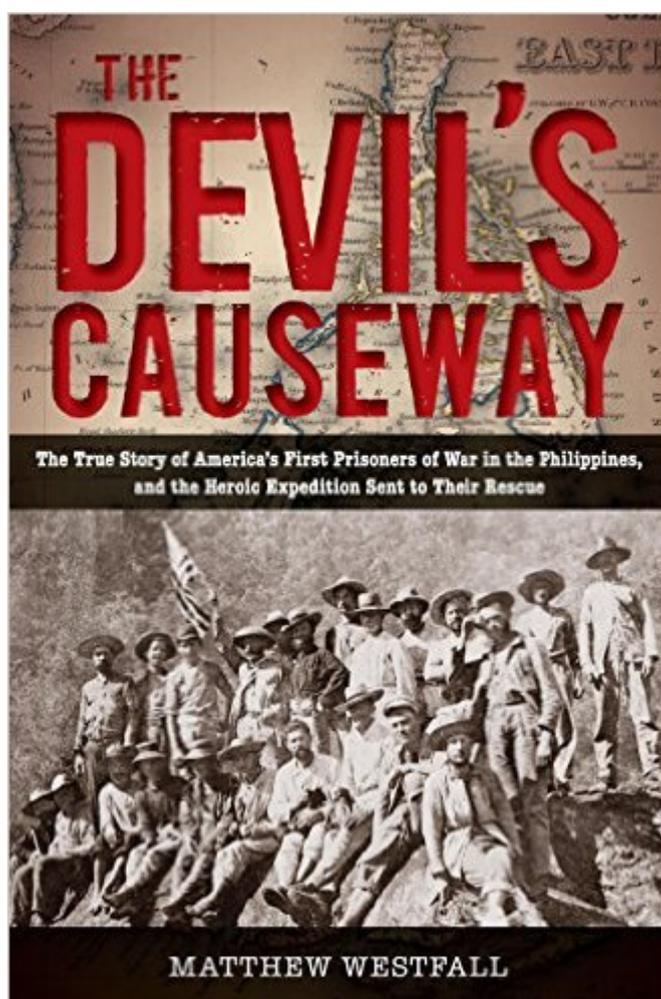


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The Devil's Causeway: The True Story Of America's First Prisoners Of War In The Philippines, And The Heroic Expedition Sent To Their Rescue



Synopsis

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Customer Reviews

I had the good fortune of living and working in the Philippines for six years, and have explored much of the Cordillera and Baler terrain that provide the tapestry for this remarkable and rarely examined period in the shared history of the Philippines and the United States. Westfall's impeccable research and mastery of fact alone make this book an important read, but it is his the telling of the story, marked by great passion, imagination and tense pacing that make it a must have. Through Westfall's eyes you feel the incredible privation and heartbreak experienced by captive sailors, by the soldiers sent overland for months to rescue them, and by the Filipinos struggling to assert their independence from their new colonial masters. Perhaps that is the greatest achievement of this book: there are heroes and villains aplenty on both sides, and through their stories you will learn a lot more than you ever expected about this chapter in American history.

This book has been compared to "Band of Brothers" and "Citizen Soldiers" with good reason. Like Stephen Ambrose, Westfall combines rigorous research, 1st hand accounts of the era, and a wonderfully compelling narrative style. After having thought about the book for a while, however, I

realize that it's something more than that. Although not a biography, in style and substance, *The Devil's Causeway* has much in common with books by Chernow or David McCullough. Westfall employs spare, yet highly evocative descriptions (a "freckle-faced" young man who weighs in at, "a windblown 111 pounds") with nail-biting adventure (I won't give any of that away), and serious historical chops. The bottom line is that this is a really fantastic book - and I hope it will not be Westfall's last.

I came upon this book completely by accident while browsing through a store. As someone into Philippine history and as an amateur historian, I feel that this book is a great contribution to the period known as the Philippine-American War. Matthew Westfall has written an eye-opening account of a chapter in an oft-forgotten part of the history between the Philippines and the United States. While the main focus of the book is the account of the capture and rescue of the Gillmore party, the author has also provided snippets of how America went about its mission of "benevolent assimilation" in the islands. Very impressive is the meticulous research Westfall put into his work. He breathes life into the personalities such as the vain Gillmore, the feral Novicio and others. The characterizations are vivid, giving the reader engaging images of all the players. Moreover, recreating the tracks of the Gillmore party's trek through central and northern Luzon is no mean feat and all the more adds to the overall quality of storytelling. For people with more than a passing interest in the history of the relationship between the Philippines and the United States, this is a book worthy to be added to one's library. More to come please...

I really wasn't sure what to expect with this book, as I've seen a lot of poorly written history written about my country. But this title was strongly recommended by a friend so I gave it a chance. Wow. How is it this incredible story was never taught in our schools and we're only hearing about it now? How did the author even find all the photos that appear in the book? What a treat! This entertaining book offers a lot more than just a story of what is touted as America's first prisoners of war in the Philippines and their rescue. On a broader level, it's really more of a riveting exploration into the very roots America colonial ambitions in the Philippines and the tragic, unfortunate and probably unnecessary war that followed. I greatly appreciate the effort the author took to tell the story in a factual, even-handed way, where we come to learn our war with America wasn't one big 'black and white' morality tale, as has often been put forward, but rather a complex event nuanced with many shades of gray. With the excellent, exhaustive research undertaken to back up the writing, this is an important contribution to my country's history, and I truly hope to see more books like this

in the future. My verdict: Highly recommended... read this one for sure. (Before it becomes a movie!)

Carefully researched and beautifully written, *The Devil's Causeway* is a masterful tale that keeps the reader fully engaged. This narrative is a little-known story that is presented in such a way that the reader cannot wait to turn the page to see what happens next. Matthew Westfall is hitting on all cylinders in this book. His use of primary documents along with his on-the-scene investigations makes this story come alive. Even if the reader has not been to the Cordillera mountain range, Westfall's writing takes us all there. One is not surprised to find that Westfall is also a film maker because this book is like watching a movie unfold--and you don't want it to end. The well-deserved praise that Westfall is receiving for this book is garnering him many fans who cannot wait to read his next book. I am one of those fans waiting for Westfall's next book.

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