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Gathering at the Golden Gate: Mobilizing for War in the Philippines, 1898

Stephen D. Coats

Department of Joint and Multinational Operations
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College



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Foreword

As the US Army shifts from being a forward-deployed force to a continental United States (CONUS)-based force, it must concurrently develop new plans and methods for rapidly deploying large numbers of units to contingency areas outside CONUS. Historically, the US Army has often been challenged in trying to rapidly deploy large forces from CONUS to the theater of operations. One need only review the Army's deployments to Cuba in 1898, to France in 1917, to Saudi Arabia in 1990, or most recently to Afghanistan and Iraq since 11 September 2001 and the enormous complexities associated with such operations to see that the Army has not always met its, and the nation's, expectations.

Dr. Stephen D. Coats's study of the Army's efforts to assemble a contingency force at San Francisco for deployment to the Philippines in 1898 is an example of how the Army got it mostly right. One could argue that 1898 was a much simpler time and that the complexity associated with deploying ground forces has grown dramatically since then, and that would be correct. However, the Army of 1898 was not professionally trained to deploy and fight wars overseas. Additionally, the force that assembled at San Francisco was not a professional army. It was largely a volunteer force led by a few Regular Army generals and managed by a handful of Regular Army staff officers, none of whom had any appreciable experience in deployment operations. Yet they succeeded.

As in all facets of military art, there are timeless principles that, if applied correctly, will go a long way toward helping planners achieve success. A careful reading of Dr. Coats's work will illuminate many of those principles. We and the author hope that those principles will increase the likelihood of successful Army deployments in the future. *The Past is Prologue!*

Timothy R. Reese
Colonel, Armor
Director, Combat Studies Institute

Preface

“The Manila expedition was very thoroughly organized. It was a distance of over 7000 miles from our base, and I think that very few mistakes, if any, were made.”

Major General Francis V. Greene, USV

7 October 1898

Testimony before the Dodge Commission*

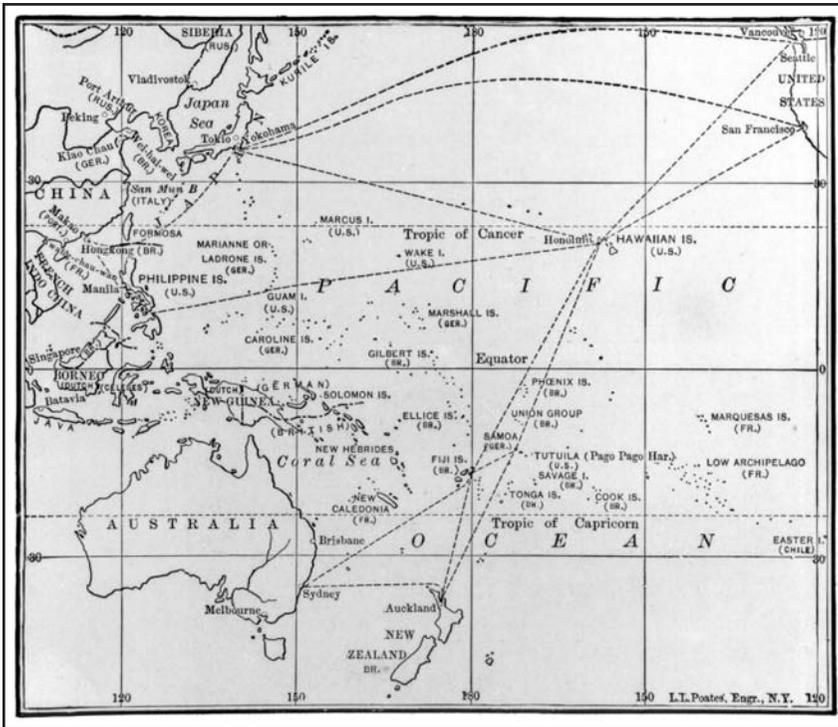


Figure 1. The New Pacific.

Today, as the US military prepares units for conflicts abroad and deploys forces overseas, it is instructive to examine how the Army coped with similar challenges in the late 19th century. This study analyzes efforts during the Spanish-American War to mobilize expeditions in San Francisco for the Army’s first major overseas deployment: destination, the Philippines. Not since the Mexican War, fought a half-century earlier, had the American military attempted to prepare a large force to move to a foreign land. No prewar plans existed to provide a blueprint for this endeavor in 1898. To compound deployment challenges on the West Coast, the Army had already moved most of its Regular organizations

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and logistics support to Southern assembly areas oriented on objectives in the Caribbean.

President William McKinley assigned two general officers, Wesley Merritt and Elwell S. Otis, to quarter, organize, train, and equip designated forces in San Francisco, the port of embarkation. Drawing on available, but limited, logistics resources from military organizations in the area, Merritt's command received thousands of Regulars and Volunteers who poured into the Golden Gate region for duty overseas. Units initially camped on military reservations but eventually spilled over into several locations in the city.

Given the paucity of medical and morale support available to the troops through the military, the San Francisco community rallied behind local relief societies and religious organizations on behalf of the expeditionary forces. Citizens donated money, food, goods, and services through the Red Cross, Young Men's Christian Association, and Catholic Truth Society. Each organization established shelters in the encampments to better assist those in uniform.

This study finds that to mobilize effectively, the Army depended on fundamentals then that are still prized to this day: leadership, initiative, and resourcefulness. It also reveals the vital role that private volunteer organizations and the civilian community played in supporting the military forces assembling at the Golden Gate. Together the American Army and San Francisco community succeeded in sustaining and deploying expeditionary forces that fought the battle of Manila in August 1898.

*Observations of Major General Francis V. Greene, USV, to the Commission Appointed by the President to Investigate the Conduct of the War With Spain, 7 October 1898, in US War Department, *Report of the Commission Appointed by the President to Investigate the Conduct of the War Department in the War With Spain*, volume 3, *Testimony* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1900), 112.

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Chapter I Introduction

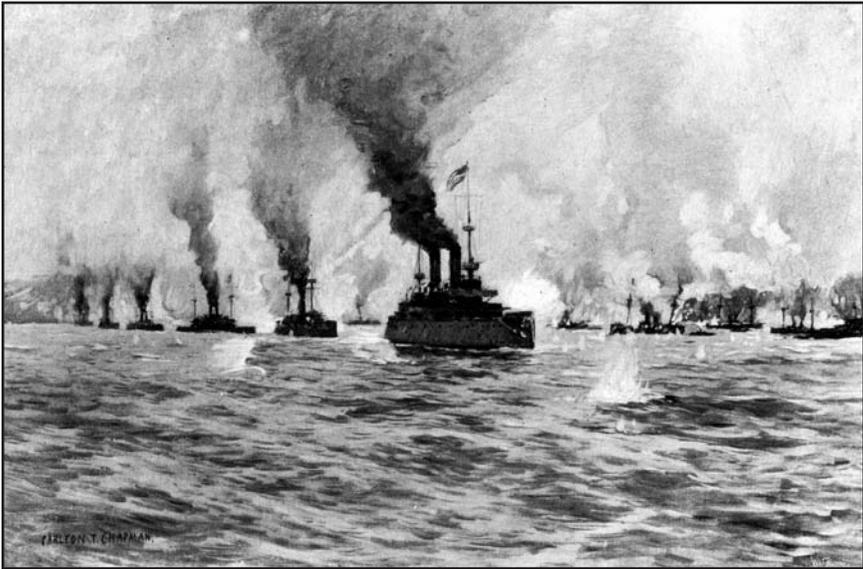
On 30 April 1898, Commodore George Dewey's Asiatic Squadron approached Manila Bay under cover of darkness. Steaming with "all lights masked and gun crews at the guns," Dewey's six warships slipped past Spanish shore batteries that guarded the bay's entrance. Aboard his flagship *Olympia*, the commodore ordered his small fleet to reduce speed. Dewey later wrote, "I did not wish to reach our destination before we had sufficient daylight to show us the position of the Spanish ships."¹

Just after dawn on 1 May, the Asiatic Squadron spotted its objective. Vessels of Admiral Patricio Montojo's Spanish flotilla formed "an irregular crescent in front of Cavite." Led by the *Olympia*, Dewey's squadron eluded the shelling from Spanish gunners and bore down on Montojo's seven warships. At 0540, sailors manning *Olympia's* forward turret opened fire, and the Asiatic Squadron began the first of five passes against Montojo's command. By late afternoon, the opening engagement of the Spanish-American War had ended with a decisive victory for the United States. Dewey could write, "The order to capture or destroy the Spanish squadron had been executed to the letter. Not one of its fighting-vessels remained afloat."²



Figure 2.

Dewey's attack was the first engagement of a war, some three years in the making, between the United States and Spain. In February 1895, during President Grover Cleveland's second administration, Cuban rebels began a new quest for independence from Spanish rule. Rebel leaders implemented scorched-earth tactics designed to weaken Spain's resolve to maintain control over the island and its economy. Additionally, Cuban strategists worked to gain American support for their revolution. They knew the war would have some secondary impact on the United States' economy. More important, the rebels believed they could foster the growth of American moral outrage over the ongoing subjugation of Cuba to Spanish colonial rule. The revolutionaries established a junta in New



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Figure 3. The battle of Manila Bay.

York City to energize US public opinion against Spain and its efforts to retain control over Cuba.³

Spain's policies toward its Caribbean colony played into the hands of revolutionaries and provided Americans with a reason to focus on the Cuban revolt. Not long after assuming command of Spanish forces in Cuba on 10 February 1896, General Valeriano Weyler y Nicolau instituted his "reconcentration" military policy. The strategy, designed to separate revolutionaries from potential bases of support, moved a half million people from their homes and villages to resettlement camps. Abysmal living conditions at these locations led to the deaths of at least 100,000 Cubans and the suffering of hundreds of thousands more.⁴

The Cleveland administration pressured Spain diplomatically to alter its policy toward the island. At times, Spain seemed willing to make concessions politically and militarily, but the government never suggested that independence was in Cuba's future. William McKinley, who assumed the American presidency in 1897, renewed diplomatic efforts to redefine the relationship between Spain and its colony. By the end of the year, a new Spanish government appeared open to reexamining its Cuban policy and solicited US help in supporting its efforts. Tensions lessened between the United States and Spain.⁵

Hopes for diplomatic solutions to the issues that focused on Cuba changed dramatically in early 1898. On 9 February, the *New York Journal*

published a private letter from Enrique Dupuy de Lôme, Spanish minister to the United States, who described McKinley as “weak” and a “would-be politician.” The tone of the correspondence called into question Spain’s sincerity in restructuring its Cuban policy. Then on 15 February, the USS *Maine*, an American battleship sent to Cuba as a sign of US interest in the island, exploded and sank in Havana harbor. Hundreds of sailors were killed. Some in the United States suspected that Spain was behind the tragedy.⁶

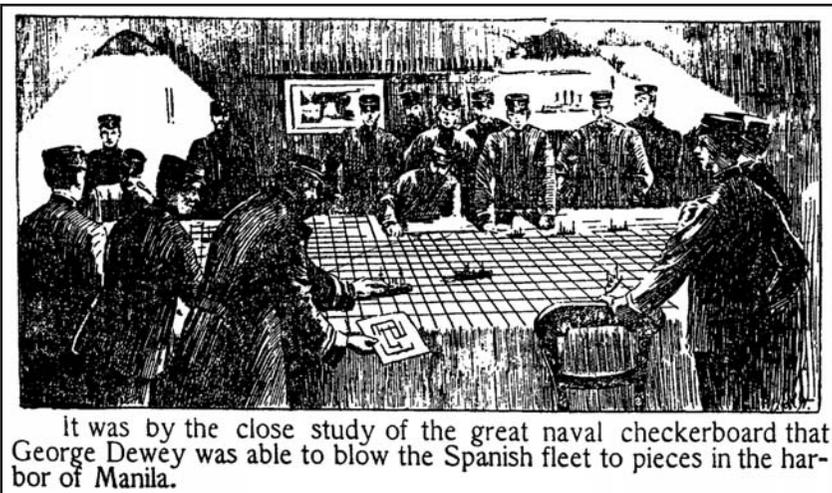
About a month after the *Maine* was destroyed, Senator Redfield Proctor, a friend of the president, reported to colleagues on a fact-finding trip he had made to Cuba. Proctor graphically described the Spanish concentration camps that caused so much suffering among the island’s indigenous population. The senator, who was not originally disposed to war, certainly made a case for intervention as he offered passionate descriptions of the abysmal living conditions he observed. On 21 March, four days after Proctor’s oration, an American court of inquiry the president appointed to investigate the *Maine* disaster reported its findings. The board “concluded that an external mine of unknown origins had destroyed the vessel.” Many Americans believed the board’s findings confirmed their suspicion that Spain was to blame for the loss of 266 US naval personnel.⁷

Moved to pursue belligerent diplomacy, the McKinley administration cabled several demands to Madrid on 27 March: an armistice to end hostilities between Spanish troops and Cuban rebels who wanted independence from Spain, Cuban-Spanish negotiations to secure peace, termination of the “reconcentration” policy, and relief aid to the Cubans. On 9 April, Spain offered some concessions but did not address all of the American requirements. Two days later, McKinley, still hoping to avoid war, asked Congress for authority to intervene in the Cuban-Spanish conflict “to stop the misery and death, protect American lives and property in Cuba, curtail the damage to commerce, and end the onerous task of enforcing neutrality.”⁸

McKinley’s request prompted a surge of decisions and actions on both sides of the Atlantic. On Friday, 15 April, the War Department ordered Regular Army infantry, artillery, and cavalry to four Southern assembly areas oriented on the Caribbean.⁹ Military depots across the United States moved ordnance and equipment to the same four locations. The following Tuesday, Congress responded to McKinley’s 11 April petition with a joint resolution that exceeded the president’s requests. Both houses called for Cuba’s independence, Spain’s immediate withdrawal from the island, and if necessary, the use of armed force to attain these goals. The Spanish

government reacted by breaking diplomatic relations on 21 April. The day before Spain declared war on the United States on 23 April, American warships initiated a blockade of Cuba, an action recommended during prewar naval planning.¹⁰ On 24 April, President McKinley approved another option in those plans. Through the Secretary of the Navy, the president ordered Commodore Dewey into his attack.¹¹ Twenty-four hours later, Congress passed a formal declaration of war on Spain retroactive to 21 April.

The blockade of Cuba, attack at Manila Bay, and assembly of Army forces in the South corresponded to prewar planning measures articulated by both services. In that capacity, the Navy had taken the lead in preparing for conflict. Dewey's strike was conceived years earlier through evolving naval contingency plans that assumed a war with Spain. First developed in training exercises during 1894 at the Naval War College, students designed these strategies to achieve American supremacy at sea. Subsequent planning revisions called for US Navy squadrons to destroy enemy fleets and merchant vessels "and perhaps bombard or blockade Spanish cities and colonies," wrote historians Allen R. Millett and Peter Maslowski.¹² Between 1896 and 1897, advanced plans outlined several sea operations designed to wrestle Cuba from Spanish rule. One secondary naval effort would secure Spain's Philippine capital, Manila, and gain control over commerce with the archipelago. Naval planners envisioned Manila as a bargaining chip to end the war. According to their hypothesis, once the United States freed Cuba, Spain would be more likely to end hostilities if the Americans agreed to depart Manila Bay.¹³



The Examiner, 5 June 1898

Figure 4. Naval games at Newport, RI.

The Navy had created these plans in a political vacuum. Writing 73

years after Dewey's victory, historian Graham Cosmas observed that the services readied for war without political guidance from President McKinley. No one in the War or Navy Departments knew of the president's ultimate goals in a conflict with Spain. Cosmas captured the dilemma of the armed services: "They were to prepare for war, but for what kind of war and for what political objective?"¹⁴

Devoid of input from the president, planners created their own assumptions. One key premise that both the Navy and Army embraced was that major territorial acquisitions would not be an objective. A war with Spain would be "mainly a naval conflict with little Army activity." The president seemed to accept this supposition when, after Congress dedicated \$50 million on 9 March 1898 for national defense, McKinley channeled \$29 million to the Navy without giving it guidance on how to spend it.¹⁵

Army planners, who to that point had little to show for a possible war with Spain, took \$19 million apportioned to their service from the 9 March law and poured much of it into coast defense.¹⁶ They also did not ignore the possibility that land forces could be assigned an expeditionary mission in conjunction with naval operations. Should Spain need additional incentive to sue for peace after American warships struck in the Caribbean, the Army intended to send contingents led by its Regular force to secure a Cuban beachhead and attack targets in the region.¹⁷ As Regulars would be pulled from their posts in the United States to constitute the core of ventures into Spanish colonies, National Guardsmen could man the nation's coast defense works. Calling for methodical manpower mobilization that would gradually increase the Regular Army from 28,000 to 104,000, the War Department found a congressional sponsor in Representative John A.T. Hull. The Iowa Republican introduced a bill for an "expandable Army" to the Congress on 17 March 1898.¹⁸

Influenced in part by inland National Guard advocates who bitterly opposed the Hull Bill, Congress had shelved the War Department's plan to create an "expandable" Regular Army for combat operations against Spain.¹⁹ In lieu of that proposal, a 22 April law, forged out of a compromise between the War Department and National Guard leaders, established an Army of the United States composed of two branches: the Regular Army and Volunteer Army.²⁰ Unlike the Hull Bill, which looked to increase the Regular contingent, the new law created a separate force dominated by state Volunteers who had served in the National Guard.²¹

Empowered by the act of 22 April, the president made two decisions that surprised the Army. First, one day after Congress gave him the authority, McKinley moved to expand the size of the Army. That initiative was

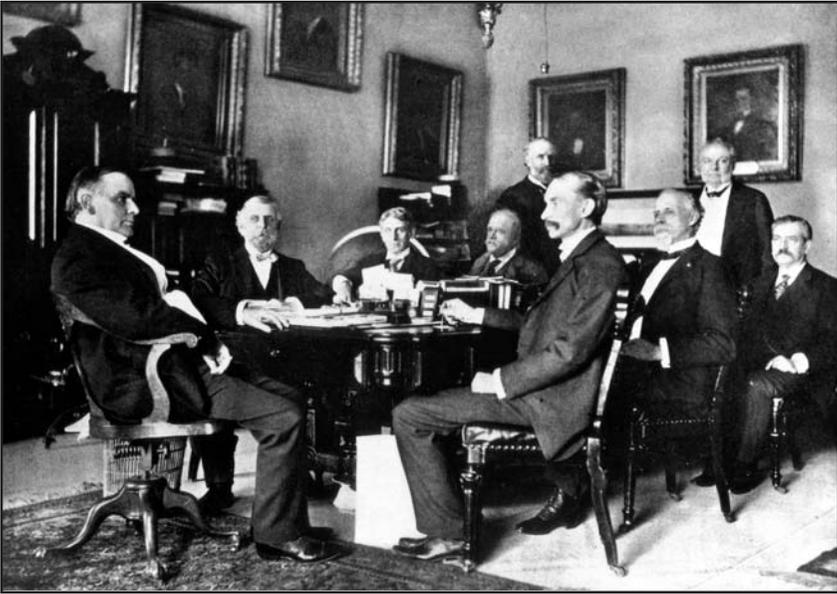
expected; however, War Department officials were flabbergasted to learn that McKinley asked for 125,000 men. Politically, the call was a stroke of brilliance. Estimates placed National Guard enlisted strength at approximately that figure.²² Essentially, the call would allow all guardsmen a chance to volunteer. State governors would not have to turn away those who wished to participate. Militarily, a call that size caught the Army unprepared. The War Department originally planned a systematic enlistment of 75,000 men for its Regular Army. On 23 April, the Army was directed to accept that number plus 50,000 more as quickly as National Guardsmen could be mustered for federal service.

As the Army arranged to deal with a massive influx of personnel, the president made a second decision that the War Department had not anticipated. In early May, McKinley decided to send Army forces to San Francisco where they would prepare for missions in the Philippines.²³ Lacking political guidance to the contrary, military officers who developed prewar plans had not envisioned the dispatch of Army expeditions against Spain's Pacific holdings. McKinley gave this course of action little to no consideration before Dewey's naval victory at Manila Bay. After all, virtually all of the Regular Army had oriented on the Caribbean, having been ordered to points in Georgia, Louisiana, Alabama, and Florida on 15 April. Those units unaffected by the directive to proceed to Southern assembly areas had remained at inland posts or garrisoned coast defenses.

As the Army positioned for an expedition to Cuba, McKinley pondered the extent to which the United States should gain control of the Philippines. Dewey's victory had opened the door to that line of thinking. However, nearly 20,000 Spanish troops, based predominately in the environs of Manila, threatened to deny American influence beyond the bay. The president therefore ordered an Army contingent to exploit Dewey's success. Still not fully cognizant of the objective he wished to pursue in the islands, McKinley nevertheless intended to establish an American presence around Manila.²⁴

Beginning in May 1898, Merritt's Department of the Pacific deployed Regular and Volunteer forces to Luzon. Between May and August 1898, the Army converted from a frontier constabulary that picketed the Great Plains of North America to an expeditionary force stationed 7,000 miles west of San Francisco. By the end of August, American troops defeated the Spanish garrison at Manila and awaited McKinley's decision on the fate of the Philippines.

This study examines how the US Army mobilized expeditions for de-



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Figure 5. President McKinley and the War Cabinet.

ployment to the archipelago. Much of Chapter II explores several questions related to mobilizing forces for the mission abroad. Specific questions are Why did the president designate San Francisco as the port of embarkation for the Philippine expeditions? What considerations influenced the War Department's process for specifying which units, Regular and Volunteer, would be sent to San Francisco? How did states gather and prepare their Volunteer organizations for federal duty? How did the Army transport regiments to the West Coast, and what did troops encounter on their way to California?

Chapters III and IV analyze the military experience by the Golden Gate. How did the military in the region receive the troops? What regard did San Francisco citizens have for the military, and how did they assist soldiers upon their arrival? Where and why were units quartered at several municipal locations? Who led within the Department of the Pacific, and how was command and control exercised? What did the troops experience in terms of drill, discipline, exercise, and diversion? How well did the Army sustain its organizations logistically and medically?

Chapters V and VI examine how the Golden Gate community supported Regulars and Volunteers during their stay in San Francisco. What relief societies and religious organizations emerged to care for the troops? Who led these groups, and what were their ties to the community? Who

contributed resource support in the form of money, goods, and services? What formal and informal connections were established between civilians and soldiers to support the military encamped about the city?

Chapter VII studies preparations for deploying units to the Philippines. How was oceanic transportation secured? What factors determined which units were selected to sail before others? As expeditions organized to move abroad, what impact did departing units have on the encampments in San Francisco? Why did the camps and commands undergo restructuring?

This study of the military's earliest preparations for missions overseas has relevance for those who seek to understand the challenges that faced America's armed forces of a bygone era. Today's service personnel routinely face deployments over vast distances, commitment to hostile environments, murky political objectives, and military operations short of war. Learning how earlier generations mobilized to meet deployment requirements for duty overseas without the benefit of recent experience and planning systems should prove enlightening to those of a subsequent age.

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9. H.C. Corbin to Commanding General, Department East, 15 April 1898, in US War Department, *Correspondence Relating to the War With Spain and Conditions Growing Out of the Same, Including the Insurrection in the Philippine Islands and the China Relief Expedition, Between the Adjutant-General of the Army and Military Commander in the United States, Cuba, Porto Rico, China, and the Philippine Islands, From April 15, 1898 to July 30, 1902*, Volume I (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office [GPO], 1902), hereafter cited as *Correspondence I*, 7.
10. Hendrickson, 20-23; Millett and Maslowski, 268-69; Paterson, et al., 17; Trask, 70-78.
11. *Ibid.*, 92.
12. Millett and Maslowski, 270.
13. Trask, 75; Ronald Spector, *Admiral of the New Empire: The Life and Career of George Dewey* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974), 32-35.
14. Graham A. Cosmas, *An Army for Empire: The United States Army in the Spanish-American War* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1971) 74-75.
15. Trask, 78, 82; Cosmas, 73, 75, 83; Millett and Maslowski, 270-71.
16. Cosmas, 83; Millett and Maslowski, 271.
17. *Ibid.*, 271-72.
18. Cosmas, 89-93.
19. Millett and Maslowski, 272; Cosmas, 93-102.
20. US War Department, *Annual Reports of the War Department for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1898. Report of the Major-General Commanding the Army*. Annual report of the adjutant general to the major general commanding the Army (Washington, DC: GPO, 1898), 485; Trask, 151; Cosmas, 100-102.
21. Trask, 151-52.

22. Millett and Maslowski, p. 273; Trask, p. 152; Cosmas, p. 109.

23. W. McK. to the Secretary of War, 4 May 1898, in US War Department, *Correspondence Relating to the War with Spain and Conditions Growing Out of the Same, Including the Insurrection in the Philippine Islands and the China Relief Expedition, Between the Adjutant-General of the Army and Military Commander in the United States, Cuba, Porto Rico, China, and the Philippine Islands, From April 15, 1898, to July 30, 1902*, Volume II (Washington, DC: GPO, 1902), hereafter cited as *Correspondence II*), 635; Nelson A. Miles to the Honorable, the Secretary of War, 3 May 1898, in *Correspondence II*, 635.

24. Cosmas, 119-21.

Chapter II Assembly

When President William McKinley decided to send US Army forces to Manila, senior political and military officials had to make several critical decisions. Specifically, the War Department needed to settle on the size and composition of the Philippine expedition. Secretary of War Russell A. Alger and ranking general officers collaborated to determine what Regular and Volunteer organizations should be assigned to the Pacific Command. State governors worked to meet their manpower quotas. Where troops assembled to fulfill overseas missions and how they reached their West Coast destination were two other issues that political and military officials had to resolve.

Creating the Force

Between May and August 1898, Philippine expeditionary forces, designated the VIII Corps on 21 June, consisted of troops from the Regular and Volunteer Armies. At the outset of discussions on task organization, the consensus among military officials was that Regular units would form the nucleus of US expeditions for Manila. In terms of their numbers, however, state Volunteer organizations would dominate most of the overseas contingents. Even the numbers of Volunteers would greatly surpass those of active duty troops. Deployed within multiple expeditions, Volunteers would constitute at least 75 percent of the force in the Philippines before the United States and Spain agreed to a peace protocol in August 1898.¹

First to advocate the approximate force ratio of nearly four Volunteers to one Regular was Major General (MG) Nelson A. Miles, Commanding General of the Army. On 3 May 1898, two days after Dewey's stunning victory, Miles recommended that the United States deploy three state Volunteer infantry regiments and two batteries of heavy artillery to the Philippines, accompanied by



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Figure 6. MG Nelson A. Miles, USA.

a smaller Regular contingent of two infantry battalions and two cavalry troops.² Miles' proposal nicely complemented Dewey's appeal for 5,000 troops, a request received in Washington on 13 May.³

By that date new considerations called into question the troop numbers Dewey proposed and the force-mix that Miles suggested. The president had named MG Wesley Merritt to command the Philippine expeditionary force.⁴ After conferring with the president about his new assignment, Merritt offered his own appraisal to McKinley on 13 May. The general argued for an Army expedition to Manila nearly three times the size that Dewey requested.⁵ The number of Spanish troops in the archipelago, estimated to be as many as 25,000; the recommended ratio of Regulars to Volunteers; and McKinley's growing interest in the Philippines influenced Merritt's assessment.⁶ The War Department, too, was preparing for a larger presence in the islands. On 13 May, the Adjutant General, Brigadier General (BG) Henry C. Corbin notified MG Henry C. Merriam—commander, Department of California and in whose jurisdiction the force would assemble—that “it is now thought that it [the expedition] will probably consist of about 12,000 men, or one army corps.”⁷

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Figure 7. MG Wesley Merritt, USA.

assistance. Merritt concluded that this self-sufficiency could be achieved only if a skilled, professional force composed of Regulars formed the expedition's core.⁸

In correspondence dated 16 May, three days after Merritt expressed these views, MG Miles presented a new proposal to the Secretary of War,

In his 13 May correspondence to the president, Merritt also expressed little confidence in the proficiency of the Volunteer force originally suggested for duty in the Philippines. He urged that the expedition consist of a much larger Regular contingent, some 44 percent of the total number, including four active duty infantry regiments. He argued that states could provide a large reserve force oriented on the Caribbean where, by virtue of proximity, objectives would be much more easily supported. Conversely, the force deploying to the Philippines, so distant from its base of operations in the United States, must be capable of handling challenges without

one that substantially revised the recommendations he had made two weeks earlier. Miles agreed that the expeditionary force should be larger than he originally anticipated to maintain “our possession and our flag on the Philippine Islands, and at the same time relieve our navy as speedily as possible.” Addressing the Secretary of War, Miles calculated that, in the main, two Regular infantry regiments; two Regular cavalry squadrons; three Regular artillery batteries; and nearly 13,000 Volunteers should comprise the force.⁹ Essentially, he increased the force size but maintained the ratio of Volunteers to Regulars.

When apprised of Miles’ recommendation, Merritt considered the proposal unacceptable. On 17 May, Merritt responded, noting that the Regular force Miles had advocated was “a very small proportion of the 42 regular regiments in the Army.” As the core of the expedition, such a force would be insufficient to accomplish the tasks of “conquering territory 7000 miles from our base, defended by a regularly trained and acclimated army of from 10,000 to 25,000 men, and inhabited by 14,000,000 of people, the majority of whom will regard us with intense hatred born of race and religion.”¹⁰

In the end, Miles prevailed. He pointed out that, in his view, Merritt’s assessment suffered from two shortcomings. First, Miles believed that Merritt overestimated the number of Spanish soldiers and Filipinos in the archipelago. Second, and more important, Miles felt that Merritt had misconstrued the mission. Miles wrote that “the force ordered at this time is not expected to carry on a war to conquer an extensive territory.” Miles viewed the expedition’s task as one of “establishing a strong garrison to command the harbor of Manila, and to relieve the United States fleet under Admiral Dewey with the least possible delay.”¹¹

Merritt lost his battle with Miles and the War Department but had little time to grumble. The challenge of assigning, preparing, and moving Army units to a port of embarkation demanded Merritt’s and other military officers’ attention and energy. Additionally, political officials and Army leaders sought to influence the process of shaping the expeditionary force to the Philippines.

Assigning Regular Units

Despite their disagreement over the ratio between active duty troops and state Volunteers, both of the Army’s senior generals were of like minds on one issue: Regulars should constitute the nucleus of the force deploying to the archipelago. The War Department faced a tremendous challenge, however, when deciding which units should be allocated for Pacific missions.

Reaching that decision would not be easy. A month before the commencement of hostilities with Spain, the War Department exercised administration through eight geographical military departments.¹² On 15 April, BG Corbin telegraphed orders to department commanders preparing the Regular Army for war against Spain.¹³ In the name of the commanding general, Corbin ordered an impressive array of units from the US Army's artillery, cavalry, and infantry regiments to several national assembly stations in the South.¹⁴



History of Military Mobilization in the US Army, 1775-1945

Figure 8.

Essentially, Corbin had stripped seven territorial commands of their combat organizations and had poised them for attacks into the Caribbean. The beneficiary of this directive, the Department of the Gulf—the eighth territorial command—prepared to receive 23 of the Army's 25 infantry regiments, six of 10 cavalry regiments, and the light batteries from all five artillery regiments (two more artillery regiments were organizing to bring the total to seven). Coast defense obligations and constabulary duty responsibilities pursued in other territorial departments simply precluded the Army from reassigning all infantry, cavalry, and artillery units.

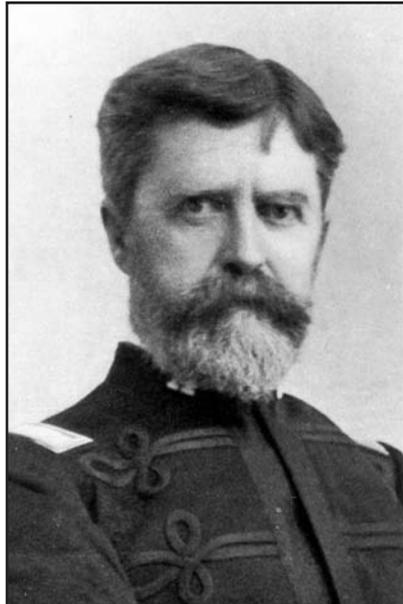
The president's decision to dispatch troops to the Philippines required the War Department to reexamine its manpower allocations. Senior Army officials considered their options and elected to retain Regular forces at locations already oriented on possible deployments into the Gulf; they

would not be repositioned from Southern assembly areas to West Coast sites. That decision left the War Department with the onerous task of moving Regular units away from coast defense or frontier policing and replacing them with federalized state Volunteers.

On 4 May, President McKinley designated San Francisco as the national assembly station for troops marshaling on the Pacific coast. The city by the Golden Gate at once became the potential port of embarkation for the Philippine expedition.¹⁵ Had this announcement occurred a few weeks earlier, the 1st Infantry Regiment would have been an attractive candidate for any force deploying to the archipelago. Through the first few months of 1898, the regiment had been based at the Presidio of San Francisco performing a variety of missions in the Bay Area. By late April, however, Corbin had sent the regiment to New Orleans, Louisiana, for possible duty in the Caribbean.

Of the Regular infantry regiments subsequently ordered to San Francisco for duty in the Pacific, the War Department initially selected the 14th. Like several other regiments in the decade before the Spanish-American War, the 14th Infantry had been diced into undermanned companies and distributed piecemeal throughout several locations in the West to perform a variety of missions. With their regimental headquarters at Vancouver Barracks in Washington state, several companies took station in northern Idaho during 1892. When mining disputes in that region erupted into violence, members of the regiment served as train guards, protected property, and helped civil authorities make arrests. Between 1893 and 1898, some companies of the regiment protected lands allotted to American Indians near Tacoma and the Indian Territory, and others guarded railroad property in the Northwest during the Pullman and American Railway strike.¹⁶

When the United States went to war with Spain, elements of the 14th Infantry were two months into duty in Alaska. In February 1898, Colonel (COL) Thomas Anderson, the regiment's commander, and four of its companies took station in Alaska to maintain order during the Klondike gold rush. From the regiment's forward headquarters,



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Figure 9. BG Thomas M. Anderson.

COL Anderson also took command of the Lynn Canal District, an area of land that both Great Britain and the United States claimed. Upon his arrival in the territory, Anderson discovered that a Canadian mounted police patrol had established itself in the region, flying a British flag. The colonel ordered the police removed. In March, a British vessel arrived with two companies of armed Canadian Mounted Police. Anderson deployed two companies of the 14th and refused to let the Canadians disembark until they agreed to vacate the disputed land. Anderson's show of force led to the withdrawal of the Canadian police.¹⁷

When MG Miles recommended two battalions from the 14th Regiment as the core infantry force of the first expedition to the Philippines, he must have taken into account their availability and location. Of the 25 infantry regiments that were active in the Army at the beginning of the war, the 14th and 15th were the only organizations not ordered to assembly points in the South on 15 April 1898. Of the two uncommitted regiments, the 14th Infantry was the closest to San Francisco.

By mid-May, however, the War Department was anticipating a requirement for a larger Pacific force and an attendant increase in the numbers of Regular infantry to deploy. Nevertheless, as Merritt acknowledged in a telegram on 17 May, the 14th Infantry would remain only partially available.¹⁸ Troubles in Alaska among miners and between the United States and Britain could not be ignored. Therefore, the War Department ordered two of the 14th Regiment's eight companies to stay at Dyea and Fort Wrangel. Companies B and H remained in Alaska for the duration of the war. Companies A, C, D, E, F, and G received orders for San Francisco where they were reunited with COL Anderson after he had relinquished command of the regiment in early May.¹⁹

On 19 May 1898, President McKinley validated the War Department's inclination toward a beefed-up expeditionary force. The president apprised Alger of his intent "to send an army of occupation to the Philippines for the twofold purpose of completing the reduction of the Spanish power in that quarter and of giving order and security to the islands while in the possession of the United States."²⁰ That same day the War Department reconsidered an earlier decision and began to shift manpower resources away from a Southern assembly area. Corbin informed Merritt that two additional Regular infantry regiments, the 18th and 23d, had been ordered from New Orleans to San Francisco.²¹ To provide troops for McKinley's evolving vision for the Philippines, the War Department demonstrated a willingness to reallocate manpower from the Caribbean and a desire to meet Merritt's request to assemble additional Regular infantry troops at San Francisco.

Despite being assigned the 18th and 23d, Merritt held to a conviction that he was still short one Regular infantry regiment. Apparently he viewed as a requirement, rather than a recommendation, his request for four Regular infantry regiments identified in his 13 May message to the president.²² One of those four regiments he assumed to be the 15th, as had Miles.²³ When informed that the 15th would not be forthcoming, Merritt wrote Corbin that he expected a replacement: “Either the Fourth or the Twentieth would be satisfactory to me, or any other regiment that can better be spared.”²⁴ The War Department did not respond to Merritt’s replacement option.

Merritt was undeterred. The general revisited the size of his Regular infantry contingent when, at the end of May, Secretary Alger decided that McKinley’s goals in the archipelago required a 20,000-man expeditionary force. In notifying Merritt of the decision, Corbin asked the general to “intimate the States from which you would like to have the additional force sent.”²⁵ From San Francisco, Merritt began his telegraphed response: “the additional force should be sent from States having their troops in best order for immediate shipment.” Then he revisited earlier requests for specific Regular units:

“The greatest difficulty to contend with here is want of organization. The addition of the Twentieth and Fifteenth regiments of infantry would be of greatest value.”²⁶ Both regiments, however, were in the midst of commitments to other missions. Corbin had ordered the 20th Infantry to Mobile nearly a month and a half earlier. Merritt knew this, but believing that the War Department had stopped fencing the Caribbean force when it reassigned the 18th and 23d to San Francisco, he forwarded the request.

The status of the 15th Infantry was another matter. It and the 14th Infantry were the



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Figure 10. Adjutant General BG Henry Clark Corbin, USA.

only two infantry regiments not assigned to assembly points in the South a week before the war began.²⁷ Like part of the 14th Infantry, the 15th continued to perform missions closer to home. Corbin's order of 15 April to department commanders included a directive that the 15th dispatch a company "to proceed to Fort Wingate and take station at that post."²⁸ Territorial responsibilities in the Southwest required the 15th to maintain a presence at locations in Arizona and New Mexico.²⁹

Corbin's response to Merritt's request did not address the status of the 20th Infantry. Nor did he suggest anticipating the dispatch of any other Regular infantry regiment then located in Southern assembly areas. Corbin, however, approached the 15th's assignment in different terms. The AG asked Merritt if there was "a regiment of volunteers now on Pacific coast that you think would be willing to take post of Fifteenth Infantry. . . . Secretary of War desires, far as possible, to ascertain whether this is practicable and report accordingly."³⁰

Corbin's proposed solution is illuminating for several reasons. First, in declining to address the 20th Infantry, Corbin tacitly indicated that any further diminution of the Caribbean force's Regular infantry would not be forthcoming in the short term. That resource was now closed to the Philippine expedition. Second, the AG's treatment of the 15th Infantry ostensibly indicated that the War Department would consider assigning another Regular infantry regiment to the Philippine expedition, something Merritt had been pressing to achieve in the past several weeks. While giving a signal that the field commander would have some input into the composition of his command, Corbin also held Merritt responsible for finding a Volunteer unit in lieu of the 15th Infantry.

That solution never developed. On 1 June, Merritt telegraphed Corbin that he had exhausted efforts to find state substitutes for the 15th. The commander wrote, "No regiment will accept this duty voluntarily. I still think it important that one should be ordered for this service."³¹ On the East Coast, War Department officials could not find a solution to their own proposal. Corbin wrote Merritt that an effort to secure a Volunteer regiment for the 15th had met with no success "on this side of the continent."³² He made no reference to ordering any state Volunteer organization to take the 15th Infantry's place. That option was simply politically untenable to McKinley's administration. States were fighting to get their citizen soldiers mustered into the Volunteer Army for duty overseas. Ordering a Manila-bound Volunteer force to remain at home in lieu of a Regular regiment could incur the wrath of voters during an upcoming national election.

The War Department, however, did assign other Regular units to Merritt's command. Although the core of the expeditionary force was composed of Regular infantry units, that nucleus would be augmented with Regular artillery and cavalry organizations. In much the same way that it had decided to pull part of the 14th Infantry from posts in Washington state and Alaska, the War Department took resources from intranational constabulary duties and coast defense, leaving the forces assigned to the Department of the Gulf intact.

Neither leaders within the War Department nor the Philippine expedition ever advocated taking an entire regiment of Regular cavalry troops to the Philippines. Recommendations generally varied between four to eight troops out of a possible 12-troop regiment.³³ As he had done with Regular infantry, Merritt argued for the most cavalry troops. Ultimately, the War Department made Merritt and Merriam responsible for solving this problem, with the caveat that the cavalry troops would come from within Merriam's department commands.³⁴

Consensus as to how much cavalry to deploy was relatively forthcoming. Merriam and Merritt agreed to allocate six troops of cavalry to the Philippine expedition.³⁵ Selecting the regiment that would provide these troops was essentially a foregone conclusion. Like the 14th Infantry Regiment, the 4th Cavalry Regiment had not been assigned to the Department of the Gulf by the diktat of 15 April.³⁶ Headquartered at Fort Walla Walla, Washington, the regiment took up station at various posts near the West Coast before the war.³⁷ Also like the 14th Infantry, some troops from the 4th Cavalry would continue to perform constabulary missions near home stations while others marshaled in San Francisco preparatory to going abroad.³⁸

Merritt also tried to secure a special detachment of troops from another Regular cavalry regiment. In a note to the Secretary of War on 12 May 1898, Merritt requested 100 noncommissioned officers and men from the 8th Cavalry to man a battery of six Hotchkiss mountain guns pledged to his expedition. The general asked for men from this unit because they "had experience in handling and packing this peculiar weapon."³⁹

The commander of the Philippine expeditionary forces got his guns but not his 8th Cavalry men. On 13 May, Corbin instructed MG John R. Brooke, commander, Provisional Army Corps, Chickamauga Park, Georgia, to ship six Hotchkiss guns to Merritt.⁴⁰ Corbin's directive, however, did not reassign cavalymen. When soldiers were not forthcoming, Merritt queried Corbin, stating that the Secretary of War had pledged these

specific troops.⁴¹ On 4 June, the expeditionary commander received some unwanted news. The assistant AG informed Merritt that due “to the reported serious condition of the frontier bordering the Sioux Indian reservations and the trouble between the Apaches and reservation Indians in Indian Territory, it is regarded as absolutely necessary to keep the Eighth Cavalry at their present stations.”⁴² The response from the AG’s office indicated that domestic missions still commanded a priority even when the United States engaged in war outside its borders.

No senior military official suggested deploying a complete Regular artillery regiment to the archipelago. To the contrary, the first proposal MG Miles offered to constitute the Philippine force failed to contain any reference to Regular artillery units.⁴³ Not that the function was ignored; Miles wanted two heavy artillery batteries from the California Volunteers to accompany infantry and cavalry forces sailing for Manila. What Miles’ message did reflect, however, was that light artillery batteries—those most appropriate to deal with conditions in the Philippines—were unavailable. The existing light batteries—the 1st through 5th Artillery Regiments—had been concentrated at Chickamauga Park to prepare for operations in the Caribbean.⁴⁴

In subsequent messages, Miles, Merritt, and War Department officials argued repeatedly over the artillery to be designated for Philippine duty. On 13 May, Merritt requested two Regular field batteries; on 15 May, he amended the request to include an additional siege battery.⁴⁵ Miles was first to recommend specific types of field artillery when on 16 May he advocated one heavy and two light batteries from the newly organized 7th Artillery Regiment.⁴⁶ The War Department subsequently settled on a solution similar to the one involving the cavalry. On 1 June, the Secretary of War ordered MG Merriam, who commanded both the California and Columbia Departments, to provide Merritt with four batteries from the 3d Artillery Regiment.⁴⁷

Three days after communicating the secretary’s decision to Merriam, Corbin offered Merritt an additional light artillery unit just formed, the Astor Battery.⁴⁸ This unique organization “was presented to the United States by Mr. John Jacob Astor, and was manned by the assignment to it of three officers of the Regular Army, and by a complement of men who were enlisted in the Regular service for a period of three years.”⁴⁹ Merritt quickly accepted.⁵⁰

The Astor Battery, authorized at 98 enlisted troops, initially inducted 96 men by 1 June. Captain (CPT) F.A. Whitney, a New York recruiting

officer, estimated that “at least 80 per cent of this Battery is made up of educated men, a great many of them graduates of Colleges and professional men. Some of them wealthy.”⁵¹ Using resources of the Astor estate, Lieutenant Peyton C. March, the battery commander (and later Chief of Staff, US Army, during World War I), purchased Hotchkiss mountain guns and uniforms for his men.⁵² On 11 June, the Secretary of War ordered March and his troops to San Francisco.⁵³ Later in the month, two light batteries from the newly formed 6th Artillery Regiment joined Merritt to complete his complement of artillery forces.⁵⁴ No other Regular artillery unit would be assigned to the VIII Corps before the protocol with Spain.

Assigning the State Volunteer Forces

MG Wesley Merritt never warmed to the reality that Volunteer units, often formed from state National Guard organizations, dominated his command’s force structure. As the expeditionary force evolved, the general tried to increase Regular Army strength in his organization. His effort in that regard intensified when, on 13 May, he learned the War Department had tapped the American Northwest for state Volunteers. Merritt believed those mustered from this region were “not as well drilled or disciplined as those from any State in the East or interior.”⁵⁵

The general likely formed these impressions from personal experiences. As the former commander, 5th Cavalry, and later, commander, Department of Dakota, Merritt observed militia actions in the trans-Mississippi West. He was not impressed with the National Guard’s lackluster attempts to quell violence growing out of labor disputes in 1877 and the 1890s. Some militiamen and their units refused to serve; others joined strikers and contributed to the chaos.⁵⁶

Regulars, including Merritt, had also witnessed the National Guard increase its political clout. The National Guard Association emerged in the late 19th century to lobby Congress successfully for more federal support. The Guard had also worked to kill the Hull Bill in Congress on the eve of the war with Spain. Some active duty officers viewed the Guard’s growing influence as a challenge to the Army’s status as the nation’s primary military force.⁵⁷ Friction between the Regulars and militia or National Guard—a tension that could be traced to the Revolutionary era—had only seemed to escalate in the last quarter of the 19th century.⁵⁸

Merritt’s low opinion of Guard organizations in general, however, did not apply to all state units in particular. His recollection of the northwestern Guard contrasted sharply with his image of East Coast organizations. Pennsylvania and New York maintained two of the strongest militia programs

in America.⁵⁹ The War Department organized military activities of both states in the Department of the East, a command Merritt held from April 1897 to May 1898. The general was obligated to be familiar with National Guard proficiency in his territory. As a department commander, Merritt “was responsible for training militia and volunteer forces called into federal service.”⁶⁰

With Merritt’s preferences in mind, several explanations account for why a state Volunteer unit received orders to report to San Francisco instead of a federal camp in the South or East. Geography influenced this consideration, particularly during May 1898 in the haste to assemble troops for Pacific duty. Merritt’s misgivings notwithstanding, the closer the state was to the western port of embarkation, the more likely that its units would head for that destination. Hence, Volunteers from California, Oregon, and Washington were among the first to be assigned for duty in San Francisco. In a recommendation to the Secretary of War, MG Miles suggested that an infantry battalion from Idaho and a cavalry troop from Nevada be added to the force list as well.⁶¹ Again, proximity to the West Coast may have been a factor in making these suggestions.

Evolving national interests and military concerns combined with geographic considerations to summon additional Volunteer units as the month wore on. By the middle of May, Dewey had issued his formal request for land forces, and President McKinley’s intent to establish a presence in the archipelago had begun to solidify.⁶² Miles, Merritt, and the War Department had already articulated their respective arguments, all of which advocated assembling a larger force to send to the Philippines.

Cobbling together additional units meant tapping into extra manpower, and War Department officials looked to the nation’s interior for resources. In a memorandum dated 16 May, the Secretary of War assigned more Volunteer organizations to San Francisco. These units came from states deep within the trans-Mississippi West, including Kansas, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Utah, Wyoming, North Dakota, and South Dakota.⁶³ All newly assigned organizations were infantry except those from Utah. That state was directed to provide the first light artillery batteries to the force gathering at the Golden Gate. Merritt needed artillery, especially light artillery, and those kinds of state Volunteer units were at a premium.

Of the states that eventually sent Volunteers to the Bay Area, all but three were located west of the Mississippi River. Geography, evolving national interests, and military needs necessitated gathering units from west-

ern states. Other factors, however, contributed to assigning forces from states east of the Mississippi.

Political influence assisted in bringing the first East Coast Volunteer unit to San Francisco. Merritt added a Pennsylvania regiment to his command because the general's need for additional troops coincided with a US congressman's personal request. On 17 May, the 10th Pennsylvania received instructions to proceed to Chickamauga Park to be integrated into the invasion force bound for Cuba.⁶⁴ That same day, Pennsylvania Congressman J.B. Showalter, US House of Representatives, sent a message to Secretary Alger. Showalter urged, "Should you decide to send any Eastern troops to Manila, I would respectfully request that the Tenth Pennsylvania Volunteers be taken. They are anxious to go." The following day, the Army's AG changed the unit's destination to San Francisco.⁶⁵ Showalter again petitioned the War Department for another Pennsylvania unit to be included in the Pacific force but this time to no avail.⁶⁶ The War Department was growing concerned that it should not give the impression of favoritism by assigning multiple units from one state to Merritt's command.

Political and domestic considerations accounted for the assignment of a regiment from another state east of the Mississippi—Tennessee. Providing Merritt with Volunteers out of a former Confederate state could gain Southern support for the McKinley administration and mend sectional wounds that had lingered from the Civil War. The president had already chosen to pursue these aims by supervising Army commissions. For example, former Confederate cavalrymen Joseph Wheeler and Fitzhugh Lee, both strong Southern Democrats, received general officer appointments.⁶⁷

Opportunity afforded the McKinley administration another way to achieve these same goals. In late May, when Secretary Alger decided to increase the Philippine expeditionary force to 2,000 men, Corbin, as a courtesy, asked Merritt for his preferences on the states from which additional forces should be drawn to augment the expedition.⁶⁸ The general fired back a reply the same day with one request: those states that had units prepared to make the trip.⁶⁹ Merritt essentially gave the War Department carte blanche authority to make assignments, and the Secretary of War acted accordingly.

On 1 June, Alger wrote a confidential note to the governors of Iowa and three Southern states: Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. He inquired of each "if it would be agreeable for a regiment from your State now awaiting assignment to be ordered to report to General Merritt, San Francisco, for

duty with expedition to the Philippines.”⁷⁰ Iowa responded favorably and sent the 51st.⁷¹ Of the three former Confederate states solicited, Tennessee subsequently dispatched an infantry regiment to California.

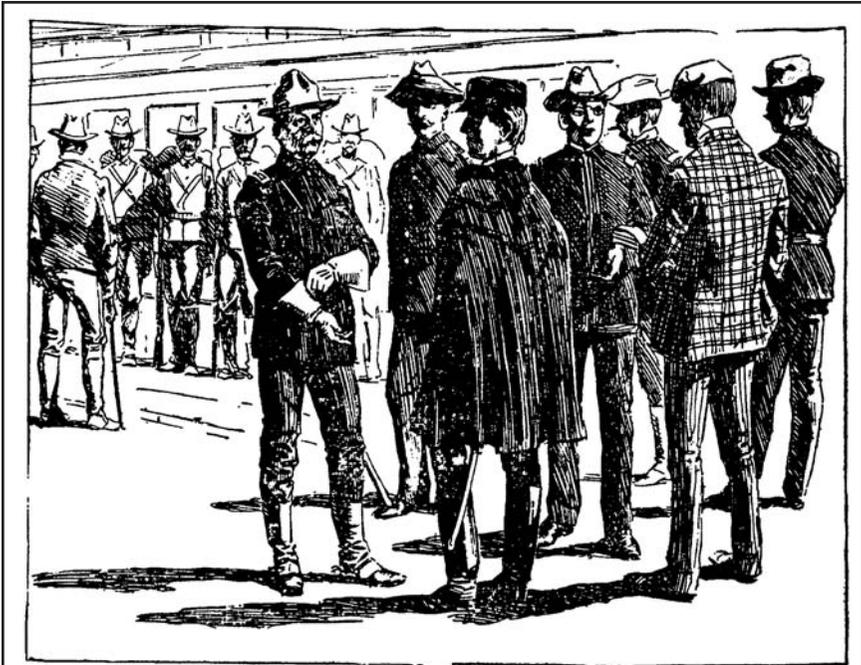
Administration officials must have delighted in the San Francisco reception accorded Tennessee Volunteers. Surely President McKinley became aware of the enthusiastic coverage the city’s print media accorded Southern Volunteers. “Cheered for the ‘Boys in Gray’” proclaimed *The Examiner* when the regiment arrived in mid-June.⁷² The *San Francisco Call* quoted COL William C. Smith, commander, 1st Tennessee, and a former captain in the Confederacy: “I know now that there is no longer any North, or South, or East, or West. The reception accorded my regiment at every point amply demonstrates that sectional lines are forever obliterated.”⁷³ The colonel proved to be the darling of locals with ties to the Civil War. Local newspapers noted his presence at activities featuring veterans from that war.⁷⁴

Finally, general officer preference brought another Volunteer regiment to San Francisco from a state east of the Mississippi. Although Alger and Corbin did not honor all of Merritt’s appeals, the War Department solicited and attempted to act upon many of his manpower requests. One of Merritt’s petitions involved a unit from New York. By the middle of June, Merritt had calculated that even with the inclusion of regiments from Pennsylvania, Iowa, and Tennessee, his command warranted additional units to reach the 20,000 men Alger had promised. For the first time, Merritt requested specific Volunteer organizations: the 1st Maine and the 9th New York.⁷⁵ Both units hailed from states associated with the general’s former command, the Department of the East. These regiments, however, had already been committed to Southern assembly areas. Just as it had done with Regular forces, the War Department was not about to reposition these units when other state forces remained unassigned in state camps.

With both units unavailable, Merritt was not about to leave the choice of regiments to the War Department as he had done on 29 May. That decision inspired the McKinley administration to send the 1st Tennessee, a regiment that Merritt deemed unsuitable for duty overseas. In a 20 June message to Corbin, Merritt faulted Tennessee troops, describing them as “unlikely to be fit for some time to become a part in this expedition.”⁷⁶ In the same correspondence, he asked the AG to send the 1st New York. Corbin had informed Merritt of the regiment’s availability in a telegram transmitted on 19 June.⁷⁷

On 28 June, the AG’s office assigned the 1st New York to Merritt’s

command.⁷⁸ Before the regiment departed for the West Coast in July, a newspaper correspondent asked COL Thomas H. Barber an obvious question: Why would the government assign his command to San Francisco and incur the cost of a cross-country move? Barber's answer focused on Merritt. He explained that Merritt, while commanding the Department of the East, "inspected the regiment, saw it drill," and decided to ask that it be assigned to the expeditionary force.⁷⁹



**COLONEL THOMAS H. BARBER and His Officers
Greeted on Their Arrival at Oakland by Captain
Putnam B. Strong.**

San Francisco Call, 14 July 1898

Figure 11.

Preparing Volunteer Units: State Musters

To challenge Spain's hold on islands in the Caribbean or the Pacific, the United States needed more troops than the Regular Army could supply. The president, through the War Department, directed state and territorial governments to furnish manpower in the form of Volunteer units that would be mustered into federal service. How these units were assembled and prepared for movement to national camps hinged upon decisions left to governing authorities at the state or territorial level.

Within days of the 23 April 1898 presidential call for 125,000 men, governors moved quickly to meet their allotted manpower quotas. In most instances, the National Guard apparatus worked to concentrate militia units at various state assembly points. These staging areas became the locus for mustering activities that included recruiting, equipping, and organizing Volunteer forces. Often using existing militia as a foundation, numerous states reshaped their National Guard organizations into the specific type and number of units the War Department required. These tasks could be quite challenging.

Oregon, for example, received an allocation of one infantry regiment.⁸⁰ Governor William P. Lord immediately confronted a dilemma: how to take the state's Guard (consisting of two regiments, an additional battalion, and three separate companies) and meet the smaller requirement from Washington. One option Lord explored was to increase Oregon's allocation with an offer of one additional light battery.⁸¹ BG Corbin, the Army's AG, immediately rejected that proposal.⁸² The governor then decided to assemble the Guard in Portland and consolidate it into one regiment.⁸³

Across the Rocky Mountains, Iowa officials faced a similar problem. When the president issued his first call for Volunteers, the state's four National Guard infantry regiments converged on Camp McKinley at the State Fair Grounds in Des Moines. The problem for state officials was that the Secretary of War had levied Iowa for three infantry regiments and two light batteries.⁸⁴ Private John Snure, one of Iowa's Volunteers, wrote that "there was much talk of consolidation—much dissatisfaction at the prospect of four regiments merging into three. Such a step would have thrown out many officers of the guard." Governor L.M. Shaw telegraphed Iowa's influential Republican senator in Washington, W.B. Allison, for help in mustering four regiments, explaining, "Any other course now would create such a ruction as we nor you have ever known in Iowa. For God's sake see Sec'y of War at once. . . . You cannot imagine excitement here and in the State." Alger approved the request, and on 30 April, BG Corbin sent the good news to the governor. Senatorial leverage paid dividends.⁸⁵

Elsewhere in the Midwest, another state chief executive chose to gather Volunteers in a manner considerably different from his peers. Governor John W. Leedy distrusted the Republican-dominated National Guard in his state of Kansas. A Populist serving a two-year term when the war began, Leedy opted to mobilize without using the existing Guard organization. To achieve the state's Volunteer quota, the governor determined to form regiments from the state's citizenry at large.⁸⁶ Leedy's decision prompted Kansas AG L.E. Walker to seek justice from sources outside the state. As the senior National Guard officer in the state, Walker appealed directly

to President McKinley. Claiming guardsmen “ready to answer the call,” Walker wrote that “apparently an effort is being made to run politics into this matter by ignoring them and calling for entirely new volunteers.”⁸⁷

Walker’s petition elicited a response from the Secretary of War. In a telegram to Leedy, Alger wrote “to express the earnest wish that the National Guard of your State, as is done in all other States, shall be first recognized and organized; this because they are drilled, officered and armed, and will be soon ready for active service.”⁸⁸ Leedy exercised his prerogative as the state’s chief executive and refused to change his mobilization plan. Although some Kansas militiamen eventually became Volunteers, Leedy did not allow the Guard to shape muster activity.

Those states that chose to create Volunteer organizations from existing National Guard units faced an additional challenge: manpower shortages. The War Department calculated that, on the average, state Volunteer companies included among their numbers only 30 National Guardsmen or 50 percent of the manpower assigned to the original Guard company. In his annual report for 1899, BG Corbin observed that militia companies usually carried a maximum strength of 60 men. Among those seeking federal service, about 25 percent failed to pass physical examinations before muster.

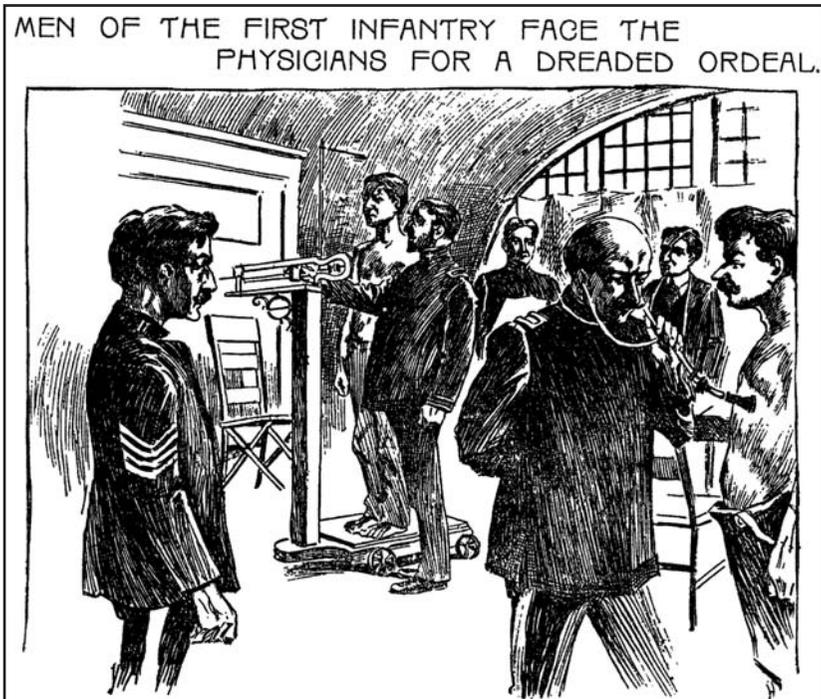


Figure 12. Physical examinations for California National Guardsmen.

Another 25 percent declined to volunteer or were rejected upon physical examination after muster. Corbin calculated that each Volunteer company required a minimum of 77 troops for induction into federal service, “in many instances about 47 recruits, mostly untrained and without uniform or equipment, were hastily obtained and physically examined.”⁸⁹ This revelation suggested that even the most proficiently drilled and thoroughly equipped National Guard companies likely absorbed untrained men into their ranks on the way to becoming state Volunteer organizations.

Preparing Volunteers Locally: State Camps

Units tagged for San Francisco mustered, drilled, and to varying degrees equipped in their local camps before boarding trains bound for the Golden Gate. The time each unit spent in its respective state or territory varied. Gaining sufficient manpower to admit the unit into federal service constituted the principal local task. Equipping and drilling began in state camps and continued more vigorously on the West Coast.

The 10th Pennsylvania Infantry concentrated at Pittsburgh and Greensburg before traveling to Mount Gretna, Pennsylvania, on 28 April 1898. For the next two weeks, the organization, along with other Pennsylvania regiments, worked to increase manpower in each company from 60 to 75 men.⁹⁰ One of the men, Private William S. Christner, wrote his sister: “There is (sic) over ten thousand eight hundred soldier boys here and we are eating hard tack and drinking black coffee. . . . To day (sic) we enter in to (sic) the United States service providing we can pass the examination. There is (sic) a great many of the boys leaving the ranks for home but as I write there are thousands going cheering past me who have mustered in.”⁹¹

On 13 May, Governor Daniel H. Hastings informed the Secretary of War that the 10th Pennsylvania Regiment, commanded by COL Alexander L. Hawkins, had been mustered into the Volunteer Army. Hawkins’ organization consisted of 36 officers and 604 enlisted men spread over eight companies.⁹² Although the regiment had not finished equipping, Hawkins reported the 10th en route to San Francisco by 19 May.⁹³

Tennessee Volunteers, representing the only Southern state assigned to Merritt for duty in the Pacific, began their assembly into three regiments on 24 April. The state tried to use guardsmen to man Volunteer organizations, but that practice proved difficult. Governor Robert L. Taylor wrote of the medical standards that each prospective serviceman had to meet: “The examination which is being held is more rigid than was expected for our national guards and is materially reducing the number of men in the regiments.”⁹⁴ Camping at Cherokee Park, 8 miles outside of Nashville, those

forming the 1st Tennessee Infantry would not complete their muster into federal service until 26 May. The unit remained in-state another two weeks conducting various drills before boarding trains for San Francisco.⁹⁵

Iowa engaged in a muster that BG Corbin described as “much behind that of other States.”⁹⁶ Volunteers spent more than a month in their state camp at Des Moines. Private John Snure wrote of the duty routine: “Battalion drills each morning with the afternoons reserved for regimental drills. Training also included numerous marches, skirmish drills and outpost duty.” The 3d Regiment, renamed the 51st Iowa at the governor’s request to “save existing numbers sacred to Old soldiers,” took shelter in old horse barns on the fairgrounds. Cold and rainy weather diminished the comfort of most, but visitors and Sunday excursions into town helped to brighten the troops’ spirits.⁹⁷ The Volunteer infantry regiment departed for San Francisco on 5 June 1898.⁹⁸

North Dakota’s Volunteers assembled at Camp Briggs in Fargo on 2 May where they remained for the better part of the month. Not having had a National Guard encampment in nearly five years, the men drilled in squad and platoon movements, then company and battalion skirmish drills. In summarizing his comrades’ logistics readiness, First Sergeant Phil H. Shortt observed that “they were poorly equipped in all military supplies. Arms in sufficient numbers were unobtainable, many men were ununiformed.” Nevertheless, they used available resources to conduct the best training possible.⁹⁹

Two factors determined how quickly a unit could leave its home station. The first consideration dealt with getting organized—the time needed to assemble minimum numbers of personnel who met the physical requirements for muster. That process could take days or weeks. Some organizations moved to San Francisco with decidedly fewer troops than others. When the War Department subsequently increased the personnel strength of each Volunteer company, units already in San Francisco dispatched recruiting parties to fetch additional men, some from their home states.

The second factor that affected the timing of an organization’s departure from state camps was equipment status. Corbin encouraged each unit to equip itself with the requisite arms, ammunition, clothing, and tentage before moving toward the West Coast. The AG could waive that practice if an organization’s stay in its home state threatened to delay departures from San Francisco for the Philippines. In that case, Corbin encouraged immediate deployment to the Golden Gate. Once there, Benicia Arsenal would provide arms, ammunition, and tentage to those Volunteer organizations with shortages.¹⁰⁰

Moving to San Francisco

Nearly a week before the United States declared war on Spain, War Department officials ordered most of the Regular Army to four assembly points in the South: Chickamauga Park, Georgia; New Orleans, Louisiana; Mobile, Alabama; and Tampa, Florida.¹⁰¹ There the Army organized commands, received Volunteer forces, and readied seaborne assaults against Cuba and later Puerto Rico.

Tampa, augmented by the other three staging areas, offered ready access to the Gulf of Mexico. In geographic terms, each area presented deployment advantages as long as the McKinley administration focused on Caribbean objectives. Once the president's priorities expanded to include goals in the Pacific, however, the Army needed a western assembly point where forces could be gathered preparatory to movement overseas. Securing a Pacific Coast port for this undertaking became essential if forces were to reach the Philippines in a timely manner.

Boosters from Oregon seized the opportunity to nominate Portland for such a role. On 5 May, H.R. Lewis, secretary of the city's Chamber of Commerce, sent a telegram addressed to Oregon's senator in Washington, George W. McBride. Lewis asked McBride, the Chairman, Committee on Coast Defenses, to "Suggest to the war department the advisability of outfitting and starting one or more Philippine transports from Portland sailing distance same, markets equal to San Francisco, north-western troops easily concentrated at Portland."¹⁰² The following day, McBride attached the telegram to a personal letter to Alger, closing with the sentiment "I trust you will favorably consider Portland as a point of departure for Northwestern troops."¹⁰³

By 5 May, however, arguments favoring Portland were moot. The preceding day, McKinley verified with the Secretary of War that troops "should be assembled at San Francisco, Cal., for such service as may be ordered hereafter."¹⁰⁴ Several factors account for San Francisco's selection as the port of embarkation for troops deploying into the Pacific.

By 1898, San Francisco was the premier city on the West Coast, boasting a population of more than 330,000. It possessed first-rate municipal utilities as well as telephone and telegraph service. As a terminus on the transcontinental railroad, the community offered ready access to Regular and Volunteer forces traveling west for rendezvous. The location featured one of the country's best ports; transportation overseas could be secured through oceanic steamship companies that

maintained headquarters or offices in the city.¹⁰⁵

San Francisco also sported one of only six Army general depots in the United States over which the quartermaster-general had direct control. Depending on available stocks, the military could use this facility and its organization to outfit both Regular and Volunteer forces converging on the West Coast. Additionally, since the 1870s the Subsistence Department maintained a purchasing depot in the city. Through this facility, the commissary acquired fresh beef, flour, and other commodities largely through local sources. Subsistence officers could secure forage, lumber, and other products to establish Bay Area campsites.¹⁰⁶

San Francisco offered one other feature no community could claim on the West Coast: an entire infantry regiment. CPT Frank de L. Carrington, a Regular Army officer attached to duty with the California National Guard, submitted a very strong evaluation on the state's 1st Infantry Regiment. In his "Statement of the Condition of the National Guard of California in 1897," Carrington noted that the regiment, organized into three battalions composed of four companies each, maintained its headquarters in the city. The organization paralleled that of the Regular infantry in other important ways; its uniforms and equipment generally replicated that of active duty forces.

Carrington rated as "excellent" the National Guard's personnel and discipline. He observed that the 1st California's central location gave it "great advantage" in drill over other state regiments. He emphasized the progress he observed during encampments, writing, "They were all much better than I have ever seen before in the California National Guard."¹⁰⁷ San Francisco therefore offered transport, supply, and manpower resources that the War Department could easily tap.

The task of moving troops, animals, and freight to San Francisco belonged to the Quartermaster Department. Beginning with the order to reposition Regulars in April 1898, chief quartermasters of geographical departments worked with railroad companies to arrange transportation.¹⁰⁸ When apprised by the AG of destinations for Volunteer units, department quartermasters advertised for and contracted with the rail carriers who generally offered the lowest bids.¹⁰⁹ Total costs to the government depended on several variables, including the magnitude of the shipping order, the distance to be traveled, and the railroad companies involved. Several of the more expensive Volunteer rail movements to San Francisco involved the 1st Tennessee for \$20,454.90, the 51st Iowa for \$15,981.81, and the 1st Nebraska for \$15,808.80.¹¹⁰

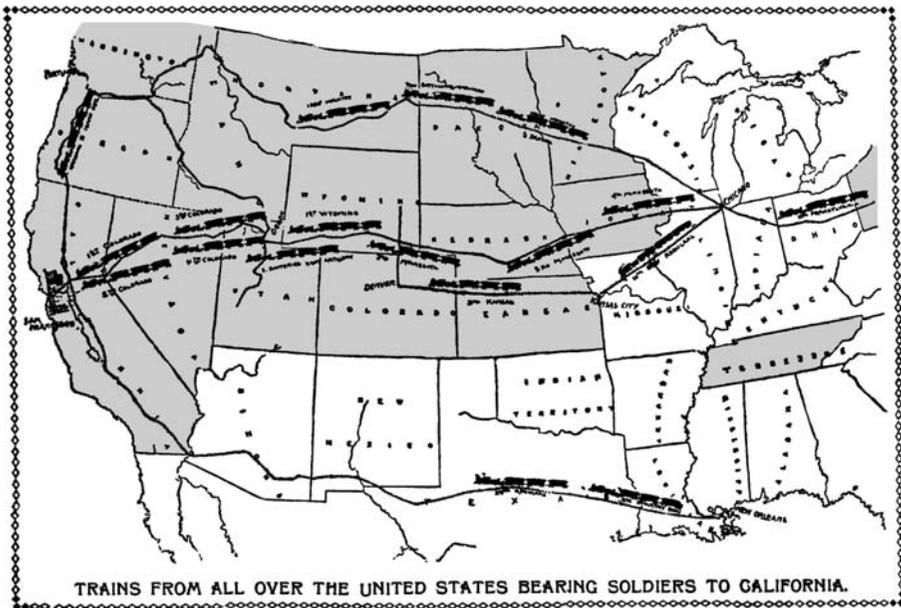


Figure 13. States shaded, including New York and Pennsylvania, sent Volunteers to San Francisco.

As the troops relocated from state or territorial encampments to rendezvous with expeditionary forces staging out of the Bay Area, virtually all experienced an outpouring of support from local citizens. Most Volunteer organizations broke camp and paraded to train depots surrounded by cheering crowds. Private Madison U. Stoneman of the 1st Wyoming wrote, “We were marched down through thronged streets, amidst men and women, some joyous, others weeping. . . . Here and there squads of citizens fired salutes from double barrelled shot guns.” Reaching the depot platform, Stoneman and his comrades were presented with “pies, cakes, fruits and other articles of food; musical instruments, testaments and mementoes.”¹¹¹

As they moved through the state of origin, troop trains occasionally stopped in the larger towns or cities where their passengers were treated to foods and speeches of all types. Men of the 51st Iowa, who experienced a 2,200-mile rail journey to San Francisco, remembered the special treatment accorded them during their trip through the state. Private John Snure wrote of traveling through Iowa’s towns, “Flowers fairly strewed their path, and the proverbial hunger of the soldier was never forgotten or allowed to go unsatisfied.” Citizens at Council Bluffs and Red Oak fed the men.¹¹² The celebrations did not stop when crossing state boundaries but

frequently continued along the routes to California.

For numerous young men, the trip to state assembly camps was their first journey, and adventure, away from home. Revelations followed as newly mustered Volunteers formed into units and then loaded onto trains that made their way across hundreds, even thousands, of miles to the West Coast. Their odyssey, however, was just beginning. The San Francisco community waited, preparing to host the military guests about to converge on the city.

Notes

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2. Nelson A. Miles to The Honorable, the Secretary of War, 3 May 1898, in US War Department, *Correspondence Relating to the War with Spain and Conditions Growing Out of the Same, Including the Insurrection in the Philippine Islands and the China Relief Expedition, Between the Adjutant-General of the Army and Military Commander in the United States, Cuba, Porto Rico, China, and the Philippine Islands, From April 15, 1898, to July 30, 1902*, Volume II (Washington, DC: GPO, 1902), hereafter cited as *Correspondence II*), 635.
3. David F. Trask, *The War With Spain in 1898* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1981), 382-83.
4. H.C. Corbin to MG Wesley Merritt, 12 May 1898, in *Correspondence II*, 637.
5. W. Merritt to His Excellency William McKinley, 13 May 1898, in *Correspondence II*, 643-44.
6. W. Merritt, Respectfully Returned to the Adjutant-General of the Army, 17 May 1898, in US Senate, *Report of the Commission Appointed by the President to Investigate the Conduct of the War Department in the War With Spain*, volume II, *Appendixes* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1900), hereafter cited as *Report II*, 1204.
7. H.C. Corbin to General Merriam, 13 May 1898, in *Correspondence II*, 639; Trask, 383.
8. Merritt to McKinley, 13 May 1898, in *Correspondence II*, 643-44.
9. Miles to the Secretary of War, 16 May 1898, in *Report II*, 1203-1204.
10. Merritt to the Adjutant-General of the Army, 17 May 1898, in *Report II*, 1204.
11. Miles to the Secretary of War, 18 May 1898, in *Report II*, 1204-1205.
12. Marvin A. Kreidberg and Merton G. Henry, *History of Military Mobilization in the United States Army, 1775-1945*, Department of the Army (DA) Pamphlet No. 20-212 (Washington, DC: DA, November 1955), 150-51; US War Department, *Annual Reports of the War Department for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1898*, Report of the Major-General Commanding the Army, Annual Report of the Adjutant-General to the Major-General Commanding the Army (Washington, DC: GPO, 1898) 495-96.
13. Exchange between COL Charles Denby and Corbin during the latter's testimony before the Commission Appointed by the President to Investigate the Conduct of the War with Spain, 22 December 1898, in *Report of the Commission Appointed by the President to Investigate the Conduct of the War Department in the War With Spain*, Volume VII, testimony (Washington, DC: GPO, 1900), hereafter cited as *Report VII*, 3280-83. Through his questions, Denby attempted

to elicit from Corbin why the Regular Army was ordered to assembly points more than a week before the United States declared war. Corbin repeatedly parried the questions, observing at one point, “It is only fair to the Adjutant-General to add that a great many things are often said to him that would be a question of propriety for him to testify before this commission.” The committee deferred to BG Corbin’s judgment.

14. H.C. Corbin to Commanding General, Department East, 15 April 1898, in US War Department, *Correspondence Relating to the War With Spain and Conditions Growing Out of the Same, Including the Insurrection in the Philippine Islands and the China Relief Expedition, Between the Adjutant-General of the Army and Military Commander in the United States, Cuba, Porto Rico, China, and the Philippine Islands, From April 15, 1898 to July 30, 1902*, Volume I (Washington, DC: GPO, 1902), hereafter cited as *Correspondence I*, 7.

15. W. McK. to the Secretary of War, 4 May 1898, in *Correspondence II*, 635.

16. Captain L.S. Sorley, *History of the Fourteenth United States Infantry* (Chicago: Privately printed, 1909) 7-8.

17. *Ibid.*, 9-10.

18. W. Merritt, Respectively Returned to the Adjutant-General of the Army, 17 May 1898, in *Correspondence II*, 648.

19. Sorley, 11, 25.

20. William McKinley to the Secretary of War, 19 May 1898, in *Correspondence II*, 676.

21. H.C. Corbin to General Merritt, 19 May 1898—11:45 p.m., in *Correspondence II*, 662.

22. Merritt to McKinley, 13 May 1898, in *Correspondence II*, 643-44.

23. Miles to the Secretary of War, 16 May 1898, in *Correspondence II*, 647-48; Merritt to Corbin, 17 May 1898, in *Correspondence II*, 648.

24. Merritt to the Adjutant-General of the Army, 21 May 1898, in *Correspondence II*, 666.

25. Corbin to Merritt, 29 May 1898, in *Correspondence II*, 680.

26. Merritt to the Adjutant-General of the Army, 29 May 1898, in *Correspondence II*, 680.

27. The telegram dated 15 April 1898 from Corbin to territorial department commanders ordering infantry regiments to assembly areas in the South omitted reference to the 25th Infantry. See Corbin to the Commanding General, Department East, 15 April 1898, in *Correspondence I*, 7. One reason for the omission may have been that units of the 25th received orders to converge on Chickamauga as early as 10 April. See Captain John H. Nankivell, *The History of the Twenty-Fifth Regiment, United States Infantry, 1869-1926* (Fort Collins, CO: The Old Army Press, 1972), 65-67.

28. Corbin to Commanding General, Department East, 15 April 1898, in *Correspondence I*, 7.

29. Corbin to Merritt, 30 May 1898—Midnight, in *Correspondence II*, 682.

30. *Ibid.*

31. Merritt to the Adjutant-General of the Army, 1 June 1898 (Received 5:46 p.m.), in *Correspondence II*, 684.

32. Corbin to Merritt, 3 June 1898, in *Correspondence II*, 687.

33. Miles to the Secretary of War, 3 May 1898, in *Correspondence II*, 635; Merritt to McKinley, 13 May 1898, in *Correspondence II*, 643-44; Miles to the Secretary of War, 16 May 1898, in *Correspondence II*, 647-48; Merritt to the Adjutant-General of the Army, 17 May 1898, in *Correspondence II*, 648.

34. Corbin to Merritt, 31 May 1898—12 midnight, in *Correspondence II*, 683; Corbin to Merriam, 1 June 1898, in *Correspondence II*, 683-84; Corbin to Merritt, 2 June 1898, in *Correspondence II*, 685.

35. General Merriam to the Adjutant-General of the Army, 2 June 1898 (Received 4:56 p.m.), in *Correspondence II*, 685; Merritt to the Adjutant-General of the Army, 3 June 1898 (Received 3:41 p.m.), in *Correspondence II*, 688.

36. Corbin to the Commanding General, Department East, 15 April 1898, in *Correspondence I*, 7.

37. US War Department, *Annual Reports of the War Department for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1897, Report of the Secretary of War. Miscellaneous Reports*, Report of the Major-General Commanding the Army (Washington, DC: GPO, 1897) 115; US War Department, *Annual Reports of the War Department for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1898, Report of the Major-General Commanding the Army*, Report of MG Henry C. Merriam, Commanding the Department of the Columbia (Washington DC: GPO, 1898), 179-81.

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39. W. Merritt to Mr. Secretary, 12 May 1898, in *Correspondence II*, 638.

40. H.C. Corbin to MG John R. Brooke, 13 May 1898, in *Correspondence II*, 639.

41. Merritt to the Adjutant-General of the Army, 3 June 1898 (Received 7:26 p.m.), in *Correspondence II*, 688.

42. Carter to General Merritt, 4 June 1898, in *Correspondence II*, 689.

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46. Miles to the Secretary of War, 16 May 1898, in *Correspondence II*, 647-48.

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60. William G. Bell, et al., *American Military History*, (Fort McNair, DC: Center of Military History, 1989), 185.

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66. Showalter to Alger, 19 May 1898 (Received 20 May 1898), in *Report II*, 1219.

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68. Corbin to Merritt, 29 May 1898, in *Correspondence II*, 680.

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Chapter III

Getting Organized

Army units moved from points around the country to converge on San Francisco between May and August 1898. Their efficient reception at the port city became the next step in a process designed to organize overseas expeditions. Local military and civilian authorities contemplated the appropriate actions that should be taken to receive troops and move them to assigned campsites near the Golden Gate. A routine gradually developed that pooled resources from the San Francisco military and civilian communities.

Trains bearing forces from the east carried organizations into California as far as Oakland. Troops detrained and boarded vessels for a trip across the bay. After disembarking near the Ferry Building, soldiers received a meal or refreshments that volunteers from the state Red Cross Society served. Following Red Cross festivities, military escorts guided Regular and Volunteer organizations through the city to their designated campsites. These areas could be at any of several locations: the Presidio, Bay District Racetrack, Jordan Tract, or Fontana warehouse. Time of arrival in the city and, later, unit mission dictated assignment to a specific location on or near the Presidio.

Preparing the force for wartime missions also required suitable command and control. In early May, the War Department established a new department-level command to preside over the expeditions. Later in the month, a division command structure emerged to organize, train, and equip the units designated for overseas duty.

Oakland and the Bay

Most of the units that gathered at the Golden Gate had traveled by rail to Oakland. Train sections made their way to the city's 16th Street station, not far from the Oakland mole—a terminal where railroad passengers could connect with ferry transportation to San Francisco. Troops could use the ferry service that operated from early morning through late afternoon.¹ The Southern Pacific, a railway company that managed ferry service, agreed not to dispatch units across the bay after 1600.² The reason was that soldiers still had to disembark, handle equipment, march to camp, and establish their campsites. Reaching the city late, only to be transported across the bay, meant the deeper into an evening they would take to get settled.

At least one regiment, the 10th Pennsylvania, arrived to be welcomed



The Examiner, 21 May 1898

Figure 14.

by a group of citizens at the Oakland station. Remarkably, when the train pulled into the mole at 0100, “500 people, the remnants of a much larger crowd, were waiting under the electric lights to cheer and to distribute flowers.” However, most of the troops were sound asleep and missed their warm reception.³

How quickly organizations embarked for the trip across San Francisco Bay depended principally on the time they reached the Oakland terminus. Part or all of several regiments remained overnight in Oakland because ferry operations had ceased for the day. Troops from Kansas, Pennsylvania, New York, Utah, Montana, Iowa, Tennessee, Minnesota, Wyoming, and the Astor Battery slept in railroad cars on sidetracks and awaited ferry service the next day.⁴ At least one unit that stopped in Oakland established security around its train; the 1st Battalion, 13th Minnesota, posted armed guards with ammunition chambered. A reporter for the *San Francisco Call* wrote, “No one was allowed to approach nearer than twenty feet to the train until he had been admitted by a commissioned officer.”⁵

When ferry service resumed, most organizations detrained, and the men walked aboard vessels like the *Piedmont*.⁶ Each passenger ferry accommodated about 250 men.⁷ Troops boarded and could share their 6-mile excursion across San Francisco Bay with civilian passengers.⁸ Ferries were not chartered for military use; units took available vessels that made routine runs between Oakland and San Francisco.

Not all troops took passenger ferries. Exceptions included mounted units from Utah and the 4th Cavalry. These organizations arrived fully equipped with horses, saddles, and bridles. Specifically, the Utah Cavalry transported 84 Volunteers and 87 horses on six railway cars.⁹ All six cars,

including troops and animals, were run aboard the freight boat *Transit*, which took an hour to reach San Francisco's docks. The same procedure occurred with Troop E, 4th Cavalry.¹⁰

Whether conveyed by passenger or freight vessels, troops formed diverse impressions about their jaunt across the bay. Private James Camp, 1st Idaho, wrote that he and his comrades arrived in Oakland "somewhat cranky" after being cramped in crowded rail cars for three days. Camp observed, "Our trip across the bay did not improve our tempers."¹¹

For others, the excursion was another segment of a revealing odyssey that began with assemblies in state camps. The *San Francisco Chronicle* suggested that bay sights must have been particularly spectacular for those coming from origins east of the Rocky Mountains. After 1st Nebraska men docked at the Ferry Building, a *Chronicle* reporter wrote, "Strangers to the far West and to deep water, hundreds of them never having seen a ship or an ocean steamer before in their lives, these newcomers marveled at what they beheld while crossing from the Oakland side." Troops strained to see "the warlike Monterey and the forest of towering masts of merchantmen and the scores of funnels of big passenger liners lying peacefully all along the extensive water-front. It was a novel experience in a new country."¹²



The Examiner, 21 May 1898

Figure 15.

Arrival in San Francisco

Starting on 7 May 1898, units that had formed outside of San Francisco began to close on the city. By the peace protocol of 12 August, Volunteer organizations from 18 states, Regular troops representing seven active duty units, and the special military force that John Jacob Astor funded had poured into the Bay Area. (See appendix A.) Authorities were busiest receiving troops over the last two weeks of May. During that period, men from 11 infantry regiments, two batteries of artillery, one troop of cavalry, and one company of engineers reached the Golden Gate. Military organizations arrived before and after those hectic 14 days but never at the same pace.

Reception activities for those reaching San Francisco started at the Ferry Building. In this newly constructed, spacious depot funded by California state, troops experienced a special greeting that for many created lasting memories.¹³ The men were treated to a lavish spread of refreshments that had been organized, and in some cases prepared, by members of the Red Cross Society. Volunteer histories compiled after the war often regarded the Red Cross welcome as the noteworthy event of their organizations' San Francisco experience.¹⁴



Golden Gate National Recreation Area, National Park Service

Figure 16. Ferry Building, circa 1898.

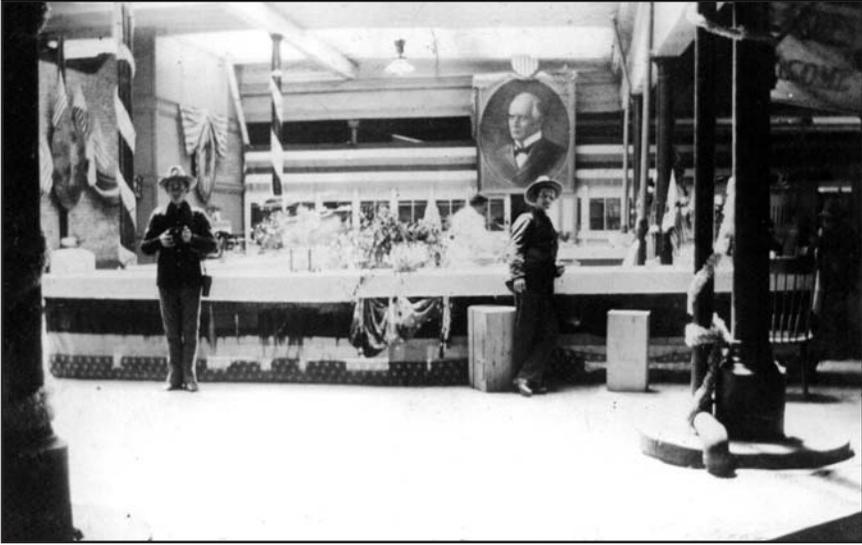
Individual soldiers accorded this Red Cross activity with similar recognition. Private William S. Christner of the 10th Pennsylvania Infantry wrote his parents on 26 May 1898: “When we arrived at Frisco the ladies of the Red Cross Society met us and such a breakfast the boys had not eaten for some time. Then they packed our haversacks with sandwiches, oranges, and bananas. Grapes and apricots were given us in plenty.”¹⁵ Private A.G. Baker of the 1st Colorado recalled the event in his personal narrative of the war. As Colorado Volunteers disembarked near the Ferry Building on 21 May, Baker observed, “Our coming had been anticipated by the noble ladies of the Red Cross Society of California, who had provided an excellent dinner for us.”¹⁶

Unlike Pennsylvania and Colorado Volunteers, the first troops to reach San Francisco entered the city and marched to camp on empty stomachs. On 7 May, the 7th Californians crossed the bay after a tiresome 24-hour railway journey. They believed that food awaited them at the Presidio. *The Examiner* reported that “somebody played ‘Philippine’ with the provisions,” and the troops received “nothing at the end of the trip but sea breeze and dirt.”¹⁷ Companies of men from the 14th US Infantry and 6th California followed over the next four days and also went into camp without refreshments.

A similar experience befell troops of the 2d Oregon’s first battalion who docked at the city’s wharf on 13 May. Their neglect elicited criticism from two city newspapers. A *San Francisco Daily Report* article decried the apathy accorded those in uniform. Another publication, the *Call*, observed, “The men were hungry and tired from their long trip from Oregon, and they were obliged to tramp all the way to the Presidio with no one to even offer them a drink of water.”¹⁸

Spurred by this lack of consideration and supported by the Salvation Army, the city’s Red Cross Society established a suitable welcome. On 18 May, the society positioned civilian volunteers at the Ferry Building to greet incoming troops shortly after they stepped off vessels from Oakland. Fittingly, the remainder of Oregon’s Volunteers were the first to enjoy this reception. Thereafter, Red Cross representatives, surrounded by tables of refreshments, awaited dockside to offer military arrivals “a practical California welcome.”¹⁹

The dockside fiasco of 13 May also energized the mayor and other civic organizations. On 22 May, the Knights Templars conferred with Mayor James D. Phelan on “how to provide for the incoming troops that the Government seems so powerless to provide” for. The Knights asked the mayor “what had been done by the city and by himself toward properly



Golden Gate Nat'l Recreation Area, Nat'l Park Service

Figure 17. California Red Cross Room, Ferry Building, San Francisco, September 1898.

receiving the troops.” The mayor highlighted several steps he had taken to furnish bands and escorts, and cited the program the Red Cross had undertaken. Phelan urged the Knights to become involved and to support the society, and they did so with alacrity.²⁰

The Ferry Building provided a backdrop for some memorable scenes. One highly publicized incident involving the Red Cross Society and an Army captain occurred at the depot in June 1898. When the Astor Battery docked on 20 June, the society’s welcome for troops had reached obligatory status. Red Cross volunteers and the city that supported them expected new arrivals to participate in reception activities. Allegedly, Peyton C. March, commander, Astor Battery, and recently promoted to captain of Volunteers, had not been apprised of the expectation that this ritual would be observed. In an article titled “A Discourteous Lieutenant” (the demotion itself a written jab at the Astor captain), the *Call* ac-



Record of the Red Cross Work on the Pacific Slope

Figure 18. Mayor James D. Phelan.

cused March of rendering “a snub so direct and given with such studied discourtesy as to stamp the offender as totally lacking every qualification of a gentleman.”

March, it seemed, had the audacity to decline the Red Cross breakfast. Pressured anew to allow his men inside the Ferry Building’s dining area, the captain “did unbend enough to march his men into the room, and the ladies offered each a bunch of flowers and an orange, which were gratefully accepted.” While hot food was also available to the men, a correspondent wrote that March forbade them to indulge. The Astor’s commanding officer felt that the artillerymen, having had their fill of hardtack and coffee before crossing the bay, required no more food. Branding him “an obscure lieutenant of artillery, lifted into momentary conspicuousness by the favor of a millionaire,” the *Call* wished the worst for March. “It is to be hoped he will be assigned to the next expedition and given every opportunity to extinguish himself on the field of battle,” judged an editorial.²¹

The incident found its way into additional newspapers. Private Joseph I. Markey, 51st Iowa, wrote a state newspaper claiming the Astor Battery “refused to accept lunch proffered by the kind ladies of the Red Cross, on the ground that it was not good enough for them.”²² Other reporters described the incident in less sensational terms than those the *Call* employed. A writer for *The Examiner* quoted one Red Cross volunteer who characterized March as “high-toned” and “curt.” The same reporter acknowledged that the captain, despite his perceived aloofness, relented and permitted his men to take refreshment.²³

Unlike other newspapers, the *Daily Report* came to March’s defense. In an article titled “The Ladies not Snubbed,” the paper offered observations from another society volunteer, Mrs. Mark Requa. She confirmed that although March at first declined the society’s hospitality, he subsequently consented. Mrs. Requa added that the captain “had no intention of acting discourteously” and expressed his appreciation to the Red Cross ladies.²⁴ The following day, the *Daily Report* went so far as to offer an editorial defense of March and his unit, concluding, “The Astor Battery is all right.”²⁵

The Ferry Building was also the scene for another incident involving a different unit, the 1st Tennessee. Portending racial incidents to come, the Tennesseans docked in San Francisco with “a prisoner . . . the colored porter” from one of the Pullman cars carrying Southerners to the Golden Gate. The *Call* alleged that troops from one company had coerced the porter to smuggle liquor aboard the train, but guards caught and confined him. Apprised

by telegraph of the situation, a Pullman Company superintendent secured his employee's release when the 1st Tennessee arrived in the city.²⁶

The last regiment to dock at the ferry depot before the peace protocol was also the only organization of that size to be feted at a special reception. After the 1st New York Regiment reached San Francisco on 15 July, it marched to the Mechanics' Pavilion where the New York Association of San Francisco treated the troops to a breakfast banquet. The event offered the first signs of special treatment that would be accorded New Yorkers during their stay in the city.²⁷

The March to Campsites

Led by the Red Cross, the city worked to improve the welcome bestowed upon Volunteers and Regulars. Army officials, too, needed to reassess their reception activities. The 2d Oregon's arrival on 13 May highlighted shortcomings in Army plans to accept units at the Golden Gate. To the embarrassment of the military, the *Daily Report* informed readers that Oregonians "were surprised at not being met at the ferry by an army officer to guide them through the streets out to the Presidio. While the officers knew something about San Francisco, they did not know the best route to reach camp and had to inquire their way."²⁸

The 2d Oregon and every Volunteer unit that followed neglected to dispatch anyone to San Francisco who could coordinate their organization's arrival. Perhaps more grievous, no one from the US Army already at the Golden Gate routinely met every force debarking in early May. Instead a "to each his own" philosophy prevailed. Members of the California National Guard tended to California units, and the 4th Cavalry sent a representative to meet companies of the 14th Infantry. That method worked well until Volunteer forces outside of California approached the bay city.²⁹

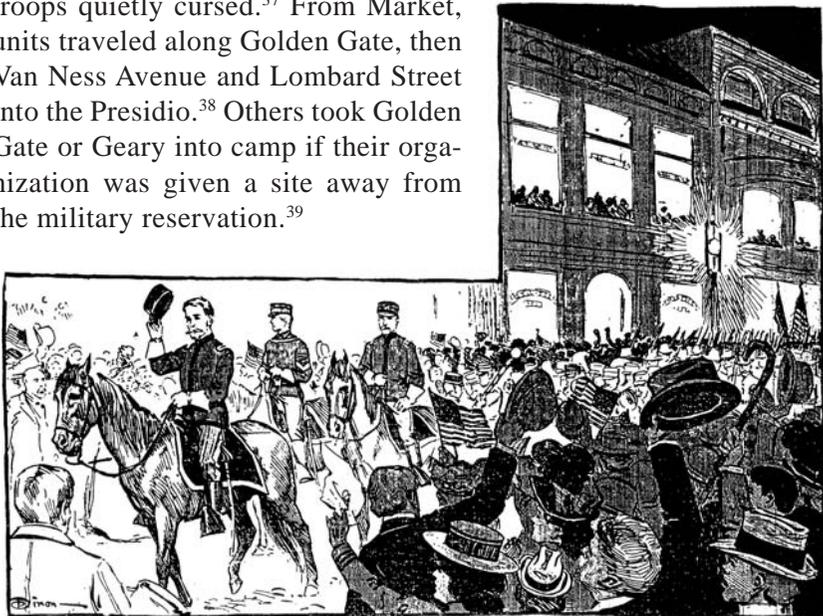
Arguably, the Army should have addressed this oversight in receiving incoming Volunteers no later than 9 May. On that date, MG Henry C. Merriam, commander, Department of California, wired his adjutant general in San Francisco: "Instruct the commanding officer at the Presidio to designate one officer to aid each volunteer regimental commander in drawing and issuing arms, clothing and general outfit, and accounting for same, as these regiments arrive and go into camp, and give all other aid necessary to start administration."³⁰ Unfortunately, the order was strictly interpreted. Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Louis T. Morris, commander of the Presidio, appointed CPT James Lockett, 4th Cavalry, to fulfill these tasks. The captain discharged his responsibilities—but only after Volunteers

reached their campsites. Between the waterfront and the Presidio, units were on their own.

With some additional prompting, Army officials adjusted their reception procedures. The *Daily Report* article from 13 May, plus Merriam's return to San Francisco on 16 May, provided the incentive to resolve the dockside glitch. By 18 May, Army escorts, assigned to guide units into designated campsites, met organizations as they disembarked near the Ferry Building.³¹

The march to camp constituted the final stage of a unit's welcome to San Francisco. After being presented with food and flowers by Red Cross volunteers, troops vacated the ferry depot sporting blossoms on their uniforms and in gunbarrels.³² Often a civilian crowd, anxious to catch a glimpse of the city's newest military visitors, gathered just outside the gated docks. Atop the Claus Sprekels Building a cannon fired to announce that another unit had set out for camp.³³ Accompanied by military guides and frequently preceded by bands, units journeyed to bivouac sites.³⁴ Most marched to the cheers of flag-waving, clapping citizens. Municipal police assisted in crowd control.³⁵

The trek was lengthy: 3 to 4 miles along the city's avenues.³⁶ It had its challenges beginning with Market Street's cobblestones, which some troops quietly cursed.³⁷ From Market, units traveled along Golden Gate, then Van Ness Avenue and Lombard Street into the Presidio.³⁸ Others took Golden Gate or Geary into camp if their organization was given a site away from the military reservation.³⁹



San Francisco Call, 21 May 1898

THE VANGUARD OF THE KANSAS TROOPS ON THE WAY TO CAMP RICHMOND.

Figure 19.

One unit took a circuitous route to camp because its Army escorts became disoriented. On 10 June, Iowa's Volunteers started their march led by two orderlies from Merriam's command. The *Daily Report* claimed that the escorts, who lacked familiarity with the encampment, took the regiment "on a wild goose chase." After the 51st Iowa engaged in considerable marching and endured numerous catcalls from troops in camp, the newspaper reported that "a sergeant was detailed to pilot the Iowans to their proper position."⁴⁰

Even if guided by the most knowledgeable of sergeants, units needed assistance moving unwieldy cargo from docks to camps. Troops used heavy wagons, or trucks, located near the Ferry Building to convey their baggage and weightier items. Sometimes the demand for wagons exceeded the supply. On 21 May, for example, elements from four state Volunteer organizations docked in San Francisco. Soldiers from two organizations, the 13th Minnesota and 1st Colorado, nearly came to blows over who would first use the trucks. The Minnesotans prevailed, filled their wagons with equipment, and got to camp as storms threatened. While hurrying to unpack shelters, troops discovered much to their dismay that the gear belonged to the 1st Colorado Infantry.⁴¹



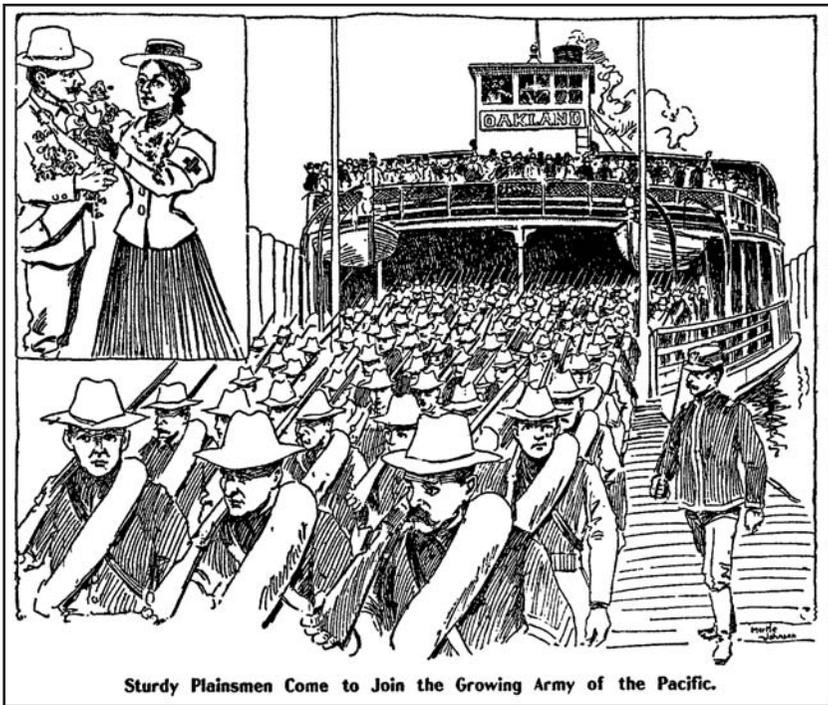
San Francisco Chronicle, 11 June 1898

Figure 20.

The City's Military Visitors: A Local Perspective

City newspapers offered critiques and colorful descriptions of units during their welcome to the city and their march to camp. The *Call* wrote of the Oregonians: "The men are fine looking soldiers, and are a magnificent body of physical manhood. Tall, strong and brawny with a determined look

on their countenances.”⁴² On 20 May, *The Examiner* dubbed Nebraskans “brave boys” though “rather smaller than the Oregon volunteers.”⁴³ Ten days later, the same newspaper wrote respectfully of the “bronzed troops from the South,” the Regulars of the 18th and 23d Infantry Regiments: “their sinewy figures bespoke the health and vigor of men inured to life on the frontier.”⁴⁴ “Husky men, all these,” proclaimed the *Chronicle* in its assessment of the 1st Montana.⁴⁵ The *Call* in particular employed vivid descriptions to delineate Volunteers: the “hardy miners and mountaineers” of Idaho; “the crack troops of the Keystone State,” Pennsylvania; the “fine-looking lot of men, big strapping plainsmen,” who hailed from Iowa; and “the Gotham Regiment” from New York.⁴⁶



San Francisco Chronicle, 21 May 1898

Figure 21.

Local journalists also delighted in identifying the mascots that accompanied Volunteers and Regulars. Many regiments and a number of smaller organizations sported some type of bird or animal. Company D, 7th California, arrived in early May with an American eagle.⁴⁷ Nebraska’s second battalion brought “Nebraska,” a huge golden eagle that William Jennings Bryan presented to the regiment.⁴⁸ Company F, 51st Iowa, toted a black eagle.⁴⁹ Two companies from the 1st Idaho brought their eagles,

“Pocatello Joe” and “Admiral Dewey.”⁵⁰ One company from the 1st New York carried a “bird of a different feather”—a crow named “Hobson.”⁵¹

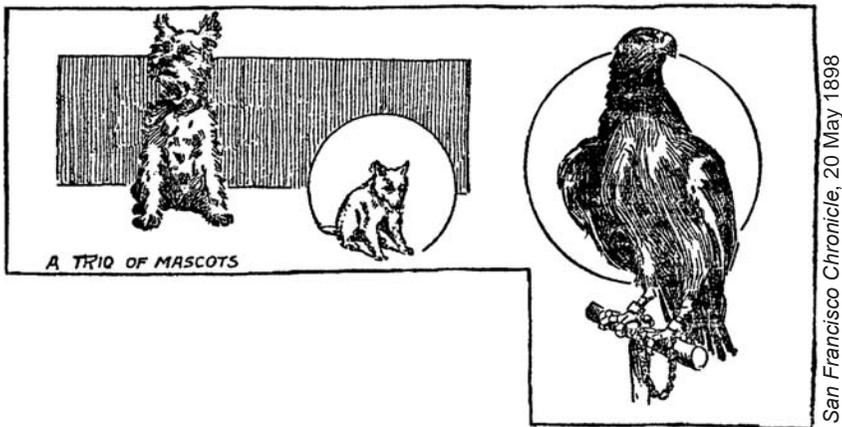


Figure 22.

Dogs were another favorite mascot among the troops. “Bummer,” a great dane, trotted alongside his masters in the 1st Battalion, 2d Oregon.⁵² Four dogs came with the troops from Idaho.⁵³ A fox terrier, “Boojum,” accompanied the Astor Battery.⁵⁴ Another artillery unit, the Alger (Wyoming) Battery, brought an Irish spaniel, “Jeff,” noteworthy for his “long legal history” in Cheyenne courts. The *Chronicle* observed “hord[e]s of other canine company mascots, most of which are named ‘Dewey.’”⁵⁵ The 10th Pennsylvania had a large black-and-white dog that bore the admiral’s name.⁵⁶ So, too, did a bulldog accompanying the 1st New York and a mutt with one company from the 51st Iowa.⁵⁷

Other units adopted less domesticated animals. One company from Idaho brought a five-week-old coyote.⁵⁸ The 1st Tennessee carried a raccoon.⁵⁹ One of the men in Nebraska’s second battalion marched to camp with a wolf pup, “Sampson,” cradled in his arms.⁶⁰

Perhaps the most novel of these mascots were teenage boys who accompanied three regiments. George Froam, a 64-pound “orphan waif from the streets of New Orleans,” connected with the 23d US Infantry during its brief stay in Louisiana. When the regiment departed for the Bay Area, Froam decided to tag along. Acting as willing accomplices, several troops smuggled the boy aboard the train. By the time the 23d Infantry reached the Golden Gate, Froam had earned a reputation for being a “hustler” who could make money singing, dancing, and polishing officers’ footwear.⁶¹

The ability to shine shoes endeared “Boots,” a 13-year-old bootblack, to the men of Company D, 10th Pennsylvania. Before leaving the East Coast, each of the troops contributed 25 cents to buy their mascot an outfit, then tried to sneak him onto the trains. Occasionally, the men paid his fare when railway authorities discovered the stowaway. Apparently, troops purchased the cheapest seat, for Boots nearly froze atop railroad cars when riding through snowsheds on the way to California.⁶²

The 1st Tennessee was the last regiment to cross the bay with a teenage mascot. Zeke Carsey, 13, began his association with Tennessee units in 1896. A native of Nashville, where he lived with his parents, Zeke endeared himself to the troops by employing “his ready wit and his superior musical abilities.” He had a reputation for being adept at playing the piccolo, drums, and banjo. Allegedly, his mother gave her permission for Zeke to go with the 1st Tennessee to the West Coast. Unlike his fellow mascots in the 23d Infantry and 10th Pennsylvania, Zeke traveled in style on the troop train; he rode in “the colonel’s car and was a constant source of entertainment to the officers.”⁶³

Into the Camps

The question of where to locate Volunteers and Regulars upon their arrival in the city had to be answered in relatively short order. Logically, the first places to consider were those military posts that were already established in the Bay Area. Evolving from military plans first conceived in 1850, the Army, by May 1898, possessed a network of installations designed for coast defense.⁶⁴

Two locations sat astride the Golden Gate straits: Fort Winfield Scott and Fort Baker. On the Marin County side north of the straits, Fort Baker occupied part of the Lime Point Military Reservation and its 1,335 acres of rugged, coastal terrain. A battery-size unit of artillery manned the fort’s crew-served weapons.⁶⁵ MG Miles had dubbed Lime Point “the Gibraltar of the Pacific.”⁶⁶ To the south, across the waterway, Fort Scott included coast artillery weapons and the old Fort Point fortress. The brick structure could accommodate several companies of infantry or comparable units of artillery.⁶⁷

Deeper into the Bay Area, the Army occupied smaller outposts that had been built to support Forts Baker and Scott during an attack. If enemy ships fought through the crossfire from these two forts and successfully negotiated minefields that protected the straits, US troops on Alcatraz Island could engage the seaborne force. Should a belligerent land force attempt to besiege Fort Scott, the works at Fort Mason protected Fort Scott’s vulnerable flank. Mason overlooked the bay about a mile and a half to the east of the

Presidio. Any land force threatening Marin's Fort Baker would have to contend with artillery and the small garrison positioned on Angel Island. Theoretically, troops at Angel Island and Fort Mason could also engage direct threats against the Alcatraz force.⁶⁸

In an emergency, Alcatraz and Angel Islands, as well as Fort Baker across the bay, offered potential bivouac sites for incoming forces. Establishing campgrounds at these locations, however, presented unattractive challenges of accessibility and support. Incapable of logistics self-sufficiency, these positions were sustained by San Francisco Bay watercraft. Each locale would eventually maintain small garrisons during the war, but these existed to man and maintain defense works.⁶⁹ In early May, local military officials needed suitable grounds quickly to accommodate the thousands of troops that President William McKinley was about to send to the Golden Gate.⁷⁰

The Presidio of San Francisco, the facility that provided manpower resources for these bay outposts, at once emerged as the most attractive site to locate incoming Volunteers and Regulars. Occupied continuously by American forces since May 1849, the military reservation encompassed 1,479 acres of land northwest of the city's more populous areas. It lay within walking distance of docks that could both receive and dispatch military forces. By May 1898, the Presidio tied into a mass transit system that provided access to parts of the city via cable car. A series of wells kept the post supplied with water. In addition to maintaining a small hospital, the reservation served as home to the US Marine Hospital, Fort Winfield Scott complex, and recently constructed brick barracks that sheltered Regulars assigned to the Bay Area.⁷¹

The Presidio was also close to MG H.C. Merriam's headquarters. Alerted that troops would stage in his California area of responsibility, Merriam issued a 4 May order to the reservation commander, LTC Louis T. Morris, to select campsites for an estimated 6,000 troops who were expected to converge on the city.⁷² That figure included Regulars of the 14th Infantry and Volunteers from California, Oregon, and Washington.

Morris looked over the Presidio for space to accommodate such a large contingent. Grounds located in elevated areas where water would "have to be brought, either by piping or by water carts," appeared most suited for an encampment.⁷³ The reservation's water wells, however, barely possessed the capacity to provide for the garrison currently assigned. The thousands of troops expected momentarily in the city would simply overwhelm the Presidio's water supply.⁷⁴

Morris's encampment options were not limited just to the Presidio or other Bay Area military outposts such as Angel Island that could take about 500 men.⁷⁵ Some citizens in the San Francisco community stepped forward to render assistance by offering shelters or real estate. Fontana and Company, local canners, offered a large brick warehouse on the bay shore near the foot of Van Ness Avenue. Once home to the Mission Woolen Mills, the warehouse had the added advantage of being located close to Fort Mason, part of the Bay Area defense network.⁷⁶ (See figure 23.) Other sites tendered included "the old race-track property, a site on the hills dividing the Richmond District from the Presidio and another on the hospital tract."⁷⁷ Like the Fontana warehouse, all were within a mile of the Presidio.

By 6 May, Morris had chosen his preferred campsite—along the southern periphery of the Presidio's spacious drill field (labeled "Parade Ground" by the *Call*) that bordered a stretch of road just inside the Presidio's Lombard Street entrance not far from the Union Street cable line terminus.⁷⁸ That decision unquestionably received the endorsement of officers affiliated with the California regiments, the first units to go into the designated location. CPT Frank de L. Carrington, the Regular Army officer directed to muster California Volunteers into federal service, preferred that "the new soldiers should at once accustom themselves to camp life," an environment best developed on a military reservation.⁷⁹ (See figure 24.)

LTC Victor D. DuBoce of the 1st California Infantry also supported the Presidio option. Indeed, the *Call* reported that Morris' decision turned on DuBoce's plea "to put them at the Presidio, where the military surroundings as well as the presence and example of the regular troops and of the other regiments would help to infuse the military spirit into the organization."⁸⁰ In a separate article, the same paper reported: "The camp will be independent of the Presidio proper, but the troops will be compelled to obey the post regulations."⁸¹

Merriam endorsed Morris's selection and published General Orders Number 8, which specified 120,000 square feet of camping space for a regimental-size force. The order directed First Lieutenant (1LT) John M. Neall, 4th Cavalry, to assign plots to arriving units "keeping in view, first, facilities for water supply, and, second, economy of space."⁸² Subsequently, Regulars of the 4th Cavalry "laid out the camp grounds, marked off the company streets and in various ways did all in their power to make officers and men comfortable."⁸³

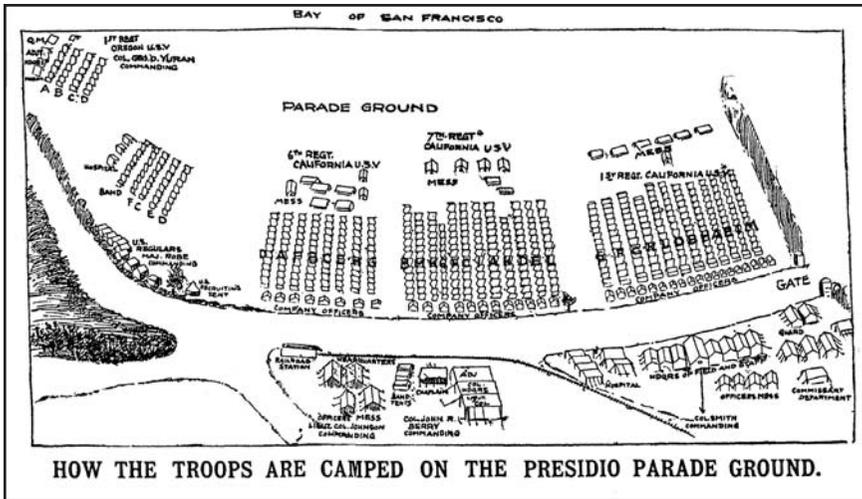
On Saturday, 7 May, the 1st California Infantry commanded by COL James F. Smith marched onto the Presidio and then into camp. 1LT Neall



Crocker's Guide Map of the City of San Francisco, 1896

Figure 23. Fort Mason and north San Francisco, 1896. Arrow points to general vicinity of Fontana warehouse.

showed the colonel his regiment's designated location, just inside the Lombard Street gate.⁸⁴ COL John R. Berry's 7th California Infantry arrived later in the day and established its bivouac area to the west of Smith's regiment. Soon units from the 14th Infantry, 6th California, and 2d Oregon, in succession, joined the Presidio encampment. By 13 May, the military reservation boasted a campsite composed of approximately 3,200 Regulars and Volunteers.⁸⁵



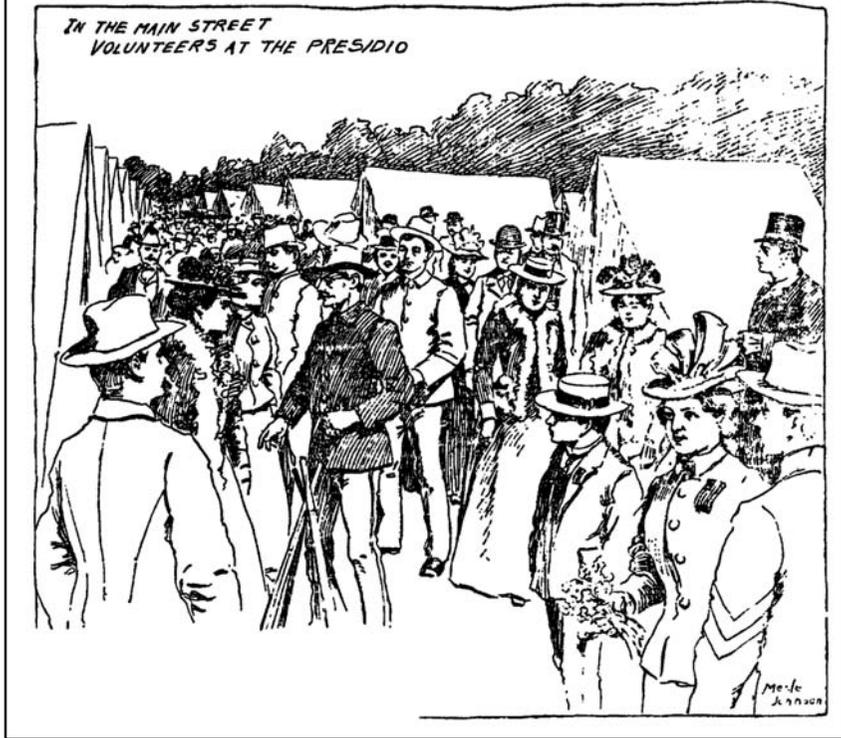
San Francisco Call, 18 May 1898

Figure 25.

Starting at the southeast edge of the large, somewhat barren drill field, the camp's bivouac sites sprang up by regiment with approximately 50 feet separating each organization. Company streets ran north and south; tents faced and opened to the east because of strong, westerly winds that prevailed in the afternoon. The *Chronicle* reported that what little vegetation existed on the plain soon disappeared in the wake of "detached groups of men marching and wheeling and squatting and aiming their rifles, according to the manner prescribed for an outlying skirmish line." Clay and sand turned quickly to dust. When San Franciscans flocked to visit the camps during early May, they churned up a dark haze of dust that engulfed the bivouac area.⁸⁶

While other areas of the reservation may have offered greater protection against the elements, access to water effectively dictated the camp's location. When LTC Morris first conducted his reconnaissance for suitable campsites, Hermann Schussler, chief engineer of the Spring Valley Water Works, always seemed near at hand. 1LT Neall's instructions regarding site selection placed a premium on access to water. Ultimately, the

SUNDAY SIGHTSEERS OVERRAN THE CITY
OF THE SOLDIERS AT THE PRESIDIO.



San Francisco Chronicle, 9 May 1898

Figure 26.

Presidio's cavalry drill field emerged as the top choice because there the military could tap into water more quickly and cheaply than in other areas. The *Chronicle* quoted a Presidio officer who stated, "There is a large main at the Lombard-street entrance, and to supply any ground below that level nothing but pipes was necessary. To supply the slope above the road every drop of water would have to be pumped. The mains above the hillside are a long way off, and to have chosen them would have involved delay, which was inadmissible, and expense, which was unjustifiable."⁸⁷ Beginning 6 May, Presidio officials arranged to have workers from the Spring Valley Water Company lay 6-inch pipe off the Lombard Street main to give the new encampment its source of water.⁸⁸

Spring Valley water could quench the thirst of those soldiers who were equipped to establish their own bivouac sites. That condition distinguished the first regimental organizations that marched onto the Presidio. Each possessed sufficient quartermaster blankets, uniforms, and tentage

to establish outdoor dwellings. Such was not the case with all units closing on San Francisco in early May, including one of California's own, the heavy artillery.

Hastily organized, these four batteries of 600 men had no mess equipment, uniforms, or other quartermaster gear. Part of the reason was that when the California National Guard reorganized in 1897, artillery regiments and light batteries disappeared from state rolls.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, the War Department directed the state to provide four heavy batteries in addition to its infantry commitment.⁹⁰ Assessing the situation, CPT Carrington, the mustering officer, telegraphed BG Corbin from San Francisco on 9 May: "I think it advisable to hold batteries of heavy artillery here for a few days until they are fully equipped to go into camp complete. . . . I have the use without cost to the government of a building for quartering them and can feed them as at present at seventeen cents per meal per man."⁹¹ That building of which he wrote was the warehouse Fontana and Company had offered.



Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Nat'l Park Service

Figure 27. Fontana warehouse, 1915.

On 11 May, the artillerymen, attired in civilian clothes, marched out of their armory looking "more like a column of the unemployed."⁹² The Volunteers converged on the old Mission Woolen Mill, which Private Charles R. Detrick of the 1st California described as "under the old smooth-bores of Fort Mason."⁹³ There the troops took up quarters in the

four-story structure. With the cannery still conducting business on the first floor, artillerymen spread over the upper three levels. Mark J. Fontana, one of the owners, offered the facility to the military for as long as needed.⁹⁴ Within a week, the Californians were joined in the warehouse by units from the 1st Washington, a regiment that MG Merriam judged to be “half uniformed and half armed.”⁹⁵

Merriam likely formed his impression of the 1st Washington before leaving Vancouver Barracks for San Francisco to oversee the assembly of forces. By the time he arrived in the city on 16 May, troops from California, Washington, Oregon, and the 14th Infantry had taken shelter at two locations: the Presidio and the Fontana warehouse. But other troops were coming by the thousands, and Merriam had to decide where to quarter those units that were scheduled to arrive starting 18 May.⁹⁶

After making a quick inspection of the Presidio encampment and conferring with LTC Morris, Merriam chose the site of the old Bay District Racetrack. The location, less than a mile due south of the Presidio, could be accessed easily by foot or streetcar. Bounded by Point Lobos Avenue to the north, Fulton Street to the south, and 1st through 6th Avenues running east to west, the site and its environs promised to accommodate many regiments that were about to arrive in the city.⁹⁷ (See figure 28.)

Merriam chose the location for several reasons. The military preferred to keep regimental organizations together at campsites. Smaller posts in the Bay Area could not host organizations that size. Another option, the Fontana warehouse, could be dismissed because of the number of troops already located there. When Merriam reached San Francisco, more than 1,000 men had found shelter in the building.

Expanding the Presidio encampment seemed the most likely choice, but the general was not persuaded that such a step was needed. Merriam wrote, “sufficient ground, suitable in all respects for so large an encampment, could not be made available on the Presidio reservation and supplied with water without considerable time and an expenditure of more than \$50,000.” Additionally, Merriam conducted his arrival inspection at a time when the Presidio camp did not look its best. Deluged by rain and crowds of visitors during the 48 hours preceding his arrival, the campsite had been transformed into what the *Call* described as a veritable quagmire of mud, sand, and standing water.⁹⁸ Sandy soil, water, and thousands of additional troops would likely produce similar results anywhere else on the reservation. That mix of men with elements could have had catastrophic effects on the post forestation project begun nine years earlier. Congress had provided

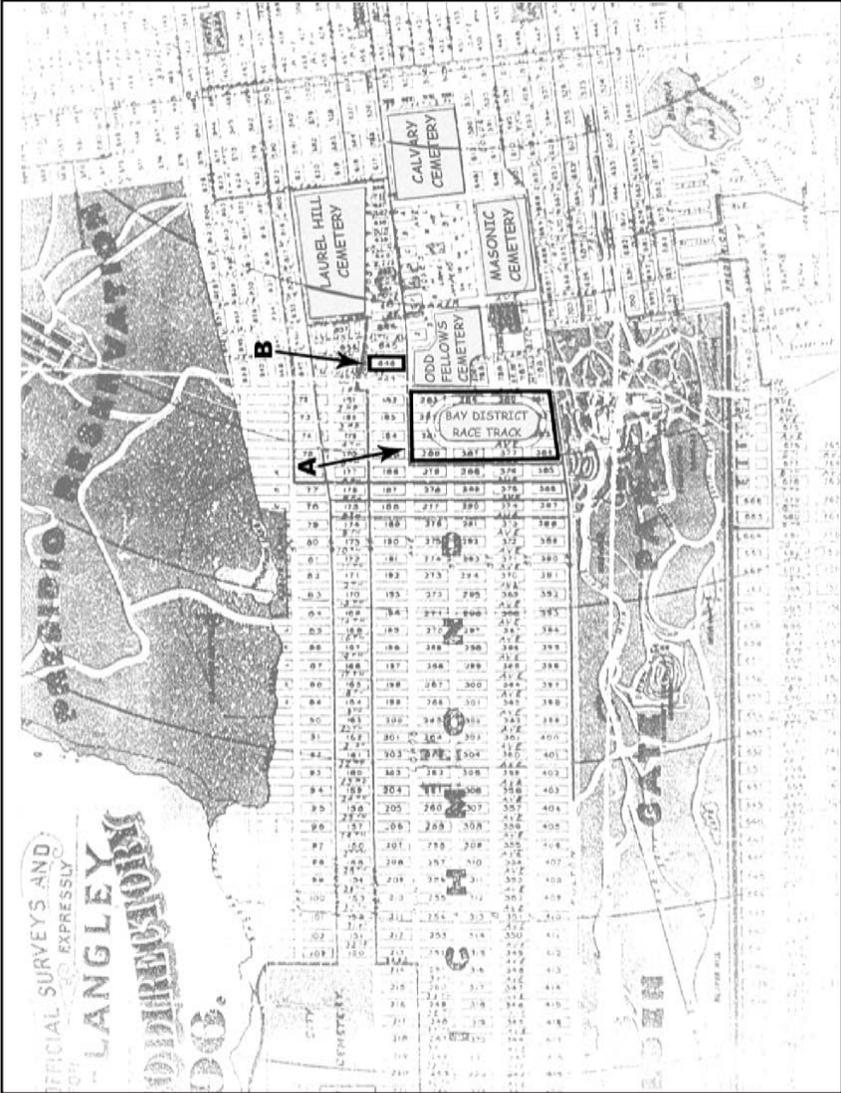


Figure 28. Northwest San Francisco, 1896. Arrow A—Old Bay District Racetrack. Arrow B—Jordan Tract.

some \$10,000 for a Bay Area firm to plant 400,000 eucalyptus, cedar, pine, and acacia to reclaim sand dunes and protect the installation's water supply.⁹⁹ Preserving the effects of this program provided an additional incentive to finding accommodations elsewhere for incoming troops.

The old Bay District Racetrack site possessed attractive features in its own right. Like the Fontana warehouse, the grounds would come at virtually no cost to the military. The Crocker Estate Company owned the property and required only "that the army authorities shall leave the premises in as good condition as they find them." City mains in the vicinity could readily provide sufficient water for the site, which could hold as many as 10,000 troops.¹⁰⁰

Beginning 18 May, Volunteers and Regulars poured onto the old Bay District Racetrack, officially dubbed Camp Merritt.¹⁰¹ Over the next several days, Merritt became the campground for units from Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado, Minnesota, Idaho, Pennsylvania, California, Utah, and Wyoming. Regular engineers and infantrymen from the 14th, 18th, and 23d Regiments joined the campsite. A week after opening, the bivouac absorbed the old Bay District Racetrack and several surrounding city blocks. It boasted a population of more than 7,000 troops.¹⁰²

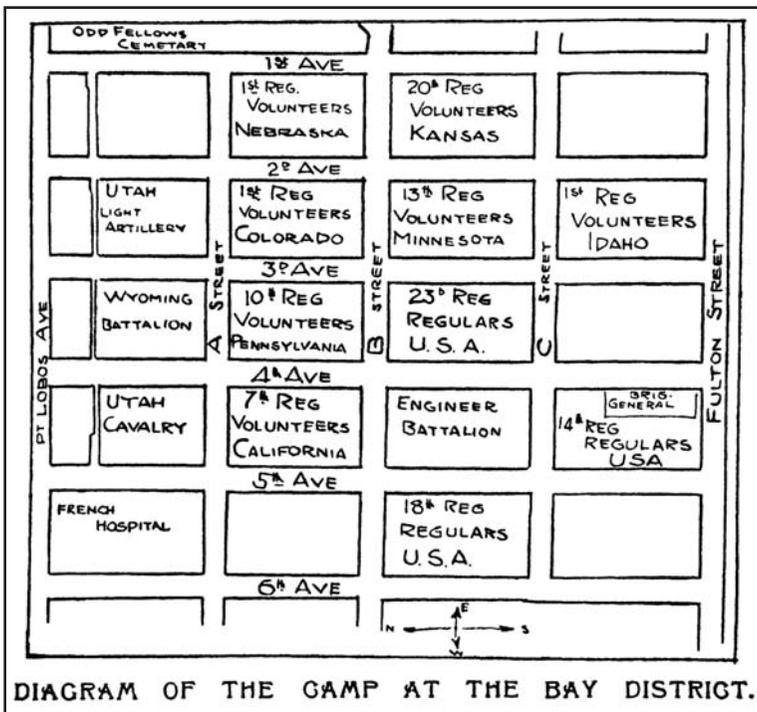
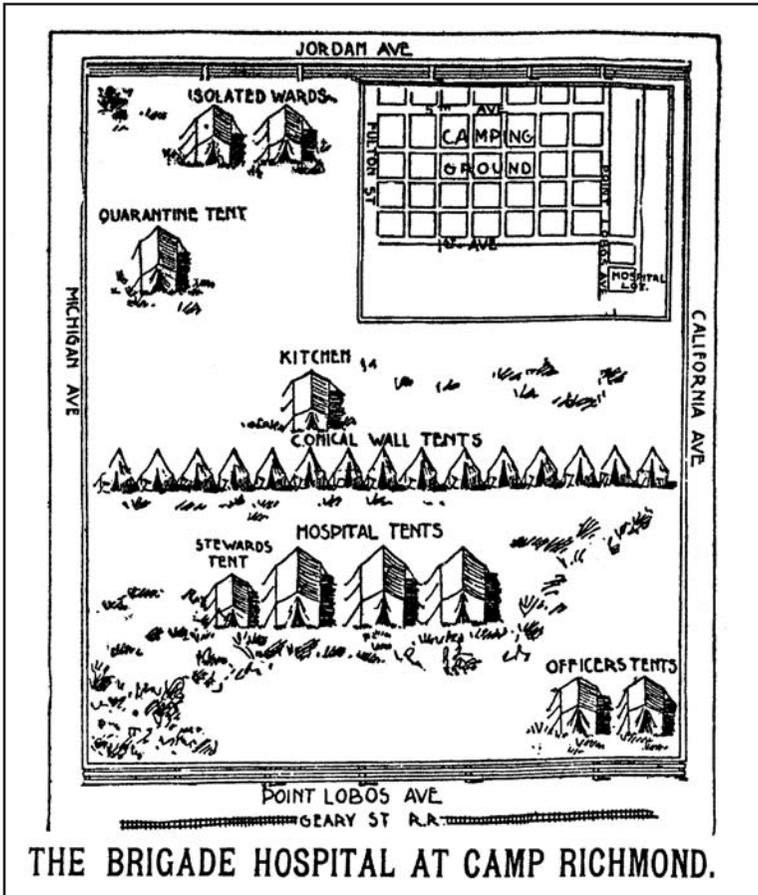


DIAGRAM OF THE CAMP AT THE BAY DISTRICT.

The Examiner, 31 May 1898

Figure 29.

So great was the influx of forces to the Golden Gate that the military sought additional space to position troops. James Clark Jordan, a San Francisco real estate entrepreneur, owned land just northeast of the old Bay District Racetrack. In late May, Jordan offered the military an area bounded by California Avenue to the north, Point Lobos Avenue to the south, and Maple to Michigan Streets running east to west. On 25 May, MG Elwell S. Otis wrote Jordan, "I am in receipt of your communication tendering the free use of the land known as 'The Jordan Tract' [see figure 28, arrow B] to the government for camping purposes of its troops now being assembled at this point. The tract is most convenient for such purposes and is gladly accepted."¹⁰³ On 28 May, the Army spilled across 1st Avenue into this new section of Camp Merritt. Eventually, the Jordan Tract included the division hospital and troops from Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nevada, and Iowa.



San Francisco Call, 30 May 1898

Figure 30. Some streets are mislabeled.

By 14 June, nearly 15,000 Regulars and Volunteers were assembled in San Francisco. Military officials spread the troops about four sites: 2,180 soldiers on the Presidio, including the original bivouac area subsequently called Camp Miller; 680 Volunteers at the Fontana warehouse; and just under 12,000 men at the two locations constituting Camp Merritt.¹⁰⁴



Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Nat'l Park Service

Figure 31. 51st Iowa at Camp Merritt.

Establishing Command and Control

MG Henry C. Merriam would be the first, and several months later the last, senior Army two-star commander to influence the forces assembled in San Francisco for the war against Spain. A career officer who received a bachelor's and master's degree from Colby College in Maine, Merriam entered the service as a captain during the Civil War. In that conflict, he earned several brevet promotions and the Medal of Honor for gallantry on the battlefield. Beginning in 1866, Merriam spent the next 30 years performing various duties on the frontier. He participated in combat operations against Mexican forces during 1876, the Nez Percé in 1877, and the Sioux from 1890 to 1891.¹⁰⁵

Promoted to brigadier general on 30 June 1897, Merriam took command of the Department of Columbia a month later. In that position, the general assumed responsibility for operations in Idaho, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska. The attendant problems created by a rush of miners into Yukon territory demanded the use of departmental resources. In early 1898, the

spat over boundaries between the United States and Canada described in chapter II that involved COL Thomas Anderson's 14th US Infantry occurred within Merriam's command.¹⁰⁶

Due south of Merriam's Columbia Department, Brigadier General (BG) William Shafter headed the Department of California at the beginning of the war with Spain. Shortly after ordering the 1st US Infantry Regiment from the California territory to an assembly area in the South, the War Department directed Shafter to leave his post at San Francisco and take command of troops assembling at New Orleans.¹⁰⁷

With Shafter's departure, Merriam assumed responsibility for the Department of California while retaining control of the Department of Columbia.¹⁰⁸ His combined territory encompassed the entire West Coast of the United States, Alaska, Idaho, and Nevada. Merriam was, therefore, at once responsible for the Army's portion of Pacific coast defense. Merriam initially elected to remain at Vancouver Barracks in Washington state where, in addition to coast defense, he was also ordered to "supervise organization of volunteers in Washington, Oregon and California."¹⁰⁹

Merriam's choice of locations from which to exercise command may have been appropriate through late April. By early May, however, he should have reconsidered his decision. The president's directive to send Army forces to the Philippines through San Francisco had considerable implications regarding the Department of California. A senior officer needed to be present to supervise the reception, quartering, and equipping of forces due into that port of embarkation. Coast defense and state militia mobilization could be monitored just as easily from San Francisco as it could from Vancouver Barracks. Merriam tried to establish a *de facto* presence by communicating via telegraph with the department's staff, but that action did not allow for a personal assessment of actions.

Merriam's decision did not rest well with the War Department. Between 3 and 16 May, Corbin, Miles, and Alger had no general officer contact at the Golden Gate to render status reports on the assembly of forces. They received information piecemeal and from numerous sources by wire. Finally, on 13 May, Corbin telegraphed Merriam, "The General Commanding the Army would like for you to repair to San Francisco soon as possible and give the organization of these troops your personal attention."¹¹⁰

To his credit, Merriam, reacting to Corbin's message, departed for the city within 24 hours.¹¹¹ Nevertheless, to ensure that Merriam fully understood his priorities, the AG's office followed up with a message on 16 May:

“Secretary of War directs that until further orders you establish your headquarters at San Francisco, Cal. You will continue to exercise command of both the Departments of the Columbia and of California.”¹¹²

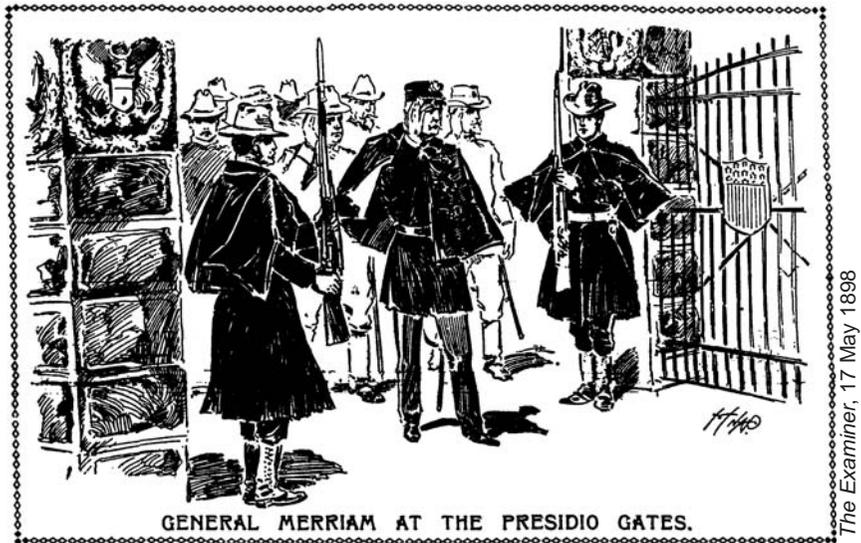


Figure 32.

Merriam’s first major decision after his arrival on 16 May would be his most controversial: selecting the Bay District Racetrack as a campsite. Before he made his choice, *Call* accounts looked for the Presidio to absorb additional forces reaching the Golden Gate beginning mid-May.¹¹³ The newspaper even cited 1LT Neall as saying incoming troops would be accommodated at the Presidio “upon the slope south of the Union car line.”¹¹⁴ Given his responsibility to establish campsites, Neall was certainly in a position to know where troops would most likely be quartered.

After moving to establish an additional encampment away from the Presidio, Merriam’s influence over all the forces positioned in San Francisco diminished due to the presence of MG E.S. Otis. On 11 May 1898, Secretary of War R.A. Alger offered Otis “second in command” of the Philippine expedition.¹¹⁵ (See figure 33.) Alger’s proposal was not due to happenstance; the War Department knew firsthand of Otis’s talents. He was an experienced senior leader, and he held both regimental and brigade command positions during the Civil War. In the 1880s, Otis led the Regular Army’s 20th Infantry Regiment. After his promotion to brigadier general in 1893, he took command of the Department of Columbia. In 1897, he left that post to become commander of the Department of Colorado.¹¹⁶

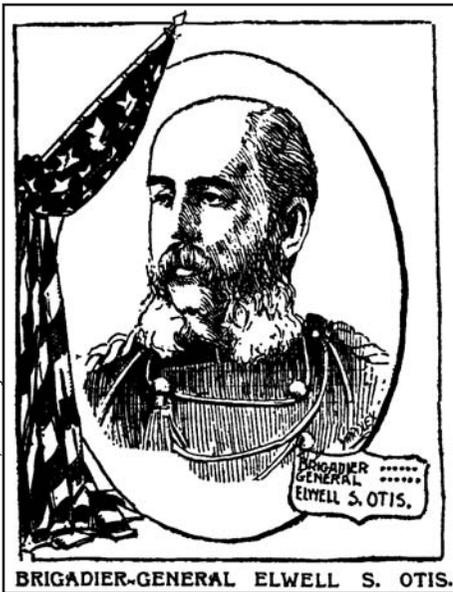


Figure 33.

After accepting Alger's offer, Otis received a twofold directive from the Secretary of War. First, as a newly promoted major general of Volunteers, he was ordered to take command of forces assembling in San Francisco, assisting "in their organization and equipment as rapidly as possible."¹¹⁸ Later, Alger instructed Otis to join the first force leaving for the Philippines. He wanted Otis to confer with Admiral Dewey and then occupy "such part of the islands as you may be able to do with this force until the arrival of other troops."¹¹⁹ The War Department urged Otis to depart for the archipelago as soon as possible.¹²⁰

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Otis acted quickly following his arrival at the Golden Gate on Tuesday evening, 17 May. He spent Wednesday making personal inspections and developing a sense of what had been accomplished and what needed to be done.¹²¹ That evening he dashed off a superb report to Washington, the first of its kind to come from the West Coast, highlighting the status of vessels, troops, and supplies designated for the Pacific. He concluded with one recommendation based upon his onsite observation and assessment: Otis requested permission from the War Department to remain in San Francisco, "putting the troops here in condition" for service abroad.¹²² He assessed that the Army needed a senior officer to organize the effort at the port of embarkation.

Otis also possessed superb organizational and administrative skills. In 1881, MG William T. Sherman directed Otis to develop the new School of Application for Cavalry and Infantry at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. For four years, he served as the school's first commandant, helping to introduce a formal system of education to officers within the military profession. In 1896, he worked in the War Department revising US Army regulations. When asked to become a part of the Philippine endeavor, Otis was finishing duty as president of a court-martial proceeding, using analytical skills acquired on his way to earning a law degree from Harvard.¹¹⁷

Wisely, after consulting with the president, Secretary Alger directed Otis to remain.¹²³ On 20 May, the general established Headquarters, US Expeditionary Forces, and assumed command of all troops “for contemplated expeditionary purposes.”¹²⁴ Over the next several days he prepared the first expedition for departure, readying the troops and their vessels. He apprised the War Department of coordination that should be conducted with the Navy over convoy support and raised concerns about acquiring transports for subsequent deployments. By 24 May, troops of the first expedition were onboard and prepared to steam for the Philippines.¹²⁵

With that accomplished, Otis learned that the Secretary of War had renewed his desire to have the general sail with the next expedition.¹²⁶ The secretary’s preference would not be fulfilled in the short term. Instead, Otis assumed command of a new organization established on 1 June 1898: the Independent Division, Philippine Islands Expeditionary Forces.¹²⁷ More important, he established his headquarters at Camp Merritt on the grounds of the old Bay District Racetrack.¹²⁸ From that location, Otis would be in a position to exercise command and control over his newly organized division that was composed of four brigades. The division was created in part to ensure Otis’s retention in San Francisco, even after the arrival of the Army’s second-highest ranking officer, Wesley Merritt.



Figure 34.

The Examiner, 27 May 1898

Like Merriam and Otis, Merritt was a career soldier; however, he came into the service under circumstances quite different from those of the other two generals. Born in New York City on 16 June 1836, Merritt entered the Army after graduating from West Point on the eve of the Civil War. During the conflict, he commanded a cavalry division as a brevet major general of Volunteers.

After the war, Merritt reverted in rank to a Regular Army lieutenant colonel but continued to serve in the cavalry. In 1887, he completed a tour as superintendent of his alma mater, then assumed control of the Department of the Missouri as a brigadier general. In 1895, Merritt received a promotion to major general and, subsequently, command of the Department of the East.¹²⁹

Merritt had presided over the East's jurisdiction for about a year when the war began in April 1898. Early in the month, he completed an inspection of the Army's coast installations with a view toward sustaining a possible maritime attack mounted by the Spanish.¹³⁰ As had Merriam on the West Coast, Merritt prioritized eastern seaboard defense from Maine through Virginia. For the first 10 days of May, he remained oriented on his responsibilities in the East as that department's commander. Correspondence with the Governor of Pennsylvania indicated that he was concerned with protecting docks and harbors, particularly around Newport News, Virginia.¹³¹

On 12 May, the War Department abruptly shifted Merritt's focus. The AG, BG H.C. Corbin, informed Merritt that he had been relieved as commander, Department of the East. Acting on directives that filled key command positions, Corbin notified Merritt that "by direction of the President you are assigned to the command of the expedition being sent to the Philippine Islands. You will repair to San Francisco, Cal., and assume command of and organize troops assembling there."¹³²

Merritt did not reach the West Coast until 26 May, which is why the locations and actions of Merriam and Otis were so important. At least one of the three general officers needed to be in San Francisco, directing the efforts of those units reaching the city and coordinating troops' departure for the Philippines. Despite Merriam's proximity to these activities, Otis emerged early as the key general officer to shape the Philippine command evolving in San Francisco.

While Otis worked to reach the bay city and establish control, Merritt elected to fight other battles. In the two weeks preceding his arrival at the Golden Gate, Merritt visited Washington, DC on two occasions, conversing

with the president and Secretary of War on details related to the Philippine expedition. During these meetings and in subsequent correspondence, Merritt advanced his requests for more Regulars, fewer Volunteers, and specific kinds of equipment for the force.¹³³ His running debate with the Commanding General of the Army over Regular versus Volunteer force ratios culminated in a partial victory for Merritt.¹³⁴ In a sense, his efforts during these two weeks represented his focus for much of the war. Merritt concentrated on squeezing Washington for more manpower resources; Otis received, shaped, and shipped them.

By the time Merritt joined Otis in San Francisco, the Philippine expedition had achieved departmental status.¹³⁵ On 30 May 1898, Merritt established in San Francisco the Headquarters, US Expeditionary Forces and Department of the Pacific.¹³⁶ With this step the general assumed command of all forces allocated for duty in the Philippines, including the Independent Division at Camp Merritt that MG Otis commanded.

He also established a departmental staff to coordinate actions between Washington and San Francisco. When Merritt received orders to take command, Corbin telegraphed, “You will be accompanied by your authorized aids (sic). General staff officers will be assigned you hereafter.”¹³⁷ McKinley had the power to appoint staff members when circumstances permitted him to name general officers.

McKinley’s authority did not deter Merritt from initiating requests of the president. Just as he had been prone to do for units and equipment, Merritt appealed for specific individuals. In a succinctly written letter to the president prepared on 15 May, Merritt addressed several concerns relating to his command, including the “urgent necessity that the chiefs of the staff departments be appointed at once to assist in organizing and equipping their specialties. They will need time to get information of the conditions and to study their respective problems. We are going too far from our base to permit of any guess work.” Merritt then submitted a list of staff officers “being those that I would select, but any capable men, chosen by their respective chiefs, would be agreeable to me.”¹³⁸

In this instance, the president honored many of Merritt’s requests. The general submitted his preferences for 10 general staff positions; seven of those he asked for joined his department. Equally significant, he urged the commissary general in Washington on 15 May to expedite the assignment of his chief commissary, LTC David L. Brainard, to San Francisco “in order to make every preparation for the subsistence of the command going to the Philippines.”¹³⁹ Brainard received orders and

reached the Golden Gate on 24 May, two days before Merritt arrived.¹⁴⁰

Two other officers noteworthy for their role in preparing troops to deploy joined Brainard on the Pacific department staff. COL Robert P. Hughes, Inspector General (IG), charged with examining each unit assembled, assessed what Merritt described as “all matters relating to its operations and involving its efficiency.”¹⁴¹ At the outbreak of the war, Hughes served Merritt as the IG for the Department of the East. The *Call* reported that Hughes also acted as a courier between Merritt and Secretary Alger when the two negotiated force mix.¹⁴²

LTC James W. Pope served as the department’s chief quartermaster. In writing a description of the supply departments in an 1893 publication, Merritt singled out the quartermaster for its significance. He assessed the department as “second to none in importance. On it depends the supply of the army of clothing, forage, transportation, and everything that is required by the soldier in barracks or in the field connected with these.”¹⁴³

Pope and other quartermasters worked closely with one officer who already operated in San Francisco at the beginning of the war, CPT Oscar F. Long. In April 1898, Long served as acting Depot Quartermaster, San Francisco. In this position, he maintained close ties with designated territorial departments while working directly for the Quartermaster-General, US Army. Long managed a general supply depot from which divisions and departments could, on order from the War Department, draw essential clothing and equipment.¹⁴⁴

By early June, many of the troops destined for service abroad had arrived in the city. They were assigned to one of four quartering sites: a section of the Presidio, the Fontana warehouse, or either of two locations that constituted Camp Merritt. Three major generals interacted to accomplish the major missions pursued on the West Coast. MG Merriam commanded the Department of California and Department of Columbia, facilitating the establishment of coast defense; the mobilization of western Volunteers; and the support of units marshaling in San Francisco for duty in the Philippine archipelago. MG Merritt commanded the Department of the Pacific, gathering resources from Washington, DC and the Department of California to outfit his expedition abroad. MG Otis led the Independent Division, a part of Merritt’s command, and coordinated receiving, equipping, training, and shipping the force bound for duty in the Pacific. That process of preparing and deploying the Philippine expeditionary force for war against Spain spanned three and one-half months and drew upon all three commands’ resources.

Notes

1. "Troops Pouring Into the City," *San Francisco Daily Report*, 21 May 1898, 2; "Fifty-First Iowa Regiment is Here," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 10 June 1898, 7.
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Chapter IV

Overseeing and Training the Troops

Organizing, training, and equipping units for expeditions overseas became a top priority for those in command at San Francisco. The task to prepare and move troops thousands of miles across the Pacific, having no precedent in US Army history, had to be addressed quickly, efficiently, and spontaneously. Military and political officials in Washington were pushing for rapid deployments to the Philippines.

To exercise effective leadership within his department, MG Wesley Merritt needed the services of general officers to lead new brigades and assembled expeditions. He had to establish suitable command and control facilities capable of linking his command to the War Department and various local contacts. He also had to execute several responsibilities that put him in touch with Bay Area political, economic, and social leaders.

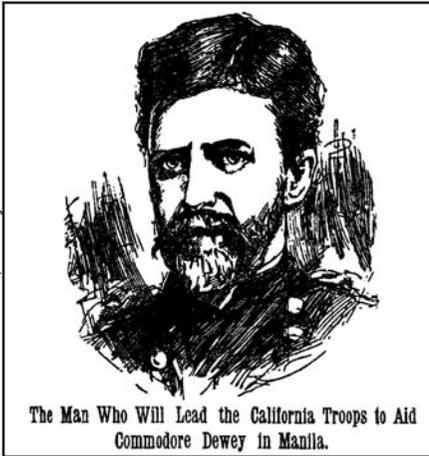
As the commander of Camp Merritt, MG Elwell S. Otis faced his own challenges. To Otis fell much of the burden of training the force to achieve proficiency as a military organization. To that end, he and other commanders worked to establish good order and discipline within the Independent Division. They also had to identify those diversions that would be appropriate and suitable for units to maintain their men's morale. Welfare of the troops quickly emerged as a major test for the command. Officers from the ordnance, subsistence, quartermaster, and medical departments grappled with how to equip, feed, and care for Volunteers and Regulars as they prepared to deploy overseas.

Exercising Command and Control

When apprised of his selection as commander of the Philippine expedition, Merritt petitioned the War Department to ensure that his command reflected a greater ratio of Regulars to Volunteers. Along with more Regulars, he solicited additional artillery and cavalry units to augment the sizable infantry forces already committed to his command. To assist in the tasks of receiving, staging, and deploying the force of nearly 20,000 troops, the general recognized the need for ample senior leadership.

Before reaching San Francisco, Merritt initiated a request for additional general officers. On 21 May, during his final trip to the nation's capital before heading west, Merritt submitted to the AG, BG Corbin, a by-name request for one-star officers that would be "necessary to the success of my expedition." Again showing his preference for active duty military, the Pacific department commander began his petition asking for three

San Francisco Call, 5 May 1898



The Man Who Will Lead the California Troops to Aid Commodore Dewey in Manila.

Figure 35. BG Thomas M. Anderson.

Regular Army colonels: George W. Davis, Adna R. Chaffee, and Samuel S. Sumner. Each had recently received a promotion to brigadier general of Volunteers; all had a cavalry connection. Then Merritt added that he would welcome two from civilian life should the president appoint them general officers: COL Francis V. Greene and COL George A. Garretson. Both possessed military experience and were graduates of West Point.¹

Merritt did not receive his Regular Army preferences. The War Department’s assignment of general officers illustrated how the administration emphasized Caribbean over Pacific missions. On 16 May, Alger approved a command list that assigned seven of eight major generals of Volunteers to camps gathering resources for operations against Cuba or Puerto Rico. The only major general named for Philippine duty via San Francisco was MG Otis.² Of 19 Regular colonels appointed brigadier generals, including the three that Merritt requested, only one received orders for the Golden Gate: Thomas M. Anderson, former commander of the 14th US Infantry, who was already on the West Coast.³ Merritt knew at the time of his request that both Otis and Anderson belonged to his command.

MG Merritt fared about the same with regard to his petition for specific civilian appointees. Garretson dodged an assignment to the Philippines, admitting that “I do not care particularly for the detail.”⁴ Greene was already with Shafter’s command in Florida, but the War Department ordered him to San Francisco. Unlike Garretson, Greene welcomed the directive: “Will leave to-night unless otherwise instructed.”⁵ Greene and Merritt shared a common history. Both had written on military subjects for professional publications.⁶ Both had graduated from the US Military Academy. Greene sub-



General Francis V. Greene.

San Francisco Chronicle, 29 May 1898

Figure 36.

sequently taught military engineering at the academy during part of Merritt's tour as superintendent.⁷

Merritt later pursued and secured the services of two other brigadier generals with whom he had served. BG Charles King was adjutant of the 5th US Cavalry when Merritt commanded the regiment in the late 1870s.⁸ Upon learning that King had been nominated as brigadier general of Volunteers, Merritt telegraphed his congratulations and asked him to join his command, which the War Department arranged.⁹ Another of his by-name requests, BG Arthur MacArthur, had served with Merritt at Fort Leavenworth in the 1880s.¹⁰ MacArthur reached San Francisco in June 1898.¹¹



General Charles H. King.

Figure 37.

San Francisco Chronicle, 29 May 1898

Two additional general officers joined Merritt. BG Marcus P. Miller, like Anderson a commander on the West Coast at the outbreak of the war, transferred to the Department of the Pacific from the Department of California.¹² BG Harrison Gray Otis reached Merritt's command through a favor of the president. The law to raise a Volunteer Army, passed by Congress on 22 April 1898, empowered McKinley to nominate one- and two-star general officers for each division formed by Regular and Volunteer regiments. The president took a personal interest in filling these billets. He used the law to name Otis, editor of the *Los Angeles Times*, to Merritt's command. Described by one of the Volunteers, Karl Kraemer of the 51st

Iowa, as "a tall heavy set man with light hair and a goatee and mustache," Otis had served with the 23d Ohio during the Civil War.¹³ The regiment provided Otis with a key connection to the president; McKinley belonged to the 23d Ohio during the same conflict.¹⁴ (See figures 39 and 40.)



Figure 38.

San Francisco Call, 13 June 1898

By mid-June, Merritt's department therefore consisted of an additional major general, Elwell S. Otis, and six brigadier generals. Before deploying to the archipelago, Miller, King, H.G. Otis,

San Francisco Chronicle, 16 August 1898



Figure 39.



Figure 40.

The Examiner, 28 May 1898

and MacArthur each commanded one of the Independent Division's four brigades in San Francisco. Anderson and Greene led the first two expeditions into the Pacific shortly after they reached the Golden Gate.

As the commander of the department's Independent Division and Camp Merritt, MG Otis was entitled to a staff. When the Secretary of War ordered Otis to San Francisco to take charge of the expedition pending Merritt's arrival, Alger authorized the general "to take with you such staff officers and clerical assistance as you may desire."¹⁵ Otis quite correctly interpreted that offer to include more than personal aides. He brought with him four officers and seven noncommissioned officers.¹⁶

Staff members who accompanied MG Otis assumed critical responsibilities. Major Francis Moore performed some quartermaster functions, and CPT John S. Mallory served as acting IG. Two aides attended Otis: CPT John L. Sehon and 1LT Fred W. Sladen. Others who subsequently joined the division staff included CPT George Ruhlén and CPT C.A. Devol, acting quartermasters, and Major W.O. Owen, chief surgeon, who also supervised the division field hospital. Some of these men changed duty positions or held several titles simultaneously during their tours in San Francisco.¹⁷

After Otis and some of his staff reached the Golden Gate in mid-May, they established the Headquarters, US Expeditionary Forces in downtown San Francisco.¹⁸ The city's Phelan Building at O'Farrell and Market Streets would serve as the command and control center for expeditionary force leadership before deployment. Otis and his staff occupied offices at

the site until the end of the month.¹⁹ On 30 May, Merritt's entourage constituting Headquarters, Department of the Pacific, took up residence on the fourth floor.²⁰ Otis and the staff personnel of the newly created Independent Division relocated to Camp Merritt.²¹ When MG Merritt sailed for the Philippines in late June, Otis returned to downtown San Francisco.²²

The Phelan Building had specific features that appealed to Philippine expeditionary leaders looking to establish a headquarters site. Part of the building already served as the Headquarters, Department of California. The commander and his staff occupied much of the second floor.²³ Officers from the Department of the Pacific occupied office space in rooms adjacent to those of Merriam's organization.²⁴ Coordination between the two commands became a matter of walking down the hall or tapping into the building's communications system. Officers of both commands could reach national contacts telegraphically and local authorities by using the telegraph or telephone.²⁵

The Phelan Building's physical location offered advantages as a command and control center. Less than a mile from the docks, the structure afforded easy access to transports or the steamship companies that leased them.²⁶ Forces arriving and departing via the bay could be monitored readily. San Francisco's municipal centers were close by, as were offices of the California National Guard. Most important, the headquarters of the depot quartermaster on New Montgomery Street was within easy walking distance.²⁷

The headquarters location, however, had some drawbacks. The Phelan Building was located about 5 miles from Camp Merritt. LTC Henry Lippincott, Chief Surgeon, Department of the Pacific, noted that although the headquarters was connected to the camps by "the excellent street railway system of San Francisco, communication with the officers there was somewhat inconvenient."²⁸

MG Merritt stayed in San Francisco for 35 days, many of them at work in the Phelan Building. "Surrounded by a cordon of sentries, aides and staff officers," Merritt spent much of his time communicating telegraphically with superiors in Washington. Behind a glass door bearing the inscription "Commander Philippine Expedition," Merritt dictated letters to a stenographer and periodically met with visitors who waited for an opportunity to talk with him.²⁹ (See figure 41.)

Some visitors included members of the press. Merritt made himself quite accessible to reporters who delighted in quoting the general. Locally, his relationship with correspondents evolved after a slow beginning. When



Figure 41.

Merritt arrived in the city on 26 May, he had little to say.³⁰ By 5 June, the *San Francisco Chronicle* went so far as to observe: “There is no censorship of news at General Merritt’s headquarters, for the reason that no news whatever is given out.”³¹ M.H. de Young, editor and proprietor of the *Chronicle*, may have regretted the timing of that observation because the same day *Examiner* reporter Alice Rix published her interview with the general. Rix was able to elicit Merritt’s views regarding officer leadership and the quality of Volunteer units.³² Days later, as he prepared to depart for the Philippines, Merritt used an interview to thank the Red Cross, Catholic Truth Society, and citizens of San Francisco for supporting the troops.³³ In another interview with the *Chronicle*, he told of some plans for occupying the Philippines.³⁴

For good reason, Merritt shied from Bay Area newspaper reporters at the outset of his stay in San Francisco. Before he reached the Golden Gate, the general voiced concern over the paucity of Regular forces assigned to his command. Those misgivings appeared in New York and California newspapers on 17 May. The next day Merritt telegraphed Secretary Alger,

“I desire you to know that the interviews published in the New York papers this morning are in every way incorrect and unauthorized.”³⁵ Merritt’s protestation appeared to be not so much a statement of denial as an effort to avoid trouble with superiors. This instance would not be the last time he felt compelled to address public statements attributed to him with the War Department. Merritt allegedly made some remarks on Philippine policy at an “informal” banquet Mayor James Phelan hosted at the Pacific-Union Club in early June. Later that month, Merritt responded to an inquiry from the Secretary of War and denied that he had made such remarks.³⁶

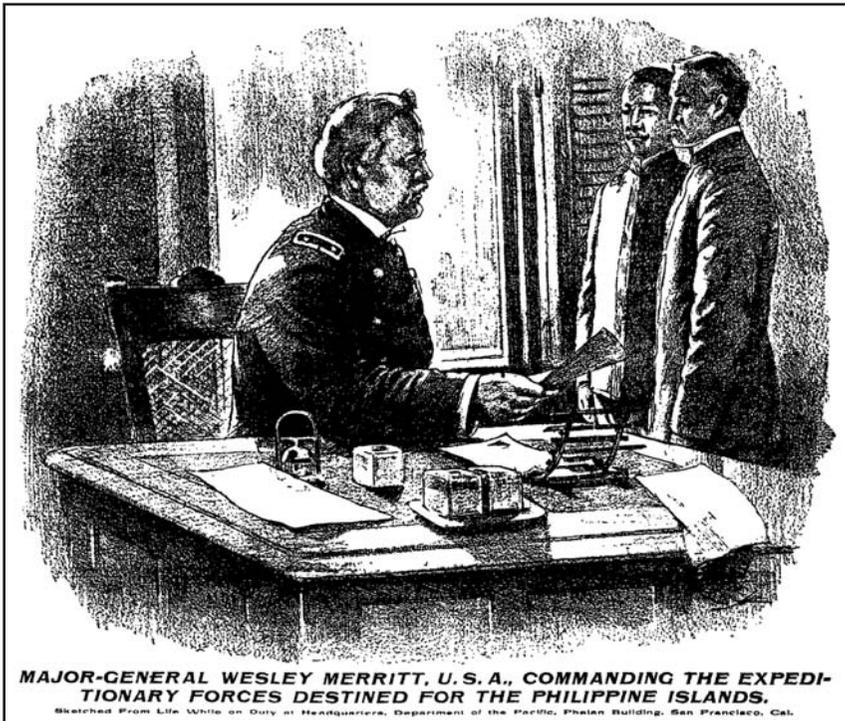


Figure 42.

Although Merritt may have entertained reporters, the soldiers of his command did not often see him at Fontana warehouse, Camp Merritt, or the Presidio. Little evidence exists to suggest that Merritt spent much time observing how the troops, be they Regular or Volunteer, trained or lived at these encampments. Local papers reported on four trips that the general made to Camp Merritt, all undertaken principally to confer with MG Otis.³⁷ Three of the four visits coincided with the departure of the second expedition to the Philippines. Only once did a reporter observe Merritt “informally inspecting the camp.”³⁸ Months later, when queried about Camp

Merritt, the general exhibited at best only a vague familiarity with the bivouac site. He said the location used to be “fair grounds.” Merritt described the site as “a concentrated camp. The sewerage was good, but it had been established (the Bay District Racetrack area) before I got there, and there was no other place to go except to the other side (the Jordan Tract).”³⁹

Merritt may have formed a different opinion of the “sewerage” had he lived there or maintained a headquarters at the campsite, but he did not. He established his residence at the Palace Hotel, not too far away from the Phelan Building. In 1898, the Palace was San Francisco’s finest hotel and reputedly the most opulent of any in the West.⁴⁰ Merritt must have felt quite at home in such exclusive surroundings, for his biographer, Don E. Alberts, later suggested that the general possessed a “fondness for comfortable urban living.”⁴¹

That affinity manifested itself in other ways. Merritt appeared as the guest of honor at several dinner parties.⁴² At one point, city officials planned to host a public banquet in Merritt’s honor at the Palace. The general subsequently requested a smaller, more informal affair, which Mayor Phelan and other civic leaders sponsored at the city’s Pacific-Union Club on Thursday, 9 June.⁴³ Eight days later, he appeared at the Mechanics’ Pavilion for a Red Cross benefit that featured an exhibition drill by the 13th Minnesota.⁴⁴ On 19 June he attended a performance at the Orpheum, a variety theater on O’Farrell Street. As Merritt took his front seat, “the band struck up a patriotic strain and the people arose and cheered the commander to the echo.”⁴⁵

The general spent five weekends on the West Coast; parts of two he used to escape the city. On Saturday, 11 June, he departed for the Monterey Bay Area. After spending 24 hours at the beach, he returned to San Francisco late Sunday afternoon.⁴⁶ A reporter for *The Examiner* wrote of the general’s holiday: “The General has been very closely confined to his headquarters in the Phelan Building and his trip to Monterey is the only recreation he expects to have before his departure for the Philippines.”⁴⁷

That expectation may have been accurate at the time, but the following weekend Merritt left town again. On Saturday, he traveled to Burlingame, southeast of San Francisco, where he was the guest of Henry T. Scott. Scott was president and treasurer of the Union Iron Works, “an immense shipbuilding and iron manufacturing corporation capitalized at millions and employing thousands of men—the largest enterprise of the kind on the coast.”⁴⁸ On Sunday he spent time in Menlo Park, hosted by Major Rathbone, before returning to the Palace Hotel that evening.⁴⁹

While MG Wesley Merritt fulfilled the political, military, and social roles of a department commander, MG Elwell Otis labored to bring organization to the forces assembled in San Francisco. Otis was the perfect complement to Merritt. As Merritt worked out of the Phelan Building engaged in correspondence with authorities in Washington, Otis and the staff of the Independent Division toiled and slept at Camp Merritt, administering to assigned units and preparing to deploy forces abroad incrementally.

Upon establishing Headquarters, US Expeditionary Forces, Otis tackled the challenge of dispatching the command's first expedition to the Philippines on 25 May. After Merritt arrived the following day, Otis shifted his focus to the condition of Regulars and Volunteers that remained. Although expeditionary forces had begun to assemble in San Francisco as early as 7 May, no central command exercised control over those organizations. That situation changed on 1 June when Otis assumed command of the newly created Independent Division and established his headquarters at Camp Merritt.

The staff took several days to prepare the site for operation. Acting IG CPT John S. Mallory and Acting Chief Quartermaster Major Francis Moore supervised site preparation in the southwest section of Camp Merritt.⁵⁰ The specific location at Fulton Street and 4th Avenue offered several advantages.⁵¹ At the time of its construction, the headquarters was in a more remote part of camp where noise and dust levels were somewhat diminished. Directly south across Fulton Street lay the "blossoming shrubs and ornamental trees" of Golden Gate Park, one of the more rustic, scenic areas of the city.⁵² An additional

feature was that the location allowed easy access to the McAllister-Street Line, a cable car service that linked the park to Market Street and the ferries.⁵³



The Examiner, 3 June 1898

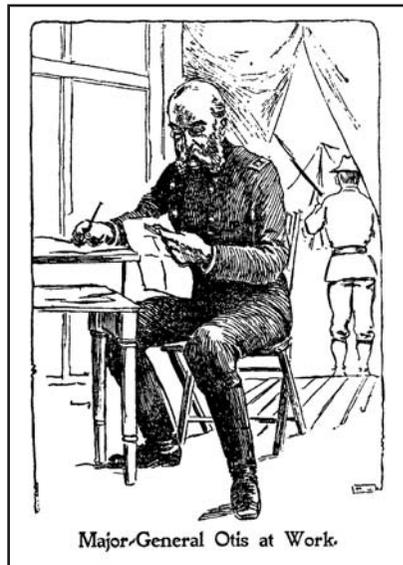
Figure 43.

While Otis found a somewhat secluded spot for his headquarters, he was by no means removed from the troops in his division. The site rested on slightly elevated ground that permitted him to observe the encampment to the north.⁵⁴ He and his staff shared the immediate vicinity of his bivouac with the men of Company G, 14th Infantry. Eventually Regular engineers and infantry from the 18th and 23d Regiments established their campsites in the undeveloped city blocks nearby.⁵⁵

MG Otis was also linked to superiors and subordinates through a comprehensive communications network. A reporter from *The Examiner* observed, “the tents of the Major-General, his lieutenants, adjutants and clerks have been pitched. From them there is telegraphic and telephonic communication with the city and the headquarters of each regiment.”⁵⁶ Otis’s headquarters complex comprised 12 tents, including one for the general’s office, another for his sleeping quarters, and a third for storage. At least one tent served as the telegraph center, which likely stood near Otis’s headquarters. The others belonged to staff officers and clerks.⁵⁷

The general’s staff endured lengthy workdays. That condition was likely a reflection of Otis’s penchant for detail as well as the situation encountered upon arriving in the city. One reporter wrote: “There are no men in San Francisco who are harder worked at present than the officers at United States Army headquarters. They are kept busy from early morning until 10 o’clock at night in carrying out the instructions received from Washington in regard to the fitting out of the Manila expedition.”⁵⁸

Lengthy workdays focused on outfitting expeditions, and organizing the Independent Division consumed Otis and his staff. Unlike his boss at the Phelan Building, the commander of Camp Merritt neither appeared at social events nor ventured outside of San Francisco. One reporter observed that “only fleeting glimpses may be had of Major-General Otis, as he trudges from his headquarters tent to an adjoining one. An orderly is ever at his door, the tent flaps are closed, and General Otis is alone with his plans, maps and responsibilities.”⁵⁹



San Francisco Chronicle, 6 June 1898

Figure 44.

Absorbed in his tasks, Otis made little time for the press, which journalists did not appreciate. In particular, the *San Francisco Daily Report* took exception to Otis's ostensible indifference toward news personnel. Shortly before the first expedition sailed on 25 May the paper criticized his headquarters for failing to publicize departure information.⁶⁰ When Otis established his headquarters at Camp Merritt, the *Daily Report* complained, "This morning a sentry was on duty and allowed no one to come within fifty feet of the General's tent. Even newspapermen were not admitted."⁶¹

The paper continued to snipe at Otis in early June. At one point, a reporter wrote sarcastically, "There was joy among the newspapermen at Camp Merritt this morning. General Otis braved the persistency of the reporters and walked from his tent to the street cars. He even condescendingly bowed."⁶² By this time, another paper had fired a verbal volley at the general. The *San Francisco Call* suggested that if Otis succeeded "in holding off the Spaniards at Manila as he is now doing the press of San Francisco, he can sustain a siege there of indefinite length without any base of supplies."⁶³

Otis had reason to distance himself from the press. He knew how Merritt's "incorrect and unauthorized" interviews printed in New York newspapers had generated some unwelcome attention from superiors in Washington.⁶⁴ That situation reinforced the value of discretion in dealing with reporters, a lesson Otis grasped from the outset of his arrival in the city. Shortly after detraining on 17 May, the general offered a few observations about receiving orders for the coast and traveling west from Colorado. When asked about the controversy surrounding Merritt, Otis declined to comment. According to a *Call* reporter, the general stated that "military courtesy prevented him from passing any opinion on the subject."⁶⁵

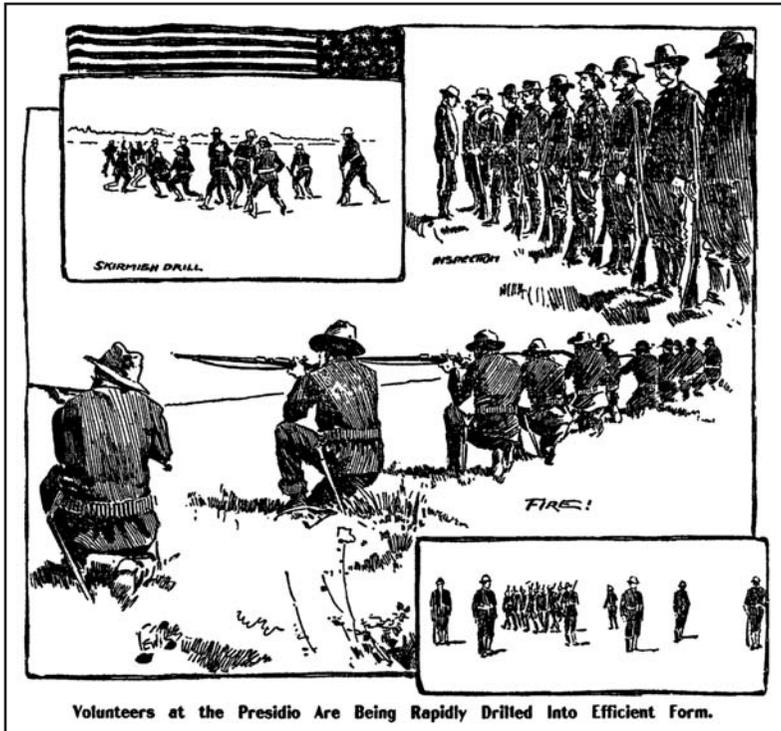
Otis's leadership position relative to Merritt's also accounted for the division commander's reluctance to talk to newspapermen. As a subordinate to Merritt, Otis wisely referred journalists to officials at the Department of the Pacific. On one occasion when the *Daily Report* criticized Otis's inaccessibility, the paper noted, "A 'D.R.' reporter was told that all information would be given out at army headquarters in the Phelan building."⁶⁶ The journalist chose to interpret Otis's decision as a rebuff; that notwithstanding, the general exercised his prerogative to defer press inquiries to Merritt's headquarters.

Reporters eventually gained some access to Otis. On 6 June, the *Chronicle* published some remarks he made about the encampment he

commanded and the status of BG Greene.⁶⁷ After Merritt sailed aboard the *Newport* on 29 June, Otis became more communicative with the press as the expedition's senior officer in San Francisco. On 8 and 10 July, *The Examiner* cited his views on topics that included Camp Merritt, Hawaii, transports, and California troops.⁶⁸

Drill and Exercise

While MG Otis gave little time to the press, he spent hours tending to the details of preparing expeditionary forces for duty overseas. One dimension of that preparation dealt with drill and exercise. When Otis took command of Camp Merritt and the Independent Division, he defined guidelines that systematized the manner in which units under his command approached these fundamentals. To the credit of those Regular and Volunteer regiments that went into camp before the division command structure evolved, units vigorously pursued drill programs. The *Daily Report* observed on 16 May, "Drill in the manual of arms, drill in signaling, drill in music, the setting up exercises—drill, drill, drill all day long. That is the order of things in the camps at the Presidio—nothing but drill and lots of it."⁶⁹



San Francisco Chronicle, 17 May 1898

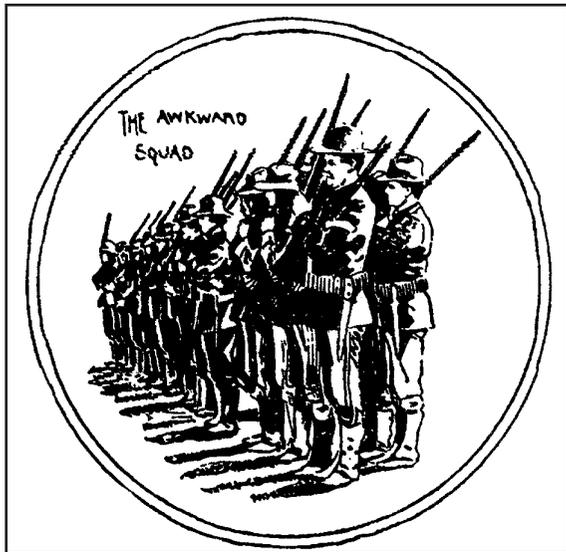
Figure 45.

Each regimental commander grappled with a most vexing challenge to his training program: inexperience. Not one regiment, Volunteer or Regular, reached the port city with an organization composed entirely of seasoned soldiers. In every case, new recruits who had never donned uniforms populated the ranks. For example, when a guard organization federalized in its home state, new men were added to replace those who were unwilling or unable to volunteer for service. In another case, the president issued his second call for Volunteers on 25 May. Infantry companies, artillery batteries, and cavalry troops increased their authorized manpower. This executive decision meant that units then mobilizing in states, assembling in San Francisco, or deploying to the Philippines would absorb an additional number of raw recruits after they had already begun their drills.

This challenge called upon infantry commanders, for example, to pursue a drill regimen that took into account the varied expertise within each squad, platoon, company, and battalion. That condition called for organizations to plan and execute a variety of drills concurrently, from those that transformed raw recruits into green soldiers to exercises that focused on brigade movements.

Varied drill routines appeared among the first Volunteer and Regular regiments quartered on the Presidio. The 14th US Infantry and two California regiments each trained “awkward squads” of recruits at the battalion or regiment level.⁷⁰ These new men received instruction in marching, the manual of arms, and physical exercises. After gaining a certain proficiency, men shed their “awkward” status and moved into the permanent organizational structure.

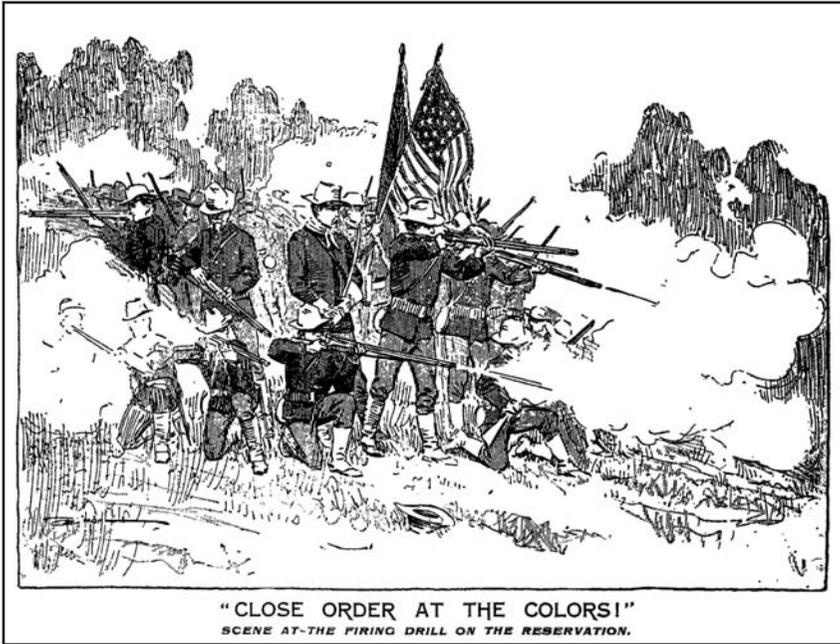
As these troops worked their way through this rite of passage, others engaged in more advanced activities. On 11 May, seasoned California Volunteers worked at extended



The Examiner, 11 May 1898

Figure 46.

order movements and skirmisher deployment; Regulars conducted guard mount and company maneuvers.⁷¹ On 13 May, COL Smith took his 1st California through close order and extended order drill at the company and battalion levels.⁷²

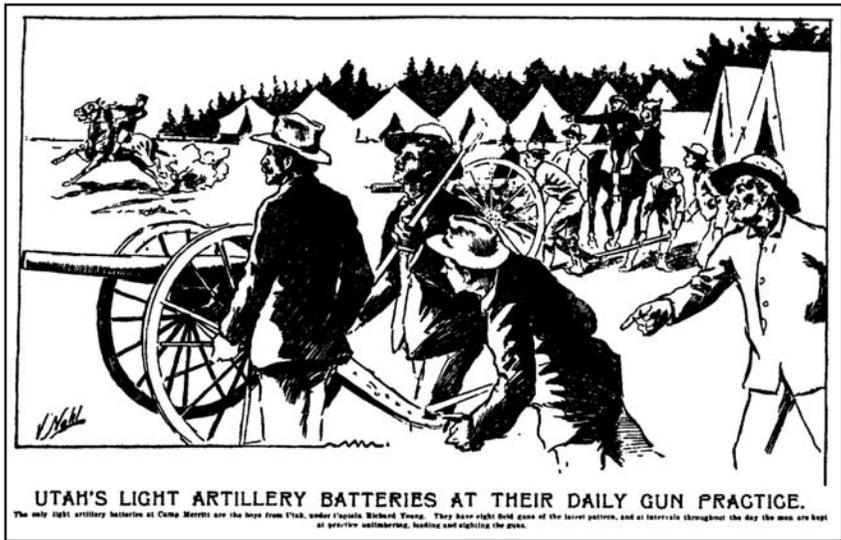


San Francisco Call, 29 May 1898

Figure 47.

When Otis brought many of these units under his control, he wisely maintained this decentralized approach to drill while routinizing the training program of units belonging to the Independent Division. On 2 June, he published General Orders No. 2 that stated, "For the present the practical military instruction of the troops of the Division will be of the character which Brigade, Regimental, or Battalion Commanders think most essential." He did, however, add several stipulations that obligated commanders to conduct the following: drill at a minimum of 3 hours per day; daily personnel inspections, including the troops, their arms, clothing, and hygiene, in lieu of formal dress parades; assemblies with arms at reveille and retreat; and guard mount, the only daily ceremony required.⁷³

Otis gave his command about one month to work on its priorities in drill. Essentially, that permitted brigade and regimental commanders 34 days to achieve some level of proficiency in close and extended order drill as they accepted new personnel and blended them with veterans to mold a specific unit identity.



The Examiner, 4 June 1898

Figure 48.

Taking his lead from Otis, BG Marcus Miller, commander of the division's 1st Brigade, looked to his regimental commanders for the drills most needed in their respective commands.⁷⁴ Although his was the only command to be composed of Regular infantry, Miller received quite a diverse response from the 14th, 18th, and 23d Regiments because of each command's unique characteristics.

Major Charles Robe, acting commander, 14th Infantry, had just seen five companies of the regiment dispatched with the first expedition to the Philippines. Other companies from the organization had either recently arrived or were converging on the city, and recruits were joining the ranks to reach the 14th's authorized strength. Robe observed, "the instruction most needed is that now being given, viz: the schools of the soldier, and company, in close, and in extended order, 'the squad.' All troops of this command are receiving four hours daily instruction in the above." He anticipated challenging his command to evolve into platoon, company, and extended order.⁷⁵

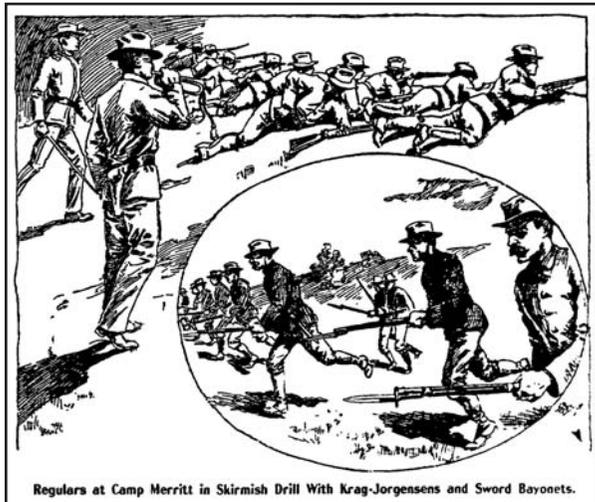
COL D.D. Van Valzah, 18th Infantry, reported that "heavy guard duty" responsibilities and recruit training had stripped two battalions of "old soldiers." "We have now over two hundred recruits and expect four hundred and twenty-two more, and the instruction of these men will require all the command (the 2d. and 3d. battalions) to assist." He preferred "that all the companies be required to drill all their men three hours a day and recruits four hours a day, and that as the drills and instruction progress the regimental

commander advance the instruction from squad drill to company and battalion drill, giving especial attention to extended order exercises.”⁷⁶

COL Samuel Ovenshine, 23d Infantry, suggested drill hours that mirrored the 18th Infantry’s. He already had four companies of “drilled men” tagged for the next expedition, and he anticipated he would lose their expertise shortly. Ovenshine wrote, “After the arrival of the recruits now en route to the regiment, the eight companies to remain in camp will be virtually recruit companies.” Given the circumstances, Ovenshine intended to concentrate on “company or squad drills.”⁷⁷

Commanders needed time to get their units into fighting order starting with drill fundamentals. Otis and his brigade commanders understood this reality but expected their organizations to gain proficiency quickly. On 3 July, Miller published a circular with more detailed guidance. He wanted his commanders to submit unit “schemes of instruction” over a 10-day period. While they had the latitude to design their own programs, Miller directed, “The instruction should be progressial (sic), the last three or four days for Cavalry, Infantry and Battalion of Heavy Artillery, California, devoted to marching with advance and rear guards and flank parties establishing pickets and reconnoitering the streets of a city or village.”⁷⁸ Miller’s circular reflected the expectation that units should be engaged in more sophisticated training, particularly along the order of likely missions overseas.

Miller either knew or anticipated his boss’s expectations. Two days after distribution of the 1st Brigade circular, MG Otis published new training guidance, challenging his units to tackle more advanced drills. New general orders issued on 5 July formalized drill periods and specified instruction subjects within the Independent Division. Otis expected organizations to engage in three drill periods each day, two scheduled for the morning. In the first session of 45 minutes, infantry, cavalry, and artil-



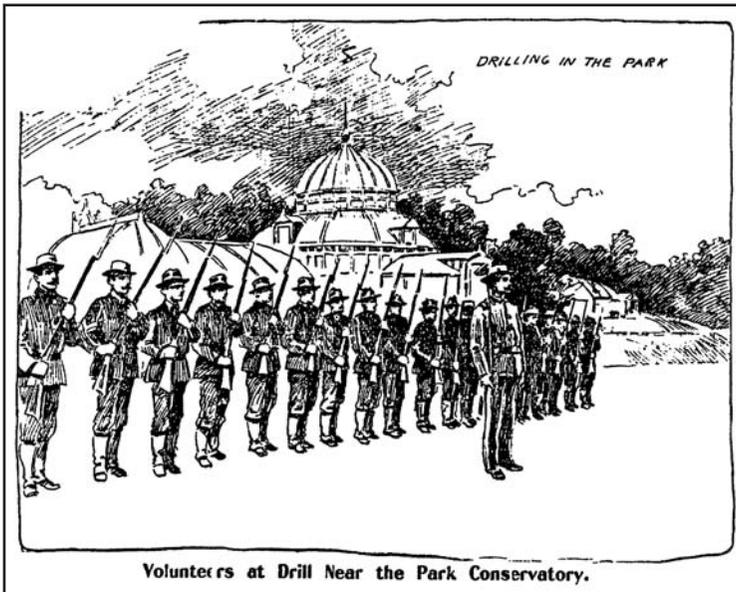
San Francisco Chronicle, 7 July 1898

Figure 49.

lery units conducted school of the soldier. During the 90 minute second period, infantry commanders executed school of the company, emphasizing platoon movements and “the preliminary target practice drills in aiming and pointing.”⁷⁹

Otis directed that infantry commanders give the single, 2-hour period in the afternoon to “the school of the battalion and evolutions of the regiment, and in the battalion and regimental extended order.” The division commander expected cavalry and light artillery to use the second and third drill periods to pursue training that was unique to their arm of service. The cavalry would train in school of the trooper and troop in both close and extended order, and light artillery would train in school of the cannoneer and battery dismounted. Heavy artillery was the only arm directed to train outside of its area of expertise. Men in this branch of service would likely not have siege guns in their possession in an attack against Spanish-held Manila. Not wanting to waste the manpower, Otis directed that they be trained “in the school of the company and battalion for infantry.”⁸⁰

Drill at close or extended order required training areas. For those quartered at Camp Merritt, that need presented a challenge. Located near the Richmond District in the northwest part of the city, the campsite offered only limited space for training activities. Regiments used roads within the confines of Camp Merritt for some drills. In late May, the 20th Kansas took to the gravel and pebble streets adjacent to camp for their training.⁸¹



San Francisco Chronicle, 28 May 1898

Figure 50.

Writing after the war, Private James Camp, 1st Idaho, recalled “many drills over sandy or broken rock-covered streets.”⁸² Commissioners of the Golden Gate Park opened “the main drive of the park up to 9 A.M. each day and the use of the other drives for all day for purposes of drill.”⁸³

Access to streets assisted in executing close order or guard mount, but larger formations and more complex drills required additional space. The *Call* pointed out on 26 May that “soldiers will have to take a long march before they can secure room enough to maneuver.”⁸⁴ That “long march” oriented on the Presidio and a few of the reservation’s 1,400 acres.⁸⁵

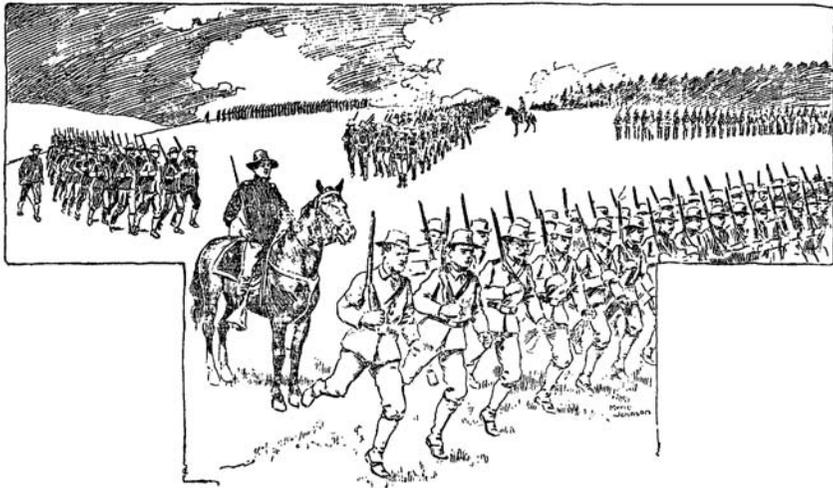


Golden Gate Nat'l Recreation Area, Nat'l Park Service

Figure 51. Camp Merritt in foreground;
soldiers drilling on the Presidio at the upper right.

On 31 May, *The Examiner* reported that “the Nebraska troops will begin their drills in extended order on the Presidio hills north of the camp at Richmond.”⁸⁶ On 14 June, the 1st Montana used Presidio terrain to fight a “sham battle,” a sort of intramural attack and defense among the regiment’s battalions.⁸⁷ One member of the regiment, Lieutenant Alexander Haist, recalled that one drill site on the Presidio consisted of “a gently sloping hillside” that overlooked the Pacific Ocean. “When the regiment first marched to it,” wrote Haist, “many of its members got their first view of saltwater.”⁸⁸ CPT Frank W. Medbery, 1st South Dakota, remembered spending 5 hours each day on a Presidio drill site where “the grass was short and slippery” and the terrain uneven.⁸⁹

Collectively, the drills pursued in the space allocated and orders governing their execution were revealing for several reasons. First, beginning



Volunteers at Drill on the Grassy Slopes of the Presidio Reservation.

Figure 52.

San Francisco Chronicle, 3 June 1898

in May, commanders challenged their units to gain proficiency. Leaders started with the most fundamental exercises as organizations accepted new men. In relatively short order, however, commanders pursued more complicated company and regimental maneuvers expected of seasoned units even as recruits learned how to march and salute.

Second, regimental commanders worked to attain proficiency at “extended order.”⁹⁰ These tactical skills reflected the most current doctrinal thinking of the era. In 1891, Fort Leavenworth published references for the infantry, cavalry, and light artillery that “were the United States Army’s first true tactical manuals, providing officers with advice on how to fight, on both offense and defense.”⁹¹ Both the infantry and cavalry manuals featured instruction on “extended order,” which Perry Jamieson, in his 1994 book *Crossing the Deadly Ground*, called “the most important single innovation of the new volumes, basing the battle tactics on loose-ordered squads of eight men each.” Extended order “deployed soldiers into loose formations, spreading them out to minimize the targets they would present to the destructive firepower of breech-loading repeaters, Gatling guns, and improved artillery.”⁹² The infantry manual advised teaching “the mechanism of the movements on the drill ground.” Once familiar to troops, extended order would then be “executed on varied ground, making use of the accidents of the surface for cover, etc., and observing the conditions of battle.”⁹³ The instruction had its effect. CPT Medbery wrote of the training, “Men learned to keep step over difficult ground, to execute quickly and accurately all commands and, in a manner that afterward proved most

successful, to deploy as skirmishers, take advantage of all accidents of the ground and finally with impetuous charge capture a sand-pit a mile from the starting place.”⁹⁴

Finally, drills and orders revealed the Army was at least a generation away from engaging in combined arms training.⁹⁵ That is, infantry, cavalry, and artillery did not train with each other to learn how they could support other arms in offensive or defensive operations. As the orders reflected, infantry troops worked to gain infantry skills, cavalry at cavalry, and so forth. The only exception Otis made was to train the heavy artillery as infantry.

The training experience among units in San Francisco exhibited other common features as reflected in newspaper accounts, letters, and regimental histories from the era. Some troops saw drill as one of the dominant occurrences of their encampment. Private Madison U. Stoneman, 1st Wyoming, wrote, “Drill was the order twice each day until it seemed that the most awkward specimen of humanity ought to be quite proficient in tactics.”⁹⁶ Private James Camp, 1st Idaho, observed that “our stay in ’Frisco had two sides to it; the one made of many drills. . . . The other side was made up of pleasant acquaintances.”⁹⁷ Writing in his diary several days after Otis issued his 5 July training guidance, Private William H. Barrett noted, “6 hours drill per day.”⁹⁸ Private Karl Kraemer, 51st Iowa, wrote a letter to his sister on 7 July and observed, “We have not much time anymore.” He remarked how a clearly defined schedule featuring drill dominated the routine day for his unit.⁹⁹

In that same letter, Kraemer also referred to sighting, an exercise designed to improve each soldier’s marksmanship.¹⁰⁰ Marksmanship training was another common feature in the San Francisco drill experience. The Coloradans were among the first units assembled to engage in “dummy rifle practice” during the latter part of May.¹⁰¹ On 6 June, several days after assuming command of the Independent Division and Camp Merritt, Otis issued special orders that both encouraged and enabled units to conduct marksmanship training: “All volunteer organizations of the encampment are authorized to expend in target practice from ammunition on hand, ten rounds of the same for each man of their respective organizations” at the Presidio target range.¹⁰²

After Otis published his guidance, units marched to the Presidio to engage targets beginning on 8 June. Volunteer regiments went to ranges most often in the order of their departure for the Philippines. The 1st Colorado and 10th Pennsylvania, regiments chosen for the second expedition, fired

first.¹⁰³ Organizations composing the third expedition, including the 1st Idaho, 1st North Dakota, and 1st Wyoming, followed between 12 and 22 June.¹⁰⁴ Units that joined subsequent expeditions began to fire in late June. Among those participating were the 1st Tennessee, 51st Iowa, and several companies from the 14th and 18th US Regular Infantry Regiments.¹⁰⁵ The Regular organizations got their turn at the range because recruits dominated the ranks.¹⁰⁶ Most of the experienced men had shipped with the first and second expeditions.

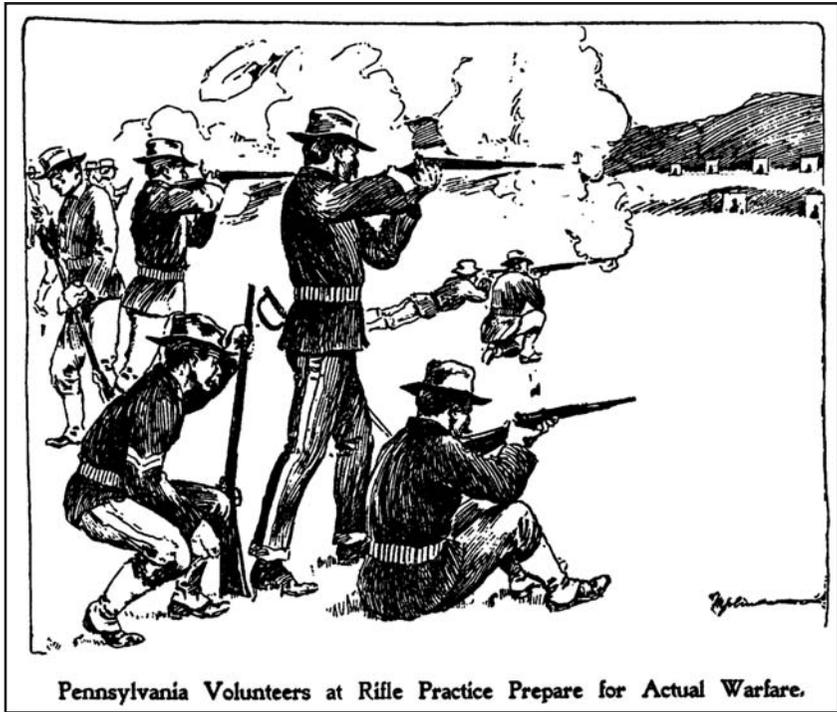


Figure 53.

Whereas marksmanship drills sharpened the eyes, physical training worked on the body. This activity was another experience the troops commonly shared, especially recruits. Private Kraemer wrote to his grandfather on 9 July 1898, “When we get up before breakfast, we have gymnastic exercises. There are 17 different movements.”¹⁰⁷ Kraemer referred to “setting up exercises,” so dubbed by the 1891 Leavenworth drill manuals. *Infantry Drill Regulations* described them as arm, hand, trunk, leg, and foot exercises intended “to retain a proper set-up and to keep the muscles supple.”¹⁰⁸ (See figure 54.)

Almost from the outset of the San Francisco encampments, newspapers



The Examiner, 11 May 1898

Figure 54.

commented on physical training. On 9 May, the *Daily Report* observed how recruits in both the 1st and 7th California Regiments received instruction “in the mysteries of setting up and the manual.”¹⁰⁹ The following day the *Call* reported on activities at the Presidio: “The new men received special instructions from the sergeants in the setting up exercises and that part of the manual of arms relative to loading and firing.”¹¹⁰ More than a month later, the same paper observed in a paragraph on the 1st South Dakota how “physical exercise drill” had become “a feature of regular camp practice.”¹¹¹ On 20 June, the *Chronicle* printed a drawing that illustrated “Calisthenic Drill for the New Recruits at Camp Merritt.”¹¹² Nine days later, the *Chronicle* commented on the training received by the new men who filled the ranks of the 14th and 18th Infantry Regiments: “These regulars get daily one hour of calisthenics, two hours of drill without arms and two hours with arms.”¹¹³



San Francisco Chronicle, 20 June 1898

Figure 55.

As tedious as the training in drill, marksmanship, and calisthenics may have become for them, soldiers nevertheless shared common incentives to earn a reputation for military proficiency. Unit pride and the competitive spirit inspired some. In a letter to his father on 31 May, Corporal Hugh E. Clapp, 1st Nebraska, surveyed unit rivals in drill at Camp Merritt and wrote, “I say none of them can come up to us, and as a drilled man I will say that while they have companies that can beat some of ours, still we have companies that can beat any of them.”¹¹⁴ Quartermaster Sergeant Louis Hubbard, 1st South Dakota, wrote his mother on 28 June, “Co E is very well at present and they are coming right to the front with their drill. They are considered the best in the regiment at the time.”¹¹⁵ Just before the peace protocol of 12 August, Private Kraemer questioned a “heavy marching order” exercise in a letter to his sister, “I don’t know what this drill is for only to see who is the best regiment and then I don’t know what they will do with it.”¹¹⁶

Performing drills for the public provided another incentive to becoming adept at training. Units participated in San Francisco’s holiday parades. The 7th California, 1st Colorado, and 13th Minnesota marched in the Memorial Day review on 30 May.¹¹⁷ MG Otis directed the 7th California, 51st Iowa, 1st South Dakota, 1st Tennessee, and 20th Kansas Volunteer Regiments to join the Independence Day parade on 4 July.¹¹⁸ That same day, the 1st Montana Regiment ferried to Oakland where it led a holiday procession along the city streets.¹¹⁹ Later that afternoon while still across the bay, Montana Volunteers fought a sham battle for spectators gathered about the heights near Lake Merritt. Using blank cartridges, troops from six companies attacked comrades reluctantly playing the role of Spaniards.¹²⁰ Some participants

dropped as if hit by gunfire. *The Examiner* observed that “the drill in which able-bodied Red Cross operatives shouldered supposedly wounded men and carried them to the rear was particularly interesting.”¹²¹



San Francisco Chronicle, 5 July 1898

Figure 56. Scenes of sham battle fought in Oakland.

Other regiments performed a variety of training exercises for the public in an enterprising collaboration between the Army and philanthropy. The Red Cross Society and Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) mounted an impressive volunteer effort to physically and morally care for the soldiers during their stay in the city. To assist in fundraising for both organizations, the military agreed to present exhibition drills for a paying audience at the Mechanics' Pavilion.¹²² The structure, measuring 150 feet by 300 feet, could accommodate a crowd of 10,000.¹²³

Between the middle of June and the August protocol, five regiments conducted a benefit drill for either the Red Cross or YMCA. The 13th Minnesota performed on 17 June before a "comfortably filled" pavilion. Individual companies demonstrated setting up exercises, a bayonet exercise, physical exercise with arms, company drill, and guard mount.¹²⁴ A *Daily Report* editorial called the performance a "great exhibition" and "the finest drill ever seen in San Francisco."¹²⁵

On 28 June, troops from the 51st Iowa Regiment performed drills before 5,000 people on behalf of the Red Cross.¹²⁶ The 51st presented a program similar to that of the Minnesotans but added extended order drill to its performance.¹²⁷ About two weeks later the 1st Tennessee executed similar, though fewer, drills on behalf of the YMCA.¹²⁸ Men of the 7th California and 20th Kansas offered benefit drills on 21 July and 4 August respectively.¹²⁹

Discipline and Diversion

Drill and exercise taught raw recruits fundamental military skills. New men and seasoned veterans learned or relearned tactical procedures that facilitated an organization's maneuver, firepower, and protection against enemies. Drills also contributed to developing another important component of unit proficiency: discipline. Order, conduct, and obedience exhibited by individual soldiers and their regiments influenced how well the Army performed its tasks. As units assembled and encamped near the Golden Gate, leaders worked to establish or reinforce discipline within their organizations.

The first troops to gather in San Francisco marched into a structured routine at their campsite on the Presidio. Both California regiments and elements of the 14th Infantry were obligated to conform to installation regulations.¹³⁰ LTC Victor D. DuBoce, 1st California, welcomed locating at the Presidio where he anticipated "the military surroundings" would have a positive effect on his unit.¹³¹ Those "surroundings" were augmented by a prescribed schedule that established three drill periods and several other

activities at specified times—0545, first call; 0735, guard mount; 2145, call to quarters; and 2200, taps.¹³²

Initially, men from the 1st California who encamped on the Presidio could freely come and go. After two days, however, COL Smith, commander, 1st California, required his men to secure passes to leave post. He allowed up to five men per company to depart at any one time.¹³³ Getting away from the Presidio became increasingly more difficult, particularly the closer a soldier's unit came to being deployed overseas. The *Chronicle* noted on 17 May that Smith "permitted only five men of the 1000 in his command to leave camp. Theirs were particularly urgent cases."¹³⁴

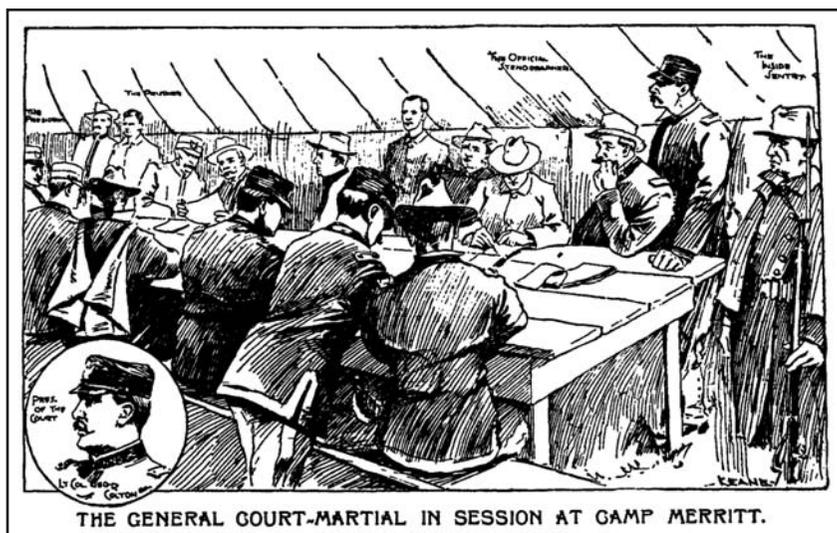
When more units converged on San Francisco, the encampment expanded, as noted, to include several undeveloped city blocks of an area formerly known as the Bay District Racetrack. Each arriving organization established an autonomous campsite generally contiguous to those belonging to other Volunteers or Regulars. Through May, regiments essentially created their own training schedules. Conducting drills or other activities at times different from one's neighbor was really quite acceptable, except in cases warranting centralized execution. One exception involved flag ceremonies at reveille and retreat. When regiments failed to raise and lower the colors simultaneously, the *Daily Report* commented on the ostensible confusion "about the time of sunrise and sunset." The paper observed, "Each regimental commander has a different time for the ceremonies, as there is no head to the organization as yet."¹³⁵

The observation "no head to the organization" was more correct in inference than fact. A week earlier, on 20 May, Otis had assumed command of all troops tentatively designated to deploy overseas.¹³⁶ His headquarters, however, had focused primarily in preparing the first expedition for its departure on 25 May. With that task accomplished and Merritt's arrival, Otis was in a position to turn his attention to the newly established Independent Division's good order and discipline.

On 1 June, Otis assumed command of Camp Merritt and announced in General Orders Number 1 that his headquarters would determine a daily schedule to "prevail throughout the division."¹³⁷ The following day he issued an order that outlined his drill guidance and prescribed times for meals, sick call, assemblies, and call to quarters. The second general order specified when units would observe reveille and retreat, noting that the Utah Light Artillery would fire "a morning and evening gun" to coincide with both ceremonies. Sunday duties would be "confined to those necessary in and about the several camps, and to the ceremonies of guardmounting and inspection."¹³⁸

Whereas a centralized schedule contributed to the camp's "good order," courts-martial worked to establish a properly disciplined division. On the first day of his command, Otis directed brigade commanders to appoint "the necessary Field Officer's Court for the trial of offenders." Otis referred his subordinates to the 1895 courts-martial manual when reviewing awarded sentences. He also directed that cases outside brigade jurisdiction come to his headquarters for action.¹³⁹

During June and July, several brigade courts-martial boards sat to adjudicate specific allegations.¹⁴⁰ On 28 June, MG Otis ordered a board convened, specifying, "It being necessary for the sake of immediate example the court is authorized to sit without regard to hours."¹⁴¹ Several cases brought to trial involved insubordination.¹⁴² One board found a 1st Tennessee private guilty of disregarding orders and sentenced him "to three days hard at labor, a \$5 fine and forfeiture of the privilege of leaving camp for a period of twenty days."¹⁴³ Another board dishonorably discharged a 23d Infantry private for insubordination.¹⁴⁴



The Examiner, 8 June 1898

Figure 57.

Some soldiers accused of desertion or drunkenness appeared before boards. A private from the California Heavy Artillery received a two-year sentence in the military prison at Alcatraz for an unauthorized absence from his unit. One 14th Infantry Regular got a year for committing a similar offense. For being drunk and disorderly, a 1st Montana soldier had to forfeit \$20 of his pay and spend two months in prison at hard labor. Another trooper from the 1st California received

a \$10 fine and 10 days confined at hard labor for his drunkenness.¹⁴⁵

Not all disciplinary matters warranted trial by courts-martial. Lesser infractions could be addressed within units, and Otis did nothing to discourage this alternative. Major Frank White, 1st North Dakota, presided over a field court that tried his regiment's "petty offenders."¹⁴⁶ Lieutenant Alexander Laist wrote of the 1st Montana field officer's court convened by a major in the regiment. Laist observed, "The minor offenses were followed by a few days' work in the kitchen, and some had employment there so steadily that by the time they were mustered out, they had learned the worthy trade of cooking."¹⁴⁷

COL Alexander L. Hawkins, 10th Pennsylvania Regiment, dealt with recalcitrant men in imaginative ways. On 30 May, the regimental guard-house held 23 men "for extending the limit of their leaves from camp." While the rest of his unit drilled, Hawkins ensured that his prisoners received special training. The men "were compelled to march for two hours in double-quick time through the six-inch-deep sand of one of the company streets."¹⁴⁸ On 1 June, the eight to 10 men still under guard "were compelled to march up and down one of the company streets shouldering a log of wood." At the end of the street "they deposited the log on the ground, about faced and picked it up again and continued the walk."¹⁴⁹ Hawkins' attention to prisoners inspired others to gainfully employ those who were serving sentences. By late July, military authorities used prisoners to police Camp Merritt.¹⁵⁰

Prisoners required guards, as did encampments, pay officers, and transports preparing to depart for the Philippines. Private Kraemer, 51st Iowa, discovered that his regiment found another task for sentries. On 11 August, one day before the peace protocol, he wrote his sister, "The next morning



San Francisco Chronicle, 14 June 1898

Figure 58.

after you are on guard we have to go around the ground and pick up the paper that is laying around.”¹⁵¹

Guard duties emerged as an integral component of a program to instill and preserve discipline in the ranks. By 9 May, COL Smith, 1st California, ensured guard mount routinely occurred in his regiment each day at the Presidio.¹⁵² Just to the west of Smith’s regiment, 14th Infantry Regulars practiced guard mount as a part of their training.¹⁵³ When Otis assumed command of the division and Camp Merritt on 1 June, he ensured that subordinate units conducted guard mount ceremonies each day, including Sundays.¹⁵⁴ LTC Edward C. Little, acting commander, 20th Kansas, ordered the ceremony conducted twice each day to give the men “experience.”¹⁵⁵



San Francisco Chronicle, 10 July 1898

Figure 59.

Some units used the guard mount ceremony to exhibit their military proficiency. Men from the 4th US Cavalry executed a “mounted guard mount” on the Presidio for the benefit of a “large crowd of spectators.”¹⁵⁶ The *Call* announced a “crack company of the 13th Minnesotas” would give an exhibition ceremony.¹⁵⁷ When the 13th Minnesota and 51st Iowa performed benefit drills in the Mechanics’ Pavilion, both regiments included guard mount as a part of their programs.

Other indicators offered evidence as to the emphasis given guard duties by military units at the Golden Gate. Private Kraemer again wrote his sister on 7 July 1898, observing, “We can’t get off as easy now as we could,

but we can get off at nights if we know General Orders for Sentinels.”¹⁵⁸ COL Frederick Funston, commander, 20th Kansas, “provided all of his men with copies of general instructions to the sentries” and required each man “to commit the instructions to memory” before leaving camp.¹⁵⁹ Commanders of the 1st Colorado and 1st South Dakota Regiments each appointed a major as an “instructor of the guard” who would apprise “the men as to the formalities expected of them.”¹⁶⁰

Some “formalities” and instructions issued to guards addressed those civilians to be barred from camp to preserve the good order of bivouacs. The *Chronicle* noted on 15 May that the Presidio camp was closed to visitors five days a week. The newspaper reported that a visitor could “not go a rod without being stopped by a bayoneted young person.” Only a pass from headquarters could guarantee passage through the posted sentinels.¹⁶¹

After encampments sprang up in the city, banning undesirables became even more of a challenge. Public roads and streetcars ran throughout Camp Merritt, giving what the *Daily Report* called “loose women” unwanted access to the troops.¹⁶² COL Harry C. Kessler, 1st Montana, was also concerned with other miscreants. According to the *Call*, Kessler observed that “bakers and venders were making themselves a nuisance, and that a number of soldiers had become ill by the unwholesome fruit purchased from peddlers. Disreputable persons of both sexes” should be barred from camp.¹⁶³

Commanders and city officials empowered sentinels to preserve discipline within the camps. Sentries continued to admit only those with passes. 1st Wyoming guards permitted ladies in their camp only if properly escorted. Private Stoneman endorsed the provision, writing, the “rule, while it may have seemed a peculiar one, was certainly commendatory and worthy to be enforced.”¹⁶⁴ The *Daily Report* noted that “in a great many of the camps ladies are not permitted after sundown.”¹⁶⁵ In late June, the city’s street committee acted on COL Kessler’s concerns and allowed the military to restrict traffic along public avenues in the northeast section of camp.¹⁶⁶ On 29 June, Kessler’s brigade commander, BG Harrison Gray Otis, published general orders for sentries that outlined who could or could not enter regimental campsites.¹⁶⁷

Through sentinels, commanders excluded undesirables from camp and just as frequently prevented troops from leaving the Presidio or Camp Merritt. Stoneman wrote, “Guards were put to pacing up and down on the four sides of our camp and only those who obtained passes were allowed



San Francisco Call, 7 June 1898

Figure 60.

out."¹⁶⁸ Sometimes passes were difficult to acquire. About two weeks after the 1st Nebraska arrived in the Bay Area, Corporal Clapp wrote his father, "Have seen but little of Frisco as it is very hard to get a pass." Clapp hypothesized, perhaps sarcastically, that the situation may have had something to do with the enemy: "We are under pretty strong guard now as they seem to be afraid of Spain here."¹⁶⁹

Any perceived Spanish threat notwithstanding, military authorities were most likely concerned with the actions of some troops in the city. Saloons or "grogeries" quickly popped up around Camp Merritt after it was established. These popular enterprises rankled citizens, including members of the Point Lobos Avenue Improvement Club, who registered complaints with the Police Commission and MG Merritt.¹⁷⁰ Sometimes soldiers, having had too much to drink, created trouble for themselves

and others. The *Daily Report* observed on 8 June that “as might naturally be expected, some of the soldiers who patronize the saloons are getting a little too lively for the peace and comfort of quiet and orderly citizens. Therefore the Richmond folks have asked or are about to ask General Otis to establish a provost guard in order to gather in the boys in blue who are out for a lark.”¹⁷¹

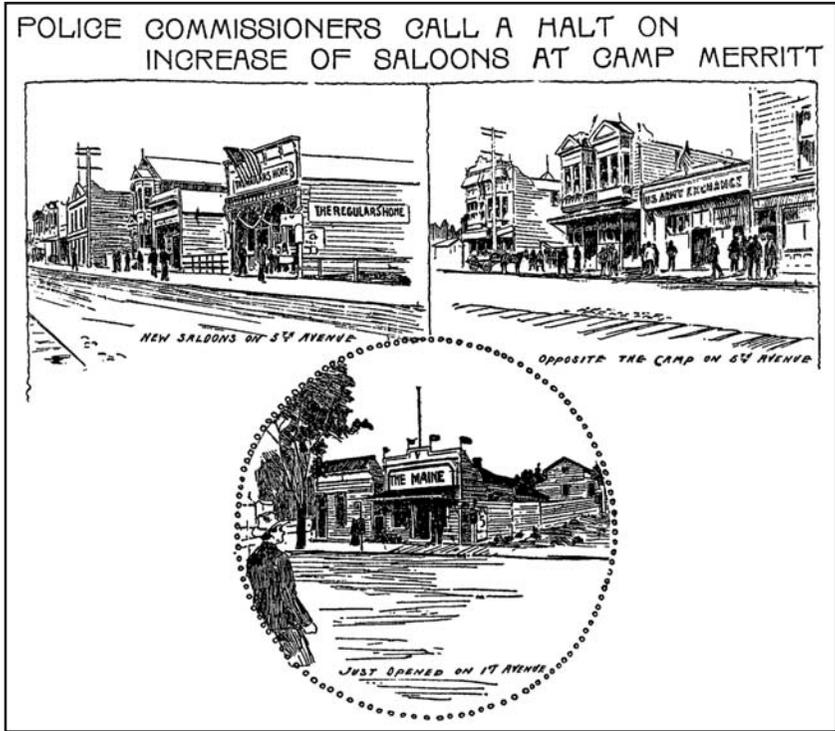


Figure 61.

Provost guards became a disciplinary tool for commanders. The *Chronicle* reported on 10 June that a provost guard patrolled “business streets” the preceding day looking for troops who had stayed out all night.¹⁷² COL Funston employed such a guard later in June to “free” some of his men. Funston dispatched an officer and eight troops “to a saloon on Grant avenue where three of his men were held captive.” The proprietor willingly released his prisoners.¹⁷³ When COL John R. Berry, commander, 7th California Infantry, learned the whereabouts of one of his troops who was absent without leave, he sent an armed provost guard into the city to get him.¹⁷⁴

Confronted by so many guards and so few passes, some of the troops

found diversion at the expense of sentries. Private Stoneman wrote, “The boys did not take kindly to being kept in, and frequently took the desperate chances of ‘running the guard line.’”¹⁷⁵ Soldiers willingly took the risk, particularly before shipping out to the Philippines. An article in the *Daily Report* observed on the eve of the second expedition’s departure, “Many of the soldiers, knowing it to be their last night in the city for many months perhaps, ran the guard lines and spent the time down town.”¹⁷⁶ Not all were successful at eluding the sentinels. On 25 June, Private S.F. Pepper, 20th Kansas, was wounded “in the back by a bayonet . . . while attempting to run the guard lines.”¹⁷⁷

Other more organized and authorized diversions existed to help troops find relief from the constant grind of drill and discipline. Within the major encampments, civilian volunteers established reading and writing tents, libraries, and assembly shelters where soldiers could relax and enjoy the company of others. A number of regiments stationed at the Presidio or Camp Merritt brought bands that offered camp concerts in the evening.¹⁷⁸ On weekends, those permitted to leave encampments could take the street cars to various points in the city to enjoy the sights of San Francisco. That could amount to quite a number of soldiers. The 1st Nebraska camp, for example, allowed most of its men to leave camp on Sundays between 0900 and 1900.¹⁷⁹



Red Cross Work on the Pacific Slope

Figure 62. Writing home.

Several points of interest in San Francisco captured many troops’ attention. Just south of Camp Merritt, Golden Gate Park provided a kind of oasis from the sand and grime of encampment life. Once in the park, soldiers could climb Strawberry Hill or enjoy the conservatory, playgrounds, lawns, shrubberies, statuary, avery, and other attractions.¹⁸⁰ The *Chronicle* reported on Sunday, 22 May, that attendance at the park museum exceeded 4,000, “the greater part of this number being volunteers from the interior states.”¹⁸¹ Troops from the 1st Wyoming, 51st Iowa, and 1st Nebraska wrote affectionately of visits to the park.¹⁸²

The Sutro Baths, a facility less than 3 miles from Camp Merritt, was another favorite troop spot.¹⁸³ *Doxey’s Guide* called it “the finest and most extensive inclosed baths and winter-garden in the world.” The L-shaped structure, made from 600 tons of iron and 100,000 “superficial feet” of glass,

measured 500 feet long by 100 to 175 feet wide. An amphitheater inside contained 3,700 seats; the building could hold as many as 25,000 visitors. Palms, shrubs, and flowering plants adorned the entrance. Although the bath structure housed both a museum and picture gallery, troops most commonly frequented the six swimming tanks, one of which was 300 feet long.¹⁸⁴

During their stay at the Golden Gate, many regiments organized trips to the Sutro Baths. The 20th Kansas, 1st Montana, 1st New York, 1st Tennessee, 14th Infantry, 1st Washington, 51st Iowa, Nevada Cavalry, and both Dakota regiments conducted unit visits.¹⁸⁵ By early July, Sutro hosted weekly swimming contests that pitted soldiers against each other and “some of the local professionals.”¹⁸⁶ Several of the regiments held their own meets and awarded medals for top performances.¹⁸⁷ At least one trooper found his visit a little overwhelming; he slipped and put his arm through one of the many glass windows that adorned the baths.¹⁸⁸

Although the Sutro Baths proved to be the most popular swimming facility among the troops, soldiers enjoyed taking a dip elsewhere around the city. On 23 May, the Lurline Salt Water Baths at Bush and Larkin Streets opened its doors to uniformed visitors. The *Call* reported, “They marched in, a half dozen companies at a time, from Camp Richmond, and enjoyed themselves in the large swimming tank.”¹⁸⁹ The bay provided yet another alternative for some. Volunteers encamped at the Presidio took the plunge as early as 16 May.¹⁹⁰ Sometimes the troops did not use their best judgment when swimming there. In early August, the proprietor of the Harbor View Gardens registered a complaint “against soldiers bathing in the bay in front of the gardens without any bathing suits on.” The *Call* reported, “The necessary orders to prevent this were immediately issued by General Miller.”¹⁹¹

Besides swimming, the troops enjoyed other sports, either as spectators or participants. On 28 May, the president of the Pacific Coast Baseball League invited Merritt’s command to attend all games held in San Francisco. Eugene F. Bert, the league president, wrote to MG Merritt, “Our gate-keepers have been instructed to admit all uniformed soldiers free.”¹⁹² To raise money for the Red Cross, the league’s San Francisco Baseball Club challenged a Volunteer team from the 13th Minnesota to a game at Recreation Park. The city team soundly thrashed the Minnesotans, 26 to 5, but the game attracted considerable attention, reported the *Chronicle*, “for sweet charity’s sake.”¹⁹³ On 6 August, the 51st Iowa and 6th California dueling at the Presidio Athletic Grounds in the first inter-Volunteer baseball game.¹⁹⁴ A number of regiments also formed basketball and football teams that played either local organizations or other military units.¹⁹⁵



Figure 63. 51st Iowa Regiment football team.

Supply and Medical

If regiments were to drill effectively or engage in organized diversions, commanders first had to address fundamental troop necessities. Regular and Volunteer organizations, hastily dispatched to the West Coast, frequently reached San Francisco with soldiers lacking essential equipment. MG Merritt observed, “The regiments that reported at San Francisco were of various characters. They all contained good material, but quite a number of them were poorly prepared for service—some came there without uniforms, some without arms; but everything was supplied as quickly as possible.”¹⁹⁶ Thousands of men, quartered in tent communities on the Presidio and its environs, required daily rations and adequate medical care. The Golden Gate area possessed the military facilities and civilian infrastructure capable of meeting many units’ needs. The challenge for the military leadership was to tap into those sources of aid that would provide for their men’s welfare.

The US Army Ordnance Department supported Benicia Arsenal, a major depot on the Pacific Coast, stocked with large quantities of ammunition and .45-caliber Springfield rifles.¹⁹⁷ Located about 43 miles northeast of San Francisco, Benicia afforded easy access to military organizations in need of weapons or munitions.¹⁹⁸ For example, the arsenal’s commander, COL L.S. Babbitt, received orders on 14 May to assist two units belonging to the first expedition. Adjutant General BG Corbin directed Babbitt to provide the 1st California and 14th Infantry Battalions with “400 rounds per man” and “such arms as necessary to fully arm” the Californians.¹⁹⁹ Four days later, Corbin hastened a partially armed 10th Pennsylvania to San Francisco, knowing that ordnance shortfalls could be made up on the coast.²⁰⁰ While in camp by the bay, the 7th California, 1st Tennessee, 8th

California, 2d Oregon recruits, 1st Nebraska, and 1st Montana received Springfield rifles.²⁰¹ The arsenal also served as a receiving facility for ordnance and ordnance stores that organizations would not take when they were deployed to the Philippines.²⁰²

The Army's Subsistence Department operated a purchasing depot in San Francisco.²⁰³ Through this facility, the commissary could obtain and dispense fresh beef, flour, and other commodities that were often produced locally.²⁰⁴ By 1 June, the department's commissary planned to store a three-month supply of subsistence for 20,000 men.²⁰⁵ COL William H. Baldwin, the purchasing commissary colocated with the depot quartermaster, ordered "immense quantities of supplies in San Francisco."²⁰⁶ The chief commissary for Camp Merritt estimated that during July "an average of 9366 men were fed at a cost to the Government for the food materials of \$43,416." The *Chronicle* speculated that much of that sum went to city suppliers.²⁰⁷ Drawing rations every 10 days, unit commissaries provided their men with an assortment of items, including beef, bacon, salmon, flour, potatoes, vegetables, coffee, sugar, and baking powder.²⁰⁸

The Quartermaster Department maintained one of only six Army general depots in San Francisco. The depot quartermaster, Major Oscar F. Long, was charged with a twofold responsibility. He had to arrange oceanic transportation for expeditionary forces and provide assembled organizations with military stores and supplies, including clothing, tents, blankets, and "all materials for camp and for shelter for troops and stores."²⁰⁹ The second task seemed formidable because by 1 May, "nearly all war material available had been sent from San Francisco to the East."²¹⁰ When the Army ordered Regular forces to Southern camps for possible operations in the Caribbean, the Quartermaster General also moved tons of stores



Record of the Red Cross Work on the Pacific Slope

Figure 64. Major Oscar F. Long.

for their support. Long wrote that repositioning these goods left “this depot almost wholly without any stock to speak of, except tents, on hand, with which to meet the emergency.”²¹¹

To compound Major Long’s problem, in early May the McKinley administration urged governors to dispatch Volunteer organizations with all speed. If regiments were not fully equipped but able to travel, War Department officials suggested “that it is best they go ahead and complete their equipment at San Francisco.”²¹² Additionally, before May ended, the depot quartermaster learned that the projected force to gather by the bay had increased from 6,000 to 20,000.²¹³ As a result, Long reported, “Regiments, battalions and detachments arrived from 20 States and Territories of the Union, some even without shoes and wearing bandannas in lieu of hats—without tentage, with nothing for comfort and even without the few necessities which suffice for the simple needs of the soldier.”²¹⁴

Long specifically cited several regiments that were in dire need of help. He wrote, “The troops from Montana, Kansas and Tennessee were almost entirely unequipped.” Even those from Colorado, Iowa, and Pennsylvania who had telegraphed that they had their basic gear “were found, when their requisitions were filled, to be deficient in the most essential requirements of equipment.”²¹⁵ A reporter for *The Examiner* wrote about the 1st Idaho Regiment’s clothing deficiencies when the unit reached San Francisco: “Many of the men had no uniforms, some of them were poorly dressed, but all of them looked well. The fact is that but two companies of the eight, that is to say 168 men out of 672, are fully equipped.”²¹⁶

To address these equipment shortfalls, Long acted quickly to replenish stocks in his depot, and San Francisco reaped the dividend. He flooded the Golden Gate and other West Coast cities with quartermaster requests. On 16 May, Long told a *Chronicle* correspondent:

Our orders for clothing and supplies for the expedition are keeping busy every factory that makes them in this city and on the Pacific Coast. We have reached out to Portland and other cities, wherever there are mills. The government is spending a vast amount of money in this affair. At least 10,000 workingmen and women in San Francisco are today occupied on Government contracts. We have ordered 8000 uniforms, identical in color with the ordinary fatigue uniforms but lighter in weight. We have also ordered 1200 canvas uniforms for wear in Manila, all to be delivered in a few days.²¹⁷

In addition to uniforms, the depot quartermaster let contracts for the manufacture of shoes, overcoats, overalls, and drawers.²¹⁸ To expedite procurement, Long acquired “all other supplies which were obtainable ready made in the market.”²¹⁹ Articles obtained in this manner included blankets, shoes, stockings, suspenders, undershirts, axes, and bedsheets.²²⁰

The depot quartermaster issued supplies as quickly as they could be purchased or “as promptly as 6000 workmen employed in this City night and day in manufacturing could furnish them.”²²¹ Men from the 1st California Regiment received shoes on 17 May. The 7th California acquired more than 900 complete uniforms on 27 May. Volunteers from Kansas obtained uniforms, and the 1st Tennessee finally secured trousers, shirts, blouses, underclothes, and shoes. Soldiers from the 1st Colorado and 7th California welcomed an issue of underwear.²²² The challenge for the quartermaster was to meet the troops’ needs before shortages led to operational or welfare problems. Given the paucity of stocks combined with organizations arriving without equipment, Long and Pacific Department quartermaster officers did not always have the means to supply soldiers quickly.

The medical department confronted a situation similar to that of the quartermaster. Given limited military assets, it had to provide essential health care for troops. Organizations that converged on San Francisco brought their own medical support. Each Volunteer regiment was authorized one surgeon, two assistant surgeons, and three hospital stewards.²²³ Such a small staff could be easily overwhelmed should virus or disease infect the 600 to 1,000 soldiers commonly manning these units.

Complicating the challenge facing regimental surgeons, higher headquarters possessed scant facilities to render medical assistance. The Department of California could access one military healthcare asset in the Bay Area: the Post Hospital, Presidio of San Francisco. The structure consisted of a small frame building large enough to accommodate “the ordinary number of sick of two companies.”²²⁴ Fortunately, the Presidio also served as home to a US Marine Hospital. Established on the reservation in 1875 “to combat cholera, yellow fever, and general unsanitary conditions existing among seamen,” the Treasury Department operated the hospital. During the war, the Treasury Secretary allowed the Army Surgeon General to use vacant beds at this facility. Merritt’s command tapped into the Marine Hospital shortly after camps were organized in the city.²²⁵

The Department of the Pacific did not establish a division hospital until 30 May. Composed of three large double hospital tents, the field facility

was “capable of accommodating forty men.”²²⁶ Before that, military medical treatment came through meager unit resources or a brigade hospital formed from pooling regimental holdings.²²⁷

Unfortunately, sickness could not be postponed until Merritt’s department prepared itself to meet medical emergencies. On 19 May, the *Call* reported a 2d Oregon Volunteer had been hospitalized with a case of measles.²²⁸ By 21 May, several other cases developed within the regiment. A “rigid quarantine” helped to prevent the communicable disease from reaching epidemic proportions.²²⁹ Nevertheless, measles infection spread to others. The 20th Kansas reported a case on 23 May.²³⁰ Major W.O. Owen, chief surgeon in charge of the division hospital, noted that 50 patients were being treated for measles on 11 June.²³¹ Shortly thereafter, the disease threatened to infect much of the camp when the 1st Tennessee arrived at the Golden Gate with 18 cases already developed.²³² The field hospital, by that time in operation for nearly three weeks, took the lead to ensure the contagion stayed in check.

Over time, other maladies appeared among the troops. Unit surgeons reported treating nonlife-threatening “minor diseases usual in military camps” such as diarrhea, bronchitis, mumps, gonorrhea, and syphilis. Medical officials surmised that diarrhea could be traced to assorted causes: “exposure to cold and dampness” at campsites; poorly cooked food combined with an “irregularity of diet in the shape of overindulgence in pies, sweetmeats, fruits, etc., procured by the men or forced upon them by injudicious friends”; and “the excessive use of alcoholic stimulants in various forms indulged in by some of the men.”²³³ Surgeons believed that the health of the command would improve with an assault on wretched camp hygiene and poor personal habits. Until such corrections were made, however, medical officers feared that unchecked “minor disease,” such as diarrhea, could exacerbate “epidemic diseases” like typhoid fever.²³⁴ According to the Board of Medical Officers convened in September 1898 to investigate disease at Camps Merritt and Merriam (established on the Presidio as Camp Merritt closed), measles, pneumonia, cerebrospinal meningitis, and typhoid fever accounted for the most serious illnesses and deaths among the men.

This same board and several Army officers believed that Camp Merritt was a breeding ground for sickness in the expeditionary force. BG George M. Sternberg, US Army Surgeon General, described the location of Camp Merritt as “unsuitable. Its surface was a cold damp sand, continually exposed to chilly winds and heavy fogs, which saturated the tents, clothing, and bedding of the men with moisture.”²³⁵ LTC Henry Lippencott,

chief surgeon, Department of the Pacific and VIII Corps, wrote how Camp Merritt was located on high ground that exposed it to winds and mists that perpetuated pneumonia.²³⁶

Some units' poor sanitary habits compounded the ills fostered by the camp's location. The Board of Medical Officers wrote, "It is known that great neglect existed among the men in this camp as regards the use of company sinks. It frequently occurred that men taken with diarrhea during the night would defecate in the company streets near and among the tents, covering up the deposit with a thin layer of sand." The board observed that "the longer this camp was maintained in one place the greater would be the amount of area of contaminated soil."²³⁷ LTC Lippencott wrote that "vaults, covered with sheds, were dug for privies, but in many cases they had been put too near the kitchens and sleeping quarters of the men, no doubt due in many instances to the limited area of the camp. They were also not properly cared for." He would subsequently observe, "Another criticism in regard to the sinks is the closeness of most of them to the company kitchens, the distance between the two in many instances not exceeding 10 yards."²³⁸ Strong breezes could blanket the campsite with sand, dried fecal matter, varied contaminants, and garbage that the men discarded.



Golden Gate Nat'l Recreation Area, NPS

Figure 65. Bird's-eye view of Camp Merritt, looking south.

MG Elwell S. Otis believed that one of the causes of sickness was the camp's location in "San Francisco, to which hucksters and immoral and depraved persons within the city had access. The camp should have been placed several miles from the city limits, where temptations for evil doing would have been farther removed."²³⁹

The Board of Medical Officers appeared to support Otis's views in

part. Its report, dated 3 September 1898, found that “The general hygienic condition of Camp Merriam is much superior to that of Camp Merritt, owing to the fact that it being on a military reservation it is impossible to surround the men with and bring into their immediate view rum shops and other alluring means of debauchery, which circumstances it is known were important in lowering the general vitality of the command at Camp Merritt.”²⁴⁰

Treatment for those sick within the encampments demanded medical aid that exceeded the military facilities’ capabilities. To address this void, the Red Cross and several local civilian hospitals offered support. Their assistance proved an invaluable supplement to the Department of the Pacific’s inadequate medical resources.

MG Merritt worked to secure the services of other general officers who could lead the department’s brigade organizations in San Francisco and expeditions preparing to deploy overseas. MG Otis assumed command of Merritt’s major subordinate unit, the Independent Division. Otis and his staff established procedures to organize, train, quarter, and equip the division’s Regular and Volunteer forces assembling at the Golden Gate. In completing the latter tasks, the Department of the Pacific tapped into resources belonging to the Presidio and depot or arsenal assets that several staff departments—quartermaster, ordnance, subsistence, and medical—managed.

Merritt’s command, however, did not depend exclusively upon military assistance in tending to expeditionary forces. Members of the San Francisco community donated land, facilities, goods, and services to support the many uniformed newcomers. In particular, several public and private organizations emerged to help clothe and care for troops when Army resources were lacking.

Notes

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11. "General MacArthur is Here," *San Francisco Call*, 13 June 1898, 5; "General M^r Arthur has Reached Here," *The Examiner*, 12 June 1898, 15.

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13. Letter, Karl Kraemer, Co H, 51st Iowa Infantry, to "Dear Grand. Pa.," 9 July 1898 (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army Military History Institute).

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