

EMERGENCE TO WORLD POWER 1898–1902

In the latter part of the nineteenth century the United States, hitherto largely provincial in thought and policy, began to emerge as a new world power. Beginning in the late 1880s more and more Americans displayed a willingness to support imperialistic ventures abroad, justifying this break with traditional policy on strategic, economic, religious, and emotional grounds. Much of the energy that had been channeled earlier into the internal development of the country, especially into westward expansion along the frontier (which, according to the Census Bureau, ceased to exist as of 1890), was now diverted to enterprises beyond the continental United States. It was only a matter of time before both the Army and the Navy were called upon to support America's new interests overseas.

A New Manifest Destiny

This new manifest destiny first took the form of vigorous efforts to expand American trade and naval interests overseas, especially in the Pacific and Caribbean. Thus, in the Pacific, the United States took steps to acquire facilities to sustain a growing steam-propelled fleet. In 1878 the United States obtained the right to develop a coaling station in Samoa and in 1889, to make this concession more secure, recognized the independence of the islands in a tripartite pact with Great Britain and Germany. In 1893, when the native government in Hawaii threatened to withdraw concessions, including a site for a naval station at Pearl Harbor, American residents tried unsuccessfully to secure annexation of the islands by the United States. Development of a more favorable climate of opinion in the United States in the closing years of the century opened the way for the annexation of Hawaii in 1898 and Eastern Samoa (Tutuila) in 1899.

In the same period the Navy endeavored with little success to secure coaling stations in the Caribbean and Americans watched with

interest the abortive efforts of private firms to build an isthmian canal in Panama. American businessmen promoted establishment of better trade relations with Latin American countries, laying the groundwork for the future Pan American Union. And recurrent diplomatic crises, such as the one with Chile in 1891–1892 that arose from a mob attack on American sailors in Valparaiso and the one with Great Britain over the Venezuelan–British Guiana boundary in 1895, drew further attention to the southern continent.

Trouble in Cuba

While economic and strategic motives contributed significantly to the new manifest destiny, it was concern for the oppressed peoples of Cuba that ultimately launched the United States on an imperialistic course at the turn of the century. Cuba's proximity to the United States and strategic location had long attracted the interest of American expansionists. Yet they were a small minority, and only when the Cubans rebelled against the repressive colonial policies of Spain did the general public turn its attention to the Caribbean island. This was true in 1868, when the Cubans initiated a decade-long rebellion, and again in 1895, when they rose up once more against continuing repression by the mother country. Many Americans soon favored some kind of intervention, but President Grover Cleveland was determined that the United States should adhere to a policy of strict neutrality. Events in Cuba increasingly made this difficult.

When after almost a year of costly fighting the Spanish had failed to suppress the rebellion, they turned to harsher measures. A new Captain-General in Cuba, Valeriano Weyler, attempted to isolate the rebels from the population by herding women, children, and old people from the countryside into detention camps and garrisoned towns. This poorly executed reconcentrado policy led to the death of thousands of civilians from disease and starvation. Weyler's methods gave newspapers in the United States an opportunity to make sensationalistic attacks on Spanish policies. They portrayed the war in Cuba as a struggle between the "butcher" Weyler and high-minded patriots struggling bravely for freedom from Old World authoritarianism.

Despite mounting public pressure, Cleveland's successor as President, William McKinley, also tried to avoid war with Spain. He might



Wreck of the Maine, 1898

have succeeded had the American battleship *Maine* not been sunk on February 15, 1898, in Havana harbor as a result of a mysterious explosion with a loss of 260 lives. The vessel was in port ostensibly on a courtesy call but actually to provide protection for American citizens in Cuba. A naval investigating commission appointed by the President announced on March 25 that the *Maine* had gone down as a result of an external explosion, a conclusion that even today is in doubt. To most Americans, however, the report indicated Spanish treachery. After diplomatic efforts failed to defuse the crisis, Congress on April 19 authorized the use of force to secure Cuba's independence. Six days later, on April 25, Congress issued a formal declaration of war. So began the conflict that McKinley and Cleveland had tried to avoid, a war for which the country was ill prepared.

Mobilizing for War

The extent of unpreparedness for overseas combat varied considerably in the two military services. In the decade preceding the war, the Navy, thanks to the efforts of career officers such as Rear Adm. Stephen B. Luce, Capt. Alfred T. Mahan, and Benjamin Tracy, Secretary of the Navy in Harrison's administration, as well as to the willingness of Congress to appropriate the necessary funds, had carried out an extensive construction and modernization program. The historical writings of Alfred T. Mahan were particularly influential in establishing the framework of a global, blue-water fleet focused on the dominance of the Navy, the establishment of refueling bases, and the aggressive protection of commerce. During the same period, the Naval War College at Newport, Rhode Island (established in 1885 through the efforts of Admiral Luce), had provided the Navy with a strong corps of professional officers trained in the higher levels of warfare and strategy, including the far-ranging doctrines of Mahan.

The Army was not so fortunate. During the quarter of a century preceding 1898, the Army averaged only about 26,000 officers and men, most of whom were scattered widely across the country in company- and battalion-size organizations. Consequently, the Army rarely had had an opportunity for training and experience in the operation of units larger than a regiment. Moreover, the service lacked a mobilization plan, a well-knit higher staff, and experience in carrying on joint operations with the Navy. The National Guard was equally ill prepared. Though the Guard counted over 100,000 members, most units were poorly trained and inadequately equipped. Thus, while most regulars were armed with Krag-Jorgensen rifles firing smokeless powder cartridges, most guardsmen were still equipped with Springfield rifles that could fire only black powder ammunition.

The utility of the Guard was further compromised by question as to whether it was legal for Guard units to serve abroad. Consequently, as in the Civil War, the national government on April 22 called upon the states to raise 125,000 volunteers for federal service. Guardsmen were encouraged to enlist, and in some cases entire regiments of militia volunteered for federal service, thereby permitting the units to remain intact. In most cases, however, guardsmen enrolled as individuals and took their places alongside men devoid of any military background in

The Army rarely had had an opportunity for training and experience in the operation of units larger than a regiment.

entirely new organizations. War fever soon led Congress to increase the size of the volunteer force by an additional 75,000 and to create some special forces, including 10,000 enlisted men “possessing immunity from diseases incident to tropical climates,” the so-called Immunes. It also authorized more than doubling the size of the Regular Army to nearly 65,000. By war’s end in August 1898, the regular forces numbered 59,000 and the volunteers 216,000, a total of 275,000. Regardless of whether these men were regulars or volunteers, the vast majority of them had had little or no military experience prior to the war.

Mobilizing, equipping, and supplying the burgeoning wartime Army placed a severe burden on the War Department. With neither a military planning staff nor in peacetime the funds necessary to plan for war, the department was ill prepared for any kind of major mobilization. Further complicating matters were basic disagreements concerning the strategy to be followed and the way mobilization should be conducted.

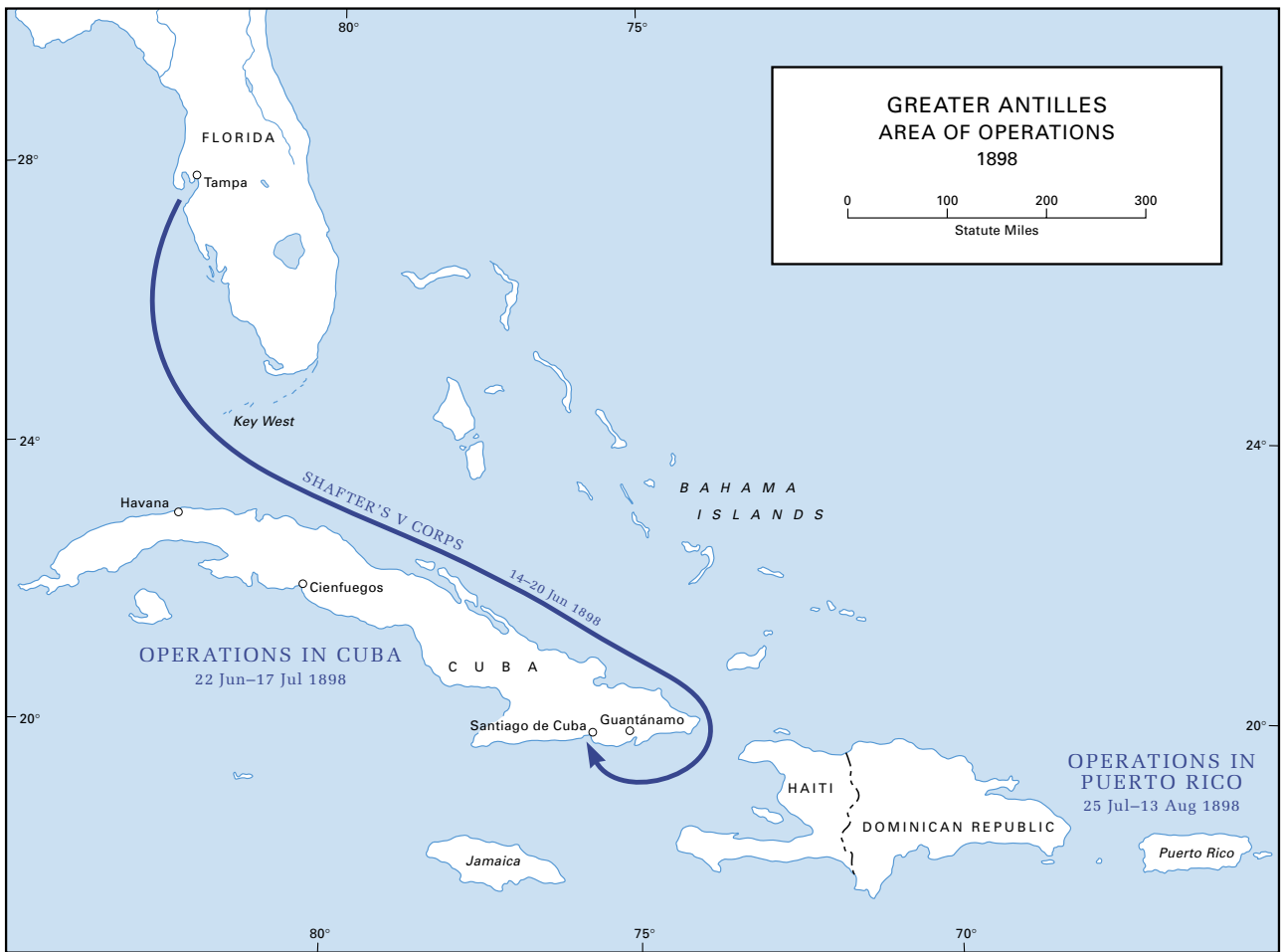
To the extent the United States had a strategy for the conduct of the war against Spain, it consisted of maintaining a naval blockade of Cuba while Cuban insurgent forces carried on a harassing campaign against Spanish troops on the island. Supporters of this policy (Captain Mahan was among its more articulate advocates) believed that it would lead eventually to the surrender of the Spanish forces and the liberation of Cuba. No direct clash between American and Spanish troops was visualized; American land forces would simply occupy Cuba as soon as the Spanish departed.

More or less in conformity with this strategy, Maj. Gen. Nelson Miles, Commanding General of the Army, proposed to assemble, train, and equip a small force of about 80,000 using the Regular Army as a nucleus. There would be ample time to prepare this force, since Miles deemed it unwise to land any troops in Cuba before the end of the unhealthy rainy season in October. The first step was to concentrate the entire Regular Army at Chickamauga Park, Georgia, where it could receive much-needed instruction in combined-arms operations.

So deliberate and cautious a plan, however, was by mid-April 1898 not in harmony with the increasing public demand for immediate action against the Spanish. With an ear to this demand, Secretary of War Russell M. Alger ignored General Miles’ advice. He ordered the regular infantry regiments to go to New Orleans, Tampa, and Mobile, where they would be ready for an immediate descent on Cuba. (*Map 36*)

“EMBALMED BEEF”

In December 1898 Nelson A. Miles, the Commanding General of the Army, made a sensational public charge that refrigerated beef supplied to the Army during the Spanish-American War had been “embalmed” with harmful preservative chemicals. Miles also criticized canned boiled beef that the troops universally reviled for its poor quality, tastelessness, and often nauseatingly spoiled condition. Official inquiries found no evidence of harmful chemicals in either type of beef but concluded that use of the easily spoiled canned beef in the tropics was a serious mistake. Despite these findings, the myth of embalmed beef persisted in the public imagination.



Map 36

(Later some infantry troops did go to Chickamauga Park, where they trained with the regular cavalry and artillery concentrated there.)

The decision to mobilize large volunteer forces compounded the problems of equipping, training, and supplying the Army. In the spring and summer of 1898, thousands of enthusiastic but inexperienced volunteers poured into newly established camps. A taste of military life soon curbed the enthusiasm of most of them, for in the camps they found chronic shortages of the most essential equipment. Even such basic items as underwear, socks, and shoes were lacking. A steady diet of badly prepared food, unbelievably poor sanitary conditions, and inadequate medical facilities complemented the equipment shortages. Red tape and poor management in the War Department's supply bureaus (the Ordnance Department possibly excepted) delayed correction of some of the worst deficiencies, while the shortage of capable volunteer officers further limited the quality of training received in the camps.

Confusion and inefficiency likewise characterized the War Department's conduct of operations. Since Congress had provided no machin-

ery in the department for the peacetime coordination of foreign policy with the country's military posture, the nation went to war without any kind of overall plan of operations or even adequate intelligence about the enemy. Given time, the Army might have devised adequate operational plans; but public opinion, political pressures, and the trend of events demanded the launching of an immediate expedition against the Spanish in Cuba.

Victory at Sea: Naval Operations in the Caribbean and the Pacific

Fortunately, it turned out that the really decisive fighting of the war fell to the much better prepared Navy, although last-minute alterations in its strategic plan seriously threatened to reduce its effectiveness. Shortly after the war began, rumors circulated that an enemy fleet under Admiral Pascual Cervera y Topete was approaching the east coast of the United States. An alarmed public demanded that measures be taken to defend the Atlantic seaboard. In deference to this demand, the Navy Department in late April 1898 withheld some of its best fighting ships from Rear Adm. William T. Sampson's North Atlantic Squadron, sent to blockade Cuba. These ships, formed into a "flying squadron" under Commodore Winfield S. Schley, set up a watch for Cervera. This move was in conflict with the provisions in the Navy's strategic plan that, based upon Mahan's doctrines, called for maintaining Sampson's squadron at full strength in the Caribbean, ready to intercept any Spanish fleet sent to relieve Cuba.

In the western Pacific, meanwhile, the Navy was able to adhere to its strategic plan—the latest version of which had been completed in June 1897. Developed by officers at the Naval War College in collaboration with the Office of Naval Intelligence, the plan provided for an attack on the Philippines, leading to the destruction of Spanish warships there, the capture of Manila, and a blockade of the principal Philippine ports. The basic objectives of the plan were to weaken Spain by cutting off revenues from the Philippines and to place the United States in the position of having something to offer the Spanish as an inducement to make peace after Cuba had been freed.

The Navy began to actively prepare for war in January 1898, and in late February Theodore Roosevelt, as Acting Secretary of the Navy (Secretary John D. Long was ailing), cabled orders to American naval commanders, instructing them to get their squadrons in readiness for action. Commodore George Dewey of the Asiatic Squadron responded by assembling his ships at Hong Kong, where they could take on coal and supplies preparatory to an attack on the Philippines. Thus, on April 24, when McKinley finally ordered the Asiatic Squadron to initiate hostilities, Dewey was ready. He sailed into Manila Bay on the night of April 30 and the following morning located Spain's weak and dilapidated naval squadron at Cavite. In a few hours and without loss of a single American life, he sank or disabled the entire Spanish force. In the days immediately following, he also silenced the land batteries defending Manila harbor; but the city itself continued to resist. With barely enough men to maintain his own squadron, Dewey requested the dispatch of land forces from the United States to help take Manila.



A Pennsylvania artilleryman would wear a khaki cotton field coat such as this.

EMILIO AGUINALDO (1869–1964)

Despite modest military abilities, Emilio Aguinaldo embodied the Philippines' struggle for independence; and his capture, while not ending the rebellion, certainly helped weaken it. After taking an oath of allegiance to the United States, Aguinaldo spent the next thirty years as a farmer. When Japan invaded the Philippines in 1941, he participated in the Japanese puppet government. Charged as a collaborator after the war, he was soon pardoned. Having lived through three colonial administrations, he finally witnessed the birth of a free and independent Philippines in July 1946. He died in 1964 at the age of 95.

While Dewey blockaded Manila and awaited reinforcements, the Filipinos rose up in revolt against their Spanish overlords. The Philippines had rebelled against Spain in 1896, a conflict that had ended only in December 1897 with a pact that had included the exile of the insurgent leadership to Hong Kong. Spain, however, did not fully live up to its part of the pact; and upon the outbreak of war between the United States and Spain in April 1898, pro-independence Filipinos once again took up arms against the Spanish. Seeking to capitalize on this development, Dewey arranged for Emilio Aguinaldo, the leader of 1897 insurgent government, to return to the Philippines in May. Aguinaldo immediately sought to reassert control over the revolutionary movement, forming an army and declaring the islands independent. By the time American ground troops began to arrive at the end of June, Filipino revolutionaries already controlled the majority of the archipelago, as the Spanish Army had withdrawn to Manila and a few other key cities. The Americans thus joined the Filipinos in besieging Manila.

Operations in the Caribbean

As in the Pacific, naval developments would determine when and where the Army undertook operations in the Caribbean. During the early part of May 1898, the whereabouts of the Spanish Fleet under Admiral Cervera remained a mystery. Lacking this information, the Army could not precisely fix the point where it would launch an attack. Nevertheless, the War Department pushed preparations at Tampa, Florida, for an expedition under General Miles to be put ashore somewhere near Havana. But persistent rumors of the approach of the Spanish Fleet to Cuban waters delayed this expedition while the Navy searched further for Cervera. News at last reached Washington near the end of May that the Spanish admiral had skillfully evaded the American naval blockade and on the nineteenth had slipped into the bay at Santiago de Cuba. (*See Map 36.*)

The Navy, at first not at all certain that it was actually Cervera's fleet in Santiago, sent Admiral Sampson to inspect the harbor. As soon as the American naval commander had ascertained that the four cruisers and several smaller war vessels were indeed Spanish, he bombarded the forts at the entrance to Santiago Bay. Unable to silence them, Sampson decided against trying to run the heavily mined harbor entrance. Instead, he sent Lt. (Junior Grade) Richmond P. Hobson to bottle up the enemy



Embarking for Cuba, *Charles Johnson Post, 1930*

fleet by sinking the collier Merrimac athwart the channel. When this bold project failed, Sampson requested army forces to seize the Spanish batteries, at the same time dispatching marines ashore to secure a site for a naval base east of Santiago. In the first land skirmish of the Cuban campaign, the marines quickly overcame enemy resistance and established the base at Guantánamo Bay.

Upon receipt of Sampson's request for land forces, the War Department, already under strong public pressure to get the Army into action, ordered Maj. Gen. William R. Shafter to embark with the V Corps from Tampa as soon as possible to conduct operations against Santiago in cooperation with the Navy. This corps was the only one of the eight that the War Department had organized for the war that was anywhere near ready to fight. Composed chiefly of regular Army units, it had been assembling at Tampa for weeks when the order came on May 31 for its embarkation; it would require another two weeks to get the corps and its equipment on board and ready to sail for Cuba.

Many factors contributed to the slow pace of preparation. There was no overall plan and no special staff to direct the organization of the expeditionary force. Moreover, Tampa was a poor choice for marshaling a major military expedition. Selected because of its proximity to Cuba,

Tampa had only one pier for loading ships and a single-track railroad connecting with mainline routes from the north. It could not, therefore, readily accommodate the flood of men and materiel pressing in upon it. So great was the congestion that freight cars were backed up on sidings as far away as Columbia, South Carolina, waiting to gain access to the port. When a freight car finally did reach the port area, there were no wagons to unload it and no bill of lading to indicate what was in it. When it came to loading the ships, of which there were not enough to carry the entire corps, supplies and equipment were put on board with little regard for unloading priorities in the combat zone should the enemy resist the landings.

In spite of the muddle at Tampa, by June 14 nearly 17,000 men were ready to sail. On board were 18 regular and 2 volunteer infantry regiments; 10 regular and 2 volunteer cavalry squadrons serving dismounted; 1 mounted cavalry squadron; 6 artillery batteries; and a Gatling gun company. The expedition comprised a major part of the Regular Army, including all of the regular African American combat regiments. Departing Tampa on the morning of the fourteenth, the V Corps joined its naval convoy the next day off the Florida Keys and by June 20 had reached the vicinity of Santiago.

While the troops on board endured tropical heat, unsanitary conditions, and cold, unpalatable rations, Shafter and Sampson conferred on how to proceed against Santiago. Sampson wanted the Army to storm the fort on the east side of the bay entrance and drive the Spanish from their guns. Then his fleet could clear away the mines and enter Santiago Bay to fight Cervera's squadron. Lacking heavy artillery, Shafter was not sure his troops could take the fort, which crowned a steep hill. He decided instead to follow the suggestion of General Calixto Garcia, the local insurgent leader, and land his forces at Daiquiri, east of Santiago Bay. (*See Map 37.*)

On June 22, after heavy shelling of the landing areas, the V Corps disembarked amid circumstances almost as confused and hectic as those at Tampa. Captains of many of the chartered merchant ships refused to bring their vessels close to shore. Their reluctance slowed the landing of troops and equipment already handicapped by a shortage of lighters. Horses, simply dropped overboard to get ashore on their own, swam out to sea in some instances and were lost. An alert enemy defense might well have taken advantage of the chaotic conditions to oppose the landings effectively. But the Spanish, though they had more than 200,000 troops in Cuba—36,000 of them in Santiago Province—did nothing to prevent Shafter's men from getting ashore. Some 6,000 landed on June 22 and most of the remaining 11,000 on the two days following. In addition, 4,000 to 5,000 insurgents under General Garcia supplemented the American force.

The Battle of Santiago

Once ashore, elements of the V Corps moved westward toward the heights of San Juan, a series of ridges immediately east of Santiago, where well-entrenched enemy troops guarded the land approaches to the city. On June 23, Brig. Gen. Henry W. Lawton, commanding the vanguard, advanced along the coast from Daiquirí to Siboney, which

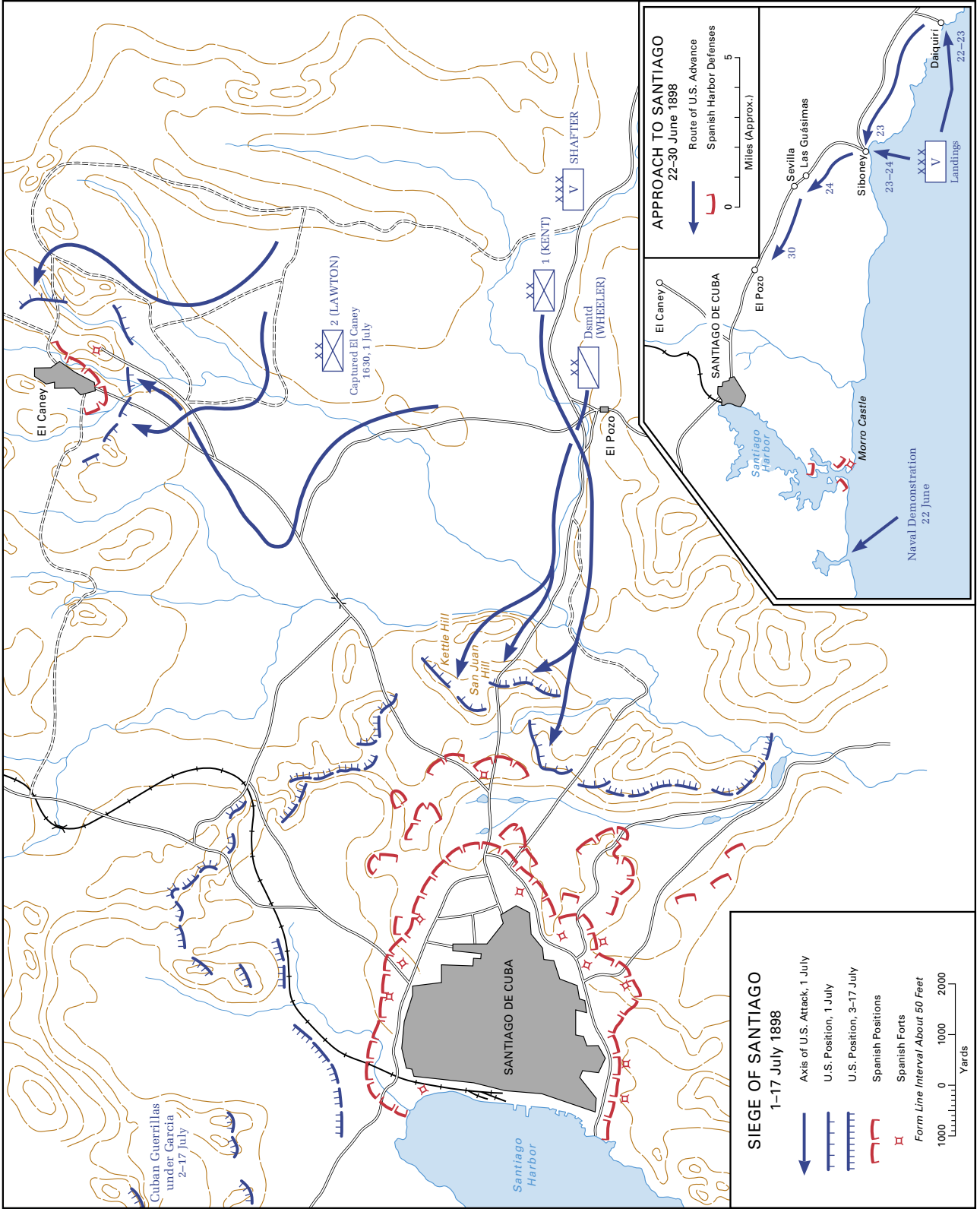
then became the main base of operations. The next day, Brig. Gen. Joseph Wheeler, the Confederate Army veteran, pushed inland along the road to Santiago with dismounted cavalry to seize Las Guásimas after a brief skirmish with rear guard elements of a retiring Spanish force. This move brought American units within five miles of the San Juan Heights, where they paused for a few days while General Shafter assembled the rest of his divisions and brought up supplies. Even in this short time, Shafter could observe the debilitating effects of tropical climate and disease on his men. He was aware, too, that the hurricane season was approaching. Consequently, he decided to launch an immediate attack on the defenses of Santiago.

Shafter's plan was simple: a frontal attack on the San Juan Heights. For this purpose, he deployed Brig. Gen. Jacob F. Kent's infantry division on the left and Wheeler's dismounted cavalry on the right, the entire force with supporting elements comprising 8,000 troops. But before he made the main advance on the heights, Lawton's infantry division with a supporting battery of artillery, more than 6,500 men, was to move two miles north to seize the fortified village of El Caney, cutting off Santiago's water supply and, if necessary, intercepting rumored Spanish reinforcements. This action completed—Shafter thought it would take about two hours—Lawton was to turn southwestward and form on the right flank of Wheeler's division for the main assault. A brigade that had just landed at Siboney was to advance in the meantime along the coast in a feint.

The attack, which moved out at dawn on July 1, soon became badly disorganized because of poor coordination, difficult terrain, and tropical heat. The corpulent Shafter, virtually prostrated by the heat, had to leave the direction of the battle to others. At a stream crossing on the crowded main trail to San Juan Heights, enemy gunners scored heavily when a towed Signal Corps balloon pinpointed the front of the advancing line of troops. Lawton's division, delayed in its seizure of El Caney by a stubborn enemy defense, misplaced artillery, and the necessity of withdrawing a volunteer unit armed only with telltale black powder, did not rejoin the main force until after the assault had ended. Despite these unexpected setbacks, Kent's and Wheeler's divisions at midday launched a strong frontal attack on the Spanish forward defensive positions. Cavalry units of Wheeler's division, including the 9th

THE ROUGH RIDERS

The 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry, initially commanded by Col. Leonard Wood, was popularly known as the Rough Riders. It was composed of western volunteers, cowboys, and woodsmen and raised in large measure by the forceful personality of its second in command, the future President Theodore Roosevelt. During the Spanish-American War, the unit charged detached Spanish works on Kettle Hill in front of Santiago, Cuba, on July 1, 1898, along with other elements of the Cavalry Division, V Corps. Roosevelt led the Rough Riders from the front, revolver in hand. Concurrently the 1st Division attacked the main Spanish position on San Juan Ridge. By the time the Americans reached the Spanish lines, the defenders had fled. Newspaper accounts magnified the Rough Riders' role in the victory but not their bravery and daring.



Map 37



San Juan Hill, July 10, 1898, *Charles Johnson Post, 1930*

Cavalry and part of the 10th, both African American regiments, and the 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry (the “Rough Riders”), now commanded by newly commissioned Lt. Col. Theodore Roosevelt, seized Kettle Hill, separate from the central heights. Then Kent’s infantry regiments, supported by Gatling guns, stormed up San Juan Hill in the main ridge line, driving the Spanish from blockhouse and trench defenses and compelling them to retire to a strongly fortified inner line. Thus the day ended with the Americans’ having achieved most of their initial objectives. The cost was high: nearly 1,700 casualties sustained since the start of operations against Santiago.

Concerned with the increasing sickness that was thinning the ranks of the V Corps and faced by a well-organized Spanish second line of defense, General Shafter cabled Secretary Alger on July 3 that he was considering withdrawing about five miles to higher ground between the San Juan River and Siboney. The shift would place his troops in a position where they would be less exposed to enemy fire and easier to supply. Alger replied that “the effect upon the country would be much better” if Shafter continued to hold his advanced position.

The V Corps commander then sought to get the Navy to enter Santiago Bay and attack the city. But

neither the Navy Department nor President McKinley was willing to sanction this move. Just when the whole matter threatened to become an embarrassing public debate between the two services, the Spanish resolved the issue.

By early July serious shortages of food and ammunition had convinced the Spanish that Santiago must soon fall. While Cervera considered flight from the port hopeless, he had no recourse but to attempt it. Officials in both Havana and Madrid had ordered him, for reasons of honor, to escape when Santiago appeared about to surrender. Finally, on the morning of July 3, while Sampson and Shafter conferred ashore, Cervera made his dash for the open sea, hoping to reach the port of Cienfuegos on the south coast of Cuba. As soon as the Spanish Fleet appeared, Sampson’s squadron, temporarily under the command of Commodore Schley, gave chase and in less than two hours destroyed

Cervera's force; four cruisers were crippled and run ashore, one destroyer was beached, and another was sunk.

A few days later General Shafter persuaded the Spanish leaders in Santiago that they had no choice except to surrender. On July 16 they signed the unconditional terms demanded by the McKinley administration, which provided for the surrender of 11,500 troops in the city and 12,000 others in the vicinity of Santiago. The formal surrender ceremony took place on the following day.

During preparations for the Santiago campaign, General Miles personally had been overseeing the organization of a second expedition to seize Puerto Rico. On July 21 he sailed from Guantánamo with more than 3,000 troops. His original strategy was to land at Cape Fajardo in the northeast part of the island, where he could establish a base of operations for a subsequent advance west to the capital, San Juan. For reasons not entirely clear, but probably because of a desire not to have to cooperate with the Navy in the attack on San Juan, Miles, while still at sea, changed his plans and on July 25 landed forces at Guanica on the southeastern coast. Meeting virtually no opposition, the Americans shortly occupied the port of Ponce. In early August, after the arrival of more than 10,000 additional troops from the United States, General Miles, using Ponce as a base of operations, launched a four-column drive toward San Juan. There was little bloodshed—casualties for the campaign totaled fewer than fifty—and, in fact, most Puerto Ricans welcomed the American troops. The campaign ended on August 13 when word reached the island that Spain had signed a peace protocol the previous day.

Back in Cuba, conditions for the Army were much less pleasant. The spread of malaria, typhoid, and yellow fever among Shafter's troops at Santiago threatened to have far deadlier consequences than had the actual fighting. Concern over this problem led a number of Shafter's senior officers to draft a joint letter proposing immediate evacuation of the Army from Cuba. Addressed to the Commanding General, this round robin letter came to the attention of the press before it reached Shafter. Hence, Washington officials read it in the newspapers before learning of its content from the general himself. Naturally the whole episode, coming at the time when peace negotiations were beginning, caused a sensation. Although acutely embarrassing for the Army and General Shafter, the incident did have the salutary effect of hastening measures to evacuate thousands of troops to Montauk Point, Long Island, where the Army Medical Department already had taken steps to establish a quarantine camp. There, those who had contracted tropical infections received the necessary treatment. The Army's nearly disastrous experience with the debilitating effects of disease and climate in Cuba did, however, spur the Medical Corps to determine the causes of yellow fever, inaugurating a long-term program of research and study into what henceforth would be a permanent concern of the Army, the maintenance of the health and effectiveness of American troops in a tropical environment.

The spread of malaria, typhoid, and yellow fever among troops at Santiago threatened to have far deadlier consequences than had the actual fighting.

The Fall of Manila

In another tropical setting halfway around the world from Cuba, the final military episode of the war took place. On June 30 the first

contingent of American ground troops disembarked in the Philippines. By the end of July 1898, 13,000 volunteer and 2,000 regular troops, constituting the VIII Corps under Maj. Gen. Wesley Merritt, had reached the islands. These troops had embarked from west coast ports (chiefly San Francisco) with a minimum of the confusion and difficulty that had characterized the launching of the Cuban expedition. In spite of the long voyage across the Pacific, they were in good condition and ready to start operations against the 13,000 Spaniards trapped inside Manila. Between the Americans and the Spanish lay Aguinaldo's revolutionary army, also numbering around 13,000 men.

Although the Americans and the Filipinos shared a common interest in defeating Spain, relations between the allies deteriorated steadily during the summer. The most important reason was a fundamental difference in objectives. The goal of the insurgents was immediate independence for the Philippines. After some hesitation, the McKinley administration began to express the view that the United States ought to retain the islands for itself. Thus, by late summer the two allies eyed each other warily.

The Spanish commander in Manila realized his situation was hopeless but believed he must put up at least token resistance, not only for honor's sake, but also to avoid a court-martial back home. He greatly feared that a rebel assault might lead to a massacre of the garrison. The Americans shared the Spaniard's desire to keep the insurgents out of Manila, not only for humanitarian reasons but also to deny the independence movement the political legitimacy it would garner by occupying the capital city, a prize the Americans wanted for themselves. After persuading the Filipinos to give them a small portion of the front lines, Dewey struck a secret deal with the Spanish governor in which the Spanish agreed to make only minimal resistance to an American assault if the Americans in turn promised to keep the Filipino army out of the city. On August 13, after a short but not entirely bloodless battle, Merritt's soldiers occupied central Manila, shutting out their chagrined allies. Operations at Manila cost the Americans a total of 17 killed and 105 wounded.

Formal surrender ceremonies came the following day—actually two days after the government in Madrid had signed a protocol suspending hostilities. News of the protocol had not yet reached Manila because a cable Dewey had cut when he first entered Manila Bay still had not been repaired.

After negotiations in Paris in the fall of 1898, the United States and Spain signed a peace treaty on December 10. By its terms Spain gave up sovereignty over Cuba, which became an independent state, ceded Puerto Rico and Guam to the United States, and accepted \$20 million in payment for the Philippines. Thus fatefully did the Americans commit the nation to a new role as a colonial power in the Far East, with momentous future consequences that few at the time could anticipate.

The Philippine-American War, 1899–1902

News of the Treaty of Paris brought no comfort to Filipino nationalists. Since the fall of Manila an uneasy truce had existed between

the Filipino army that continued to surround Manila and the Americans inside the city. After consolidating his hold over much of the archipelago, Aguinaldo established a republic with a capital at Malolos, northeast of Manila, and made preparations to resist the United States should it attempt to assert its claims of sovereignty over the islands. As the soldiers of both sides waited anxiously to see if the U.S. Congress would ratify the Treaty of Paris, relations between the erstwhile allies deteriorated and scuffles became common. It was only a matter of time before full-scale violence erupted.

That moment came on the night of February 4, 1899, when Filipino and American patrols traded shots near a disputed village in the neutral zone that separated the two armies. The firing quickly spread along the entire front line; and at dawn Maj. Gen. Elwell S. Otis, who had replaced General Merritt, launched an offensive to drive the Filipinos off the high ground that overlooked the northern portion of the American lines. Though no one knows to this day who fired the first shot, the war was on. Meanwhile, back in Washington, a deeply divided Senate narrowly ratified the Treaty of Paris on February 6. Having formally purchased the Philippines from Spain, the United States declared its newfound possession to be in a state of insurrection. Thomas B. Reed, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, remarked ruefully, “We have bought ten million Malays at \$2.00 a head unpicked, and nobody knows what it will cost to pick them.”

In February 1899 Aguinaldo’s Army of Liberation of the Philippines had arrayed up to 40,000 men around Manila with additional detachments of militia distributed throughout the archipelago. Orga-



General Otis’ Staff and Assistants in Their Quarters in Manila, 1899

nized as a conventional military force, the Army of Liberation lacked training, discipline, and equipment. Worst of all, it was plagued with incompetent and inexperienced leaders. Otis, by contrast, had fewer than 20,000 men available in Manila, the vast majority of whom were state volunteers who expected to be discharged now that the war with Spain had ended. Nevertheless, the volunteers fought well: by late February they had driven the Filipino army from Manila and crushed a revolt within the city itself. By the end of March the VIII Corps had captured the capital of the Philippine Republic at Malolos, twenty-five miles northeast of Manila and inflicted a series of sharp defeats on Filipino forces. Aguinaldo's army would never recover from the losses it suffered during the first weeks of the war in terms of men, materiel, and morale. Nevertheless, it stubbornly remained in the field, retiring to the north in front of the advancing Americans while additional detachments continued to threaten Manila from the south, compelling Otis to launch several expeditions into southern Luzon to stabilize his southern flank.

The summer of 1899 brought a hiatus to the campaign. The small size of Otis' army became increasingly felt the farther he pushed from Manila, while disease and fatigue reduced some regiments by 60 percent. The onset of the monsoon season further complicated the situation, as did the political need to send the state volunteers home. Congress had attempted to meet the military needs of the new war in March when it authorized the enrollment of a temporary force of 35,000 volunteers for Philippines service. Unlike the volunteers of 1898, who had been organized by the states under officers appointed by state governors, the men of 1899 were organized directly by the federal government as U.S. Volunteers, with a term of service set to expire at the end of June 1901. By September 1899 the new U.S. Volunteer regiments, together with additional units of regulars, had begun to arrive in the Philippines; but their arrival merely offset the departure of the state volunteers, thus leaving the VIII Corps with an effective force of just under 27,000 men.

Otis nevertheless was determined to press ahead with a major offensive north of Manila, an offensive that he hoped would destroy the Army of Liberation once and for all. In early October he launched a three-pronged attack. Moving up on the right, General Lawton captured San Isidro and approached San Fabian on the Lingayen Gulf in an attempt to prevent the insurgent army from retreating into the mountains. Maj. Gen. Arthur MacArthur of Civil War fame, in the center, pushed up the central Luzon plain, seized Tarlac, and then moved on to Dagupan. Meanwhile, Brig. Gen. Loyd Wheaton, on the left, went by ship from Manila to San Fabian, moving inland to defeat the insurgents at San Jacinto before linking up with MacArthur at Dagupan. The operation succeeded in destroying part of Aguinaldo's army and dispersing the remainder, but it did not end the war. Aguinaldo escaped into the mountains of northern Luzon, and in November 1899 he ordered the remnants of his army to shift from conventional to guerrilla warfare.

The change of tactics was well considered. The Philippine Islands were a labyrinth of rice paddies, mountains, and jungles pierced only by rough trails and a few primitive roads. In this arena, Filipino guerrillas enjoyed numerous advantages over the Americans, not the least of which were their familiarity with the terrain and people and their accli-

mation to the region's enervating tropical climate. Aguinaldo, realizing that he lacked the resources to conduct a coordinated, conventional defense, organized his forces into a number of highly autonomous regional commands, each of which included a core of full-time "regular" soldiers backed by part-time militiamen. Together, these forces waged a war of ambushes, raids, and surprise attacks designed to keep the Americans off balance. Although some guerrillas wore uniforms, many did not; and even those who freely did changed into civilian clothes and hid their weapons to disguise their true identity from American patrols. This "chameleon act," whereby the guerrillas transformed themselves into obsequious "amigos" in the blink of an eye, made them difficult to counter, especially given the Army's lack of familiarity with Filipino language and customs.

Complementing the guerrillas in the field was a clandestine civil-military organization that acted as a shadow government in the villages, enforcing insurgent edicts, raising recruits, collecting supplies and "taxes," and gathering intelligence on American activities. Since many of the leaders of the resistance were from the middle and upper classes, they were able to exploit the oligarchic nature of Philippine society and the system of patron-client relationships upon which it was based to further the movement's influence over the people. Using a mixture of genuine nationalism, paternalism, propaganda, and terror (including the assassination of pro-American Filipinos), the leaders of the resistance maintained their control over the population despite their inability to defeat the U.S. Army in the field.

In fact, military victory was never the aim of Filipino leaders after 1899. Instead, they sought to undermine America's will to continue the struggle by harassing U.S. military forces. The Filipinos were well aware that many Americans opposed the government's venture in imperialism, and they consciously played to this audience. Realizing that 1900 was an election year in the United States, they sought to stir up as much trouble as they could in the hope that a disenchanted electorate would replace McKinley with the avowed anti-imperialist, William Jennings Bryan, in the presidential election.

Otis responded to the changed circumstances of the war by dividing the VIII Corps into several geographical commands, each of which was responsible for the pacification of a particular region of the Philippines. Regiments assigned to these districts were further broken down and dispersed among hundreds of small posts, most of which were located in or near towns. The posts served three purposes: they helped protect the population from guerrilla intimidation; they interfered with the ability of the population to provide food and recruits to the guerrillas; and they served as launching pads for innumerable small-unit patrols and raids into the bush in search of the guerrillas and their bases. The dispersion caused many difficulties in terms of logistics, morale, and command and control, while the effects of disease and fatigue threatened to undermine the effectiveness of many small garrisons. Nevertheless, the aggressive posture adopted by the Americans kept the guerrillas dispersed and on the run, thereby undermining both their ability and their will to continue the war.

Tactically the Army performed well during the guerrilla phase of the Philippine War. Guerrilla ambushes, while frustrating and difficult

to prevent, were rarely devastating and could be countered by sound tactics and proper security measures. Meanwhile, the Americans attempted to take the war to the enemy, sending small columns to search for and destroy his camps and supply bases while other units made night raids on villages to round up suspected insurgent leaders. The clandestine nature of the enemy's organization frequently frustrated these operations, but over time the Americans gradually eroded the insurgents' capability to resist. Of particular assistance in spreading control and separating the guerrillas from the ordinary citizens was the growing number of Filipinos who agreed to take up arms in American service—over 15,000 by war's end in such organizations as the Philippine Constabulary, the Philippine Scouts, and various other police and paramilitary organizations.

Bullets were not America's only answer to Filipino resistance, however, for Otis was not just the commander of American military forces in the Philippines but the military governor as well. Following McKinley's instructions to "win the confidence, respect, and admiration of the inhabitants of the Philippines," both Otis and General MacArthur who succeeded him in May 1900 worked to restore the norms of civil society. They built schools and roads, refurbished markets, and introduced improved systems of health and sanitation. They offered amnesty to guerrillas willing to turn themselves in and rewards to those who handed over their weapons as well. They restored government services, at first using American officers as governing officials but gradually transferring political control to Filipinos, beginning in the towns and villages. They were aided in their work by a body of American civilian commissioners led by William H. Taft that became the legislature for the Philippines in the fall of 1900. Although soldiers and civilians sometimes clashed over their respective authority and the speed at which the transition from military to civilian rule should take place, both worked toward the mutual goal of restoring law, order, and administration to the Philippines.

By the end of the first full year of guerrilla warfare, the Americans had clearly gained the upper hand. Hounded by American forces (which had reached an all time high of 70,000 men) dispirited by McKinley's reelection, and tempted by American promises of future peace and prosperity, one Filipino leader after another laid down his arms and returned to civil life. For those who refused to come in from the bush, MacArthur stepped up the pressure, permitting the use of imprisonment, deportation, execution, and the confiscation and/or destruction of property to punish guerrillas and their supporters to a greater degree than had been permitted heretofore. MacArthur and Taft complemented this firmer wielding of the sword by a greater extension of the olive branch, creating in December 1900 the Federalist Party, a Filipino political organization that supported American rule in return for the establishment of representative government and increased local autonomy. The party proved an effective tool in competing with resistance leaders for the allegiance of the Filipino people. Then, in March 1901, a small band of American soldiers and Filipino auxiliaries led by Brig. Gen. Frederick Funston dealt the resistance a further demoralizing blow when they succeeded in capturing Aguinaldo through a ruse. By July 1901 sufficient progress had been made to permit the establish-

FREDERICK FUNSTON (1865–1917)

A born adventurer who lacked formal military training, Frederick Funston fought alongside Cuban revolutionaries before receiving a volunteer commission in 1898. Sent to the Philippines, he fought with distinction but was denied a commission in the Regular Army. He was about to muster out in early 1901 when he learned of the location of Aguinaldo's headquarters. Throwing caution to the wind, he penetrated Aguinaldo's headquarters by pretending to be a prisoner, then turned the tables and seized Aguinaldo. The exploit won Funston a commission as a brigadier general in the Regular Army.

ment of full civilian rule in many parts of the Philippines under Taft, who became Governor-General of the Philippines.

Despite this progress, another full year of war remained. The most serious fighting occurred in southern Luzon and on the island of Samar, where the resistance movement remained strong. The burden for these last campaigns fell upon the regulars as the U.S. Volunteers of 1899 mustered out of service in the summer of 1901. Hardest hit was the 9th Infantry, which lost nearly an entire company to a guerrilla surprise attack in the village of Balangiga, Samar, in September 1901. The Army responded to this continued resistance with increasingly stringent methods, including the destruction of buildings and crops and the imposition of population concentration measures not unlike the notorious reconcentrado methods that had proven so distasteful to the American public prior to the outbreak of the Spanish-American War. Some officers, frustrated by the enemy's elusiveness, even resorted to torture to gain information. These sterner measures, coupled with the continued promise of equitable treatment and representative government, ultimately broke the back of the resistance movement. The last major revolutionary commanders surrendered in the spring of 1902; and on July 4 the United States officially proclaimed the insurrection to be over. In actuality, some sections of the Philippines continued to be troubled by violence, banditry, and rebellion for several more years, particularly in the Moslem areas that had never been fully pacified by Spain. But American rule was never seriously challenged again.

In his official report upon the end of the war, Secretary of War Elihu Root concluded, "it is evident that the insurrection has been brought to an end both by making a war distressing and hopeless on the one hand and by making peace attractive." Ultimately, the United States employed a carrot-and-stick policy to both entice and cower the Filipino population into submission. Force broke the back of the resistance; positive measures undermined it and helped reconcile the nationalists to their defeat. Neither would have been as effective without the other, but finding the right mix of benevolence and coercion had been difficult.

Ultimately, over 126,000 regular and volunteer soldiers served in the Philippines between 1899 and 1902. Of these, 1,000 died in battle or of wounds received in battle, 3,000 more died of disease and other causes, and nearly another 3,000 were wounded. The price of empire was not inconsiderable.

The Boxer Uprising

One important argument advanced for retaining the Philippines was that they would serve as a convenient way station on the way to China. The dominant problem in China at the end of the nineteenth century was its threatened partition by the Great Powers, who sought to carve up the weak Manchu Empire into a number of colonies, protectorates, and “spheres of influence.” The United States had no territorial ambitions in China and opposed partition, largely because it feared losing access to China’s lucrative commercial markets. Consequently, in September 1899 the United States announced its preference for what it termed an Open Door policy in China in which everyone would enjoy equal access to trading rights.

Years of foreign exploitation, however, had fueled anti-foreign and anti-Christian sentiment in China that was about to erupt into violence. In early 1900 a secret society dedicated to purging China of foreign influences, known to westerners as the Boxer movement, began killing foreigners and Chinese Christians. The Dowager Empress sympathized with the Boxers, and consequently the government did little to stop them. The wave of violence climaxed in June when a large force of Boxers entered Peking. Fearing for their lives, most foreigners as well as many Chinese converts fled to the foreign legations quarter in Peking, defended by a composite force of 600 legation guards and civilians. There, they were besieged by thousands of Boxers.

Although the McKinley administration disliked the idea of becoming involved in foreign alliances, it agreed to join with the other powers (Britain, France, Germany, Russia, Austria-Hungary, Italy, and Japan) to rescue their beleaguered nationals. About 100 U.S. marines joined a 2,100-man international force under British Admiral Sir Edward



Typical Officer's Sleeping Quarters in China, ca. 1900

“I’LL TRY, SIR!”

Company E, 14th Infantry, part of the allied relief expedition to Peking, held a position directly opposite the thirty-foot-high city walls on August 14, 1900. The unit had no ladders or ropes, but the company commander believed it possible to scale the wall using hand holds. He called for volunteers. A young soldier, Musician Calvin P. Titus, said, “I’ll try, sir!” Titus, although under fire, made it to the top; the remainder of his company soon followed. It was a critical action toward allowing the allies to force their way into the city and relieve the besieged legations.

Seymour in an attempt to relieve the foreign quarter in Peking. Vastly outnumbered, the relief column failed to reach the imperial capital. Meanwhile, on June 17 coalition warships bombarded the Taku forts guarding Tientsin, the port city nearest to Peking. Regarding both the Seymour expedition and the assault on the Taku forts as hostile acts, the Chinese government declared war on the coalition nations and added its own troops to those besieging the foreign legations. Meanwhile, coalition forces besieged Tientsin, which finally fell to assault on July 13–14—an assault that cost the 9th Infantry eighty-eight casualties when coalition commanders committed the regiment to an ill-considered attack over marshy ground that stalled under heavy fire.

Tientsin’s fall opened the way to Peking, and during the following weeks additional coalition troops arrived to create a second relief expedition, this time numbering 19,000 men. The American contribution to this second force, officially titled the China Relief Expedition, consisted of 2,500 soldiers and marines under Maj. Gen. Adna R. Chaffee. On August 4 the multinational force set out for Peking, seventy miles away, in temperatures that exceeded 100 degrees. Since the coalition lacked an overall leader, decisions were made by majority vote in a council of the various national commanders. Coordination between the various contingents was difficult at best and contributed to a friendly fire incident in which Russian artillery mistakenly opened fire on American infantry. Such shortcomings notwithstanding, the expedition succeeded in defeating the Chinese in several sharp engagements and arrived outside of Peking in mid-August.

A final council of war assigned each national contingent a gate to attack along the city’s outer walls but agreed to postpone the assault when the Russian commander stated that his troops needed time to recuperate from the grueling march from Tientsin. The agreement was short lived, however, for on the evening of August 13 the Russians stole a march on the rest of the allies and attacked Peking on their own at the gate originally assigned to the Americans. News of the Russian action led first the Japanese and then the American and British contingents to make a mad dash for the city. There, on the morning of the fourteenth, they found the Russians pinned down at the Tung Pien gate unable to make further headway. Soldiers of the 14th Infantry scaled the city’s outer wall and cleared the gate, relieving the trapped Russians and opening the way for additional soldiers to pour into the city. Meanwhile, the British penetrated the outer wall at another point and

ARMY WAR COLLEGE

When Secretary of War Elihu Root took office in 1899, the Army lacked a senior service school. The officer corps of what had been scant years before a frontier Army required educational preparation for modern war. Recognizing this need, which his military advisers confirmed, Root in November 1901 directed that a War College be established. In February 1903 President Theodore Roosevelt and Secretary Root spoke at the laying of the cornerstone for the Army War College building, designed by the prominent architectural firm of McKim, Mead, and White, at Washington Barracks (now Fort McNair), D.C.

relieved the legation quarter. The following day, Capt. Henry J. Reilly's Light Battery F of the U.S. 5th Artillery shattered the gates of the city's inner wall with several well-placed salvos, opening the way for the allied troops to occupy the central Imperial City.

The capture of Peking and the relief of the legation quarter did not end operations in China. The coalition organized a military government in which each nationality was given a section of Peking to govern, while expeditions combed the countryside to root out the last vestiges of Boxer resistance. The American contingent participated in only a few of these expeditions, partly because the United States was anxious to transfer troops back to the ongoing war in the Philippines and partly because it believed that the expeditions, often brutally conducted, did more harm than good. In a few months all resistance had ended, but prolonged negotiations delayed the final signing of the Boxer Peace Protocol until September 1901. Under its terms the Chinese government agreed to pay the coalition members \$333 million and to give them exclusive control over the legation quarter with the further right to place troops along the Peking-Tientsin-Shanhaikwan railway to ensure open communications between the capital and the sea.

After the conclusion of peace, the American contingent left China except for a detachment from the 9th Infantry that remained in Peking as a legation guard until 1905 when marines resumed this duty. The Boxer Peace Protocol had long-term implications for the Army, however, for in 1912 the United States decided to invoke its right to station troops along the Peking-Tientsin-Shanhaikwan railway when revolution threatened China's internal stability. Thus began the 15th Infantry's long sojourn in China, duty that would last until 1938 when the United States, fearful of becoming embroiled in Japan's escalating aggression against China, withdrew the garrison after a 26-year stay.

All totaled, some 5,000 soldiers participated in the China Relief Expedition of 1900–1901. Of these, about 250 were killed, wounded, or died of disease. The participation of the United States in the expedition marked the first time since the American Revolution that the country had joined with other powers in a military operation. The nation's first foray into coalition warfare had not been easy, marred as it was by poor planning, miscommunication, and national jealousies. Suspicious of the motivations of some of its "allies" and desirous of maintaining its freedom of action, the United States refused to put its troops under the command of foreign generals during the conflict.

Nevertheless, the intervention in China represented one more instance of America's changing role in world affairs. Although many Americans still believed that the nation could adhere to its historic principles of isolationism, America's growing economic and political interests abroad demanded otherwise. The dawn of the twentieth century had heralded the first stirrings of the United States as a world power; and as events in Cuba, China, and the Philippines had demonstrated, changes would be needed in many long-established institutions and policies to meet the requirements posed by the nation's growing role in world affairs.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did political considerations influence the planning and execution of military operations in Cuba, the Philippines, and China? Do similar considerations influence military operations today?
2. How well prepared was the United States to project power beyond its borders in 1898?
3. What challenges did the U.S. Army face in waging expeditionary warfare at the turn of the century? Do these same challenges remain today?
4. Should the United States have intervened in Cuba at all? Explain your answer.
5. How did the Army overcome guerrilla warfare in the Philippines?
6. What lessons can be derived by studying multinational operations during the Boxer Rebellion?

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