

The Filipino-American War, 1898-1902

Or

How I Came to Love the Krag

by:

Jeff Roberts

History 575

Dr. Bernadette Pruitt

May 12, 2005

The Filipino-American war is one of the most ignored conflicts in U.S. history. Officially, lasting from 1899 to 1902, its roots are in the Spanish-American War and the destruction of the Spanish fleet in the Philippines. The Filipinos anticipated an ally in the Americans to help them win their independence from Spain. Their belief was reasonable, as U.S. had not previously gone to war with imperialistic aims. The fact that America had no plans to annex Cuba lent even more weight to this perception. Once U.S. troops began to arrive in large numbers, the Filipinos began to realize their mistake and a showdown between the two sides became inevitable. With its many intricacies, it is almost impossible to write on all aspects of the Filipino-American War; therefore, this paper will not attempt to do so. Instead, it will focus on the causes of the conflict, the aftermath of its outbreak, the regular war between the two sides, the guerilla war, the capture of the Philippine leader Aguinaldo, the campaign on the island of Samar, and the wars conclusion. Fighting in the islands lasted beyond the wars official end in 1902, especially in the Moro's islands where fighting between its Muslim inhabitants and Americans lasted until the outbreak of World War One.¹ This work will not detail the conflict in the Moro's islands, although it may prove to be an interesting topic for future discussion.

Much as India was for England, the Philippine Islands were the crown jewels of the Spanish empire. Magellan discovered the islands in 1521 and pacification of them began in 1565. By 1571, Spain proclaimed sovereignty over the entire island group and made Manila their capital.² The largest of the archipelago's 7,083 islands are Luzon and Mindanao, and at the end of the nineteenth century, the archipelago's inhabitants numbered around eight million people.³ At the outbreak of the Spanish-American War,

Spain had possessed the Philippines for almost four centuries. Periodically, the Filipinos revolted against Spanish rule and the control of Spanish priests who owned almost half a million of acres of some of the best land in the northern islands.⁴ Dissent was common with the Filipino population and in the late nineteenth century much of it focused around Dr. Jose Rizal, who wrote several protest novels. The Spanish deported Rizal his activities and in 1896 and he was eventually executed, turning him instantly into a martyr for the Filipinos.⁵ Luzon became the central battlefield in a new outbreak of fighting led by Don Emilio Aguinaldo y Famy.⁶

This revolution dealt the Spanish several hard blows but suffered from a lack of rifles and ammunition. Unexpectedly, the Spanish offered the Filipinos a peace offer. They would grant general amnesty and promised to make broad changes, including freedom of the press and land reforms. In return, the Filipinos had to end the insurrection and turn over one thousand rifles. In addition, the Spanish would give insurrection leaders \$850,000 if they left the island.⁷ Aguinaldo and his men had their doubts as to the sincerity of the Spanish, but they needed the money with which to buy weapons and thus agreed to the Spanish terms. With much fanfare, they went into exile and the Spanish deposited \$400,000 into Aquinaldo's personal bank account.⁸ Nothing actually changed. The promised reforms never materialized and the insurrection continued on, despite the fact that its leaders were in exile.

The outbreak of hostilities between America and Spain provided the insurgents an excellent opportunity to win their independence. At Hong Kong, Admiral Dewey had been preparing to attack the Spanish in the event that war broke out. In theory, the Spanish fleet at Manila posed a serious threat to Dewey, and if the Spanish had mined the

harbor entrances, just getting into the bay could prove dangerous. All fears proved groundless, as the Spanish had not mined the harbor. Furthermore, the decrepit Spanish fleet at Manila was no match for the American ships. In the six-hour engagement between the two forces, Dewey sank the entire Spanish fleet in the shallow waters off Cavite. The Spanish suffered three hundred and eighty-one casualties. Dewey's fleet, on the other hand, had hardly been touched with the worst damage being a broken deck beam on the *Baltimore*.⁹ Dewey was now master of Manila Bay and the naval station at Cavite; however, his conquest could go no farther as he had no soldiers. Manila, and the rest of Luzon, remained in Spanish hands.

America's story in the Philippines does not begin with Dewey's victory. It actually begins with the U.S. Counsel-General, E. Spencer Pratt. He negotiated with Aguinaldo to intensify the rebellion in conjunction with anticipated U.S. involvement. In exchange, Pratt all but guaranteed Filipino independence.¹⁰ In reality, Pratt had grossly overstepped his bounds. Eventually the government dismissed him from the Consular service for his efforts.¹¹ No one could stop the events that were now in motion. On May 16, Aguinaldo, and seventeen members of his staff, boarded the American ship *McCulloch* at Hong Kong and proceeded to Manila Bay. There Dewey himself greeted Aguinaldo.

The context of Aguinaldo and Dewey's conversations is a matter for much debate. The Filipinos' later claimed that Dewey made promises about Philippine independence. It seems that Dewey did not promise the Filipinos independence as such, but instead allegedly informed him that, "America was uninterested in colonies."¹² Some also claim that Dewey instructed Aguinaldo to make a national flag, "...but not unfurl it until Spain

was defeated.”¹³ No one wrote down what these men said in these meetings. Even if it agreements had been made in writing, Admiral Dewey did not have the authority to negotiate anything with the Filipinos. Later Dewey denied promising the Filipinos anything, and denied even wanting their help.¹⁴ In reality, Dewey did need the help of the Filipinos. The Filipinos had forces on the ground and could complete the conquest of the island of Luzon while Dewey’s fleet continued to blockade Manila. The first significant numbers of American troops did not arrive until June 30, 1899, when over two thousand men landed under the command of General Thomas Anderson.¹⁵

In the absence of American troops, Filipino forces, some of them armed with Spanish weapons captured from the arsenals at Cavite, began a successful campaign against the Spanish.¹⁶ The New York Times even held up these early successes. In one such article, the Times reported that the Spanish General Augustin was “...shut up in Manila” and was afraid that the city would fall before the arrival of American soldiers.¹⁷ Another article “Chief Aguinaldo Means To Rule,” detailed Filipino success in several engagements as well as the capture of two thousand Spanish prisoners.¹⁸ In fact, the Filipinos enjoyed so much success they soon had almost the entire island of Luzon under their control, save a few isolated garrisons. As for Manila itself, the insurgent forces soon surrounded it with impressive earthworks.

The question remains as to what was really the status of the Philippine Republic. No U.S. official ever guaranteed the islands independence; however, it was certainly implied. Taken in conjunction with America’s previous abhorrence to colonialism and their treatment of Cuba, the Filipinos had every reason to believe that their independence would be granted. Transporting Aguinaldo on an American ship and arming his men

with arms captured by the Americans was the act of an ally, even if it was not official. Most importantly are the actions of the Filipino troops in Luzon. Aguinaldo was able to raise an army that wrested control of most of the island from the Spanish. Military success alone should have been sufficient to insure Philippine independence. Aguinaldo established a government and began to operate as its leader. Although American commanders avoided giving any official recognition to Aguinaldo's government, one cannot deny that it was functioning in an official capacity. The U.S. should have recognized Philippine independence; however, it would soon become apparent that it had no intention of doing so.

Filipino success proved a problem for American forces under the command of General Wesley Merritt. Merritt wanted to defeat the Spanish in Manila without the aid of the Filipinos, thus keeping them out of the city; however, with Filipino forces surrounding the city, American forces could not get to it. Merritt eventually negotiated an arrangement with Aguinaldo by which the Filipino lines opened to allow in the Americans. The U.S. did not reward the Filipino's good faith. Merritt and Dewey were negotiating the surrender of Manila behind the backs of the Filipinos.¹⁹

On August 13, 1898, a battle broke out on the American section of the line around Manila. American ships shelled the Spanish lines while U.S. forces stormed the trenches. After relatively few casualties on both sides, the Spanish forces surrendered. In actuality, the battle was a sham concocted to help save the reputation of the Spanish commander. Ironically, this battle was unnecessary, as the two countries had signed a peace protocol just hours before the battle's outbreak; however, the U.S. had cut the communications cable to Manila so the actors were unaware. The biggest threat to

the Spanish and Americans on August 13 was actually the Filipinos. Both sides took steps to keep the Filipinos out of the battle and out of Manila.²⁰

The Americans had deceived Aguinaldo and his forces. Furthermore, they ignored the Filipinos pleas for joint occupation of the city. American forces occupied the city alone and took over its day-to-day operations. The Filipinos had no choice but to continue to maintain their lines around Manila, hemming in the U.S. troops. This made for a very tense situation. General Merritt's orders were to occupy the city so Merritt followed them to the letter and asked that Aguinaldo remove his forces from two of the cities outlying suburbs, a demand reiterated by Merritt's successor, General Elwell Otis. If the Filipinos did not withdraw, Otis threatened to use force.²¹ Aguinaldo avoided a conflict by agreeing to withdraw from the suburbs. Shortly after this, Otis once again demanded that Filipino forces withdraw from another position at Pandacan, which just happened to be a strategic high ground flanking the Filipino line. This request was purely strategic, since no one had previously considered Pandacan to be part of Manila. The Filipinos objected strenuously, but once again withdrew.²²

The period between the fall of Manila and the outbreak of the Filipino-American War marked a cold war between the two sides. A large Filipino army surrounded the Americans in Manila and relations between the two sides were declined rapidly. The demands that the Filipino forces pull back were partly to blame. Not only did they put the Filipinos at a disadvantage, but also having to withdraw hurt their pride. In addition, U.S. forces brought their prejudices with them and began to refer to the darker skinned Filipinos as "niggers" and "gugus." The Filipinos came to realize that these terms were not friendly in nature and began hurling back insults of their own. Violence by American

soldiers was also becoming more and more common place. The whole situation was a powder keg that needed only one spark to set it off.²³

The spark came on February 4, 1899. In the weeks before the war's outbreak, General Otis moved elements of a Nebraska Volunteer regiment and the Utah artillery battery to an area know as Santa Mesa. This previously unoccupied high ground overlooked the Philippine trenches. One particular point of contention was an area on the mesa known as the "pipeline". On the evening of February 4, 1899, American soldiers at the "pipeline" encountered a group of four Filipino soldiers. Private Grayson recounted what followed:

I challenged with another "Halt." Then he immediately shouted "Halto" to me. Well I thought the best thing to do was to shoot him. He dropped. Then two Filipinos sprang out of the gateway about 15 feet from us. I called "Halt" and Miller fired and dropped one. I saw that another was left. Well I think I got my second Filipino that time. We retreated to where six other fellows were and I said "Line up fellows; the niggers are in here all through these yards."²⁴

There is some debate as to who theses Filipino soldiers were and what they were doing. In his book, "Benevolent Assimilation": The American Conquest of the Philippines, 1899-1903, Stuart Miller argues that they were drunk and unarmed.²⁵ Brian Linn states in his book, The Philippine War, 1899-1902, that the Filipinos may have been advancing on the Americans armed, and that they cocked their weapons in response to the Americans' challenge.²⁶

What truly happened at the "pipeline" is unknown; however, what resulted is clear. American troops along the entire line began to open fire, which the Filipinos then returned. The firing lasted until two a.m., but both sides suffered few casualties.²⁷ Fighting began again the next morning as American naval bombardments supported infantry advances. The attack caught the Filipinos totally unawares. The Filipinos had

tried to prepare themselves in the months preceding the outbreak of hostilities, but many of their troops were too inexperienced. The Filipino soldiers had notoriously bad aim as ammunition shortages had limited their chances for target practice. In addition, some of their soldiers even removed the rear sights from their rifles. They were also unprepared for the effect of artillery and naval bombardments. American troops ran roughshod, slaughtering the helpless Filipino forces and capturing valuable stockpiles of supplies. The casualty figures show just how lopsided the battle was, with three thousand Filipinos killed to only sixty Americans.²⁸ On February 6, the New York Times reported that hostilities had begun, and placed blame squarely on the shoulders of the Filipinos.²⁹

Where the blame lies for the outbreak of hostilities has been a major subject of debate. Both sides were responsible for the hostilities leading up to the night of February 4, although the Americans were probably more responsible for this hostility than were the Filipinos. Furthermore, U.S. soldiers did fire first on the night of February 4. Further fighting might have been prevented if cooler heads had prevailed on the American side on the morning of February 5; however, General Otis ordered the attack continued and in doing so refused several Filipino peace offers.³⁰ General Otis himself must shoulder much of the blame for starting the Filipino-American War.

This outbreak of hostilities on February 4, 1899 marked the first phase of the war. This phase was a series of pitched battles between the American and the Filipino armies. In retrospect, the Filipinos had little chance to defeat the Americans in open battle; however, at the time they did have some facts in their favor.

First, the most common type of rifle used by the Filipinos was a Mauser rifle. This excellent weapon is a magazine fed, bolt-action rifle with a high rate of fire. Its

relatively high muzzle velocity meant that, in properly trained hands, it could fire accurately at a long distance. In the absence of rifles, the Filipinos usually armed themselves with bolos. These long, sharp swords resemble a large machete, and are capable of doing massive damage. At the beginning of the war, the majority of American soldiers in the Philippines were State volunteers armed with antiquated Springfield rifles. These weapons were large caliber single shot breach loaders firing black powder cartridges, and could not shoot as fast or as far as the Mausers. Regular army units were equipped with the new Krag-Jorgensen rifle. The Krag-Jorgensen was magazine fed bolt-action rifle as well, with firing characteristics comparable to the Mauser. The military fazed the Springfields out as more of the new American Krag-Jorgensen rifles became available.

In addition, the Filipinos were proving quite adept at constructing defensive breastworks. Assaulting these positions always proved difficult. Fredrick Funston, who rose to great fame during the war, described the quality of the Filipinos while on the defensive:

...these insurgents showed no little mettle in defending positions, for they often stuck to them until the bottoms of the trenches were literally covered with their dead...The real test of the *moral* of troops is the ability to bring them time and again to face the music, to suffer almost inevitable defeat, and to have their ranks decimated by appalling losses. Judged by this standard, the Filipino does not by any means stand at the foot of the list.³¹

Finally, one cannot discount the advantage of terrain. Many American advances bogged down in the maze of hills, jungles, and rivers that made up the countryside that was the natives' backyards.

Despite any advantage the Filipinos might have had, their deficiencies were greater. They lacked sufficient artillery and machine guns, both of which the American

forces had and used with great success. When shooting, their soldiers tended to aim high, a process that only encouraged the American soldiers to close the distance with their opponents. The Filipinos did tenaciously defend their positions but usually lost their nerve and broke when flanked and enveloped in an enfilading fire. Therefore, American soldiers were able to make charges that would have been suicidal against better-trained opponents, and get into a position to enfilade the Filipino lines.

Stories of the continuous routs of the Filipino forces filled the headlines of the New York Times. These articles were filled with exciting descriptions of the fighting, detailing the heroics of the American soldiers. A common theme from these articles was that the “rebels” were on the run and the “insurgency” was on its last legs. One article published on April 1, 1899 was so bold as to say, “It is believed they [the Filipinos] cannot in future make even a faint resistance.”³² One cannot blame the newspapers for their rosy picture of the wars quick end since it was also the view of the American commanders in the Philippines. In fact, as the war went on General Otis became increasingly unpopular with reporters in the Philippines because of his heavy censorship of dispatches.³³ Otis himself was becoming more unpopular with his men as some began to doubt his ability to command.³⁴ More disturbingly, perhaps, were the dark stories coming out of the Philippines about American atrocities. One example was a letter from Corporal Sam Gillis to his parents, which then appeared in the Salinas paper:

We make everyone get into his house by seven p.m., and we only tell a man once. If he refuses we shoot him. We killed over 300 natives the first night. They tried to set the town on fire. If they fire a shot from a house we burn the house down and every house near it, and shoot the natives, so they are pretty quiet in town now.³⁵

These only added to Otis's worries as the military forced him to investigate their validity; however, Otis's form of investigation was to force the soldier who made the accusation to print a retraction.

The culmination of this first phase of the war was General Otis's grand encirclement plan to capture Aguinaldo and end the war. It was a three-pronged pincer attack led by Generals Lawton, Wheaton, and MacArthur. The plan began to collapse shortly after it began because of terrain difficulties. General Lawton, whose men were supposed to close the trap, faced the hardest going through some of the roughest terrain. In efforts to get back on schedule, Lawton dispatched a flying column under General Young to finish closing the trap and meet up with the men of General Wheaton. Despite the problems, the campaign almost succeeded as Aguinaldo had a couple of narrow escapes. American soldiers even captured his mother. A heroic rearguard action fought by the famed Filipino general Gregorio del Pilar ensured Aguinaldo's escape. Pilar died during the action and the Americans gave him a hero's burial.³⁶

Although Otis's grand campaign failed to capture Aguinaldo, it did succeed in finally breaking up the Filipino army. One thousand, one hundred men, under Colonel Danilo Triona, surrendered themselves and eight hundred rifles to the Americans. Aguinaldo went to ground and established a new headquarters in the remote Isabella Province on the islands northeastern coast.³⁷ Otis had finally delivered his "crushing blow" to the Filipinos, although no one really believed him.

After serving for twenty-one months as commander, Otis resigned, hushing the talk that the army was getting ready to remove him. Otis felt that he had won the war and was ready to go home. The Republican Party, looking towards the upcoming presidential

elections, wanted the Americans to feel that Otis had won the war as well, so he returned to the U.S. amidst much fanfare and celebration. In actuality, his comments that the war in the Philippines was over were ill timed. Once the parades were over, the Army placed him in a command backwater. His career was over and he quietly retired.³⁸

The end of regular combat marked the end to the first bloody chapter to the Filipino-American War. The Filipinos had gone head to head with the American army and had lost. They had been unprepared for the tenacity and determination of the U.S. forces who did not give their opponents a chance to rest and regroup. Victory came at a heavy price. U.S. casualties were high and Filipino casualties were higher. In addition, the scorched earth policy that both sides took up led to the destruction of much of the countryside and the untold suffering of the civilian population. There is no doubt that both sides were committing atrocities against the other. Neither side was right for doing so, but few at the time seemed to care so they carried on. Through all of this, President McKinley's policy of "Benevolent Assimilation" continued.

Despite what Otis wanted to believe, the war in the Philippines had not ended. Even as Otis was making his victory speeches, the Filipinos caught American units in several well-planned and well-organized ambushes. The war was entering a new phase of guerrilla combat. Ambushes and sabotage marked this phase as Filipino forces avoided large-scale engagements. In actuality, the Filipinos forces probably would have been better off if they had conducted a guerrilla war from the beginning. This was the most trying phase for the American soldiers. Placed in remote parts of the Philippine Islands, small and isolated garrisons faced constant threat of annihilation. Because of the threat of ambush and booby traps, patrolling, a necessity in this kind of warfare, was

incredibly dangerous work with very few tangible payoffs in terms of Filipino killed and wounded. One former soldier describes a common booby trap thusly:

The insurgents had made the traps by digging holes about six feet deep and three feet wide. In the bottom of the holes they had planted spears with point upwards. Near the top of the holes thin bamboo slats were placed transversely, and over them was placed a layer of sod in such a manner that the traps could not easily be discovered. Thus, if a man stepped upon them, the bamboo slats gave way and he fell into the spears in the bottom of the hole.³⁹

Fighting was also rapidly spreading to islands that had been relatively peaceful up to this point. Islands like Samar became the new hot beds of activity, causing the Americans to spread their forces out even thinner.

If regular combat had been bad for the countryside and the native population, the guerrilla phase would be brutal. American military leaders tried various carrot and stick policies in the beginning. For example, General Arthur MacArthur, who replaced Otis as commander, would offer a general amnesty to the Filipinos and a bounty of thirty pesos for every rifle that was brought in.⁴⁰ This policy was a failure and soon was replaced by ones with more teeth, especially after General Adna Chaffee took command of U.S. forces. American soldiers increasingly turned to scorched earth policies as a means of combating the guerrillas.

Combined with this scorched earth policy was an idea of concentrating the civilian populations. American soldiers forced them from their homes and herded them into concentration camps. They then proceeded to destroy all the food, homes, and livestock that were outside the camps. The Americans designated anyone outside the camps the enemy, and generally killed them.⁴¹ Andrew Pohlman detailed a standard patrol on Samar:

August 8th...marched up the valley of a river near Borongan. When we arrived in the enemy's country we began burning houses and destroying crops of sugar can[e], rice, sweet potatoes and bananas. While cutting down a patch of tall banana plants near the river we discovered a herd of about twenty-five carabao tied with ropes. We drove them out into the stream and killed them by shooting. About two P.M. we arrived near the end of the valley, where we destroyed the last patch of cane within sight and then started homeward.⁴²

This guerrilla war was so strong that even the capture of Aguinaldo himself could not destroy it. Aguinaldo's capture is a subject that deserves some attention as it stands out as one of the highlights of the entire Filipino-American War.

Aguinaldo's location had been a closely guarded secret; however, captured and decoded messages from Aguinaldo himself revealed his hiding place. General Frederick Funston led a force of eighty-nine men, consisting of Macabebe scouts disguised as Filipino soldiers, as well as Funston and a few other American officers pretending to be prisoners. They forged letters on captured stationery, complete with the forged signature of Filipino commander, to help the deception. If they were discovered it would mean almost certain death. The U.S. warship *Vicksburg* then took the entire party up the coast and dropped them off under the cover of darkness.⁴³

The deception worked beautifully; however, the column still faced the prospect of starvation as their food ran out. In a trick for the ages, Funston dispatched a forged message to Aguinaldo's encampment requesting food be sent to them. Funston's column received the requested food and was able to carry on to Aguinaldo's encampment at Palanan. Some would later criticize Funston for begging for food from the man they meant to capture; however, Funston justified his action with the following argument, "We had simply fooled him into supplying us, as he thought he was rationing his own troops.

Had we, disclosing our identity, asked for quarter, and that food be furnished us, and had then turned on him, the case would have been entirely different.”⁴⁴

The capture itself was a complete success. The Macabebe scouts overwhelmed Aguinaldo’s guards, killing two of them. Other party members wrestled Aguinaldo to the ground and informed that he was a prisoner of the Americans.⁴⁵

The whole column marched back to the coast with their prize where they met the *Vicksburg*, and then steamed back to Manila. Funston personally delivered Aguinaldo to MacArthur. For his bravery, Funston received a commission as Brigadier-General in the regular army.⁴⁶

The capture of Aguinaldo did not stop the guerilla war, but it did deal it a heavy blow. Despite his isolation, Aguinaldo had maintained command of many of his scattered forces; however, the war could continue operating with out him as each of the regional commanders had great independence. Aguinaldo did do one thing of note after his capture. He swore allegiance to the U.S. and began appealing to his followers to do the same. After his appeal, many other Filipino generals did begin to surrender themselves and their men. Not all commanders headed their former leaders call as two pockets of major resistance still held out, one in Batangas under General Malavar and one on Samar under General Lukban.⁴⁷

The island of Samar is another point of interest that deserves more attention. In 1900, General Kobbe wrote the following statement about the inhabitants of Samar, “I began to understand why the Spanish would never permit these people to even own a table knife.”⁴⁸ It was here that some of the worst fighting of the war took place. The

actions of U.S. Marines there brought national attention upon them, and the commander of the Marine detachment was court-martialed.

The story of Samar does not start with the Marines; instead, it starts with the men of Company C, Ninth U.S. Infantry. These men were garrisoned in the town of Balangiga under the command of Captain Tomas W. Connell. The men of Company C were suffering from homesickness, as they had not received any mail for months. Connell's orders that they not attend the local cockfights and associate with the local women only compounded the men's' extreme homesickness and boredom. As a gesture of trust, Connell also ordered that his men not carry their weapons to meals or to church.⁴⁹

Connell also took a stance on the garbage that was piling up around Balangiga. Eighty native men were impressed into service to remove garbage and clear brush; however, Connell realized that he needed more men to finish the job. The town president, Pedro Abayan, suggested that he bring in natives from the surrounding area to "work off some taxes". He brought in forty outsiders to help on September 26, 1901.⁵⁰

That same day, the first mail in months arrived for the desperately homesick men. In addition, the camp received news about President McKinley's assassination. Connell ordered the men to appear the next morning wearing black mourning bands for their fallen Commander-in-Chief.⁵¹

That night, an unusual number of women going to the church surprised the sentries. The women were heavily dressed and many carried small coffins. A curious soldier pried open one of the caskets and found the body of a dead child. The woman told the soldier that a cholera epidemic had broken out and he thought nothing more of it.

If the guard had searched the coffin more carefully, he would have found that the body concealed a number of bolos, as did all the coffins. Furthermore, if the guards had searched the women they would have found that many of them were actually men in women's clothing.⁵²

The next morning, things continued as usual. The men went to breakfast reading the mail they had received the day before, all were unarmed. The native police chief, Sanchez, sent the impressed workers to their duties. He then seized the rifle of Private Adolph Gamlin, whom he then knocked down. Sanchez then shot a second American soldier. At this point all hell broke loose. The church bells began ringing wildly and conch shells were blown to signal the Filipinos to launch their attack. Out of the church poured a mass of bolomen, and the native workers turned on their guards. They caught the American garrison completely off guard.⁵³

Hand to hand fighting ensued as the Americans fought back with whatever weapons they had available. Some threw rocks and cans, others fought with knives, forks, and with their bare hands. The Filipinos killed the units' officers in the first wave. A few American soldiers managed to get rifles and began to drive the Filipinos back. The few survivors grouped together and regained possession of the town. Casualties had been horrendous. Out of the seventy-four soldiers in the company, only thirty-four were still alive, of which thirty were wounded. The survivors boarded a few native boats and began rowing for the nearest American base. Only twenty-six survivors eventually reached safety.⁵⁴

American response to this massacre was swift. Samar was the responsibility of General Jacob Smith. He immediately appointed Marine Major Littleton Waller Tazewell

Waller to command a Marine detachment in southern Samar. Smith's exact orders to Waller would be a key point in Waller's court-martial. According to Waller, Smith's orders were, "I want no prisoners. I wish you to kill and burn, the more you kill and burn the better you will please me. I want all persons killed who are capable of bearing arms in actual hostilities against the United States." Waller reportedly asked, "I would like to know the limit of age to respect, sir." Reports indicate that Smith then replied, "Ten years."⁵⁵

Waller went on to lead his men in Samar in a series of successful campaigns against the Filipinos. Waller's crowning achievement was the destruction of the Filipino stronghold on the Sohoton cliffs. In this engagement, the Marines suffered no casualties and killed thirty Filipinos. The Americans burned two camps and destroyed stores of food and gunpowder. More importantly, Waller had proved that the American forces could successfully penetrate the Samar interior.⁵⁶

The stage was now set for Waller's most dramatic campaign, an attempt to march across the southern tip of Samar. This was no easy task. The route would take them through jungles and over mountains. In addition, a countless number of rivers and streams would have to be crossed and re-crossed. On the morning of December 28, 1901, Waller led his party of fifty marines and thirty native carriers out of Lanang with rations for four days. The plan was to follow the Lanang River for as long as possible and then strike out over land for the Sohoton cliffs, where a supply camp was to be waiting for them.⁵⁷

From the beginning, things did not go well. Rain-swollen rivers impeded their progress, sharp vines tore their clothes, rough volcanic soil tore their shoes, and giant

leeches made everyone miserable. As food ran low and the men weakened, Waller divided his command so he could push ahead to get supplies for his men. Finally, Waller arrived at Basey on the other side of Samar with part of his column on January 6, 1902.⁵⁸

The other portion of Waller's column was not fairing near as well. They divided the column again as the men tried to make their way back to Lanang. To make matters worse, it seems that the native packers were becoming less and less cooperative. At one point, a few of the porters attacked Lieutenant Williams. The Marines were contemplating having to kill the natives when a relief party found them on January 18. Out of Waller's fifty marines, ten died on the trail. When the natives packers appeared, the Americans arrested them.⁵⁹ In the aftermath of the march, Waller ordered eleven of the natives executed.⁶⁰

The Army court-martialed Waller for his ordering the executions of the eleven natives; however, Waller was really a scapegoat. By 1901 and 1902, the American public was becoming aware that U.S. forces were committing many atrocities. Descriptions of the "water cure" caused outraged citizens to demand action. Before, if there was punishment for actions like these, it was generally insignificant. Now people wanted real results. When news of the Waller case came out, the public outcry was tremendous. The Secretary of War himself demanded Waller's court martial.⁶¹ Waller was unfortunately at the wrong place at the wrong time.

After an eighteen-day court-martial, the jury found Waller innocent; however, in the course of his trial information about the orders he received from General Smith. Smith himself was court-martialed.⁶² Charged with "conduct to the prejudice of good order and military discipline" for giving Waller orders to kill and burn, and take no

prisoners. Furthermore, it also came out that Smith had told Waller, “The interior of Samar must be made a howling wilderness”. The court convicted him and forced his retirement from active service.⁶³

President Roosevelt declared the Filipino-American War over on July 4, 1902.⁶⁴ Of course, how you declare an end to a war you never recognized in the first place is a mystery. For the most part, the American population promptly forgot all about the Philippines. As for the war itself, there was no real closure. The war did not end so much as it died. The Americans had outlasted the Filipinos in what came down to a war of attrition. They had worn down and slaughtered the native population. They no longer had the means or the will to resist. McKinley’s “Benevolent Assimilation” had won by default as the people came to realize that any thing was better than death and destruction. During the war, the Filipinos suffered twenty thousand combat casualties, with another one hundred thousand to two hundred thousand noncombatant deaths. The numbers of carabao, which the Filipinos relied upon for meat, transportation, and as a draft animal, reduced to a tenth of their prewar levels. With out them, rice crops could not be cultivated. The wars cost was high for the U.S. as well. On the American side, 4,234 soldiers were killed with another 2,818 wounded. The total cost of the war was \$600,000,000.⁶⁵ America finally had its islands, but at a terrible price.

¹ Leon Wolff, Little Brown Brother: How the United States Purchased and Pacified the Philippine Islands at the Century's Turn, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1961), 363.

² Richard Brinsley Sheridan, The Filipino Martyrs: A Story of the Crime of February 4, 1899, (London and New York: John Lane: The Bodley Head, 1900), 19.

³ Wolff, 19.

⁴ Wolff, 16-17.

⁵ Wolff, 23-24.

⁶ Wolff, 26-27.

⁷ Wolff, 30-31.

⁸ Wolff, 32.

⁹ Wolff, 55-59.

¹⁰ Wolff, 47-48.

¹¹ Wolff, 54.

¹² Wolff, 69.

¹³ Wolff, 69.

¹⁴ Wolff, 69.

¹⁵ Brian McAllister Linn, The Philippine War: 1899-1902, (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 13-14.

¹⁶ Wolff, 70.

¹⁷ "Augustin Shut Up In Manila", New York Times (June 21, 1898).

¹⁸ "Chief Aguinaldo Means To Rule", New York Times (June 8, 1898).

¹⁹ Stuart Creighton Miller, "Benevolent Assimilation": The American Conquest of the Philippines, 1899-1903, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982), 43.

²⁰ Miller, 43-44.

²¹ Miller, 44, 46-47.

²² Miller, 47-49.

²³ Miller, 58.

²⁴ Miller, 61.

²⁵ Miller, 61.

²⁶ Linn, 46.

-
- ²⁷ Miller, 63.
- ²⁸ Miller, 67-68.
- ²⁹ "Fight At Manila With Filipinos," New York Times, (February 6, 1899).
- ³⁰ Miller, 63 and 69.
- ³¹ Frederick Funston, Memories of Two Wars: Cuban and Philippine Experiences, (New York, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), 226.
- ³² "Filipinos' Big Army Broken And Fleeing," New York Times, (April 1, 1899).
- ³³ Miller, 82.
- ³⁴ Miller, 94.
- ³⁵ Miller, 89.
- ³⁶ Miller, 95-96.
- ³⁷ Miller, 97.
- ³⁸ Miller, 99-103.
- ³⁹ Andrew Pohlman, My Army Experiences, (Broadway, New York: Broadway Publishing Company, 1906), 48.
- ⁴⁰ Miller, 134.
- ⁴¹ Waller, 208-209.
- ⁴² Pohlman, 68.
- ⁴³ Funston, 384-403
- ⁴⁴ Funston, 413-416.
- ⁴⁵ Funston, 420-421.
- ⁴⁶ Funston, 423-426.
- ⁴⁷ Miller, 170-172.
- ⁴⁸ Joseph L. Schott, The Ordeal of Samar, (Indianapolis, Kansas City, and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1964), 8.
- ⁴⁹ Schott, 20-23.
- ⁵⁰ Schott, 24 and 31.
- ⁵¹ Schott, 31 and 33.
- ⁵² Schott, 33.

⁵³ Schott, 35-37.

⁵⁴ Schott, 40-52.

⁵⁵ Schott 71-72.

⁵⁶ Schott , 91-93.

⁵⁷ Schott, 105-106.

⁵⁸ Schott, 107-112.

⁵⁹ Schott, 113-121.

⁶⁰ Schott, 145.

⁶¹ Schott, 189.

⁶² Schott, 276-278.

⁶³ Schott, 278-279.

⁶⁴ Miller, 250.

⁶⁵ Wolff, 360.