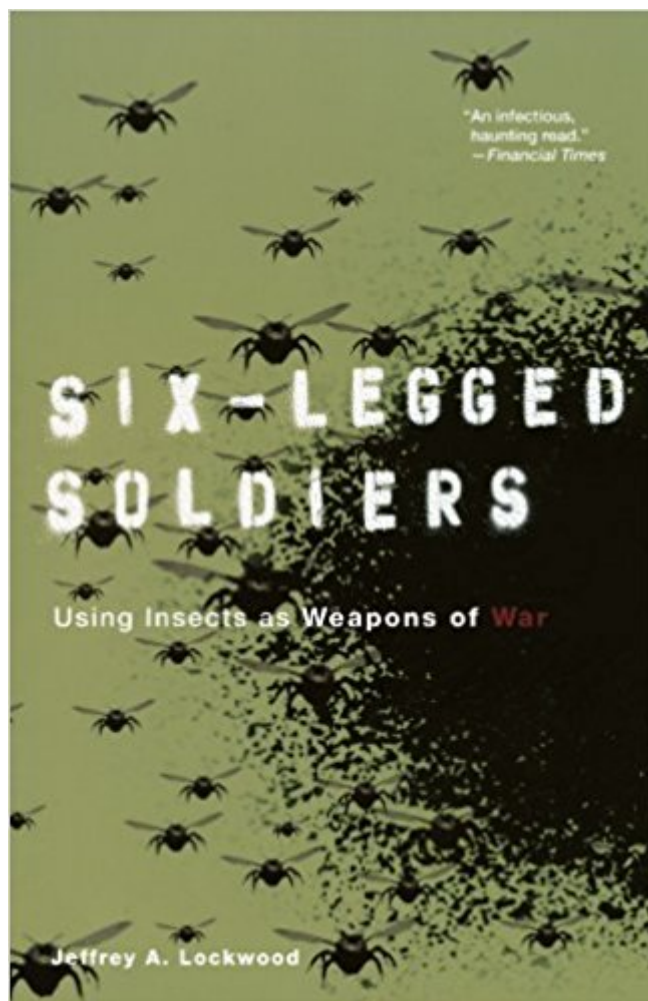


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Six-Legged Soldiers: Using Insects As Weapons Of War



Synopsis

In *Six-Legged Soldiers*, Jeffrey A. Lockwood paints a brilliant portrait of the many weirdly creative, truly frightening, and ultimately powerful ways in which insects have been used as weapons of war, terror, and torture. He concludes with a critical analysis of today's defenses--and homeland security's dangerous shortcomings--with respect to entomological attacks. Beginning in prehistoric times and building toward a near and disturbing future, the reader is taken on a journey of innovation and depravity. Lockwood, an award-winning science writer, begins with the use of "bee bombs" in the ancient world and explores the role of insect-borne disease in changing the course of major battles, from Napoleon's military campaigns to the trenches of World War I. He explores the horrific programs of insect weaponization during World War II: airplanes designed to drop plague-infested fleas, facilities rearing tens of millions of crop-devouring beetles, and prison camps where doctors tested disease-carrying lice on inmates. The Cold War saw secret government operations involving the mass release of specially developed strains of mosquitoes on an unsuspecting American public--along with the alleged use of disease-carrying and crop-eating pests against North Korea and Cuba. Lockwood reveals how easy it would be to use insects in warfare and terrorism today, pointing to how domestic eco-terrorists in 1989 extorted government officials and wreaked economic and political havoc by threatening to release the notorious Medfly into California's crops. A remarkable story of human ingenuity--and brutality--*Six-Legged Soldiers* is the first comprehensive look at the use of insects as weapons of war, from ancient times to the present day.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Few people think of flies, scorpions or potato bugs as weapons of war, but entomologist Lockwood (Grasshopper Dreaming), winner of a Pushcart Prize and a James Burroughs Award, details in this fascinating study how creepy crawlies have been used against the enemy since antiquity. The Romans' siege of a desert fortress ended abruptly when buckets of scorpions were dumped on their heads. Many a medieval army catapulted beehives or hornets' nests over a castle's ramparts to drive out the defenders. The Vietcong used a version of this trick, setting off small explosives near huge beehives when American soldiers walked by. Lockwood tells how the Japanese used Chinese civilians as human guinea pigs in their program to weaponize plague and other diseases. And Lockwood explores charges by the North Koreans and Fidel Castro that America has called out insect troops on occasion as well. Fortunately, as the author points out, insects aren't very cooperative soldiers, and using them to deliver diseases is much easier said than done. Both science and military history buffs will learn much from Lockwood, a self-described skeptic with a sense of humor. 49 b&w illus. (Oct.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Insects have been recruited for war since biblical times and are currently scientifically bred for the nefarious purpose of spreading disease, according to Lockwood. Prior to the control exerted by medical doctors and entomologists, disease galloped well enough on its own, which Lockwood illustrates in accounts of armies felled by epidemics, such as several French forces of the Napoleonic period. In the twentieth century, most industrial nations have conducted research on the suitability of insects as deliberately deployed vectors of disease, with Lockwood going into extensive detail on biological weapons notoriously used by Japan in World War II. He is also animated by the proposition that some nations "particularly the U.S." dropped infected bugs on China or Cuba while acknowledging the cold war propaganda temptation the Communist regimes of those countries had in claiming so. Concluding with the vulnerability of American agriculture to an insect-borne attack by terrorists, Lockwood offers a scientific history that leaves readers better informed, albeit with a severe case of the creepy-crawlies. --Gilbert Taylor --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A must read, especially if you have an insect-borne disease. I have Lyme disease and I was furious

that MacArthur just let Shiro Ishii off the hook. He did so much more damage than many of the Germans punished at the end of WWII (I know the holocaust was terrible but if you read the book, you will agree). And the Americans just swept it under the table, ignoring all of the millions they tortured and killed for their experiments. If you have Lyme, this is how you got it: Ishii shared the technology with Germany during WWII using insects as vectors to spread biological diseases. Germans continued with experiments before the end of the war. The war ended and Operation Paperclip enabled us to get Nazi Erich Traub, a biological warfare specialist. They put him on Plum Island, where he experimented using ticks as vectors and VOILA! See how close Plum Island is to Lyme, Connecticut? Get a map and look. Thanks to Shiro Ishii, our lives have been destroyed. Am I bitter? You betcha. Doctors don't know how to treat Lyme because there is no such thing as chronic Lyme, according to the CDC. Lyme is sore knees, neck, bullseye rashes and a positive ELISA. When we all developed many more symptoms, chronic pain and fatigue, neurological symptoms, heart and digestive system, etc., they called it fibromyalgia or chronic fatigue syndrome because we didn't fit the definition of Lyme disease. The tests are poor...I mean, who has ever had an accurate ELISA? Yet that is what they use, and if you test positive with that, you get to have a Western blot which is more accurate but does not include all of the Lyme-related bands and includes some unrelated to Lyme. No, you get to pay a Lyme specialist a lot of money out-of-pocket because they don't take insurance. They can't, remember? They are treating a disease that doesn't exist. And many Lyme docs have lost their licenses for treating it, especially if they treat children. There is no treatment protocol except for the guidelines from Dr. Burrascano, a retired Lyme doc. Even if you don't have Lyme, etc., the book is an important read and very interesting.

Who knew that Napoleon's army wasn't decimated by the Russian Winter? Who knew that many ancient battles weren't lost due to crossbows and catapults? Who knew that the most devastating shock troops in history had six legs? I certainly didn't, but I do now, and it has fundamentally altered my view of history and warfare and will likely change the way I write in the future. Bravo to this author! Everyone who is the least bit interested in history should READ THIS BOOK! I will definitely be recommending it to all my friends

Very in depth and may get boring at times

If you weren't already worried enough about terrorist threats, along comes Jeffrey A. Lockwood to tell you how easy it will be for enemies of America to deliver a series of plagues that will kill us with

gruesome, insect-borne diseases and decimate our crops! Six-Legged Soldiers was most interesting to me when Lockwood was describing the use of insects in ancient warfare. By the time he reaches the modern era--notably the career of Ishii Shiro, godfather of Japan's biological warfare program--the tone becomes more political. The horrors Lockwood describes are stomach-wrenching, as is the realization that our own country could let such evil go unpunished for political reasons. The book becomes a bit redundant from this point forwards, but it's still a fascinating (though often gruesome) read.

Well written.

Excellent and well researched book. Extremely interesting.

Having spent half a century working with people and what bugs them - this was a professional interest. More importantly writing myself on related subjects it was a pleasure to read. Something anyone in public health or pest management services should have a working knowledge. There is more to the story and this book was concise to allow further investigation. Overland Adventure

I will never look at a bug the same way. Very very spooky and interesting. I will definitely re-read this one.

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