

Lane County Historian



1st Sergeants, 2nd Oregon Volunteer Infantry, 1898-1899.

—Courtesy Lane County Pioneer Museum

LANE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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LANE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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LANE COUNTY HISTORIAN

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MAP OF LUZON—from "Oregon in the Philippines"

Company C in the Philippines — 1898-1899*

By Inez Long Fortt

It was 1933 and the pile of letters was still growing. Robert S. Huston, Eugene, Oregon, 1st Lieutenant of Company C, 2nd Oregon Volunteers, opened his desk drawer and took out a box of letters neatly alphabetized and signed. Would the letters never stop coming?

Almost 35 years had passed since Company C had returned from active service in the Philippines and not one veteran had received his promised travel pay or a pension. For many it was already too late. Of the volunteers in Company C, many were from Lane County, almost thirty from Eugene, alone.

Huston picked up one of the letters and read it again. It was a repetition of so many, a plea for help. The letter was from Charles A. Cornell. Huston remembered him well, as he remembered all his men in Company C; Cornell, a former farmer and a musician, now a resident of California.

"Fresno, California
Nov. 7, 1933

Mr. Robert S. Huston
1685 Franklin Blvd.
Eugene, Oregon
My dear sir

Could I ask a favor of you as I need an affidavit from you hoping it will help to get my pension.

So if you will state what you know of my case you can do so in your own words & I will put it in the proper form & mail it to you for your signidture (sic)

Hoping I do not cause you any inconvenienc (sic) I Beg to Remain
Sincerely Yours

Charles A. Cornell"

As Huston placed the letter in the file, he sighed again. From A to Z they were all the same. There was Willoughby's letter, one of the last in the box. Leon Willoughby, a corporal in his company from Eugene, who had lost the use of his limbs.

"Cantil, Calif.
May 26th, '33

Mr. H. S. Huston
Eugene, Oregon
Dear Lieutenant Huston

This may be a little surprise but as I am looking for a letter, help or information, I am takeing (sic) this oportunity (sic) to see if you should remember about Ralph B. McMurry and myself. It was while we were at Mayeauayan, both of us lost the use of our limbs. McMurry was sent into Manila and when I tried to get Col. Moon to let me go, he offered to lay me of(f) duty in camp, telling me that we did not have half a company as it was. I would not take the lay off as he suggisted (sic) but took my turn standing guard along with the rest.

If you happen to remember about that, and would care to sign an affidavit to that offict (sic), I will be more than glad to forward it to you along with the notary fees. Awaiting your reply, I am Sincerely

Leon R. Willoughby"

*"Oregon in the Philippines," J. B. Whitney, State Printer, Salem, Oregon 1903
Mrs. Robert S. Huston Collection

Herbert C. Thompson Papers, University of Oregon Library, Oregon Collection

Articles by Herbert C. Thompson, published in Oregon Historical Quarterlies:

"Oregon Volunteer Reminiscences of the War with Spain"—Vol. 49, p. 195-205;
"War Without Medals"—Vol. 59, p. 293-325

"Life and Achievements of Admiral Dewey" by Murat Halstead, Dominion Co., Chicago, 1899

Huston spared no effort to obtain assistance for his men in Company C. Affidavits, one after another, were sent to the State of Oregon and the County of Lane.

One written on October 26, 1933, illustrates his deep concern.

"I, Robert S. Huston, being first duly sworn, depose and say:

That I have been personally acquainted with Silvy Wood for the past thirty-five years. During the war with Spain and the Philippine Insurrection, I served as 1st Lieutenant of Company C, 2nd Oregon Volunteers, of which company Silvy Wood was a member.

At the time Mr. Wood enlisted, he was in good physical condition. In the Philippine Islands, July, 1898, he suffered a severe wrench in his back while helping unload boats at Cavite, making it necessary to be confined to quarters. On August 5th he was taken to Brigade Hospital, Cavite, P.I. for treatment for a severe malarial condition, remained there until Sept. 23, 1898; weak and ill, his condition was such that an immediate return to the United States was his only hope of recovery.

The next time I saw Mr. Wood was October, 1899, I noticed very little improvement, he seemed to drag himself around. I found he had been discharged while still sick in bed, soon after returning from the Philippine Islands.

Since then, have seen Mr. Wood occasionally, know him to be suffering from a weak, nervous condition, result of the malarial fever and disintary (sic) contracted in service as above stated.

That the above facts are true to the best of my knowledge."

In another sworn affidavit to the City of Eugene, County of Lane and the State of Oregon, Huston declared the following:

"Eugene, May 8, 1933

I, Robert S. Huston first being duly sworn, do depose and say I have known Leonard Gross over thirty-five years, and served with him in the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection and that he had spells of severe stomach and bowel trouble while in the service, and also believe his present trouble with his stomach and bowels is traceable to the poor water and food and unsanitary conditions existing while in line of duty during the war, and I have every reason to believe the disability is due to his Army service.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 18 day of May, 1933.

Robert S. Huston"

* * *

WAR! WAR! WAR!

"Remember the Maine"

Anchored at Havana on the Cuban Shore.

Fearless of all danger, dreaming love days,

Peacefully he slumbers in an unknown grave

And while the stars are dreaming beauty

This is what he sings

Rise now, ye countrymen rise

Let not your flag be in vain

Strike down the cowardly foe

That slaughtered the crew on the Maine."

It was the morning of February 16, 1898. Men, women and a few children, crowded in front of the window of the *Daily Guard*, a weekly newspaper in Eugene, Oregon, and pressed against the glass pane to read the telegram posted in the window.

Shocked into silence, not a word was spoken. Then, from the rear of the group, a veteran of the Grand Army of the Republic, his hair and whiskers turned white,

*A popular ditty sung throughout America following the explosion of the "Maine." Words from Mrs. Robert S. Huston.

spoke aloud the thought that was in everyone's mind. "This means war."

On the night of February 15, the battleship *Maine* of the United States Navy at anchor in Havana, Cuba, was destroyed by an explosion. Two hundred and sixty men were killed.

The telegram posted in the window of the *Daily Guard* announced the catastrophe. As the news spread, excitement multiplied and angers flared, not only in Eugene but throughout the country. "An outrage! A deliberate plot perpetrated with the knowledge of the Spanish!"

In the White House was a new president. War was already in the air the fall of 1897 when William McKinley was elected President of the United States.

In 1897, insurgents in Cuba denied home rule by the Spanish had refused to arbitrate further. Spain with a new cabinet of liberals, replacing the reactionaries, feared the armed intervention of the United States with its powerful navy.

William McKinley wanted peace. The people of Cuba wanted peace. But there was no peace in Cuba. Instead there was terror. Insurgents burned homes and destroyed fields. The Spanish army moved masses of Cubans into wired enclosures where many died from exposure and starvation.

The Cuban people begged America for help. But the internal affairs of a foreign country were not the responsibility of the United States.

"What about the 260 Americans who lost their lives in the Cuban harbor?" Americans asked with indignation.

The "yellow papers" of American journalism bristled with ban-

ners calling for American intervention and charged Spain with the explosion of the *Maine*.

A fever of war swept the country. People demanded action. Whether the explosion was caused by Cuban "patriots" or the Spanish did not deter the "yellow papers" from shrieking "Free Cuba from the oppressors."

On April 2, 1898, the United States Congress with a skeleton force of 27,822 men declared war against the Spanish. But the United States Navy was ready for war. An American blockade was ordered.

On May 1, 1898, Commander George Dewey sailed into Manila Bay and destroyed the Spanish fleet lying at anchor. Though some skirmishes followed, Dewey's May 1st victory ended the war. An armistice followed, a treaty later signed on December 10, 1898.

In the far-off Pacific were the Philippine Islands of whose very existence* few Americans were aware. In the treaty, the United States received Cuba, Porto Rico, the Philippine Islands and Guam. America overnight became a colonial power.

In return the United States paid Spain \$20,000,000 for Spanish government buildings in the colonies.

So ended the war!

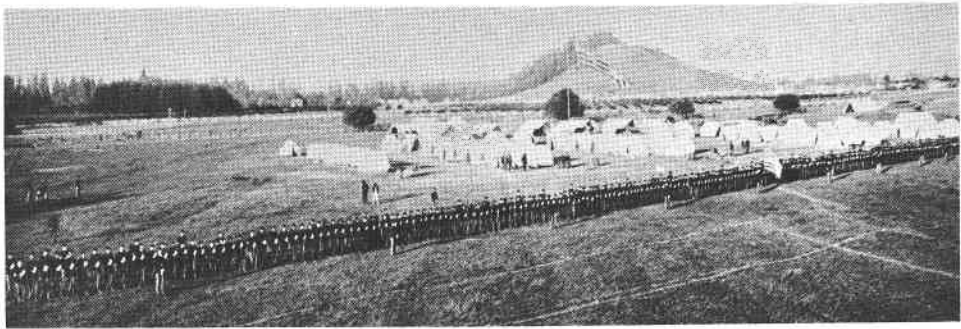
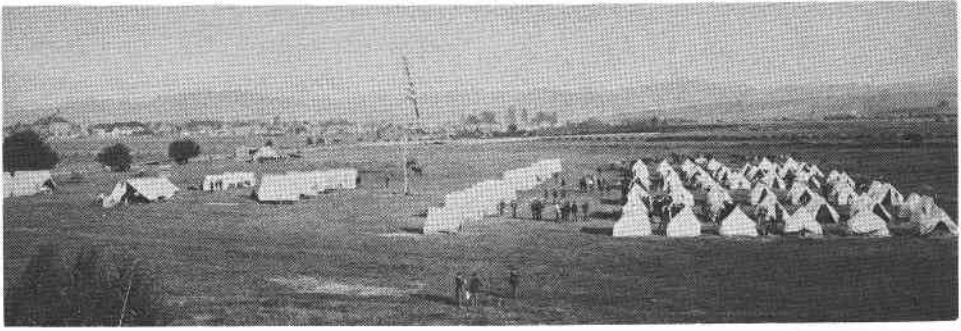
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A RUSH TO ENLIST

After the declaration of war in April, 1898, President McKinley issued a call for volunteers. The United States small army had become static. Since the Civil War, units were scattered at outposts throughout the country, engaged only in Indian skirmishes.

The National Guard numbered 114,602 men. Some of the states equipped and drilled their units, a few furnished only wooden guns

*Congressmen, editors ran to maps, encyclopedias; it was reported "McKinley himself was discovered in his study searching a globe for 'those darned islands.'"



Oregon National Guard Encampment, Eugene, 1891.

—Courtesy Lone County Pioneer Museum

for parades. Oregon took great pride in its guard and each summer held an encampment outside Eugene.

Herbert C. Thompson as a boy in Eugene watched the summer encampment each year. With a worship of military glory, his ambition was to grow up and become a militia man.

Along with other boys, Thompson slept on hay stacks outside the lines, heard the sentries call the hour, thrilled to the morning bugle, watched the sleepy men douse their heads in buckets of water, answer roll call and drill on the stubble fields.

When the call for volunteers was issued, Herbert C. Thompson, student at the University of Oregon, was one of the first at the Armory to join the volunteer army.

Eager to serve in this war of oppression by a foreign power, men in Lane county rushed to join the

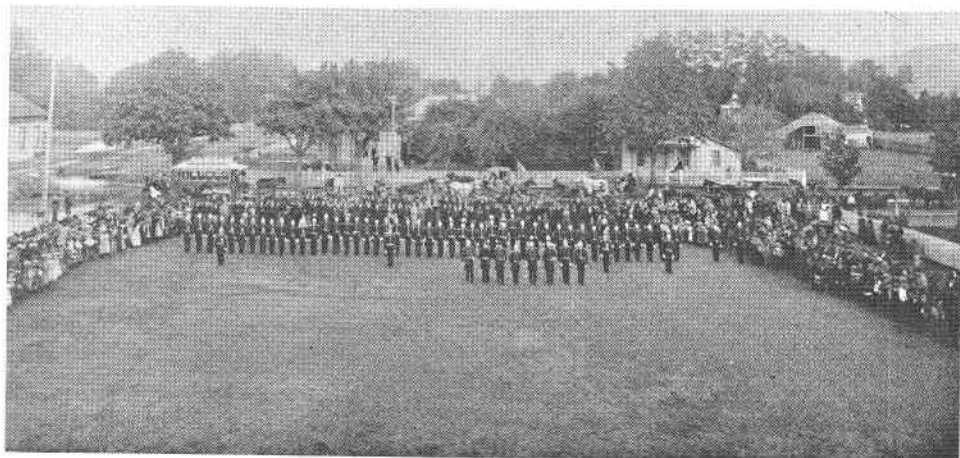
militia. Almost thirty from Eugene alone became recruits.

War fever saw men leave their jobs, their businesses and offices, walk off their farms and students at the University of Oregon left their classes to join the volunteers. Their only concern was that the war would not last long enough for them to see action.

The war had become their war.

"From the company's slop chest," wrote Thompson fifty years later in the Oregon Historical Quarterly of September, 1948, "I drew an undersized cast-off jacket, square-cut of dark blue, and a badly sprung pair of gray-blue trousers, both of heavy winter wool. Putting them on, I felt like a damfool. Yet I issued into the street as a full-blown hero dogged by a pack of worshipful small boys."

The militiamen lived in their homes and met to drill on the school common. Thompson wrote,



Volunteers drilling in Eugene, 1898.

—Courtesy Lane County Pioneer Museum

"To tell the truth, we were anything but models of military bearing. In the first place, our postures were bad, with a tendency to stoop. Our blue uniforms were as ugly as a horsetram's driver's without being comfortable. Our felt hats sat awkwardly on the mops of hair then in fashion among our young. However, we did our best.

"Full equipment consisted of a canvas haversack on one side, a round water bottle on the other, and a blanket roll tied like a horse collar. From the cartridge belt hung a long spiked bayonet, later to serve only as a can opener. And our rifle was a single-shot with a .45 brass shell plugged with a heavy bullet of soft lead.

"We expected orders to assemble at Portland at any moment. Meanwhile the warm-hearted and hospitable people of Eugene outdid themselves for us. A militia man was not allowed to pay for his ice cream and sodas, to the high satisfaction of the country boys who enjoyed indulgencies of this sort only on the Fourth of July and Circus Day. Every night there was a dance at the armory to the tinkle of piano, squeak of fiddle and

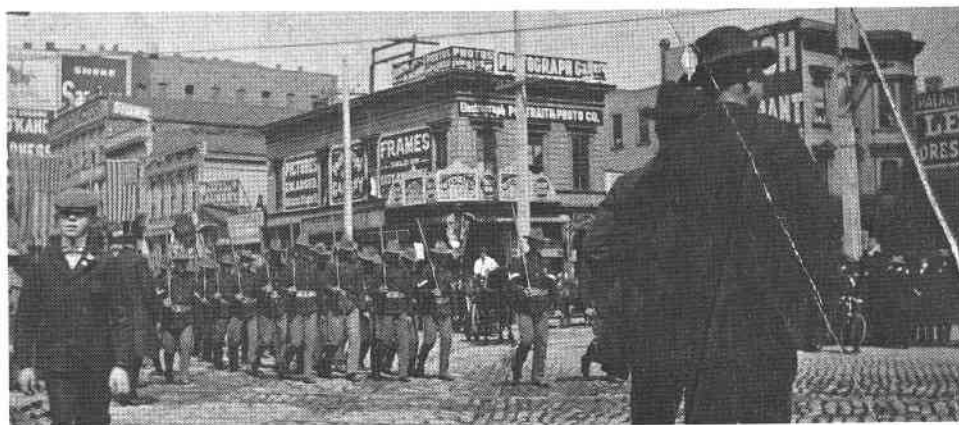
squeal of cornet, ending the grand farewell ball with band music."

Finally, orders arrived for departure. "For the front, perhaps! At least we headed for the Guard camp at Portland, our next stop. What a day for us! What a day for the girls! Even the older men who expected us back in a month, cheered and waved flags. From early dawn the countryside had been pouring in. The crowd and hubbub beat all records. Streets echoed with the rattle of wagon wheels on the hard gravel and the clop clop of hoofs. The parade was set for ten."

The Eugene streets were gay with bunting and packed with people. It was the first time Eugene had seen its boys marching off to war. The town band led the parade to the railroad station.

"We felt," continued Thompson, "Like militiamen surrounded by small hero worshippers in knee pants who already saw us wading through blood and cannon smoke with Spanish guts dangling from long thin bayonets.

"We boys felt the excitement outside, the eyes on us, admiring eyes, skeptical eyes. Our nerves were tight. Were no one looking,



Volunteers parade to railroad station, 1898.

—Courtesy Lane County Pioneer Museum

we would have wept. But we wished to live the part of heroes marching off to war. Looking straight ahead and led by the town brass band, with the officers 'hep-hep' to keep our rhythm, we passed through the cheering crowd up Willamette Street, gay with flags and bunting to the depot where the Grand Army in blue stood as a guard of honor. Among them was a loveable old soak now sober and solemn with spiritual elation on his dissipated old face. And who should be color-bearer but Prof. Benjamin J. Hawthorne of the University—affectionately known as 'Buck' Hawthorne from his goatish beard. As a young Virginian he had served on Lee's staff. Today, he held the flag with his splendid son* in our company, doomed never to return. At the sight of those old fellows, tears sprang from my eyes. I couldn't stand it.

"Family and friends broke through the lines to say goodbye, young things in fresh spring dresses kissed the boys goodbye in

Civil War tradition—but avoided the older fellows with drooping mustaches which were well dyed with soup, coffee and chewing tobacco."

On the train, young Travis† claimed he had broken the record by kissing sixty-seven.

The gay little brass-bound locomotive clattered into the station. Some of the recruits had never been on a train, a few had never seen a train. Not many had seen Portland and there were some who had never seen the ocean.

The war promised high adventure. For the farm boys, service meant freedom, release from their chores, dawn to dusk.

The boys were on their way to fight for "bleeding Cuba."

* * *

CAMP MCKINLEY, PORTLAND

Irvington Park in Portland was soon named Camp McKinley in honor of the President. At the camp the Lane county boys joined the Guard already assembled there by

*Winter Hawthorne died in 1st Reserve Hospital, Manila, Philippine Islands, result of injuries received in service, January 16, 1899.

†Lee M. Travis, University of Oregon student, returned sick with malarial fever to San Francisco from the Philippines, September 15, 1898, was discharged, February 28, 1899.

the Governor.* The volunteers and the Guard combined to form the 2nd Oregon Volunteer Infantry.

Oregon was one of the first states to respond with a complete regiment of infantry. Its total contribution in man-power for the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection was 1,650 men.

Officers named by the governor were required to pass an examination, quite different from the Civil War method when anyone who raised a company automatically became its captain, a colonel if a regiment, etc.

Colonel Owen Summers, a Civil War veteran, was in command of the 2nd Oregon Volunteer Infantry. Among other officers were Lieutenant Colonel George O. Yoran of Eugene who had commanded the 2nd Guard Regiment, Captain William S. Moon of Company C, a druggist and Robert S. Huston, a printer from Eugene, 1st Lieutenant of Company C.

Captain William S. Gilbert of Eugene, chaplain of the 2nd Regiment, Oregon National Guard, was appointed Chaplain of the volunteers. A small town minister, he became a social agency for the men; in the Insurrection, he carried canteens of water through the firing lines to the soldiers in the front lines.

The regiment's doctor was Major Matthew H. Ellis, a country doctor with one eye who gained fame as one of the ablest surgeons in the Manila General Hospital.

The men in the 2nd Oregon Volunteer Infantry averaged twenty-five years of age, were five feet, eight inches tall and 150 pounds in weight. Of these there were 158 students, 141 clerks, 123 farmers, 175 laborers, 66 mechanics, 20 carpenters and the rest were lawyers,

bookkeepers, teachers and merchants with a couple of ministers. Of them all, 114 were college graduates.

Significantly, there were few experienced hunters and many had never shot a firearm. Except for those from the cattle ranches only the farmers knew how to handle a horse.

To the east, the west was still the wild and woolly west. To the east, the war would be a great picnic for the west.

At Camp McKinley, Company C settled in. The men drove stakes for the street of small oblong white tents, each of which held four men. "Next," said Thompson, "we took our bedticks to a straw pile, crammed a mule's breakfast into each one, lined up for coffee and placed sentries.

"As we lay on the straw, we heard the beautiful and haunting call of taps and felt what it meant to be a soldier."

* * *

END OF THE WAR — ON TO SAN FRANCISCO

Awakened at dawn, "by the rude brassy tones of 1st call from a blubber-lipped bugler who could not get into his town's band, we turned out for the ritual of reveille."

It was not long before a ditty was added to the early morning bugle call. Mrs. Robert S. Huston remembered the words, soon a universal favorite:

"Get up! Get up! you sons of bitches, Get on your boots, shirt and britches."

"A dash of icy water in the face," recalled Thompson, "made us welcome mess call. But it took a wolfish appetite to relish our chow.

"More than the menial tasks, the sweating drill and aching bones

*William Paine Lord, Governor of Oregon, January 14, 1895-January 9, 1899.

was the mess. There were no tests for the cooks. Anyone who claimed experience over the stove of a logging camp could get the job. Bad cooking was an art, it just couldn't happen by accident."

Two hard days of camp had passed when the word arrived. The War was over! Dewey had sunk the Spanish squadron on May Day.

Everybody in Portland went wild. The country went wild. "But the news took the starch out of us.

"Yesterday we were heroes. Today we are nothing. Visitors do not come out and small boys yell 'tin soldier' at us."

The men continued to drill—in a sad perfunctory way. What was the use? The war was over.

Then, one day, the men heard shouts of joy from the head of camp. Word had arrived the War Department was sending an expedition to the naval station at Cavite in Manila Bay to relieve Dewey's overworked marines. The war had not ended after all!

Drill took on new life, visitors again swarmed out to camp and "the urchins quit shouting 'tin soldier' at us."

Orders arrived for San Francisco. Again, it was a parade to the railroad station. Schools were dismissed and businesses closed. The no-longer "tin soldiers" marched through the streets of Portland, pelted with flowers, deafened by cheers and boarded a train for San Francisco.

On the train there were no diners for the men but with "fried chicken, pies, cakes melting with eggs and sugar coming through the windows at every stop, what need was there for diners? Towns with depots turned out with bands to welcome us."

The biggest crowd of all was at Eugene. Such were the crowds,

"none of us could tell our own mothers or family goodbye."

At San Francisco, a very different kind of welcome, a foretaste of things to come. No one met the train, a Ladies Aid served coffee and sandwiches.

The volunteers marched unnoticed over cobble streets for five weary miles to the gates of the Presidio.

"A sentry halted us at the gates. There followed a long palaver and wait. The Sergeant of the Guard found the Officer of the Day who had no orders about us, but let us march in and pitch our tents on the sands of the cavalry drill grounds.

"The War Department had not informed the Commandant of our pending arrival. Not a hand had been lifted in preparations; there were no water pipes, sewer or storage areas."

A note in Teddy Roosevelt's diary of May 7 reads, "The War Department is in utter confusion."

The Presidio came alive. Water pipes were laid, people arrived with foods, fruits and tobacco. The men were given passes to take cable cars to town for the gaslights and Midway, with its theatres, beer gardens and restaurants.

In the harbor were three Pacific liners, *The City of Peking*, *Australia*, and the *City of Sydney*.

Exactly one month after Governor W. P. Lord of Oregon received President McKinley's call for a regiment of volunteers, the Oregon men received their orders to board ship for the voyage to Cavite, Philippine Islands.

Company C was on the *Australia*. The quartermaster corps accustomed to mules and wagons and tents not ships and decks, forgot to build a galley or chill rooms for perishables for the 800 men on board. Officers were quartered in the passenger section while the

ship's crew retained their own quarters.

As the *Australia* steamed out of San Francisco for the open sea, bands played and crowds on the docks waved goodbye.

The sailing of this first of all United States overseas military expeditions was May 25th, 1898.

The picnic was over.

* * *

THE ODYSSEY OF COMPANY C

Five weeks at sea and the men had stomach ulcers from the diet of beans and more beans. On June 20, the Island of Guam was in sight. The men thought of coconuts, bananas and pineapples, not battles.

But there was no sign of life. Where were the Spaniards? During the night a terrible squall came up which provided showers with fresh water for the men.

In the morning, ammunition was passed out. Belts and haversacks were filled. The volunteers were ready with their clumsy black weapons of Civil War model.

A launch with officers went out from the ship and was met by a Japanese brig; soon, the launch returned without touching land with the men appearing sheepish.

The Spaniards had surrendered! The Stars and Stripes were raised over some old ruins and the band played Star Spangled Banner.

It was a bloodless victory for the volunteers.

Thompson recalled, "At roll call that morning, I had to answer in shirt, my jacket had been stolen by some scamp at retreat. I was assigned to kitchen detail and went to work on crated vegetables rotting in the sun. With a knife, I cut into stinking potatoes that oozed black juice, then operated on soft sprouted onions and moribund heads of cabbages. I broke open cases of

canned salmon to take the place of the 'bully beef'* turned green which we fed to the sharks."

But the officers returned with bananas, coconuts, mangoes, etc.—"and feeling gay."

It was not so gay for the Spaniards; the governor, four officers and fifty men who said farewell to their families and became prisoners on the *City of Peking*.

"Again we were at sea and my last look at Guam was from a bucket while quartering potatoes."

On June 30, the Oregon volunteers arrived at the Philippines and were the first to set foot on the conquered land. They watched the Stars and Stripes being raised over Manila.

Their period of military service was over. They had enlisted for the duration of the war.

Not a volunteer had fired a shot.

Almost at once, Manila erupted. The Filipino Insurrection exploded with the close of the Spanish surrender.

Army regulars assigned to the base were only a small force. More men were needed to police the Walled City of Manila and maintain order. The Insurrection promised trouble.

Oregon volunteers were on the spot, available and spoiling for action. "If the volunteers would remain," the word came, "they would receive travel pay."

No volunteer wanted to go back home without even firing a gun. Eager for active service, the men agreed to stay. Also, the promise of travel pay was a great temptation.

But forty-five years would pass before any volunteer would receive the promised travel pay and by that time most of them were dead.

Orders arrived to police the walled city of Manila. It was tropi-

*Beef, poor grade, often spoiled, labeled "bully beef" by the men.

cal weather and the men were still in their blue woollens.

New issue of clothing sent to the tropical Philippines by Uncle Sam included long-sleeved, long legged underclothing of thick cotton flannel, heavy socks, two kinds, one of scratchy bull's wool. Shoes sent were bricklayer's brogues with snap buckles. The volunteers continued to wear their civilian shoes, black or tan, sharp to blunt toes, plain to fancy tops.

The thick woollens were soon discarded for brown canvas trousers and gingham shirts and the men cropped their shocks of hair with clippers. Officers ordered uniforms of silk and pongee at their own expense.

It was not long before the tropical heat with its dazzling white light, the hordes of insects and the bad diet wore down the men. Rations planned for the Philippines were not planned for hot weather. The "bully beef" of past campaigns was green on arrival. Beans and

more beans furnished the bulk of the meals.

The unsanitary sewers, the disease-breeding cesspools and filthy moats spread typhoid and malaria. Few members of the regiment escaped an attack of some kind. Many who recovered from one disease became a victim of the next.

Many were taken to the general hospital popularly known as "Camp Coldfoot."

The volunteers, homesick, miserable in the tropical heat, talked constantly of green Oregon with its forests of shade, yearned for the cool mountains, the kindly sun and fresh bubbly milk.

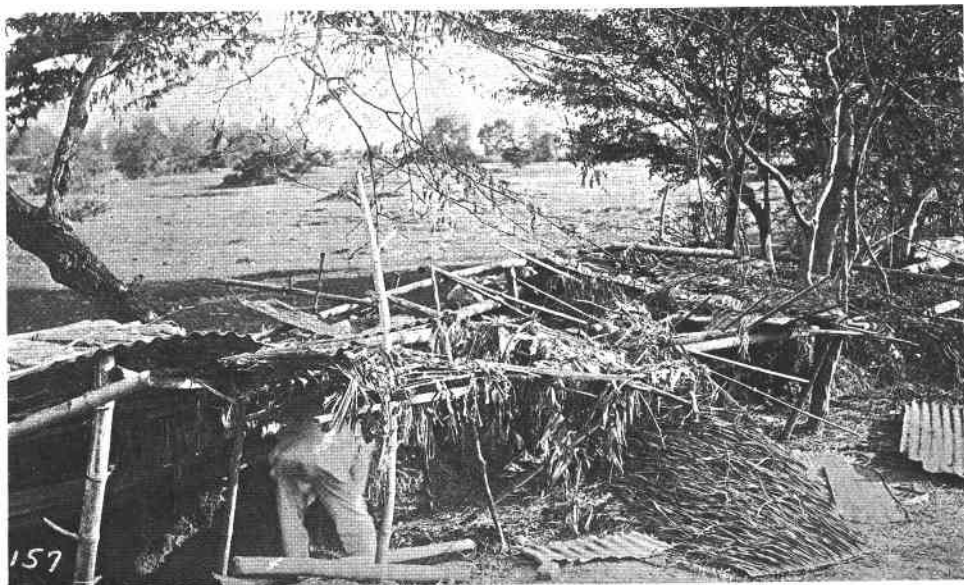
But more was to come.

The volunteers had not counted on Malabon.

* * *

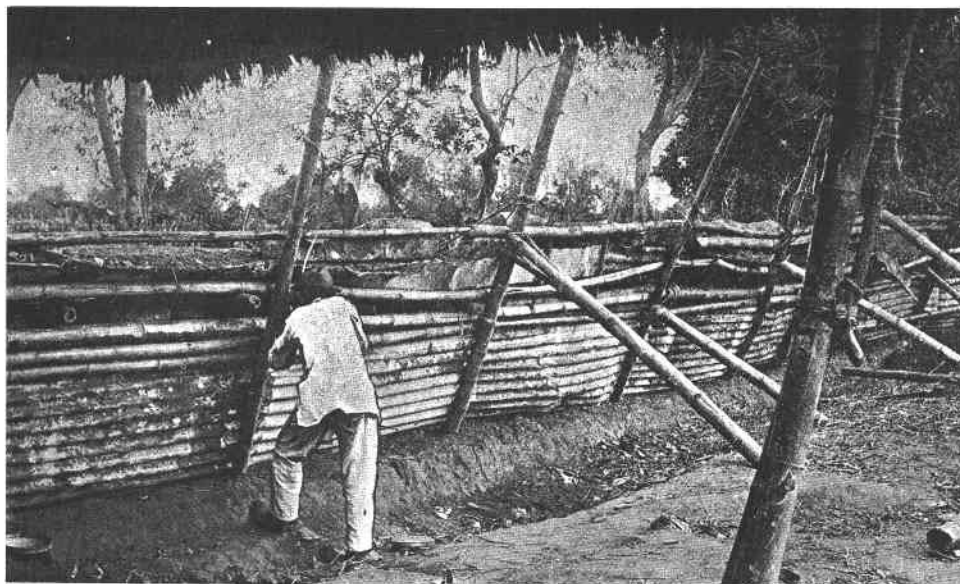
THE BATTLE OF MALABON

It was March 25, 1899, and the men of Company C were at Luzon. Entrenched in a tunnel built over a shallow trench covered by a fluted



First line of trenches carried by second Oregon at Malabon.

—Photograph from "Oregon in the Philippines," Salem, Oregon, 1903



Third line of trenches carried by Second Oregon at Malabon.

—Photograph from "Oregon in the Philippines," Salem, Oregon, 1903

zinc roof with layers of dirt for protection from shrapnel,* the men huddled together. From squarish portholes, they watched and listened for an attack by the insurgents.

Rear exits were wide and reached from the floor to the low ceiling. At intervals, men left "for private reasons or to wash up and fill containers at the tank. They returned with a mug of hot coffee which softened the flinty squares of hard tack,† issued in small paper cartons."

In the tunnel, "men squatted over letter pads, scribbling a last message home. Others were turning over a watch, a keepsake or money to a comrade 'for delivery to the family in case' or sometimes said bluntly, 'in case I am killed.' It was hard to give or receive a keepsake."

Finally morning came and with it, the dazzling burning white light.

The tunnel became an oven and sweat dripped from noses and chins.

"As we lolled about, wondering and waiting, a Utah gun spoke and how it spoke," recalled Thompson. "The blast at our backs nearly blew us out of our skins. The Filipinos replied with hot fire."

At the trumpet's brassy notes, the men scrambled out of the diggings and jumped from the trench top to the barren fields ahead. It was Lieutenant Robert S. Huston who led the charge. As he pushed forward, he shouted, "Hell, Men! Come on!"

As he ran, he heard men falling, calling out but he was unable to stop. He had to keep going—going on and on. Cussing the enemy, he shouted commands and ran and ran.

And his men followed after him. Mrs. Huston remembered his story of that charge, how the men fol-

*The enemy, the insurgents, had no shrapnel.

†The Portland Cracker Company, opened in 1886, operated day and night during the Spanish-American War, manufacturing hardtack for the volunteers.

lowed and never stopped. Later, she said, some of the men told her too of that charge and that they would have "followed him to Hell without question."

Herbert C. Thompson described that day. "I heard the first command and that was the last I heard in the roar and heat of the battle. I lay behind an ant hill as big as a barrel, firing and loading my single shot Springfield as fast as I could. I got on my feet, dodged out, hunched over, dropping behind paddies to fire and tried to catch up to the harum scarum ahead. Not a Filipino was in sight.

"The next I knew I woke in the lee of a tiny roadside shrine, a stone chapel with holy images. My Springfield was gone, my haversack torn open and some of its contents lost. My shirt smelled of the sour of vomit. A corpsman came up, gave me some pink anemic mixture, the kind given to drunks at hospitals. Nothing was wrong with me except that the sun had knocked me out.

"There were some wounded and sun-struck stretched out or huddled together for protection in the chapel. More were dragged in. In Company C, Elvin J. Alse and Herb B. Chandler,* a farmer from Eugene, were wounded."

Other Eugene men suffered casualties as well. Elvin J. Crawford received a wound in the head, James E. Snodgrass, a printer, was injured in his right knee. Elmer Roberts, a painter, suffered an injury to his right side and Corporal Horace A. Burnett, also a printer, was taken to sick quarters.†

As Thompson lay stretched out in the chapel, a limp and lifeless body was lugged along by his comrades. "Poor fellow," said a volun-

teer, removing his hat, "he done his duty."

"I fell asleep again," wrote Thompson, "and when I woke up, I got on my gear, wiped the sticky blood off the stock of an abandoned Springfield nearby and started off to find my company.

"My clothes hung on me like a wet pack. The firing had lessened, the insurgents must have been pushed back.

"Cast-off blankets and distorted bayonets lay scattered all over the place. The useless bayonet scabbards were only good for tripping a man up, catching between his legs. So we threw them away.

"As for the insurgents, the only ones I saw were dead or wounded. I looked at a dead Filipino, his body swathed in coarse cotton, soaked and caked with blood, his shattered leg in a pathetic mass of rags and bamboo splints.

"All the insurgents carried bamboo splints, a water bottle made of a bamboo joint with a wooden stopper in a hole cut out in the upper node, the whole suspended from the shoulder with a piece of rope yarn."

According to Mrs. Robert S. Huston, the bamboo joints had many purposes. "Bamboo joints were packed with scraps of iron, broken glass and sharp metal odds and ends. The Filipinos threw the packed bamboo joints like a home-made bomb. The 'cook stoves' as the volunteers called them, blew up on contact and caused severe injuries." Lieut. Huston called them "a wicked weapon."

The Filipinos lived close to the soil, not only for auxiliary weapons but for food as well. They were not dependent on any supplies except ammunition. The Americans were tied to their bull carts.

*Herbert B. Chandler died of head wound injury, 1st Reserve Hospital, Manila, P.I., April 15, 1899.

†"Oregon in the Philippines."

"At the water tank," continued Thompson, "I saw Dad Howard,* our company cook, his Springfield across his shoulders and the caraboo cart loaded with boilers of hot beans and pots of steaming coffee."

"I thought the boys would be hungry," was all Dad Howard said.

Thompson and Dad Howard started out together looking for Company C. As they reached a wide opening ahead, pulling the cart, snipers opened up and bullets rained on the caraboo. Dad Howard gave worried looks at the boiler of beans.

Thompson gathered discarded blanket rolls and heaped them on top of the boilers until the cart could take no more, saying to Dad, "The boys will need them at night."

"We found Company C, at least a part of it, in the lee of a massive earthwork, sprawled out on their ponchos, sweaty, filthy with dust and smoke, bones aching and shoulders pounded blue by the lusty kicks of their Springfields. But when they saw Dad with a cart of hot beans and coffee, they came to life with alacrity. What those weary fellows said about Dad must have been recorded to his credit by Saint Peter."

Only Company C had hot beans and coffee that night. But only Company C had Dad Howard. The other companies nearby had hard tack, canned salmon† and canteen water.

Afterwards the men stretched out, tried to relax, but there was only one thought—what was to come on the morrow? Would the real struggle come on the morrow when the order would come to cross the Tuliahan against the fire of an entrenched army?

There were many more days of fighting ahead—days of bloodshed, days of bitterness, days of hunger and thirst, before the Insurrection was put down and the men of Company C were again on their way home to their beloved Oregon, the local boys to their homes in Eugene and throughout Lane County.

* * *

LIFE AS A VOLUNTEER IN THE PHILIPPINES

There were other moments too for the volunteers besides warfare.

According to Mrs. Robert S. Huston, the stories were many her husband related of life in the Philippines during the Insurrection.

Music, especially singing, helped to fill the long days and evenings in camp. The volunteers, young, full of life, needed moments of laughter and gaiety. A few of the men had special talents.

Mike Gross from Eugene was a born entertainer. Before his enlistment, he worked in the Eugene depot express office and played in an orchestra.

An innate comedian, he devised endless stunts and acts and was always ready to play the "fool" for laughs. His repertoire of lusty songs drew the men to join in on the choruses.

But one song aroused the men to such a fury that only the intervention of the officers saved Gross from an attack. Homesick and sentimental, they rose as a body when Gross launched into a song, "I loved to see my poor old mother work."

Gross was also an acrobat. One day a half-grown calf was spotted, left behind in a pen by the retreating Filipinos. Dad Howard called

*"Dad" Howard was John G. Howard, a farmer from Eugene, who became Company C cook.

†The canned salmon consisted of scraps, small bones or waste, worked off on the government for the benefit of the volunteers serving in the Philippines during the Insurrection.

out, "If you catch him, we will have beef and dumplings for chow."

Gross climbed into the pen. The calf took one look and charged. Gross made a tree just in time. Snared, he put on an acrobatic performance, the equal of any of the monkeys prevalent in the area.

The men enjoying the show took their time to shoot the calf and free Gross.

At times, passes were handed out for a day in Manila and the men were warned to travel in groups. One time there was a tragic ending—an ending before the day began.

As usual the men caught the horse-drawn street car to the city. As they piled on, they called to Lieut. Huston to join them. The car was packed but the men caught Huston and he hung onto the back of the car.

A Filipino pulling a hand cart with razor sharp pointed "thills" sticking out in front, spotted Huston hanging onto the back of the car. He ran after the horse-drawn

street car and jammed the thills deep into Huston's back.

Huston fell onto the ground, seriously injured. He bore the scars all his life.

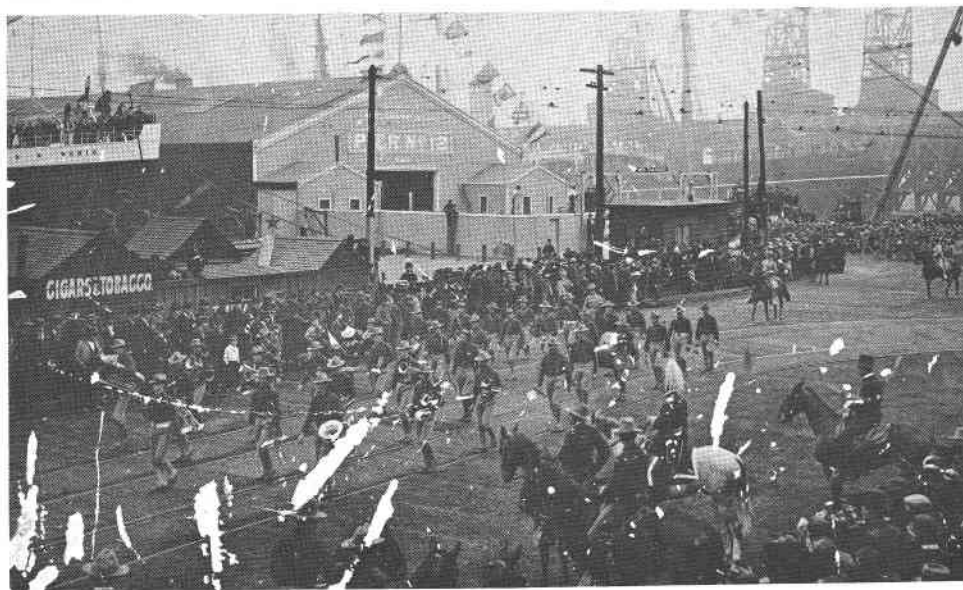
An insanity swept the men on the street car. In a frenzy of fury, they dropped off the car and as a single man, dragged the Filipino out from between the thills and crushed him to death by stamping him under their feet.

The only explanation the men gave, said Mrs. Huston, was that "we loved Bob Huston."

However, there was not a constant "war" between the volunteers and the Filipinos of the countryside.

The Filipinos often brought food, rice, fish, etc. to the camp. The officers, too, pooled their money to secure foods to augment the men's rations.

Filipino orphans overran the camp. They were everywhere, and usually in great need. Lieut. Huston "adopted" a little boy, secured clothing for him, taught him and



2nd Oregon Volunteers arrive at San Francisco from Manila, July 12, 1899.

—Courtesy Lane County Pioneer Museum

hoped to take him back to the States.

Later, Huston learned the boy was butchered by the Filipino insurgents because of his friendship with the American soldiers.

* * *

BACK TO AMERICA AND HOME

On July 12, 1899, one month to the day after climbing aboard the *Ohio* in Manila Bay, Company C was approaching San Francisco Bay. The veteran volunteers of Company C were on deck, wrapped in blankets, scanning the horizon for signs of land. Ahead in the mists were the outposts of San Francisco, and the Presidio which they had left a year ago for the Philippines.

Talk was of mustering out, receiving their promised travel pay and then off for Oregon and home.

Talk was of a ride on the rattling cable cars into San Francisco, a great big meal at the best place in town, a night in the "bright lights" with a show at the Orpheum where the seats had ledges for beer glasses in front, clowns to laugh at, dances and songs to enjoy—and Manila forgotten.

The men attached no importance to their return or that they were the first to be back from the Philippine War. It would be a routine affair—be mustered out, receive their travel pay and go home.

No "fuss or feathers!" They were coming back, not going to war. Parades were of the past. They would be glad to be left alone.

The mists cleared as the *Ohio* neared the Golden Gate. The men stopped talking and simply stared. "Jesus, look at those boats." There was a whole fleet, yachts, tugs, cutters, launches and bay steamers—all making a straight line for the *Ohio*. "Christ a'mighty, fellers,

look at 'em," excited voices called out to one another.

The men crowded the rails. The flotilla continued coming, penants, burgees were fluttering, hand flags were swinging back and forth and ladies' handkerchiefs were waving wildly. The bands were playing.

Tears were in many of the men's eyes. Others blew their noses loudly, untying their blue bandanas from around their necks.

Thompson recalled, "We never saw the like before, we sprawled over the shrouds, waved our bandanas and yelled and yelled and yelled."

The cries of welcome, the flotilla of welcoming boats and the bands playing and the men knew they would be "parading" after all to the Presidio. One veteran exclaimed, "Christ, we'd parade our legs off for them white women."

A tug pulled up, a great bundle of newspapers landed on the deck, still damp from the presses. Headlines blazoned. The men would not land! The ship would not dock but continue on to Portland.

There would be no travel pay!

There was an uproar on the deck. It was an outrage! An injustice! It was a political job!

The pleasure of the men in the welcome of the floating flotilla was gone.

Hardened by the Philippine war, the raw recruits of a year ago were not the same men, one and all had a special fury for war-supply contractors and for politicians.

In the midst of their anger, their blood a-boil, an Oregon official-welcoming tug bearing the Governor of Oregon* and his staff of ornamental colonels drew up to the *Ohio*.

The men stood at the rail in total silence and watched the governor

*T. T. Geer, Governor of Oregon, January 9, 1899-January 14, 1903.

mount the accommodation ladder to the *Ohio*.

Politics! After a year of war to become puppets in a public spectacle for the benefit of the Governor, like pawns in a political game.

As the governor reached the deck, he bowed to a profound silence.

"Give three cheers for the Governor," shouted one of the officers.

A voice was heard from the back, "Give him a can of our salmon."

Then, as if the entire affair had been planned and rehearsed, the men chanted in unison, "Frisco, Frisco, Frisco."

The governor tried to speak, the officers tried to quiet the men with no success. Finally, the governor threw up his arms as if in defeat. The men grew quiet and the governor in a resigned voice said they might do as they wished.

There was sudden applause and cheers from the men.

As the dejected governor left with his "tinselled staff colonels in their gilt braid and shining brass buttons," the men felt some qualms quickly dispelled by the memory of their salmon bones along with the ever-present hard tack.

* * *

REMORSE !!!

There were many more qualms felt later.

The Oregonian carried a banner "And no Reception" and reported how the welcoming party with the Governor and his staff had been treated by the returning Oregon veterans over a bit of "miserable travel pay" and that Astoria and Portland had made elaborate

preparations for a welcoming home party to surpass all affairs.

"I can realize," said the governor in an interview, "how bitterly disappointed the people of Astoria and Portland* are. At this moment, the streets of those two cities are gaily decorated. So are the ferry steamboats especially quartered to carry 12,000 people from the Columbia to greet the transports."

But Astoria and Portland and all the other towns in Oregon had not gone thousands of miles across an ocean to fight in a nonexistent war already ended before they arrived and then stayed to fight in another nonexistent war.

In the history books, the Spanish-American War is recorded as a small war, a very small war.

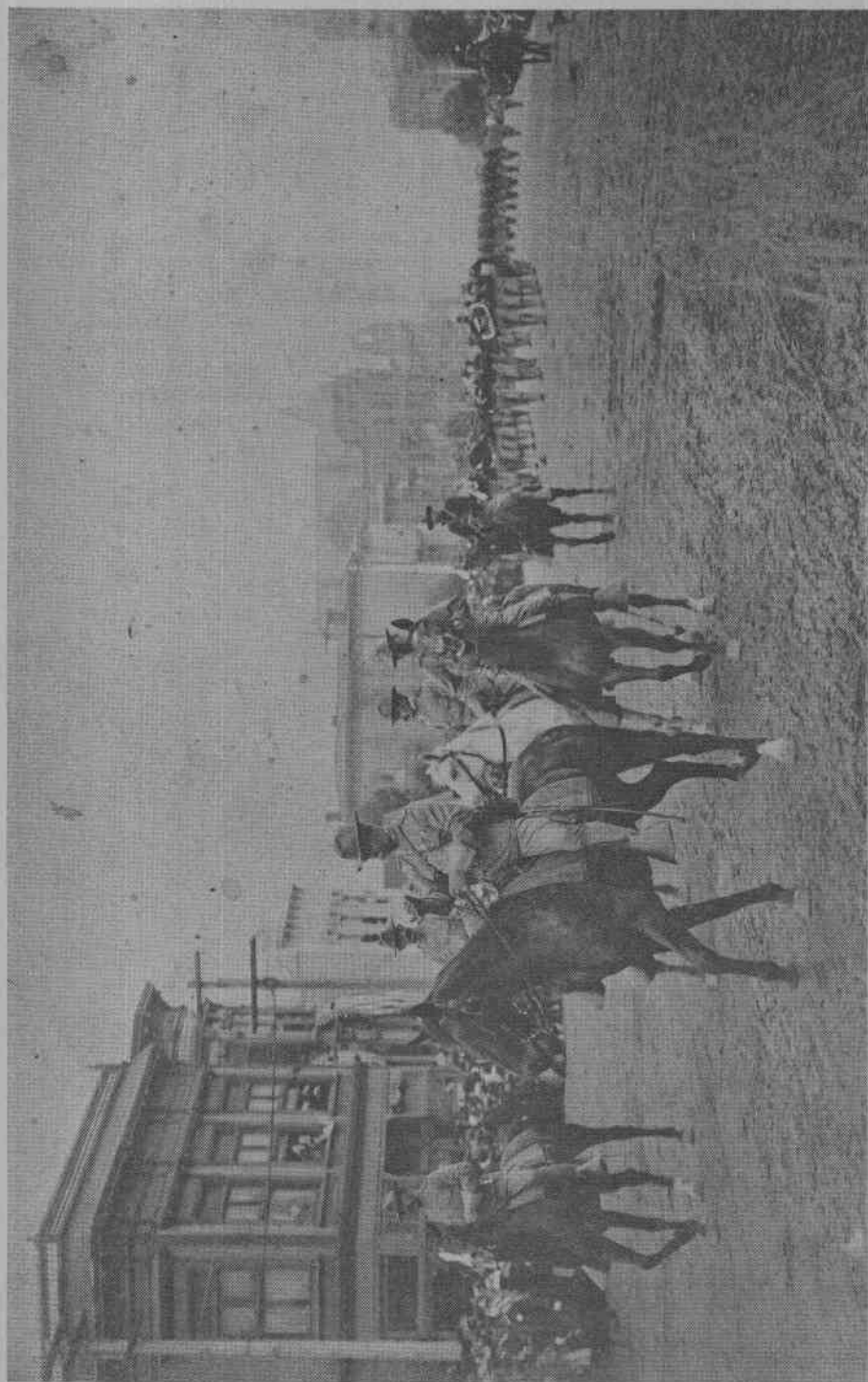
But it was an important war, it was a turning point in American history. As a result of the war and peace treaty, America became a colonial power, expanded to the Far East, never again able to become an isolationist country.

The war to Oregon and Lane County was also significant.

It was Oregon's regiment, the first military expedition ever sent overseas by the United States and it was Company C with almost 30 men from Eugene alone who were the first to step foot on foreign soil to serve their country abroad.

But it was also Company C veterans who became the "forgotten men," who waited forty-five years for their promised travel pay and pensions and who received no recognition as volunteers in a war as quickly forgotten and dismissed in their lifetimes as in the history books.

*On August 9, 1899, special trains bore the veterans to Oregon. Met at the state line by Governor Geer, special ovations greeted the men at every stop. At Portland, the regiment paraded to Multnomah Field and at a formal ceremony turned the colors over to the Governor. "Oregon in the Philippines."



2nd Oregon Volunteer Infantry arrive, San Francisco, from Manila, July 12, 1899.

—Courtesy Lane County Pioneer Museum

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Head of column of 400 Insurgents captured at Taguig, near Pasig.

—Photograph from "Oregon in the Philippines," Salem, Oregon, 1903