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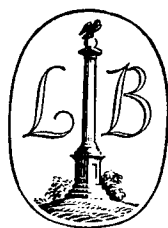
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The Splendid Little War

By
Frank Freidel

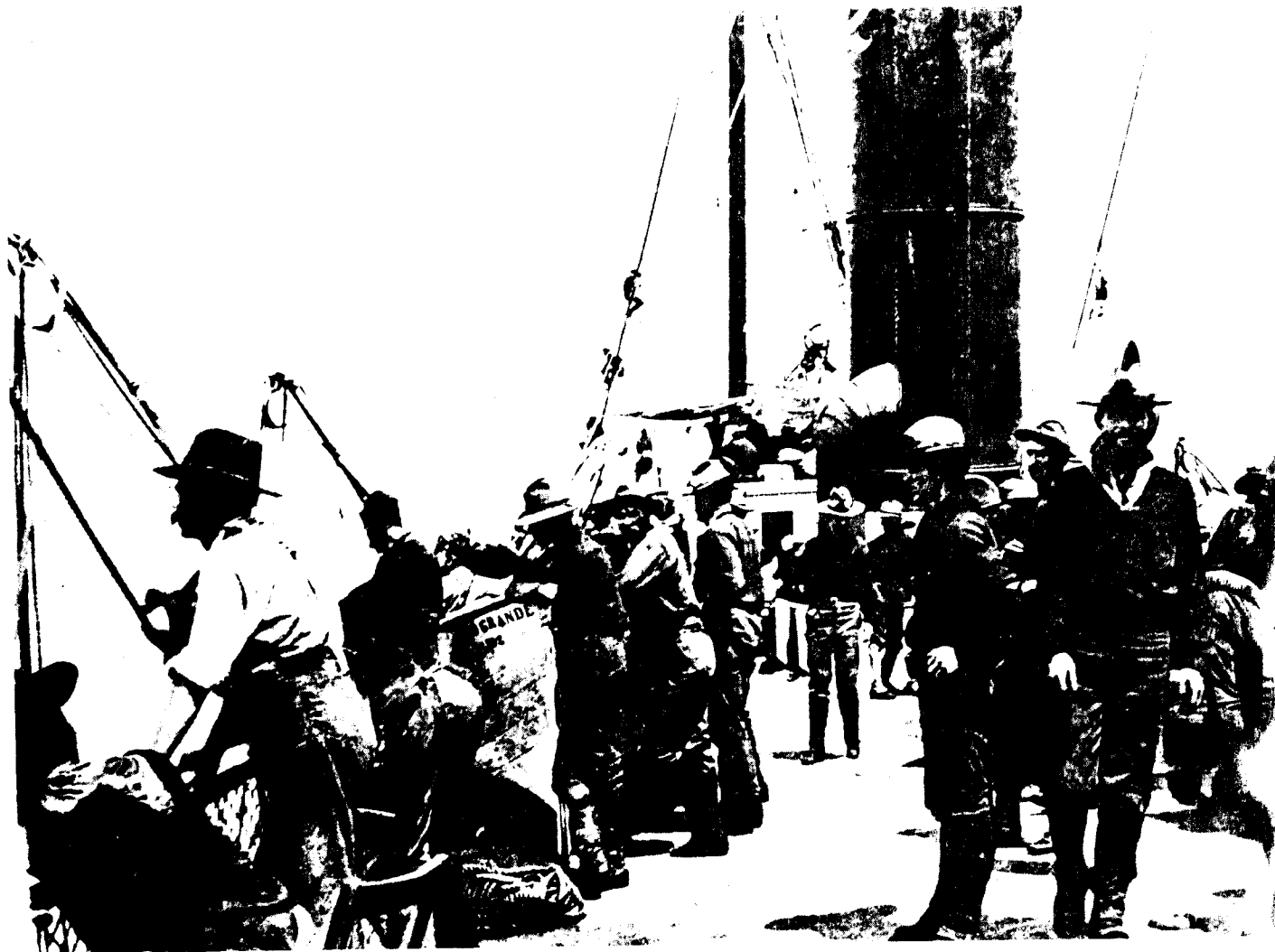


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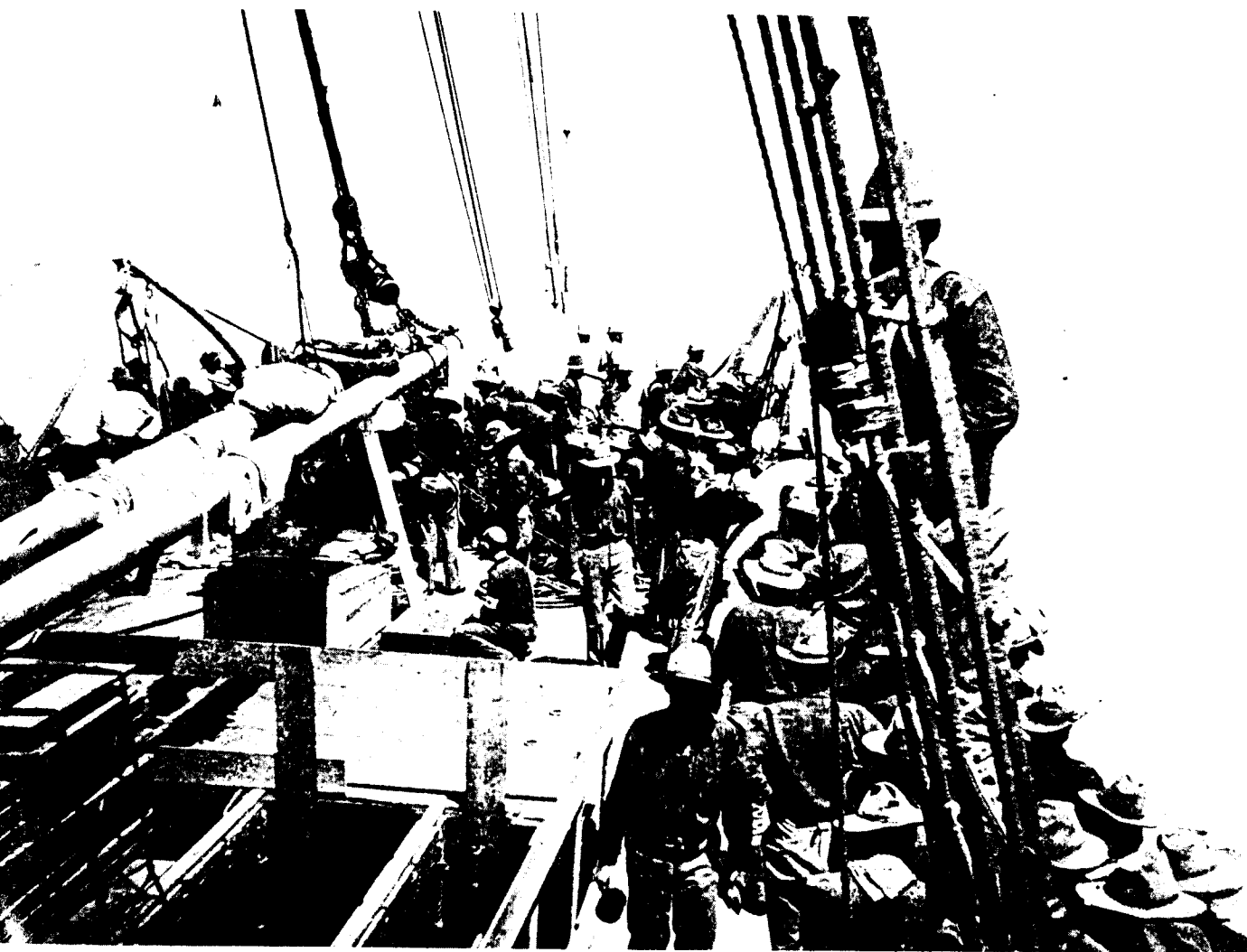
Balloon Signal Detachment aboard Rio Grande

tomatoes and beans. These are travel rations and we have now had 10 days of them with 5 days more on the road. We get the coffee hot, but the other things are usually cold unless an enterprising fellow will make a mess of the whole thing which he calls a stew.

"We have all gone expert in 'rustling' food, begging it, buying it from the ship's cook who is supposed not to sell, smuggling it in from shore etc. As my troop K is enterprising we fare quite well. . . .

"All the boys have lost flesh at the most astonishing rate. . . . Then too although our passage has been remarkably quiet many of the boys have been sea-sick. This with the confinement and heat to which they are not accustomed, and poor food has weakened them. I am very much afraid that we shan't do much."

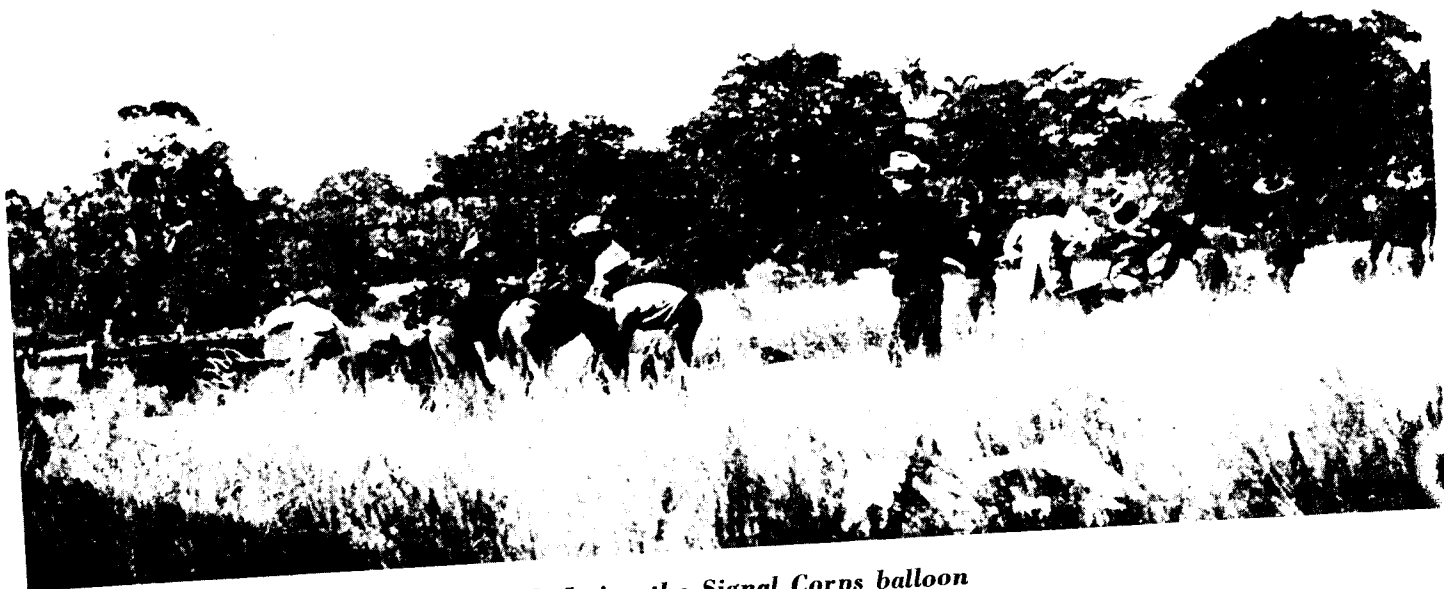
At daybreak on Monday, June 20, they sighted the rugged mountains of the Sierra Maestra wrapped in a blue mist. They reminded the men from the West of the mountains of Arizona. The troops made up their rolls, preparatory to disembarking, and crowded the rails in anticipation. Within a few hours they sighted through the haze the Morro Castle of Santiago and the semicircle of the blockading fleet surrounding the harbor entrance.



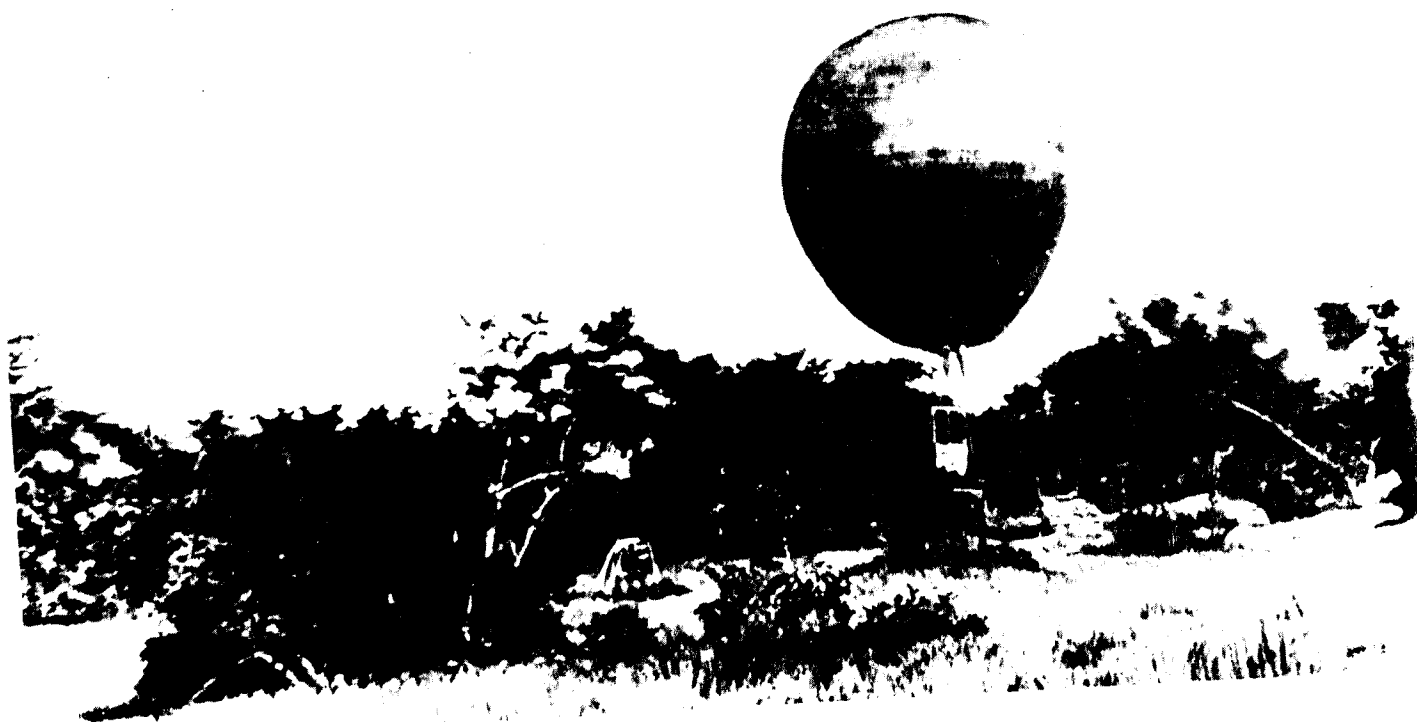
Transport approaching Cuban coast

While the convoy waited, Admiral Sampson came aboard the *Segurança* to sail with General Shafter eighteen miles west of Santiago to confer ashore with the Cuban General Calixto García, who could give them detailed information about the Spanish land forces. As the Navy gig pulled up onto a beach overhung with palms, a double line of Cuban officers stood drawn up in their honor. Stripped Cuban soldiers, shouting and cheering, rushed into the water to haul the boats ashore or to carry some of the officers and correspondents on their shoulders. A mile inland, General Calixto García met them. He was impressive with his white mustache and goatee and the deep bullet scar in his forehead where he had tried to kill himself ten years before when he was a captive of the Spaniards.

In a palm-frond hut, they held a council of war. Admiral Sampson wanted the Army to land at both sides of the entrance to Santiago harbor and charge up the steep slopes to capture Morro Castle and the sister batteries at Socapa. Then the Navy would sweep the mines from the harbor entrance and attack the Spanish fleet. Shafter, who on his way to Cuba had been reading an account of a disastrous eighteenth-century British expedition against Santiago, had come to his own conclusions. He wished no such bloody undertaking as would



Inflating the Signal Corps balloon



Signal Corps balloon ready for service



Balloon with Lts. Williams and Campbell in basket

within a few hundred yards of the Aguadores River. The enemy's musketry fire was already becoming quite spirited, but when the balloon reached this point it was opened upon by a heavy fire from field-guns, and the musketry fire also increased. The third shell or shrapnel fired at the balloon struck it, and the next one tore it so badly that it at once descended. Time enough, however, was afforded Colonel Derby to discover a road leading from the main road to the left and crossing the Aguadores River four or five hundred yards farther down the stream. This was a most opportune discovery, as the main road was congested with troops and the fire so heavy as to tend to demoralize the men. . . . General Kent . . . at once turned his division into [the side road]."



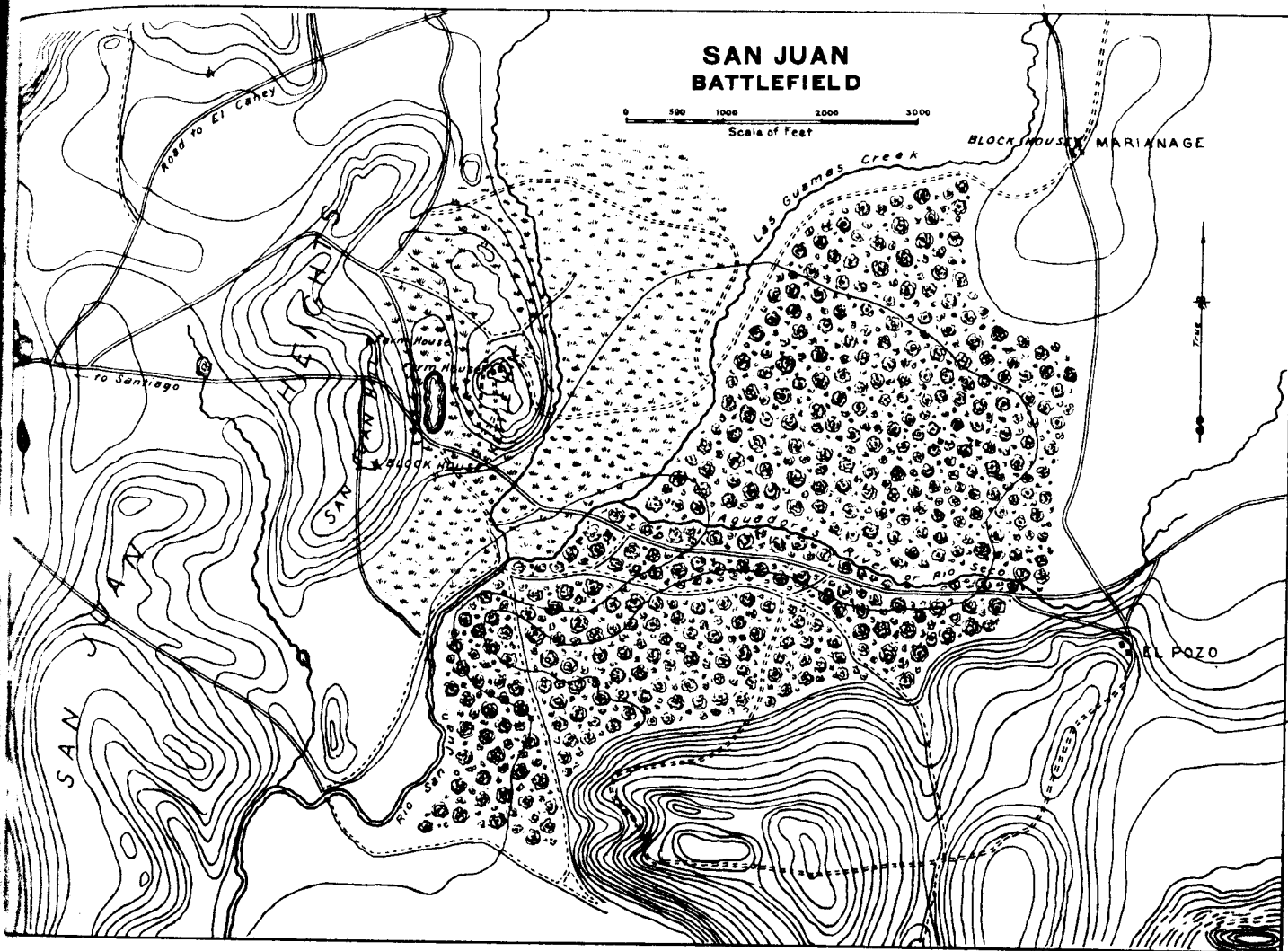
Rough Riders crossing first ford, a mile from front

"The front had burst out with a roar like a brushfire," wrote Stephen Crane. "The balloon was dying, dying a gigantic and public death before the eyes of two armies. It quivered, sank, faded into the trees amid the flurry of a battle that was suddenly and tremendously like a storm.

"The American battery thundered behind the men with a shock that seemed likely to tear the backs of their heads off. The Spanish shrapnel fled on a line to their left, swirling and swishing in supernatural velocity. The noise of the rifle bullets broke in their faces like the noise of so many lamp-chimneys or sped overhead in swift cruel spitting. And at the front the battle-sound, as if it were simply music, was beginning to swell and swell until the volleys rolled like a surf."

Along a mile of jungle road, men not seeing the enemy, not even seeing the fortifications on the hills defending Santiago, came under fire. First Lieutenant John J. Pershing, of the Negro Tenth Cavalry, had helped hurry his men along it before the firing became heavy:

"The road . . . follows, tortuous and narrow, along the river through the swampy jungle, then crosses the river and passes toward and between the San Juan Hills. . . . The



regiment moved slowly along this road under the scorching sun and sweltered; a few men were overcome with heat; already, an occasional bullet nipped a leaf above our heads. Impatient at delay the regiment and brigade finally swung past the waiting infantry and moved farther down the road. . . .

“When the Tenth Cavalry arrived at the crossing of the San Juan River, the balloon had become lodged in the treetops above and the enemy had just begun to make a target of it — no doubt correctly supposing that our troops were moving along this road and were near at hand. A converging fire from all the works within range opened upon us that was terrible in its effect; the Seventy-first New York, which lay in a sunken road near the ford, became demoralized and well-nigh stampeded; our mounted officers dismounted, the men stripped off at the roadside everything possible, and prepared for business.

"We were posted for a time in the bed of the stream to the right, directly under the balloon, and stood in water to our waists awaiting orders to deploy. Remaining there under this galling fire of exploding shrapnel and deadly mauser volleys the minutes seemed like hours. . . . General Wheeler and a part of his staff stood mounted a few moments in the



San Juan Hill, from Bloody Ford

left his study for the ministry to join the Rough Riders, wrote his parents, "Now it is hard enough to face those ugly bullets with your own carbine smoking in your hand, but it becomes doubly hard when you lay under a hell of fire and can't fire a shot to reply. Such was our situation all the morning — just keeping a few yards in the rear of the firing line, but not allowed to join it. We had not been on the field five minutes before our men began to get hit on the left and on the right of me. Fifteen minutes after the fight opened Captain O'Neill of Troop H was killed, one of the finest captains in our regiment."

O'Neill "had a theory that an officer ought never to take cover — " wrote Roosevelt, "a theory which was, of course, wrong, though in a volunteer organization the officers should certainly expose themselves very fully, simply for the effect on the men." O'Neill boasted, "The Spanish bullet isn't made that will kill me." A few minutes later, he was hit in the head.

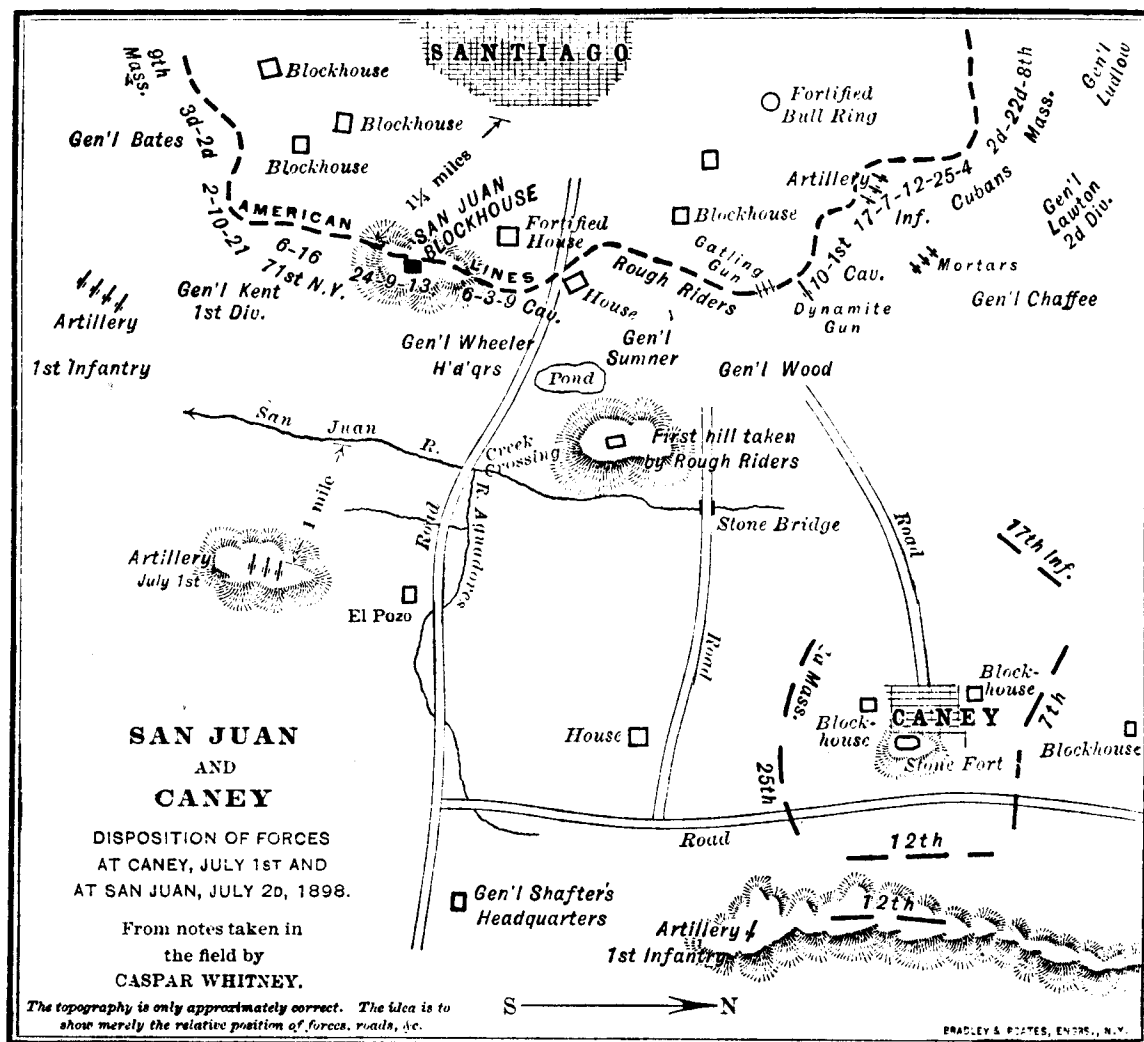
With casualties rising, it was impossible to hold the men any longer at the edge of the meadow; either they must advance or retreat. Miley sent back word from the skirmish line: "The heights must be taken at all hazards. A retreat now would be a disastrous defeat." By noon the men were advancing rapidly. Knox wrote:



Rough Rider Frank Knox

"The enemy were slowly withdrawing from the brush into the bottoms of the trenches on the hills. As they withdrew, we advanced on our hands and knees, crawling on our stomachs at times, and where the ground permitted, with a rush, until we had driven them all to the hilltops. Now began the serious work of the day. We had to dislodge an enemy our equal or superior in numbers from a strongly fortified and entrenched position on the ranges of hills that surround the city."

At about one o'clock, General Sumner ordered his brigades to attack Kettle Hill. Roosevelt paraded conspicuously in front of his men, fully exposed on horseback.



Harper's map, showing Rough Rider advances

When the order came to attack, he rode back and forth, assembling the regiment. He considered it too dangerous to remain at the foot of the hill firing, so ordered his own men, accompanied by fragments of four other regiments, to charge:

"By this time we were all in the spirit of the thing and greatly excited by the charge, the men cheering and running forward between shots. . . . I . . . galloped toward the hill, passing the shouting, cheering, firing men, and went up the lane, splashing through a small stream; when I got abreast of the ranch buildings on top of Kettle Hill, I turned and went up the slope. Being on horseback I was, of course, able to get ahead of the men on foot, excepting my orderly, Henry Bardshar, who had run ahead very fast in order to get better shots at the Spaniards, who were now running out of the ranch buildings. . . . Some forty yards from the top I ran into a wire fence and jumped off Little Texas, turning him loose. He had been scraped by a couple of bullets, one of which nicked my elbow, and I never expected to see him again. As I ran up the hill, Bardshar stopped to shoot, and two Spaniards fell as he emptied his magazine. These were the only Spaniards I actually saw fall to aimed shots by any one of my men, with the exception of two guerillas in trees.

Picture Credits

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I. Remember the Maine

2. Library of Congress
4. *The Bee*, June 8, 1898, 1:8
5. Frances Benjamin Johnston, Library of Congress
6. *New York World*, February 17, 1898
7. BS-19-9-17; RB-5212, National Archives
8. Library of Congress
9. (Upper) Library of Congress; (lower) Van der Weyde, Theodore Roosevelt collection
10. C. C. Johnson, SC-113510, National Archives
11. C. C. Johnson, SC-113511, 113512, 113514, 113515, National Archives

II. The Battle of Manila Bay

12. George Grantham, #4046, Official U. S. Navy Photograph
14. Record Group 45, National Archives
15. *Harper's Weekly*, June 11, 1898, 42:576
16. W. N. King, *The Story of the War of 1898*, 111
17. *Loc. cit.*
18. #534, Official U. S. Navy Photograph
19. RB-1072, National Archives
20. #18190, Official U. S. Navy Photograph
21. King, *War of 1898*, 125
22. *McClure's*, February 1899, 12:374-375
24. #7601, Official U. S. Navy Photograph
25. Adelbert M. Dewey, *The Life and Letters of Admiral Dewey*, 371
26. *Century*, August 1898, 56:616
27. Harvard University Library
28. #18196, Official U. S. Navy Photograph
29. *Illustrated London News*, July 2, 1898, 113:22
30. #18199, Official U. S. Navy Photograph
31. Harvard University Library

III. As Johnny Went Marching Off

32. SC-85585, 90190, National Archives
34. CN-10062, National Archives
35. SC-93574, RB-2803, National Archives
36. Elmendorf, Theodore Roosevelt collection
37. Elmendorf, Roosevelt collection
38. SC-94524, National Archives
39. (Lower left) Elmendorf, Roosevelt collection; others, SC-113490; CN-3226, 10063, National Archives
40. Elmendorf, Roosevelt collection
41. RB-2739, National Archives; Elmendorf, Roosevelt collection

IV. Hunting the Spanish Fleet

42. #608, Official U. S. Navy Photograph
44. Elmendorf, Theodore Roosevelt collection
45. Elmendorf, Roosevelt collection

46. SC-90119, National Archives
47. SC-94517, National Archives
48. Elmendorf, Roosevelt collection
49. Elmendorf, Roosevelt collection
50. Library of Congress
51. Library of Congress
52. #18238, Official U. S. Navy Photograph
53. #5044, Official U. S. Navy Photograph
54. *Leslie's Weekly*, July 14, 1898, 87:32
55. #14050 and #15713, Official U. S. Navy Photographs
56. #5173, Official U. S. Navy Photograph
57. SC-94467, National Archives

V. Expedition to Cuba

58. SC-94469, National Archives
60. Elmendorf, TR collection
61. Elmendorf, TR collection
62. B. J. Falk, Library of Congress
63. Lt. H. D. Wise, SC-113498, National Archives
64. Clifton B. Brown, TR collection
65. Lt. A. Springer, Jr., SC-113499, National Archives
66. Elmendorf, TR collection
67. SC-113503, National Archives
68. Clifton B. Brown, TR collection
69. SC-84981, National Archives
70. Capt. A. L. Parmerter, SC-113505, National Archives
71. Cosby scrapbook, TR collection
72. RB-3521, National Archives
73. NR & L (Old) 15706, Official U. S. Navy Photo
74. SC-85582, National Archives
75. SC-113531, National Archives
76. Capt. G. J. Newgarden, SC-113530, National Archives
77. CN-10134, National Archives
78. J. D. Whelpley, SC-113538, National Archives
79. Adelbert Ames, Jr., SC-113580, National Archives

VI. Daiquiri Beachhead

80. B. West Clinedinst, *Leslie's Weekly*, July 14, 1898, 87:21
82. RB-1755-A, National Archives
83. SC-94436, National Archives
84. 1st Lt. H. D. Wise, SC-113535, National Archives
85. SC-94454, National Archives
86. SC-94528, National Archives
87. James Burton, SC-94489, National Archives
88. RB-1753, National Archives
89. William Dinwiddie, Library of Congress
90. Capt. Arthur H. Lee, Royal Artillery, SC-113552, National Archives
91. RB-1754, National Archives
92. CN-10136, National Archives
93. Capt. Z. W. Torrey, 6th Inf., SC-113587, National Archives
94. A. D. Brittingham, SC-113540, National Archives
95. Capt. Z. W. Torrey, 6th Inf., SC-113548
96. SC-82037, National Archives
97. *Leslie's Weekly*, Aug. 78, 1898, 87:128-129

II. Skirmish at Las Guásimas

98. SC-90118, National Archives
99. Brady B-5128, National Archives
100. SC-94482, National Archives
101. From R. A. Alger, *The Spanish-American War* (New York, 1901), p. 106
102. *Leslie's Weekly*, Sept. 15, 1898, 87:208, 213.
103. Captain Lee, SC-113549, National Archives
104. *Leslie's Weekly*, Aug. 25, 1898, 87:148, 153
105. *Leslie's Weekly*, Sept. 8, 1898, 87:188, 193
106. SC-94507, National Archives
107. Burr McIntosh, PX 48-22:4024 (11), Franklin D. Roosevelt Library
108. Burr McIntosh, TR collection
109. *Leslie's Weekly*, Sept. 1, 1898, 87:168, 173
110. CN-10132, National Archives
111. SC-84957, National Archives
112. SC-94477, National Archives
113. A. D. Brittingham, SC-113561, National Archives

VIII. Assault on El Caney

114. SC-90162, National Archives
115. CN-10128, National Archives
116. SC-94542, National Archives
117. William Dinwiddie, Library of Congress
118. SC-94549, National Archives
119. James Burton, SC-94534, National Archives
120. SC-84849, National Archives
121. Capt. A. L. Parmerter, SC-113559, National Archives
122. *Harper's Weekly*, Oct. 1, 1898, 42:973
123. SC-94486, National Archives
124. Lt. W. D. Davis, SC-113558, National Archives
125. *Harper's Weekly*, June 11, 1898, 42:566
126. SC-94464, National Archives
127. SC-100466, National Archives
128. *Leslie's Weekly*, Aug. 18, 1898, 87:136
129. A. D. Brittingham, SC-113560, National Archives
130. *Leslie's Weekly*, Nov. 3, 1898, 87:346-347
131. SC-84951, National Archives
132. SC-94450, National Archives
133. *Leslie's Weekly*, Aug. 25, 1898, 87:158
134. *Leslie's Weekly*, Oct. 20, 1898, 87:813

IX. Up San Juan Hill

135. Library of Congress
136. SC-113589, National Archives
137. *Harper's*, Nov. 1898, 97:828
138. SC-94484, 94485, National Archives
139. SC-84842, National Archives
140. RB-1767, SC-85554, National Archives
141. CN-10125, National Archives
142. SC-94544, National Archives
143. SC-94550, National Archives
144. SC-85538, National Archives
145. William Dinwiddie, Library of Congress
146. SC-90150, National Archives
147. SC-94444, National Archives
148. *Harper's*, Nov. 1898, 97:969
149. CN-6922, National Archives
150. Chicago Daily News Photo

151. *Harper's*, Oct. 1898, 97:802
152. SC-81824, National Archives
153. *McClure's*, Oct. 1898, 11:507
154. W. N. King, *The Story of the War of 1898*, 235
155. SC-84841, National Archives
156. *Leslie's Weekly*, Sept. 29, 1898, 87:248, 253
157. SC-94487, National Archives
158. SC-96334, National Archives
159. *Harper's Weekly*, Aug. 6, 1898, 62:768-769
160. A. D. Brittingham, SC-113565, National Archives
161. William Dinwiddie, Library of Congress
162. *Harper's*, Nov. 1898, 97:971
163. RB-2839, National Archives

X. A Precarious Toehold

164. *Leslie's Weekly*, Dec. 29, 1898, 87:509
165. SC-85530, National Archives
166. SC-94437, National Archives
167. SC-94704, National Archives
168. SC-94546, National Archives
169. SC-82107, National Archives
170. SC-84989, National Archives
171. Dr. W. M. Gray, SC-113577, National Archives
172. TR collection
173. SC-84835, National Archives
174. A. D. Brittingham, SC-113566, National Archives
175. Capt. W. C. Worden, SC-113551, National Archives
176. A. D. Brittingham, SC-113567, National Archives
177. *Leslie's Weekly*, Nov. 17, 1898, 87:386-387
178. SC-94545, National Archives
179. *Collier's Weekly*, July 9, 1898, 21:12-13
180. RB-1764, National Archives

XI. The Fleet Darts Out

181. *Harper's Weekly*, July 30, 1898, 42:729
182. New York Public Library
183. #5443, Official U. S. Navy Photograph
184. #5436, Official U. S. Navy Photograph
185. #5456, Official U. S. Navy Photograph
186. #12176, Official U. S. Navy Photograph
187. *Century*, April 1899, 57:908
188. W. N. King, *The Story of the War of 1898*, 291
189. #16898, Official U. S. Navy Photograph
190. *Century*, May 1899, 58:90
191. *Century*, April 1899, 57:908
192. #6111, Official U. S. Navy Photograph
193. *Harper's Weekly*, July 23, 1898, 42:712
194. King, *Story of War*, 285
195. BS-3-16-29, National Archives
196. *Century*, May 1899, 58:78
197. #5892, Official U. S. Navy Photograph
198. *Century*, May 1899, 58:80

XII. A Fourth of July Present

199. Library of Congress
200. #5062, Official U. S. Navy Photograph
201. *Century*, May 1899, 58:98
202. *Harper's Weekly*, July 30, 1898, 42:742-743
203. #16894, Official U. S. Navy Photograph

218. #5822 and #5818, Official U. S. Navy Photographs
219. #5821, Official U. S. Navy Photograph
220. #15723, Official U. S. Navy Photograph
221. #15727, Official U. S. Navy Photograph
222. #5024, Official U. S. Navy Photograph
223. W. N. King, *The Story of the War of 1898*, 299
224. #5825, Official U. S. Navy Photograph
225. *Century*, May 1899, 58:85
226. William S. Thomas, #17942, Official U. S. Navy Photograph
227. #16895, Official U. S. Navy Photograph
228. #593, Official U. S. Navy Photograph
229. BS-6843-A, National Archives
230. BS-6844-A, National Archives
231. #468, Official U. S. Navy Photograph

XIII. Siege of Santiago

232. From sketch by C. M. Sheldon, *Leslie's Weekly*, Aug. 25, 1898, 87:141
234. Arthur Lee, SC-113571, National Archives
235. James Burton, SC-94504, National Archives
236. James Burton, SC-94499, National Archives
237. SC-94530, National Archives
238. *Leslie's Weekly*, Aug. 25, 1898, 87:149
239. *Leslie's Weekly*, Aug. 25, 1898, 87:158
240. SC-84848, National Archives
241. SC-85571, National Archives
242. SC-94518, National Archives
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244. *Scribner's*, SC-94434, National Archives
245. SC-94446, National Archives
246. SC-84850, National Archives
247. (Upper) Library of Congress; (lower) CN-10133, National Archives
248. William Dinwiddie, Library of Congress
249. SC-94460, National Archives
250. SC-85566, National Archives
251. TR collection
252. *McClure's*, Oct. 1898, 11:510
253. CN-10135, National Archives
254. SC-81806, National Archives
255. SC-94480, National Archives
256. A. L. Parmerter, SC-113605, National Archives
257. SC-90195, National Archives
258. (Upper) CN-10141; (lower) SC-113594, National Archives
259. SC-94441, National Archives

XIV. Puerto Rican Campaign

260. From photograph by Richard Harding Davis, *Scribner's*, November 1898, 24:521
262. Northwestern University Archives
263. *Munsey's Magazine*, July 1899, 21:577
264. SC-94538, National Archives

265. CN-10126, National Archives
266. CN-10130, National Archives
267. Gen. Sherman Miles Collection, Library of Congress
268. SC-94541, National Archives
269. CN-10131, National Archives
270. CN-10127, National Archives
271. SC-84809, National Archives
272. SC-94496, National Archives
273. SC-94463, National Archives
274. SC-84810 and 85650, National Archives
275. SC-94491, National Archives
276. SC-85659, National Archives
277. SC-94501, National Archives

XV. Expedition to the Philippines

278. RB-2745 and 2747, National Archives
280. RB-1169, National Archives
281. *Harper's Weekly*, July 30, 1898, 42:753
282. RB-1258, National Archives
283. RB-2742, National Archives
284. RB-2762, National Archives
285. RB-3637, National Archives
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288. RB-1337, National Archives
289. Library of Congress
290. RB-1338, National Archives
291. RB-1078, National Archives
292. RB-1138, National Archives
293. RB-1609, National Archives

XVI. Victory — and Death

294. *Leslie's Weekly*, September 15, 1898, 87:210-211
296. W. L. Murphy, SC-113590, National Archives
297. Dr. W. M. Gray, SC-113555; 84991, 113556, 84993, National Archives
298. RB-2842, National Archives
299. Harvard University
300. Elmendorf, Theodore Roosevelt collection
301. Upper left and right, lower left, Elmendorf; lower right, Van der Weyde, Roosevelt collection
302. Roosevelt collection
303. Elmendorf, Roosevelt collection; RB-4325, National Archives
304. RB-1047, National Archives
305. RB-1037, SC-85795, National Archives
306. Library of Congress
307. William H. Rau, Library of Congress; Elmendorf, Roosevelt collection

Picturing the War

308. John C. Hemment, *Cannon and Camera*, opp. 38, 100

For Further Reading

A most readable, satiric, and thought-provoking account of the Spanish-American War is Walter Millis, *Martial Spirit* (New York, 1931). Also readable and satiric but briefer is Gregory Mason, *Remember the Maine* (New York, 1939). The older, classic history of the war, containing long quotations from documents, is French E. Chadwick, *The Relations of the United States and Spain: The Spanish-American War* (2 vols., New York, 1911). On the Cuban campaign, Herbert H. Sargent, *The Campaign of Santiago de Cuba* (3 vols., Chicago, 1907), is useful, and Hermann Hagedorn, *The Rough Riders* (New York, 1927), is vivid. I am heavily indebted to the Society of Santiago de Cuba for their fascinating collection of reminiscences, *The Santiago Campaign* (Richmond, Va., 1927). *Harper's Weekly* and *Leslie's Weekly* provide especially good running pictorial and reportorial accounts of the war. The best contemporary picture histories are W. Nephew King, *The Story of the War of 1898* (New York, 1898), and *Harper's* and *Leslie's* histories.

On American entrance into the war, see Julius W. Pratt, *Expansionists of 1898* (Baltimore, 1936); Marcus M. Wilkerson, *Public Opinion and the Spanish-American War* (Baton Rouge, La., 1932); Joseph E. Wisan, *The Cuban Crisis as Reflected in the New York Press 1895-1898* (New York, 1934); and Richard Hofstadter, "Manifest Destiny and the Philippines," in Daniel Aaron, ed., *America in Crisis* (New York, 1952). Especially valuable is Ernest May, "The Spanish-American War as an Irrepressible Conflict," a paper delivered before the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, April 1958. On the trouble with the German squadron, see Thomas A. Bailey, "Dewey and the Germans at Manila Bay," *American Historical Review*, October 1939, 45:59-81.

Among documentary materials are: *Annual Report of the Major-General Commanding the Army* . . . (Washington, 1898); *Correspondence Relating to the War With Spain* . . . (2 vols., Washington, 1902); *Report of the Commission . . . to Investigate the Conduct of the War Department* . . . (8 vols., Washington, 1900) [Dodge Commission Report]; Office of Naval Intelligence, *War Notes and Information from Abroad* series (Washington, 1898-1900).

From among the vast quantity of writings on the war, I have made use of the following:

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Fiasco AT SAN JUAN

The Americans advancing on San Juan Hill had the services of an observation balloon that could have been a great help. Instead it became a target for Spanish guns.

BY MAJOR CHARLES B. VAN PELT

EARLY IN 1898, military leaders in the United States recognized that war with Spain was coming and began to plan for it. One factor which weighed heavily in their war plans was the Spanish Navy. Subsequent events proved the reputation unfounded, but Spain was then considered to be a formidable naval power. The American general staff thought it likely that the Spaniards would try to blockade eastern seaboard ports. Harbor defense then must have high priority. Among other defensive measures, all harbors would have to be protected by observation balloons. It was characteristic of the "splendid little war" that the order for balloon protection was put out in ignorance of how many balloons the Army had. As it turned out, the Army had just one!

Observation balloons were used by both sides during the Civil War, but the Northern effort had been largest and most successful. After 1865, military appropriations were so small that for many years the War Department would not spend money on observation balloons, even though some Army officers thought aerial observation would be useful in fighting the Western Indians. It was not until 1891 that a small amount was made available to the Signal Corps to purchase a balloon, and it was bought the next year. It was named the *General Myer* in honor of the Signal Corps' first Chief Signal Officer, Albert J. Myer.

THE *General Myer* was exhibited at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago during 1893-1894. Then it was transferred, first to Fort Riley, Kansas, and finally to Fort Logan, Colorado. In Colorado the military operators of the *General Myer* ran into trouble. Higher authority decided to save money by reducing the funds needed to purchase hydrogen to fill the balloon's envelope. Signal Corps personnel were forced to keep the balloon inflated all the time to operate it, which was unwise because of the preva-

lent high winds. The balloon detachment requested that a shed be built for storing the inflated balloon. A year elapsed while War Department red tape was releasing \$900, and the shed was being built. Meanwhile the *General Myer* perished in a severe wind storm.

The Signal Corps now had a shed but no balloon. A request for money to buy another balloon was "not favorably considered" by the War Department. The aerialists at Fort Logan pleaded, cajoled, and finally secured enough cash to buy the fabric for making another envelope. When the order came to move all observation balloons to the East Coast to defend the Nation's harbors from the Spanish Navy, the Army had one. It had been hand-stitched together by a Signal Corps sergeant and his wife on the floor of their living room at Fort Logan.

THE defeat of a Spanish fleet at Manila Bay on May 1, 1898 caused American military leaders to re-appraise enemy naval capabilities. They no longer regarded U. S. harbor defense as top priority, and adopted a plan which called for organizing two balloon companies for field use. The only balloon already available had arrived with its crew in New York, but now it was ordered to join Major General William R. Shafter's V Corps in Tampa, Florida, where an expedition to take Cuba was being formed. First Lieutenant Joseph E. Maxfield, U. S. Army Signal Corps, was placed in charge of balloon operations. Near the end of May, Maxfield loaded the balloon and its equipment aboard freight cars bound for Tampa and then himself departed from New York.

General Shafter had received an order from the War Department: "You are directed to take your command on transports, proceed under convoy of

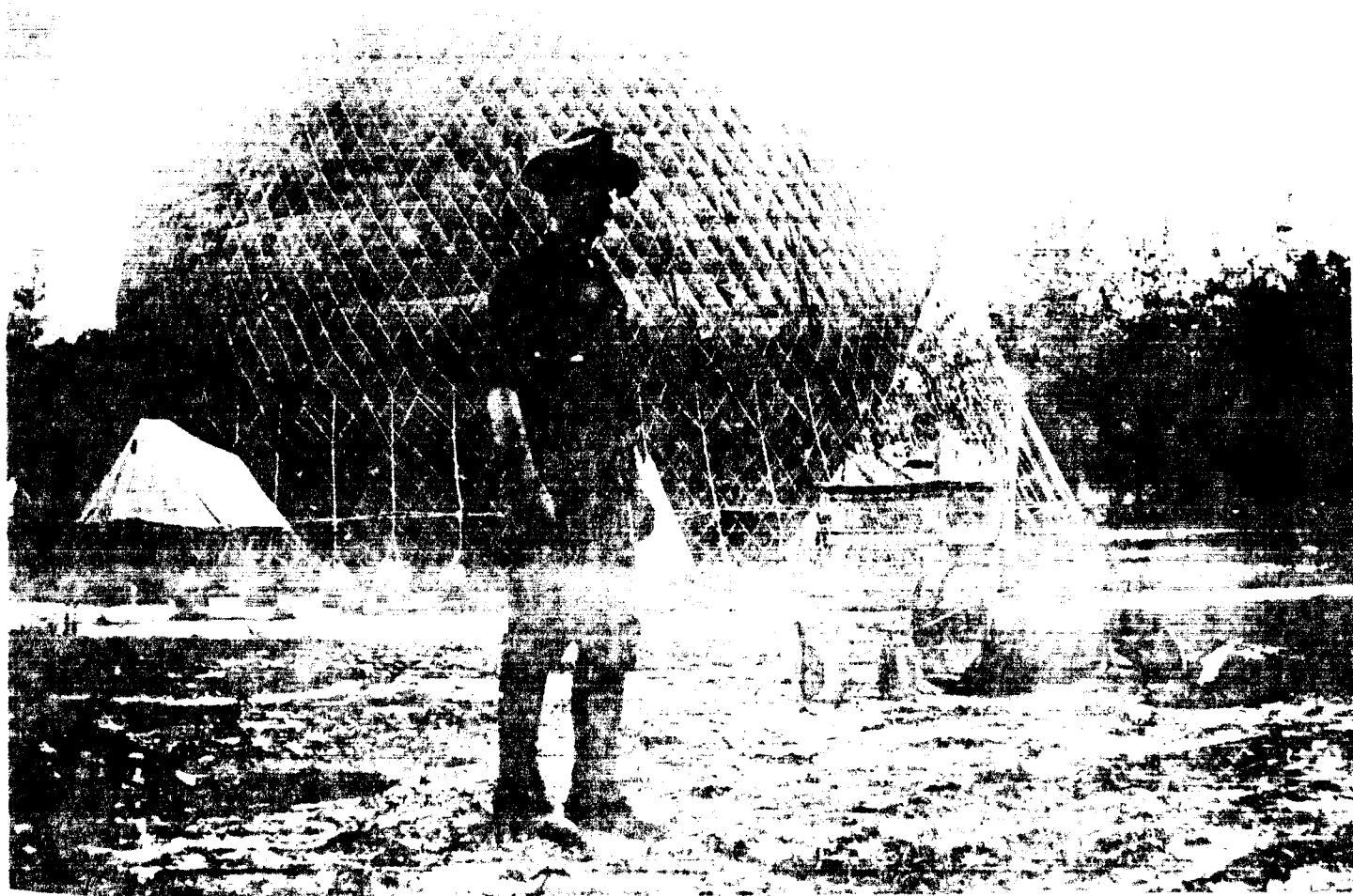
the Navy to the vicinity of Santiago de Cuba [and] capture or destroy the garrison there. When will you sail?

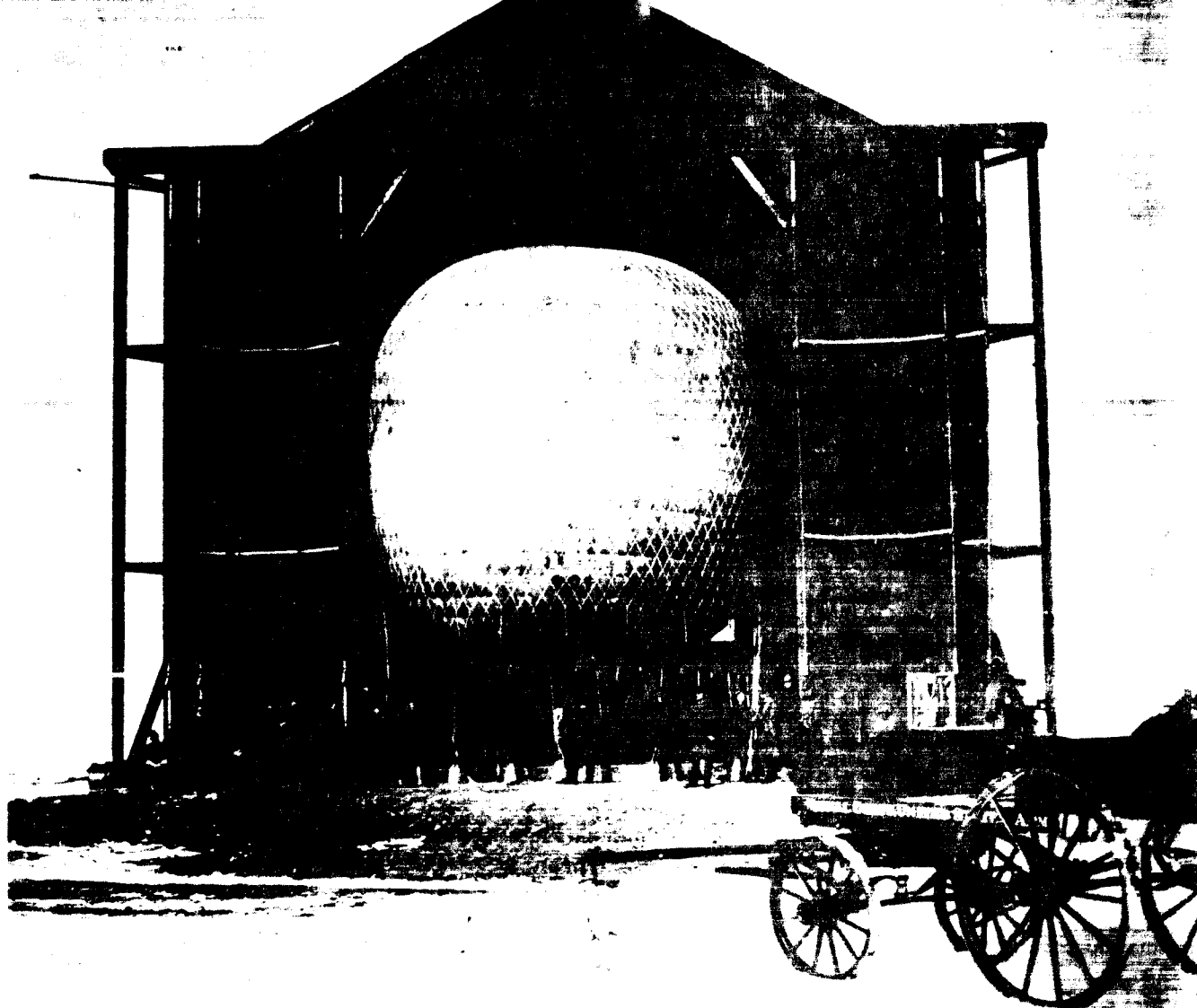
The commander of V Corps could not say when his expedition would sail. In preparing for the expedition, vast numbers of freight cars loaded with supplies had collected on railroad sidings, but no cargo manifests had been received. Transport vessels had been chartered by the War Department, but the process of refitting them to carry troops, horses, and pack animals was not complete. A single railroad track ran between Tampa and the embarkation point at Fort Tampa. A bottleneck in movement of troops and supplies developed immediately and congestion was increased by a land promoter in Port Tampa who insisted on running sightseer excursion trains between city and port while the loading was going on.

MAXFIELD arrived in Tampa in the midst of all the confusion. No enlisted men had been assigned to the balloon section and he was the unit's only officer. The freight cars in which he had loaded equipment in New York had been shunted onto a siding—he didn't know which—with hundreds of others. Chaos notwithstanding, Shafter decided to sail on June 3 and Maxfield was told to be ready to embark on that date.

Major General Nelson A. Miles, senior officer in the Army, arrived in Tampa on June 3 and found the Cuba expedition far from ready to sail. Freight car sidings were aswarm with soldiers. "There are over 300 cars loaded with war material along the roads," Miles reported to Secretary of War Russell A. Alger. "Stores are sent to the quartermaster at Tampa, but the invoices and bills of lading have not been received, so that officers are obliged to break

The Signal Corps balloon partially inflated. (From U. S. Signal Corps photo No. 111-RB-3027D in National Archives)



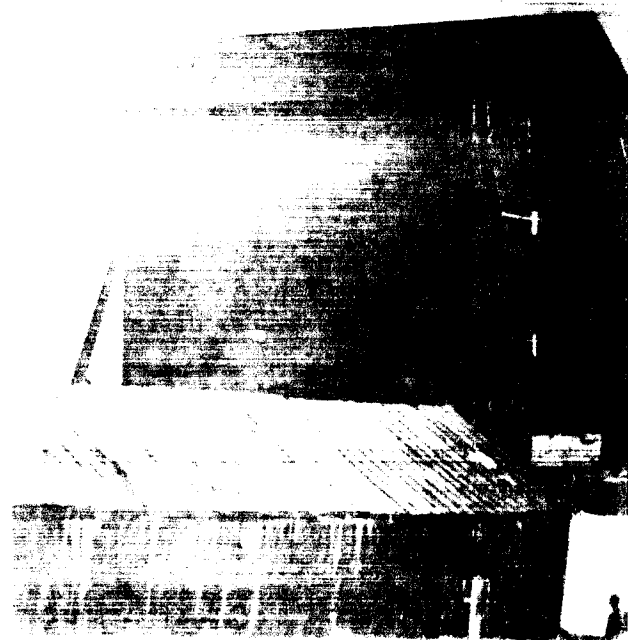


ABOVE: Handmade balloon in shed, Fort Logan, Colo., 1891 (National Archives; U. S. Signal Corps photo 111-SC-102102)

open seals and hunt from car to car to ascertain whether they contain clothing, grain, balloon material, horse equipments, ammunition, siege guns, commissary stores, etc." Not until the evening of June 6 was the order finally given to leave Tampa for the port.

Those three days by which Shafter had erred in his estimate of departure were put to good use by Maxfield. Aided at first by a detail from an infantry regiment, and later by twenty-four men assigned to the balloon section from Signal Corps units in Atlanta, Chickamauga, and the Department of the Gulf, he searched rail sidings for freight cars which contained "balloon material." When orders arrived to strike camp and move to the port, items essential to operating the balloon had been located and packed aboard wagons, although no weapons had been located for the enlisted men and they had to share mess kits because fewer than half of them had been issued any.

RIGHT: The balloon ascending at Fort Logan. (From U. S. Signal Corps photo No. 111-SC-102106 in National Archives)



MOVEMENT of the Expeditionary Force down the single track between Tampa and the embarkation point was characterized by the same lack of coordination as in the supply buildup. By the time the embarkation order arrived, all commanders knew that the transports could accommodate no more than 20,000 men. Since there were 25,000 in the Expeditionary Force, obviously some weren't going to make the trip. Each commander was determined that his unit would not be among those left behind. Men raced about madly, throwing together personal equipment and struggling to board waiting trains, then chafed with impatience as all the trains tried at once to get on the single track that led to the port. The 6th U. S. Infantry reached the end of the nine-mile track after standing for four hours in a hot sun, ankledeep in the manure of a stock train recently occupied by another species of passenger. Traveling in coaches with filled ice water coolers but no food, the 10th Cavalry also reached the end of the line after many hours. The 10th was a Negro outfit and its officers had found no one along the way willing to sell food to their troops.

At the port, the quartermaster was struggling to allot space aboard the transports. He was hampered and harried by commanders who did not wish to wait for assignment to a ship and made their own selections, or by others who did not like their assignments and simply boarded a vessel more suited to their tastes. Once aboard, *possession* became the only law. More than one unit arrived at the gangway of its

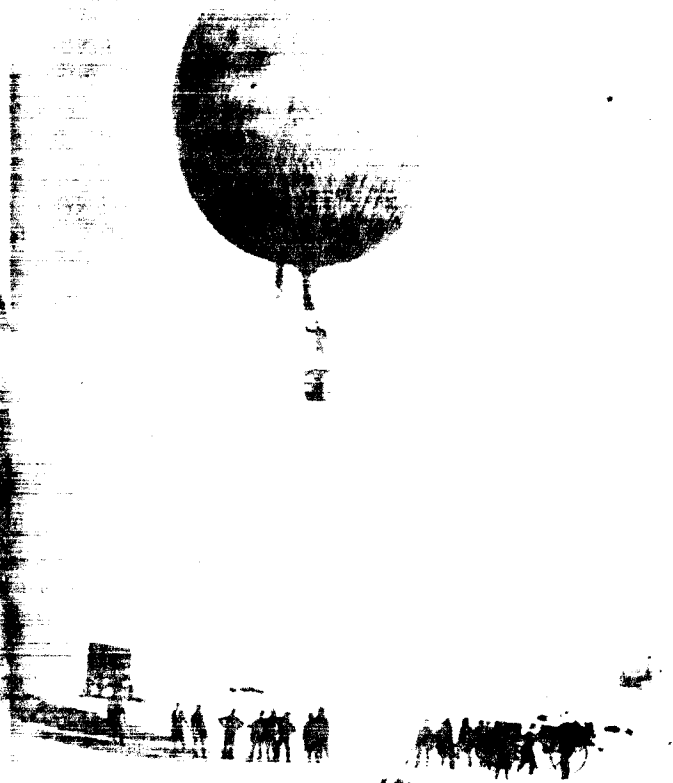
allotted transport to find it already taken. Two courses of action were then open: return to the quartermaster for another assignment or dispossess the troops already aboard. Few units were willing to return to the quartermaster and sporadic battles broke out all over the quay.

Typical of that day's events was the experience of the 1st Volunteer Cavalry (Rough Riders). The Quartermaster allotted them the *Yucatan*. Colonel Leonard Wood immediately jumped into a small boat, was rowed out to midstream where the transport was awaiting its turn to move up to the quay, and staked claim. Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, second-in-command, started for his troops to ready them for loading. On the way, as he reported later, "I happened to find out by accident that the transport *Yucatan* had also been allotted to the 2d Infantry and the 71st New York, and I ran down to my men and rushed them down to the dock and got on the *Yucatan*, holding the gangplank against the 2d Infantry and 71st New York." When Captain Anthony J. Bleecker of the 71st arrived, expecting to board, he was met by Roosevelt. "Hello," said Roosevelt. "What can I do for you?" "That's our ship," said Bleecker. "Well, we seem to have it," replied a smiling Roosevelt. Bleecker, out-ranked, retreated and the 71st eventually went aboard another transport, the *Vigilancia*.

THE Cuban Expeditionary Force was the largest single military expedition the United States had ever dispatched from its shores. It was composed of 819 officers, 15,058 troops, and 469 civilian teamsters, stevedores, and clerks. Four 7-inch howitzers, four 5-inch siege guns, sixteen light guns, one Hotchkiss revolving cannon, one pneumatic dynamite gun, and eight 3.6-inch field mortars made up the artillery train. There were four Gatling guns also. For transportation in Cuba, there were 2,295 horses and mules, 195 wagons, and 7 ambulances. There was also a balloon section. By herculean effort, Maxfield had loaded the balloon, personnel, and equipment aboard the *Rio Grande*, one of the ships in the convoy.

The transports were off for Cuba. General Shafter walked wearily down the nearly deserted quayside to his headquarters ship, the *Saginnaw*. A courier breathlessly intercepted the general before he reached his vessel and handed over a dispatch from the Secretary of War. "Wait until you get further orders before you sail!" Wondering whether his army was ever destined to leave Florida, Shafter recalled the transports. Within hours of having left for glory and adventure in Cuba the expedition was back at the quay in Port Tampa.

Secretary Alger's message had been based on a reported sighting of Spanish warships between Cuba

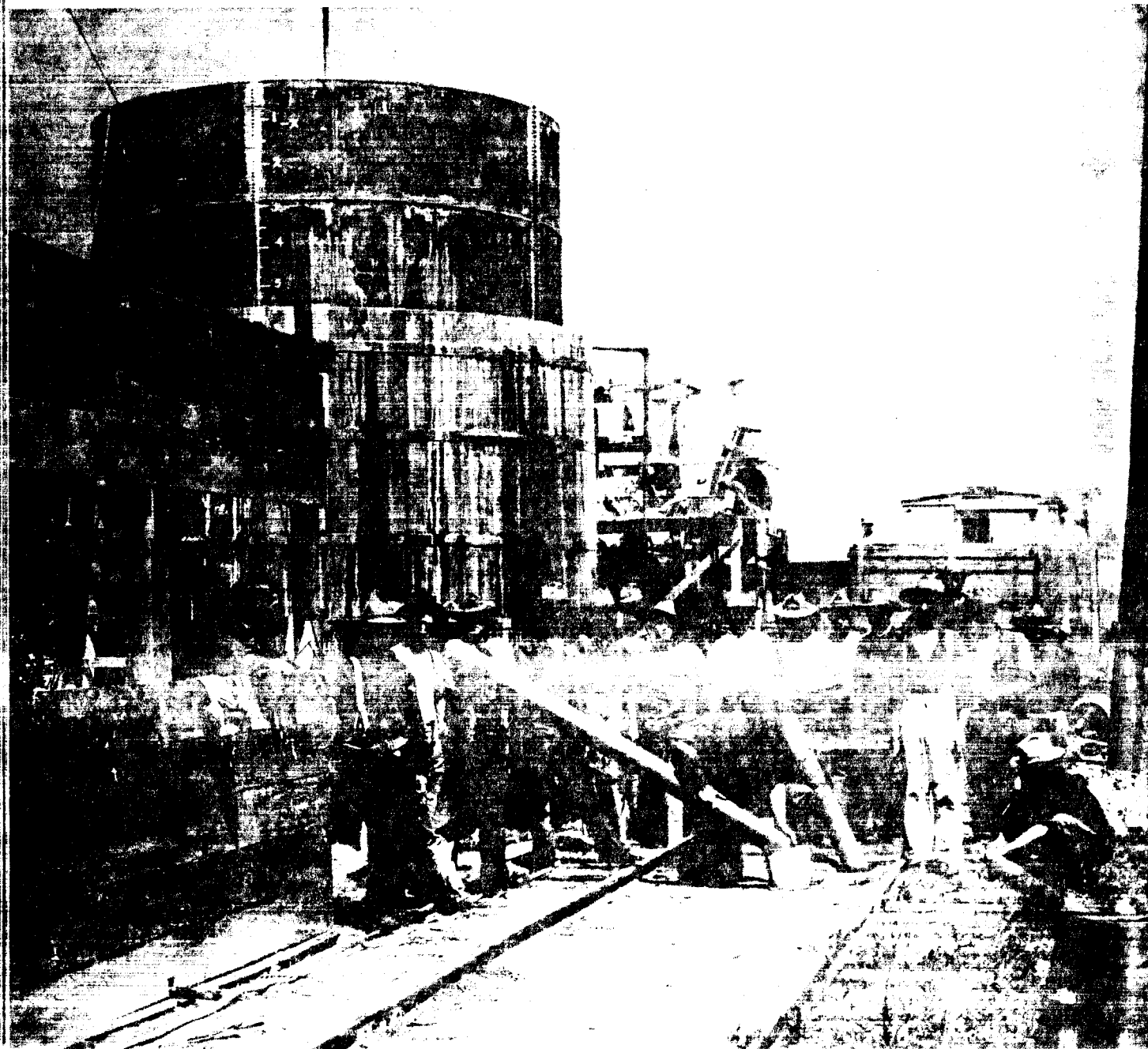


and Florida. While the Navy tried to locate these enemy vessels, the expeditionary troops sweltered aboard their transports. It was just as well. During the four-day wait, someone discovered that all the medical supplies had been left behind during the frenzied departure. As those were now being loaded, General Shafter again received permission to leave. It took two more days to take on fresh water and re-embark the animals. On June 14 the transports departed a second time for Cuba.

EIGHT days later the Expeditionary Force was trying to get ashore at Daiquiri and Siboney. It is generally conceded that had the Spanish Army made

Signal Corps Balloon Section, Tampa, Florida, 1898, prior to embarkation. (NA: U. S. Signal Corps photo 111-2B-3166)

even a half-hearted attempt to defend the shoreline the Americans might never have made it to land. None of the planners seems to have realized that there might not be piers in Cuba. No small boats had been provided to get from the transports to the shore. Units had to reach Cuban soil the best way they could, which in many cases meant that they made it without equipment. Draft animals, reaching shore after having been thrown overboard and allowed to swim in, galloped wildly about through the landing troops. Some of the horses, not having been informed that the Army was to operate in Cuba, swam off for remembered green pastures in Florida and were lost. The Navy bombarded the shoreline, frightening some of the civilian transport captains. Many would not take their vessels in close to the shore. Others simply followed the lead set by the



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shoreline to land. The small boats were the best way that the section could reach the shore and allow the troops to move through the mud. In Cuba, the shoreline was so muddy that the troops had to be carried to shore by the boats.

Once on dry land, the section quickly packed its equipment aboard wagons. Moving off promptly, the section started toward Santiago, on a trail that was a mess, softened by rains and churned under thousands of marching feet and stamping hooves. Sliding, tripping, and swearing, the mud-plastered balloonists struggled to get to where the war was being fought. Frequently unloading and reloading the wagons to extract them from deep mud holes, the section troops arrived at corps headquarters on the afternoon of June 29, having taken better than twenty-four hours to cover ten miles.

ON THE morning of June 30 the envelope was being spread on the ground preparatory to inflating it. First one fold refused to open. Then other stubborn folds were found. Pressure against the open edges of these folds produced a rending, ripping sound which sickened those who knew what it meant. The Florida heat and moisture had softened the varnished surface of the fabric and the folds were sticking. As the creases were forced open, rents were torn in the fabric. The envelope was finally unfolded completely. It resembled a Swiss cheese. Instead of being ready for battle, the balloon looked as if it had been punctured by shrapnel.

Somehow the section troops patched the envelope so that it would hold hydrogen, for awhile at least. Then they inflated and rigged it. The balloon was safe, of course. No sane man would dare get into it. On the other hand, it was the only one of the kind in Cuba and the dilemma was: Take a chance or what they had or not get into the air at all. The balloonists made three ascents that very afternoon. During the second, they spotted Rear Admiral Pascual Cervera y Topete's fleet in Santiago Harbor, confirming the hitherto suspected location of the Spanish Navy in the western Atlantic.

THE battle for possession of San Juan Hill, which brought so much fame to the 1st Volunteer Cavalry (Rough Riders) and its distinguished commander, was fought on July 1, 1898. The Army Signal Corps' aeronautical unit participated in that engagement. On the previous evening Lieutenant Colonel George M. Derby, Chief Engineer on Shafter's V staff, reported to his commander the discovery of Cervera's fleet. Shafter in turn told Derby of the



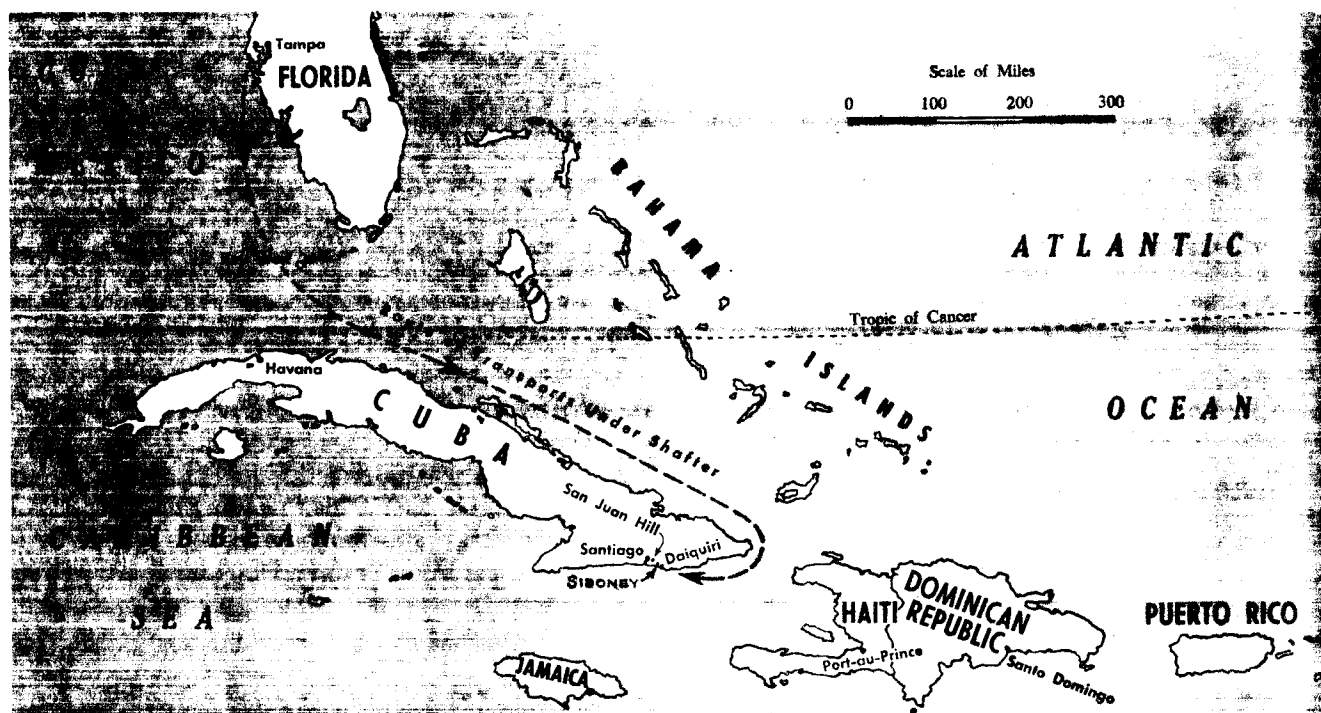
The lack of docking facilities at Daiquiri made it necessary for the horses to swim ashore. Some swam for Florida.

plan to take San Juan and Kettle Hill the next day. The engineer officer was ordered to have the balloon moved forward to some point near El Pozo and report what could be seen of the action. Derby relayed these instructions to Maxfield.

At 8:20 the next morning American artillery on El Pozo opened fire on the Spanish positions covering San Juan Hill. Smoke from black powder, still used by the out-of-date American batteries, rolled across the face of the ridge in puffy clouds. For a few seconds, there was no reaction from the Spanish on the ridge opposite. Then the whistle of incoming enemy shells was heard above the pounding of the guns and lead shrapnel balls began striking among a group of Americans who were clustered together watching the artillerists at work.

Roosevelt was with the group of officers and several newspaper correspondents and artists. After being struck on the wrist by a spent shrapnel ball which raised a bump "about as big as a hickory-nut," he moved his Rough Riders over the crest of the ridge into some brush. The others in the group scattered in every direction. Frederic Remington, one of the artists who joined the rout, reported that "it was thoroughly evident that the Spaniards had the range of everything in the country. Some gallant soldiers and some as daring correspondents as it is my pleasure to know did their legs proud there. The tall form of Major John Jacob Astor moved in my front in jack-rabbit bounds. Prussian, English, and Japanese correspondents were flushed, and went straddling up the hill."

THE American artillery officers were left in almost solitary splendor on El Pozo. Search though they did, they could not locate the Spanish batteries, which



Map showing route of Shafter's expedition to Cuba

were using smokeless powder. At 9:05 the Americans ceased firing. Their obsolete cannon had been outpointed.

One member of the observer group did not join the others in seeking a safer position. Derby, who was waiting for the balloon section, remained on the hill during the first ten minutes of the Spanish salvos. Convinced then that the enemy fire was too heavy to permit ascension of the balloon, he moved down from the crest. There he encountered Maxfield, whose horse had been shot from under him, walking up the hill in search of Derby. Together they met the balloon section and guided it to the bed of a stream adjacent to El Pozo. The two officers climbed into the basket and ascended.

From their perch in the sky, the engineer and aerialist surveyed the surrounding countryside. The wagon carrying the telegraph cable, by which it had been intended they communicate with the ground, had not kept up with the balloon handlers. There was only a light wind, however, so the observers wrote out messages on pieces of paper, which they weighted with pebbles and dropped to the handlers below. Derby reported later that "an excellent view of the country was obtained, which would have been of greatest value, had it been available a few days earlier." Nature of the terrain was such that, on the ground, the dense undergrowth restricted visibility to a few hundred yards. From the air, however, "it was apparent that there were many trails through the woods, the existence of which was not even sus-

pected below, and many large, open clearings, where the troops could be assembled and deployed." Of the Spanish positions on San Juan Hill, still 2,900 yards distant, nothing could be seen that was not already known.

WITHOUT knowledge of the trails and clearings visible from the balloon, the advance on the San Juan heights had begun. In the van went Brigadier General Jacob F. Kent's 1st Infantry Division, which was supposed to have been preceded by the cavalry. Kent was aware of only one road to his objective, the Santiago Trail, a narrow and tortuous path that in places would accommodate only three or four men walking abreast. His troops plunged into its shadowy mouth, not realizing that the Spaniards knew it to be the only trail that the Americans would use and could enfilade it with fire from their trenches at San Juan.

Movements made by the 1st Division were plainly visible from the balloon. Since it was obvious that Kent did not know of the other trails, Derby decided that the balloon should move closer to the enemy lines. He asked Maxfield to order the handlers to reel in line to lower the balloon to a more manageable altitude and to begin moving it forward on the Santiago road toward a clearing they could see north of the road about 1,000 yards closer to the Spanish positions.

Maxfield was not happy over this request. Though indifferent to personal danger, he was concerned about the balloon. But it was obvious that the balloon would be of little use where it was, so he reluc-

finally gave the order to move it forward.

At the entrance to the Santiago Trail the balloon section met the Rough Riders. Roosevelt, belatedly realizing that Kent had not waited for the cavalry before starting toward San Juan, had rushed his troops down from below the crest of El Pozo where they had taken cover during the enemy artillery fire. There ensued a heated argument which the foot soldiers ultimately lost. Kent's infantry halted, then pulled aside into the brush on either side of the trail to permit the cavalry to pass. As the horse soldiers moved up the trail they were followed by a string of epithets from the immobile infantry. The Rough Riders, who had lost their horses during the trip from Florida, were walking, just as were the infantrymen they pushed aside, and they failed to appreciate the comments. Taking advantage of a heaven-sent opportunity, the balloon ground crew

The 16th U. S. Infantry in San Juan Creek Bottom, under fire from Spanish guns on San Juan Hill, July 1, 1898. (L.C.)

This is the third appearance in this magazine of Major Charles Bruce van Pelt, United States Air Force. He is a graduate of the University of Maryland and has a graduate degree from Trinity College of Texas.

had attached themselves to the rear of Roosevelt's column. Past the swearing, sweating troops in the brush strode the balloon handlers, while Derby and Maxfield leaned over from above to watch in detached amusement.

THE batteries on El Pozo again opened fire to cover the advance. As the Spanish trenches slowly came into view, Derby swept them with his field glasses. No enemy could be seen. The American guns ceased fire, but still no Spanish soldiers appeared. The occupants of the balloon basket had about concluded that the enemy had abandoned their positions when the Spaniards lost patience with the situation.



Not only were the Americans using the single trail expected of them, but they were marking their progress down that trail with a lumbering and cumbersome, majestic and grotesquely beautiful balloon. When the balloon was within a few hundred yards of the Aquadores River, the Spanish opened up with small arms and artillery.

The van of the American column shuddered, recoiled upon itself, and stopped. Not so the middle and rear. Eager to get into the battle, those troops joyfully pressed forward on their comrades in front until the Santiago Trail held a solidly massed and immobile body of men. So jammed together were they that they could not have returned the enemy's fire if the tall brush lining the trail had permitted it. Casualties began to mount. Infantry and dismounted cavalry alike began to glare at the balloon which hung over them, its inflation appendix seeming to point out their location to the enemy like an accusing finger.

In the basket above were two very uncomfortable observers. Because of the heavy brush lining the trail, the balloon had been lowered still more when the section attached itself to the cavalry. When the ground crew tried to move through the thicket be-

tween the trail and clearing spotted earlier, the line became hopelessly entangled. The balloon could not be raised, lowered, moved to the clearing, or back to the trail. In perfect range of the Spanish artillery Derby and Maxfield saw no way out of their dilemma.

GENERAL Kent was also in a stew. Continuing up the Santiago Trail seemed to be a short road to suicide. To retreat was impossible. Yet he could locate no other path but the one he was on. Finally he decided to move forward on his only path. As the suffering infantry at last advanced past the thicket where the balloon was helplessly moored, Derby leaned out of the basket and called. Was there a general officer below? No answer. Was there a field or staff officer down there? Still no reply. Was there any kind of officer down there? Yes, quite a few. "I see two roads in front," reported Derby. "Where do they lead to?" he was asked. "I can't tell." Conversation between air and ground terminated abruptly at that point as the balloon took two hits in quick succession and descended rapidly. Derby and Maxfield landed in the middle of the thicket with no more than bruises and scratches, but it took them some time to free themselves. Derby set out to find General Kent while Maxfield remained behind to assess damage.

Assault on San Juan Hill by the 10th U. S. Cavalry (Colored)



The engineer was lucky. He found the turning general nearby, trying to keep his troops moving. After Derby described the discovery of the alternate trail, Kent quickly diverted his unit to the adjoining path.

Maxfield was not so fortunate. His men spent thirty minutes in untangling lines and rigging before they could move the balloon into the clearing. Damage was severe. Small-arms fire had put many holes in the fabric and artillery shells had torn it badly. Field repair was impossible on account of the extensive damage and because shop facilities did not exist anywhere in Cuba. Tenderly the ravaged envelope was folded and, with its network of rope, placed in the basket.

So ended the aerial phase of the Spanish-American War. The enlisted men of the balloon section served out their time in Cuba as hospital orderlies and in laying telegraph wire. Lieutenant Maxfield returned to Tampa where another balloon unit was being assembled to accompany an expedition to Puerto Rico. But the armistice ended all fighting on August 12, 1898, and the new unit was not needed.

COMMENTS made after the war about the balloon operation on the Santiago Trail were generally uncomplimentary. Shafter's aide, John D. Miley, wrote that enemy fire had already become "quite spirited," but when the balloon reached the point where it became ensnared in the thicket, the Spanish opened up with field guns, and small-arms fire increased also. Lieutenant John J. Pershing remarked that "when the 10th Cavalry arrived at the crossing of the San Juan River, the balloon had become lodged in the treetops above, and the enemy had just begun to make a target of it—not doubt correctly supposing that our troops were moving along this road and were near at hand. A converging fire from all the works within range opened upon us that was terrible in its effect; the 71st New York, which lay in a sunken road near the ford, became demoralized and well-nigh jammed." All in all, many agreed with Arthur L. Wagner that the balloon episode would "doubtless go down in history as one of the most asinine proceedings ever known on a battlefield."

This criticism was not entirely fair. Overlooked were the actual reasons for the fiasco on the Santiago Trail, such as lack of reconnaissance and planning before the action, a weakness which for that matter characterized the entire war; the inexperience of the troops; and indecisiveness of the commander. Also overlooked by the critics was the service the balloon did provide: discovery of the alternate trail. The position of the Spanish fortifications indicated that General Kent's assessment of the situation was correct. It would indeed have been virtually suicidal to have

continued up the Santiago Trail in the face of the enemy enfilade fire.

The critics also failed to mention the courage of the aerialists. The balloon was rotten, beyond the very minimum conditions of safety. Yet it was inflated and put into the air on four occasions; several different men risked their lives in it. Especially meritorious service was provided by Derby and Maxfield, who occupied the basket under heavy fire and did the job they were intended to do. They established a standard of conduct that has been met by many American airmen since that "splendid little war" of 1898.



Balloon goes aloft at San Juan Ford, July 1, 1898. (U. S. Signal Corps photo No. 111-SC-85554 in National Archives)

AMERICAN HISTORY

Illustrated

LEROY E. SMITH

Publisher

MEADE D. DETWEILER

Editor, General Manager

ROBERT H. FOWLER

Editorial Offices

Box 1831, Harrisburg, Pa.

(Phone 284-5091) 17195

Circulation, Advertising Office

302 York Street, Harrisburg, Pa.

(Phone 331-1100)

VOLUME III, NUMBER I

APRIL 1968

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Direct editorial mail to Editor, American History, 302 York Street, Harrisburg, Pa. 17105. Please include zip code.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: If you have moved, please advise our circulation department.

Subscription prices: Single copy, \$1.00; 12 issues, \$10.00 per year. Payment in advance.

19-9-3
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THE CUBAN AND PORTO RICAN CAMPAIGNS

BY

RICHARD HARDING DAVIS, F.R.G.S.

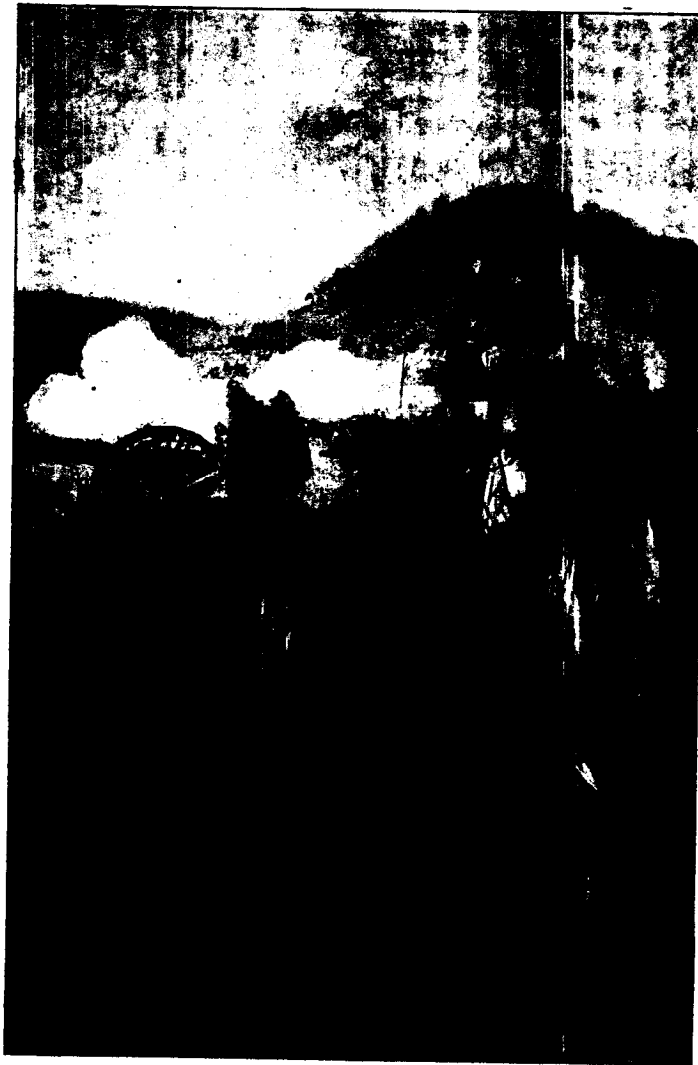
AUTHOR OF "SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE," "GALLEGHER AND OTHER
STORIES," "THE PRINCESS ALINE," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1898



Officers Watching the Artillery Play on Coamo.

Drawn by F. C. Yohn from a photograph by the Author.

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PRINTING AND BOOKBINDING COMPANY
NEW YORK

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THE CUBAN AND PORTO RICAN CAMPAIGNS

said, "There is no Spanish bullet made that can kill me." Steel, Swift, Henry, each of them was shot out of his saddle.

Hidden in the trees above the streams, and above the trail, sharpshooters and guerillas added a fresh terror to the wounded. There was no hiding from them. Their bullets came from every side. Their invisible smoke helped to keep their hiding-places secret, and in the incessant shriek of shrapnel and the spit of the Mausers, it was difficult to locate the reports of their rifles. They spared neither the wounded nor recognized the Red Cross, they killed the surgeons and the stewards carrying the litters, and killed the wounded men on the litters. A guerilla in a tree above us shot one of the Rough Riders in the breast, while I was helping him carry Captain Morton Henry to the dressing-station, the ball passing down through him, and a second, shot from the same tree, barely missed Henry as he lay on the ground where we had dropped him. He was already twice wounded and so covered with blood that no one could have mistaken his condition. The surgeons at work along the stream dressed the wounds with one eye cast aloft at the trees. It was not the Mauser bullets they feared, though they passed continuously, but

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too high to do their patients further harm, but the bullets of the sharpshooters which struck fairly in among them, splashing in the water and scattering the pebbles. The sounds of the two bullets were as different as is the sharp pop of a soda-water bottle from the buzzing of an angry wasp.

For a time it seemed as though every second man was either killed or wounded, one came upon them lying behind the bush, under which they had crawled with some strange idea that it would protect them, or crouched under the bank of the stream, or lying on their stomachs and lapping up the water with the eagerness of thirsty dogs. As to their suffering, the wounded were magnificently silent, they neither complained nor groaned, nor cursed.

"I've got a punctured tire," was their grim answer to inquiries. White men and colored men, veterans and recruits and volunteers, each lay waiting for the battle to begin or to end so that he might be carried away to safety, for the wounded were in as great danger after they were hit as though they were in the firing line, but none questioned nor complained.

I came across Lieutenant Roberts, of the Tenth Cavalry, lying under the roots of a tree beside

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the stream with three of his colored troopers stretched around him. He was shot through the intestines, and each of the three men with him was shot in the arm or leg. They had been overlooked or forgotten, and we stumbled upon them.



General Hospital of the First Division.

only by the accident of losing our way. They had no knowledge as to how the battle was going or where their comrades were, or where the enemy was. At any moment, for all they knew, the Spaniards might break through the bushes about them. It was a most lonely picture, the young

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lieutenant, half naked, and wet with his own blood, sitting upright beside the empty stream, and his three followers crouching at his feet like three faithful watch-dogs, each wearing his red badge of courage, with his black skin tanned to a haggard gray, and with his eyes fixed patiently on the white lips of his officer. When the white soldiers with me offered to carry him back to the dressing-station, the negroes resented it stiffly. "If the Lieutenant had been able to move, we would have carried him away long ago," said the sergeant, quite overlooking the fact that his arm was shattered.

"Oh, don't bother the surgeons about me," Roberts added, cheerfully. "They must be very busy. I can wait."

As yet, with all these killed and wounded, we had accomplished nothing—except to obey orders—which was to await further orders. The observation balloon hastened the end. It came blundering down the trail, and stopped the advance of the First and Tenth Cavalry, and was sent up directly over the heads of our men to observe what should have been observed a week before by scouts and reconnoitring parties. A balloon, two miles to the rear, and high enough in the air to be out of range of the enemy's fire,

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may some day prove itself to be of use and value. But a balloon on the advance line, and only fifty feet above the tops of the trees, was merely an invitation to the enemy to kill everything beneath it. And the enemy responded to the invitation. A Spaniard might question if he could hit a man, or a number of men, hidden in the bushes, but had no doubt at all as to his ability to hit a mammoth glistening ball only six hundred yards distant, and so all the trenches fired at it at once, and the men of the First and Tenth, packed together directly behind it, received the full force of the bullets. The men lying directly below it received the shrapnel which was timed to hit it, and which at last, fortunately, did hit it. This was endured for an hour, an hour of such hell of fire and heat, that the heat in itself, had there been no bullets, would have been remembered for its cruelty. Men gasped on their backs, like fishes in the bottom of a boat, their heads burning inside and out, their limbs too heavy to move. They had been rushed here and rushed there wet with sweat and wet with fording the streams, under a sun that would have made moving a fan an effort, and they lay prostrate, gasping at the hot air, with faces aflame, and their tongues sticking out, and their eyes

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rolling. All through this the volleys from the rifle-pits sputtered and rattled, and the bullets sang continuously like the wind through the rigging in a gale, shrapnel whined and broke, and still no order came from General Shafter.

Captain Howse, of General Sumner's staff, rode down the trail to learn what had delayed the First and Tenth, and was hailed by Colonel Derby, who was just descending from the shattered balloon.

"I saw men up there on those hills," Colonel Derby shouted; "they are firing at our troops." That was part of the information contributed by the balloon. Captain Howse's reply is lost to history.

General Kent's division, which was to have been held in reserve, according to the plan, had been rushed up in the rear of the First and Tenth, and the Tenth had deployed in skirmish order to the right. The trail was now completely blocked by Kent's Division. Lawton's Division, which was to have reinforced on the right, had not appeared, but incessant firing from the direction of El Caney showed that he and Chaffee were fighting mightily. The situation was desperate. Our troops could not retreat, as the trail for two miles behind them was wedged with

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men. They could not remain where they were for they were being shot to pieces. There was only one thing they could do—go forward and take the San Juan hills by assault. It was as desperate as the situation itself. To charge earthworks held by men with modern rifles, and using modern artillery, until after the earthworks have been shaken by artillery, and to attack them in advance and not in the flanks, are both impossible military propositions. But this campaign had not been conducted according to military rules, and a series of military blunders had brought seven thousand American soldiers into a chute of death, from which there was no escape except by taking the enemy who held it by the throat, and driving him out and beating him down. So the generals of divisions and brigades stepped back and relinquished their command to the regimental officers and the enlisted men.

"We can do nothing more," they virtually said. "There is the enemy."

Colonel Roosevelt, on horseback, broke from the woods behind the line of the Ninth, and finding its men lying in his way, shouted: "If you don't wish to go forward, let my men pass, please." The junior officers of the Ninth, with their ne-



The Fight at the San Juan Block-house, July 1st.

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groes, instantly sprang into line with the Rough Riders, and charged at the blue block-house on the right.

I speak of Roosevelt first because, with General Hawkins, who led Kent's Division, notably the Sixth and Sixteenth Regulars, he was, without doubt, the most conspicuous figure in the charge. General Hawkins, with hair as white as snow, and yet far in advance of men thirty years his junior, was so noble a sight that you felt inclined to pray for his safety; on the other hand, Roosevelt, mounted high on horseback, and charging the rifle-pits at a gallop and quite alone, made you feel that you would like to cheer. He wore on his sombrero a blue polka-dot handkerchief, *à la* Havelock, which, as he advanced, floated out straight behind his head, like a guidon. Afterward, the men of his regiment who followed this flag, adopted a polka-dot handkerchief as the badge of the Rough Riders. These two officers were notably conspicuous in the charge, but no one can claim that any two men, or any one man, was more brave or more daring, or showed greater courage in that slow, stubborn advance than did any of the others. Someone asked one of the officers if he had any difficulty in making his men follow him. "No," he answered, "I had

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some difficulty in keeping up with them." As one of the Brigade Generals said: "San Juan was won by the regimental officers and men. We had as little to do as the referee at a prize-fight who calls 'time.' We called 'time' and they did the fighting."

I have seen many illustrations and pictures of this charge on the San Juan hills, but none of them seem to show it just as I remember it. In the picture-papers the men are running up hill swiftly and gallantly, in regular formation, rank after rank, with flags flying, their eyes aflame, and their hair streaming, their bayonets fixed, in long, brilliant lines, an invincible, overpowering weight of numbers. Instead of which I think the thing which impressed one the most, when our men started from cover, was that they were so few. It seemed as if someone had made an awful and terrible mistake. One's instinct was to call to them to come back. You felt that someone had blundered and that these few men were blindly following out some madman's mad order. It was not heroic then, it seemed merely terribly pathetic. The pity of it, the folly of such a sacrifice was what held you.

They had no glittering bayonets, they were not massed in regular array. There were a few

THE BATTLE OF SAN JUAN

men in advance, bunched together, and creeping up a steep, sunny hill, the tops of which roared and flashed with flame. The men held their guns



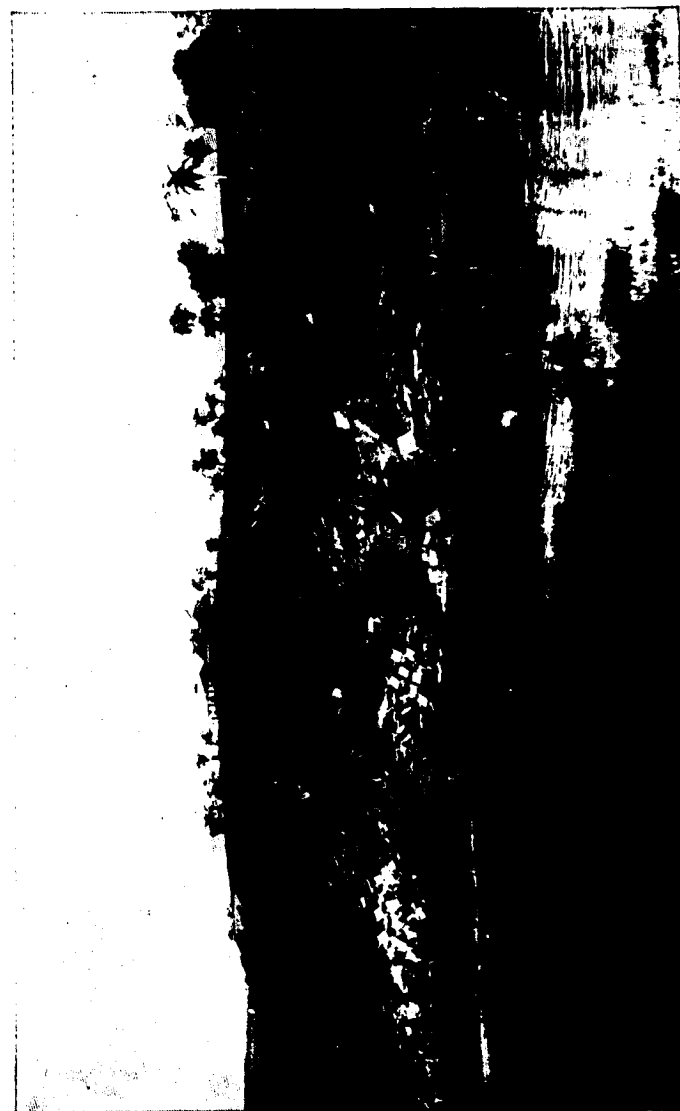
San Juan Block-house, Showing Marks of Shot.

pressed across their breasts and stepped heavily as they climbed. Behind these first few, spreading out like a fan, were single lines of men, slipping and scrambling in the smooth grass, moving forward with difficulty, as though they were wad-

THE CUBAN AND PORTO RICAN CAMPAIGNS

ing waist high through water, moving slowly, carefully, with strenuous effort. It was much more wonderful than any swinging charge could have been. They walked to greet death at every step, many of them, as they advanced, sinking suddenly or pitching forward and disappearing in the high grass, but the others waded on, stubbornly, forming a thin blue line that kept creeping higher and higher up the hill. It was as inevitable as the rising tide. It was a miracle of self-sacrifice, a triumph of bull-dog courage, which one watched breathless with wonder. The fire of the Spanish riflemen, who still stuck bravely to their posts, doubled and trebled in fierceness, the crests of the hills crackled and burst in amazed roars, and rippled with waves of tiny flame. But the blue line crept steadily up and on, and then, near the top, the broken fragments gathered together with a sudden burst of speed, the Spaniards appeared for a moment outlined against the sky and poised for instant flight, fired a last volley and fled before the swift-moving wave that leaped and sprang up after them.

The men of the Ninth and the Rough Riders rushed to the block-house together, the men of the Sixth, of the Third, of the Tenth Cavalry, of the Sixth and Sixteenth Infantry, fell on their faces



The San Juan Hill, Showing General Wheeler's Camp.

SUB: *Balloons*
in *WW I*

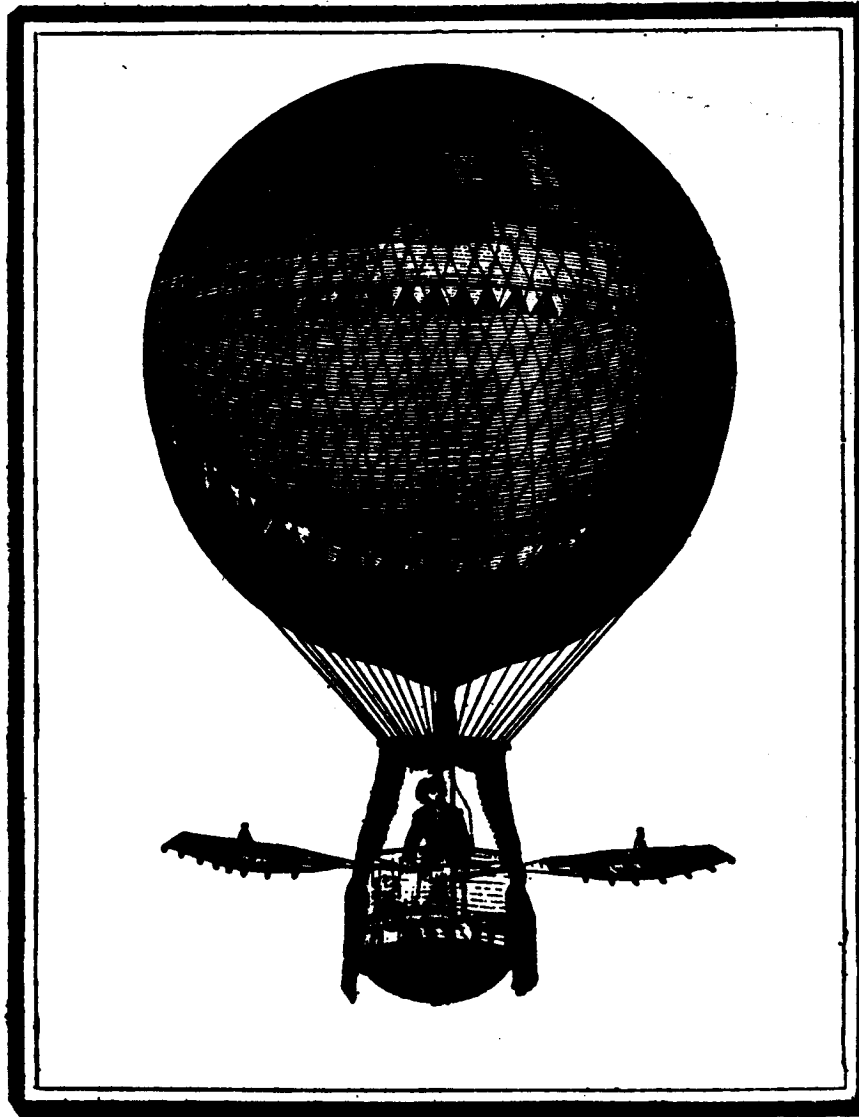
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LIGHTER-THAN-AIR FLIGHT

EDITED BY

Lt. Col. C. V. Glines, U.S.A.F.
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A vitally important branch of the U.S. Army in World War I was the Balloon Service which proved to be an indispensable adjunct to the trench-bound Allied armies. The war in Europe, before the United States entered the conflict, had reinstated military ballooning as still the best way to learn the plans of the enemy from the skies. When the conflict had become a war of position, it was found that balloon observers could report information that was denied to the faster- and higher-flying heavier-than-air machines. The balloonist, with a range of vision of about eight miles in every direction, was able to make a detailed minute-by-minute analysis of the enemy's movements behind the front lines. He was able to supplement the airplane and permit the battlefield commanders to know exactly the tactical situation in front of them.

The following selection, written by a former captain in the Air Service, explains the dangers confronting these unsung heroes who dared to brave the elements and enemy bullets to do their duty. By the end of the war, 598 Americans had been graduated from the three Stateside balloon schools to man the 500 balloons that had been delivered by the war's end. A total balloon force of 14,467 officers and men had been authorized. Sixty-nine balloon companies were to be formed. The war ended, however, before this strength was realized. Never again would any government plan to have a balloon service dedicated to spy on enemy land forces.

The Balloon Service in World War I

CAPT. ARTHUR SWEETSER, USAAS (RET.)

FOR HOURS at a time the balloonist would ride in his basket with the enemy lines spread out before him and with the intelligence officers below in direct telephonic communication. The moment artillery action began on either side a new phase of his work opened. If it were enemy batteries going into action, he would have to decipher as nearly as possible their exact location, possibly in triangulation with other sources of information, and tell by their fire of what calibre and how many in number were the guns. He was expected to know his front so well that no new battery could come into action without his spotting it immediately

and furnishing the information that would lead to its demolition. So also in case of his own batteries going into action, he had immediately to spot the efficacy of their fire and correct its accuracy.

This work, of course, had its dangers. Nothing afforded more attractive prey for the aviator than an enemy balloon, for there was excitement in penetrating its antiaircraft defenses and satisfaction in seeing its clumsy and inquisitive form burst into a cloud of smoke. At any moment a "hostile airplane overhead" was apt to come over the telephone wire, and the balloonist be forced to drop everything, climb over the side, and jump out, a mile above the ground, with only a slender parachute to save him from death. If there were no hostile aviator, there might be a rain of shrapnel with the object of setting the balloon on fire, or of percussion shells aiming to blow up the windlass below and set the big bag adrift with a wind blowing across the enemy lines.

Other difficulties also had to be met. Ascents in thunderstorms were dangerous because of the lightning; rainstorms added to the weight of the balloon and consequently decreased its ascending power; heavy winds put a strain on the cable and considerable wear and tear on the windlass; occasional clouds were dangerous as hiding places for lurking enemy airmen, while general clouds rendered observation almost impossible. The finding of a "bed" for the big envelope also presented difficulties, especially as enemy airmen were fond of seeking out balloons as they lay on the ground. As a rule beds were sought in the lee of a hill which would obstruct artillery fire or in the deceptive shadows of a nearby wood, with all the added precautions that the camouflagers' art could give.

The problem of equipment presented difficulties, as there was neither a satisfactory type available here nor factories trained in this specialized manufacture. During the Mexican trouble in 1916 there had been but one balloon in the service of the Army on the border, and that a gift to the National Guard battery and of amateur design.

Up to the beginning of the European war, there had been the greatest difficulty in securing a balloon that did not sway and bob about in the air to an extent inconsistent with exact observation. Captain Caquot of the French army, however, developed a new type, with a gasbag larger in diameter at the nose than at the tail which made it

head into the wind, and with a rudder at the tail which kept it from rocking and pitching. The maximum diameter of the balloon was approximately twenty-eight feet, its capacity one thousand cubic metres, or thirty-five thousand cubic feet, and its power of ascension conferred by hydrogen gas.

As in the heavier-than-air service, a special training system was developed abroad to "transform" men from this country by means of training under actual war conditions. To this end a balloon school was established in France both for observers and for enlisted men. By the termination of hostilities, 157 officers had been graduated and 48 were still in attendance, while of enlisted men there had been graduated 174 machine gunners, 68 winch operators, 63 chartroom clerks, 58 telephone experts, and 55 radio operators.

Although this force came to the front but gradually, the balloon service may be said to have proved itself at Chateau-Thierry, as did its companion heavier-than-air service. Only three hours after the American infantry had entered the city at the beginning of its offensive, a balloon company of one hundred and seventy men and its equipment entered; next morning it had a balloon up five miles beyond, observing for American artillery, with a complete line of communication established. Another balloon company, a few hours behind the first, got into action closely after and brought down an enemy airplane with a captured machine gun, for which a citation in French army orders was given. Another company, so heavily shelled that it had to haul down its gasbag, transferred its whole equipment to the other side of a forest fourteen acres in area, and continued its work uninterrupted. Several other companies were mentioned in orders, one because, "despite the fact that shells were falling on all sides of the balloon, so close as to tear holes in the fabric, no man left the ropes nor faltered."

Many balloon observers found safety only by climbing out and jumping off into space with their parachutes when their balloons were set on fire by enemy planes. Lt. James A. McDevitt, for instance, was cited as follows:

Four jumps: September 17, 1918, at Memey, Lt. McDevitt jumped when attacked by enemy plane. October 5, 1918, Lt. McDevitt jumped during the advance northwest of Verdun. There were eight holes in the balloon and four in the basket from the enemy's bullets. October 6, 1918, Lt. McDevitt, while observing in a balloon, was attacked by two enemy planes and forced to jump. Eighteen minutes later he ascended and continued his work. October 6, 1918, Lt. McDevitt was attacked the second time, and an hour and eight minutes later, he jumped. The balloon was burned.

So also Lt. George D. Armstrong was credited with three jumps, the second on October 6, when he was attacked by two Fokker planes, followed immediately by a reascension and another jump thirteen minutes later.

The first fatality in this work was that of Lt. C. J. Ross in October. Lieutenant Ross was on a special mission during a day of overcast skies when suddenly, during an intense bombardment which he was directing, a German air squadron appeared out of a cloud bank, dived for the balloon, and set it on fire. Ross's companion had some trouble in getting out of the basket, and Ross delayed to see him clear before he jumped himself. The delay proved fatal, as his parachute in its slow flight was overtaken and ignited by burning wreckage from the balloon.

All during this time both equipment and men became available in ever increasing numbers, so that by the time hostilities ended America was well represented in ballooning at the front, where Col. Charles de F. Chandler was head of the Balloon Service, A.E.F. Up to November 6, 251 balloons had been received from the United States, of which 10 had been given to the French and 15 to the British; 23 had been lost by burning or condemnation, 16 were at the training fields, and 81 in the zone of advance, and 106 were stored. During the week of October 30, 17 balloon companies were actually at the front and flew a total of 54 hours. Of the 405 officers with the service in France, 201 were in the zone of advance. Ballooning, though less spectacular than the heavier-than-air work, had fully proved its inestimable value in observation and direction of artillery fire.

The tethered balloon had proven itself useful as a lofty perch from which to spy on the enemy under static battlefield conditions. The impasse often reached in the trench warfare of World War I provided the best opportunity for the balloonist to reconnoiter enemy lines and direct artillery fire. The balloon observer, however, became an unsung hero of the "Great War" because the pilots of newer, swifter air vehicles stole the limelight. As the heavier-than-air machines got better, the balloonist's risks increased. The balloon observer found himself at the mercy of swift enemy planes. Besides enemy bullets and mortars, he also had to cope with the age-old problems of weather and mechanical difficulties. The following story is a unique episode in the lives of two observers who found themselves adrift over no-man's land. . . .

The Runaway Balloon

LT. JAMES M. RICHARDSON, USA

THE TWELFTH BALLOON COMPANY had a sausage about two kilometers south of Sommedieu on the morning the Saint-Mihiel drive started.

Near the balloon Captain Small had a number of 400-mm. guns that had been placed to throw shells on the railroad yards at Conflans. The drive went ahead as scheduled, and Small was anxious to do all he could to demoralize the enemy. When it got light, he wanted the balloon company to make an ascension to check the accuracy of his fire on the railroad yards.

The balloon men were loath to go aloft. A damp, swirling fog barely cleared the treetops of the rugged encircling hills, a high wind was blowing, the winch was poorly situated between two hills and faced the direction of the wind. But in spite of the fact that they had nothing in their favor, it was finally decided to try an ascension. The great American drive was on, and now, if ever, they should strain a point to aid.

The decision made, everything was prepared hurriedly. Lieutenants George W. Hinman and R. S. Tait climbed into the basket with their paraphernalia, gave the signal to their helpers, the giant bag mounted

steadily and soon began tugging violently at the winch. Before it reached one thousand five hundred feet, it was entirely out of sight from the ground.

Hinman and Tait could see nothing in the maze of clouds and fog that whirled about them and impeded visibility. Up above, the wind was worse than on the ground; it tore into the balloon and swung it about fiercely in wide circles; it gave the observers the roughest and wildest ride they ever had.

It is recorded that "Lieutenant Tait was very sick" from all this motion, and at the end of fifteen minutes the ground crew started hauling the balloon down. For a time it came along nicely, but either the too rapid rate at which it was being hauled down or the sudden shift of the bag from broadside to tail in the wind caused it to make a wild nose dive toward the ground, narrowly missing the ground crew.

Extraordinary excitement ensued. The men who operated the winch and those on the basket detail rushed to the assistance of the observers.

In some way one of them slipped over Lieutenant Hinman's parachute rope and pulled the parachute out of the container. Just then the balloon rose again, the man fell heavily on the ground and the parachute tumbled over the side of the basket.

The upward surge of the basket put Hinman in a very dangerous position; his parachute, dragging in the wind, opened up, and the force of its drag pulled his head and shoulders to the edge of the basket and wedged him there so that he could not move.

Then the chest strap on his parachute harness slipped upward to his throat and would have choked him to insensibility, had not Lieutenant Tait, himself enmeshed in the telephone cords, acted quickly. Tait grabbed a knife and slashed frantically at the telephone cords until he was free. It took him but a second to leap over and valve the balloon sufficiently to check its progress until Hinman could be released.

This was only the beginning of their troubles. The balloon rose speedily, pitching and lurching as it had done before. Instead of stopping at the end of its tether, it snapped the cable and broke completely away, furnishing Hinman and Tait with the uncanny and alarming sensation of being adrift.

They rushed to the edge of the basket and looked over. Could Hinman rely on his damaged parachute in a leap to the earth? Even if he

could, should they desert their balloon? They decided to let Tait, who was a free-balloon pilot, try to bring the runaway to the earth immediately.

Tait valved the bag and it sank rapidly. But they gave up any idea of landing at this point after they got their first peep at the ground, dim through the fog. They saw the flashes of the American artillery, they heard the shells whistling through the air beside them. It was evident that they could choose a healthier place to moor their charge. They must gain some altitude and drift to a quieter spot.

In order to get the necessary altitude, nearly everything of weight was sacrificed. They threw out maps and photographs, four pairs of glasses, one thermos bottle of coffee, one large round loaf of bread, one can of beans, one can of corned beef, the telephone, and the swinging chair. Thus unburdened, the balloon rose rapidly to a height of twelve thousand feet. Here they watched the bag expand and grow tight. They searched impatiently for a glimpse of the earth, but the clouds quite obscured it. All the time they were drifting at a rapid rate.

They did not forget the possibility of meeting enemy airplanes, and the thought of it made them search the heavens and peer at the surging clouds below. These reflected the sun brilliantly and kept them anxious lest planes slip up from that quarter unobserved.

They had been in the air about thirty minutes when the clouds began to break up and anti-aircraft shells started bursting near them. They did not relish the idea of having one of these destroy the balloon, so Tait valved it and made a rapid descent. Too rapid, in fact, and they had to check the mad downward plunge by clearing the basket of the last few remaining articles.

About fifty feet from the ground the balloon was ripped fully half open, with the result that the basket crashed hard but on one edge. The principal part of the gas left was in the nose, and the lifting power of that section held the flabby tail over the basket into which it hung.

Then, for some reason, before Tait and Hinman could jump out, the buoyancy which the balloon still possessed took it off the ground. Scrambling for the dangling rip cord, both lieutenants grabbed it and ripped the balloon wide open. Again the basket sank to the earth, where it was dragged along until it tripped over and the observers rolled out.

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13-1
25

NOTES ON CONVERSATION WITH COL MAURICE SMITH, 21 May 90/1330

1st Lt Maurice R. Smith, AEF, 5th Balloon Co., Observer, visited the EHH today. He was at Maxwell for "Gathering of Eagles." He mentioned being born in 1894. 1894 as a starting point.

He said he knew Frank Luke well and had spent some time telling Luke about the "best" time to catch a balloon unprotected. Smith said the protection was at its least when the balloon unit was moving forward or back for the night. He said Luke, who he thought a bit touched (perhaps syphilis affecting his mind Smith speculated) and dove on balloon after balloon. He said Luke went so far as landing at night behind enemy lines so he would be able to catch enemy balloons when they first started to move forward in the morning.

Smith said he knew Col deForrest Chandler very well also and maintained that he (Smith) was in charge of "balloon operations" (??) He did not know Sgt H. O. Nicholls of DSC fame with 7th Balloon Co.

Smith was not aware we had a balloon at San Juan Hill during the S-A War.

He said he was shot down one time and jumped. Problem was to avoid the heavy cable falling on parachute after balloon exploded. He said he was first to test parachute worn on back as opposed to attached to basket. He mentioned knowing Leo Stevens and said he (Smith) was in International Balloon Races in 1924 & 2 (?).

He did not know Corporal Edward Ward,

Also see index page 790 in the US Air Service in WWI Vol III, ed by Maurer Maurer. There are several references to Smith and Smith is listed as Cmdr of 5th Balloon Co, Balloon Wing Co A, I Corps Obs Group, on 19 Sep 1918 with USAS Balloon Officer Maj John A. Paegelow.

Smith said he started out enlisted and rapidly ascended the ranks, in charge that afternoon, NCO that week, skipped 2LT completely.

He mentioned Birge M. Clark as Cmdr of 3rd Balloon Co.

Smith said he had no interest in heavier-than-air flyers and etc. Strictly a LTA man.

Smith said he was in charge of plant at Ft Omaha for a while. He knew Teddy Roosevelt's son and gave him "what for" (not Quentin) for some offense.

Striving to research and document the proud heritage of Air Force enlisted people, the Airmen Memorial Museum unveils a groundbreaking history compiled about . . .

The First Enlisted Airman

by George E. Hicks
Director, Museum Affairs
Airmen Memorial Museum



Corporal Eddie Ward, if not one of a kind, was certainly the first of his kind. He was, in fact, the first enlisted man assigned to the United States Army's Aeronautical Division of the Signal Corps, the forerunner of the U.S. Army Air Corps and, in 1947, the U.S. Air Force. At one point, he was the *only* enlisted airman.

On August 1, 1907, the Chief Signal Officer of the Army, Brig. Gen. James Allen, signed Office Memorandum Number 6 for the War Department, formally creating the forerunner of today's Air Force:

"An Aeronautical Division of this office is hereby established, to take effect this date.

"This division will have charge of all matters pertaining to military ballooning, air machines and all kindred subjects. All data on hand will be carefully classified and plans perfected for future tests and experiments. The operations of this division are strictly confidential, and no information will be given out by any party except through the Chief Signal Officer of the Army or his authorized representative.

"Captain Charles DeF. Chandler, Signal Corps, is detailed in charge of this division, and Corporal Edward Ward and First-Class Private Joseph E. Barrett will report to Captain Chandler for duty in this division under his immediate direction."

Eddie Ward would probably have described himself as a "common soldier." He came from humble, unpretentious origins in Pine Knot, Ky. Life was centered on family, the farm or the railroad. When you were not in school, you worked — usually seven days a week.

In 1959, almost 30 years after he retired from the military, the elderly Mr. Ward shared some remembrances about his military life and his boyhood in the rural Bluegrass State. Those recollections were



Corporal Eddie Ward (Sitting, L), the first formally-assigned enlisted man in America's aviation defense, sits on a balloon concentrating ring, joined by other members of the Aeronautical Division.

preserved on tape in an unpublished interview with Air Force historian Royal Frey.

Speaking of his early life, Ward recalled the demands of his youth as challenges. "All the boys around there either grew up to be farmers or engineers or telegraph operators or something." In fact, "... from the time I was big enough to walk, I used to go with daddy, on Sundays. He worked seven days a week. Took care of those block signals on the railroad and I used to go with him. Learned all about them, the train rules and everything. One summer, I guess I was about 16 years old, I wasn't in school — school must have been out or something — and I had a job as a water boy.

"So, I worked a couple of days and there was this big train wreck. They gave me a red lantern and sent me down to stop trains before they ran off of the tracks. That made me a flag man. I worked there awhile and learned what I could before I moved on."

His years working with the rail-

road gave him the basis of an education that served him well in the military. When he enlisted in the Army in 1901, Ward was detailed to the 74th Company of the Coast Artillery.

His first major task was mounting two of the long-range disappearing guns employed along our shores. Those mammoth artillery pieces served as the long-range defensive weaponry of "fortress America" until the advent of World War II.

Creating the emplacements and mounting the weapons was no easy task. Yet, to the young private, it was another way of applying what he had learned while working on the railroad. "The commanding officer called me in one day and asked me if I knew anything about hydraulic jacks. I said, 'Yes, sir.' He said, 'Well, I'm going to put you in charge of mounting these two 12-inch guns.'

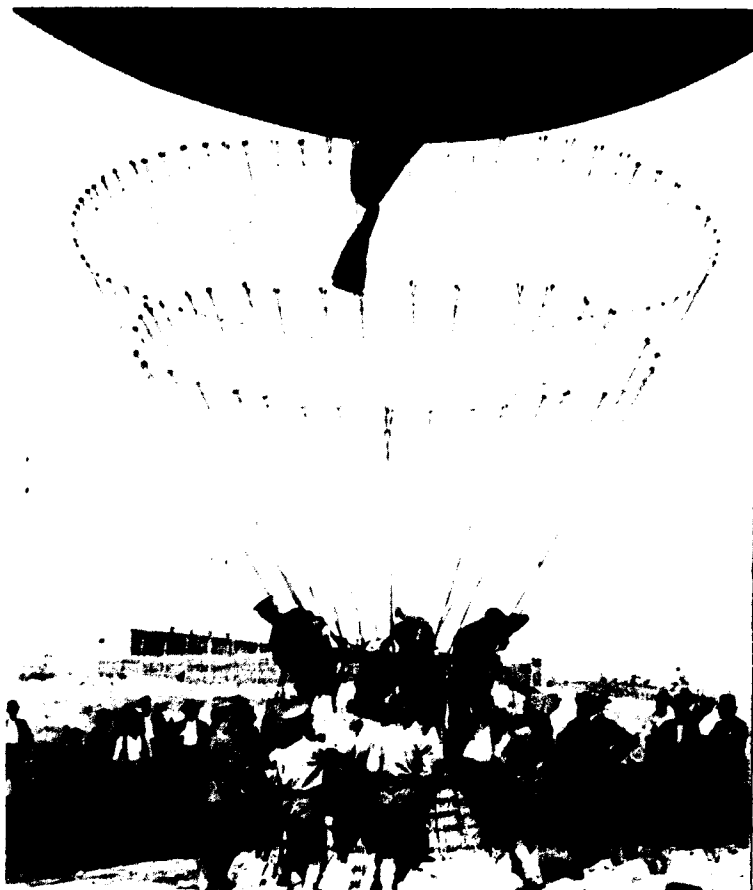
"Well, they didn't have machinery like they do now [speaking in 1959]. It was all done by hand... and he gave me a detail. Well, they had these big 12-by-12 blocks — like these house movers have — ya' know. They [the guns] weighed 110 tons and the carriages weighed 110 tons. So, we'd have to jack up them hydraulic jacks... and put a block in there and jack up the other end and put in a block [raising the piece one foot at a time]. We had to raise them about 25 feet to get them on the carriages."

Ward's positive attitude and his ability to adapt to the more practical aspects of life on the railroad served him well. In his more than

28 years in the military, Eddie Ward was a Master Signal Electrician, a Master Photographer, Balloon Pilot and Mechanic. He witnessed history in the making and contributed to it. Indeed, many of his assignments came as a result of his own adaptability in an era in which there was no formal training for many of his duty specializations or assignments.

In actuality, Eddie Ward first became involved in military aviation a month prior to the formal founding of the Aeronautical Division. In July of 1907, Corporal Ward and First-Class Private Joseph E. Barrett were detailed to the Balloon Factory of Leo Stevens to obtain basic training in the fine art of ballooning. The pair of soldiers were schooled in the very rudimentary tasks of fabric handling, stitching, the manufacturing of gases and the control of the "aircraft."

Under the watchful eye of Stevens



Balloon handlers of the Signal Corps' first aeronautical division prepare their balloon for a launch before interested spectators. Photo courtesy of Mrs. Marge Waters.

and his wife, the two enlisted men received basic instruction in "... folding, inflating, and handling of balloons." At the time, the use of gas filled balloons was still in the experimental stages. They were little more than a logical step in the progression of hot air balloons that served as popular attractions at county fairs.

Indeed, those spherical envelopes were small wonders unto themselves, as were the early daredevils who used them as aerial platforms for parachuting. Stevens and his wife were among those first parachutists.

Mrs. Stevens' daredevil days though, were brought to an early end with a rather unceremonious landing. As Ward himself reported, "She landed in an apple tree and tore her pants off! She quit! She had to!"

Balloons of the era were crude. They were, in fact, little more than layered spherical bags of rubberized silk, contained in a n open net which was, in turn, attached to the man-carrying basket, or gondola, suspended below. The cigar shaped dirigible featured a somewhat more frightening "cockpit," or "car," which was made of Oregon spruce and was "... bound together by wire." Maintaining and maneuvering the different aircraft posed unique challenges to the pioneering airmen who sat on canvas seats suspended beneath their highly flammable "lighter than air" craft.

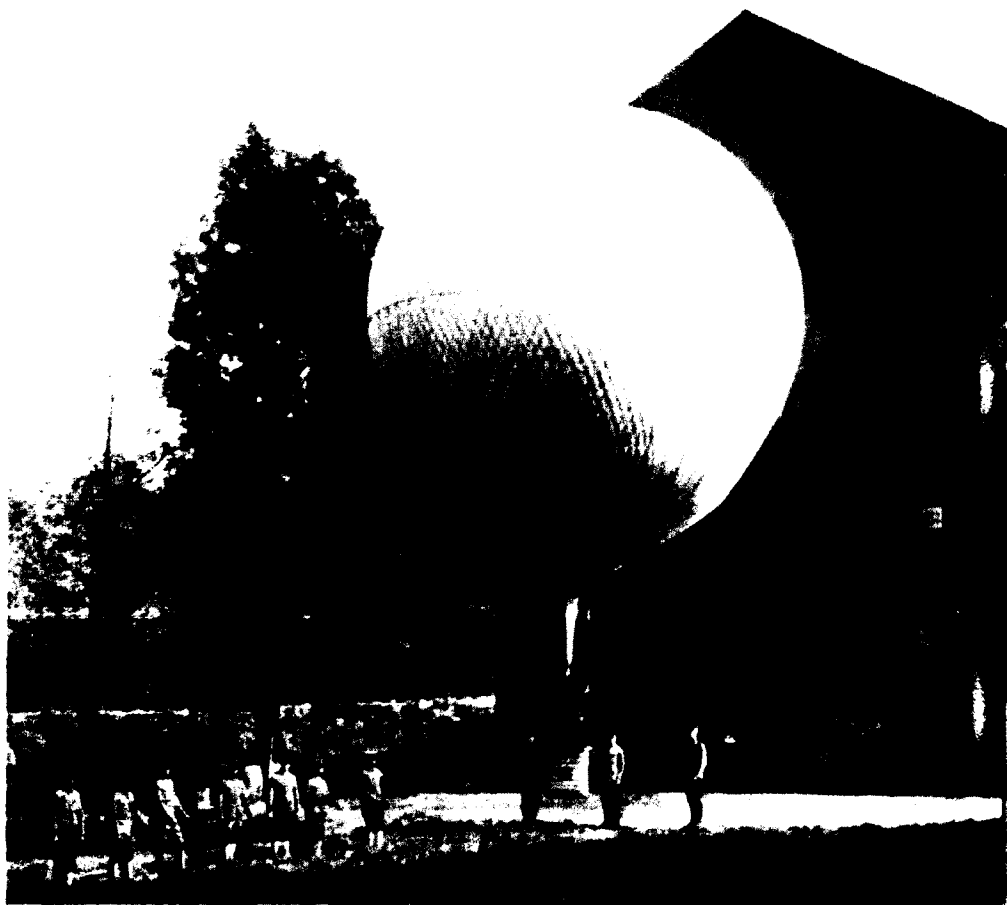
Speaking from the vantage point of retirement, Ward himself recalled the challenges and the simplistic technology employed in those early days. The balloons were equipped with a valve enabling the vessel to be filled with hydrogen. Once fully inflated, and the craft unleashed from its ground tether, the pilot gained or lost altitude by opening or closing a valve, thereby releasing the gas. For quick landings and emergency descents, the balloon was equipped with a "rip strip."

"In a balloon, any kind of balloon, even a gas balloon, you gotta have some way, if you gotta make a landing, to get rid of that gas quick," Ward recalled. "On the side you had a strip ... the full length of the balloon [attached] to a rope. When the pilot pulls

the rope, it rips out the whole side of the balloon. Then, you have to sew that strip back in before you make another flight."

Training with the Stevens couple was apparently not terribly tough, in fact, it was probably good duty — all things considered. While on temporary duty in New York City, Ward and Barrett were provided with a subsistence allowance and trolley tickets. The pair put the money to good use.

toes and everything, but you couldn't get no coffee. You had to drink beer! So Barrett and I, we were at Fort Wood there, and they'd give us car tickets to go up to the school, see, and 50 cents to buy our lunch with. We'd go up there, buy a dime glass of beer and get our lunch and have 40 cents left over to go to town on Saturday night. We could have a big time on that."



Balloon Hangar, Fort Myer, Va., 1908 -- Barely discernible beneath the tree in the background is the "Gas plant ... [we used to] make hydrogen gas. We cut up old wood drums ... [got] iron shavings from the Navy, poured in so much water [and] sulphuric acid and [the] acid eating the iron made hydrogen!" USAF photo.

In the same neighborhood with the balloon factory were several "... saloons, you call them taverns now. But, you could go in there and buy a glass of beer for a dime and you'd get a hamburger steak dinner, french fried pota-

(Editor's Note: The preceeding is Part One of a two-part series. Part Two will appear in the July 1989 issue of SERGEANTS.)

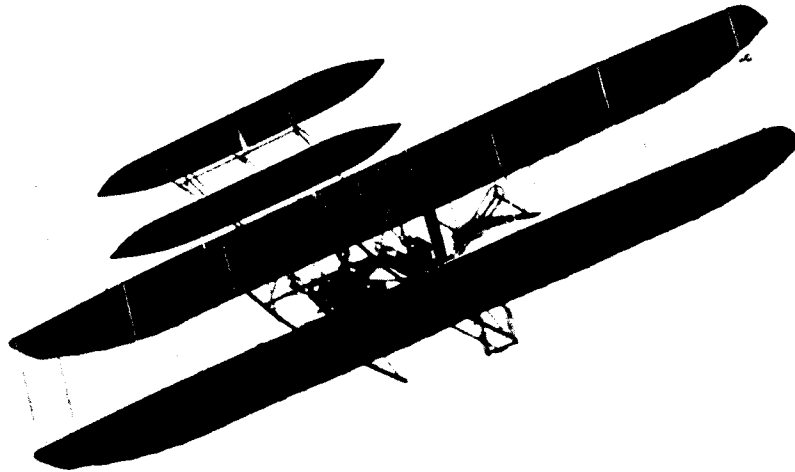
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF SIGNAL OFFICER,
WASHINGTON.

August 15, 1907.

News Items for "American Magazine of Aeronautics."

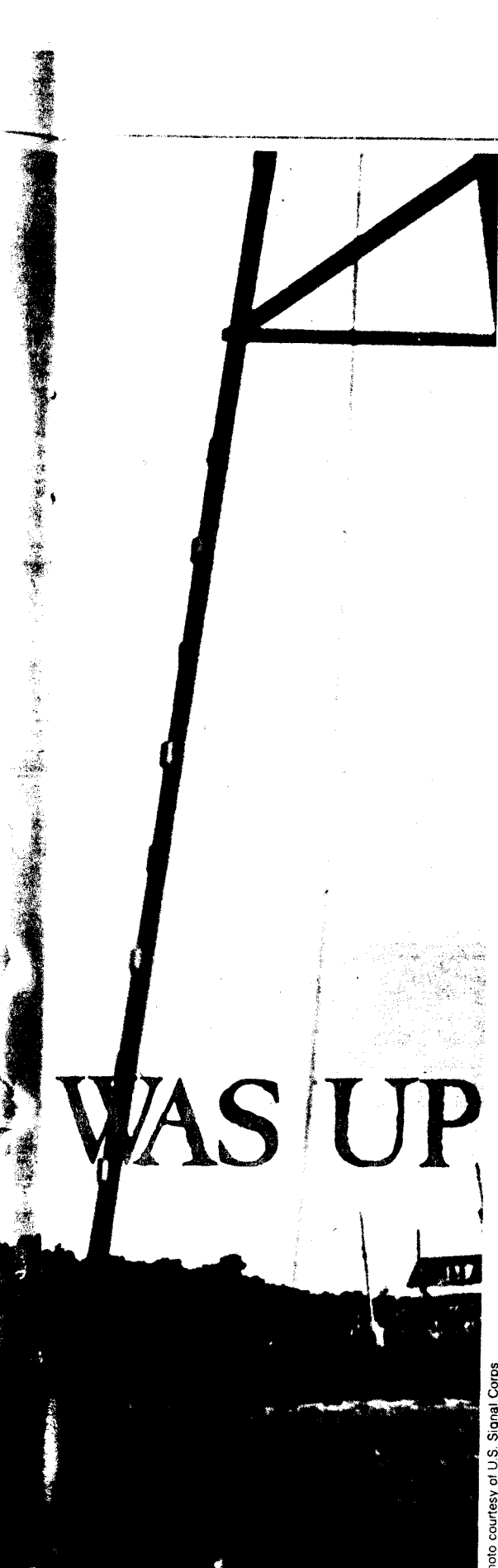
On August 1st the Chief Signal Officer of the Army established a new division in the Signal Corps, known as the Aeronautical Division. This Division will have charge of all matters pertaining to military ballooning, air machines and all kindred subjects. All data on hand will be carefully classified and plans perfected for future tests and experiments. The operations of this division are strictly confidential and no information will be given out to any party except by the Chief Signal Officer or his authorized representative. Captain Chas. DeF. Chandler is detailed to this division, and Corporal Edward Ward and First Class Private Jos. E. Barrett will report to Captain Chandler for duty under his immediate direction.

On August 15th the Quartermaster Department will open proposals for the construction of a large steel balloon shed and a building for generating and compressing hydrogen, which will be erected at the Signal Corps aerostatic park at Fort Omaha, Neb.



**College Park, Md.,
was the home of heroes . . .**

WHEN FLYING



Arrmy Lieutenants Frank Lahm and Fred Humphreys had been airborne fewer than 10 minutes on that humid Monday morning in early November, their fragile biplane skimming barely three feet above the ground.

A short distance away, just over the horizon, the day's activities were just beginning at the Maryland Agricultural College, its students and faculty oblivious to history in the making at the two-month-old airfield at College Park.

Confidently Lahm put the Wright brothers' flying machine into a turn at the north end of the field and was about to level off for the return leg along the B&O railroad tracks when the left wingtip scratched the ground. The light plane hurtled over onto its right wing, and the linen covering the lower wing tore away. The plane came to rest on the dirt and grass strip, its lower right wing and right landing skid twisted and splintered.

History, yes—the first crash of a military aircraft and crew, November 8, 1909. The two officers were unhurt, though undoubtedly their pride was bruised.

But they could shake off any feelings of failure. Two weeks earlier, on October 26, they had made history of a different sort, becoming the first two military pilots in America to solo successfully in an Army aircraft.

They had made a beginning, a step forward for U.S. military aviation. Others had paved the way. Lt. Thomas Selfridge, for one, died following the crash of another Wright-Flyer during Army tests the previous year.

WAS UP IN THE AIR

by TSgt. TOM DWYER

photo courtesy of U.S. Signal Corps

It had been a long and grueling process as aviation pioneers tried to interest the government in flying machines. The Wright brothers, too, had been discouraged in their repeated attempts.

Two years after the Wrights' first flights at Kitty Hawk in 1903, they were still attempting, in vain, to interest the government in financing their flying tests. They had already made more than 100 successful flights, including the first circular flight. Yet they were plagued by skepticism.

Then in 1907 they got unexpected help when Maj. George Squier of the Signal Corps returned from Europe and a tour of foreign air centers, such as they were, to convince the Army to advertise for construction of the first military airplane in America.

Specifications for such a plane seemed preposterous: "The machine should develop a speed of 40 miles per hour in still air, be able on its trial flight to remain continuously in the air for one hour, carry two passengers whose combined weight is not less than 350 pounds, and have sufficient fuel for a flight of 125 miles." There were other specifications, such as being easily disassembled and transportable by wagon.

It was the airworthiness, though, that troubled the public. *Aeronautics*, the only aeronautical journal of the day, questioned the likelihood of "practical bidders." The *New York Globe*, pessimistically chiding the Signal Corps, said, "One might be inclined to assume from the announcement . . . that the era of practical human flight had arrived . . . but . . . a very brief

examination of the conditions imposed and the reward offered for successful bidders suffices, however, to prove this assumption a delusion."

What the public didn't know, of course, was that the specifications were designed around the exact performance standards claimed by the Wright brothers.

On February 1, 1908, when the Army Board of Ordnance and Fortifications, which would pay the successful bidder, opened some 22 bids, its members accepted offers by A. M. Herring of New York for \$20,000, James D. Scott for \$1,000, and the Wrights for \$25,000. Contracts were signed by the Wrights and Herring. Herring obtained several extensions on his contract, always claiming to have an airplane under construction. When he failed to produce, his contract was canceled. The activities of Scott are still a mystery.

But the Wright brothers went to work in their Dayton, Ohio, factory to prepare for flight trials at Ft. Myer, Va., near Washington, D.C.

Nearly a year and a half after the bids were opened, Orville Wright, with Lt. Benjamin Foulois as a passenger/navigator, flew a 10-mile round trip between the Ft. Myer parade field and the construction site of the George Washington Masonic National Memorial in Alexandria, Va. The plane exceeded the speed requirements, averaging 42.58 miles an hour. Having already flown the one-hour "endurance" test the year before, the Wrights now claimed the entire Army contract.

The Army paid for and officially took possession of

When the Wright brothers were preparing to fly their airplane in 1910 at what is now Maxwell AFB, Ala., there is not much doubt that skeptical onlookers commented, "It will never fly."

Those same words were heard again at Maxwell 66 years later when work was begun to build a replica of the hangar the Wright brothers used in their flying school in Montgomery, Ala., seven years after Kitty Hawk.

Why build the hangar? Col. Thomas H. Normile, commandant of the Air University's Squadron Officer School, the Maxwell unit responsible for the project, explained, "Since Maxwell is rich in aviation history, we thought the rebuilding of the hangar would be a fitting gesture to support the Air Force's role in the Bicentennial celebration." Old photos of the hangar served as the model.

To hold costs to a minimum, SOS faculty volunteers tore down an old building on base for the wood to build the hangar. "As it turned out," said Maj. William Car-

roll, the project officer, "we saved the Air Force money." Base civil engineers estimated the effort saved \$6,000 in demolition expenses.

Some 85 volunteers from the SOS faculty pitched in to build the structure, contributing about 750 hours of time. They started on a Sunday morning and worked until after midnight by lantern light. The idea was to build the replica in the same time—three days—it took the original contractor. The 3800th Civil Engineering Squadron supported the project.

"The physical labor that first day was easy," one worker said. "It was the tedious painting of the advertisements and the finishing touches the last two days that was the hardest." Advertisements were those of 1910 Montgomery firms that boasted, for example, "Our prices are 'Wright like Wilbur,' but they are not up in the air."

The hangar was dedicated on March 10, the same date the original structure was dedicated in 1910.

IRENE P. BARRETT
Maxwell AFB, Ala.

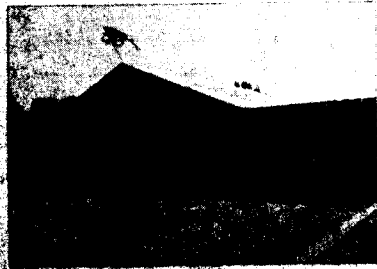


Photo by James D. Davis, Jr.

the biplane August 2, 1909. All that remained for completion of the contract was the training of two military officers as pilots for the "heavier-than-air" machine, a task that fell to brother Wilbur.

By now the crowds that swarmed Ft. Myer to see the test flights were getting on the nerves of the fort commander. He "invited" the flyers to "clear out" and take their "flying machine" with them. Wilbur felt the field was too small for flight training anyhow, so he happily accepted the invitation.

Lieutenant Lahm, a member of the Army board that monitored the test flights, now took to the air himself, although in a lighter-than-air balloon, to help. He searched out an area for a suitable flight training field. He and Lieutenant Foulois were to be Wilbur's first military students.

The balloon drifted northeast over the Nation's Capital and into Maryland, where Lahm spotted what appeared to be a good location. Further investigation on horseback of the field near the Maryland Agricultural College bore out Lahm's aerial observation.

A civilian experimenter, Fred Cox, was already at work trying to build a plane of his own (which incidentally did fly) but there was plenty of room on the more than 200-acre field for the Army, too. Cox's hangar was moved close to the B&O railroad tracks bordering the west side of the field; trees and brush were cleared for the Army, and a hangar of wood and tarpaper was built near the tracks to house the Wright-Flyer.

The plane was loaded aboard a horsedrawn wagon and brought to the field. Before the lessons could begin, though, Foulois was directed to attend the International Congress of Aeronautics at Nancy, France. To him it was "exile," a critical blow to his dream of being one of the first two military men to pilot an airplane.

However, for another young officer, Lt. Frederic E. Humphreys, it spelled opportunity. He was directed from his duties with the Army engineers to join Lahm at College Park and eventually sat in the right seat on the first Army flight.

The Army Aviation School, as it later became known, opened October 8, 1909. There were no rules, regulations, or red tape to cope with. The job was to train a couple of Army pilots and Wilbur saw no reason to delay. That same day Lahm and Humphreys received their first airborne instruction.

With one instructor for two pupils, training was intense. In the next 2½ weeks, the Wright-Flyer was in the air 14 hours.

Lahm took to flying easily. The seed of soaring was already deeply planted within the young officer before the Wright brothers flew at Kitty Hawk. In 1889, as a boy standing at his father's side, young Frank had watched Santos Dumont float around the Eiffel Tower in a balloon. In 1904, Frank Lahm, along with his father and a friend, took his first balloon ride.

The next year he was licensed to pilot a balloon and was racing in Europe, winning the Gordon Bennett International Balloon Race with a borrowed balloon. The race, from Paris to the far shores of the English Channel, marked the first entry and victory for an American. Three years later he was the passenger with Orville Wright on the one-hour endurance test flight at Ft. Myer.

At College Park, with the deliberate Wilbur Wright as their instructor, Lahm and Humphreys would have barely three hours of instruction before soloing and becoming the first American military pilots.

They were aggressive, swashbuckling, a breed apart, and they knew it. Learning to pilot a Wright-Flyer was a challenging and daring undertaking.

Before each flight a starting rail was positioned so the biplane would take off into the wind. A 1,000-pound weight was suspended from a tower behind the plane, connected by rope and a series of pulleys to a two-wheeled starting cart.

Just before a flight, a crew of enlisted men would lift the airplane onto the starting track. From this position, the students and their instructor would attempt to take off.

Half the time the 800-pound plane—built of wire, spruce, cloth, and glue—would hug the ground, dragging its sled-like skids, and come to rest 50 feet off the end of the starting rail.

Their activities shared front page headlines with Halley's Comet in Washington and New York papers. But, like their instructor, they probably didn't foresee the full impact of what they were about to do. Asked when airplanes would be as common as automobiles, Wilbur had earlier replied, "Oh, in a million years perhaps."

October 26, 1909 had been forecast to be windy, but, as that autumn Wednesday dawned at College Park, the winds were ever so slight. As flight time approached, the temperature rose to 39 degrees but a curtain of mist hung over the area. There was just enough sun, though, for flying.

The plane was fueled, set on the starting cart, and the catapult weight raised to the top of the tower.

The chief mechanic stood ready to spin one of the two propellers at the rear of the plane to start the four-cylinder engine. The left wing had been fitted with window weights to simulate the weight of the instructor who would normally sit in the left seat, thus balancing the fragile plane.

Moments before the early morning flight, Wilbur Wright gave last-minute instructions to Lieutenant Humphreys, who was about to become the first military man in the United States to fly alone in a military airplane. He had been chosen to solo first simply because it was his turn to fly. (Some reports indicate the toss of a coin gave Humphreys the chance to become the Army's first solo pilot).

Wilbur cautioned him against staying aloft more than two minutes and against flying higher than 20 feet.

Humphreys, a noted auto racer, climbed over the wires and wooden skids to take his seat next to the engine. He braced himself, his booted feet resting on a wooden crossbar directly in front of him. When the propeller was turned, the fragile airframe shook as the 30-horsepower engine sputtered to life.

Now it was up to Humphreys. At 8:16 a.m. he yanked the rope releasing the weights from the catapult tower. The starting cart jerked forward, reaching 28 miles an hour in the first 51 feet, and the plane lifted away from the cart, its skids dragging momentarily along the ground. Finally, *Miss Columbia* nosed up into history.

Anxious spectators cheered as Humphreys began

the first of his two circles around the field. The plane pitched and bumped a little but not nearly as much as would be expected with a novice pilot attempting his first solo flight.

After gliding to a perfect landing, Humphreys climbed from the plane, and was met by Wilbur with a congratulation of sorts. "I suppose," said Mr. Wright when the smiling officer reached him, "that I ought to congratulate you, but it is so much a matter of course that it hardly seems necessary."

Now it was Lieutenant Lahm's turn. The tall, slender soldier stood a full head taller than his instructor as he, too, received last-minute instructions. He could stay up no longer than 15 minutes, he was told and, like his fellow student, should stay low.

His initial take-off failed as the Army plane skidded along the ground. But it took fewer than 10 minutes for the ground crew to ready the plane for a fresh start and, at 8:41 a.m., Lahm began a 13-minute flight. There were no instruments for these early flyers, save a piece of rag that dangled from a skid in front of the pilot. When the rag blew straight back, the pilot could relax. All was well. When it blew at an angle, he knew his machine was off balance.

From his seat on the leading edge of the lower wing, Lahm could see the agricultural college a mile away. The *New York Times* noted that "... he could have dropped a bomb into the old mansion that Lord Baltimore built more than two centuries ago."

Wilbur allowed Humphreys to fly again "to even things out," and both flew again later. This time Lahm thrilled the small group of spectators by challenging a passing train to a race and keeping up with the locomotive. By day's end Lahm had three hours and seven minutes of career flying time as a pilot. Humphreys was three minutes behind.

Newspapers reported the day's activities, but not their significance. Up until this time, no country could boast of a military air arm complete with planes and pilots. But military men everywhere were intensely interested in aviation.

A year earlier, the Secretary of War noted that "... the armies of the principle foreign powers were devoting special attention to military aeronautics. England

had five officers and 40 enlisted men with primary duties restricted to the field. France had 24 officers and 432 enlisted men; Germany, 20 officers and 465 enlisted men; Russia, 79 officers and 3,255 enlisted men. . ." and so on.

On the other hand, the U.S. had only three officers and 10 enlisted men. But now she also had a plane and two trained pilots.

A week after his first solo flight, Lieutenant Lahm flew alone for almost an hour. "I only came down because I was hungry," he told onlookers. Two days later he had Lt. George C. Sweet, USN, as a passenger. Sweet then qualified as the first Navy officer to fly in an airplane.

Then on November 8, Lahm and Humphreys experienced the first military aircraft accident. Though neither pilot was injured, the damage was severe enough to postpone further flying until parts could be shipped from the Wrights' factory in Dayton.

Lahm was ordered to join the 6th Cavalry because of a provision in the so-called "Manchu Law," which, in effect, required all line officers to return to duty with troops of their own arm of the service after four years' detached service. Humphreys stayed on to train the third military pilot, Lieutenant Foulois, before also being ordered back to his unit.

As winter set in, Foulois was ordered to take the plane and as many spare parts as he could find and relocate at Ft. Sam Houston, Tex. There he was to teach himself to fly. He did.

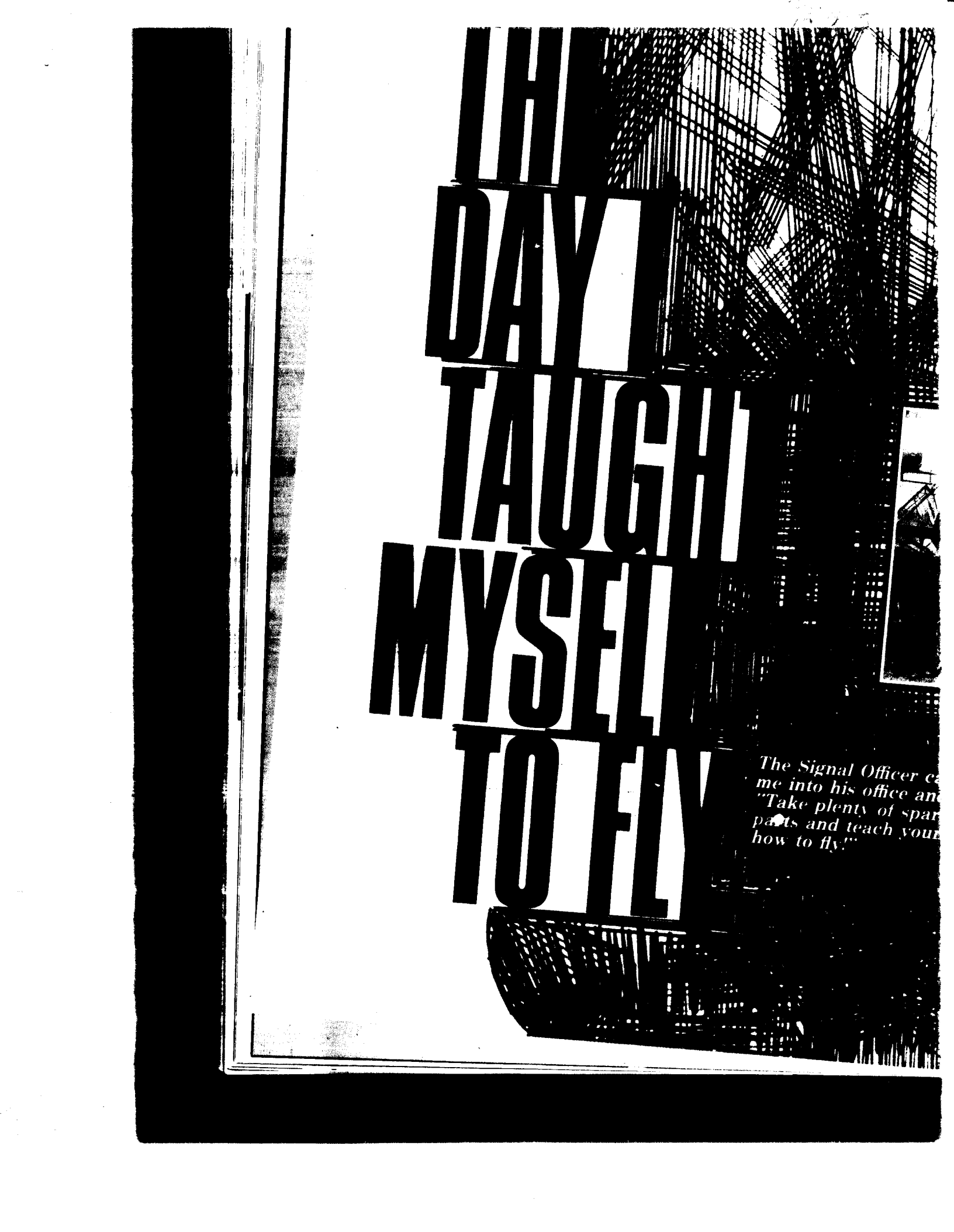
In 1911 College Park was reopened as a flight school. Such aviation pioneers as Thomas Milling, Charles DeForest Chandler, Henry (Hap) Arnold, and Lewis Rockwell flew and taught at College Park.

Lahm later became a brigadier general and Foulois a major general. Humphreys resigned his commission after being ordered back to the engineers.

The College Park Airport is the oldest continuously operated airport in the world. In 1973 the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission bought the airport to assure its historic preservation and continued existence. Today 80 privately owned airplanes are flown and maintained at this birthplace of military aviation. ✈



photo courtesy of U.S. Signal Corps

A high-contrast, black and white photograph of a ship's mast and rigging. The mast is a complex network of ropes and pulleys, creating a dense, geometric pattern. A basket hangs from the rigging. The image is grainy and has a high-contrast, almost stencil-like quality.

I HAD DAY TAUGHT MYSELF TO FLY

The Signal Officer came into his office and said, "Take plenty of spare parts and teach your crew how to fly."

The faculty at the Signal Corps School, Fort Leavenworth, Kans., apparently did not observe that my graduation thesis on aeronautics was taken largely from the Holy Bible, Jules Verne, and Army field service regulations. They liked it, and as a result I was assigned to aviation duty at Fort Myer, Va., upon my graduation in June 1908.

At that time, Fort Myer was the center of our government's attempt to get men off the ground and into the sky. I guess you could call it the Cape Kennedy of its day.

The month after my assignment there, the Signal Corps made two contracts, one for a lighter-than-airship or dirigible, and another for a heavier-than-air flying machine. Both craft had to go through a number of tests prior to acceptance.

The airship, designed by Glenn Curtiss and Tom Baldwin, arrived first, and I was among those who became airship pilots. It was accepted in August 1908 but while we were making the acceptance tests, Orville Wright arrived with the *Wright Flyer*. Lieutenants Frank Lahm, Tom Selfridge, and I were given assignments in connection with testing it. Tom was killed in a crackup on September 17, and Orville Wright, who was flying the machine, was seriously injured. That crash ended our flying for 1908.

By July 1909, Orville had recovered, and tests were resumed. On July 30 it was my privilege to be Orville Wright's navigator on the final acceptance test.

The airplane became Army property on August 2, and shortly thereafter the Aero Club of Washington held a banquet to honor the Wright brothers. After the usual political and diplomatic speeches, Wilbur and Orville were asked to address the group. Well these were men of action, not words. Wilbur got up and said everything he had to say in five minutes, and he sat down. Then it was Orville's turn.

"Gentlemen," he said, "amongst the birds the parrot is the best talker and the poorest flyer. I never try to emulate the parrot."

Then he sat down. They were both better flyers than talkers, except when they were discussing aeronautics in the shop or hangar. Then

they would talk far into the night.

Well, I enjoyed talking with these men, and I wanted to learn to fly that airplane. The contract called for the Wrights to teach two Army officers to fly, and Frank Lahm and I were chosen. We built a hangar at College Park, where the University of Maryland is today, and got ready for the instruction. Then I got orders to represent the United States at an international aeronautical congress in France. As a result, a young Engineer officer named Lt. Fred Humphreys was selected to take the flying lessons in my place, and I went on to Europe.

I got back from France shortly before Lahm and Humphreys made their first solo flights in mid-October 1909. Although he was not obligated to do so, Wilbur Wright volunteered to give me some flying lessons anyway. By November 5, I had completed 54 minutes of instruction, but had not yet made a takeoff or landing. I also had flown with Humphreys, but only as a passenger.

Well, on that date I was out there on the field ready to fly, and Lahm and Humphreys were in the air with the plane. They finally came in to land, hooked a wing into the ground, and cracked it up. The weather was getting cold, so that ended our flying for 1909.

Lahm was sent back to his Cavalry regiment about the middle of November under a law that required officers to spend at least two years out of six with troops. The Engineers didn't want any of their bright young officers in this crazy game of flying, so Humphreys was relieved, too. That left me with 54 minutes of instruction, a wrecked airplane, eight enlisted men, and a civilian mechanic—the whole active duty air force at that time!

The chief signal officer called me into his office in December and told me he was going to send me and the airplane down to Fort Sam Houston, at San Antonio, Tex.

"Take plenty of spare parts," he said, "and teach yourself how to fly."

After exhibiting the airplane in Chicago and St. Louis, I arrived at Fort Sam Houston in February 1910 and my men and I built a hangar on what was then known as the mounted drill ground. We fixed the plane

up, and by the 2nd of March it was ready to fly. I made four flights with it, the first flight 7 minutes, second one 14 minutes, third 21 minutes, and the fourth about 21 minutes when the fuel pipe broke. I came in and landed, knocking the tail off the airplane. I made four firsts that day—my first solo, my first takeoff, my first landing, and my first crackup.

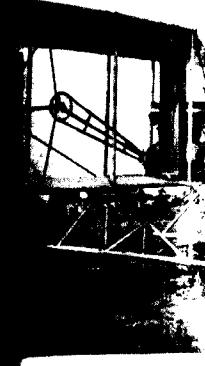
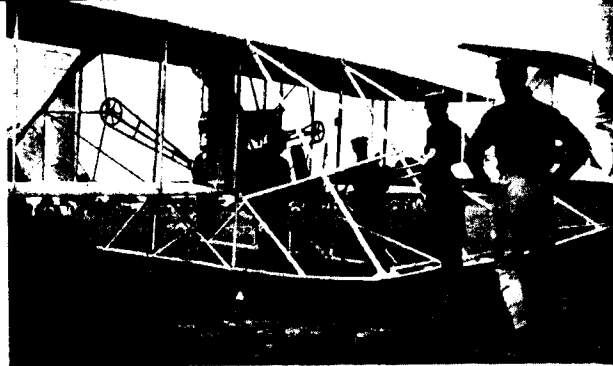
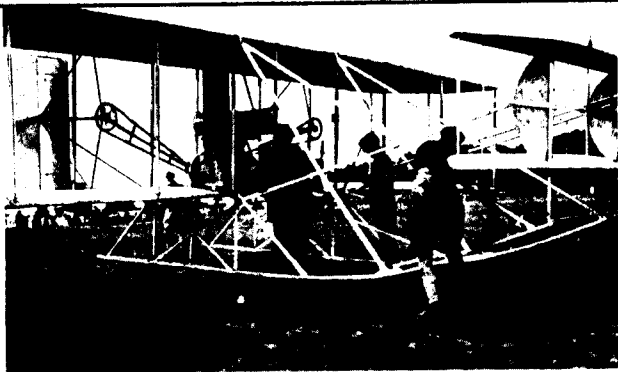
We hauled the wreckage into the hangar and tried to puzzle out what had gone wrong in the landing. Finally I sat down and wrote a letter to the Wright brothers telling them what I thought I had done, and they wrote back and told me what I ought to have done. That started my correspondence course with the Wright brothers, and I guess it made me the first correspondence course airplane pilot in history.

After we repaired the airplane I went up again, flew around awhile, cut the engine, and started my landing approach. Coming in toward the drill ground the plane dropped suddenly toward the ground and threw me completely out of my seat. Fortunately, I fell back into the seat, straightened out the control levers, and came on in.

Capt. Fred Austin, airfield artillery battery commander, galloped up on his horse and wanted to know what had happened. I said, "Fred, I need something to keep me in that damn seat! Something like a trunk strap about four feet long with a buckle on it so I can lash myself down onto the seat." Well, that afternoon his battery saddler gave me a strap, and it became the first safety belt ever used in an airplane in this country.

On my third day of flying I had to reorient my monorail catapult system into the wind every time I took off. The wind was changing direction every 10 or 15 minutes. On one takeoff I just got the plane off the track and into the air when a sidewind hit me and teakettled me up on one wing and down I went. The crew had to pull old Number One off me that time. They cut a couple of wires that were gouging into my left leg, and finally I was free. I carry a scar today from that crash, although it's the only one I've ever received from flying.

Right away I decided to do away with the tower and track system and



Orville Wright (center) shows his aircraft to army aviators and others in Alexandria, Va., on July 30, 1909.

put wheels on the plane, so I sent my mechanic to San Antonio Arsenal. He rounded up a pair of rubber-tired cultivator wheels, then started working on some recoil springs to go with them, and soon we dispensed with tower and track altogether.

All the crashes and repairs were costing us money and we had very little to work with. One day I was called into the chief signal officer's office at Fort Sam Houston, and he said he had heard rumors that we were spending our own money to keep the airplane in the air. I told him I had been allotted \$150 to run that airplane for four months, and had dug into my own pockets for \$300. I said my enlisted men had also contributed what they could and that the carpenters, plumbers, blacksmiths, painters, and tailors on the post were furnishing materials, and that's the way we were keeping the plane in operation.

Well, he said this was bad advertising for the War Department and he was going to report me to Washington. He did, and about a week later I got a letter ordering me to stop flying, take my detachment to an Army target range about 25 miles from the post, and put in an electrical annunciator buzzer system for operating and handling targets. We went out there and dug trenches, laid cable, made manholes, and did everything in the world for a month. Two good Signal Corps noncommis-

sioned officers and a half dozen illiterate laborers could have done the job. What it amounted to was that I got a reprimand from the War Department and my enlisted men got a month of hard labor in return for all the flights we had accomplished up until that time.

When this job was finished we went back to Fort Sam Houston and resumed flying. We wanted to develop the airplane into a stable platform for air reconnaissance work. Old Number One was the last of the Kitty Hawk models, and with its two elevators out in front it was about as stable as a bucking bronco. We continued experimenting while the Wright brothers made modifications back at Dayton, Ohio. When one of the elevators up front was moved around to the back, stability improved somewhat, but not enough. I later found out that by using just one elevator, the rear one, I had a platform that worked well. I could let go of one of the levers and make notes and sketches. It got to be an airplane that could be used for real military reconnaissance.

Eventually we got a second airplane to work with, the *Wright-Collier*, and finally, in April 1911, a third Wright machine.

In the spring of that year we were having trouble with Mexico, which was itself having a considerable amount of internal troubles, and 10,000 troops were concentrated at Fort

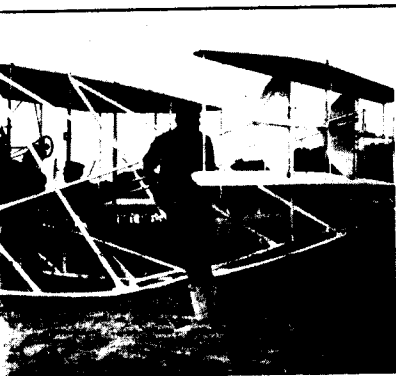
Sam Houston, ready to move down to the border if they had to. These troops were camped on the mounted drill ground, and this left me with a space for flying operations about 500 yards long and 100 yards wide. During this time I had to do all my flying before reveille in the morning or after retreat in the afternoon, because they not only used my flying field but all the other open spaces I had there for drill purposes. Well, I didn't mind that so much because I got quite a lot of satisfaction out of getting up before reveille and waking the troops, which they didn't appreciate at all.

Since most of the men, mules, and horses had never seen an airplane, I thought it would be a good idea to indoctrinate them. One day the Sixth Cavalry was lined up for a parade, with about 400 officers and enlisted men and their horses participating. I came sailing in over the formation and they went running in every direction. Then I headed straight for San Antonio to get out of the way until the smoke cleared. Fortunately for me the division commander down there, General Carter, was in favor of this indoctrination work.

One particular incident that I recall involved a battery of artillery that used to come out and form up on my flying field, and go through their maneuvers. Guns, caissons, and horses. They got all lined up nicely, ready for the officers to report front

and center to er, when I came behind, diving alry outfit.

Unfortunately the fact that and while the every direction about 60 miles faster than speed. At the in the directic headed straight one side of the something mi almost to the enough to m down the flar when my flyin I was ready right in front wagon. Well, chest and kn haunches. an I glared at hi Then he go wagon, and of artillery he About this horse and wa tween the ten an argument. me for dama devil for beng he had no bu that time a said, "Hey, E going on?" there sticking



Maj. Gen. Benjamin D. Foulis

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for me, I overlooked
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battery scattered in
I came in downwind
an hour, considerably
the normal landing
rate I was going and
I was moving, I was
t for a row of tents on
field, and I had to do
hty quick. When I got
ents I still had speed
ke a sharp left turn
of those tents. Then,
speed decreased and
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me, was a horse and
hit the horse in the
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he glared at me and
n for a few seconds.
up, overturned the
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ses and guns.

me the owner of the
on appeared from be-
s, and he and I got into
He was going to sue
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out on the field where
ness to be. And about
rdly vice behind me
nnie, what the hell's
ell, I look around and
his head out of a tent,

was a young captain of Engineers
named Douglas MacArthur, adjutant
of the Engineer battalion that
occupied that flank of the field.

Well, I left the owner of the horse
and wagon talking to himself and I
went over to see Doug. He and I had
been lieutenants together and
served together for years.

"Doug," I said, "it was a choice
between your tent and that horse
and wagon. Lieutenants and cap-
tains and horses are expendable in
this man's Army, but government
tents are not. If I'd hit that tent I'd
have it on my paycheck next month."

Well, we reminisced about a lot of
things we'd been through and chat-
ted awile, then I went back to my
plane to see if I couldn't fix it, which
I had to do.

I've thought about that little inci-
dent on many occasions in later
years. Later on when MacArthur was
Chief of Staff of the Army and I was
chief of the old Army Air Corps, we
fought and bled for the Army, a lot
of times together. I've often thought
since that time that if I'd hit that tent
I certainly would have changed his-
tory.

In July 1911, on orders from the

War Department, we shipped the first
Army airplane to Dayton to be re-
stored by Wilbur and Orville Wright.
The only original part left at that time
was the upper main surface. In all my
crackups I had landed it in every way
possible except on its back.

When the Wright brothers were
through restoring it, they sent old
Number One to the Smithsonian In-
stitution in Washington, D.C., where
it was placed on permanent display.

Before this machine became a
museum exhibit the public looked
upon the Wright brothers and every-
one associated with them as people
who should be in a government
hospital for the insane. Now we are
thinking in terms of travel to the
moon and beyond. We have come a
long way since the Army got its first
airplane back in 1909, and we are
likely to go to a great deal further in an
equal period of time in the future. I
will not attempt to predict what ad-
vancements will be made in the next
50 or 60 years, but will say that I
believe that in aerospace nothing,
absolutely nothing, is impossible.
We'll just keep moving ahead. ☛

Reprinted from September 1965 AIRMAN.







COMPANY B, SIGNAL CORPS, FORT MYER, VIRGINIA. 1905





CAPTIVE BALLOONS. Fort Myer & Connecticut, 1900.

Notes abstracted from a Report by Lieut. A.T. Clifton, dated September 21, 1900, addressed to Lt. Col. Samuel Beber, S.C. War Dept. Washington.

Lieut. Clifton assigned as C.O. Balloon Detachment by orders at Signal Corps Post, Fort Myer, Va. May 28, 1900. The enlisted detachment originally consisted of 12 men, afterward increased to 20, nearly all recruits of less than 2 months service. First mission was to clear a space 300 ft. diam. in front of the balloon house at S.C. Post which was built among trees. Also, ground was leveled to some extent.

Equipment received by the Detachment comprised: one German ~~irachon~~ balloon, complete; 3 French silk balloons; 5 small cotton signal balloons; 5 baskets; 3 nets; cotton gas hose; steel tubes; anchor cable; balloon wagon; anchors; sandbags; gas compressor with fittings; a set of hydrogen generating tanks. Most of this equipment has been used at Tampa during Spanish War. Some had been exhibited at the Omaha Exposition in 1900, then stored at this post. None of equipment had been used for two years. Gas generator had been exposed to weather in meantime. The varnish on the three silk and five cotton balloons had deteriorated and folds of envelope were stuck together. Efforts were made to remove the old varnish chemically, but no success. The German balloon was O.K. A professional balloonist was hired to try to rehabilitate the old balloons; he could not suggest anything that had not already been tried. Effort made to fill one balloon with gas but generator leaked so badly that most of gas escaped. However, the civilian balloonist overhauled all rigging, etc., cars, etc. instructing the enlisted detachment in that work, including the patching of the envelopes.

Each day a balloon was inflated with air and transported outside in order to give experience in handling to the detachment.

A retired boatswain of the Navy was employed to give instruction in knots, splicing, rigging, etc.

For the summer army maneuvers in Connecticut, one balloon was to be employed. Col. Beber assigned in charge with Lieut. Clifton as his asst.

Enlisted Detachment increased to 20 men for this maneuver operation.

Carl Myer of Frankfort, N.Y. was awarded contract for a new 12,000 cu. ft. balloon to be delivered by July 25th for the maneuver service.

Intention was to use compressed hydrogen shipped from Ft. Myer.

Compressor found in bad condition. Expert employed made overhaul.

After compressing two days, the compressor exploded; no one injured.

July 25th, ascension by Beber and Clifton at Frankfort, N.Y. as test of the new balloon. During the night, 20% gas lost; balloon then

given new coat of varnish. Delivered at Ft. Myer August 15th.

Balloon inflated at Ft. Myer and used for training personnel. First ascent to 1000 ft. by Lieut. Clifton and Sgt. Bladnow; then all other

men of the detachment, 2 at a time.

Windlass operated by man powers cranks geared to drum. Required about

20 minutes to haul down from 750 ft.

Aug. 25. The Detachment started for Point Judith and Narragansett with

camp equipment for the summer maneuvers comb. with Navy. Balloons

equipment shipped by railroad. Gas supply came from tank generators

rented from Carl Meyer. (12,000 lb. each iron filings & sul. acid.)

R.R. car from Ft. Myer lost en route; not located until Aug. 30;

arrived Aug. 31; gas generators arrived several days earlier in Frankfort.

Maneuvers began Sept. 1, but too much wind for inflation of balloon until

Sept. 3. Rain 2nd and 4th. Wind split balloons while maneuvering over

wall on the 5th. Sewing machine borrowed; repair made; new inflation.

Ascension next evening; steady flier observed off Block Island 10 PM.

Later in day, the balloon slipped again and was damaged.

Detachment returned Ft. Myer Aug. 9.

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 SPECIAL DOCUMENTS
 COLLECTION
 100-100-100



Brigadier General
Albert J. Meyer
1860-1890



Brigadier General
William B. Ransom
1840-1897



Brigadier General
Adolphus W. Gentry
1840-1908



Brigadier General
James A. Brown
1840-1914



Major General
Irving J. Carr
1841-



Brigadier General
George F. Johnson
1840-1907



Major General
George O. Turner
1840-1908



Major General
Charles H. Johnson
1841-1908



Major General
George J. Smith
1840-1907

CHIEF SIGNAL OFFICERS, U.S. ARMY
1860-1931



F14-235