
"Young and Adventurous"

The Journal of a North Dakota Volunteer in the Spanish-American War, 1898-1899

by Adam S. Mischel

Edited and with an introduction by James F. Vivian

Adam S. Mischel was born in Pflzburg, south Russia, in 1876. His family, including his parents, Sebastian and Katharina, and eight siblings, figured among the first wave of German-Russian immigrants to pioneer the Richardton area of North Dakota in the early 1890s. Mischel was just twenty-one years old, and his father many miles away, when the call for troops was announced for the Spanish-American War. Although threat of conscription into the Russian Army had driven some German-Russians to emigrate from the Russian steppes, Adam found himself eager for the adventure, and no doubt the pay, promised by a comparatively glamorous American foreign war. His experiences as a North Dakota Volunteer, far more taxing than he as a young man could envision, drove him several decades hence to pen a surprisingly eloquent journal based upon his wartime pocket diary.

Adam's family had at first prospered in North Dakota, buying a farm and later a hotel, general store, and lumberyard.¹ As a young man, Adam worked with his father in their farming enterprise and family owned business until a fire destroyed their home, the hotel, and the store. As Adam described it,

Then came misfortunes ... Shortly before [the fire] we had received from Russia, Russian furs worth fifteen hundred dollars, which we had hanging in the upper rooms, all lost by the fire. We couldn't save all our clothing and we had no insurance. The damage amounted to about \$10,000, and since at that time many German-Hungarians and German-Russians arrived, and some were poor, my father had helped them with farm machinery and the like. So also here some thousands were gone and we were almost at the end of our business.²

Mrs. Mischel was subsequently injured in a buggy accident and was advised by doctors to seek a warmer climate to promote healing. Having lost nearly every-

thing in the fire, Adam's father moved with his wife and younger children to Florida. Adam, and his older brother Fredinand, who had married and owned a homestead near Richardton, remained in North Dakota.

War fever exacted a firm grip on North Dakota in March 1898. Recognizing the potential for hostilities, the *Dickinson Press* took the timely precaution of arranging for direct telegraph communications with the regional news bureau in St. Paul, Minnesota.³ Reports from Alaska and of the Klondike gold rush, in which many Stark County residents seem to have been interested and perhaps involved, faded against the worsening diplomatic crisis with Spain over the fate of its troubled Cuban colony in the Caribbean Sea. In their place, the *Press* kept ever closer track of developments in Washington, D.C. At last came the bulletin the *Press* had mostly expected—Congress authorized President William McKinley to employ military force in resolving the dispute. Spain, unable to suppress what it termed an internal rebellion in Cuba, and yet unwilling to negotiate a peaceful solution with the rebels or to accept United States mediation of the protracted conflict, now faced the imminent prospect of outside intervention. Already, on April 22, the President had ordered a naval blockade of the island, instructed Admiral George Dewey's squadron anchored off Hong Kong to steam toward Manila Bay in the Philippines, and appealed for 125,000 citizen volunteers.⁴

The War Department first called on North Dakota to muster 500 cavalry troops. This met with much disappointment, not in the least because of the numerous would-be soldiers anxious to respond. Henry C. Hansbrough, the state's senior senator, registered a complaint with the proper authorities. Quickly the order was modified to include, if not the desired full regiment, then a force of eight companies, or two battalions, of infantry. Most of the state's extant militia units, which had last encamped at Jamestown in 1894,



Company K, 1st North Dakota Infantry, taken at the Nipa barracks in Malate just before going to the front. The illustration appears in Karl I. Faust, Campaigning in the Philippines (1899), p. 60.

stood at half strength. Dickinson's Company K, numbering forty-one uniformed personnel when the emergency sounded, reached its authorized level of eighty-one within the week.⁵

Mischel and Fred Kuntz, the son of a local farmer, together eagerly rushed to the enlistment center in Dickinson, the county seat twenty-two miles distant, on April 26, barely one day after the news had broken. They remained wholly ignorant of their ultimate destination until May 12, when the War Department advised that the North Dakota contingent, like those of most western states, would be sent to Manila.⁶

All eight companies converged upon Camp Briggs (named after Frank A. Briggs, the state's fifth and current governor), near the Northern Pacific railroad

station in Fargo, for a short month of hurried induction, indoctrination, and training. Almost 5,000 residents and visitors, the equivalent of half the city's total population, observed the first full dress parade staged on Sunday, May 8.⁷ Two trains left Fargo on May 27 along both the Northern Pacific (Company G of Valley City, Company H of Jamestown, and Company A of Bismarck) and Great Northern (Company C of Grafton and Company D of Devils Lake) railway routes in order that the troops could visit their relatives and friends en route to the embarkation complex in San Francisco, California. Company K arrived in Dickinson late the same day, where it was held up for a midnight reception lasting more than an hour.⁸ Excitement and patriotic fervor filled the air at each stop.

1. The following biographical information is drawn from *Richardton Heritage: A History of Richardton, North Dakota* (Richardton: Assumption Abbey Press, 1983), p. 273, and *Historical Review of Richardton, North Dakota: 75th Anniversary Jubilee, 1883-1958* (Dickinson, ND: Dickinson Press, 1958), pp. 131-133.

2. *Historical Review of Richardton*, p. 131.

3. *Dickinson Press*, April 23, 1898, p. 2.

4. H. Wayne Morgan, *America's Road to Empire: The War with Spain and Overseas Expansion* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1966), chap. 3.

5. Chad M. Chidgey, "The Mobilization of the North Dakota National Guard during the Spanish-American War," research paper, Fall 1991, History department, University of North Dakota, pp. 3-4.

6. *Fargo Forum*, May 12, 1898, p. 4. The May 18, 1898, issue of the *Forum* contains the complete official roster of North Dakotans merged into the regular army.

7. Chidgey, "The Mobilization of the North Dakota National Guard," p. 11.

8. *Dickinson Press*, May 28, 1898, p. 3.



Members of the 1st North Dakota Volunteer Infantry in front of the Dickinson Opera House as they leave for training at Camp Briggs in preparation for service in the Spanish-American War, 1898.

Private Mischel had entered upon a fatefully different, although presumably temporary, career. His unit merged with the vanguard of American forces being sent across the wide Pacific. Thus it was that Mischel found himself, barely six months after reaching legal majority, tramping, wading, and slogging about Luzon island, the largest and most populated in the tropics of the Philippine archipelago. He was, as the *Nord-Dakota Herald* tersely recorded in its obituary, "ein Beteran des Spanisch-Amerikanischen Krieges."⁹

Little did he imagine that, once at the front, diplomatic and logistical complications might dictate an extended tour of duty. He would return a year and a half later no longer the innocent young adult that family and neighbors had known before he had endured twenty-three battlefield engagements and skirmishes. Field conditions, especially bouts of prolonged exposure to

tropical dangers, eventually claimed a toll, leaving him physically compromised for the remainder of his life.

Some forty years later, on the eve of World War Two, Adam Mischel sought to put down his Spanish-American War memories. Correctly sensing that bluster and war increasingly punctuated too much foreign news reporting, Mischel composed a concise journal of his stint in the military, based apparently on a simple pocket diary he kept during his enlistment and on the recollections it jogged in his mind. The journal, written in his native German, first appeared in a five-part series in the *Nord-Dakota Herald* between February 3 and March 3, 1939. Its translated reproduction here has been accomplished with due respect to its author and his purpose—that is, with all sincere good will and only the most necessary of editorial intrusion and elaboration.¹⁰

February 15, 1898 The American warship [U.S.S.] *Maine* was sunk in the harbor of Havana. The news spread like wildfire throughout the country. We had given little thought to the trouble Cuba was having with Spain and never dreamed of the effects it would have on us.

The Cubans were being mistreated by the Spaniards and when conditions did not improve, the United States government ordered the *Maine* to Cuba to protect American cities and their property against the Spaniards. The American soldiers were cordially welcomed, so it came as a shock when less than a month later, the ship *Maine* was sunk without warning, taking

the lives of 266 men. President McKinley warned Spain to settle for the damages and ordered the Spaniards to leave Cuba. Upon their refusal, the United States declared war on Spain on April 25, 1898.

Telegrams were sent throughout the nation asking all young and able-bodied men to show their patriotism by volunteering to enlist in the Army.¹¹ My buddy and I were living in Richardton, North Dakota, when we were urged to enlist, being told that since we were young and single it was our duty to serve our country. Therefore, being young and adventurous, we signed up with Company K from Dickinson, North Dakota.

Little did I realize how much grief and anguish I was

causing my father, who at the time was in Florida for his health. I wrote to him telling him I had joined the army and bade him goodbye. When I received his answer, telling me how he felt, it was too late for anything but regrets. Before I left home, I paid a visit to our parish priest. He gave me a statue of Saint Joseph, telling me to carry it with me always and I would return home safely. He was right. I knew if I put my trust in God, He would help me.

May 1 We were on our way to Fargo. There we were told about the hardships and sacrifices we would have to undergo. After getting details on army life, some of the men decided they could not take it and returned home. My buddy and I stuck together and were sworn in with the rest. Then began a rigorous period of training, drilling, and marching; some days we marched for six hours.

Here is a sample of our schedule:

5:30 a.m. Bugle call and we all scrambled out of bed.

6:00 a.m. Breakfast.

7:00 a.m. Beds had to be made and tents put in order.

8:00 a.m. Sick call—anyone who was not feeling well had to report to the doctor. This was quite convenient for the soldiers who had overslept. To avoid punishment they answered sick call, complaining of headache or stomachache. The doctor would give them two black pills and between the doctor's office and their tent they would dispose of them, then lie around all day. This was soon changed. The doctor got wise and made them take the pills in his presence. As the pills were horrible tasting, no one was very anxious to take them. The rest of the day was spent in drilling and training.

9:00 p.m. Lights out, everyone in bed and quiet.

Each soldier's pay was \$15.60 a month plus eats and uniforms. Each received three uniforms of white, blue, and brown, and these had to be kept immaculately

clean. The food was good and we were all contented and had a lot of good times. Soon we were through with our training and were convinced we were as good as the experienced soldiers.

May 26 We entrained at Fargo en route to San Francisco. Many stops were made and everywhere we were greeted by bands. Women and girls treated us like heroes and served us food. In Portland, Oregon, we were treated to lunch and a rose or more was tucked in each soldier's buttonhole.¹²

In San Francisco we were met by bands and the cheering of a lot of people. The bands led us to a large auditorium where we had a royal reception. Tables were decorated with flowers and laden with food and drinks. It was very nice. If this was a sample of army life, we would not mind making it a career.

We spent two hours there, then marched on to Camp Merritt, where we pitched our tents and put everything in order.¹³ We also had to buy new buttons to replace the ones we had so eagerly given as souvenirs. The next day it was back to real army life, drilling and marching with our equipment. It was very hard work but, nevertheless, we were satisfied. We had good food which was supplemented by the special treats brought us occasionally by the women from the Red Cross.

June 27 We were at Camp Merritt until Monday morning when we received orders to pack up our gear, take down our tents, roll them for transportation, and load them on wagons. The bugler sounded the call. We took up our knapsacks and fell in line for the march. The band led the regiment to the port. No longer were we so happy and carefree as we thought of leaving our loved ones and country behind. Our destination was the Philippine Islands, a voyage of about 7000 miles on the Pacific before us.¹⁴ We knew things would be different now. We got lunch from the nice women of San Francisco, then marched up the gangplank to the

Camp Merritt, San Francisco, home to the North Dakota Volunteers from June 1 to June 27, 1898.



ship *Valencia*, which was a small ship and very crowded.¹⁵ The people on shore threw oranges on deck and we feasted on them. At 4:00 p.m. we bid our goodbyes, and as the people ashore were waving and shouting "Good Luck" the boat sailed out of the harbor. Before long we were on the high seas. The sea was rough and the ship began to roll and toss about. Our evening meal was served at six o'clock, but most of us were already seasick and food did not appeal to us. In a short time it grew dark.

June 28 Practically all of us were sick, including me, and we were certain we were at death's door. I made my way up on deck, and after getting fresh air I felt better and soon regained my appetite. The food was not too good here; our menu consisted of one potato, one piece of beef, bread, and black coffee, the bread being anything but good. After a few days, as we got hungry, it began to taste better.

July 1 The weather was nice and warm, the sea was calm. Everybody went up on deck and we were all in good spirits. Down below in the bunks everything was upside down. Nobody could find their belongings and the stench was overpowering. After it was cleaned up, we all felt better, but below deck there was always a bad odor and no one wanted to go down.¹⁶ I had a bright idea and suggested to four of my comrades (one, the buddy who enlisted with me, and the others from Dickinson, a neighboring town) that we sleep in the lifeboats which hung on the side of the ship. We lived here very nicely. For protection from the sun and rain we pulled our tents over the boats. My comrades were good singers and we spent many hours singing German songs or playing cards.

July 2 Very nice weather; the sea was calm and the ship barely moved. For the first time we saw flying fish. They glittered like gold and silver and every once in a while one or more would leap over the ship. Except for the sky and the water, that was all we could see.

July 3 Another nice day, a little rain towards evening. At night the moon was shining and it was as bright as day; it was beautiful. From one side of the ship we could see the water glittering in the moonlight and on the other side a rainbow; such a magnificent sight we had never seen.

July 4 Independence Day; far from anywhere, surrounded by water. Oh, how I longed to be home. The day passed quickly though, and we had our own little celebration on board. The officers made speeches and the little cannon aboard was shot off. There was music and singing and in the evening we even had fireworks. Everyone was sober; there was nothing to drink but water.

July 5 We were told that today we would see land. The day passed, night came, and still no sight of land.

July 6 2:00 p.m. We finally spotted a small island to the south of us. It was after supper and had already grown dark when we reached Honolulu.¹⁷ We were met by a ship on which a band was playing, and escorted to harbor. We could hear the natives celebrating far into the night.

July 7 In the morning we landed and got passes to spend the whole day in the city. This was a nice city; there were many and countless varieties of beautiful flowers in bloom. At noon we were escorted to the park near the courthouse and served a delicious lunch by the women of Honolulu. We spent the rest of the day sightseeing and had a wonderful time.

July 8 We were to join a convoy of four other ships and continue on our journey. The one ship being in repair, we spent the whole day lying around on the *Valencia*.

July 9 Everything in readiness. We left the harbor and continued on our voyage to the Philippines, accompanied by the [U.S.S.] *Indiana*, *City of Para*, *Morgan City*,

9. *Nord-Dakota Herald*, October 28, 1955, p. 8.

10. Translation by Hilda Mischel Hoerner, Spokane, WA, and perfected by Walter G. Tschacher, assistant professor of language, University of North Dakota.

11. The telegrams, disseminated through the states' adjutant generals' offices, were then relayed to unit commanders—in this instance, to Captain George Auld in Dickinson. *Fargo Forum*, April 30, 1898, p. 3.

12. A youthful fad, in which "the girls trade their hat-pins for buttons from the soldier boys' coats ... some of the boys hadn't a button in their coats but enough hat-pins to start a pin shop." Charles H. Brown, *The Correspondents' War: Journalists in the Spanish-American War* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1967), p. 422.

13. The bivouac near the Presidio, about 3.5 miles north of the city and at the mouth of the Golden Gate. Lt. A. J. Osborn's letter in *Dickinson Press*, June 18, 1898, p. 3.

14. The *Fargo Forum*, May 12, 1898, p. 4, originally cheered the news, saying that the islands were "pretty ... [at the end of] a magnificent ocean voyage ... and much healthier than Cuba."

15. A total of 630 officers and men were crammed on board the *Valencia*, a privately owned ship whose passenger capacity had been listed at 300. Besides both North Dakota battalions, the ship carried detachments of the Signal and Hospital Corps.

16. The *Fargo Forum*, June 29, 1898, p. 3, reported that privates were all bunked in the ship's steerage section, where no portholes existed.

17. "We reached Honolulu this morning at 1 a.m., and were met at the dock with a big reception. This is the most beautiful place I ever saw, a perfect garden of Eden." Lt. Osborn in the *Dickinson Press*, July 23, 1898, p. 2.

18. Except for the *Indiana*, all ships were government chartered for military service. The battleship in question, actually the U.S.S. *Monadnock*, was of the monitor class, built in 1896 principally for coastal defense. Karl I. Faust, *Campaigning in the Philippines* (New York: Arno Press, 1970), p. 62, lists the chartered transports required to supplement the inadequate American navy at a cost of more than \$4 million.

19. The reference is to crossing the International Date Line.

Ohio, and a battleship.¹⁸ Our troops were under the command of Brigadier General Arthur MacArthur.

One day passed after another and we had no Friday or July 15th. As we traveled farther west the days got an hour shorter until we lost the one day completely.¹⁹

July 18 A man fell overboard from the ship *Ohio*. All the ships halted until the man was found, two hours later.

July 19 Another man overboard on the same ship, but he was never found.

July 23 Running low on drinking water, we had to catch rainwater. Our food supplies were also running low, and another week to travel. This was a hardship; twenty-four days at sea, poor food to start with and not enough to get a fill, and now almost out. There was not much singing now. Ten of us comrades from Company K were sitting together lonely, dejected, and blue. Oh, if only we were on land. In the evening of this day we could see three islands. A short distance farther we could see a volcano out of which heavy smoke was pouring. As we came nearer we could see the fire erupting. We were told this volcano was always active, but as darkness was fast approaching, we could not tell how large it was.²⁰

July 29 Thirty-two days after we left San Francisco, we finally saw the Philippine Islands. We were joyful when we pulled into the China Sea; from here it was still 400 miles to Manila. The sea was rough though, and most of us got seasick again.

Sunday, July 31 We reached Manila. Here Admiral Dewey's six battleships were anchored. As we neared the city of Cavite, ten miles [south] from Manila, we could see the eleven Spanish warships lying over the shallow water. These were the ships that had been sunk by Admiral Dewey's fleet on May 1st.²¹

Not far from here the Spaniards had dug themselves in and every now and then the Americans and Spaniards had a little battle. Our army lost 16 men and 6 were wounded. The Spaniards had 300 dead and about 40 wounded.

August 5 We landed and were happy to be on solid ground again; thirty-eight days aboard ship had seemed endless to us. We were near the city of Cavite.²²

August 10 We came to a large Catholic church; upon entering we saw a ghastly sight. Limbs of human bodies



Adam S. Mischel, a private in Company K, 1st North Dakota Infantry, 2d. Battalion, in his uniform. This photograph hung in Mischel's store in Richardton for many years. Courtesy of Dolores M. Amann, Richardton.

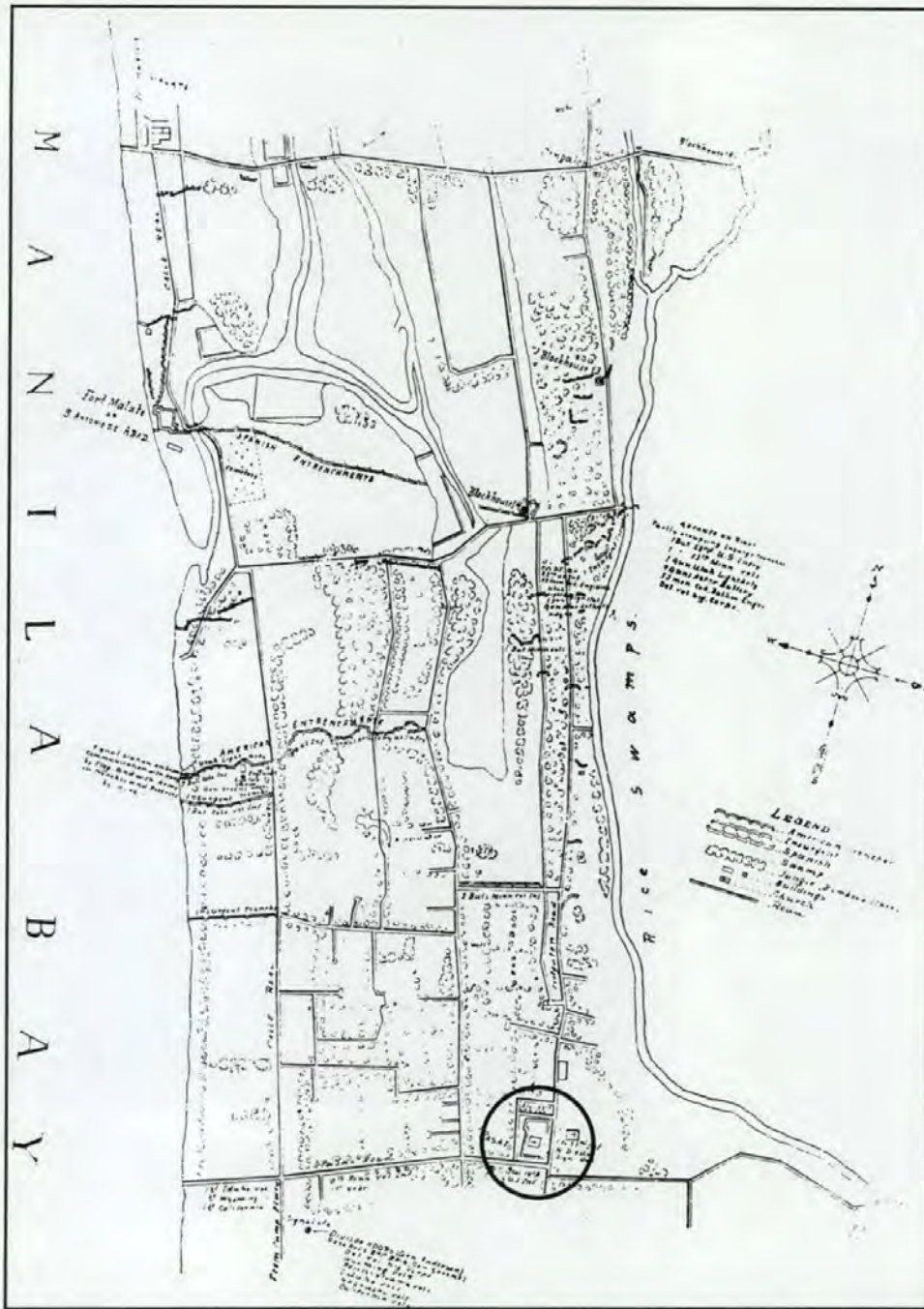
were lying about; the priest was killed too. Big holes were in the walls where the cannonballs had gone through. There still were a lot of beautiful statues here. The American soldiers had received orders not to destroy churches or any property [or] to take anything, so we always left everything in its place.

20. Farallon de Parajos, the northernmost island in the Marianas group, of which Guam is the largest.

21. "We got into the harbor at 3:30 p.m. on July 31 and cast anchor behind Dewey's gunboats drawn up in line of battle. We lay just behind the flagship *Olympia* and about 200 yards from us are the wrecks of three of Spain's fleet just showing above water ... " Lt. Osborn in the *Dickinson Press*, September 10, 1898, p. 2.

22. "We were held on the *Valencia* from the date of our arrival ... until August 5, when we landed at Cavite ... There we were stationed in some old Spanish barracks. They were not very fine quarters but a great deal better than aboard ship." Sgt. Fulton Burnett in *Dickinson Press*, October 8, 1898, p. 2.

23. Command position lately established south of Malate about twenty-one miles north of Cavite by road, six by boat.



Map showing position of American, Spanish, and Filipino troops in the battle of August 13, 1898. The North Dakota Volunteers were located in the southeast corner of the city near Pasai Road. The map appears in Faust, *Campaigning in the Philippines*, p. 80.

From there we came to a large prison, where we saw the imprisoned Spaniards who had been captured by the Filipinos. The Filipinos had been at war with the Spaniards for many years. We were overcome with pity as we saw them. They were in a dreadful condition. They received one meal a day consisting of cooked rice and water, [and] many of them died of starvation. We wished we could have shared our food with them, but we had very little food left for ourselves. Soon after that they were released and taken care of by the American Army.

Today, the 10th, we received orders to pack, then boarded small boats and went to Camp Dewey, which was closer to Manila. At Camp Dewey we pitched our

tents.²³ Not having any beds, we slept on the wet ground [as] it had rained most of the day.

August 11 The entire American Army gathered here and prepared for the attack. The date to capture Manila, the principal city, was set for August 13th. The American force consisted of 470 officers and 10,464 enlisted men. The Spaniards had close to 25,000.²⁴

August 12 We again received orders to pack. Each man received 150 shells to put in his belt. In our knapsacks we took hardtack (a hard biscuit or bread made only with flour and water), and some bacon. Our company from Dickinson had to march three miles to

its post.²⁵ It was very hot and sultry. The ground was muddy from the rain, our shoes were soon filled with water, and the sweat was pouring off us. By the time we reached the little village we were all wet and tired. At noon we had a meal, which was our last for that day. The Spaniards started shooting at us and the shells were flying overhead all night.

August 13 Before daylight a battery with two cannons went by us. Behind them came one regiment after another, also a company of Insurgents (these were native-born Filipinos) who had joined us, until a very long line was formed. At ten o'clock we marched forward against the enemy. Admiral Dewey was firing from his battleships and the soldiers were firing from land. As we pressed ahead the rumbling and roaring of the guns and cannons shook the ground. On our way to the city, we came to a church where we unloaded seventy-five boxes of ammunition in the sacristy. Three men from Company C and three men from Company K had to stand guard, but two of our company were afraid so a comrade and I had to take their places. We were to be relieved in the evening but no one showed up. At about four o'clock the Insurgents brought some bodies, one of an infant, for burial by the church. One large grave was dug, the bodies placed in it side by side, then covered; the grave was only two feet deep. One body was carried into the church and laid in front of the altar. Toward evening some more Insurgents came, equipped with guns and knives, and appeared to be very restless. We could not understand what they wanted as we could not speak their language, so we showed them that we would shoot if they came too close, as no one was allowed to enter the church. We opened the church doors, set the boxes of ammunition in the entrance, and stood behind them. In the evening, the shooting lessened and the warships ceased firing. On Forte Malate, the white flag was raised and most of the Spaniards had surrendered, but on the right side, farther from the sea, the shooting was still heavy. The Insurgents were getting more and more restless, but seemed to be afraid to start anything with us. Time passed and it grew dark, yet no one showed up to relieve us from our duties. We were hungry but had no food, and could not leave our post.²⁶ Even if we would have wanted to leave, where could we have gone? We spent a lonely night in the dark church with one sick soldier and one dead Insurgent.

August 14 It was past noon when, finally, two companies came and relieved us. They gave us canned tomatoes and hardtack and we filled up. Then we started on



A Catholic church, likely located within the walled city of Manila. Courtesy of North Dakota National Guard Historical Holding and Archives.

our way towards Manila to find our company. It was a slow, tedious task as we had to go through the mud. We had been underway for two hours when I became sick, evidently from the tomatoes. My comrades could not abandon me, so they carried me until toward evening when we reached the Wyoming Regiment. They left me there with the doctor who gave me a shot and some medicine and put me to bed.

August 15 Feeling much better, I was told where I could find my regiment. I started on my way and was soon with the company. Here, for the first time in several days, I had a decent meal and a good night's sleep.

The war with the Spaniards was almost over and the Spanish War prisoners were brought to the barracks in the old city of Manila. The old city was a fort, surrounded by a double stone wall on which cannons had been placed; the only entrances were through large doors or gates, which were guarded. The Spaniards, having been at war with the Filipinos for many years, had built this fort so strong that the Insurgents could not take it. Whenever the Spaniards were in trouble, they retreated to this fort. This was a small but nice town. They had a beautiful church, a hospital, and various business places. All of the inhabitants were Spanish and all were Catholics. The other [older] city of Manila was larger and inhabited by people of all nationalities, mostly Chinese and Japanese.²⁷

24. Company K formed part of Major General Wesley Merritt's command making up the third army expedition to the Islands. With its arrival in Manila Bay, the combined strength of American forces approached the 15,000 maximum authorized by President McKinley in May, and judged sufficient to achieve a victory over Spanish forces concentrated in Manila. John M. Gates, *Schoolbooks and Krags: The U.S. Army in the Philippines, 1898-1902* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973), pp. 4-5, 19-20.

25. At Pasai near the Paco cemetery, on the Cingalong road, four miles south of Manila.

26. "We have smelt powder, learned to sleep anywhere, and gone through any amount of mud and water and have been wet more than we have been dry. We have had very poor food for quite a while. There is something wrong in that department. Sometimes we could not get even hardtack." Sgt. Burnett in *Dickinson Press*, October 8, 1898, p. 2.

August 16 We were sent to Fort San Antonio de Abad near Malate for guard duty. The natives were dissatisfied with the Americans. They were under the impression that when the Spaniards were defeated, the Americans would turn everything over to them and send their troops home.²⁸ But this could not be done, so we had to take the Spaniards' place and guard over all. Here, but for the will of God, I nearly lost my life. I was on guard duty at post number two at eight o'clock, [when] a soldier from another company came and took my place and I moved on to post number three. Less than an hour later he was shot through the chest and killed by an Insurgent. How or why he came to take my place, I never did find out.

We were here for some time and did not have too much trouble with the Insurgents. Peace was made with Spain and the Spaniards went back to their country.²⁹

September 14 President Aguinaldo marched his troop of Insurgents out of the city. They were preceded by a band of about sixty men. They were friendly and wished us well, but we were warned that we would still have trouble with them.

September 19 I came down with malaria and was taken to the hospital, where I was given quinine, which was bitter as gall. Two hours later I had a terrible

headache. The doctor came and tried to talk to me but I could not hear him. He hollered, still I could not hear. I was very frightened. I did not want to lose my hearing. The doctor must have sensed my feelings as he tried to reassure me that I would regain my hearing. After four hours my hearing did come back, then I received another dose of quinine. This went on for twelve days until I finally recovered. I never did get rid of the noise and ringing in my ears.

We were stationed in the barracks in the district of Malate, on a street named El Camino Real. The 14th Infantry Regiment was quartered on the other side of the street. We were close to the ocean. Not far from here were two beautiful large churches, [but] there were no benches in the churches. The floor was made of stone and tile, and the people would kneel or sit on the floor. The natives were used to this; they had no tables, chairs, or beds in their homes either. The natives lived on rice, fish, fruit, and all smoked cigarettes, the women as well as the men. The older women also chewed some kind of a hard green tobacco [betel nut]. All went barefoot and wore very little clothing. For pastime they had rooster fights, music, and singing. We couldn't understand anything, but it sounded good.

We were living very nicely; each had his own bed. But the mosquitoes, which were big and plentiful, bothered us so much, especially at night, that we could hardly sleep. About three-fourths of a mile from here



An army hospital in the Philippines. Courtesy of North Dakota National Guard Historical Holding and Archives.

27. Spain's most recent census, dating from 1897, recorded the total population of Manila at 400,238, of which 41,998 were Chinese.

28. Emilio Aguinaldo had issued a declaration of independence at Cavite on June 13, proclaiming himself the head of the revolutionary government of the Philippine peoples. Adopting at first the rank of dictator, he soon changed the title to president, and proceeded to constitute a cabinet, believing that the U.S., which had yet to develop a policy beyond defeating Spain, would acknowledge the native government upon achieving its initial goal. Alden March, *The*

History and Conquest of the Philippines and Our Other Island Possessions (New York: Arno Press, 1970), pp. 81-84.

29. In Washington, D.C., on August 12, the U.S. and Spain signed a protocol preliminary to negotiating a treaty settlement. News of the signing did not reach Manila until August 16. Paolo E. Coletta, ed., *Threshold to American Internationalism: Essays on the Foreign Policies of William McKinley* (New York: Exposition Press, 1970), pp. 130-131.

30. Outside the old walled city on its south side.

31. "We hope that we will be sent home soon, but I must say the

was Luneta Park; the American Military Band usually played there evenings.³⁰ My comrades and I rented a boat so we could go to hear them. The evenings on the water were very beautiful. It did not rain much. There were streetcars on which we could get to and from Manila. It was an old car pulled by two small horses. It was very slow progress, but an improvement on traveling by foot. Being under the impression that the war was over, we did not have much work to do and had no more drilling, so we had plenty of free time to go sightseeing. I went to a big cigar and cigarette factory. Filipino boys and girls did most of the work; it went fast. A pack of cigarettes, twenty-five to a pack, cost two cents; cigars were cheap too. People lived here very cheaply; money was scarce. What there was in the line of money was mostly copper. We could see very few Spaniards or white people here, mostly Filipinos, and we didn't associate with them.

One day we went to a cemetery, which was not far from here. It was very different than the ones at home. The cemetery was surrounded by a high stone wall; the wall on one side was eight feet thick. There were holes in the wall, one beside the other; the coffins were placed in these holes, then the holes were closed with an iron plate. After several years the coffins were removed, the bones taken out and heaped on a pile on the other side of the cemetery, then the coffin holes were reused. It was horrible to see all the human bones in one huge pile.

Time was passing and we were getting homesick. There were not enough soldiers from [the] regular army, so the volunteers had to stay until replacements could be sent.³¹



*A social afternoon on the Luneta, north of the Ermita suburb of Manila, by the old sea wall. The American troops advanced under fire through the Luneta to the walls of Manila during the Philippine Insurrection. The illustration appears in Francis D. Millet, *The Expedition to the Philippines* (1899), p. 149.*

In October, the leader of the Insurgents requested the United States to send its troops off of the island. If they were not gone by December 15th [he said], war would be declared on the United States.³² Things were different now. We were back in training, drilling, and guard duty.

The U.S. military successfully terminated Spain's dominion over the islands after three and a half centuries, and gained dominance in Manila, the population and administrative center. This reality did not presuppose the existence of a stated American policy for the distant archipelago, however, as there was none. Frank D. Millet, among the squad of newspaper correspondents on the scene, detected the essential paradox. Until the victory in Manila, he wrote, "I always believed it to be an elementary military axiom that if two armed bodies jointly occupy a territory, they must be either enemies or allies." This proved not the case, Millet perceived, for

"the insurgents were not recognized by us in either of these capacities."³³

While the McKinley administration contemplated its policy options through the autumn of 1898, it refused to admit the Aguinaldo element into the process or to permit it to participate in the American-Spanish dialogue. Finally, in late October, the President decided to demand that Spain cede the Philippines to the United States as part of a sealed treaty settlement. Spain acceded to the American demand in December. Rebuffed and isolated, Aguinaldo ordered the stockpiling
(Continued on page 14)

outlook is not very encouraging. We have done what we came here for. We did not enlist to do garrison duty in a foreign country. . . . While none of us are sorry we came, we do not want to be cooped up here in a garrison for two years . . ." Sgt. Burnett in *Dickinson Press*, January 21, 1899, p. 4.

32. Aguinaldo, in a speech on September 28, thanked the U.S. for helping to liberate the islands from Spanish rule, and suggested it

should now depart, leaving them independent and under native control. *New York Times*, October 2, 1898, p. 22.

33. Quoted in Brown, *Correspondents' War*, p. 423.

34. Morgan, *America's Road to Empire*, p. 108; Stanley Karnow, *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* (New York: Random House, 1989), pp. 134-135.

35. Sgt. Burnett in *Dickinson Press*, January 21, 1899, p. 3.

Lieutenant A. J. Osborn, Photographer and Soldier

One of the commissioned officers of Company K, First North Dakota Volunteers, was Lieutenant Ambrose J. Osborn of Dickinson. A professional photographer, Osborn captured not only the daily life of the troops but also the images of the foreign land on which the volunteers were fighting. He served as correspondent to the *Dickinson Press* as well, writing colorful reports home of Company K's experiences enroute to war and in service in the Philippines. The pride Osborn felt for his unit, for North Dakota, and for his country is evident in his letters.

A. J. Osborn had only lived in North Dakota a few years before the outbreak of the Spanish-American War. He was born in Steuben County, Indiana, on March 3, 1870, and moved with his family to Michigan four years later. In 1887, he moved to Coldwater, Michigan, where he attended high school and worked in his brother's photography studio. Following his family's military tradition, Osborn became a member of Company A, 2nd National Guard, Minnesota, and was appointed Corporal in 1891. He was honorably discharged when he moved to Gladstone, North Dakota, where he established a homestead. After three years of farming, Osborn traveled to Coldwater to finish his study of photography. He returned to North Dakota in 1895, this time to Stark County. On February 8, 1896, he purchased a studio in Dickinson from Orlando Goff and began his career in photography.¹

A. J. Osborn joined Company K when the National Guard unit was first formed in the summer of 1897 by Governor Frank Briggs. He began as a second lieutenant but was quickly promoted to first lieutenant and adjutant of the second battalion.² He was one of the first members of Company K to volunteer for duty in the Spanish-American War. After doing so, he rented his photography studio to John Currie, Jr., and,



1st Lieutenant Ambrose J. Osborn, who served as Battalion Adjutant in Company K in Manila. He owned a photography studio in Dickinson both before and after the war. Courtesy of North Dakota National Guard Historical Holding and Archives (top). Osborn Studio in Dickinson. The photograph appears in Stark County Heritage and Destiny (1978), p. 497 (bottom).

on April 30, 1898, just days before Company K was sent to Fargo for training, he married Kheda Saunders. In the newspaper account of the wedding, Mr. Osborn's contributions to Company K are described:

he has done much toward giving the company the good standing that it has among the other militia companies of North Dakota. Mr. Osborn makes a splendid military officer and as 1st lieutenant of Co. K his prospects are exceptionally bright.³

In one of his first letters to the *Dickinson Press*, Osborn's patriotic spirit is clear, as he described the receptions the train full of soldiers received as they headed west from Dickinson on their way to San Francisco:

The street [in San Francisco] was lined on both sides by people who cheered until they were hoarse. I think that a man who would not fight for his flag and country after making the trip and being enthusiastically received all along the line and receiving the blessing and godspeed of the dear ones at home would not be much good.⁴

In another letter to the *Dickinson Press* from Camp Merritt in San Francisco, Osborn writes:

The 10th Tennessee regiment—1,200 strong—arrived yesterday. They had been on the road seven days. They are not so large and well-sized a lot of men as the North Dakota boys, and there are few regiments here that are, but their hearts are in the right place.⁵

After several months of fighting, Osborn writes proudly, "We are all proud of our regiment and

we have reason to be. It is made up of good men, while we were under fire I think I was the only man in the company who was nervous." Later, he describes their readiness to return to the States: "We will be glad when the disposition of the islands is made so we can come home. We have done what we came for and would like to get back to North Dakota where we could see the friends and get a good drink of water."⁶

Following his service in the Spanish-American War, Osborn returned to his photography studio in Dickinson, which he owned until his retirement in 1928, when his son, Lawton, Sr., took over the business. The Osborn Studio remained in the family through eighty years and a third generation, until Lawton Osborn, Jr., sold the business in 1976.⁷ Most of Osborn's military photographs were donated by the Osborn family to the North Dakota National Guard.⁸ The State Historical Society of North Dakota has a small collection of photographs in the photo archives from Osborn's stint with the First North Dakota Volunteers in the Philippines as well as others taken by him, his son, and grandson, throughout the long history of the Osborn Studio.

The Osborns recorded the daily life and times of the people who settled western North Dakota—the sheepherders, the mineworkers, the cowboys, the shopkeepers, and the families—both in formal portraits and in candid snapshots. Their photographs document the growth of the city of Dickinson from early pictures of the town's main street storefronts with simple boardwalks and horses tied to the hitching posts to the modern buildings and shiny new automobiles that replaced them. With these images, the history of Stark County and the people who lived there, even those who traveled thousands of miles to fight on foreign soil, are preserved for the future.

Janet Daley Lysengen
Editor

1. Karl Irving Faust, *Campaigning in the Philippines* (San Francisco: Hicks-Judd Company, 1899), pp. 61-62, and *Dickinson Press*, March 23, 1928, p. 7. For more information on early North Dakota photographers, see *North Dakota History* 6 57:3 (Summer 1990).

2. *Dickinson Press*, May 7, 1898, p. 2.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

4. *Dickinson Press*, June 18, 1898, p.3.

5. *Dickinson Press*, June 25, 1898, p. 3.

6. *Dickinson Press*, October 22, 1898, p. 3.

7. Sheldon Green, "The Osborn Collection," *North Dakota Horizons*, Winter 1984, p. 11.

8. Conversation with Lawton Osborn, Sr., March 8, 1993. When the Osborn Studio was sold in 1976, the new owner, Larry Brown, donated over 340,000 negatives from the Osborn Collection to the Stark County Historical Society, Green, p. 12.

of arms and foodstuffs preparatory to resisting the American exercise of sovereignty over the islands. Tensions mounted steadily after Aguinaldo proclaimed on January 5, 1899, the creation of the Philippine Republic. Five subsequent conferences with the so-called insurgents failed to discover any possible basis for a cooperative agreement.³⁴

Meantime, American military commanders took initial steps toward establishing the beginnings of a colonial government, effecting such humanitarian and sanitation programs as were practical under the circumstances, and relocating their headquarters at the strategic junction of the San Juan and Pasig rivers to the east or landward side of Manila. The latter step insured

American preeminence in the city against Aguinaldo's government, situated at Malolos twenty miles to the north, and its control of most interior towns and villages. "There are daily drills and calls to be attended to," Sergeant Burnett wrote about Company K, but "there is not much to do. The men spend their time in various ways, playing cards, reading, writing, sleeping or walking around, taking in the sights. Anything to pass away the time.... We have been waiting and watching to see what the Paris peace commission will do. We hope that we will be sent home soon, but I must say the outlook is not very encouraging."³⁵

Mischel's journal continues:

January 11, 1899 The Insurgents came closer and we were sent to the firing line. Our good times were now over. During this time it rained a lot and we had to stand out in the rain, sometimes even sleep in our wet uniforms.

January 21 I came down with malaria again. This time it was very bad. At first I knew nothing, but finally the fever left me and I was well again, but now I lost part of my hearing and had a continual ringing in my head.

February 4 I was still in the hospital when, at night, the battle started with the Insurgents. Out in the field and in the city all was lit up from the shooting and the burning homes.³⁶ Even in the hospital we were not safe. The bullets were flying through the windows, and the sick had to crawl on hands and knees trying to escape the bullets. Even so, one man was killed when hit through the head with a bullet. The battle continued all night. The rumbling and roaring of gunfire was terrible. Towards daylight it eased off, and the Insurgents who could still walk disappeared. By morning, we had 75 dead and 256 wounded in the hospital.

February 5 We drove the Insurgents out of the city. The loss was heavy, both in dead and wounded. This was the same place we had defeated the Spaniards [not] more than six months before on August 13 and 14.³⁷

February 24 I was reunited with my company on the

firing line. I was still weak and could hardly walk, but whoever was able to stand had to fight, and I was glad to get out of the hospital again. Here and there bullets whizzed by us, but we were used to that and were no longer afraid.

March 6 We marched ahead and forced the Insurgents back.

March 13 We took the town of Culi-Culi.³⁸

April 1 We were near the Pasig ferry.³⁹ We were steadily pushing ahead, taking one small town or village after another. We were close to a river where the Insurgents were entrenched. We stopped at a church, where most of the company slept on a stone floor. This was my night for guard duty. We had to sneak our way to the river, crawling on hands and knees, so we could hear the Insurgents. We had to lie in watch for two hours, then we were relieved by others.

April 2 We marched on and in a short time the Insurgents had fled. We had to wade across the [Pasig] river, the water reaching our necks. Clothes wet, shoes full of water, we kept right on pushing ahead. The days were very hot, so we slowly dried off. Nevertheless, it was hard going with wet clothes and shoes, and the mosquitoes were so thick and stung us through our clothes, we scratched ourselves nearly raw. We had to go through a lot of hardships, but being young and

36. "A little after taps ... we were aroused by a cannon shot, followed by a volley of musketry. Soon every man was in his place and the street was filled with soldiers marching to the front. There was no confusion. The false alarms had helped to drill us for the occasion." Sgt. Burnett in *Dickinson Press*, April 1, 1899, p. 2.

37. "About 2:30 in the afternoon ... we deployed as skirmishers and advanced toward Pasai, over the battle grounds where the present enemy had worked with us in conquering the Spaniards but

six months previously. Co. K was on the extreme right of the line ... along the beach." Sgt. Burnett, *Ibid.*

38. "Our position now is about a mile and a half east of where we were before February 19. ... After waiting over a month for reinforcements the Americans commenced offensive operations yesterday. The left of the south line moved forward and captured Guadalupe church near San Pedro Macati." Sgt. Burnett in *Dickinson Press*, May 13, 1899, p. 4.



faced with an ordeal, we could bear it. We reached a coconut grove. The trees were very tall, the coconuts hung at the top of the trees and were quite large. We had to be careful so they wouldn't fall on our heads. When they fell it hurt as bad as a bullet through the arm or leg. We filled up on coconut milk. We had no drinking water; there were water holes, but they were full of frogs and insects.

The country here was thickly covered with trees and underbrush. Two or three men were always sent to scout ahead to see if it was clear of Insurgents. I had my turns at scouting too. This was a tough and dangerous assignment. We ran from cover to cover, trying to find the enemy or their sentry. We had to be careful not to get too close or [to] be seen first, as it could have been disastrous. After we could find no further signs of the enemy, we were sent back to Manila for a few days of rest. Our clothes were filthy, faces dirty, beards overgrown; we looked like wild men. We welcomed the chance to get cleaned up.

April 8 We were sent out again, this time with the 14th Regiment [with] two batteries with two three-inch cannons.⁴⁰ We boarded small boats, which were pulled by small tugboats, and went down the Rio Pasig. At nine o'clock in the evening we came to Santa Cruz. We landed two miles from the city. The tugboats released each boat, and it would head for shore until it hit shallow water and grounded, then we waded ashore. We pulled the cannons ashore with ropes. During this time it started to rain. We started to walk until we reached a rice field. A short distance from here the Insurgents were lying in wait for us and started firing. We kept going until we reached a forest. We ate our rations, then prepared for the march forward.

A long line was formed, the 14th Regiment and the North Dakota Regiment went ahead; Company K had orders to go with the battery and help pull the two cannons; two dozen Chinese, carrying the boxes of ammunition, went with us. We had only about a half mile to go, where we were to wait until the next day,

when we were to try to take the city. It was raining steadily and it was a difficult task going through the rice field. The ground was wet and swampy, the cannons would always get stuck, and we had to help them out too. We had not been able to keep up with the regiment, and could no longer see it. Finally, we played out and could go no further. The night was dark and not being able to see or hear anything, we decided to call a halt and wait. After some time we heard a whistle. Our commanding officers were looking for us. When they met up with us they informed us we had gone too far ahead. We struggled our way back and to the left until we met the regiment. It was midnight and all were asleep, except those on patrol. I had two hours of patrol duty, too, before I could go to bed. Our bed was the rice field, our pillow the stone wall surrounding the field. We laid our caps under our heads and held our guns in our arms. Soon we were sound asleep in the soft green grass and dreamed of home. It rained occasionally and we were soaked to the skin, but it was very warm and did not hurt us any.



The troops engaged in battle on the Pasig River, near Guadalupe (top). Taking supplies to the front in a cart pulled by a water buffalo (bottom). The photographs appear in Faust, Campaigning in the Philippines, pp. 154, 148.



Formed by Civilian W. H. Young, a soldier of fortune, at Angat in the Philippines, the men referred to as Young's Scouts included seventeen men from the North Dakota Volunteers, three from the Fourth U. S. Cavalry, and five from the Second Oregon. Five other volunteers from the North Dakota group joined later. They were chosen for their "quickness and intrepidity." Their leader, Young, died from wounds suffered in a skirmish on May 13th. Private James Harrington, Company G, Second Oregon, United States Volunteers, who assumed the leadership after Young's death, died in a later battle on May 16th (Faust, Campaigning in the Philippines, pp. 9-10). Courtesy of North Dakota National Guard Historical Holding and Archives.

April 10 Morning was here too soon, and this turned out to be a day that we could not soon forget. The rain had ceased, the sun came out, and slowly we dried off. We started on the march. As we neared the city, the shooting started on all sides. As we entered the city, the firing was very heavy. There were many dead Insurgents lying about. A mother with child came running and screaming out of a house; she was bleeding. At eleven o'clock, we had captured the city. The Insurgents still had a stronghold at one end of the city, but before long we had driven them off. In ditches along the road and on the fields there were close to 250 dead Insurgents. Our casualties were light, two dead from the 14th Regiment and several wounded.⁴¹

At last all was quiet, and we were able to replenish our empty stomachs. A field kitchen with food supplies and ammunition was always behind us. This was a two-wheeled cart pulled by a water buffalo and driven by

Chinese or natives. I believe the army paid the driver fifty cents [centavos] a day for each team. Every once in a while, we lost cart, food, buffalo, and all. When the buffalo were thirsty and saw water, there was no stopping them. They just took off into the water taking the cart along. The cart would sink and everything in it. This happened to me once when I had charge of the cart, and I was lucky enough to jump off with the driver before they hit the water.

Canned pork and beans, bacon, and coffee were our usual rations. Today we had three meals in one. We rested here, cleaned and dried our clothes. Then most of us went to look at the dead and wounded Insurgents. It grieved us to see all the suffering. The wounded pleaded with us to spare their lives. That was unnecessary, as they were carried off and cared for as well as our own comrades. We spent the night here and all enjoyed a good night's sleep.

April 11 We were on the march again, always pressing ahead. We were sometimes glad to get out of one town and on to another. The Filipinos, old men, women, and children, who had fled the town days before, were returning to their homes; they were coming from all directions. Generally a small boy or girl, waving a stick with a white rag signifying peace and friendship, led the procession, with the old ones coming behind. Many had contagious diseases such as smallpox. This was nothing bad for them, but we were more terrified of them than we had been on the firing line. The Insurgents were hidden in the forest, mostly bamboo trees; we were not far from the town when they started firing. Our troops broke into a run towards them, returning their fire. The battle did not last long; the Insurgents turned and fled. We had only a few wounded, no dead.⁴²

Toward noon we reached the village of Pagsaughan, where we crossed another [the Balanac] river; again we waded across.⁴³ In some places the water reached to our necks. Clothes wet, we kept on the march. It was very hot and walking was anything but a pleasure. At one o'clock we reached another town, which was very nice. A lot of banana and coconut trees were here. We saw no signs of the enemy, who had evidently retreated rather than have the city ruined.

Planning to stay here for some time, we were placed in the better homes. I, with some others, was placed in a parish house close to a nice church. Guards were stationed throughout the city and at the church, so that nothing would be ruined. We were under orders not to ruin, molest, or take anything, not even catch chickens to eat if we had food of our own. Later, we went to see the church, and as we entered we saw one of our "smart aleck" soldiers trying to read the Mass at the altar. He was not breaking anything, so we could not do anything to him. He did not go unpunished, however, as a few weeks later he lost his mind.

We lived here very nicely. Three of us slept in one big bed with corner posts and a curtain around it, so we were not plagued at night by the mosquitoes, which were so plentiful. We had to furnish our own bedding. Occasionally we caught chickens, cleaned and fried them, and ate bananas. The city was abandoned by the natives. One day, a comrade and I were trying to catch

a chicken. In its flight it flew through the window of a house. We took after it and, as we came into the house, we found an old sick woman. She was terrified. Thinking we were going to kill her, she began to pray and cry. We tried to make her understand she need not fear; all we wanted was the chicken. We could find nothing in her room but a pot of cooked rice. This I took and set beside her. When we left she just looked at us in surprise.

April 12 This was a very nice day, not too hot and no rain. A small group of soldiers from our regiment were on our way to Paete, where we were to go on guard duty. The road was close to the sea. On one side were high mountains covered with trees. We were marching slowly along, admiring the beautiful scenery and giving little thought to anything else. We had not seen nor heard any sign of the enemy for some time, [and] so thought we were safe. We were about three-fourths mile from the city, when we were taken by surprise. The enemy started firing at us. Several of our comrades were wounded, so we quickly carried them into the shelter of the trees, and waited for the Insurgents to come closer. We did not have long to wait. Our regiment was in Pagsaughan and had heard the shooting. Two batteries were sent to assist us and shortly the Insurgents were driven off. We lost five of our comrades, the Insurgents only one.⁴⁴

It was dark when we reached the village of Paete. We did not know where the enemy was, so all of us stood guard all night. We were hungry but had no food with us. Before dawn I was sick and feverish, my left leg was swollen and throbbing. I had scratched a mosquito bite and had infection in it. I was taken by boat to the hospital in Manila, along with the wounded and dead. In a week I had recovered.

Our regiment had returned to Manila for a two day rest also, before they were sent out again.⁴⁵ Having lost a lot of weight and being too weak, I was allowed to remain in Manila a few more days to recuperate. Here, I had a chance to think of all we had gone through, which is difficult to put into words, and yet no one was dissatisfied as we were fighting for our country.

One week later I went with some others, also dis-

39. "We are transferred to General King's Brigade. ... We will be apt to see some more fighting now, and are expecting to have a new position on the line in a few days. General Lawton relieves General Anderson, and is our division commander." Sgt. Burnett, *Ibid.*

The ferry point is about ten miles east of Manila, at the shoreline of Laguna de Bay, the large lake in the island's interior. Mischel omits mentioning that Lawton's command intended to cross the lake to Santa Cruz on the opposite shore, with the object of sweeping through the towns and villages that ringed the lake, where insurgent forces enjoyed considerable support and preeminence. Karnow, *In Our Image*, p. 150.

40. "We received definite orders about the middle of the forenoon that we would start on our expedition at 3 p.m. today. ... We spent the night on barges drifting around near the source of the river. We started across the lake the next morning at daybreak and arrived

opposite Santa Cruz about 4 p.m." Sgt. Burnett in *Dickinson Press*, May 27, 1899, p. 2.

41. "Forward went the line, on a run, every man yelling like a Comanche Indian. General Lawton led the charge. We were in the city by 9 a.m. The insurgents fled across the open field north of town and were mowed down by our men, some of them riddled with bullets." Sgt. Burnett, *Ibid.*

42. "Left Santa Cruz early in the morning to take a town near there called Pagsaughan. ... We marched for a distance along a nice level road. On either side were beautiful palm tree groves, which afforded us shade from the morning sun. We took the town without a hard fight, one officer and one man wounded." Sgt. Burnett, *Ibid.*

43. "Pagsaughan is situated on the fork of a river, a large mountain stream. It is a fine town for this country. There is a magnificent church or cathedral built of stone, and some good living houses. It

charged from the hospital, to join the regiment. We traveled thirty miles by streetcar, the rest by foot. It was a very hot day and while walking, four of us took sick again and could not go on; we had to lie down. We were still too weak and should not have ventured out yet. We were sent back to Manila.

About two weeks later our regiment returned and we were told we would soon be on our way home. We were happy at the thought that we were soon to be released from our suffering and hardships. We were at the camp for some time. The food was not too good, but we had plenty to eat. We had payday; for two month's service, each received \$31.20 in gold and silver. Poker and card games were held until some were broke.

A comrade and I decided we wanted a good meal for a change, so we went to a Chinese restaurant. Some officers were seated at a table, eating. We sat down at a table near them and ordered fried oysters. The waiter brought the oysters and some Chinese food, and my comrade started to dig in. I looked at my food a little more closely and saw some little white worms crawling on my plate. I showed them to my comrade, and we decided we were no longer hungry. We called the waiter and showed him the worms. We got up quietly and left, not saying anything to the officers, so as not to spoil their appetites and to let them enjoy their worms. We went back to camp and were well-contented with our beans and bacon.

We had lots of fun in our quarters. Ole and John, both from our neighboring hometown of Dickinson, had a misunderstanding and, as there could be no friction between soldiers, they had to fight it out. We looked on, anxious to see who was the best fighter. Both were strong, John being the smaller. Ole gave John a Norwegian punch, which John returned with a German-Russian punch on the left ear. Ole fell to the ground [and] got up again, staggering and swearing, saying he tripped on a wire. We all laughed as there was no wire in sight. They shook hands and everything was forgotten.

From home we each received a pillow made out of rubber and covered with cloth.⁴⁶ At one end was a valve so we could blow it up with air. It made a good, comfortable headrest. We also got mosquito netting, which we hung over our beds, so we had no trouble at night with mosquitoes. At first, we had a little trouble with our pillows. We blew them up at night and by morning, they were flat, all the air was out. Some pranksters had opened all the valves during the night.

June 3 We were ordered out with the 9th Infantry Regiment with two four-inch cannons to drive the remainder of Aguinaldo's army out of the hills. At noon, we were nearing Tai Tai when the Insurgents opened their fire. The battle was on. Slowly, we rushed ahead, lying down, getting up and going forward again. This kept on until dark, when the firing lessened. We worked our way close to the river near the town, where the Insurgents had a stronghold. We could not see them as everything was overgrown with bamboo and other trees. We halted in the rice field where we spent the night. We had some rations with us which we ate; some of us stood guard while others slept with their guns in their arms. The Insurgents were firing all night but did us no damage.

June 4 At dawn the battle resumed with full fury, and it was not too long before we had forced the Insurgents out of their stronghold. The Insurgents had destroyed part of the bridge and we had to repair it before we could cross the river with the cannons. Some Insurgents were still hidden up in the trees and started firing, wounding one of our men. One of them was seen and shot down and we heard no more of the rest. The bridge was soon finished and before noon we had taken the town of Tai Tai. We had lost only one man from the 9th Regiment and had several wounded. The town of Tai Tai had been abandoned. Here there were a lot of chickens, ducks, bananas, mangoes, etc. We filled up on fruit and had started to fry chickens when the trumpet sounded for us to prepare for the march. We filled our knapsacks with the chickens and took as many bananas as we could carry.

We came to another little village that had been abandoned, then went on to Angona. It was evening. The few Insurgents soon fled and we spent the night here. We finished frying our chickens and had a feast. We were bothered by the mosquitoes all night.

June 5 On the march again: the day was very hot and a lot of the men became dizzy from the heat. We took leaves from the banana trees and put them on our heads for protection against the sun. This helped a lot. Our Captain, George Auld, and some others had sunstroke, so we carried them under the trees and left them there while we went on. We went steadily forward, climbing up mountains and down again. Finally we came to another small village, where we halted, as we were too exhausted to go further. We had our coffee, beans,

is not so hot here as in Manila." Sgt. Burnett, *Ibid.*

44. "Left town about the middle of forenoon ... the N.D. battalion went on ahead to take the town of Paete. ... The road runs along the lake at the base of the mountain. ... We were not 100 yards from the enemy's entrenchments. ... We poured volleys up the side of the mountain. ... The noise of firing reverberated along the mountain side and was simply deafening. It was the fiercest battle we have been under." Sgt. Burnett, *Ibid.*

45. "Immediately after I mailed you my last letter we received orders to return to Manila. The trip back was very tedious. ... We were glad to get back once more ... we had been in the field since

February 4 and the trip to the interior had been hard on everyone." Sgt. Burnett in *Dickinson Press*, June 24, 1899, p. 4.

46. The *Dickinson Press*, November 5, 1898, p. 3, reported the benefit dance held for Company K, which raised \$135.00 for a Christmas present of inflatable rubber pillows.

47. "The N.D. boys are suppose to have sailed from Manila on the 8th. A private cablegram to a Fargo party so states, although there has been no official message. The people of this state are talking of raising the necessary funds to charter a train for the boys from 'Frisco." *Dickinson Press*, July 15, 1899, p.3.

48. Corporal Harold H. Davis, age eighteen, and a resident of

bacon, and hardtack. We spent the night and all of the next day here. Of the Insurgents we saw nothing, so had a good rest.

June 7 We marched to the village of Marong, about thirty-five miles from Manila. This village had been abandoned too, except for some old people who were unable to walk. The hardships we endured here were something we would not soon forget. We were to be on guard duty here for a week or two. We picked out the best homes for our quarters; these were made of wood, with straw roofs, the walls were four feet high. We had a hard time finding suitable drinking water; the river was yellow and dirty, and the well water was the same. We finally found a well that looked clear so we used that. The next day some felt sick. The third day almost all were down with typhoid fever. Even the doctor was unable to help himself. Those that were able to get around had to stand guard around the village. We were not too sure of our safety. The poor guards were in bad condition, but they were true to their duty. A few days later, we began to feel better, but our stomachs felt raw.

We stayed in this village for some time. One night at about two o'clock, we were awakened by the bugle call. We rose from our beds of rice straw. One of our three Chinese cooks had unexpectedly died of cholera. We were afraid as we were all in a weakened condition and had not much resistance. We packed our belongings and went out into the streets. Then we set fire to the shacks. The Chinese cook was burned too; the other two were placed under guard. We moved to another part of the village and when, after a few days, nothing else happened, we all were relieved. Now and then a small boat arrived from Manila with food supplies. We also heard that we would soon be sent back to Manila. It was high time: we were a sight, we looked like tramps. We had to laugh when we looked at each other. One had a black beard, one a red, another brown; we had no razors with us so hadn't been able to shave. Our clothes were torn and filthy. We had worn the same clothes day and night for thirty-four days.

July 7 The 21st Infantry came from Manila to relieve us. We boarded small boats and sailed on the Pasig River to Manila. Here we cleaned up and changed our clothes. Still, some could not shake off the sickness. I would get the chills and was unable to warm up. I had a continual buzzing in my ears and could not hear very well, the aftereffects of malaria.

Two weeks later, we received the wonderful news that we were to be shipped home. Joyfully, we packed our belongings and prepared for our journey.⁴⁷

July 30 We said goodbye to Manila and boarded the ship *Grant*. This was a pleasure for all of us.

July 31 5:30 p.m. Just one year after we had arrived at the harbor of Manila, we left the harbor homeward bound. We had spent a full year here, having "good times," if one could call it that. Nevertheless, it was a year that we would all remember to our dying days.

Soon we were on [the] high sea. The ship *Grant* was

large; we had plenty of room and good food. Not having enough coal on the ship, we would have to stop at Japan, which was not far from here. All was going well, the weather was nice and the sea calm. We passed several small islands and enjoyed the scenery. We were all elated at the thought that we would soon be home. We had been homesick for a long time. We were mostly all in high spirits and felt like singing again. My buddy was still with me, but of the three who had joined us on the way over and shared the lifeboats with us, one had lost his life, and his two buddies did not feel much like singing.

There were many sick on board, and two that had lost their sanity. One of these jumped overboard and was lost at sea, the other was kept under guard and watched. He was just like a child. He always wanted jelly bread, then he would lick the jelly off and want us to put more jelly on the bread. Poor fellow, it was no wonder some lost their minds, after what they went through.

August 2 Funeral services were held for a sergeant, who had died of sickness at sea, and his body was lowered into the water.

August 5 We arrived in the harbor of Nagasaki. Another man died today, and another was close to death, so he was taken to the hospital in Nagasaki. Some of my comrades went ashore and went sightseeing. I had to stay on board for guard duty. This was a nice big city. In the harbor were various warships, also a Russian warship. The next day I got a pass, and with two comrades decided to try to get aboard the Russian ship. There were several small Japanese boats around our ship, so we rented one of them to take us to the Russian ship. The crew were all in the water taking their baths, and as we came near, they were called on deck. We were told to come around to the other side of the ship where steps were leading up. We went on board. At the top stood the captain and his mates. We greeted them



Transport ship Grant, which brought the 1st North Dakota regiment home from the Philippines. Courtesy of North Dakota National Guard Historical Holding and Archives.

and they were very friendly. I tried to explain that I was a German-Russian by birth, but since I had been in the United States since the age of seven, I could not speak or understand Russian too well and asked if anyone could speak German. There was one who was from Waterloo, Russia. We told them we were not there on business but to visit. They seemed glad to see us and wanted to hear all about the war. Then the German showed us around the ship. The ship was in immaculate condition. The officers were very strict with the crew; for punishment they would be placed in a dark cell. It was close to mealtime and we wanted to leave, but they urged us to have dinner with them. The bugle sounded and all formed a long line. They filed past a small keg of whiskey, which was fastened to the wall with two small chains. A small dipper was attached and each had a dipper of whiskey before they sat down to eat. We ate in the quarters of the German, a machinist. The first course was borsch (a Russian soup). When I took hold of the wooden spoon, I thought I was in Russia. The borsch was very good. This was followed by beef, potatoes, rye bread, etc. It was a delicious meal and one we did not forget so soon. The German gave us an address of a German tavern in the city, and thanking them for their wonderful hospitality, we took our leave and headed for shore.

They had no streetcars or horse-drawn vehicles here. Instead they had two-wheeled carts (rickshaws) drawn by Japanese coolies. The fare was twenty cents an hour, [and] no more than two could go in one cart. We gave them the address of the German tavern, and they took us there. We stayed at the tavern until late afternoon, then spent some more time sightseeing before we went back on board ship.

August 8 We left Nagasaki and went through the Inland Sea. On both sides of the ship we could see land and here and there a small village. The scenery was pretty with the mountains in the background. Soon we were on high seas again.

August 9 11:00 a.m. We pulled into the harbor of Yokohama. This was one of the biggest cities of Japan. Preceded by the band, we marched into the city and to a large hall, where food and drinks had been prepared and were waiting for us. The Japanese welcomed us and were very friendly. We spent several days at Yokohama sightseeing. As we wandered through the markets, we saw watermelon in one market and decided to get some. We went in and my buddy asked if we could eat it there. There were only an old woman

and a girl in the market. The woman said something to the girl, which of course we could not understand. They led us into a small room and motioned us to a small table, then gave us plates and knives. They sat on pillows nearby and watched us. As we looked around the room we were filled with wonder. It was a nice room with a lot of tapestries, rugs, sofa pillows, and everything was spotless. We had not known the Japanese were so clean. We could not talk to them so did not stay long. We thanked them and left.

August 13 We went back to the ship. There was a lot of sickness aboard, so we had to go to a control station where the ship was cleaned. We had lost four men while in Yokohama due to smallpox.

August 14 We left the harbor, San Francisco bound. We still had 4700 miles before us. All was going well and the weather was good.

August 19 Corporal Davis died; he was from Company K from Dickinson. His body was embalmed and was to be sent home for burial.⁴⁸ He had not been sick long. From now on things began to improve. The weather was good, the sea calm, and we made good headway. About ten days out of Japan, we saw a whale. It was not far from the front of the ship, and we watched it for some time and could see the water spouting from it.

August 29 We arrived in the harbor of San Francisco and stayed on board overnight.

August 30 We marched to Camp Presidio, where we lived pretty good. The people from San Francisco brought us good food to eat. We were here not quite a month. We were close to the Golden Gate and could see the ships coming and going in the harbor.

September 25 Mustering out day. We thought we would get a good-sized mustering out payment. They told us we had only volunteered for the Spanish American War, and therefore it was not necessary for us to fight the Filipinos. But they wouldn't send us home, and had promised us \$400 to \$500 if we would fight. Now we were told it would have to be approved by Congress first and the money sent to us later.⁴⁹

Two days later, we took the train to Dickinson. When we arrived the people were waiting to welcome us. We were treated to a dinner at the hotel and a free dance in the evening.⁵⁰ There were not many of us who returned

Dickinson since 1892, died of meningitis. Obituary in *Dickinson Press*, September 16, 1899, p. 2.

49. President Franklin D. Roosevelt vetoed two previous authorizations in 1935 and 1938 to reward the veterans for their extra service. Finally, in the spring of 1940, Congress overrode Roosevelt's third veto, granting about \$400 to each of 7-8,000 soldiers or their descendants. *New York Times*, May 3, 1940, p. 13.

50. The *Dickinson Press*, October 7, 1899, p. 4, contains complete

coverage of the reception, banquet, and varied festivities.

51. *Historical Review of Richardton*, p. 131; *Stark County Heritage and Destiny* (Dickinson, ND: Stark County Historical Society, 1978), p. 679.

52. Correspondence from Pamela Frederick of Dickinson, North Dakota, March 9, 1992.

53. C. H. DeFoe interview in *Dickinson Press*, November 7, 1940, p. 4.

with Company K of Dickinson. Of the eighty-three who had volunteered, more than half were gone. Some stayed in San Francisco, two were killed in action, and some died of their wounds or through sickness. Very few of us who had all been healthy returned that way. Almost every one had some affliction. So it goes in the war.

The next day, I arrived in my home town of Richardton and was reunited with my family. Shortly after I came home I lost my hearing completely.

It has been forty years since the war. As I sit and reminisce, I am thinking. The voice of your loved ones you cannot hear. Where there is music and singing, you can only see, and in company, you sit like a stupid creature. Some people think that because one cannot hear, he is blind and dumb as well.

Where are the old comrades of war now? How have you fared? If some are in eternity, so rest in peace. It would be nice if [all?] our governments could settle their differences peacefully. Then we veterans could truthfully say to ourselves, "We have spent our best years not in vain, but for Liberty and Americanism."

Conclusion

When Adam came home from the war, he traveled to Hannover, Kansas, where his father had bought a small farm. His mother was in ill health and the family struggling. He helped them move to a farm in Minnesota, but when his father developed cancer, they wanted to return to Richardton. Adam brought his family back to North Dakota where his father died in 1905 and his mother a few years later. Adam joined the family business, first in partnership with a cousin, and later, in 1907, on his own when the two cousins divided the merchandise and Adam stayed with the lumber and building materials business. His marriage to seventeen-year-old Elizabeth Hatzenbuler in 1909 produced four children: Sebastian, Alice, Edmund, and Hildegard.⁵¹

In spite of his hearing loss, Adam's great-granddaughter described him as a very active man, stating that "he was capable of communicating with others through sign language with the few who knew it [and], by reading lips a little and written notes, he was still able to speak well enough to be understood."⁵²

In the years after his return he built, operated, and sold a movie theater, a bowling alley, and a tavern. He also built four homes in Richardton, including the one he and his wife lived in, as well as several churches and business places. Upon retirement, Adam passed on the mainstay lumber supply to his son Sebastian in 1942, and devoted his last years to a carpentry shop, farming, and contributing occasional articles to the *Herald*, a weekly newspaper published by the Roman Catholic diocese through the Richardton Abbey. He died in



Adam S. and Elizabeth Mischel in front of their family home that Adam built in Richardton. They are wearing veteran organization hats. Courtesy of Ruth Hoerner Wessner.

October of 1955; his wife, Elizabeth, died seven years later. His youngest daughter, Hilda (Mrs. Val Hoerner), first translated her father's journal for family members, before her death in 1974.

Time never completely soothed the searing memory of the diary's source. It influenced and channeled the course of Adam Mischel's life, impelling him to cling to his religious faith, and to identify with his wartime brethren. Upon nearing sixty-two years of age in 1939, it saddened him to count fewer than a half-dozen remaining comrades, two of whom lived in Dickinson.⁵³

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