means comprehensive, they do provide thoughtful analysis of many issues critical to the Army during the Korean War.

This analysis also sets this collection apart from other collections of Korean War records. The collection of official unit records maintained by the Suitland Reference Branch of the National Archives is much larger and in some cases more detailed. However, those records lack the insight and interpretation provided by the Army historians who observed the events. This collection neatly fills a gap between the unfiltered official records and the wide range of personal reminiscences currently available.

The U.S. Army Center of Military History is pleased to cooperate with Scholarly Resources to make this valuable collection available to a wide range of researchers. One of the Center's primary missions is to encourage the study and use of military history. We hope that the increased availability of this collection will stimulate public interest in the history of the U.S. Army during the Korean War

period, much as the release of World War II collections promoted interest in that conflict during the fiftieth anniversary commemorations of its major events.

*Donald A. Carter*  
*Archivist*  
*U.S. Army Center of Military History*  
*Washington, DC*