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America at War: The Philippines, 1898-1913 (review)

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military in East Africa shows us that African history, German colonial history, and military history have much to say to each other.

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*America at War: The Philippines, 1898–1913.* By A. B. Feuer. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002. ISBN 0-275-96821-9. Maps. Photographs. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xx, 265. \$64.95.

In a manner somewhat reminiscent of those end-of-the-nineteenth-century books that regaled American readers with stories of their army's and navy's accomplishments in the Far East—something like Murat Halstead's *Story of the Philippines* (1898) comes to mind—A. B. Feuer's version of the American conquest of the Philippines consists mostly of lengthy quotations from published and unpublished accounts of wartime events, some written at the time and others long after, by both civilian and military participants in the war.

Feuer begins with extracts from journalist John McCutcheon's reports to the *Chicago Record* of the Battle of Manila Bay, which McCutcheon had witnessed from a ship of the Asiatic Squadron. McCutcheon is also called upon to describe the siege and surrender of Spanish-held Manila. A soldier's view of the attack on the city is taken from the memoirs of Evaristo de Montalvo. The Cuban-born Montalvo served with a Utah artillery battery, as did Charles R. Mabey, who published an account of Nebraska Pvt. William Grayson's shooting of (or at) an "obnoxious [Filipino] officer" at the San Juan del Monte bridge in Santa Mesa on the night of 4 February 1899 (p. 89). This story is repeated without comment, even though the author of one of *America at War's* two forewords asserts that "the Filipino who was shot and killed was apparently an unarmed civilian" (p. xv). (In fact, as Benito J. Legarda, Jr., has recently described in great detail in *The Hills of Sampaloc: The Opening Actions of the Philippine-American War, February 4–5, 1899* [Makati City, 2001], Grayson was not at the San Juan bridge nor do contemporary army reports place him there.) John Brewer of the 10th Pennsylvania Infantry recalls the attack on Malolos, Edwin Merritt of the Iowa regiment describes the advance to San Fernando, a newspaper account by navy officer F. P. Allison tells of the Balangiga massacre, and so on. Feuer concludes with a description of the events at Bud Bagsak in June 1913, relying on the reports of several army officers who were there.

Feuer contextualizes little, does not always reveal where his sources can be found, and does not direct readers to additional related sources. Feuer is innocent of any knowledge of—perhaps simply is not interested in—the scholarly literature on the Philippine War. No mention of the works of Teodoro Agoncillo, John Gates, Brian Linn, Glenn May, Stuart Miller, or Resil Mojares is found here. *America at War* makes no contribution to the histo-

riography of the Philippine War, but the stories Feuer has selected are interesting (even if not always reliable), and some of them cannot easily be found elsewhere.

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*Sober Men and True: Sailor Lives in the Royal Navy, 1900–1945.* By Christopher McKee. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002. ISBN 0-674-00736-0. Photographs. Appendixes. Notes. Index. Pp. 285. \$29.95.

An important perspective on the armed services is that provided by the experience of service personnel themselves. For those who value this point of view, the past two years have seen the welcome appearance of two first class works on the British armed services, drawing on the voices of servicemen who served during war and peace over the course of the twentieth century. The poignant and justly well-received *Soldiers* by Philip Ziegler (London: Chatto and Windus, 2001) on the soldiers of the British Army is now joined by Christopher McKee's portrait of Royal Navy sailors in *Sober Men and True*.

Both writers use the techniques of oral history—McKee's sample of eighty or so sailors is much larger than Ziegler's focus on nine biographies—while McKee is interested in the period from 1900 to 1945 compared with Ziegler's coverage of more recent events. Ziegler relies on his own interviews, while McKee draws, for the most part, on material collected by others and available, for example, in the Imperial War Museum. In the case of McKee, to match his incisive analysis of the problems as well as promise of what might be achieved by oral history, there is the hope that the picture he draws of the Royal Navy might be used in further comparative work on enlisted servicemen of navies that have developed from the British tradition.

The authors aim to convey to the reader the experience of service life as it was lived by the armed services' "working class," as McKee puts it; and by allowing the story to be told very much in their own words one finds a vivid and moving portrait of the lives of servicemen. In addition, there is much food for thought for other researchers on such important questions as: why they joined the armed services, how they adjusted to the privations that are a necessary feature of the military experience, how they faced the demands of combat, how the texture of their everyday social lives was formed, and how they managed the transition from military to civilian life. Furthermore, one is led to ask: to what extent are the answers that servicemen give to these questions similar to those given by their forebears in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as well as those currently serving?

McKee shows how the lower deck was recruited largely from the semi-skilled and skilled working class: indeed, the Royal Navy could afford to be selective—more so than the Army—with recruits requiring a letter of refer-