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THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

BY

COLONEL JOSE M. ALVAREZ  
United States Army

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USAWC CLASS OF 1991



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**THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR; AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**USAWC INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT**

by

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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Jose M. Alvarez, COL. USA

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The purpose of this project was to assess selectively bibliographical material on the Spanish-American War in the U.S. Army Military History Institute (MHI). The sources available at the MHI library are remarkable for their completeness, volume and diversity. Beyond the expected abundance of official records and standard academic treatments two other sources are commended; The Spanish-American War Survey Collection and the photo collection(s). This study contains reviews of selected works, bibliographies, order of battle, and final considerations. A copy of the working bibliography available at MHI is appended, as are pertinent maps.

## INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this project was to develop a limited annotated bibliography of material relating to the Spanish-American War of 1898 under the direction of Dr. Jerry M. Cooper, Visiting Professor and holder of the Harold K. Johnson Chair of Military History, Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks.

The sources available at the MHI library are remarkable for completeness, volume and diversity. Beyond the expected abundance of official records and standard academic treatments two other sources are commended; The Spanish-American War Survey Collection and the photo collection(s).

As with any other source the key is to know how to access the information. A recent addition to the library, Anne Venzon's annotated bibliography, will literally save hours of computer time. As a matter of fact Venzon's book and a computer will make most anyone an instant credible research assistant.

The working bibliography available at MHI (Appendix I) is a vallant attempt at providing first class assistance but it would seem to be an impossible task to keep current without fulltime attention.

The official collections which received cursory review are highlighted in Appendix I...proceed with caution. As with most official documents these contain a treasure trove

of information if one knows what one is looking for. If not you can and will get lost in a morass of pedantic bureaucratese.

As discussed, Venzon's book is a must to get started. Additionally, I have included a brief summary of three of the biographic collections available. They are handy short references. Personal preference is for Webster's, however all three are good. Another excellent collection (which is not included in the reviews) is the Commanding Generals and Chiefs of Staff by William Gardner Bell, published by the US Army Center of Military History. I found it useful in trying to understand some of the policies and politics of the times.

Of the three complete books on the war---Cosmas, Mills and Trask---all are necessary reading. Mills hardly qualifies as historical research but is worthwhile if for no other reason than it was the departure point for the revisionists. The other two works are complete, studied analyses of the war...little to choose between them. Both serious and casual readers would be well served by either.

Five works in which the war is part of the greater work were reviewed for content, style and application in this particular project. Perret's and Abrahamson's are the most applicable pieces. Perret's is the better only because its chapter is more tightly focused on the war, while Abrahamson deals with the war more in the context of change. For pure,

straight battle analysis you cannot beat Cosmas' piece on San Juan Hill. Musicant and Bernardo are not worth reading.

Biographies, and autobiographies, abound. As with any significant event there is a plethora of "I was there" writing...too much of it is self-serving drivel. There is no obvious reason to recommend either Parker's autobiography or Carlson's work on Shafter. As an aside, Shafter's biography is remarkable only because of the dearth of writing available on him. Even bad generals have more published about them than Shafter does...and he was not a bad general.

A final piece which does not qualify as biography but provides more insight than most biographies is Woodford's collection. Read last, that allows you to enjoy each individual's biases and perceptions without skewing yours.

Following are sixteen book analyses of selected works that proved to be the most valuable of the material reviewed. As noted above, not all are recommended for either academic or casual study; however the selections presented here serve as an excellent start point for future research, and are representative of various approaches and styles.

## BOOKS REVIEWED

Abrahamson, James L. America Arms for a New Century: The Making of a Great Military Power. NY: The Free Press, 1981. 253p. UA23 A4295.

Excellent work that provides thorough background and analysis to the reform movement within the military between the Civil War and WWI. Abrahamson grabs the reader's attention in the introduction by bringing on stage Lieutenant Hunter Liggett and Ensign William Sims, two well known (but not the best known) personages whose careers encompassed the age. The thumbnail descriptions of the services these young men entered stand in stark comparison to the services they left after more than forty years in the second decade of the Twentieth Century. Although the Spanish-American War is only a point in history within the context of this work the first third of the book deals with the pre 1898 military. For what that provides in background and scene setting to the War the book is worth reading to expand one's understanding of the times. The latter part describes the changes effected by the services that brought the United States military to arguable preeminence on the world stage during this century. Not a primary source in looking at the War by any means, but an excellent assessment that should not be ignored.

Bernardo, C. Joseph. "The Spanish-American War: A Turning Point in Military History." Military Review XXXIV (Sep 1954): pp.19-31.

This piece was chosen because it was published in Military Review as a chapter of a future book on U.S. military policy from 1775-1953. Unfortunately it does not stand alone well. Even recognizing the standard interpretations then in vogue this is much too simplistic and truncated to serve as an example. Adhering to popular interpretations of incompetent politicians and generals pushed to action by an unrestrained "yellow press" one finishes the chapter amazed that Spanish is not our national language today. There is little analysis, no documentation and precious little original thinking.

Not worth reading. Although over thirty years old it is embarrassing.

Carlson, Paul H. "Pecos Bill" A Military Biography of William R. Shafter. College Station, Texas: Texas A&M Press, 1989. 225p. U53 S52 C37.

Informative, if not particularly well written. This work stands almost alone as a comprehensive account of the life of the commander of the Cuban expedition. As the title implies the book focuses on Shafter's frontier service, but it does a credible and necessary service in covering his Civil War and Spanish-American War years.

While hardly a fascinating character, Shafter played a significant role in this country's history. Unfortunately was not a prolific writer, nor did he stir the imagination

of the press of his time, thus he remains much of an enigma to this day. When remembered, Shafter is normally portrayed as a fat, old bufoon suffering from gout and varicose veins. He was fat, and by 1898, he was old; and he suffered from the above ailments...but he was hardly a fool. Carlson has done yeoman's service in unraveling the mystery of Shafter's life and reputation; and Shafter benefits from the treatment. A tenacious dedicated soldier Shafter played the hand he was dealt...and he played it better than most.

Well documented, this work suffers from what appears to be an expansion of an academic thesis; forced transitions and isolated vignettes detract from the readability of the book. Better editing would make for a better book.

Cosmas, Graham A. An Army for Empire. Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 1971. 334p. E725.33

Complete and thorough work. Among the first, and best, revised assessments of the Spanish-American War. Cosmas attacks the popular conception of an inept and bumbling War Department manned by incompetent old generals and addresses the roles played by Congress and the President in the "debacle" of the War. This is not to say that he absolves the Army of all guilt; he does however spread the blame, and his arguments are lucid, reasonable and cogent. The frontpiece of the book does an excellent job in identifying and analysing the attempts of the reformers before the war, and, later, the role of the war as an instrument of reform.

There is a danger for the military reader to enjoy a work like this and go into terminal nodding, agreeing with everything written. Nonetheless some descriptions are easily, and eerily, transposed onto the Vietnam experience. One can only hope that this type of clear and succinct treatment is applied to that war before its 70th anniversary.

For the casual student this, along with Trask's work, is the best primer available on the Spanish-American War. For the professional it is not a bad start point.

Cosmas, Graham A. "San Juan Hill and El Caney, 1-2 July 1898" America's First Battles, 1776-1965. Ed by Charles E. Heller and William A. Stofft. Lawrence, KS: UP of KS, 1981. pp. 109-148. E181A53

First class account of the first (and last) battle of the Cuban campaign...may be more correct to call it the battle of Santiago. Although appropriately concentrating on the tactical operation, this précis does an excellent job in setting the political stage upon which this war took place. (The brief description of the internecine squabbles among the Army leadership and the state militias' influence peddling whets the appetite for further information.) Cosmas effectively highlights the problems of command and control, outdated doctrine, politics and readiness while maintaining the focus on the battlefield---the sheen wears off the Rough Riders. As with the other pieces in the anthology, this narrative concentrates on the Army to the almost total exclusion of the Navy; which in this case

detracts from the background development of the campaign. Probably of more interest to the professional reader who is trying to draw parallels between this and the other first battles contained in the book; this is nonetheless a good, short piece from which to pursue further research.

Dawson, Joseph G. The Late Nineteenth Century U.S Army 1865-1898, A Research Guide. NY: Greenwood Press, 1990. 272 p.

Venzon, Anne Cipriano. The Spanish-American War: An Annotated Bibliography. NY: Garland, 1990. 255 p.  
Z1243V45

These two recent additions to the MHI library are outstanding. As the titles state both are annotated bibliographies of their respective topics, and both are additions to existing series: Dawson's the third in a Greenwood Press series "Research Guides in Military Studies", and Venzon's the latest in the "Wars of the United States" series. Descriptions in both books are short, to the point, and where familiarity allows me to judge, on target. To start serious research into either of these topics without first referring to these books is an exercise in time mismanagement.

N.B. It is hard to imagine improving on Venzon's effort. As with any work of this type its completeness can be challenged (ommission of Millis' Martial Spirit is an example) nonetheless it is comprehensive, well organized and easy to access. Seventeen topic areas are further subdivided into key themes; eg., Chapter V, US ARMY has

four subsections---General, Regular Units, Rough Riders, and State Units. Additionally all works are cross indexed by subject and author, a real boon to research.

McHenry, Robert, ed. Webster's American Military Biographies. Springfield, Mass.: Merriam Company, 1978. U52 W4

Spiller, Robert J. ed. Dictionary of American Military Biography. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984. 3 vols. U52 D53.

Who Was Who in American History--The Military. Chicago: Marquis Who's Who Inc., 1975. E181 W56

Three handy references providing biographic data on key personnel. Each has its own style---personal preference is for Webster's because it provides chronological information without embellishment. However if one prefers a narrative Spiller's is the most comprehensive. A comparison of fourteen personalities revealed no significant differences in the information provided.

Mills, Walter. The Martial Spirit: A Study of Our War With Spain. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1931. 437p. E715 M76.

Dated, pedantic work; imbued with real and implied references to Manifest Destiny and the "White Man's Burden", this work stood the test of time for almost forty years as the definitive piece on the Spanish-American War. As an academic work it bridges the gap between the immediate works published after the war and the more scholarly pieces of the past twenty years. It suffers in comparison to today's works because of style, lack of analysis, use and documentation of sources. Long passages of quotes are not

footnoted or otherwise credited---this is somewhat disconcerting to a modern reader. Mills is closer to his frontier age predecessors than to what passes as scholarly work today. Indeed the best comparison I could draw was some of the Custer biographies that appeared in the decade following the Little Big Horn; i.e., it cemented what passed for conventional wisdom rather than studied research, analysis and interpretation. Still, it is an important work that should not be ignored...it is still extensively quoted and used as a baseline for further study.

Musicant, Ivan. The Banana Wars: A History of the United States Military Intervention in Latin America from the Spanish American War to the Invasion of Panama. NY: Macmillan, 1990. 470p. F1418 M87.

Although the book's thrust is the United States intervention in Latin America during the first third of the Twentieth Century--the Banana Wars of the title-- the author sets the stage and thesis by reviewing the Spanish-American War in a clear and concise thirty page first chapter. Chapter One is a fairly accurate summary from the Cuban Insurrection to the end of the war. Musicant does justice to both theaters and all campaigns; and his interest as a naval historian comes through loud and clear. Unfortunately the credibility of his analysis suffers as he relies on old myths and hyperbole to establish his storyline...Hearst, Pulitzer, Theodore Roosevelt, Mills, Chadwick, et al are

used extensively as sources with neither a disclaimer nor a caveat in sight. A book published in 1990 should make better use of the intervening years and provide a less simplistic and biased statement.

Parker, James. The Old Army. Philadelphia: Dorance, 1929. 454p. E181 P24. See Chapters Ten and Eleven.

One of the plethora of old soldier reminiscences, neither great history nor great literature; still, worthwhile reading as a time piece that provides a great deal of ground level insight from a soldier whose career (1872-1918) carried him from the frontier to the eve of WWI. Parker serves as a representative of due course officers who served on the frontier as junior officers, matured into the mid grades at the turn of the century, and were rewarded for honorable service with a Brigadier's star during their twilight. Providing no startling observations, the chapters dealing with the Spanish-American War and its aftermath are insightful on at least three counts: although not a major player Parker seems to have been everywhere---Regular Army, Volunteer, mobilization, service in Cuba, and Philippine service; secondly, the political machinations undertaken to gain favorable postings; finally, one has to be fascinated by the cavalier manner in which this Army captain (albeit one with a Congressman brother) was able to visit and negotiate with the President, state governors, the Secretary of War and Chief of Staff, Shafter, Wood...the list seems endless.

By no means is this an unique book, nor necessarily the best of its genre. It is one man's account of his lifetime. Parker's biases come through, so does his honesty. It is worthwhile reading.

Perret, Geoffrey. A Country Made By War. NY: Random House, 1989. 629p. E181 P62. See Chapters Ten and Eleven.

Short, tight presentation of the Spanish-American War within the context of U.S. military history. Perret provides a comprehensive narrative covering the events leading up to the war, the war itself, and the aftermath. He does not cut corners---the Army, the Navy, both theaters get evenhanded, unbiased treatment. Because of his intertwining of events and personalities the whole of the book reads better than its parts; nonetheless it is a good narrative that should not put off either the professional or casual reader.

There are two shortcomings to Perret's style: first is the annoying practice of not providing foot- or endnotes, instead he uses narrative notes that are difficult to follow or pursue. Secondly he teases with fragments of information and then provides nothing further in explanation: e.g., in telling of the excellent performance of the 9th and 10th Cavalry, both Black regiments, Perret finishes with, "Soon they would be denigrated as constitutional cowards. It would take more than fifty years...to overcome a stigma that took root in false accounts from Cuba." Whatever false accounts may have been made remain a mystery.

Its deficiencies should not detract from the fact that this is an excellent history book. Many a college course would benefit from using it as its primary source.

Trask, David F. The War With Spain in 1898. NY: Macmillan, 1981. 654p. E715 T7.

A complete, balanced and objective study of the war covering all aspects of the conflict on all theaters. Adhering to Clausewitzian dogma that war is a continuation of politics by other means Trask sets the stage in the first three chapters from the Cuban Insurrection through the diplomatic failures that led to war. The remainder of the book does an excellent job in narrating and analyzing all aspects of the war including mobilization, the naval campaigns, and the land campaigns in Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines. Trask has done better than most in depicting the political nature of warfare...McKinley's strategic vision, the militia, the squabbles among generals and admirals, etc. If the text has a shortcoming it is that the aftermath of the war receives only cursory coverage. Had Trask developed his concluding chapters to the detail of the introductory chapters this could well be categorized as a definitive work. In any event this is an excellent primer on the Spanish-American War that serves the layman and the professional well. Documentation is exhaustive...137 pages of endnotes...however Trask has made life easier for the casual student by distilling the key primary and secondary sources to two pages.

Woodford, Stewart L. et al. The American-Spanish War: A History by the War Leaders. Norwich, Conn: Haskell, 1899. 607p. E715 A51.

This is a Jewel! Reminiscent of the Civil War's "Battles and Leaders" series this single volume captures the thought and words of many key players within one year of the war's end. Shafter writes about Santiago, Merritt on the Manila Campaign, Miles provides an Army overview...it is all interesting, it is all first hand. The Navy is represented by the Secretary and lesser personages---neither Sampson nor Dewey provided input, but their actions are effectively reported by subordinates. There are pieces by the U.S. Ambassador to Spain, members of the Cuban high command, and assorted Congressmen and cabinet members, each providing a singular perspective.

Perhaps most interesting, if not illuminating, are several "non-traditional" chapters. Consider: "Army and Navy Christian Commission" or "Woman's Work in the War" or the piece entitled, "The Secret Service in the War" by the Chief of service.

While each author has put the best light on his area of responsibility these are not self-serving pabulum; as an example, Shafter's piece is a straight forward account of the campaign that stands up to the scrutiny of modern accounts. On the other hand it certainly does not dwell on the negative---not too unlike modern status reports.

## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The following are themes developed while addressing the subject of the War with Spain within the context of this project. The intent is to provide food for thought for potential student projects or just to pique the interest of future readers. There is no claim that any of the following are great original thoughts, nor even unique in the theses which they posit: they are just natural outcroppings as a result of the readings accomplished in support of the bibliographic review.

The Spanish-American War was a pivotal action in our history, with many "firsts"...overseas deployment, non-crisis mobilization, territorial expansion beyond the continent, perhaps even our first "Joint" war...but it remains lost between the catharsis of the Civil War and our certification as a world power after WWI. Not enough has been done to elevate the status of this "splendid little war" as America's gateway into the 20th Century.

The issue of the Spanish-American War as a major debacle that the United States somehow managed to muddle through has been put to rest by the more recent publications. This does not exonerate the national and military leadership of the times; indeed no amount of

revisionism can remove all of the warts. Nonetheless, among the mitigations uncovered over time it does not appear that the fact that this was the first overseas "rapid deployment" has been fully explored. It would be interesting to analyze our preparation for WWI in the context of the restraints extant on the Army in 1898.

Additionally the number of friendly battlefield casualties was incredibly low---it compares favorably with Desert Storm---yet it remains an Army catastrophe in the mind's eye.

U.S.Army policy from the Civil War through the Indian Wars, and again during this century, was one of total war; ie, nothing was excluded in the campaign of war. Without explanation the Spanish-American War stands as an anomaly to this policy. This becomes a more intriguing question when it is recognized that the leadership of the Army at the time was made up of Indian fighters, with the senior leaders all Civil War veterans (including the President and Secretary).

President William McKinley appointed generals such as Fitzhugh Lee and "Fighting Joe" Hooker in large part as a conciliatory gesture to bind Civil War wounds. This raises several questions: Was this blatant politics with no regard to military need? Did it work as a national policy? Did the infusion of a new generation of adherents to the "Lost Cause" into the Army ordain the demise of Black regiments

The four Black regiments had emerged into this century as elite fighters. Reputations established during the Indian Wars were recertified in Cuba; yet this was their apogee. Their downward slide from San Juan Hill to their disbandment on the hills of Korea fifty years later has never been fully explained. Roosevelt's hyperbole, the Fort Sill and Brownsville incidents, etc., are part of the story, but the cohesive history has yet to be told.

By the same token was the Spanish-American War the apex of the National Guard(s) influence and power or was it the last hurrah of the states military muscle? An interesting line would be to pursue this thought through the three Roundout brigades not deploying to Saudi Arabia.

The Spanish-American War was the first in which the senior leadership was not covered with tangible public acclaim. While Miles, Shafter, Merritt, et al, were hardly social pariahs after the war they never received the national recognition of Washington, Scott, Taylor, Grant... and, afterwards, Pershing, MacArthur, Marshall and Eisenhower. It was not until Korea that the Army leaders were relegated to such ignominious anonymity after the war. From a popularity standpoint Korea was hardly a "splendid little war" nor did it establish the U.S. as a world power. The Spanish-American War leaders are lost in the footnotes of not only American but also military history.

Along with all of the reforms credited to the aftermath of the war---General Staff, education, demise of the bureaus, etc., little is said about the age of the leadership. Were the physical, and mental, shortcomings of these 40 (in some cases 50) year veterans the genesis of the current retirement system? With the exception of MacArthur, and to a lesser extent Marshall, we have not entrusted senior war leadership to old men.

#### U.S. ARMY ORGANIZATION AND ORDER OF BATTLE

The final three pages were developed as "study aids" during the research process. Basically they are summaries of the Army's organization and the V Corps order of battle in 1898 on the eve of the war. They are memory aids culled from the various readings, as such they have not been verified with official records. However they were helpful in keeping track of the various units and personalities throughout the readings. The example may prove helpful to someone else.

## US ARMY ORGANIZATION 1898

SECRETARY OF WAR      ALGER

COMMANDING GENERAL    MILES

25,000 OFFICERS AND MEN  
25 REGIMENTS OF INFANTRY  
10 REGIMENTS OF CAVALRY  
1 REGIMENT OF ARTILLERY

REGIMENT=THREE BATTALIONS  
BATTALION=FOUR COMPANIES

INFANTRY COMPANY = 106 SOLDIERS  
CAVALRY TROOP     = 100 SOLDIERS  
ARTILLERY BATTERY= 175-200 SOLDIERS  
INFANTRY REGIMENT= 1274 SOLDIERS

N.B. Numbers =  
auth, not assd

V CORPS IN CUBA =17,000 ASSIGNED  
1ST DIVISION 5000 ASSIGNED  
2ND DIVISION 5000 ASSIGNED  
1ST CAVALRY 2700 ASSIGNED  
IND BRIGADE 1100 ASSIGNED  
VOL BRIGADE 2500 ASSIGNED

CUBAN CAMPAIGN 1898

V (US) CORPS

MG WILLIAM R. SHAFTER, COMMANDING

1ST DIVISION---BG KENT

[SAN JUAN HILL]

1ST BRIGADE---BG HAWKINS

6TH (US) INFANTRY  
16TH (US) INFANTRY  
71ST (NY) INFANTRY

2ND BRIGADE---COL PEARSON

2ND (US) INFANTRY  
10TH (US) INFANTRY  
21ST (US) INFANTRY

3RD BRIGADE---COL WIKOFF

9TH (US) INFANTRY  
13TH (US) INFANTRY  
24TH (US) INFANTRY (COLORED)

2ND DIVISION---BG LAWTON

[EL CANEY]

1ST BRIGADE---BG LUDLOW

2ND (MA) INFANTRY  
8TH (US) INFANTRY  
22ND (US) INFANTRY

2ND BRIGADE---COL MILES

1ST (US) INFANTRY  
4TH (US) INFANTRY  
25TH (US) INFANTRY (COLORED)

3RD BRIGADE---BG CHAFFEE

7TH (US) INFANTRY  
12TH (US) INFANTRY  
17TH (US) INFANTRY

1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (DISMOUNTED)---MG WHEELER [SAN JUAN]

1ST BRIGADE---BG SUMNER

3RD (US) CAVALRY

6TH (US) CAVALRY

9TH (US) CAVALRY (COLORED)

2ND BRIGADE---BG YOUNG (2IC COL LEONARD WOOD)

1ST (US VOLUNTEER) CAVALRY (ROUGH RIDERS)

1ST (US) CAVALRY

10TH (US) CAVALRY (COLORED)

INDEPENDENT BRIGADE---BG BATES (IN RESERVE TO 2ND DIVISION)

9TH (MA) INFANTRY

(US) INFANTRY

2ND SQUADRON (US) CAVALRY

VOLUNTEER BRIGADE---BG DUFFIELD (REINFORCING)

33RD (MI) INFANTRY

1ST BATTALION, 34TH (MI) INFANTRY

APPENDIX I--MHI WORKING BIBLIOGRAPHIES

SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR, 1898

A Working Bibliography

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APPENDIX II--MAPS



# Philippines

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