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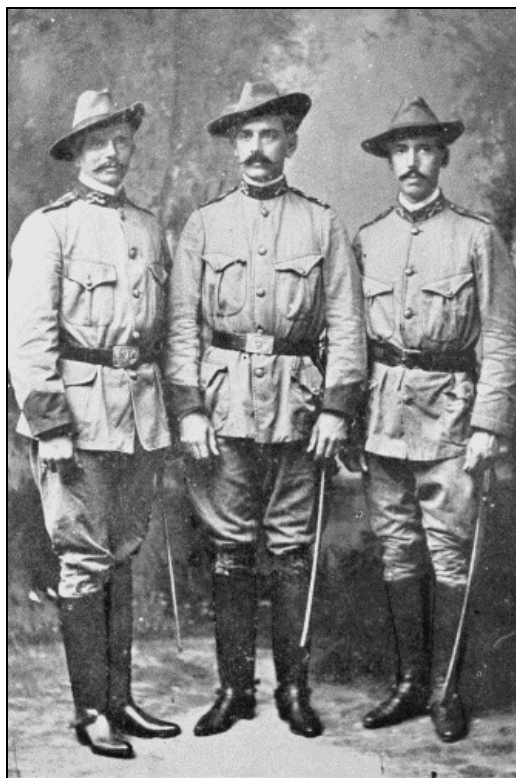
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK CAMPAIGN OF THE FIRST TROOP PHILADELPHIA CITY CAVALRY ***



**First Lieutenant Browning Captain
Groome Second Lieutenant
McFadden**

CAMPAIGN

OF THE

First Troop

Philadelphia City Cavalry

APRIL 25—NOVEMBER 11

1898

JAMES COOPER

PHILADELPHIA:

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For all that is good in this little book acknowledgment is due to Captain John C. Groome, Lieutenant J. Frank McFadden, Lieutenant J. Willis Martin, Sergeant John Wagner, Jr., Sergeant Robert E. Glendinning, F. B. Neilson, T. Wallis Huidekoper, Hugh Craig, Jr., and the publisher. They have provided the photographs and practically all the material used. Many passages are taken entirely from letters and other writings of these Troopers. The writer's personal observations merely covered the time of the Troop's stay at Mt. Gretna, Camp Alger and Newport News.

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CHAPTER I.

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THE CALL TO ARMS.

When the members of the First Troop of Philadelphia City Cavalry were summoned to prepare for the annual inspection, on April 23rd, 1898, there was but one great topic of conversation among the people of the United States. Early in February, the U. S. Battleship Maine had been destroyed by an explosion in Havana harbor, and two hundred and forty-eight American sailors had lost their lives. A board of naval officers, after daily sessions for seven weeks, had decided that the destruction of the vessel was not due to an accident; confirming the popular opinion that the blowing up of this vessel was an act of Spanish treachery. Both branches of Congress were debating measures regarding American intervention in the Cuban rebellion, which the natives of that island had successfully carried on against Spanish rule for three years. The question of the hour was whether war with Spain was at hand.

That the annual inspection of the Troop occurred just at this time was merely a coincidence—six months before the plans had been made. Nothing was changed by the exciting rumors of the day, for the Troopers belonged to that conservative class of business men, which even at this time, did not believe in the likelihood of a resort to arms over the disputes pending between the United States and Spain.

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In former years it had been the custom of the Troopers to drill Saturday afternoons, throughout the spring, in Fairmount Park. This plan had proven so troublesome that it had been decided to give up every afternoon for one week previous to the annual inspection for manœuvres at Fort Side grounds and omit the Saturday drills in the Park. The Wednesday before the date set for the first practice, some new horses for the City Troopers were sent to Fort Washington, and rooms were secured for the men at Fort Side Inn.

On Monday, April 18th, the Troop having assembled at Fort Side, in service uniform, fully equipped and mounted, were formed in line promptly at four o'clock, and at the command of Captain Groome trotted off to their first drill, which was held in a fine broad meadow bordering on the Wissahickon, opposite the Inn. After two hours of troop and squad movements they returned to the Inn, where they learned that while they had been drilling the House and Senate conferrees had agreed to a joint resolution in regard to intervention. Throughout the week the drills continued, and each afternoon showed a marked improvement, both in the men and horses. The latter soon became accustomed to the noise of the firing during the skirmish drill, and one hour each day was spent in drilling in extended order and "as skirmishers." As each twenty-four hours passed the reports from the nation's capitol showed war to be closer at hand than upon the preceding day. On Wednesday despatches from Washington were printed in all papers saying that the National Guard would be called out within forty-eight hours and sent to camp at Mt. Gretna, Pa. Captain Groome quietly passed word along the line to make ready, and arrangements were completed with the Pennsylvania Railroad to transport the Troopers to the State camp, direct from Fort Washington, should need arise. In fact there was a general hope among the men that in this way the dreaded farewells from loved ones might be avoided. Thursday night the President signed the resolutions of Congress, which stated that American troops would be sent to Cuba at once to end the war. At the same time an ultimatum was sent to Spain to withdraw her troops from the island quietly or prepare for invasion. It was announced that Spain had been given forty-eight hours in which to answer. Her only reply was to despatch her best fleet westward.

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On Saturday, the day of the Troopers inspection, President McKinley issued a call for 125,000 volunteers. While this fact overshadowed all others, the Troopers made a splendid showing that afternoon, and were heartily congratulated upon their high state of efficiency by Major Sweeney, Inspector of the First Brigade.

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Sunday was the last day of rest at home that the Troopers were to enjoy for months to come. On the following Monday, Governor Hastings ordered the State Troops to mobilize at Mt. Gretna Thursday. President McKinley's call had made no requisition for cavalry, but Captain Groome received a personal telegram from Governor Hastings saying that the Troop would be wanted without question, and the usual printed notices were sent out, ordering the men to be at the armory ready to start at five o'clock Thursday morning. As a matter of fact, a majority of the Troopers spent the two preceding days there, helping pack the stores and equipments, and getting everything in perfect condition.

Wednesday night all was in readiness, and the cavalrymen's spirits were high as they read in the evening papers how Sampson's fleet was engaged in bombarding Matanzas, and how the Spaniards were rushing work upon their fortifications in Cuba and Porto Rico.

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War had been begun without any formal declaration. Spain had refused to answer the American ultimatum and had given Minister Woodford his passports, thus breaking diplomatic relations. At

once the United States fleet, off the Cuban coast, began to capture Spanish vessels. Then, at the request of the President, Congress passed a declaration to the effect that a state of war had existed between the United States and Spain since Monday, April 25th.

At this time Spain was credited with having two powerful fleets of a strength almost equal to that of the United States Navy, and with possessing an army in Cuba and Porto Rico of 150,000 well seasoned, splendidly drilled men; war problems were admittedly assuming a graver aspect each day.

All the forces of nature seemed combined, on Thursday morning, to deter the City Troopers from their expressed intention of joining the volunteer army. Faint-hearted men would surely have been terrified at the first view presented of the hardships of a soldier's life. It was freezing cold, yet a sort of rain was falling that at times became hail and at times came down as snow. Whatever form the downfall took, it soaked through all coverings and chilled to the bone those compelled to endure its pelting attack. An icy wind was twisting and cutting through the streets of the city. [14]

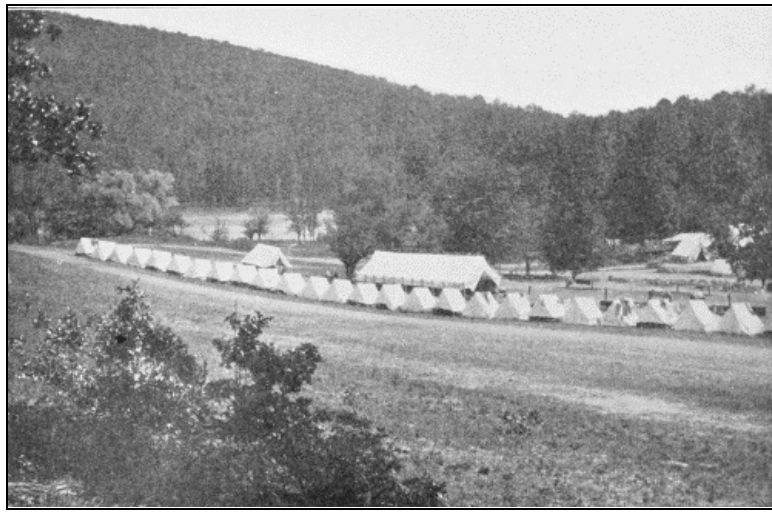
When the Troopers stepped from their comfortable homes into the storm, it was not yet five o'clock. Daylight was scarce as strong as the light from the lamps still burning in the streets; deep slush covered the streets and sidewalks. Singly, and by groups of two or threes, the cavalymen slipped and splashed their way to the old armory on Twenty-first Street.

Roll call at five o'clock found, out of the sixty-six active members of the Troop, the following present: Captain John C. Groome, First Lieutenant Edward Browning, Assistant Surgeon Charles H. Frazier, Cornet Richard Tilghman, First Sergeant J. Willis Martin, Quartermaster Sergeant William C. Lott, Sergeants R. E. Glendinning, John Wagner, Jr., Frederick Thibault, C. Emory McMichael and William H. Hart; Corporals William E. Bates, Charles H. Smith, John Houston Merrill and Francis A. Thibault; Trumpeters Pugh and Singer; Privates A. Mercer Biddle, Frank B. Bower, Ward Brinton, Thomas Cadwalader, Jay Cooke, 3d, Francis L. Cramp, Herman A. Denckla, George L. Farnum, J. Edward Farnum, William I. Forbes, Persifor Frazier, Jr., H. Percy Glendinning, Henry S. Godfrey, Samuel Goodman, Francis E. Green, Robert E. Griffith, Guston A. Heckscher, T. Wallis Huidekoper, Francis A. Janney, Charles K. Lennig, George McFadden, Percy C. Madeira, Richard W. Meirs, Frederick B. Neilson, Edward P. Rawle, Benjamin B. Reath, Samuel K. Reeves, J. Ridgway Reilly, James M. Rhodes, Jr., Thomas Ridgway, Henry D. Riley, Thomas Robb, Jr., Adolph G. Rosengarten, Mitchell G. Rosengarten, Jr., Edward K. Rowland, Reginald K. Shober, James Starr, J. C. Stevens, Edward C. Taylor, Nelson B. Warden, William G. Warden, Bromley Wharton and Alexander W. Wister, Jr. The absentees were: Second Lieutenant J. Frank McFadden, who was coming to rejoin his command as fast as the "Lucania" could bring him from Europe; George Thayer, who had cabled from Ireland that he would return upon the first available vessel; H. C. Butcher, who was in the mountains near Cripple Creek beyond the reach of telegrams, and who at that time did not know war was talked of; W. Goodman and S. Chew, who were in a similar condition of ignorance somewhere in the Klondike regions of Alaska, and Corporal Borie, sick in bed with typhoid fever. [15]

Just at 5.50 the ringing notes of the bugle sounded assembly. At six o'clock came "boots and saddles." Ten minutes later the men mounted and rode out into the icy rain, each man wearing the service uniform, heavy overcoat and poncho, and armed with saber, Springfield carbine (cal. 45) and Colts' revolver (cal. 38), and with the blanket, mess outfit, haversack and nose bag, and two days' rations securely strapped to the saddle. [16]

With bowed heads they slowly passed to the Reading siding at the corner of Twenty-third and Arch Streets, where the long troop train was waiting. Quartermaster Sergeant Lott and his detail having loaded all the stores and camp equipage before the arrival of the Troop, there was nothing for the men to do but load their horses on the cars. Inside of half an hour the last horse had been loaded, and the Troop was ready to start. For nearly an hour, however, they remained in the cars at the siding, and "last" good-bys were said over again to the few remaining friends who had braved the weather to see the cavalymen off. Finally at 7.30 the engine gave a warning toot, and the train pulled slowly out amid prolonged cheers.

Delays innumerable and inexplicable occurred on that journey, and a trip which ordinarily requires less than three hours consumed, in the Troopers' case, an entire day; so that the shades of evening were added to the gloom which had prevailed all day when Camp Hastings was reached. From the cars the Troopers tramped a half mile, up and down hill, to a little valley which had been designated as their camp site. [17]



TROOPERS CAMP AT MT. GRETNA.

After the flood of the day the valley was ankle deep in mud, and a more discouraging prospect than confronted the Troopers would be hard to imagine. No shelter had been prepared for them, nor could any be secured. By some mistake, on the part of others, their tents had not yet arrived from the State Arsenal. All buildings about the camp grounds were crowded with the constantly increasing throngs of infantrymen, each troop train upon its arrival adding to the thousands of shelterless soldiers.

A half dozen of the largest Troopers were sent out to forage, and while they were gone arrangements were made, through the courtesy of Captain Warburton, with the men of Battery A to share their tents for the night. The battery had arrived the day before and was comfortably located. Of course the doubling up of quarters caused crowding, but the grateful Troopers, wet and tired as they were, were soon dreaming their first soldier dreams, while the rain beat a mournful tattoo on the canvas overhead.

CHAPTER II.

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THE TROOP AT MT. GRETNA.

Had the Troopers not known from experience that Mt. Gretna was an ideal spot for a camp, their impressions of the place, gained from observations taken the morning after their arrival, would have been disagreeable beyond expression. In the words of "Longfeller," as one Trooper expressed it, in a letter to the *Press*,

"We saw the tents of the others,
Gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness came o'er us,
That our hearts could not resist."

For, to the disgust of the Troopers, daylight brought no news of the missing canvas, and visions of another night in the mess tents of the Battery and Sheridan Troop began to disturb the men. Captain Groome and his lieutenants had planned plenty of work for the men, however, and as soon as their minds were once occupied they began to feel better. Details were sent to relieve the guard that had been placed over the baggage car, to secure wagons to haul the luggage to the camp grounds and to do regular sentry duty.

While the spot selected for a camp by Captain Groome had its disadvantages in rainy weather, it proved to be on the whole, the most desirable spot on the entire grounds; one of its greatest advantages being the nearness of Lake Conawago, where later in the season the men enjoyed a daily bath. The Philadelphia infantry commands had been assigned the worst quarters at Mt. Gretna. They occupied a deep basin, fully a mile and a half from the station and telegraph office, and during the entire time the First, Second, Third Regiments and Battalion of State Fencibles remained there, the valley was a sea of red mud. Every other regiment was encamped on rising ground, where the sandy soil was well drained and kept comparatively dry despite the long continued rains which set in.

[19]

In the afternoon the Troopers tents arrived, and went up with astonishing rapidity. The men worked hard arranging wooden supports for their straw-filled canvas bags, so they would not be obliged to sleep on the wet turf. The horses had been well sheltered in the woods near the camp, but men and beasts alike were glad when they saw the bright sun on Saturday morning. These weather conditions quickly wrought a great change throughout the miles of tented streets. Soldiers faces brightened and the Troopers, who had kept up their pluck splendidly under a stress of unfortunate circumstances such as no other organization had been obliged to face,

[20]

could not help showing their pleasure at the improved prospects.

Sunday was spent for the most part in straightening up the camp. In the afternoon there were a number of visitors on hand from Philadelphia, although rainy weather had set in again. All kind of rumors were current as to what would be done with the State organizations, and many feared that the Troop would not be allowed to enlist as a whole, but that the men would be called upon to enter the volunteer service as individuals. These rumors soon died away, however, and on Monday when the men were lined up and asked if they were willing to enter the service of the United States there was but a single dissenting voice. One private refused to volunteer, and he at once resigned from the Troop. As there was no provision in the call for volunteers for an assistant surgeon, with a troop of cavalry, Dr. Charles H. Frazier could not be mustered in.

After the privates and non-commissioned officers had expressed their willingness to volunteer, Colonel Morrell addressed the officers as follows: "Is it your desire that I should request the Governor of Pennsylvania to issue to you a commission for the same places you now hold in the volunteer army of the United States?" [21]

Captain Groome and Lieutenants Browning and McFadden signified their desire to serve, and Governor Hastings at once responded that it would give him great pleasure to have the commissions made out as requested.

After this inspection the men settled down to camp life with zest. On the day they had signified their willingness to enlist, the great news had come of Commodore Dewey's victory in the harbor of Manila. The destruction of the entire Spanish fleet in the East, gave a new turn to the war, and it was soon whispered that it would not be long before some of the men encamped at Mt. Gretna would be on their way to these distant islands in the Pacific. Daily drills were taken up with added interest. Wednesday and Thursday were rainy. The brigade surgeons were being examined, and all was put in readiness for the physical examination of the soldiers, preliminary to their being mustered into the volunteer service. Friday the City Troopers were examined and four men were rejected by the surgeons, chiefly for defects in eyesight. Two of these were afterward reinstated by direct orders from Washington.

Saturday, April 28th, the Troopers were marched down to division headquarters to be mustered in. A heavy Scotch mist hung over the camp, and objects at a short distance were invisible. The men were lined up before a long wooden platform upon which stood Major William A. Thompson, of the First U. S. Cavalry, the officer detailed by the War Department to muster the Pennsylvania National Guard troops into the Volunteer service of the United States; Governor Hastings and his staff, and hundreds of spectators. As the roll was called, each Trooper stepped forward and answered to his name. Then the mustering officer told the men and officers to raise their right hand. Up went the hands and the spectators removed their hats while Major Thompson repeated this oath: [22]

"Do you solemnly swear that you will bear true faith and allegiance to the United States of America, and will serve them faithfully against all their enemies whomsoever, and that you will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of officers appointed over you, according to the rules and articles of war?"

"I do!" shouted each man in the same breath, and as the hearty response went up, the spectators applauded and the Third Regiment Band, sheltered in a building near at hand, struck up "The Star Spangled Banner." The officers' commissions were then filled in by the Governor and handed to their owners. Back to their camp marched the Troopers, no longer their own masters but servants of Uncle Sam, and as they filed past the mustering stand, a company of infantrymen stepped up to go through the same ceremony. [23]

Noah is credited with being the only man who ever saw it rain for forty days and forty nights, but the City Troopers ran him a close race in the month that followed. The intervals between showers were almost too brief to be noticed, and it became a popular jest that the weather man was trying to break the men in for a campaign in Cuba during the rainy season. The worst storm of the lot was reserved for the Sunday following the muster-in of the Troopers. In regular cloud-bursts the floods descended upon Camp Hastings. The camp of the Troopers was surrounded by hills on three sides, and down these hills came innumerable streams, all headed for the Troop street. Visitors in large numbers had come out from the city on the long excursion trains, and many were half ferried, half driven to camp in an old wagon which seemed especially designed to do service as a boat. Bad as was the Troopers' lot, it was almost nothing compared to what the Philadelphia infantrymen were compelled to endure. The foot soldiers in the first place had not taken the same precautions as the Troopers in raising their mattresses from the ground, and in some cases they actually found their beds under water by nightfall. Mud in the streets of every camp in the First Brigade was six inches deep, and so sticky that to attempt to walk through it, invariably meant the loss of a boot. [24]

On Monday morning, drills were resumed by the Troopers, and upon Tuesday they were called to bid farewell to the men of Battery A, who had been ordered to Newport News for guard duty.

Although the rain spoiled all attempts at systematic drill, captains throughout the camp were gradually getting their men in better shape, and the work of mustering-in had proceeded uninterruptedly. On Friday, the 13th, the last of the Pennsylvania Troops had entered the volunteer army. There were at that time 10,860 in all, and a grand review by the Governor was planned for the next afternoon. As if to compensate for past sins and sins to come, the weather

for that day was perfect, and by three o'clock on Saturday afternoon the various troops and regiments throughout the camp began wending their way from the tents to the parade ground. The Troopers took up their stand on a little hill near their camp, but the rising ground prevented their seeing the miles of blue ranks, glittering with steel, that stretched away just beyond.

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The Governor and his staff rode at full gallop along the lines, while a little band, the only one in camp, kept blowing out the strains of "Hail to the Chief." The lack of proper music was the only drawback to this occasion. Then the order to march came; the many commands swung past the reviewing party, and the finest display ever made by Pennsylvania troops since the Civil War was at an end.

The second command of Philadelphia soldiers to leave Camp Hastings was the Third Regiment. Colonel Ralston received his orders the Sunday following the review, and attempted to get off that afternoon, but railroad facilities were wanting and it was not until Monday evening that the boys of the Third got away. Tampa was their destination.

The next day Captain Groome received an order to report to General Merritt, of the Department of the East, and this order gave the reporters of the various papers material for many scare stories, as it became known the next day that General Merritt had been ordered to take command of the expedition to the Philippines, and it was supposed by some that he would take the Troopers with him. This rumor was in a measure substantiated by the orders which came for the Tenth Regiment to prepare to take a journey to the islands. For, like the Troopers, the Tenth had just previously been ordered to report to General Merritt, and when the orders came regarding the Philippines, the men of the Tenth had struck tents preparatory to going to meet General Merritt in New York. On this same Tuesday the First Regiment, made up of Philadelphia men, left Mt. Gretna for Camp Thomas, Chickamauga, and the Ninth Regiment started for the same camp.

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From the movement of the infantry regiments it seemed probable that they would soon be required for active service, but the cavalry troops were detained at Mt. Gretna waiting for the issue of arms and equipments from the Government. As the City Troop was fully armed with the carbine, saber and pistol, uniformed, equipped and mounted, and owned all their equipments and horses, Captain Groome offered to Governor Hastings, and through him to the Secretary of War, to transfer immediately all the horses and troop property of every description to the United States, to be settled for at any time and price satisfactory to the Government. The Troopers hoped by this offer to be enabled to take the field at once, but unfortunately this was not accepted, although the spirit which prompted it was warmly commended in the return message from the War Department. After this there was nothing to do but wait for the Government to provide new horses and equipments.

[27]

On the afternoon of Wednesday, the 19th, Captain Groome was called to Washington and Lieutenant Browning remained in charge of the City Troopers camp. He put the men through a long dismounted drill and followed it up with another the next day. While the captain was away, a report came from Washington, through the Associated Press despatches, that the Pennsylvania Cavalry were to be ordered at once to Hempstead, L. I., to camp there until wanted. Saturday noon Captain Groome returned. He borrowed thirty horses belonging to the Sheridan Troop and took one-half of the City Troopers out for drill. When they returned Lieutenant Browning took out the other squad. In the evening there came an inquiry from the War Department as to how many horses were needed by the City Troop. This did not arouse any enthusiasm, however, as the same request had been made two weeks before and nothing had come of it.

Sunday was a pleasant day, for a change, and the Troopers spent it quietly. There were not many visitors on the grounds, as all the regiments had departed except the Fourteenth, Fifteenth, Sixteenth and Eighteenth. Most of these men came from distant parts of the State. In the afternoon Sergeant Glendinning tried some experiments in kite flying that were watched with interest, and others of the Troopers planned to go into the kite manufacturing business to be ready for sport on the next clear day.

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There was a novelty in the way of drill in store for thirty of the Troopers, on Monday, as they were sent out in search of tramps who had settled in a nearby mountain, and were said to be moonshiners on a small scale. The exercise was splendid, but no tramps were found. That night a baby cyclone struck the camp. The wind got in its fine work about one o'clock in the morning, and the Troopers had to jump out of bed and hold their tents down. Some of the tents were sent flying before the alarm was given, and as rain immediately followed the blow, there were many men who passed an uncomfortable night.

At this time the order of the day, in camp, was as follows:

5.55 A. M.	First call.
6 A. M.	Reveille roll call.
6.05 A. M.	Setting up exercises.
6.20 A. M.	Mess.
7 A. M.	Police camp.
8 A. M.	Guard mount.
8.30 A. M.	Drill.
11.30 A. M.	Inspection of quarters.
12 M.	Mess.
3 P. M.	Drill.
6.15 P. M.	Mess.

7 P. M. Retreat roll call.
9.30 P. M. Tattoo.
10 P. M. Taps.

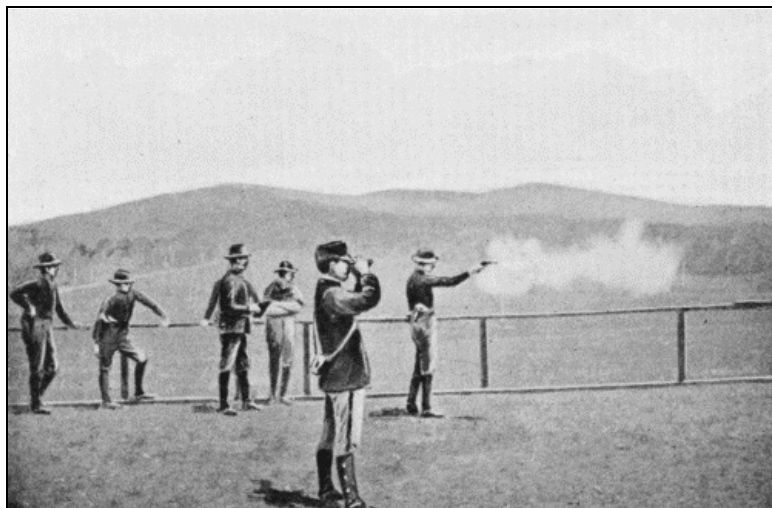
All the men contributed to the mess from their pay, so that the meals did not consist solely of salt pork and hard tack. In the mornings the drill covered the manual of carbine or saber drills, and pistol practice by squad or troop, also dismounted drill by the Troop; this drill lasted as a rule two hours. The afternoon drill as a rule extended over three hours, and was chiefly in outpost and skirmish work. One platoon would start, under the command of an officer, telling the general direction it would take, and having gone a certain distance would establish outposts of an imaginary camp, twenty minutes later a second platoon would start on a march through the country, throwing out flankers and advance guard. The men of the two platoons wearing different colors on their hats so as to distinguish them. Up hill and down dale the men would crawl their way until the crack of the pistols would show that one platoon had been unmasked. Then it was left to the officers to decide which side had the best of the manœuvres. While two platoons were thus engaged a third was always left in charge of camp. Each morning half the Troop would be taken over to the rifle range for pistol and carbine practice.

[30]

One piece of work had been done by the Troopers, during the early days of their stay at Camp Hastings, that has not been referred to. It was a squad of City Troopers that went over the triple muster rolls of the entire quota of Pennsylvania volunteers, for Major Thompson, and their quick, accurate work helped greatly in the rapid mustering-in of the men. When he discharged these Troopers from further duty, Major Thompson wrote a cordial letter to Captain Groome, giving the Troopers high praise.

And so the days passed on. Sometimes the Troopers felt that their peaceful camp life was pretty slow, but as the drills became harder day by day they realized that it was not only a great school of experience, but that each day's drill was part of a general plan of their officers, that would gradually improve their physical condition and bring them to a high state of efficiency as a Troop when they were needed for active service. And so each night, when at the last note of "retreat" the guidon was taken in, they felt they had not only earned a good night's rest, but that they had learned something during the day.

[31]



PISTOL PRACTICE AT CAMP HASTINGS.

On May 25th, President McKinley issued his second call for troops, and it was announced that the men thus called for would be added to the organizations already in the field. The City Troop was to be recruited up to a complete war footing of one hundred men, and arrangements were made to notify the men upon the waiting list of the opportunity that would be thus offered. Two days later the Paymaster reached camp for the first time. Three members of the Troop were sent to Harrisburg to secure the cash, and that night the men had their first look at Government money; for in their previous campaigns, as a troop, their pay had come from the State. A Board was appointed, consisting of Major W. A. Thompson, First U. S. Cavalry, and Captain Paxton, Sixth Infantry, U. S. A., to purchase horses for the three troops of cavalry, and the last day of May Captain Groome left camp to join them in New Castle, Pa.

CHAPTER III.

[32]

DEPARTURE FOR CAMP ALGER.

June first found Captain Groome back again, with the information that if possible the horses for the City Troop would be grey. A large number of that color had been found and accepted by the Board, and as grey was the color best suited for service in tropical countries, the Captain had bespoken the greys for his troop. On June 4th the Captain rejoined the Horse Board, and the first

animals purchased reached camp. The greys were tied to the picket line, which was extended in front of the Troop's long row of tents.

On the seventh of the month the City Troop received orders from Major-General Graham, commanding the Second Army Corps, to proceed at once to Camp Alger, and report as a part of that corps. To do this would be to leave the camp with but a part of the Troop's horses and equipments, so Captain Groome requested that the Troop be allowed to remain until fully equipped, if possible. However, all arrangements were made in compliance with the first order, and camp was broken on the afternoon of June 9th. Some of the officers' wives, who had taken cottages at Chautauqua, had dismissed their servants, and the Troopers were ready to march to the train, when an order came granting the Captain's request, and ordering the Troop to remain until fully equipped. [33]

Recruiting officers were at once sent to Philadelphia, and two days later twelve new Troopers arrived, fully uniformed. Captain Groome was too busy to remain with the Horse Board any longer, and Lieutenant Browning went in his stead. The drills increased in length each day, and the new recruits as fast as they arrived were sent out in squads to learn the first principles, and then were given a turn with the entire Troop. The officers had a class in tactics daily, and the men took up the study of bugle calls. The recruits were given much guard duty to perform, and wherever they went they carried their books of regulations, learning the paragraphs by heart.

On June 24th, Samuel Chew arrived at camp, direct from the Klondike gold regions, and took up his duties as if he had done nothing unusual, yet he had made the long journey in record-breaking time simply to rejoin his comrades. Twenty new tents arrived that day, affording accommodations for the new men. On the 17th, the last of the regiments of infantry left, and the Troopers were monarchs of all they surveyed. While the infantrymen were good fellows, there were many reasons why the Troopers were glad when they had gone. Some time previously the Troopers had erected a rough shed in which they had placed shower baths, but now that they had undisputed possession of the lake, they enjoyed long daily swims. [34]

Upon the departure of the last infantry regiment Captain Groome became the commanding officer at Camp Hastings, by virtue of seniority, he having been the first volunteer cavalry officer to be sworn into the United States service. He at once formed the three troops, Governor's, Sheridan and City Troop, into a squadron and assumed command. A change in the camp routine at once went into effect. Squadron drills were held daily, and other features of camp life, which interested all visitors, were squadron guard mount and evening parade.

The new horses were utterly unused to cavalry exercises, in fact many of them had never been ridden before, and the Troopers had lively times training their steeds. One of the sights which visitors to the camp were never tired of watching was the skill with which the Troopers "threw" their horses, to accustom them to the exercise in which the horses are supposed to lie down and afford forts for the riders. The throwing is exciting sport. The left fore leg of a horse is strapped up so that the animal stands upon three legs, a strap is attached to the other fore leg and grasped by the rider, who suddenly turns the horse's head way around to one side and pulls the other fore leg from the ground. The animal is obliged to fall to his knees and is then coaxed over. When once the horse realizes that the rider means him no harm, the work is more than half done. [35]



A LESSON IN HORSE THROWING

On the 20th of June, Private Edward Carpenter was notified of his appointment, by the President, as a second lieutenant in the regular service. He had long been anxious to make the army his profession, and was greatly pleased. The first Khaiki uniform in the Trooper's camp appeared the next day upon Lieutenant McFadden, and was the subject of much attention. Fifteen men from each troop were constantly on guard duty over the camp grounds and railroad property. "Two hours on and four hours off," was the rule with the men during their day's duty.

A blacksmith's forge was set up at the foot of the Trooper's camp, and men were detailed each day to act as assistants. The horses had all been unshod upon their arrival, and it was a long job getting them properly fitted out.

June passed into July, and still the Troopers remained at Mt. Gretna. By this time the Troop had practically its full number of horses, and the men were drilled almost to the point of perfection. They were as fit for service as soldiers could be, and the orders to move, which came July 7th, were welcome indeed. The squadron was to go to Camp Alger, but all the men felt that this was but a preliminary move, and that soon they would be at the front. Tents were struck the same day. No countermanding orders came this time, and all the camp luggage was despatched to the station ahead of the cavalrymen.

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The squadron at this time consisted of three troops and nine officers. Each troop consisted of one hundred men and one hundred and six horses. The men of the three commands had become well acquainted with one another during their long wait at Camp Hastings, and upon their camp sites left mementoes of their stay which will be seen for years to come. Two of the Troops names are cut deeply upon great rocks, together with the dates of their arrival and departure. The men of the Governor's troop erected a huge monument of stones, held together with mud, and great pride was taken by the Harrisburg Troopers in this "work of art."

CHAPTER IV.

[37]

FIRST DAYS AT CAMP ALGER.

From the little valley, in which the Troopers had pitched their tents seventy-one days previous, they rode away late in the afternoon of Thursday, July 8th, in the best condition of any command which had been mustered in at Mt. Gretna. No comrades in arms remained to be drawn up in line to give the cavalrymen a parting cheer, but fully two hundred cottagers of the Chautauqua grounds were at the station to witness the departure. The train was in waiting, made up in two sections; the baggage, horses and horse detail were to go in the first, and the work of loading was at once begun.

While the greys were being led aboard the cars, many friends of the Philadelphia men gathered upon the railroad platform to say a last good-by. Among those from whom the Troopers parted with sincere regret were T. Dawson Coleman and William T. Smith, President of the Cornwall and Lebanon road, both of whom had done much to contribute to the pleasure of the men in camp during their long stay.

At seven o'clock the first section pulled out of the station, Stable Sergeant Wagner and Troopers T. Cadwalader, Goodman, Pemberton and Rogers being detailed to accompany the horses. An hour later the remainder of the Troop was allowed to start.

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The train arrangements were excellent, every man in the squadron having a full seat to himself. It was interesting to note the various ways in which the Troopers prepared for their night of travel. A trip through the train showed all sorts of games in progress—cards, checkers, dominoes and the like. The good story tellers of the various troops were the centre of laughing groups; many of the business men had their heads buried in the commercial page of the evening papers; some of the more stolid warriors attempted to go to sleep the moment the train started; in all it formed a picturesque grouping, and furnished rich material for the students of human nature among the troops.

The discussions of the men regarding the general campaign were interesting, as the war fever was then at its height. Four days before the Atlantic Squadron, under Sampson and Schley, had destroyed the fleet of Admiral Cervera during its attempt to escape from the harbor of Santiago. General Shafter's men were then pressing upon Santiago, and its surrender was hourly expected. Then it was believed that the word would come "On to Havana," and many of the Troopers believed that their command would surely have a part in this movement.

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HAVING FUN WITH "HAZEL"

So far the war had been one of surprises, scarcely an engagement having taken place at a point where a few months before the military leaders would have deemed it possible to expect one. Spain's navy had proven no match for that of the United States, but her little army about Santiago had made a good showing, and hard fights seemed probable before the main army would be driven from Cuba.

The train first came to a stop in Harrisburg, in the midst of a mass of enthusiastic men and women, assembled to greet the members of the Governor's troop and Sheridan troop. The crowd rushed pell-mell through the cars containing the troopers of the other organizations, knocking down carbines and sabers, and upsetting things generally. But sentries had thoughtfully been placed by Lieutenant Browning at the doors of the City Troop cars, and this company's share in the demonstration was conducted through the windows. "Hazel," the goat presented to the Troop during its service at the time of the Hazelton riots, gravely surveyed the scene from her outlook, and came in for a lion's share of attention. Just as the train started an enthusiastic young woman, who had been fighting her way toward the train, thrust a white kitten into the hands of Corporal Wister, with instructions to be good to it. In all it was a pleasant break in the monotony of a long ride. [40]

By midnight the State line was passed, and at Baltimore the first section of the train was overtaken. The Troopers, with the exception of the officers, were in day coaches, and made a picturesque sight, asleep in all conceivable attitudes. Enough were awake, however, to chat for a time with the members of the horse detail. By half-past four the men aroused, and thirty minutes later reached the station at Dunn Loring, Va. A breakfast of milk and sandwiches was eaten on the train, and then the unloading began. This work was speedily accomplished without a hitch or accident, and by nine o'clock the canvas of the three troops began to go up on the site of the camp formerly occupied by the Eighth Ohio Infantry, commonly known as "The President's Own."

All day long the cavalymen worked upon the sun-baked slope, and by nightfall the grounds were in splendid order. In one regard the Troopers were fortunate, an artesian well being within fifty feet of their camp. This, however, supplied the wants of the men only, the horses, at first, having to be led more than a mile for water. Shade was abundant near the camp, the horses being better off in that respect than at Camp Hastings. [41]

After a good night's sleep the men were called upon for disagreeable duty, which was at once cheerfully taken up. The "doughboys" who had occupied the grounds previously had left the woods in the rear in such a condition as to menace the health of the camp, and twenty men from each troop were detailed by Captain Groome to police the woods, and at the end of the second day the grounds were comparatively clean, and the men were then called upon for their first drill at Camp Alger. There was a great crowd around the parade grounds when the Troopers made their first appearance, and the repeated cheers and applause of the spectators came as an unexpected and pleasing surprise.

Upon return to camp Private J. Edward Farnum was notified of his appointment, by the President, as an assistant commissary, with the rank of captain. The new government carbines, saddles and spurs were also received and distributed, but by some mistake no saddle blankets were sent, so the Troopers continued to use their regular blankets.

Sunday the Khaiki uniforms arrived, and were at once donned by all the men. The universal verdict seemed to be that the new uniforms were not particularly adapted for cavalry service, and were as ugly as they well could be. [42]

Right from the moment of their appearance at Camp Alger the City Troopers were in demand by the headquarters officers. Large details were required each day for orderlies at Camp, Division and Brigade headquarters, and for mounted patrol duty.

On July 10th quite an addition was made to the camp of the City Troop. Eight government mules, with all the largeness of ears, friskiness of feet and sweetness of voice, possessed by their race, were assigned to Captain Groome's command. The men gathered about the new comers in an admiring group, wondered how fast they could trot, what would happen if a Trooper twisted one of their tails, and just what they were good for anyway. Before the campaign was over mules had ceased to arouse any admiration whatever, but the Troopers at Camp Alger could not see into the future, with its endless mule train and trials, so they made the most of their new possessions for the time being.

Besides the mules, two wagons and two teamsters were assigned to the Troop, and these aids were greatly appreciated, as up to this time there had been a constant struggle to find conveyances for troop supplies and baggage between different points of the camps. [43]

Although the mules were in a thriving condition, the Troopers had troubles of their own with their greys. A majority of the horses had contracted shipping colds, and incessant doctoring was the order of the day and night.

All of the animals came through all right, however, with the exception of the horse ridden by Sergeant Hart, which died the fifth day after the Troop's arrival at the new camp.

The first detachment of mules was soon followed by another, until a full score had been sent to the Troop. Other commands throughout the camp had also received supplies of mules, and the

animals showed a great fondness for communicating with one another in the early morning. Far away on one side of the camp a mule would raise his silvery voice to heaven; somewhere from the headquarter's mules would come an answering bray, and in a moment the chorus would resound throughout the camping grounds. At first the novelty of these sounds appealed to the Troopers' sense of humor, but the best jokes grow wearisome by repetition, and it was not long before the men were mentally offering all sorts of rewards for the man who could devise a plan to silence the long-eared singers. [44]

On the morning of July 14th, Corporal Hecksher and Troopers Coulston, Wheeler and Mills were sent by the Provost Marshal to escort back from Washington fifteen foot soldiers who had overstayed their leave of absence. The derelicts were turned over to the tender mercies of the headquarters guard, to be dealt with as military regulations direct. A private of a western regiment, who had evidently been in Washington, returned to camp about eleven o'clock this night. After some parley with the Troop's sentinel, then on guard on the main road back of Captain Groome's headquarters, he proceeded to mix things up with the sentry, and was promptly marched to the guard house, where he spent a repentant night.

Since the arrival of the squadron at Camp Alger Captain Groome, who was in command, had posted orders for Squadron Guard Mount every morning, and for Troop Drill and Squadron Parade every evening. The number of spectators upon these occasions kept increasing daily, and the reputation for excellence in drill on the part of the squadron spread rapidly. The officers of all the commands in the camp were attracted by these reports, and the evolutions of the cavalymen were frequently watched with a critical eye by many of the best known officers of the army. Though they came as critics they remained to praise, and many admitted that they gained a vast amount of useful knowledge by an inspection of the camp of the squadron. [45]

The paymaster put in an appearance July 15th. The Troop lined up and received their portions of hard-earned government money, and then promptly turned the cash over to the Quartermaster. In the afternoon General Butler honored the Troopers by riding out especially to watch their drill, and he warmly commended Captain Groome for the fine showing of the cavalry.

CHAPTER V.

 [46]

CAMP ALGER AND NEWPORT NEWS.

At retreat roll call, on the evening of July 15th, an example was given of the affectionate regard the rest of the Pennsylvania Militia feel and show toward the Philadelphia horsemen. The battalion of State Fencibles, which formed a portion of the Sixth Regiment, marching in fours, came tramping into the Troop's street. Once there they halted and gave repeated cheers for the cavalymen. Then away they trudged, after being assured that their compliment was appreciated by the Troopers. Two members of the City Troop served on the Provost Guard the night of the 16th, and great was their amazement, when, amid the drunks and disorderly prisoners turned over to their charge, they found a chaplain. He was escorted to the guard house by a very disgusted squad.

That same night, Private Robert Fell returned to camp, after two weeks confinement at his home with a kicked knee. His place on sick report was taken by Private Rowland, who had been slightly ill for several days, although he kept that information to himself until scarcely able to stand upon his feet.

Inspection of arms and equipments of the Troopers came on Saturday, and, as the arms just issued were uniformly dirty, a large number of the men put in an hour or two of hard cleaning and polishing. In the evening a dozen of the City Troopers attended the Camp Alger Theatre, the tent for which had been pitched right at the foot of the company's street. The price at that popular resort was twenty-five cents for all seats, and the audience generally contained two rows of Troopers, who joined heartily with the vaudeville performers in singing the choruses and making things lively. Every feature was first-class in all respects, and good temper always prevailed on and off the stage. [47]

An incident occurred at the Theatre that night, which served to show the frame of mind of the American volunteers. A portion of the performance consisted of an exhibition of moving pictures. Finally a large flag was thrown on the sheet, and the man in charge said:

"There's the flag you are fighting for, boys!"

Instantly a dry western voice called out from the audience: "I wish to God we could get the chance!" and the immediate and tremendous cheer which followed, showed how heartily his wish was echoed by all present.

On Monday and Tuesday several details were sent out to do some work upon a site for a new camp nearer the station. Time began to hang heavy on all hands, and a strong rumor that the Troop was soon to go to Puerto Rico, failed to excite the interest that it would have a month before. Not that the men were less anxious to get to the front, but simply that they hated to let [48]

their hopes rise for fear of another disappointment.

On Tuesday night, while watching Corporal Chew throw his horse, in order to put a bridle on the unruly animal, Private Wetherill received both heels of the beast on his left thigh, the horse having succeeded for a moment in getting away from the big corporal. The injuries were not of a serious nature, however, and the bruised trooper refused to put in a plea of sickness.

It was expected by the men that the camps would be shifted on the 20th, and the failure to do so was regarded as lending color to the Puerto Rico rumors. On this morning the Troop dismounted and drilled finely. Their excellent work culminated when Lieutenant Browning rallied the men. Standing in close order, they fired three volleys that produced long cheering from the crowd. About two minutes later an orderly rode over from General Graham and reported to Lieutenant Browning that the commanding officer wished to know what company had fired those volleys. The General expressed himself as delighted to hear that it was a troop of cavalry dismounted. [49]

Nearly every horse in camp at this time had distemper, and at night it was decided to give each of the invalids a pretty stiff drink, consisting of a pint of whiskey and sixty grains of quinine. The dose was shot down the animals throats from a great syringe, and the stable guard was advised to be on the lookout for any unusual hilarity; but no behavior out of the ordinary was noticed.

J. L. Wetherill was granted sick leave on the 21st. He had been ill for several days, and it was thought best for him to return home. Shortly after he had done so his sickness took a serious turn, and he was unable to rejoin the Troop until its return from Puerto Rico.

Squadron guard mount, drills and evening parade continued throughout the Troop's stay, under orders of Acting Major Groome. The day before the cavalry troops left Camp Alger, however, Captain Jones, of the Sheridan Troop, was commissioned major. Captain Jones held the longest record of any officer in the Pennsylvania State troops, and had served as a captain in the Civil War. As his commission did not arrive until after the squadron had left Camp Alger, his appointment made no difference in the camp routine, and as the Sheridan and Governor's troops were left behind at Newport News, the City Troopers were not affected in the least by the change in the officer commanding the squadron. [50]

The night of the 21st one more of the greys died, but the rest of the animals were in splendid condition, and the men felt that they could make a good showing, so far as their mounts were concerned, in the foreign service soon to come.

There were many occurrences to make Friday, July 22d, an eventful day. In the morning one hundred Krag-Jorgensen carbines arrived for the City Troopers; there was an unusually interesting skirmish drill in the afternoon, and late in the evening came the eagerly awaited orders for the Troop to proceed forthwith to Newport News to take transports for Puerto Rico. Needless to say the camp was at once thrown into a thoroughly happy mood, and dozens of telegrams were sent notifying Philadelphia friends of the good luck of the Troop in securing active service, when fully 7,000 regular cavalymen were fretting in camps of mobilization. Post Quartermaster Hugh Craig, Jr., arrived the next day, and announced his intention of staying with the Troop until it left for the front. The men could not help feeling better when they saw his jolly face in the camp. [51]

Tents were struck at five o'clock Sunday morning, and an hour later the squadron boarded a special train waiting to carry it to Newport News. The journey occupied the entire day, it being nearly nine o'clock when the cars reached their destination. Instead of trying to find a camping ground that night, the men curled up in the cars and slept as best they could. In a pleasant spot on the coast, about two miles outside the city, the Troopers went into camp the next day. Even before the tents went up there were several visitors from Philadelphia who had hurried down to bid the Troopers "God-speed" upon their departure for the seat of war.

An unexpected guest was Charles Wheeler, an old member of the organization, but off the active list for years. He had just returned from a trip through Japan. He was anxious to rejoin his old comrades, and as there was one vacancy in the Troop it was promptly filled.

Tuesday morning Captain Groome received orders to have his men ready to embark at four o'clock. Tents were struck at noon, the operation being watched by scores of friends who had reached the camp by that time. Promptly at the hour mentioned in the order the Captain marched his men down to the wharf, where they found no transport awaiting them. Hour after hour passed, and still no sign of a vessel. Night found the Troopers still lounging about the dock. [52]

During this long wait a full score of prominent Philadelphia ladies, who had come down to say a last good-by to their relatives and friends in the Troop, had an opportunity to show the traditional spirit of American women. The ladies had stood around the camp all morning, had followed the Troop into the city and to the wharf, where they had shared all the discomforts of the situation. It began to rain, but they only laughed and refused to seek shelter. Not a mouthful had they eaten since breakfast, but tired, wet and hungry as they were, they smiled bravely to keep up the spirits of the men; all unconsciously they afforded fine illustrations of what the mothers, wives and sisters of American soldiers have been in all hours of need.

When six o'clock came, and it was evident that the Troopers were in for a tough time of it, the ladies went in a body to the nearest restaurant and secured some sandwiches and coffee. Walking fearlessly through the crowd upon the dock, dodging under horses' heads and around mule packs, they brought the food to the cavalymen, and even waited upon them. In the [53]

language of one trooper whose young bride was among the number of ladies upon the wharf, "there was only one regret at going to the front, and that was the leaving behind of girls like those."

Until seven o'clock the City Troopers were kept upon the wharf. At that hour Captain Groome was informed that no transport could then be secured, and that he should return with the Troop to Newport News and report to General Fred. Grant. Captain Groome ordered the Troop to *bivouac* in the grass in front of the hotel for the night. There was a general rush for shelter. The ladies sought their rooms in the hotel, from the windows of which they could see the cavalymen lying in the grass of a field opposite, rolled up in their blankets.

Captain Groome did not retire however. He returned to the wharf and spent several hours arguing with various captains, in order to find a speedy way in which to embark the Troop. It was not easy work to make headway against the seemingly endless array of objections and red tape, but perseverance won out, and the Captain was at last informed, that if he would have his men on hand at four o'clock they would be taken aboard. [54]

This last *bivouac* upon American soil was exceedingly picturesque to the spectator, but hard upon the men. Every Trooper had been thoroughly soaked by the rain while standing upon the wharf. In their wet clothes they had been obliged to wrap their blankets about them and lay down to slumber in the midst of a damp grass plot under a cloudy sky, which threatened another downpour at any moment. With the exception of some pretty tough sandwiches the men had been without food since morning, and the easy way in which they accepted the situation spoke volumes for the value of the training in camp life received at Mt. Gretna and Camp Alger.

The Troop at this time consisted of three officers, one contract surgeon, ninety-nine men, one hundred and four horses and twenty mules. The Sheridan and Governor's Troop had not received orders to sail, and the members of these commands were extremely disappointed. They remained at Newport News under the command of Major Jones.

Captain Groome arranged for an early breakfast of coffee and sandwiches for his men, and at 4.30 A. M. the next day the City Troopers were again ordered to the wharf. This time there was no disappointment. The transport "Massachusetts" was there taking on a great load of men, horses and mules. All was bustle and confusion. Within a short time the Troopers went aboard, and almost at once the vessel made ready to sail. Last words to the faithful friends ashore were shouted, there was a waving of hands and handkerchiefs, and a little after midday the "Massachusetts" began ploughing her way toward the southern isle, where General Brooke's army and the Spanish forces were reported to be already face to face. [55]

CHAPTER VI.

 [56]

LIFE ABOARD A TROOP SHIP.

Life aboard a troop ship is not a round of pleasure at the best. Long tales of woe, regarding the trials and hardships upon transports of various infantry commands, quickly found their way into print within a few weeks after active war operations commenced. Not one word, however, regarding the discomforts of the City Troop on the trip to Puerto Rico was written. Yet, if existence upon a transport ship, crowded with men is disagreeable, what would the complaining infantrymen have said had they found themselves in the Troop's plight, on a vessel containing more animals than men.

Truly discouraging was the situation in which the cavalymen were placed. Their hammocks were swung between decks, and but eighteen inches were allowed between the hammock of each man and the hammocks above and on each side of him. Two feet is the regulation distance in the navy, but circumstances alter cases, and what might be a fair allowance on a carefully kept, well-ventilated war vessel, became a distinct hardship aboard the "Massachusetts." Especially was this the case where several of the tall, broad-shouldered men found their hammocks adjoining one another—for the men's bodies touched at all times, and bumped together vigorously at every lurch of the vessel. [57]

The transport upon which the Troopers found themselves had been built to carry about four hundred horses and an ordinary crew, yet when pressed into government service seven hundred men and fourteen hundred horses and mules were considered about her proper capacity. When the Troopers first boarded the vessel their bundles of clothing and equipments were scattered about in great confusion, and a good part of the first day was spent by the men in collecting their belongings and bringing them into some sort of order.

The weather during the first day at sea was exceedingly hot, although fairly pleasant until toward evening, when the wind began to show itself and the sky became cloudy. A majority of the men prepared to sleep upon deck, but as the vessel came off Cape Hatteras about midnight she struck a regular squall. The air became cold, the "Massachusetts" began to pitch about violently and then rain came rushing down in great volumes, driving the men below in a hurry. There they found many of their fellow passengers with their dreams of glory swallowed up in seasickness. [58]

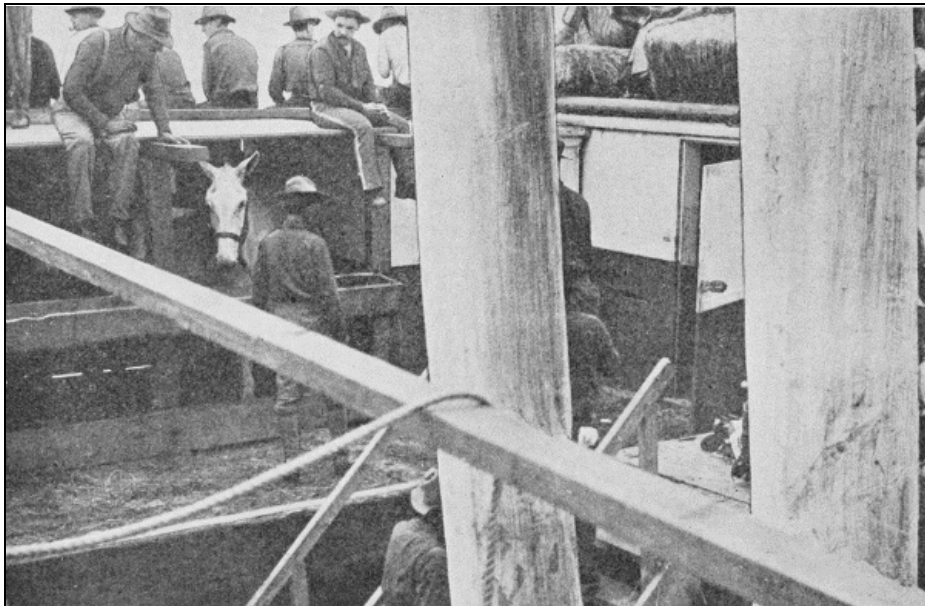
The horses, too, succumbed to the complaint in large numbers, and required much care.

Aboard the "Massachusetts" there were, in all, seven hundred horses and a like number of mules. Hundreds of the mules were fastened just below the deck to which the Troopers had been driven by the squall, while above could be heard the constant stamping of horses. Between these two layers of animals the cavalymen passed a restless night. But if their first attempt at sleep was disturbed, the conditions prevailing the second night can better be imagined than described. Despite the best efforts to keep the quarters of the animals clean, the odor which arose from the hundreds of horses and mules was sickening, and a majority of the Philadelphia men found sleeping in the hammocks impossible.

Early the next morning Captain Groome took the matter in hand, and secured permission for his men to sleep upon the baled hay, which was piled high on the main deck. There, under the stars, swept by refreshing sea breezes, the Troopers slept well—if not comfortably—the remaining nights aboard. Special sentries were appointed to see that no tired Trooper rolled from his hay mattress into the sea.

But the greatest hardship of the voyage to Puerto Rico was the lack of drinking water. Dirty, yellowish fluid was all that could be had. This would not have troubled the men a particle had it been cool enough to be refreshing. But the water was warm; sometimes it was positively hot, and always insipid and filthy looking. A skirmish by the commissary brought to light a case of beer, although there was no ice to make it palatable. The beer lasted but a day, and to keep alive the water had to be accepted and made the best of. Worse came to worst on Sunday. The pumps of the "Massachusetts" broke down, and the Troopers were obliged to go into the hold of the offensively fragrant vessel and bring up water bucketful by bucketful for the animals under their charge.

[59]



GLIMPSE INTO A TROOP SHIP.

Sergeant Martin and Corporal Wagner, stripped to the waist, were at the bottom of what looked like a deep well. The atmosphere was stifling, and in order to enable the men at the bottom to stand the heat, their comrades kept pouring water down upon their heads and bodies. As fast as pails could be filled from the bottom they were passed up along a long line of men composed of details from the various commands aboard.

It was exhausting labor, but of all the men on board the City Troopers stood the work best. The water thus brought up was of a kind absolutely dangerous for a human being to drink, and all through the day's trying struggle the Troopers silently endured the added pangs of thirst. There was more real suffering for twenty-four hours than any man in the Troop will admit, but when the pumps resumed operations in the morning, the thankful air with which the formerly despised yellowish warm water was accepted spoke volumes.

[60]

The days passed along slowly. No extremely rough weather was encountered, but on several occasions the old transport reeled sufficiently to send a few of the Troopers to their hammocks with slight attacks of *mal de mer*.

The motion of the vessel was sufficient, however, to completely disarrange each night the outfit of the Troopers, and it was their duty each morning to gather together their equipments for inspection, the same as though they were in camp. This constant readiness was in marked contrast with the arrangements among other commands aboard.

Many of the Troopers will never forget the first time the alarm of fire was given aboard the ship. It was the third morning out that a guard discovered smoke slowly curling from between the crevices of the baled hay piled high on deck. The guard was startled, and his call for the corporal and statement of the discovery of the fire was given in a loud tone, which instantly caused the alarm to spread throughout the ship. It was no pleasant thought for the men, who knew so well the inflammable nature of the cargo and the crowded condition aboard, and there was a rush for

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the point from which the alarm had come. Fortunately the blaze was a trivial affair easily extinguished, and the excitement was speedily at an end. Three other times, however, during the trip the same alarm was given, but the careful watch kept prevented the fire, in a single instance, from gaining any headway.

Although the "Massachusetts" was supposed to be one of the fastest transports, she found the entire flotilla, which had left Newport News about the same time she did, awaiting her arrival off Guayama. A despatch boat came puffing down to meet her, flying the signal, "Follow me," and Troopers in the bow saw a man armed with a megaphone mount the bridge of the despatch boat and shout: "'The Massachusetts' will lead the way, landing at Ponce."

These instructions as to the exact landing place were somewhat contrary to those before given Captain Pitcher, who was in charge of the transport, so he shouted back, "By whose authority do you give those orders?" and the reply promptly came, "By the authority of Major General Nelson A. Miles, commanding." [62]

This was at three o'clock, and the "Massachusetts" at once went ahead. At 4.30 the harbor of Ponce was sighted, and several of the Philadelphia cavalrymen in the bow saw that the transport was steering directly into shoal water, at the bottom of which a coral reef could be plainly seen. They shouted to the man at the wheel, but too late—the great transport drove bow on into the reef, and at last, on the afternoon of August 4th, the Troopers were upon hostile soil, hard and fast.

Instantly upon the stoppage of the "Massachusetts," a period of suffering began for the Troopers, in comparison with which all former experiences went as nothing. Deprived of all breeze, exposed to a torrid sun, half stifled by the fumes from the hundreds of horses and mules aboard, without water, the situation was well nigh unbearable. Up to the moment of grounding not an animal aboard had died. Within two hours after the motion of the vessel had stopped three horses perished, and two more died before they could be taken off. Fortunately none of these belonged to City Troopers. This suffering among the animals shows slightly what the men had to contend with. [63]



CATHEDRAL VIRGIN DEL CARMEN.



BIVOUAC OUTSIDE CATHEDRAL VIRGIN DEL CARMEN.

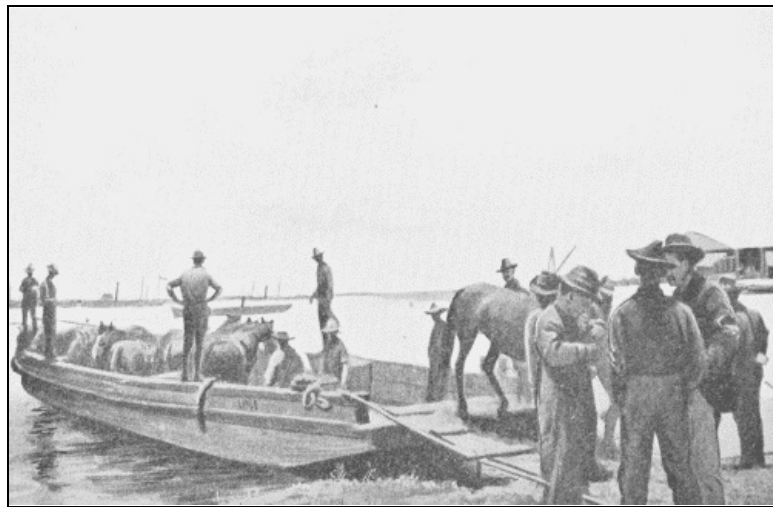
Captain Groome secured permission to send Lieutenant Browning ashore to select a camp site, and report. He made quick work of it, choosing a spot beside the Cathedral de la Carmen, and returning with an order from General Miles that the First Troop Philadelphia City Cavalry, should

land at once. This order amazed the New York cavalymen, who had been heard to boast frequently that they would surely be given the preference in all military arrangements.

The orders were received with great joy by the Philadelphians, who were ready to disembark in short order, owing to the constant readiness in which they had kept. A rope tied about their outfit was all that was necessary, and the men were only too eager to leave the grounded vessel and its disagreeable quarters.

The Troopers were rescued by the little lighter "Whitney," sent by General Miles to bring the Philadelphia men ashore. As soon as the Troopers reached land themselves they set to work to bring their horses off the transport. The air was full of rumors that the cavalry were needed in a hurry for active service, and the men went at the task of unshipping horses with a will. Some amusing attempts at interference on the part of the men of C Troop, Brooklyn, were simply ignored. [64]

At three o'clock the next morning sixty-one of the one hundred and seven horses belonging to the Troop had been landed. The men not on duty had gone into the camp selected by Lieutenant Browning the day before, on the flagstones outside of the little cathedral. All day rain came down in torrents, introducing the Troopers to the duckings which were to be their lot several times each day during their stay upon the island.



BRINGING THE HORSES ASHORE AT PONCE.

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE ENEMY'S COUNTRY.

The morning of August 5th broke clear, however, and the day was one of the few without rain that the Troopers enjoyed while in Puerto Rico. A fine breeze was blowing, and the cavalymen's ideas of the country began to take on a roseate hue. Everywhere their eyes met deep green tropical foliage and the cute little yellow houses without windows; strange old churches and curious natives made the entire scene appear more like a theatrical setting than a reality.

In the morning before five o'clock the blaring of trumpets announced a hurry call. As soon as the men came to their senses they heard the non-commissioned officers shouting: "Fall in without arms." The Troop never appeared to better advantage. The guard, the fourth platoon, tumbled out fully armed, and were standing in place in two minutes, and one minute later the entire Troop, in column of fours, with the captain in command, was double-quicking toward the dock. When the men got there, ten or fifteen minutes ahead of anyone else except the regulars, who arrived shortly after the Troop, they found that a lighter loaded with five thousand rifles for the infantry was sinking close to shore. [66]

No example of the discipline, which always prevails in the City Troop, could be more striking than the one then witnessed by a score of other commands, which came rushing, all disorganized, to the scene. While the men in other companies were hesitating and wondering what to do, the City Troop broke into regular squads, under the command of the non-commissioned officers, and began methodical relief work. Every rifle was saved. Regular army officers on the spot warmly complimented Captain Groome upon the showing made by his men.

That afternoon Captain Groome, with Major Flagler and Major McMichael, of General Wilson's staff, rode out from Ponce into the country looking for a suitable camp site. The heat was intense, the dust thick, and a place which would fulfill all requirements was not easily found. The officers kept at it, however, until satisfied; although they were in a state of complete exhaustion upon their return. Indeed, all the men's faces for the first few days in Puerto Rico showed plainly the

enervating influence of the climate, to which they could not easily get accustomed. Their tasks done, the Troopers would throw themselves down upon bales of hay, piles of boards or even the pavements, too weary to care where they were or how they looked. Men famed for their strength and endurance at home, would sit by the hour with their heads in their hands, rendered listless and weak by the heat and moisture.

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That night again the men spread their blankets on the stones outside the cathedral. A citizen placed his front porch at the disposal of the Troop as a guard house. This furnished protection for the sentries on duty from the heavy showers which invariably occurred about midnight.

On Saturday morning more horses were unloaded, and in the afternoon all the men who had mounts rode out beyond Ponce, on the highway which leads to Barros, to the camp selected by Captain Groome. While riding along the Troopers excited great interest among the natives because of the size of the American horses. In Puerto Rico all the horses are small, mere ponies in fact, less than fourteen hands high, and the islanders never failed to stare with open mouth at the City Troops handsome greys. The size of the Troopers themselves also caused many expressions of amazement, and as some of the broad-shouldered men in the second and third platoons passed, the spectators would make admiring signs with their hands, indicating the men's height and breadth.

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The first trial of the horses proved that the sea voyage had done them good in one respect. Many were suffering from distemper when they left Newport News, but there was not a case noticed after the animals landed. They were thin, stiff and sore, however, so that they were led over most of the six miles leading to the new camp.

Those Troopers still without horses remained aboard the "Massachusetts" unloading the seemingly endless string of horses and mules, and their energetic efforts were crowned with success late Saturday night, when the last of the animals were landed. Sunday morning was cool, but cloudy—and as the last detail of City Troopers were packing and saddling their horses, they heard the voice of a priest conducting early mass in the tiny cathedral close by. The cavalymen walked with their horses' bridles over their arms. As they passed through Ponce they encountered many scowling faces, but once in the country a majority of the natives shouted a welcome. By noon they reached the spot chosen for a camp; the Troopers were together again in a magnificent bit of country, blue mountains everywhere, and brilliant, luxurious foliage on all sides. "Hazel" manifested a striking fondness for all things Puerto Rican, and had to be tied in a rather barren spot to prevent overfeeding.

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Reveille sounded at four o'clock Monday morning, and the packing of saddles began at once. At seven o'clock the order came to join with H Troop as escort to a train of one thousand mules, headquarter horses, signal and ambulance corps, and as quickly as possible to join General Brooke's command at Guayama. Mounted for the first time, off the Troop went, retracing its steps through a glorious stretch of country to Ponce, where on the main southern road the long supply train for General Brooke's army was overtaken. Thus hampered, the march became slow. It was terrifically hot, and the dust blew about in clouds. At one o'clock the cavalymen passed through Santa Isabella, where a half hours stop was made to bring up the stragglers of the mule train, and to take a turn at the hard tack and dried beef.

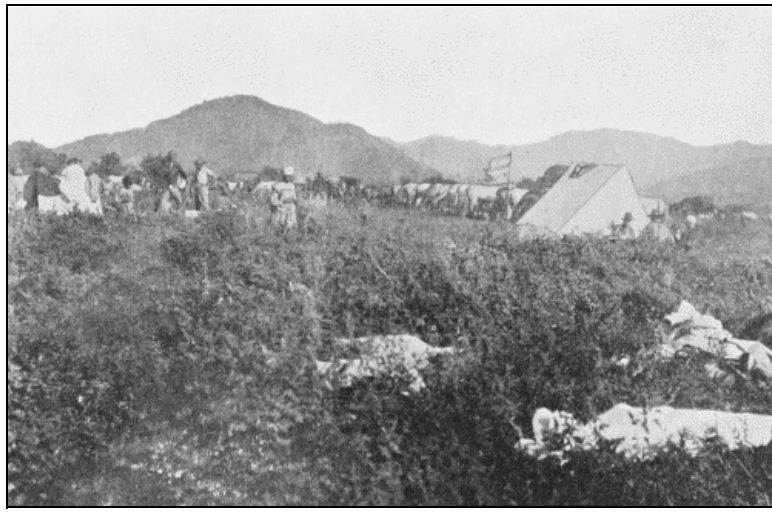
Then the march began through the enemy's country, the City Troop acting as advance guard, and H Troop, of the Sixth Regular Cavalry, acting as rear guard. Flankers were sent out, and the advance guard was frequently informed by natives that quite a large number of Spaniards were retreating a short distance ahead. The City Troopers came upon many signs of the enemy's presence along the road, and at four o'clock the Troops went into camp at the Hacienda Fortuna, a rich sugar plantation. An outpost of City Troopers was immediately established, and all barns and outbuildings were thoroughly searched before night.

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Just before midnight a hurry call sent six City Troopers and six H Troopers, under Captain Groome and Lieutenant Ryan, scouring a neighboring cane brake for Spaniards, spies having reported their presence there in force. No lurking Dons were found, however, and at four o'clock the next morning camp was broken and the march resumed in dead earnest. The City Troopers acted as rear guard to the train. No American troops had passed through this part of the island before, and as it was said to be a Spanish stronghold, great watchfulness was observed. On both sides of the ragged road were cane breaks and great growths of underbrush, and it was a tiresome ride and no small task looking out for Spaniards, stubborn mules and foolish drivers.

Late that afternoon a camp was reached at the foot of the Caney mountains, on the Hacienda Magdelane, an English estate. There the two cavalry troops and the tremendous mule train went into camp again. They had passed through Selinas in the early afternoon.

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CAMP AT ARROYO.

In the blackness of Wednesday morning the roll was called at 3.30, and an hour later saw the march resumed, with the City Troopers acting as advance guard. Lieutenant McFadden commanded the advance guard and Corporal Merrill commanded the point. Reports of native spies left no doubt as to the serious character of the situation, and the march was of necessity slow. Every two or three miles the sight of small bands of armed Spaniards would cause a halt, while out the skirmishers would go to report.

About nine o'clock the point came to a twelve-foot bridge, freshly torn up. This was quickly replaced and on the column moved. About 10.30 a few shots were heard, which fact was at once reported to Captain Groome, who gave orders for the Troop to advance at a gallop. In a few minutes the point came in sight, talking with armed men, and like a flash the word came back through the chain of advance supports that the Troop had at last reached General Brooke's outposts, the Fourth Illinois.

Orders were given Captain Groome to proceed through Guayama, toward Arroyo, one mile from which place the Troop went into camp. A few hours later H Troop came up and camped alongside.

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Thursday, August 11th, was a day of wild rumors. All sorts of movements were about to take place, according to report, and a majority of the plans had some Trooper, who believed in them. From the Philadelphia men's camp a Spanish blockhouse could be seen on the mountains two miles away. Several batteries, encamped near the Troop, wheeled into position in the morning and indulged in target practice. Many of the Troopers witnessed this stirring sight, and returned to camp with the announcement that the practice was superb. The daily rain was unusually heavy, and the men turned in early to fight the bugs, mosquitoes and stifling heat.

All conditions were unfavorable to comfort at Arroyo. Great clouds would come drifting in from the sea toward the mountains, and rain and wind would beat in at one side of the Troop's shelter tents. Within an hour the clouds would come rolling back to the sea, and the wind and rain would besiege the opposite side of the tents. Thursday night the Troopers slept in soaking blankets, inches deep in rain and mud. Nothing but good-natured chaffing over the discomforts was heard however.

Friday afternoon the Troopers went in a body to the beach, about a mile away, and took a dip in the Caribbean Sea. Rumors of an engagement close at hand kept growing in force, and when a careful inspection of carbines took place upon their return from bathing, the Troopers were fully prepared for the orders which came to them at retreat that evening, to be ready to move in heavy marching order at 5.30 in the morning. This was formal notice that a battle would take place on the morrow, and members of the City and H Troops offered mutual congratulations.

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CHAPTER VIII.

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THE FIGHT THAT FAILED.

Much has been written and more said about "the night before the battle." Then it is, that sentiment is supposed to seize upon a soldier; thoughts and talks of home, wife and mother are proper, and in fact necessary, according to all writers of fiction. But even in the face of this traditional outline of a soldier's last hours before an engagement, it must be written that the City Troopers retained their characteristic coolness. On that Friday evening a close observer of the Troopers' camp would have supposed that the men were upon familiar ground, and that a battle was months in the future, instead of being as sure to take place on the morrow as anything could be in human foresight.

All down the line the saddle packing went on amid jests and laughter. Had the Troopers been preparing for a homeward journey they could not have seemed more light-hearted. Few men spoke of the coming battle at all, yet it was in every heart, and many men felt a lump rise in their throats as the popular First Sergeant blurted out these words: "In a scrap like this the cavalry is sure to be heavily engaged. A good many of us are bound to be stopped, and, good God! just think of digging a hole to chuck one of this outfit in."

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Captain Groome paced in front of company headquarters for nearly an hour, with only his inevitable cigar as a companion. Dozens of the men watched him, and speculated as to his meditations. Lieutenants Browning and McFadden passed through the camp several times, speaking with the men on minor matters, and avoiding absolutely all talk of the coming day. Later in the evening they wrote letters.

Within an hour after taps the heavy rumbling of artillery began to be heard. Five batteries, numbering thirty guns, passed near the camp during the hours between midnight and four o'clock, and many a sleepless Trooper listened anxiously to the bumping, thumping and rattling as the guns, caissons and ammunition wagons kept rolling by.

When the Troopers tumbled out at four o'clock it was pitch dark, and the everlasting rain was descending in torrents. A few feeble glimmering lanterns supplied just enough light to show the rain-filled plates, in which bacon and potatoes floated unconcernedly about. Coffee was consumed in quantities that only Troopers know how to master; and then, in the midst of the darkness and flood, feeding, saddling and loading of ox carts was accomplished. On this morning of battle little attention had been paid to uniforming. Some men wore Khaiki breeches, others the old familiar blue. Hats and caps of all varieties were seen, several men wearing broad straw hats secured from the natives. All wore blue shirts of various ages and conditions of cleanliness. Sleeves were rolled up, and scarcely two men appeared in the same kind of boots. The closest friends of the Troopers would never have recognized the rain-bedraggled warriors as the same men who so often had shone resplendent in the streets of Philadelphia as the guard of honor of The President or distinguished soldiers.

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At last the command came, "Prepare to mount," and a moment later the cavalymen had swung into the saddle, where they found themselves seated in good-sized puddles. The City Troop mounted ninety-five men and three officers, the only absentees being Privates Wetherill and Rowland, on sick report in Philadelphia; Brooke, in the Red Cross Hospital at Ponce, and Trumpeter Brossman, in a hospital at Guayama.

Captain Groome, in a blue silk shirt, Khaiki breeches, rode at the head of the column, while on his left rode Lieutenant Browning, in full Khaiki, and Lieutenant Ryan, commander of H Troop of the Sixth regular cavalry. Behind them came H Troop's trumpeter and the City Troop's faithful trumpeter, Dick Singer. Then the head of the column, Sergeant Wagner, with the guidon, and Sergeant Thibault and Private Bower leading the long line of two's. Each saddle had a poncho strapped upon it, the carbine swung from the off side, saber opposite to the carbine; each man wore a belt of one hundred Krag-Jorgensen cartridges, with his revolver strung in his belt. On the cantle behind, each man carried his blanket wrapped in his half of a shelter tent.

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**EN ROUTE TO THE BATTLEFIELD. MILITARY ROAD
FROM GUAYAMA TO CANEY.**

Without warning the sun came out in all its fury, and then occurred the phenomena, often witnessed there, of rain falling from an apparently clear sky. The hot sun made the rain come down much like steam, but it ceased to fall after a few minutes.

At six o'clock the two troops were in Guayama, and halted by the Custom House, while Captain Groome reported to General Brooke for orders. Half an hour was spent by the Troopers watching the passing of artillery, infantry, hospital and signal corps men. Sometime before seven o'clock Captain Groome returned with orders to go into line of battle and cover the left flank of the Americans. Simultaneous with the movement of the cavalry the entire brigade of four regiments, consisting of the Third Ohio, Third Illinois, Fourth Pennsylvania and Sixth Illinois, were also off. As the Troop passed along the road at a trot it overtook the Sixth Illinois and Fourth Pennsylvania. The infantry received orders to let the cavalry through, and the mass of soldiers

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parted. Away at a trot, between this friendly gauntlet of cheering infantrymen, the Troopers rode amid all sorts of shouts. The foot soldiers thought the cavalry was going in to deploy as skirmishers and start the fight, so they gave the Troopers a good, hearty American cheer, and from each company came encouraging yells, such as: "Give them bullets, boys!" "We will follow you!" And the Fourth Pennsylvania gave three times three for the City Troop and Old Pennsylvania. All in all it was a moment that the Philadelphia riders will not soon forget.

The Spanish earthworks, as nearly as could be made out by the Troopers, were something in the form of an S. After a two-mile ride the fresh dirt on these trenches was plainly visible, and it seemed that a few minutes more riding would bring the Troop within the range of the Spaniards. Suddenly the course turned abruptly to the left and the Troop came upon Major General Brooke and his staff, standing on a little hill to the right of the road, waiting for the artillery to get into position. Captain Groome reported to General Brooke, and received orders to take the two troops of cavalry into an adjoining field, to dismount the men and unsaddle the horses. There, surrounded by beautiful tropical flowers and heavy foliage, the men awaited the boom of the cannon, which had been agreed upon as the signal for opening the battle. [79]

Strangely out of place looked the grim weapons and warlike trappings in that garden spot. Beneath the towering palm and rubber trees, amid hundreds of crimson blossoms the Philadelphia men gathered in groups to discuss the outlook, while their horses grazed at their feet.

It began to rain again about eleven o'clock, a dark, steaming drizzle. In the midst of it Mr. Davies, of the *New York Sun*, came over to inspect the cavalry. He informed Captain Groome that Major Redmond, in charge of the artillery, had just announced that he would open fire in a half hour.

A look down the line of the City Troopers at this crucial moment revealed still an absolutely amazing indifference to the conflict now all but upon them—most of their men were asleep. The three officers were sitting by the roadside chatting together a couple of hundred feet away from the remainder of the Troop. At the head of the column, with his arm through his bridle rein, lay Sergeant Wagner asleep. Sergeant Martin and Private Robb were entertaining a dozen or so of the men with an argument as to the relative charms of a Philadelphia girl and a native girl, "fat, black and greasy, with a cigar stuck in her face." A little farther back, sitting on the ground, was Harry Riley, holding the big bay mule he had been riding since reaching the island; he was quiet, but the mule was not. Next came a group composed of Billy Bates, whose beautiful little grey was lying at his feet like a faithful dog, Charlie Smith, Hecksher, Cliff Pemberton, Harry Godfrey, Bromley Wharton, the two Warden boys, Fred Neilson and "Doug" Jacobs. Charlie Smith was inviting them all to lunch with him on the mountain where the Spaniards were encamped. Coulston and Woodman were talking Spanish to each other, and Mills and Wheeler were asleep. Way in front were Jim Starr and Frank Bower, standing on a knoll and trying to see the batteries get into position, while Carroll Smyth, George McFadden and Charlie Brinton went about among the different groups distributing crackers. [80]

In a nearby field a corps of field telegraph operators could be seen stringing their wires from tree to tree, and at times making use of the wire fences for continuing their lines. [81]

About one o'clock Lieutenant Reynolds rode into camp at a furious rate and gave an order to General Brooke, who was standing in the road about three hundred yards to the right of the Troopers camp. At once the assembly sounded, and with many a sternly muttered, "At last," the City Troopers mounted and took their places.

Lieutenant Browning rode up, and all ears were strained to catch the order to advance. The lieutenant looked as if he was thoroughly disgusted with life, as in a calm tone he said: "The men will fall in and ride back to camp; General Miles has ordered all military operations to cease."

"Oh, hell!" exclaimed a Trooper near the lieutenant, throwing down his carbine as the pent up disappointment and suspense in his heart sought expression almost involuntarily. This forcible exclamation, and more particularly the tone in which it was uttered, seemed to represent the feelings of the entire Troop.

Listlessly the men mounted, grumbled "one, two, three, four," and sought a new camping ground at Hacienda De Placida. A more downcast lot of men than turned in that Saturday night, of August 13th, would be hard to find. By night it was told through camp how a messenger, on a played-out horse, had reached General Brooke with the order from General Miles, just as the gunners of Battery B, of Pittsburgh, had their hands on the lanyards awaiting General Brooke's orders to pull and give the signal for attack. Mr. Davies, of the *New York Sun*, afterward told Captain Groome that General Brooke had given the messenger a scanty welcome, and had remarked that he might have spared his horse a little, although his haste undoubtedly saved many lives. [82]

CHAPTER IX.

AFTER THE BATTLE.

Sunday morning Captain Scott brought an order to Captain Groome to send a commissioned officer, a sergeant and six privates to establish an outpost two miles beyond the farthest infantry outpost, and to maintain a flag of truce. This outpost was necessary because of the general fear of Spanish treachery. The Spaniards had a white flag flying over their blockhouse, but there was no telling at what moment they might pull it down and charge into the American ranks; so the watchers at the outpost were entrusted with an important duty. The detail first selected was in charge of Lieutenant Browning, who took with him Sergeant Glendinning, Corporal Thayer and Privates S. and W. Goodman, Strawbridge, Wheeler, Mills and Ridgeway. Captains Scott and Groome accompanied the detail to select the ground for the outpost.

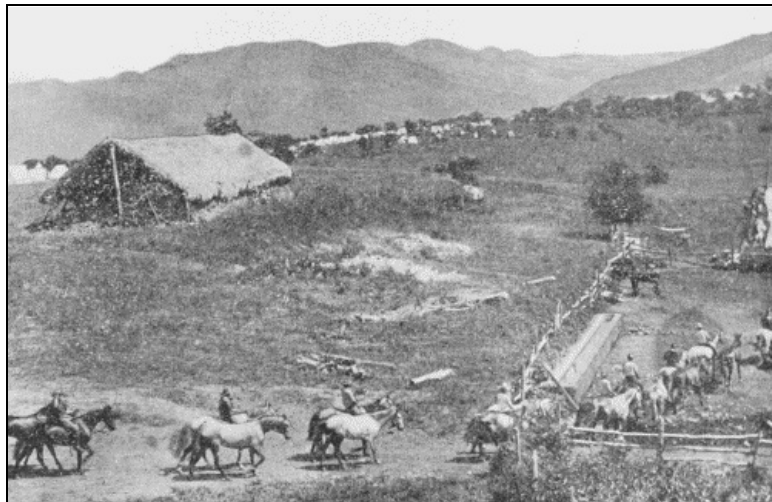
As the men were about to start, it was found that they had nothing to serve as a flag of truce. Captain Groome informed Captain Scott that the Troop was just out of such articles, and for a moment the officers were at a loss to know what to do. A handkerchief was too small and too frail, but suddenly Lieutenant Browning had an inspiration. His wife had supplied the officers' mess with some fine, large napkins. One of these was therefore pressed into service as a flag of truce, and the detachment rode forth. It was early morning, and the rain was pelting down as usual.

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On through the town, along the road the troops had tramped ready for the fray, around the mountain side, past the place Rodney had planted his batteries, past the pickets, past the last infantry outpost, under a ridge dotted with Spanish sentries, the detachment, with the now historic napkin, went on until, coming around a sharp turn in the road, they saw a mile and a half across the valley the Spanish outpost with its flag of truce already up.

Then the little band of Troopers halted and chopped down a stout sapling. To this they lashed the flag of truce for the American army, and set up the pole in a little clearing. Two Troopers were left on guard, while the rest retired a couple of hundred yards around a bend in the road and put up the little dog tents, beginning at once the routine work of a vidette outpost. The flag was pitched squarely upon the top of the mountain, so that it rained there continually, but the discomforts were swallowed up in a sense of the responsibility felt by all on duty there.

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"CAMP ESPERANCA." GUAYAMA IN THE DISTANCE.

The six men were divided in pairs, and each pair stood guard by the fluttering flag as vidette for two hours and then rested four, throughout the day and night. Through field glasses the Spanish troops could be plainly seen standing on guard or idling about the trenches.

Thirty minutes after the flag first went up a group of Spanish officers were seen approaching. As they came nearer it was plain that the party consisted of a general and six aids. Captain Scott advanced to meet the Spaniards, and was informed that the general carried a message for General Brooke. The Spaniard declined to entrust the message to Captain Scott. Captain Groome was informed of the difficulty, and at once galloped back to the American camp, returning in a short time with General Sheridan and others of General Brooke's staff. After much formality the Spanish general delivered his message to General Sheridan and ceremoniously retired.

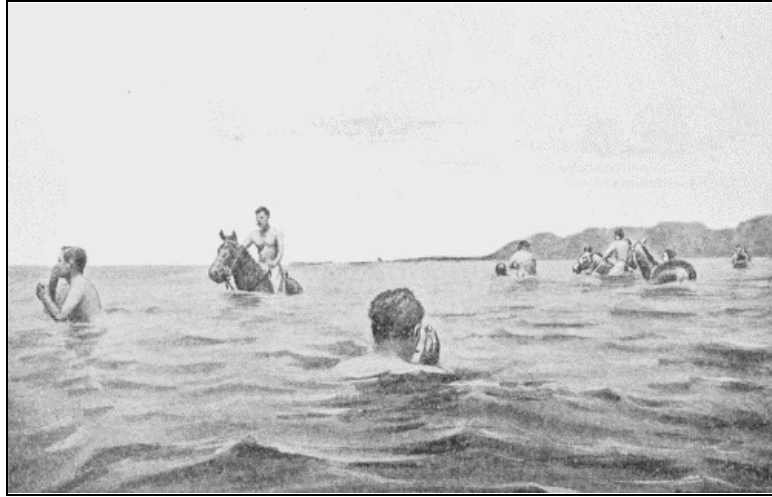
At eight o'clock the next day Lieutenant Ryan and a like detachment from H Troop relieved Lieutenant Browning. The next day Lieutenant McFadden, with Sergeant Bates, Corporal Butcher and Privates Green, Newbold, Wilson, Fell, Woodman and Armstrong relieved the H men. The day following, at eight o'clock, Lieutenant Heiberg and his detachment of regulars, and relieving them on the morrow went Lieutenant Browning, Sergeant Smith, Corporal Thibault and Privates Jacobs, Wharton, Neilson, Barclay, Cramp and Shober. Thus, as in all cavalry work for General Brooke's army at Guayama, H Troop and the City Troop took share and share alike.

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Meantime the Troopers, in camp near Guayama, had little besides routine duty to keep them occupied. The rainy season was on hand with a vengeance. Day and night, with but slight intervals of clear weather, it rained and poured. Good-sized creeks would be formed in a half hour by the floods of rain, and these little streams seemed always aimed straight at the Troopers' camp. To change clothing was useless, and at times it was impossible to obtain dry garments. Flannel shirts would be spread out in the hot sun to dry at eleven o'clock, and at half-past they would be lying in pools of water, getting more thoroughly drenched each minute.

Since leaving the United States, a wonderful change had taken place in the appearance of the City Troopers. At the time of sailing from Newport News, all the cavalymen were bronzed and weather beaten. After but little more than two weeks in southern Puerto Rico, exposed daily to natural steam baths and kept in a constant state of perspiration, the men were bleached out. Faces once ruddy became as white as paper, and all the men had lost rapidly in weight.

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AT THE BEACH NEAR GUAYAMA.

The horses, too, showed the effect of the tropical climate. When herded together there was not one head that did not droop, and their eyes were without spirit. The change in men and beasts had come quickly, but until after it was known that hostilities were over the Troopers had been too busy to notice the change in one another.

Each day the horses had to be herded, and the tidings that an animal had broken away and must be pursued was always hailed with delight, as the chase was a welcome break in the slow camp life.

As there was a splendid beach about three miles from the camp at Guayama, and about the same distance from Arroyo, Captain Groome issued orders to the City Troopers for one platoon to bathe in the morning, each day, and a second platoon in the afternoon. At the beach the trees and foliage extended clear to the water's edge. In some places the water was deep right from the tree line, but there were three or four sand bars that extended way out, so that a bather could walk as far out in the water at some points as at Atlantic City. There was always a heavy surf at the beach, that made bathing a good sport.

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It was also great fun to take the horses into the surf. At first the greys did not take kindly to surf bathing, but under the wise guidance of their riders they soon were taught that waves would not hurt them, and in some of the deep water places they quickly learned to take long swims with the Troopers.

In all their manœuvres in Puerto Rico, the City Troopers were divided into four platoons. No drills were held, but, as a matter of record, the Roster of the Troop at this period of the campaign is here given, passing from right to left in the line:

Captain, John C. Groome.

First Lieutenant, Edward Browning.

Second Lieutenant, J. Frank McFadden.

FIRST PLATOON.

Right Squad.—Sergeant, Frederic Thibault; Privates, Frank Bower, Alfred Pardee, Alfred Bright, Thomas Cadwalader, H. Percy Glendinning, Thomas Robb, Jr., Henry J. Wetherill, T. Wallis Huidekoper, Edward Gregg; Corporal, J. Houston Merrill.

Left Squad.—Privates, Edward E. Stetson, Charles Wheeler, Edward Rawle, William I. Forbes, William West, Williams Biddle Cadwalader, Charles C. Brinton, Frank A. Janney, James De Kay, Edward Cann; Corporal, Adolph G. Rosengarten.

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SECOND PLATOON.

Right Squad.—Sergeant, William H. Hart; Privates, Robert Fell, William Farr, Samuel K. Reeves, Thomas J. Orbison, Samuel Goodman, Jr., Henry S. Godfrey, Clifford Pemberton, Jr., Maitland Armstrong, George Wilson; Corporal, Gustav A. Heckscher.

Left Squad.—Privates, N. B. Warden, Stuart Wheeler, M. G. Rosengarten, J. Warren Coulston, Jr., Charles Coates, James M. Rhodes, Jr., Francis C. Green, John Conygham Stevens, John Zimmerman, Norman Risley; Corporal, Samuel Chew.

THIRD PLATOON.

Right Squad.—Sergeant, William E. Bates; Privates, Edward Lord, Henry G. Woodman,

C. King Lennig, Trenchard Newbold, Thomas Ridgway, Benjamin B. Reath, Carroll Smyth, James Starr, Edward Brooke; Corporal, George C. Thayer.

Left Squad.—Privates, John Strawbridge, William E. Goodman, Jr., William G. Warden, Jr., George L. Farnum, J. Clifford Rosengarten; Hospital Steward, William H. Cornell; Privates, S. Frederick Mills, Francis Rawle, Edward B. Cornell; Corporal, Henry C. Butcher, Jr.

FOURTH PLATOON.

Right Squad.—Sergeant, Charles H. Smith; Privates, George H. McFadden, Jr., Harry C. Barclay, Reginald H. Shober, Francis L. Cramp, Carroll Hodge, H. Austin Smith, Ward Brinton, Edward Rogers, Charles B. Lewis; Corporal, Francis A. Thibault.

Left Squad.—Privates, Herman A. Denckla, Henry Drinker Riley, Edward C. Taylor, W. B. Duncan Smith, Bromley Wharton, Lightner Witmer, Frederick B. Neilson, Douglas H. Jacobs; Commissary Corporal, A. Mercer Biddle; Corporal, Alexander W. Wister, Jr. [90]

Private Ranson, Farrier.
Private Newlin, Cook.
Private Kirk, Cook.
Private Gibbons, Saddler.
Private Halbustadt, Wagoner.
Private Nilon, Blacksmith.
Trumpeter, Brossman.
Trumpeter, R. Singer.
Stable Sergeant, John Wagner, Jr.
Ordnance Sergeant, Robert E. Glendinning.
Quartermaster-Sergeant, Dr. William C. Lott.
First Sergeant, J. Willis Martin.

While the Troopers were in camp at Guayama, under orders from General Brooke, they changed their old style of camp life a little by using a number of large hospital tents, loaned by General Brooke's headquarters, which were occupied by six or seven men each, instead of the little dog tents intended for two men. The larger tents made life more bearable during the heavy rains, and were greatly appreciated by all.

Although each duty was taken up with uniform cheerfulness, and nothing was slighted, it soon became evident that for the first time there was a unanimous desire on the part of the City Troopers, now that peace was assured, to get home as quickly as possible. So there was great rejoicing when, on Thursday morning, August 25th, Captain Groome received orders to proceed at once to Ponce with the Troop, there to take passage for New York. Just before this order came, a detachment of Troopers had gone from camp on a hunt after Spanish guerrillas. They were promptly recalled by General Brooke's command. [91]

The packing of saddles and stowing away of tents was attended to with a will, and on Friday morning the march of thirty-seven miles to Ponce was begun. This distance was to be made in two stages, as marching was slow at the best with skirmishers out, and the weather was so sultry that for most of the distance the men trudged along on foot, leading their horses.

Although buoyed up by the prospect of soon seeing home and friends again, the Troopers found the first day's march the hardest work they had undertaken since enlistment. Spaniards could be seen in the hills all about, and a close outlook had to be kept. The march led through deep cuts in the road, where there was not a breath of air stirring, where the terrific heat seemed determined to beat to the ground all living things that ventured to brave its fury. Rain—hot, steam-like rain—alternated with the blazing sun, and uniforms were one hour drenched with rain, the next hour dried by the sun, and a few moments later soaking wet with perspiration. [92]

At midday a halt was made at the same plantation visited on the way out. There was a grove of what the Troopers styled "United States trees," and in its shade they lay around and ate canned stuff and dried their clothes. Then the tramp was resumed with all its fatigue, and at night a camp fire was built on another sugar plantation. Three of the men living there spoke English, and the first use of it they made was to notify Captain Groome that a number of the laborers were sick with small pox, and that the spot selected for a camp was particularly infected.

The Captain had quite a consultation with various people before selecting the final camping ground, and the weary Troopers had no sooner attended to their horses than they dropped off to sleep. Like dead men they lay in their blankets, totally oblivious of the swarms of mosquitoes which gathered about them, or of the land crabs, little snakes and other queer creatures that all night long crawled over their bodies in a familiarly inquiring manner.



**RETURN ALONG THE ROAD FROM GUAYAMA TO
PONCE.**

The second day began with a cool shower, which left the atmosphere in a splendid condition, and the advance was more rapid. While all the men had been supplied with Khaiki uniforms, it was noticeable that on this last day's march in the enemy's country a majority clung to the blue. A short rest was taken at midday. Late in the afternoon the heavens began to let loose a flood of rain, and streams sprang up beneath the feet of the cavalrymen. Twenty minutes after the Troopers passed the bridge leading to Playa de Ponce, the structure was swept away by a raging torrent one hundred feet wide. At nightfall the City Troopers had just put up their small tents and gone into camp for the night, when, at 9.30 P. M., the signal service sent word to Captain Groome that the tents would have to come up and the men get away quickly, as a river would soon be rolling over the spot where the Troopers were preparing to turn in. Indeed, by the time the warning came, trickling streams innumerable were sweeping through the field below the camp. Assembly was sounded, and in forty-five minutes tents were struck, bags packed, horses saddled, four wagons loaded, and the Troop moved out. When the tents were first pitched, it was the intention of the Troopers to name the camp after Hugh Craig, Jr., but this idea was given up after the message from the signal corps, and the name "*Mala Aqua*"—wicked water—substituted. Mr. Craig's name was afterward bestowed upon the last camp occupied by the Troopers on foreign soil.

[94]

No sheltered spot could be found that night after the retreat from the oncoming river, so the Troopers philosophically wrapped themselves in their blankets and lay down in the streets of Playa, unmindful of the beating rain. Despite the downpour there were soon a number of fires burning about the camp, for the Philadelphia men had become experts in the art of getting a cheery blaze out of wet wood, and damp matches no longer possessed any terrors.

While the men slept on the pavement, their horses were tied to logs along the curb. Some of the Troopers induced their mounts to lie down and be used as pillows. It was a strange sight, more picturesque than it was comfortable for the men who made up the tableau. If any one incident in the campaign could be said to illustrate better than another the clean grit which actuated every move of the Troopers, this night spent in the streets of Playa, amid drenching rain, would probably be selected by a historian.

In the morning Captain Groome marched the Troopers into "Dolorales" lumber yard, where the sheds, roofed over with galvanized iron, looked extremely inviting to the rain-soaked men. Blankets were spread on the top of lumber piles, under the roof, and perched up there the Troopers were sheltered from the alternate sun and showers.

[95]

For one week there was a hard struggle to kill time. There was nothing to do but look after the horses, and no place to go. Several times members of the Troop took carriage rides about the city, and had all the points of interest explained by guides. Hope was high in the hearts of officers and men alike that a start for Philadelphia could be made by September 1st, but the first came and still no orders. Relief was close at hand, however, for on Friday, September 2d, orders came to turn the Troop's horses and equipments over to the headquarter officers at Ponce, and to embark the Troopers upon the transport "Mississippi," which was lying a half mile out in the harbor.

Before turning over the horses to other hands, the old greys were given a careful rub down, and then a thorough cleaning was bestowed upon halters, bridles, carbines, scabbards, sabers, pistols and holsters. The Troopers were complimented upon the condition of their mounts, for they came out of the campaign much the best of any other horses, although admittedly they had been given the hardest work to do.

[96]

While there was naturally much regret expressed by the cavalrymen at parting with the horses and equipments, which had formed so close a part of their lives during the summer, yet there was a bright side to the matter, inasmuch as the Troopers on their homeward trip were saved most of their hard work. No longer were they obliged to feed and water their horses twice a day, and do stable duty each morning; they were also rid of all the tugging on and off of lighters, transports and trains of saddles and equipments, and they were through spending their spare moments

polishing up the numerous small belongings of a Trooper. In the turning over of all these things there was a great relief.

All day Friday A and C Troops, of New York; the Governor's and Sheridan Troops, of Pennsylvania; and Pennsylvania A Battery, loaded the transport with their horses. Finally at six o'clock in the afternoon, the City Troop, their canvas and commissary having been lightered to the ship, fell in and marched to the dock. At eight o'clock Captain Groome ordered them on a big lighter, and drawn by the tug "Sarah," of Philadelphia, they went out in the harbor to the "Mississippi." There, with blanket rolls over one shoulder, and haversacks and saddlebags over the other, they tumbled up the ladder to the deck of the slow, but comparatively commodious transport. Not until midnight did General Wilson's headquarter horses get aboard, and the vessel was soon afterward steering for New York. No demonstration was made during the embarking of the troops. The cavalymen were too tired to do any cheering themselves, even at the thought of home. The natives about the dock did some cheering, but as they were always ready to hurrah over anything, their yells did not particularly inspire the departing soldiers. [97]

The City Troop had its quarters forward on the "Mississippi," with A Battery alongside and A Troop on the deck below. This was pleasant all around, as the New York and Philadelphia Troopers were the best of friends, and in addition the Troopers had many friends in the Philadelphia battery.

For this ocean trip of one thousand, three hundred and ninety miles the City Troopers were better prepared than on their voyage to Ponce. Of course, there were great hardships to be endured, but the commissary had laid in a supply of ice, so that the drinking water could be kept at a reasonable temperature, and the men had gained enough experience to hustle for good sleeping places on deck and not bother with the hammocks. [98]

The old transport averaged about two hundred miles a day, which seemed particularly slow to the impatient Troopers. At the time the "Mississippi" had been forty-eight hours out, it became clear that the sea voyage was doing all the cavalymen a vast deal of good; the unhealthy pallor, induced by tropical weather, began to wear off, and the men felt that they would be in good condition to receive the welcome which they knew was awaiting them.

Daily routine aboard ship was established as follows: Reveille at 6 o'clock, stables at 6.30, mess at 7, sick at 8, fatigue at 8.30, guard mount at 9, mess at 12, and again at 6, tattoo at 9, and taps at 9.30.

Fair weather remained with the "Mississippi" throughout the entire trip. Guidons of each troop aboard were affixed to the foremast head.



HACIENDA CARMEN.

CHAPTER X.

HOME AGAIN.

From the time the Jersey coast was sighted the Troopers began to realize how glad they really were to get back home. Early on the morning of Saturday, September 10th, the "Mississippi" passed Sandy Hook, and was soon cleaving the waters of New York Bay. It was rather misty, and objects at any great distance were very obscure. The Philadelphia cavalymen were often obliged to smile at the airs which some of the members of the New York and Brooklyn troops assumed as they found themselves in familiar waters. The men of Gotham boasted much of the fine reception which they felt sure was in store for them, and looked rather pityingly upon the Philadelphia cavalymen. When, through the mist, a tug was made out, with flags flying, approaching the

"Mississippi" at full speed, several of the New Yorkers pointed to it and said to the Quaker City men, "Here comes the advance guard of our escort."

While the tug was still too much surrounded by mist to make out her identity, there came floating from her deck the ringing notes of a bugle. At the first sound the Philadelphia Troopers became all attention, and a moment later the air of the Troop march—strains known to City Troopers for two generations—could be clearly distinguished. [100]

"It's our friends," shouted the City Troopers with glee, while the New York riders did not attempt to conceal their surprise at the fact that citizens of their city had been out-generated by the Philadelphia visitors in the effort to give the first greeting to the returning Troopers.

But while the later recruits among the Troopers shouted "It's our friends," the older members cried out, "It's Ellis Pugh," for they knew almost by instinct from whose lips had come the welcoming blast. Dick Singer was upon the deck with his bugle in a twinkling, and tooted back a response. Nearer and nearer the two vessels approached, until at last the two buglers joined together in the long final note.

Then other tugs appeared—six in all—five of which were filled with enthusiastic Philadelphians. The Troopers crowded to the rail and occupied all points of vantage in the rigging. Up the bay the transport and her shrieking escort continued their course. From the whistle of every vessel met there came a welcome, until the din became almost deafening.

While the health officer boarded the transport, friends on the tugs and troop ship yelled greetings back and forth. A port hole in the "Mississippi" was opened, and an avalanche of boxes and bottles poured into the hands of the soldiers aboard. The moment quarantine was raised, there was a general scramble of male visitors onto the deck of the transport, followed by a whirlwind of affectionate greetings. Fathers proudly hugged their brawny, dirt-stained sons; chums and brothers shook each others' hands off. [101]

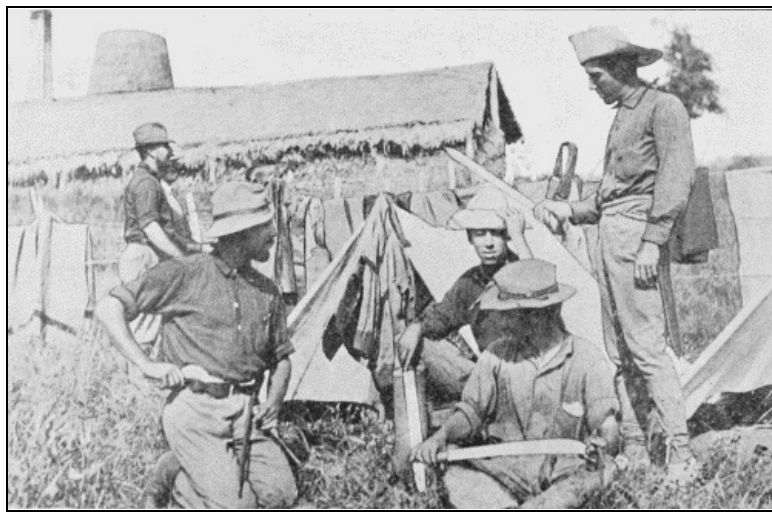
Soon there came along another tug, and Governor Hastings and Major Richardson clambered over the rail amid loud cheers of the Pennsylvanians. And so the big reception went on until the "Mississippi" pulled into dock at Jersey City. There the cavalrymen looked down from the high decks upon a sea of men and women, the great majority of whom were Philadelphians. The hospital train was run in on a siding right under the ship, and the sick were unloaded with but little delay.

Meanwhile, Captain Groome had accepted an invitation from the Philadelphia Councils Committee, to participate in a public reception upon the Troop's arrival home, and word to that effect was telegraphed to Mayor Warwick. The Troopers partook of a light lunch before unloading their camp equipage, and after two hours hard work the last piece of canvas was loaded on the cars, and late in the afternoon they finally found themselves rolling rapidly homeward. [102]

In the New York *Sun*, the day after the City Troop's arrival, there appeared the following paragraph by a reporter of reputation, who had been in Puerto Rico during the campaign:

"In commissariat, general intelligence and knowledge of tactics, the First City Troop of Philadelphia outranked any volunteers I saw at the front. They were the only company to take a water filter with them, so were the only men to drink pure water. They were the only soldiers with forethought enough to provide salt, mustard and the other little things that help make army rations palatable. Then they knew how to cook. They kept their camp clean. They kept their horses in good condition, in fact they neglected nothing, and shirked no duty, no matter how disagreeable. So much for the dude soldier."

It was eight o'clock when the train bearing the City Troopers, every man ready and fit for duty, came puffing into the Broad Street Station. Outside the building and along Broad, Chestnut and Market Streets, the route over which it had been planned to have the cavalrymen march, dense throngs packed the sidewalks, and were only kept from the streets by ropes in charge of hundreds of policemen. [103]



SERGEANT'S CLUB AT GUAYAMA.

Captain Groome was the first man to alight from the cars, and he was at once requested by General Morrell and Director Riter to permit a street parade of the command before going to Horticultural Hall, where a banquet had been prepared. The Captain said his men would be pleased to do anything the Reception Committee wished, and the line was immediately formed for parade. Police horses had been secured and were on hand for the Troopers.

The procession was led by a file of mounted policemen and carriages containing the Citizen's Reception Committee, which had gone to New York to meet the Troop. Following them came the Third Regiment Band and the Second City Troop. Last of all came the veterans in their Khaiki uniforms, and cheer after cheer went up everywhere as they came into view, mingled with enthusiastic shouts of "Here comes the Rough Riders!"

Up Broad Street, through an endless multitude, the procession moved, through brilliant displays of fireworks and past brightly illuminated residences. On Chestnut Street the scene was repeated with the added effect of booming cannon from the roof of the Union Republican Club. Down Chestnut to Eighth, and up Eighth to Market, and thence to the City Hall, the Troop passed, and when Horticultural Hall was reached the riders had the satisfaction of knowing that they had participated in the greatest parade ever given by the Troop in its century and a quarter of existence.

[104]

As the Troop drew up in front of the hall, amid wild cheering, the men dismounted and turned the horses over to the mounted police. The men then filed into the banquet room between lines of the Battery A men, who stood at "Present arms." While standing at their designated seats Mayor Warwick addressed the Troopers as follows:

"Welcome home! We are here to-night to greet you with all our hearts. God bless you, and God keep you. The Republic is proud of you, and the city thrown open to you."

While the cavalymen were eating, their relations and friends crowded in upon them. There was much laughing and much hand-shaking. The men had all been granted a sixty-day furlough, and they took their time about punishing the good things, leaving the hall at a late hour in groups of two's and three's—home at last.

Within a short time after their return, and before their muster-out, the Troopers participated in a number of interesting events. Several receptions and dinners were given in their honor by individuals and clubs, and the one hundred and twenty-fourth anniversary of the Troop's organization was celebrated. The cavalymen took a leading part in the military parade, on the second day of the Jubilee Celebration, October 27th. President McKinley reviewed the parade, and as the tradition of the Troop required that its members should act as the President's escort while in the city, the following Honorary members of the Troop were appointed to act in that capacity: Captain General E. Burd Grubb, Captain Joseph Lapsley Wilson, Captain Edmund H. McCullough, First Lieutenant James Rawle, Second Lieutenant Major J. Edward Carpenter, Second Lieutenant Frank E. Patterson, Second Lieutenant Edward K. Bispham, Cornet Charles E. Kelly, Cornet Richard Tilghman, Surgeon J. William White, Surgeon John B. Shober, Surgeon Charles H. Frazier, Quartermaster Hugh Craig, Jr.

[105]

All of these occurrences were joyous occasions, but one day in October the Troopers were called upon to perform a duty which saddened every heart. On that day, for the first time since the outbreak of hostilities, there was a voice missing at roll call which would never respond again. Stuart Wheeler had fallen a victim to typhoid fever, contracted while in Puerto Rico, and to the grave of this lost comrade the Troopers marched in silent sorrow to pay the last military respects.

[106]

Mr. Wheeler had seemed in good health upon his arrival in the United States after the campaign, and, with several friends, had gone upon a hunting trip in the Maine woods. There the fever seized him, and he died a few days after his removal to a Boston hospital.

Of the departed young hero, the Troopers will ever speak with affection and praise. In college he was an unusually earnest student, on the athletic fields he won laurels that will long remain green, at home he was a loving son and brother, with the Troop he showed the mettle of a gallant

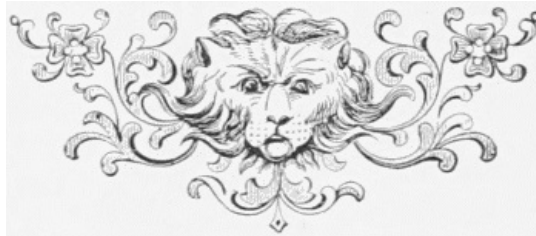
soldier. He died for his country—as surely as though his body had been found on a Puerto Rican battlefield, pierced with a Spanish bullet.

At noon on the eleventh day of November, the City Troopers gathered at their armory to bid farewell to the United States Volunteer service. Their sixty-day furlough had expired, and while there was not one who would have hesitated to re-enlist should need arise, it is safe to say that none were sorry that the moment for ending their terms as warriors had arrived. Six men were unable to be present because of sickness. [107]

Lieutenant B. F. Hughes, of the Tenth U. S. Cavalry, was on hand to muster-out the men, all of whom were first obliged to report to Doctors Spelissy and Brinton for physical examinations.

For a week preceding Captain Groome had made every preparation calculated to expedite the work, and before the men were drawn up for roll call, all the muster-out rolls, the descriptive lists and discharge papers had been prepared for the mustering officer. Even the computations of pay for each man had been figured out. As soon as each Trooper had received his physical examination he was dismissed until the following Monday. On the morning of that day discharge papers and pay were ready for all the Troopers, and so far as they were concerned the war was over.

It was not until twenty days later that the Spanish Commissioners, in Paris, agreed to accept the American terms, and surrendered to the United States 240,110 square miles of territory, with a population estimated at 9,500,000. A treaty of peace between the nations was then prepared. Practically, however, peace had existed since that day in August when but a few minutes separated the City Troopers' *bivouac*, in a field of flowers, from a charge which would have made desolate hundreds of homes. [108]



Transcriber's Notes:

Typographical errors silently corrected except those listed below. Spelling has been made consistent throughout where the author's preference could be ascertained.

Page 16 "less than three hours consumed, in the Troopers case," added apostrophe "in the Troopers' case".

Page 43 "from the headquarters mules would come an answering bray," added apostrophe "headquarter's mules."

Page 43 "these sounds appealed to the Troopers sense of humor" added apostrophe "Troopers' sense".

Page 61 "dodging under horses heads" added apostrophe "horses' heads".

Page 68 "with their horses bridles over their arms" added apostrophe "horses' bridles".

Page 68 "indicating the mens heighth and breadth" changed to "men's height".

Page 101 "brothers shook each others hands" added apostrophe "each others' hands".

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