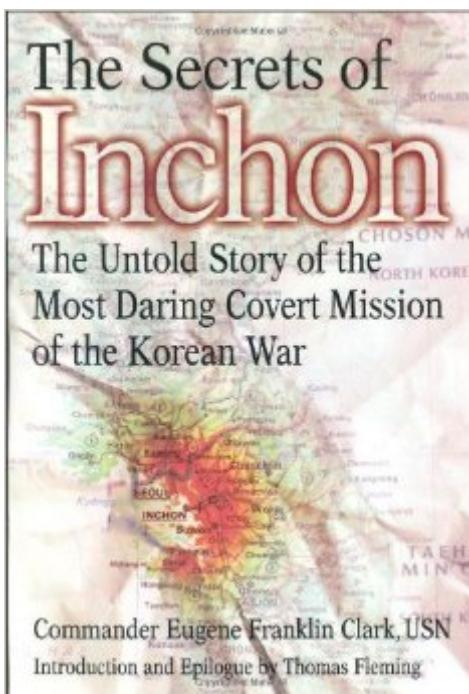


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The Secrets Of Inchon: The Untold Story Of The Most Daring Covert Mission Of The Korean War



Synopsis

In 2000, as historian Thomas Fleming prepared an article about a crucial but little-known, covert mission of the Korean War, led by a thirty-nine-year-old naval lieutenant named Eugene Clark, Clark's widow noted that her husband had written up his own account, then put it in a safe-deposit box. Would he like to read it? Fleming would-and discovered an extraordinary document: a vividly written first-person chronicle filled with color, detail, and event, as honest and revealing a wartime narrative as he'd read in many years. In late August 1950, with North Korea on the attack, MacArthur battled his own colleagues over his plan to invade Inchon, behind enemy lines. They simply knew too little about the dangerous tides and miles of mudflats, the beaches, seawalls, and fortifications. It was suicide. MacArthur convinced them, barely, and then brought in Clark, because they did know too little. Clark had to find the answers-and in just two weeks. That was all the time there was. With two South Korean officers, Clark landed on a harbor island, but the North Koreans discovered him, and soon his intelligence-gathering became filled with firefights, night raids, hand-to-hand combat, even a miniature naval battle involving armed junks. It all culminated on the night of the invasion itself-when he and his men took over a lighthouse and lit it to guide the allied fleet. The Secrets of Inchon is a stunning account, rich with courage and humanity, infused by Clark's growing brotherhood with his newfound allies-a new classic of military history. "A classic first-person account of heroism, resolve, and ultimate triumph that will touch every American in these troubled times." (Stephen Coonts) "The Secrets of Inchon is a modern classic of military history, an astonishing first-person account that fairly crackles with drama. As we have seen so recently, heroism can come at any time-but who even suspected that this Korean War hero could write so well?" (W.E.B. Griffin)

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Customer Reviews

This is a gripping adventure story. Lieutenant Clark was the man responsible for checking, updating, and correcting information on tidal channels, mudflats, seawalls, beaches, and defenses during the two weeks prior to the Inchon landings of Sept. 15, 1950. He landed, with two key Korean aides, on the island of Yonghung-do - just 12 miles from the city of Inchon. His team took the isle, organized its 1,000 inhabitants, and maintained control of his looking post during the last days before the invasion which broke the back of the North Korean supply line. From the base camp Clark conducted repeated clandestine probes of enemy defenses (frequently dressed only in mud!). There is enough action and exploits here to satisfy any reader! Paradoxically, this book's biggest problem is not Lieutenant Clark's fascinating narrative. It is the inadequate way this book was put together. Most bothersome are the curiously inadequate maps! It only has two: one of the entire Korean peninsula, and another of the islands and channels around Inchon. The first is unnecessary; the second is simply infuriating. Of the many islands shown on the second map, only four are identified by name. This is unconscionable since careful reading of the text allowed me to identify several others: Sin-Do, Sinbul-Do, Chongna-Do, Yui-Do, and Sammok-Do. (I carefully penned the names of each of these onto map next to each island for my own future reference!). I was also forced to create my own detail maps of the islands of Palmi-Do (the lighthouse island), and of Yonghung-Do (the base island) from Lieutenant Clark's narrative! The book features eight pages of glossy photos in the center (15 photos) only some of which bear directly on Clark's narrative itself - too bad the money used on these was not spent on adequate maps!

When Kuraku-san -- Eugene Clark -- died in 1998, no one except his family noticed his passing. Half a century earlier, Clark had prevented thousands of men, women and children from being murdered, and, indirectly, forestalled the deaths of millions more from murder and starvation. He was a war criminal. At least, by the standards of the self-appointed moral censors at Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Code PINK and the editorial boards of the New York Times and similar papers, he was. He set up a secret prison where he kept civilians taken prisoner without access to the Red Cross or lawyers. He turned over prisoners to a government that was known to torture and kill prisoners. He shot soldiers who had laid down their arms. He recruited and used a child soldier only 13 years old. You can decide for yourself the fitness of his behavior. He wrote it

down for his superiors in the United States Navy in 1953. After they read it, it was put in a safety deposit box where it stayed, unknown to the world, for 50 years. Clark, who spoke Japanese, was chosen to head a commando mission in September 1950 to gather information about the notoriously difficult approaches to Inchon, the port of Seoul. The anticommunist armies were on the ropes in southeastern South Korea, fighting desperately to keep from being pushed into the sea. A few weeks earlier, at an insignificant place called No Gun Ri, a minor skirmish had been fought by retreating Americans. That action has since been elevated into another war crime, as a result of a phony story published by the Associated Press. Kuraku-san, two South Korean lieutenants and a dozen South Korean marines occupied an island, Yonghung, on the approaches to Inchon and recruited local fishermen and farmers to collect intelligence.

This is a great story. Most of it takes place in the few weeks preceding the U.N. landing of troops at Inchon in September, 1950, only a few months after the Korean war started. The author, Gene Clark, was supposed to send as much information as possible to Tokyo prior to the landing date. Fortunately, he was highly aware of many aspects of such operations from his previous service in the American invasion of Okinawa in 1945. In 1948, he served as an interpreter at Japanese war crimes trials on Guam, and his account of his weeks in Korea is filled with information about how well ideas were translated from one language into another. A short paragraph in which he quotes himself is capable of showing how quickly his mind operates on many levels in the midst of complex situations, thusly: "Can't we get some clothes for these men, Kim? And get that doctor to take care of those splinters right away," I directed. Min's back and arms were a bloody mess. We couldn't afford to have this man hospitalized. (p. 150). That's from a page in the middle of the book, where the 15 pictures are located. Back in 1950, Gene Clark was not transmitting pictures in his reports to Tokyo. His radio communications were quite limited, and a lot of the spying took place after dark. Even the picture of his ten men on the island about eleven miles from Inchon, showing Clark with his shoulder holster and Youn standing "with the pistol in his belt," doesn't use the nicknames which were constantly used in the story "in case they were captured by the Communists." (p. 18). Clark had a knack for picking names for his top buddies that could be confused for major Asian figures: Yong Chi Ho and Kim Nam Sun.

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