

*The Philippine War, 1899-1902*, by Brian McAllister Linn (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 427.

Brian Linn's *The Philippine War* is the best history of the U.S. war in the Philippines from February 1899 to July 1902. Linn's work systematically covers all aspects of the war, all the major personalities, and makes a special effort to address the major myths and misconceptions regarding the war. Linn's history is simply the best, clear, and objectively reasoned discussion of the military aspects of the war yet written.

Brian Linn is a professor of history at Texas A&M University. Professor Linn has also served as a visiting professor at the U.S. Army War College at Carlisle Barracks Pennsylvania. His previous work, prior to *The Philippine War*, was the excellent book, *The U.S. Army Counterinsurgency and the Philippine War*. He has followed up his Philippine War efforts with a history of the American army in the Pacific entitled *Guardians of Empire*, and most recently an analysis of U.S. Army war-fighting in *The Echo of Battle*. Few more accomplished scholars of the history of the U.S. Army are writing today.

Linn's history of the Philippine war is uniquely organized. Part one begins and continues for the first half of the book as a straight-forward chronological description of the war. However, in part two Linn examines the guerrilla war by addressing the major geographical areas of the Philippines individually. Thus, operations in Northern Luzon, Southern Luzon, Moroland, Panay, and Samar are each addressed in a separate chapter. Each regional chapter begins with the completion of the American occupation and contains a complete chronological description of the guerrilla war campaign from late 1900 to the Summer of 1902.

Linn's book is a superb companion, and the other side of the coin to John Gate's work. Where Gates focuses on the civil affairs aspects of the war—the policy of attraction, Linn's emphasis is on the details of the military operations designed to destroy the guerrillas and those that supported them. Linn does not ignore civil affairs, but his purpose is a history of the how the Philippine insurgency was pacified using military force. The book is extensively researched, and makes use of both Filipino as well as American sources. Though favoring the American army's actions, Linn does a solid job describing the war from the Filipino perspective.

One of the great values of Linn's work is his efforts to provide balance and accuracy to the many misconceptions and myths that have been created or perpetuated by earlier histories of the war. Thus, though conceding that Generals Otis and MacArthur were quirky personalities who made some serious mistakes, he also recognizes that each of the first two American commanders were essentially competent and in different areas, very capable. Otis, the trained lawyer, laid the foundation of the President McKinley's benevolence policy, while MacArthur recognized the need for and supervised the well run counterinsurgency campaign of 1901. Linn backs up John Gate's analysis that the major part of the insurgency was won by the time MacArthur gave up

command in the summer of 1901 and makes the point that the Samar and Batangas campaigns, the most infamous of the war, were not typical of the war in general.

Though not the focus of his work, the only shortcoming in Linn's effort is the lack of political context. Linn pays little attention to, and makes only a minimum effort to articulate how domestic U.S. politics influenced the war effort. Linn does not analyze the strategic level of war, where military policy and politics meet. This shortfall is important because domestic politics is a particularly important factor in insurgency and counterinsurgency warfare. In fact, the major part of the Philippine strategy for defeating the American military effort was based on the outcome of the U.S. election of 1900. Because of this omission, Linn's book is more an operational military history, rather than a comprehensive history of the war.

Overall Brian Linn's *The Philippine War* is the best history of U.S. Army operations in the Philippines. It is also one of the best descriptions of successful counterinsurgency campaigning by any army, and is particularly relevant in this regard given current Army operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. This book is the book to read on the Philippine war. It is essential reading for all students of American military history, and it is an important read for contemporary professional military leaders dealing with the complex issues of counterinsurgency warfare.