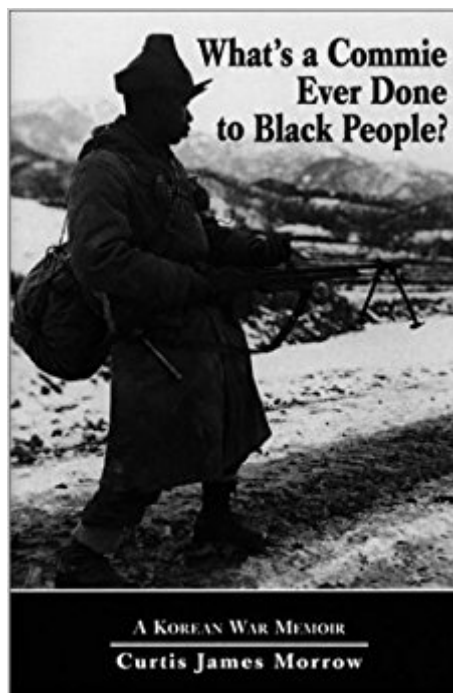




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What's A Commie Ever Done To Black People? A Korean War Memoir Of Fighting In The U.S. Army's Last All Negro Unit



Synopsis

On March 27, 1950, the author turned 17; ten days later he enlisted in the U.S. Army. During his training in Fort Belvoir, Virginia, he first learned of the "police action" in Korea, and like many others he volunteered for duty there. His biggest fear was that the action would be over by the time he arrived in Korea. Private Morrow was assigned as a rifleman in the 24th Infantry Regiment Combat Team, one of the most outstanding units in Korea and the last all black army unit; he served with distinction until he was wounded. After a short stint in Pusan, he became a paratrooper and rigger in the 8081st Airborne and Resupplying Company stationed in southern Japan. Throughout his time in the service, Private Morrow had to face the institutional racism of the U.S. Army where black soldiers consistently served longer and performed more dangerous duties than white soldiers. The effects of this on the 18-year-old private were longterm--and are described here.

Book Information

Paperback: 138 pages

Publisher: McFarland & Company (February 1, 1997)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0786403330

ISBN-13: 978-0786403332

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.5 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 21 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #2,191,526 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #70 in [Books > History > Military > Korean War > Personal Narratives](#) #791 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Ethnic & National > Chinese](#) #4386 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Ethnic & National > African-American & Black](#)

Customer Reviews

"a significant contribution to the still-developing body of literature on African Americans in the Korean War"--MultiCultural Review; "fast-paced...gripping"--VOYA.

At 17, Curtis "Kojo" Morrow enlisted in the United States Army and joined the 24th Infantry Regiment Combat Team, originally known as the Buffalo Soldiers. Seven months later he found himself fighting a bloody war in a place he had never heard of: Korea. During nine months of fierce combat, Morrow developed not only a soldier's mentality but a political consciousness as well.

Hearing older men discussing racial discrimination in both civilian and military life, he began to question the role of his all-black unit in the Korean action. Supposedly they were protecting freedom, justice, and the American way of life, but what was that way of life for blacks in the United States? Where was the freedom? Why were the Buffalo Soldiers laying their lives on the line for a country in which African-American citizens were sometimes denied even the right to vote? Morrow's story of his service in the United States Army is a revealing portrait of life in the army's last all-black unit, a factual summary of that unit's actions in a bloody "police action", and a personal memoir of a boy becoming a man in a time of war.

I also served in the Korean war and the memories I have of the 24th Infantry Regiment, under the condition they fought under, (segregation, racist & etc) they were outstanding in combat & bugged out no more than any other combat soldiers, including the mighty marines and that's a fact. In fact when the enemy's incoming firepower is greater than your outgoing fire power, believe me it's time to get out of range or stay & die. Or end up a capture. Everyone there knew that when things went bad, it was usually the old 24th RCT, the 65th Puerto Rican RCT, or the South Koreans ROK soldiers, or some other non-white combat unit that got the blame. Now here's a well kept secret for you, in reality, the term "Bug out Boogie" originated from the 24th Infantry Division. Shssss, now don't go telling anyone it's a well kept secret. But you would've had to be there to know the truth. Or ask anyone that was there at the time. Wars, are nothing like the ones fought in Hollywood

I was amazed at the style and ease Mr Morrow has in telling the truths of his life. Holding in emotions and allowing oneself to let go of a few strategic events was a hard thing to do I am sure. Once I started reading didn't put it down until I had finished reading. Vivid details! Clearly an example of a black man's plight in the service, in his community in the 50's, and in his life when he was finally able to tell his story. The title hooks you! The emotions draw you in. Great sharing of a life changing event in our history and in Mr Morrow's history. This has documentary all over it !

"What's a Commie ever done to Black People", is about one man's inner journey of courage and coming of age. I wholeheartedly recommend it to young people especially who have no idea of what it's like to face a different type of overt racism, or what it's like to face death on a battlefield, or experience seeing your best friend being killed or seriously wounded. Young people today need to know that since the beginning, in this country, African American soldiers have paid the ultimate price for being an unsung warrior hero only to face intolerable racism on the "home front". Young people in

America today also need to know that the "Korean War" was not a war but classified as a skirmish or a conflict. Yes, there are many many lessons that young people in America can learn from a young man who answered the call from his country only to discover that "War" is a living hell. And some warriors come back physically whole but mentally! and spiritually in pieces and it takes not the government, but family and community to help put the pieces back together again. All together, the book is wonderfully written and very descriptive. My recommendation is for people to buy this book with the thought in mind to buy another book for a young person who is seriously interested in the history of how our "best and our brightest" African American Warriors have been treated by this government in all wars since the War of Independence, only to face intolerable overt racism so insidious that only with God's help would it be possible for these warrior heroes to continue to stand tall. I salute them!!! America indeeds owe them all a debt of gratitude!!

This book is a "must read" for several reasons. First, you don't have to be Black to appreciate how author Curtis Morrow depicts with his own life's history the horrors of going to war as a "much too young", naive, idealistic, and patriotic teenager. Growing up can be traumatic enough. This book goes a long way toward showing the shock of "growing up" (quick and in a hurry!) in a strange and far-away land as part of an organization (the army in this case) where your "manhood" is recognized in terms of how many people you killed on any given day!...and where the count is kept by the number of ears you cut off the bodies! Add to all of that the fact that you are a Black teenager and you've got a story within a story....In every war/"conflict" Blacks have served in they've always had to fight two battles at the same time--one against the "official" enemy on the front lines, and one against the "enemy" behind his lines. Only being there can one say which war is the hardest to fight...and win. "What's A Commie..." also depicts in a loving way how two people of different races transcended the mental barriers their countries laid out for them and found happiness together. Lastly, if you are Black, you will appreciate this book that much more just because it exist. For all the Blacks that have served in war since this country let them "play" the proportionent number of books (especially by Blacks) written on the subject is totally out of balance. For this, and all the above reasons, I give a salute and word of thanks to Curtis J. Morrow....

Many coming of age stories have been written, but rarely from the viewpoint of an African-American soldier, even more rarely from the viewpoint of an enlisted man with only a grade-school education. Morrow joins the US Army at 17 during the Korean War to satisfy his thirst for adventure and demonstrate his patriotism. He volunteers for front line combat in Korea

and finds out on arriving that life ain't like the movies. We live through his eyes and thoughts as he is forced to kill or be killed. After he is wounded and sent to for rest and recuperation, we also share his experience of wartime romance. However, this is not your usual jingoistic, gung-ho, shoot-em up war story. Morrow also allows us to experience the questions that haunt him as he trudges through the deadly countryside. This is an educational and entertaining book for any reader interested in African-American and/or military history. I would also recommend this book as a gift for a young man or woman as a Rites of Passage present. I am a woman, who does not usually read war stories, but this held my interest and provided an in depth, positive, human account of one man's war experiences. It should be made into a movie. It has all the qualifications: a quest, adventures, and love interest.

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