

Institute for Korean Studies Lecture Series

Failure in Command: The Korean War and American Military Leadership

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1969–2019
EAST ASIAN
STUDIES
CENTER

Monday Oct. 21

1:00-2:30 pm

Mendenhall Lab 115



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The US army did not fight well during the first months of the Korean War. In engagement after engagement, North Korean forces pushed the American army southward and inflicted heavy casualties. There were plenty of reasons for this, but one important one was the mediocre quality of the army's high-ranking combat commanders. This was surprising because the army had plenty of capable generals who proven themselves leading divisions and corps during World War Two. However, a combination of army personnel policy and interpersonal conflict initially interfered with the army's efforts to find the best men to lead its combat units. These failures would have serious ramifications for the early months of the war in Korea. Although the army eventually overcame these problems and transferred better generals to Korea, it did so only after the North Koreans, and later the Chinese, almost drove it off the Korean peninsula. This talk will examine the failures of leadership and strategy that hindered the early prosecution of the Korean War, and the consequences of those failures for this critical battlefield in East Asia.



Free and open to the public

easc.osu.edu/events/iks/s-taaffe

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