

“C” Company/9th U.S. Infantry Regiment - September 1901 Balangiga, Samar Massacre

On the morning of 28 September 1901, approximately 400 Filipino insurrectoes under the command of Vicente Lukban launched a surprise attack on the officers, non-commissioned officers, and enlisted ranks of the 9th U.S. Infantry Regiment's C Company in the village of Balangiga, Samar Island The Philippine Islands. The 9th Infantry Regiment was/is a Regular Army organization which was organized on 26 March 1855 at FT Monroe, VA.

C Company suffered 67 killed and wounded losses against its 71 troop strength. The company losses included the company commander, CAPT Thomas W Connell, the executive officer, LT Edward A. Bumpus, the company surgeon MAJ Richard S. Griswold, and non-commissioned officers and enlisted.

C Company was in Balangiga to conduct counter-insurgency/pacification efforts during the Philippine-American War.

CAPT Connell attempted to get along with the residents of Balangiga but he angered them with his insistence on the Filipinos physically cleaning up the area, digging latrines, rebuilding schools and roads and the local church. CAPT Connell was a devout Catholic and his devotion to his faith was stronger than the village's faith which also angered them. His strong faith and behavior also angered his troops.

The Balangiga police chief, Valeriana Abandaor, was in reality a senior leader of the local Filipino resistance group. He plotted the surprise attack on the company and led the assault.

The insurrectoes smuggled bolo/machete knives into the village during the week before the attack. The Filipinos launched their attack on the signal of church bells. The C Company troops were eating breakfast and reading newspapers that detailed the recent assassination of President William McKinley. C Company fought back with their fists, rifle butts, baseball bats, kitchen knives and their Krag-Jorgenson rifles. Unfortunately, they were greatly outnumbered and casualties quickly mounted. The few survivors retreated from the village in native outriggers and paddled up the coastline to Basey where G Company was stationed.

After the survivors fled, the insurrectoes decapitated and hacked apart most of the bodies.

The G Company Commander, CAPT Bookmiller, then mobilized the company and they boarded the steamship Pittsburg, with the C Company survivors, and returned to Balangiga. They counter-attacked the Filipinos, and secured the village and their fallen comrades. The C company dead were buried and the church bell which had been used to signal the attack was taken by the survivors. The bell is now in Korea at Camp Casey, and the bell's clapper is now in Sacketts Harbor, New York.

The bell has been an on-going source of controversy between the American and Filipino governments. The Filipino government wants the 9th's Balangiga bell back as well as two bells that the

17th U.S. Infantry Regiment brought home to their post in Montana which is now F.E. Warren Air Force Base. The Defense Department has refused to return the bells which are classified as government property although some have characterized the bells as war booty.

Company was stationed in Balangiga to suppress Filipino guerrilla activity on Samar, and to conduct pacification efforts in the village and surrounding area. The US Army had been conducting counter-insurgency operations in the Philippines since February 1899 when the Filipinos launched attacks on American troops in Manila. American forces were in the Philippines after Admiral George Dewey defeated the Spanish Imperial Navy in Manila Bay Harbor on 1 May 1898. The US Army sent regular and state militia/volunteer units to the Philippines to secure the islands as US possessions following the peace treaty with the Spanish Imperial Government after the US had defeated Spanish land and naval forces on Cuba and Puerto Rico, and the Spanish Fleet in Manila Bay.

The 9th Infantry Company was originally sent to the Philippines to help put down the Filipinos in March 1899. The 9th took troop trains from its post at Madison Barracks, New York, which is adjacent to Lake Ontario and Sacketts Harbor, to San Francisco.

When the 9th arrived in Manila, it was initially assigned to the US Army's 1st Division-3rd Brigade but then shifted to the 2nd Division. From 1899 to June 1900, the 9th fought in several of the principal battles of the Philippine-American War. It was then shifted to pacification duty in the small villages of in central Luzon Island. The 9th's Philippine operations were interrupted in June 1900, however, by actions in China.

In June 1900, the 9th Company sailed to China on the troop transports Logan and Port Albert. The Regiment was sent to China as part of the Allied Relief Expedition to rescue foreign nationals, missionaries and Christian Chinese under siege in Peking, Tsientsin, and outlying provinces, from the Chinese peasants' Boxers (Fists of Righteous Harmony) during the Boxer Rebellion. The Regiment landed at Taku, China and took launches up the Peiho river to Tsientsin. On 13 July 1900, the 9th was assigned to attack the old walled city of Tsientsin in coordination with a US Marine Battalion sent from the Philippines, the British Royal Marines and the British Royal Welch Fusiliers Regiment, and a Japanese division. German, French, and Russian units attacked the new city of Tsienstin.

During the assault on the old city, the Regiment came under heavy rifle fire from peasant huts along a series of canals surrounding the old city as well as from the walls of the city. The Regiment suffered 95 casualties including the loss of the regimental commander, COL Emerson H. Liscum a battle-scarred veteran of the Civil War, the Indian Wars, and the recent Spanish-American War in Cuba, and the color sergeant, Sergeant Gorman. COL Liscum was hit in the abdomen by a Chinese Mauser round when he went to pick up the National Standard after Sergeant X had been wounded in the knee. As he lay dying in a muddy ditch, COL Liscum issued his final order: "Keep at em Men, Keep up the Fire!" Unfortunately, the Regiment was pinned down in the canals along with the Marine battalion, and the British and Japanese units. These forces were finally rescued that evening when the Japanese blew a hole in the wall of the old city, and the Regiment's 3rd battalion arrived from Taku.

Following the battle, the Allied forces rested up and recovered its strength in Tsientsin. The 9th was assigned to guard the Chinese Imperial Mint which contained a cache of silver ingots. The Chinese Imperial Government rewarded the Regiment for guarding the silver from the Allied forces looters. The

Regiment in turn had a jeweler in Tokyo create its regimental sterling silver punch bowl; The Liscum Bowl, which can hold 90 gallons.

Additional foreign forces, including more Americans (the 14th U.S. Infantry Regiment, a squadron of the 6th US Cavalry, and a 5th Light US Artillery company) under the command of Major General Adna R. Chaffee, arrived in Tsientsin. In early August, the Allied Forces then struck out for Peking which is 90 miles away to lift the siege of the foreign nationals. The Allies fought and won 2 battles, Pie-Tsang and Yang-Tsun, on the way to Peking. Finally, on 15 August, the Allies attacked Peking and rescued the foreign nationals.

The 9th was ordered to remain in China as part of the Allied Occupation forces. It was assigned to Peking and Tsinan. The 9th remained in China until May 1901. The 9th gained its regimental identity, "The MANCHU," because of the Boxer Rebellion campaign and occupation duty. The imperial dragon on its regimental crest represents the China campaigns. And the official regimental motto, "Keep up the Fire!" comes from the fallen, heroic COL Liscum.

The 9th's C Company returned to the Philippines to continue the campaign against the Filipinos. The Regiment's companies were assigned to different duties in the Philippines, although its B Company had remained in Peking as the Legation Guard. K, L, and I Companies were assigned to Manila, and O Company guarding the Filipino commander, Emilio Aguinaldo. F, G, H, and C Companies, and the ill-fated C Company, were assigned to Samar. C Company was ordered to the port village of Balangiga.

The Balangiga massacre was a shock not only to the Americans in the Philippines but back home in the States where the attack made national headlines.

The Army's commanding general, MG Chaffee, ordered BG Jacob H. Smith to put down the Filipino resistance on Samar. MG Chaffee took a very fierce interest in the retaliatory campaign because he felt that he had to avenge "his boys- the 9th Infantry" who had fought in China under him.

BG Smith in turn ordered Marine Corps LTC Littleton Tazewell Waller, a recent veteran of the Boxer Rebellion campaign, to end the resistance. Major Waller's conducted a deliberately harsh campaign resulting in large numbers of Filipino casualties including civilians and insurgents. The harsh campaign ultimately resulted in both BG Smith and Major Waller being court-martialed but acquitted.

The 9th continued operations in the Philippines until 1902 when it returned to Madison Barracks. The sun on the crest represents the Philippine operations. From 1902 until 1907, the 9th sent companies back to the Philippines to continue the pacification of the population and to assist with the on-going operations against the Muslim Moros in the southern islands. Finally, in 1907, the Regiment transferred to FT Sam Houston in San Antonio, TEX. In 1916, the 9th played a small part in the Mexican Punitive Expedition to capture Pancho Villa.

In 1917, the 9th was assigned to the newly-created 2nd U.S. Infantry Division and ordered to France to fight the Germans in WW1.

Keep up the Fire!