

STRATEGIC VISIONS MAGAZINE

Newsletter for the Center of the Study of Force *and* Diplomacy

Strategic Visions Volume 10 Number 1 (Spring 2009)

News & Updates

Evans, Stephen S. *U.S. Marines and Irregular Warfare, 1898-2007: Anthology and Selected Bibliography*. Quantico: Marine Corps University Press, 2008.

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U.S. Marines and Irregular Warfare, 1898-2007: Anthology and Selected Bibliography is one of the first books published by the newly created Marine Corps University Press. The editor, Col. Stephen S. Evans, earned his Ph.D. at Temple University in 1995 under the tutelage of Russell F. Weigley. He also served as a field historian for the Marine Corps History Division at the time the anthology was published. Having the look and feel of a textbook, this exquisitely bound work uses journal articles, separated into eleven parts, to trace the history of the United States Marine Corps' involvement in unconventional warfare. There is good reason for the anthology to be packaged as a textbook. According to the introduction, it was published as a "primer . . . intended to serve as an initial educational resource that provides Marine officers and other national security professionals with the historical basis for modern-day USMC counterinsurgency strategy and operational doctrine." This work does exactly what it was intended to do, and does it well.

The anthology contains articles from a variety of peer-reviewed scholarly journals. Some are taken from conventional military service magazines such as Naval Institute Press, Marine Corps Gazette, Parameters, and Military Review. Others come from journals and publication not traditionally connected with military affairs such as Washington Quarterly, Revista/Review Interamericana, and Hispanic American Historical Review. Each article is placed in a specific historical and geographical context that produces a nuanced narrative of specific interventions and campaigns. The articles are not triumphalist descriptions of Marine successes, but scholarly discussions of controversial topics. For instance, Brian McAllister Linn's "We Will Go Heavily Armed: The Marines' Small War on Samar, 1901-1902" details the leadership failures and atrocities sanctioned by Maj. Littleton W. T. Waller. Linn illustrates that Waller, an officer touted as a mentor for many of the Marine Corps' most notable "irregular warriors," was not only brash and reckless with the lives of his Marines, but criminal in issuing orders for the execution of ten Philippine civilians.

The work is constructed around a series of articles on historical U.S. counterinsurgency efforts, including those in the Philippines, Nicaragua, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Horn of Africa. It also contains commentaries on

current counterinsurgency doctrine and theory. One in particular touches upon a recurring theme found throughout many small wars and highlighted in numerous works on U.S. counterinsurgency efforts and irregular warfare. Thomas X. Hammes' "Insurgency: Modern Warfare Evolves into a Fourth Generation" analyzes methodological trends in Marine warfighting philosophies and strategies. Building on William S. Lind's 1989 Marine Corps Gazette article, "The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation," Hammes illustrates how insurgents forego military objectives in order to achieve political goals. Battlefield defeats, he contends, mean nothing to insurgents. Their main priority is influencing public opinion and defeating counterinsurgent nations from within. Rather than fight a conventional war against superior military forces (something it lacks the resources to do), insurgents will instead attempt to drain popular support for counterinsurgency conflicts through a lengthy and costly guerrilla war. If successful, low-tech insurgencies can defeat superpowers like the United States by merely changing public opinion.

U.S. Marines and Irregular Warfare also contains a select bibliography. It is important to note, however, that it is a "selected" bibliography gleaned primarily from the footnotes of works contained within the anthology. It is not intended to be an exhaustive or comprehensive list of scholarly works on the Marine Corps' involvement in irregular wars. The titles that are listed, however, fulfill Evans's mission of providing active counterinsurgency practitioners with a valuable historical and intellectual resource.

Overall, the work provides an excellent primer in the history of the United States Marine Corps' involvement in small wars and insurgencies. Moreover, it can be utilized either as a military textbook in an undergraduate course, or as a tutorial for fighting insurgencies. If this book is any indicator of the quality of work to come from the nascent Marine Corps University Press, military historians and defense professionals will eagerly await the next installment.