



Fangs of the Lone Wolf: Chechen Tactics in the Russian-Chechen War 1994-2009

Dodge Billingsley

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Books on guerrilla war are seldom written from the tactical perspective and even less seldom from the guerrilla's perspective. *Fangs of the Lone Wolf: Chechen Tactics in the Russian-Chechen Wars 1994-2009* is an exception. These are the stories of low-level guerrilla combat as told by the survivors. They cover fighting from the cities of Grozny and Argun to the villages of Bamut and Serzhen-yurt, and finally the hills, river valleys and mountains that make up so much of Chechnya. The author embedded with Chechen guerrilla forces and knows the conflict, country and culture. Yet, as a Western outsider, he is able to maintain perspective and objectivity. He traveled extensively to interview Chechen former combatants now displaced, some now in hiding or on the run from Russian retribution and justice. The military professional will appreciate the book's crisp narration, organization by type of combat, accurate color maps and insightful analysis and commentary. The civilian reader will discover the complexity of "simple guerrilla tactics" and the demands on individual perseverance and endurance that guerrilla warfare exacts.

The book is organized into vignettes that provide insight on the nature of both Chechen and Russian tactics utilized during the two wars. They show the chronic problem of guerrilla logistics, the necessity of digging in fighting positions, the value of the correct use of terrain and the price paid in individual discipline and unit cohesion when guerrillas are not bound by a military code and law. Guerrilla warfare is probably as old as man, but has been overshadowed by maneuver war by modern armies and recent developments in the technology of war. As Iraq, Afghanistan, the Philippines and Chechnya demonstrate, guerrilla war is not only still viable, but is increasingly common. *Fangs of the Lone Wolf* provides a unique insight into what is becoming modern and future war.

REVIEWS

Massively outnumbered and outgunned by the Russian military, the story of the Chechens' ability to hold and then humble them in the First Chechen War is an extraordinary one, hardly overshadowed by the Russians' capacity to learn from their mistakes in the Second. Through well-chosen case studies, this book explores the tactics of both sides and in the process becomes the best military study of this conflict yet." Mark Galeotti, Professor of Global Affairs at the Center for Global Affairs at New York University

"Fangs of the Lone Wolf sheds light on a poorly understood unconventional war and does so from a rare perspective, that of Chechens who fought against Russia from 1994 to 2009. Billingsley captures the voices of the Chechens from years of interviews conducted in Chechnya and in exile." Mark von Hagen, Professor of History and Global Studies at Arizona State University

"Dodge Billingsley saw the Chechen War from the inside. His insights into the extraordinary battle between one of the world's largest armies and the insurgents who fought it to a standstill are second to none." Thomas de Waal, Russia and Eurasia Program Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and author *A Small Victorious War*

"The author's unique insights, enabled by his close working relationship with the Chechens, makes for a

technical but interesting read. His narrative is blunt, honest and balanced and he does not shy away from critical conclusions of the Chechen efforts where warranted."

Canadian Army Journal

"... presents a unique and effective study of the soldiers, terrain and tactics of the complex and largely undocumented Chechen wars ... essential reading for scholars of the region seeking deeper understanding of the combatants and their tactics, or for any interested reader trying to make sense of the seemingly endless conflict in Chechnya" Russian Review

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