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Article Summary: Andrew S Wadsworth was 28 years old, living in Beatrice, Nebraska and working in his uncle's jewelry shop, a member of the Nebraska National Guard. He was one of several thousand young men who served in the Philippines when Spain declared war on the United States. Through a series of letters written home, the article illustrates what the war was like for the normal soldier.

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Photographs / Images: Map of Operations of the First Nebraska Regiment, December 5, 1898-April 23, 1899, Luzon, Philippine Islands; Andrew Wadsworth, Manila, formal portrait; Camp Merritt, San Francisco, May 1898; Filipino troops of Aguinaldo's army; Mail call for First Nebraska soldiers; Camp Santa Mesa, five miles east of Manila; Christmas dinner, 1898, for First Nebraska regiment, Company A; Filipinos killed during a skirmish; Company B, First Nebraska Regiment in the field; First Nebraska soldiers resting, March 27, 1899; Company I of the first Nebraska marching on Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, on return from the Philippines

# ANDREW WADSWORTH, A NEBRASKA SOLDIER IN THE PHILIPPINES, 1898-1899

*By Margaret Inglehart Reilly*

In 1898 Andrew S. Wadsworth was twenty-eight years old and lived in Beatrice, Nebraska, where he worked in his uncle's jewelry shop at 107 North Sixth Street. He had moved to Nebraska from the family home at New Lebanon, New York, in 1887. Wadsworth was tall and slender, with fair skin; brown, thinning hair; and gray eyes. He had no steady girlfriend. This unpretentious young man would have passed through life like any other of his generation but for the Spanish-American War. With several thousand other youthful Americans, Andrew Wadsworth answered his country's call. In the war he was no famous general, master strategist, or even a hero; but he wrote numerous letters to his family back home. These ungrammatical, plainly written letters provide a poignant, amusing, and vivid picture of what the war and the subsequent Philippine Insurrection were like for a modest man. They also suggest what most wars are like for the common soldier — first the excitement of enlisting, then the long and exotic trip to the place of action, the thrill of battle, the fatigue, and finally, the anger.<sup>1</sup>

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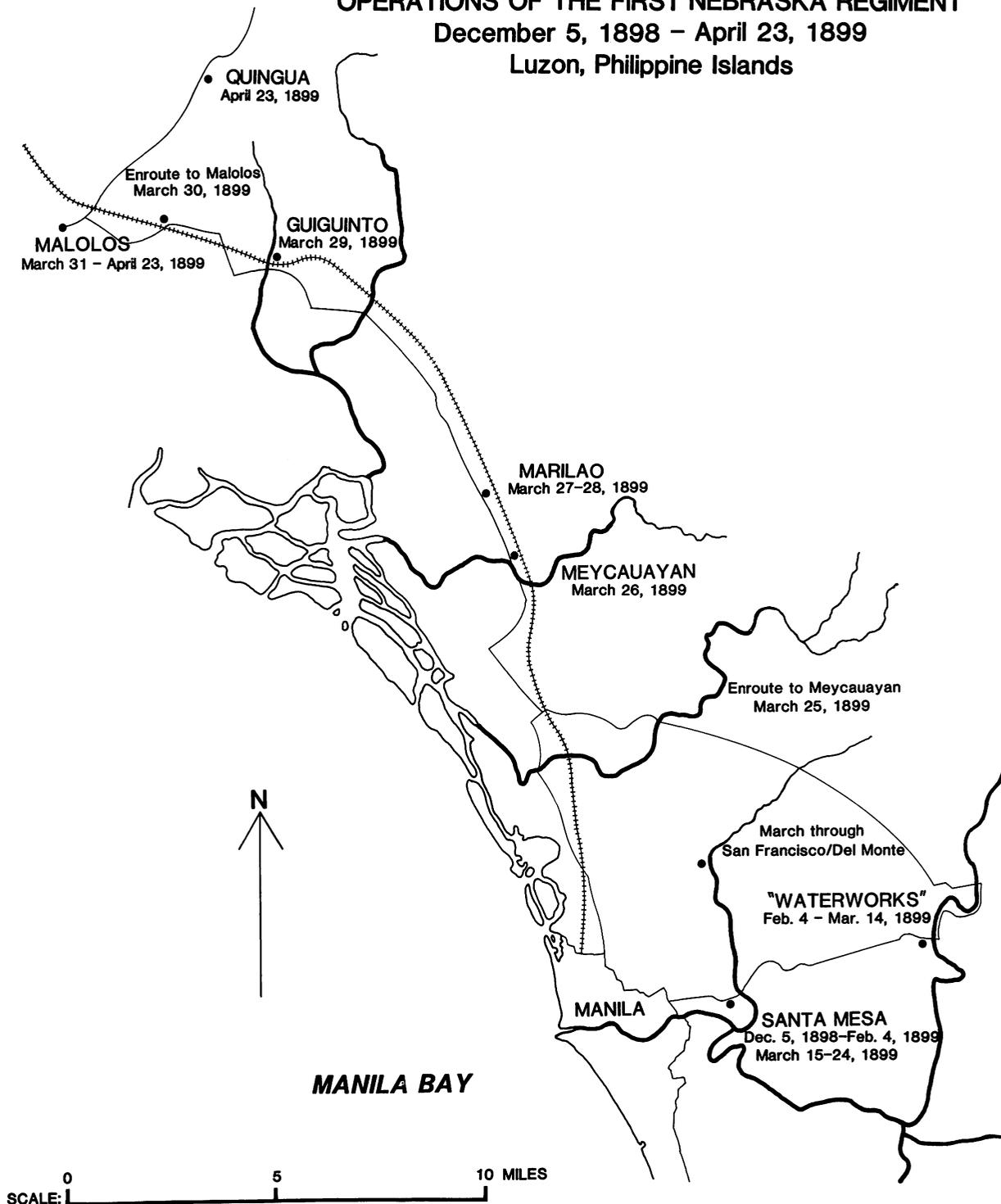
For many years the people of Cuba had wanted independence from Spain and had rebelled most recently in 1895. The American public looked on with great interest, their zeal to assist the hapless Cubans fanned ever brighter by a sensationalist yellow press. Hearst's *New York Journal* and Pulitzer's *New York World* exaggerated Spanish atrocities, the evil deeds of Spanish General Valeriano Wyler, and the sinking of the American ship, the *Maine*, mysteriously blown up in the Havana harbor. Spain agreed to most of the American requests to end hostilities on the island. But on April 11, 1898, President William McKinley asked Congress for authority to use armed force against Spain. Congress responded on April 19 with a resolution equivalent to a declaration of war; and Spain declared war on the United States on April 24. The United States wanted a war. Imperialists thirsted for foreign dominions; and even anti-imperialists believed that the American people had a "manifest duty" to help their unfortunate brethren. McKinley himself had opposed intervention, but members of his cabinet felt quite differently. Notable among them was Russell A. Alger, Secretary of War. Alger wanted war, because "the great amount of investments made in Cuba

by Americans, has all been destroyed, and this condition of affairs right on our borders is a constant menace."<sup>2</sup>

The fighting in Cuba, in which Theodore Roosevelt and his "Rough Riders" figured prominently, was soon over. But the war was also fought in the Philippine Islands, thanks to the early intervention of Roosevelt as Assistant Secretary of the Navy. In that capacity Roosevelt had wired Commodore George Dewey at Hong Kong to keep his ships full of coal, and in case of war with Spain to head for Manila and attack the Spanish fleet. Dewey sailed into Manila Bay with six American warships and on May 2 destroyed the ten Spanish ships he found there, killing 381 Spaniards. Dewey then waited two months for land troops to arrive in order to take Manila. Andrew Wadsworth was among the first land forces sent to the Philippines in the summer of 1898.

This was the "splendid little war" of Secretary of State John Hay, although Teddy Roosevelt said grudgingly, "It wasn't much of a war, but it was the best war we had." Certainly, it was a vastly popular war. Joining up was the most popular thing Andrew Wadsworth may ever have done. As he reported in his letters, everywhere they went, the soldiers were feted and applauded by

**OPERATIONS OF THE FIRST NEBRASKA REGIMENT**  
**December 5, 1898 – April 23, 1899**  
**Luzon, Philippine Islands**



## Andrew Wadsworth

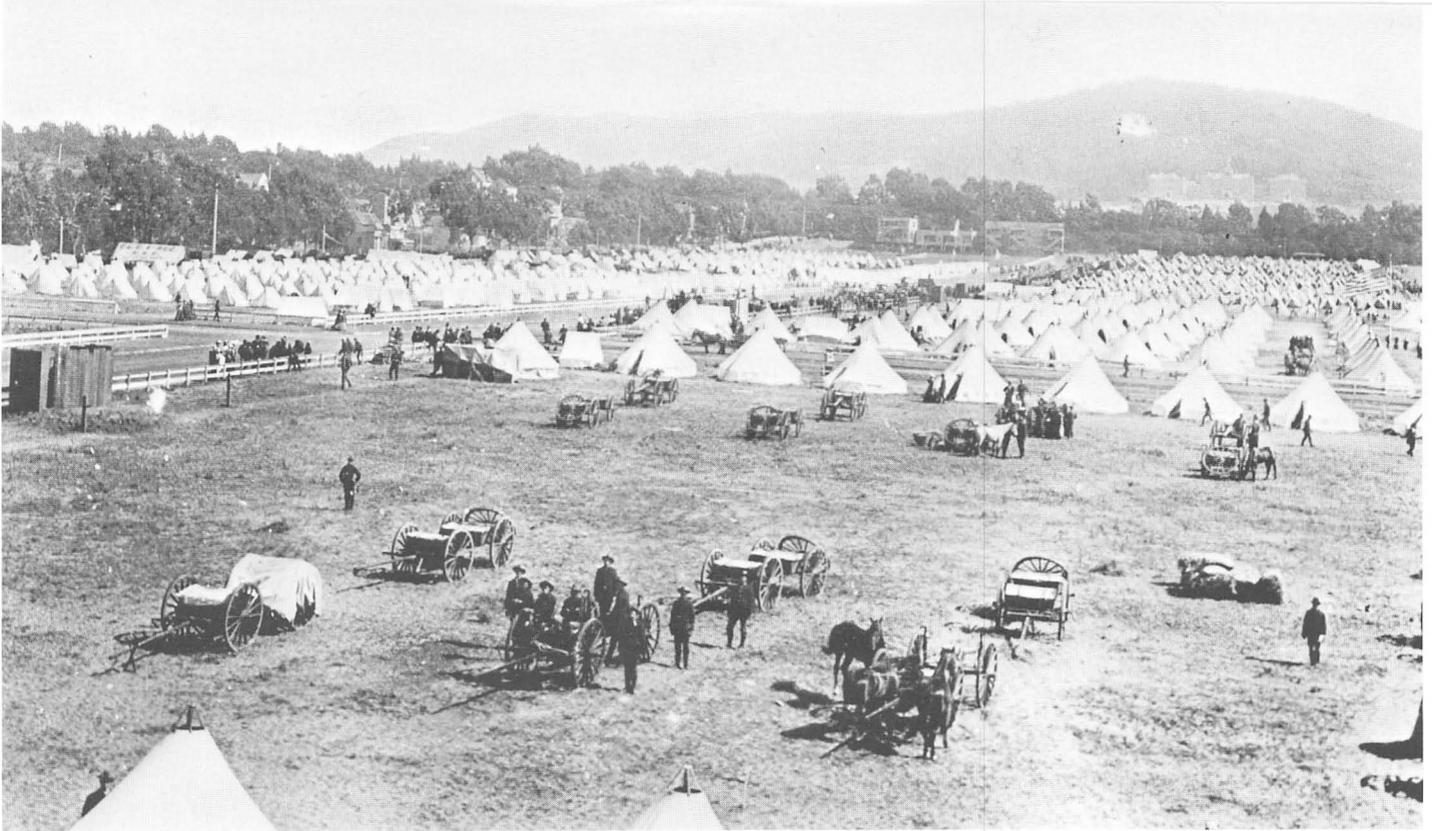
the American people, right up to the moment he returned, wounded and weary, two years later.

Winter ended in 1898 in Nebraska pretty much as it usually did, with a quickening in the woods and fields but a cold freshness still clinging in the air. "Spring with us is a settled reality," Andrew Wadsworth wrote to his sister on April 14: "A friend and myself went out in the country today with our rifles and it was so fresh and nice seemed as if it ought to always be so. All the excitement of course is the talk of war." Meanwhile, "Easter with us was a perfect day and everybody seemed glad they were alive. I started the day by going to church at 6 a.m. — ain't that devotion." He sent her an Easter egg.<sup>3</sup> On April 25 he wrote again, revealing that his present actually was an ostrich egg "that a friend of mine brought from Cal." He continued: "So you have a wheel. Ain't they the stuff though!" The bicycle was a national craze in the 1890s. He was excited because now more than ever war was in the air: "Everyone here has an attack of Cubicitis [sic] or very near it. As 1st Sergt. of Company C I expect to go if the boys do. We are all packed ready for the call." They would soon be off to Omaha or Lincoln for their medical examination, and he feared that "I may be let out on account of weight." However, "our lady friends are giving to blow us off to a banquet tonight — this part of it is all right!" He ended with some homely advice to his sister: "You must be careful not to get too fleshy with hot weather coming on."<sup>4</sup>

On April 25, 1898, Nebraska Governor Silas Holcomb ordered the various companies of the Nebraska National Guard to assemble at Lincoln to await mobilization into federal service. The War Department soon issued orders accepting three regiments of Nebraska troops for two years service.<sup>5</sup> Andrew took his medical exam and wrote, "It was a close shave for me to pass the exam. I am so light for my height. The Captain had the examining surgeon fixed I think . . . We have a company of



*Andrew Wadsworth had this photo taken in Manila. Courtesy of William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan.*



*Camp Merritt, San Francisco, May 1898. Photo by W.C. Billington, San Francisco.*

81 men and it keeps a fellow jumping to handle them . . . There seems to be a strong talk of our going to the Philippine Islands.”<sup>6</sup>

Andrew’s uncle was worried at the thought of seeing his nephew go off to war. In a letter to Andrew’s aunt, S.W. Wadsworth wrote: “I suppose Andrew wrote you he was mustered in Uncle Sam’s army for two years. I went up to Lincoln yesterday and bid him good-by with a sad heart.” The boys were “all happy to be off on their trip of over 8,000 miles,” but “war is bad and I hate to have Andrew go. I was in hopes he would not pass. He was too light for his height. All the boys wanted him to go so they passed him.” At least the older Wadsworth had the consolation that “Andrew is the best drilled soldier in the whole regiment.”<sup>7</sup> Andrew Wadsworth was indeed a good soldier. In the “competitive drill for the medal of individual drill for non-commissioned officers . . . Sergt. Wadsworth won the medal,” said a local newspaper. It concluded in a lofty tone, “The boys as a company expressed their willingness to avenge the wrongs of their country, if they are given the chance.”<sup>8</sup> In the fever pitch of excitement not many people were pausing to

ask exactly what wrongs Spain had done to the United States in the Philippine Islands.

On May 16 the First Nebraska set out for California: “When the order to move was read at dress parade you ought to have heard the boys yell,” wrote Andrew. They boarded the Union Pacific, “took supper at Grand Island and bunked down in the seats for the night and dreamed of battles to be fought.” At Laramie and Cheyenne the “people turned out and gave us a fine send off,” but “of all the lost, forsaken, starved, burned, good for no man land, the country along the Wyoming railroad takes the Bakery.” The trip was a great adventure: “We had a fire in the coach to keep out the freeze. Tuesday night we crossed from Wyoming into Utah. Just before the change we passed through a town called Evanston. The first thing I knew the Car was full of men, women and pretty girls who woke us up to shake us and say good by.” They traveled past the Great Salt Lake. At the Great Divide they got out of the train and threw snowballs. “Every mother’s son of us had a neck several inches longer from looking at the sights.”<sup>9</sup>

In San Francisco “there was a mob

of people” visiting them “all the time. They are free and outspoken; they call and visit and get our names and bring us all kinds of goodies [and] oranges.” It was “a sight” to see “all the cakes, pies, fruit, flowers they bring us.” Meanwhile the soldiers had learned that “we have a good chance of going to Manila; we have got this far and we might as well keep going if we can do them any good.”<sup>10</sup>

Andrew wrote again on June 4 of the splendid “cenery” coming over the mountains. Once in California, they “marched five miles to our camp and pitched out tents. We are camped one mile from the Pacific in about 6 inches of sand and of all the bum campgrounds this takes the pie. You can’t walk; to run is impossible, and we get sand in our eyes, ears, shoes and grub. If we don’t have sand enough for the Spaniards it will be our own fault. Being so near the ocean it is quite cold . . . The first night we were here I thought I would freeze to death . . . Have a full moon tonight. The same old moon, I suppose, but he comes up in the west to me. I am turned clear around on the compass.” In spite of the generous people, Andrew did not care for San Francisco: “The city is a bummer in

every way. Last Monday a crowd of us went through Chinatown and what little hair I have almost stood up at times. To see the dens and dives is a sight long to be remembered by this lad.”<sup>11</sup>

Camp Merritt, where the Nebraska regiment was billeted, had once been the site of a race track. It was located four miles west of the main part of San Francisco, a mile from the ocean, and just north of the Golden Gate Park. At the camp were 13,655 men, mostly from Pennsylvania, Colorado, and Utah. They were drilling hard: “We went out in heavy marching order this morning for inspection with blanket, haversack, canteen, rifle, mess outfit, and 50 rounds of ammunition, and say, it was warm for us. The boys were all vaccinated this aft which makes me think still more we will be all got off this p.m. . . . Have met quite a few old Beatrice people that makes it seem quite like being at home again at times. None of the boys are homesick that I know of. We have 4 on the sick list, will probably have a lot when the vaccine gets to work. Taps has just blown . . . with love to all . . . I remain your loving brother.”<sup>12</sup>

By June 10 he was tired of his situation at the “very poor” campsite. The “mist that flows in from the ocean is just like rain, and cold enough to freeze.”<sup>13</sup> But three days later the First Nebraska boarded the S.S. *Senator* and sailed for Honolulu. They arrived on June 22, and it was “good to see green grass and trees after days of endless sea, and of all the large room out doors the ocean takes the bun.”<sup>14</sup> After the lengthy trip, he wrote. “We had the dandy time in Honolulu of them all. After unloading in the forenoon we were turned loose and we pranced around until dinner time and then we sat down to a banquet 4,000 strong and of all the good things that dinner took the plumbs.”<sup>15</sup>

They arrived in Manila on July 17, 1898, after a thirty-nine day voyage, and from “Cavite, P.I.” Andrew wrote, “We had a long pull across the south Pacific.”<sup>16</sup> The trip had been “fine” and

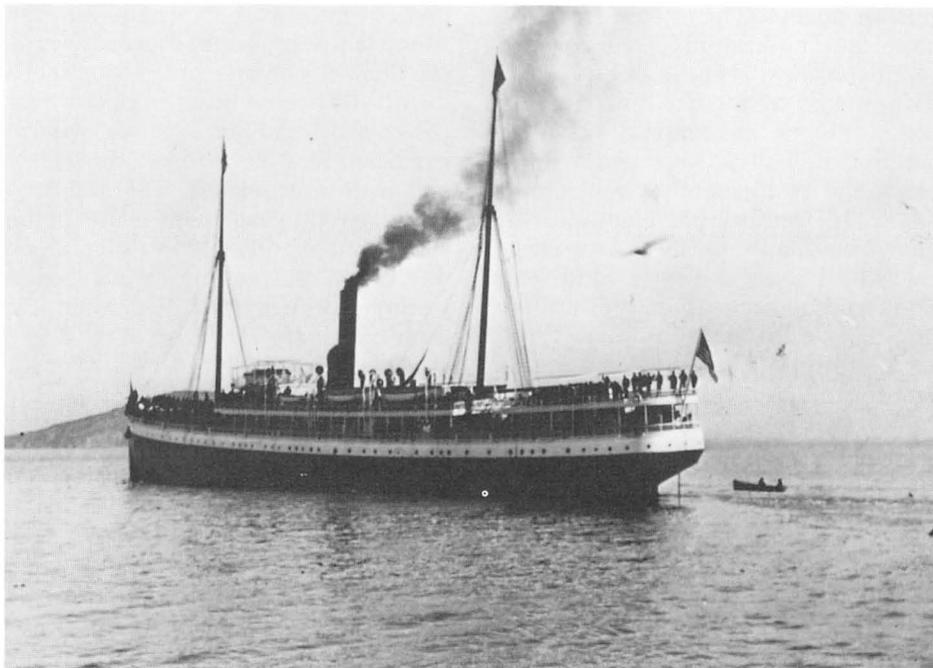
“smooth” all the way. At sea on “the glorious 4th,” they “had all the flags up and felt as jolly as possible; had a good dinner with pie and . . . band music. We had firecrackers also.”<sup>17</sup> He wrote, “We did not see a vessel of any kind after leaving Honolulu . . . We went . . . to the north of Luzon and last Friday we sighted a smoke [stack] and everybody stretched their necks until they could see the stars and stripes of the battleship *Boston*. Then everybody howled and then some. We felt pretty good I tell you because we did not know before what we would run into.” Several of the men had measles, and they had one death on board.<sup>18</sup>

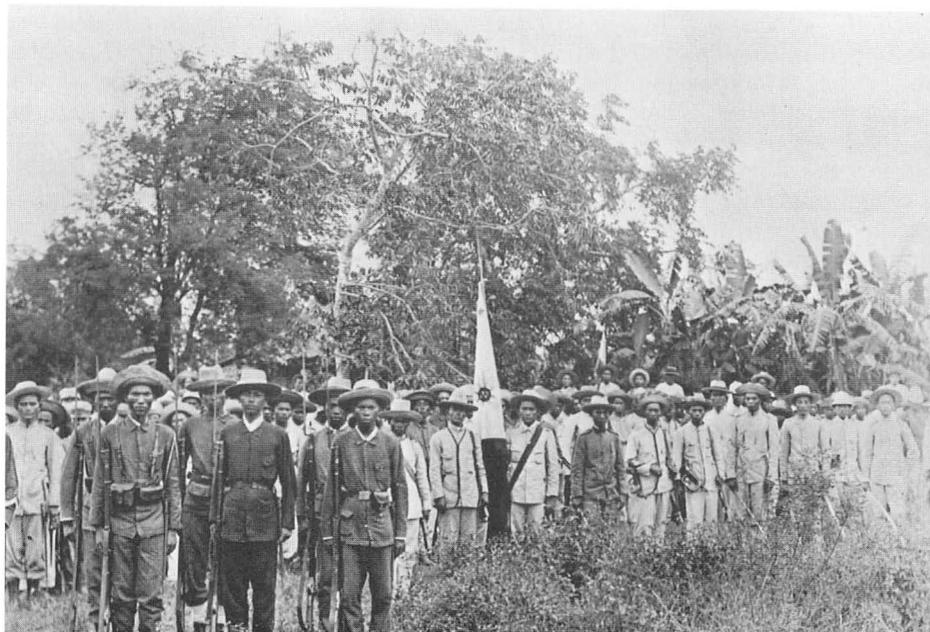
They were anchored twelve miles from Manila, which is “close enough,” he continued. “Just at present the harbor near us is full of gunboats and wrecks that Dewey didn’t do a thing to. We can see the smoke and hear the guns at Manila where they are fighting between the Insurgents and the Spaniards. The first expedition boys are out in row boats cheering us . . . The natives are alongside with fruit and

other goodies but they won’t let us buy anything for fear of poison.” He added, “I am feeling fine. I gained eight pounds since we left Frisco.” However, he wanted to get his “foot on the dirt again,” and made his little joke, that he expected “to be land sick at first . . . I can’t realize we are bumping up against the flowery kingdom [sic] and a long ways from home now.” He was eager to “do up the business we are sent here for and hike for home . . . Give my love to all the folks and tell them I am glad I am here.”<sup>19</sup>

To his sister he wrote from Cavite, “You had ought to see the shape [Dewey] left the place [in] after the ball was over. You can see seven or eight wrecks of gun boats . . . with only their funnels and masts sticking above water . . . At Cavite dead men and women were laying in the streets where they fell. The natives have no thought for cleanness or sanitary measures, and small pox and leprosy victims are loose in the streets.” The fighting was still going on. At one point the soldiers heard “cheering down the line,” and

*The First Nebraska Regiment traveled to the Philippines aboard the S.S. Senator. Photo by Charles Weidner, San Francisco.*





*Filipino troops of Aguinaldo's army.*

learned that "Sampson had did the Spaniards brown, and then we yelled again and the band played and all around was noisy, and we of course said Hurrah again." They could hear the noise as "The Insurgents and Spanish hammered away at each other . . . Monday we could see the smoke of battle."<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile, he was fine: "Run around barefooted with a shirt and pair of pants and feel as sloppy as the next one." The weather was cloudy and it rained in squalls "more or less every day;" he liked the flowers and delicious fruit and roast pork, but not the "shocking" dirtiness. However, "the natives are bright and intelligent as the average run of people."<sup>21</sup>

Andrew wrote to all his family and often made five, six, or seven copies of his letters. They also wrote to him. He thanked his sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles, and cousins for writing and for sending packages and stamps. On August 13 he wrote Uncle Silas that he should have been a sailor, for he was still on board ship with thirty-five

others, in charge of unloading the cargo. The main body of men was ashore and camped three miles from Manila. "Things warmed up this forenoon," he wrote, "when all the American fleet steamed over towards the City and commenced to drop shells into the fort that is near the place where the boys are camped . . . We saw one explosion that looked like a magazine had been touched off. The *Monterey* steamed right down to the center of the waterfront but did not fire a shot, which was a good thing for the city, as she is a terror; everybody felt glad when she came steaming in with her decks awashed all the time, but you had ought to see the mess that Dewey left [in] the harbor near Cavite. Out of the fine navy Spain had, her boats are all submarines now. The boys are getting souvenirs off from them, and the natives stripped the bodies and are selling the clothes. Have a coat and pants myself." He finished his narrative the following day, with the stars and stripes "floating over Manila," concluding, "It seems funny

to have the war over and not all the troops here yet."<sup>22</sup>

The American land forces captured Manila on August 13, 1898, after token resistance by the Spanish garrison. Of course, the war was not really over; that winter the fighting would begin again. Dewey had brought Filipino patriot Emilio Aguinaldo from his exile in Asia back to the Philippines to help with the capture of Manila. Aguinaldo believed that the Americans would grant the islands their independence once the Spaniards were defeated. But in the United States, Congress turned down a resolution to grant Philippine independence, and a debate sprang up between imperialists and anti-imperialists. Those eager to annex the islands included missionaries, business leaders, and adherents of the argument of Manifest Destiny, the delicious idea that God in his infinite wisdom had made Americans superior precisely to enable them to civilize "backward" nations. As Albert Beveridge said, "God has not been preparing the English-speaking and Teutonic peoples for a thousand years for nothing but vain and idle self-contemplation . . . No! . . . He has marked the American people as His chosen nation to finally lead in the regeneration of the world."<sup>23</sup> Opponents of annexation, including such luminaries as Mark Twain and Grover Cleveland, believed that acquiring sovereignty over an area and keeping it in a subordinate position was contrary to the Declaration of Independence. Their opposition was in vain. In the peace treaty of December 19, 1898, Spain was coerced into giving up the Philippines for the sum of \$20,000,000. The Senate voted on the treaty on February 6, 1899, but in the Philippines Aguinaldo began a new insurrection, this time against the United States.

As these events unfolded, the American troops lingered in Manila, most of them quite unaware of the developments in Washington which would have such an impact on their lives. Andrew wrote: "Oaveta is a bum

## Andrew Wadsworth

place . . . . The people have no idea of sanitary principles and they get quite bum, the streets are narrow and dirty . . . and all the people — even women, boys and girls — smoke cigarettes and chew betel nut.” The climate amazed him: “It rains every day now,” but only briefly, and “the sun can raise a blister on you in a few moments.” As for himself, “I am getting fat . . . , got a mustache coming but is rather slow and scarce; have read everything on the ship that I could get a hold of, and am trying to talk Spanish.”<sup>24</sup>

A few days later he wrote that he was “a long ways from home, yet when I get out and look at the dear old moon and see the big dipper it does not seem so far.” He described Manila: “The main city is old and behind the times. The houses are stone below and the upper stories of wood, roofed with tiles. The streets are good width but very narrow sidewalks, all of stone; and some grand Cathedrals and public buildings. Street cars run on several streets and they have the best electric lighting I ever saw. Also waterworks. A river runs between the new and old cities and when the troops came in the Spanish were throwing their guns into it and

they had sunk six boats in the channel . . . . The inhabitants are Spanish, Philippino [sic] and Chinese. The Chinese do all the novelty trade in little holes in the wall . . . , and they are hated by everyone. There are some swell stores in the business portion of town that were locked and barred until a few days ago . . . . The streets are patrolled day and night by sentries, so it is safe to go anywhere unarmed. All the carrying is done by Chinese on a pole, and they carry a load, I tell you. They have a water buffalo they use the same as an ox. They will wade out in water to their knees and bellow . . . . All the boys, girls, men and women smoke. Kids not so big as Ray Ford smoke like old timers.” In short, there were many remarkable things, “but no pie or coffee like mother makes.” He had gained seventeen pounds since leaving Nebraska; it “seems funny to have fat on your ribs.” He signed the letter, “There is lots to tell about, but this will let you know I love you still . . . . adios.”<sup>25</sup>

In September, after promotion to the rank of regimental quartermaster, Andrew was in the quartermaster’s department issuing clothing. “The government give the boys that entered

Manila the day she surrendered a new hat and shoes free of charge which is pretty bully. The city fell two weeks ago.” With twenty-foot walls the Americans could never have taken it without a fleet, “that is, if it was held by troops that were fighters.” He and the men were quartered on Fernando Street in what were Spanish barracks. “The city is patrolled day and night by sentries. We go and come as we please, never thinking of wearing side arms.” Plaintively he adds, “It don’t seem as if we are far from home. We have the same old moon and big dipper as shines in Nebraska . . . . Cigarettes cost three cents a package and cigars, fine ones, one cent apiece.” Trading money for Spanish dollars is common, but “it pulls your pockets all out of shape to carry five dollars worth of change.” He continued to dislike the Chinese: “The Philopinos [sic] hate them and I keep a guard detail busy chasing in those that get to scrapping. There are some fine stores kept by Spanish, and two jewelry stores that are the swellest places I ever saw.” The horses are small, “only ponies: They drive them to two-wheeled gigs and they go as if they were sent for all the time. Chinese coolies do most of

*Mail call for First Nebraska soldiers.*





*Camp Santa Mesa, located five miles east of Manila.*

the packing with poles on their shoulders. Four of them will take an upright piano and trot off with it as easy as Lill's dray team." He visited the British ship *Powerful*, and attended divine service, "the finest thing that has happened since I left home." As for the war, he wanted "to stay and see the whole thing through."<sup>26</sup>

Back in New York Andrew's father died. Andrew was sorry he "did not go and see him last fall when I was down, but the chance gone is gone forever."<sup>27</sup> To Sister and Brother he wrote: "His is a case that is spoken of in scripture. We are of few days and full of trouble, which some are brought to realize more than others."<sup>28</sup> But the death of an ill and elderly father did not occupy his mind as much as the exotic circumstances of his life. He wrote: "All the troops are in barracks and enjoying life as well as conditions will permit . . . . We are quartered in a large roomy warehouse with the 2d battalion; 320 men in all sleep in one room up in the second story with big doors and windows where we get lots of air and sunlight. The hardest work is to get the boys quiet after taps — songs, whistles and catcalls hardly ever cease. Last

night a native orchestra came up and we cleared the mess room, started the music and the mill began and we had a merry time for two hours." He has had "two small promotions" since starting out and was now sergeant major. There was "a great deal of sickness among the troops," with 170 men in the hospital out of 950.<sup>29</sup>

Whenever they got a chance, he and the others went sightseeing: "There is a lot to see in this man's town and every chance I get I go skirmishing around seeing the sights . . . . We miss the good American pies and cake[s] about as much as we do the girls. The Chief Clerk and [drawing of an eye] went out for a walk one day and we saw a sign: American pies inside. We of course stopped and copped one apiece; \$1.00 for two. But we had pie that day anyhow. There are a few bicycles here, and I long for my old wagon as the roads are fine for wheeling. But you can buggy ride for a small sum. We manage to figure in a boat ride occasionally . . . . Three weeks ago Sunday I was on the English ship *Powerful*. Got there just in time for divine services. They have an organ, several violins, and it was splendid . . . . Have visited several warships

and had a pleasant time. There seems to be a feeling that we will be sent home soon, and if they would only send us away home by way of N.Y. my, my wouldn't it be jolly. But if we got back the other way will be good enough [for] the likes of me."<sup>30</sup>

He went on: "The foliage is just fine now; the banana trees, coconut and orange trees are in their beauty;" but he "would love to see Siss's Pansy bed or even the wood pile back of the house." He concluded: "You need not worry about me in the least unless you want to, as I am all right — never was better in my life . . . . With lots of love . . . will say 'adios' kiss the boy for me and there you are."<sup>31</sup>

After the fall of Manila, he wrote later, the troops were getting bored, and the idea of staying for a year or more "is not relished by the majority of them." Many were sick. They had to boil water and take special care. There were plenty of coconuts, mangos, and oranges, but no strawberries or fall pippins or northern spies. Some fresh radishes that day were "just the thing." "There are a few English people here and to see an English girl on the street brings all the boys to attention and rubber neck." In the city there were "monkeys and mangy dogs" and in the streets "everything goes opposite." Many of the men were picking up guns, swords, and other artifacts to take home, if they could manage to carry them. "I might send you a Chinaman to split the wood and draw water but I don't think you would appreciate the gift. I didn't even like a negro but they are pretty good people after seeing the nabobs that live here."<sup>32</sup>

On Thanksgiving the men were given a great feast, and Andrew wrote happily to his family in New York City "of the feed we had. There was baked and potpie of chicken, noodles, mashed potatoes, dressing, bread, blackberry jam, pickles and coffee . . . . In the afternoon I took a boat ride across Manila bay and back and I felt as if I had spent quite an enjoyable day. Some of the boys got jugged and are suffering the

effects thereof." The weather was cool and cloudy, with rain "most every day:" "This is a tropical night with a full moon riding high above the coconut and Palm trees, and I wish you were here to say how nice." He continued: "We hear all kinds of rumors for and against our going home, but when I get my trotters on board a transport then I will say Hurray for sure." He appreciated all the mail and the magazines: "Read an illustrated paper showing the Rough riders after reaching New York. Say, they must have had a high old time." And then a joke: "You fellows will have to do my skating and sleighriding for me this summer, and I will pick the flowers for you. As there are no chimbleys here, think Santa Claus will have to come in through the window . . . Our Regimental minstrel show is going to be quite good I think . . . The 3rd artillery gave a show entitled 'The Baron's Victim,' and if it wasn't a frost I am no judge."<sup>33</sup>

In December Andrew Wadsworth wrote to Anna, "Well, we are out in the field, living under canvas, which seems very nice after the hot dirty city. We . . . came out here last Friday, about 7 miles due east of the city and about ½ mile from the river. The camp is . . . Santa Mesa, meaning Holy Table . . . on an elevation about 50 feet above the surrounding country, which we can see for several miles around. Just as green and nice as July. The insurgents are camped about one mile from us and I can hear their bugle calls as I write, but I don't think we will have any trouble with them."

The American troops were unaware that the political situation in the United States was turning their former allies, the Insurgents, into enemies — as Andrew wrote, "I haven't the least idea why we are here." Just the same, it was "Jolly pleasant." He continued, "The sick boys are going home in a few days, which will leave the companies in very good shape, as the Recruits joined us about two weeks ago and jumped the companies up to about 100 each . . . I still keep well and happy and that's

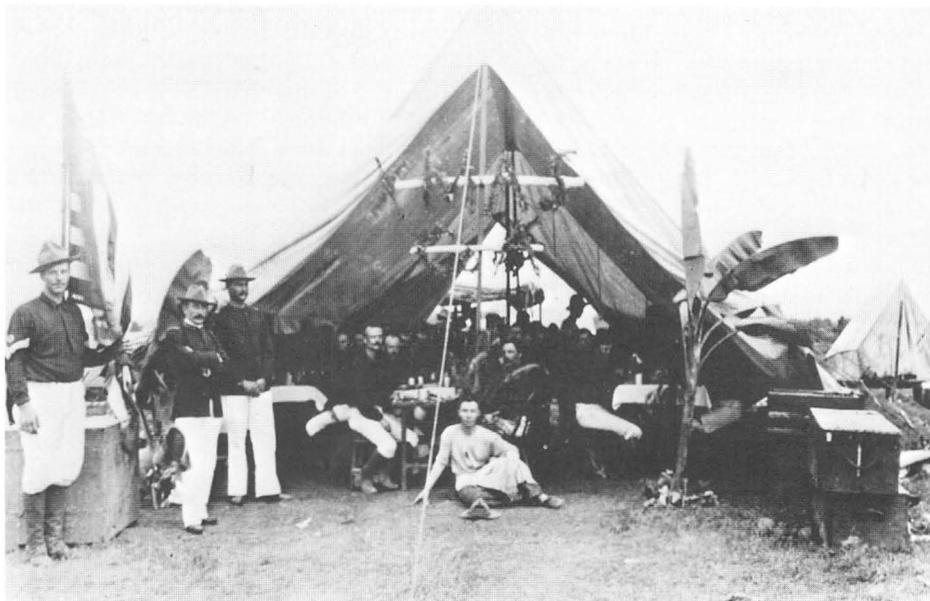
good enough for me. We hear reports for and against our going home, but I think we are booked for this place for a good long time . . . The hill is surrounded by rice fields that have been harvested and the natives chasing around picking up fallen rice makes it look as if they were picking berries." The weather was nice, and some "of us had a jolly swim yesterday." Christmas boxes will be there soon — "won't that be Jolly and only two weeks till stocking time." At Christmas, he chortled, "I can go barefooted." Andrew was glad that Anna had gone "back home," to East Chatham, New York. He often mentioned the farm and seemed to miss it. His birthday had come and gone, and he "hardly had time to think of it." He made one last joke, "Am afraid I have to eat so much rice will grow a full head of hair and that would be sad."<sup>34</sup>

Christmas was a disappointment, as no boxes arrived. "The Christmas dinner we had was the only thing worth mentioning on that day," wrote Andrew on January 2. "Had oyster stew with olives and pickles, baked chicken with dressing, cranberry sauce, sweet corn, mashed potatoes and gravy, bread, butter, jam, cakes, cookies, chocolate,

oranges, bananas and cigars." But "we had our mouths fixed for a line of Christmas boxes that they had started from the States, but they stopped them before they left, saying they thought we would be home soon after the holidays. But we have no more idea of going home than a rabbit."<sup>35</sup> This incident of the Christmas boxes as much as any single detail illustrates the precarious situation at that time. In Washington the optimists thought the Philippines could be annexed forthwith and the American troops brought home. Thus the boxes were cancelled. But U.S. officials soon had to acknowledge that the anger of the Filipino rebels required the continued presence of American troops. So the boxes were shipped after all.

This disappointment did not douse Andrew's perennial good cheer, for he was having a "great experience": The "weather is fine and the sunsets grand and the moonlight mucho grando." They had a good holiday with football and tug of war, and Andrew had been promoted to Second Lieutenant. "We have fresh meat every other day," and all kinds of good fruit. And best of all: "We have something

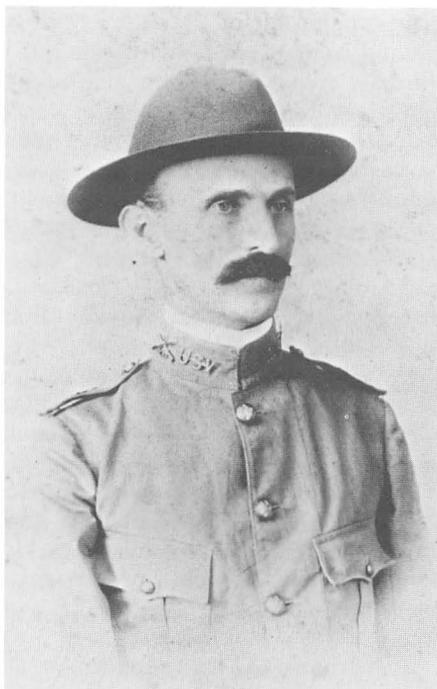
*Christmas dinner, 1898, for First Nebraska Regiment, Company A.*



funny happening all the time that keeps us fat and hearty. We have a monkey tied to a pole back of the adjt's tent and the way he climbs and slides and falls over himself makes us yell. Was out in the country awhile today and met several lassies with the big hats they wear that look like Aunt Jennie's butter bowl turned upside down." He included a little cartoon of this interesting sight.<sup>36</sup>

In January Andrew thanked his younger brother for the Christmas letter, which was one of "The best of my presents." At Christmas they had a "good feed" and "a very heavy mail and the candles were burned late that night"; but otherwise, it was like "any other day in the army. The weather is fine, the days are hot, but there is always a wind blowing that helps out, and the nights are just fine for snoozing." He went on: "No mosquitoes yet . . . no crickets or grasshoppers; . . . but they catch lizards that are from 1 to 3 feet long which they eat." So far they hadn't had "any scrap" with the insurgents, "but they had us out of bed night before last at 2 o'clock but was a false alarm. Do not look for any trouble from them . . . Hope the regiments that are coming will let us loose. We hear all kinds of rumors from the troops that went down to Plo Plo [sic]. One is that several Americans were killed and any amount of Spaniards." He continued, "Expect you heard of the [Christmas] boxes they were going to send us from the States. Well they never came, but we hope they will after telling a fellow of all the good things they have got packed in them . . . As I am writing this a filipino orchestra is outside in front of the col's tent giving him a serenade. They are natural born musicians and artists . . . So you have a bike? Well, aint they all right for getting around on, wish I had mine."<sup>37</sup>

Andrew had in this letter one moment of grief: "I feel quite bad these days as my Kansas girl went off with a section boss, but if she is happy so am I. I haven't any reason to be otherwise as I am better than I ever was, that is,



Colonel John M. Stotsenburg.

Physically." He also missed the "popcorn, apples and cider," but concluded cheerfully, "The country looks fine as the rice fields are just commencing to grow nicely and all the green things growing makes a fellow almost glad he is here."<sup>38</sup>

Fighting between the American forces and the Filipinos broke out on February 4, 1899, when Private William Grayson of the First Nebraska fired on some Filipinos trying to enter the American lines. The regiment was put into action, and Andrew Wadsworth's letters now were written "In the Field":

"When we go to bed we put on all our clothes, lay down and probably get woke up a dozen times during the night by shots or reports . . . While writing this I can hear the 1st California busy about three miles to the south of us shooting and burning the Lord only knows where it will end." He had also been fighting. At one point "we had to cross a bridge to keep after them which was done when things were pretty warm, and then commenced a running

fight of about a mile and half up hill and down, over the roughest country possible and well fortified at every turn; but we didn't stop till we had advanced to the . . . water reservoir, which was Sunday noon, and then we tumbled down and rested. We could see the natives still going back towards the hills. We rested at the reservoir until Monday noon, and then we started after them again . . . But say, it was a hot time going over some of the ground. One hill the boys had to walk over was heavily fortified and swarmed with the Indians, but we didn't do a thing to them." He was bitter about the dead and wounded: "We feel that every man of ours that's lost is worth more than the whole damned island but what can we do about it. We don't know what we are fighting for hardly."<sup>39</sup>

But his spirits never stayed down for long. "The boys found a sack of peanuts when out looking around and we roasted them in our coffee roaster and they were so good." In fact, the men were "living on all the good things the land affords — roast pork, chicken, sweet taters, radishes, bananas, and other goodies." The colonel objected to this and "shut down on our foraging." Still, "he is the only boy for us — you can put that down as no lie." In spite of the old man's "eagle eye," the foraging continued unabated. Andrew concluded, "I ain't as fat as I was by a good deal, and my old nose shines with sunburn." Like the others he had stopped shaving: "You had ought to see the bewhiskered gang we are, but they say the 1st Neb are all ok."<sup>40</sup>

Wadsworth's admiration for his colonel, John M. Stotsenburg, was not shared by all the men of the First Nebraska Regiment. Stotsenburg, a regular army officer and former commandant of cadets at the University of Nebraska, was a strict disciplinarian who sought to mold the regiment into an effective fighting force. His methods incurred the enmity of some of the soldiers whose letters home persuaded the governor and legislature of Ne-

braska to call for Stotsenburg's dismissal. An army investigation cleared the colonel and his leadership in the subsequent fighting won the respect of his men and his superiors alike.

In March Wadsworth thanked his Aunt Jennie for writing: "We have had a mail every week for this last month and nothing except orders to go home would please us better. Have forgotten whether I have written any of you folks since we commenced to chase niggers."<sup>41</sup>

Andrew's deteriorating attitude toward the enemy is illustrated in his changing use of nouns to describe them. When first arriving in Manila he wrote of the Spaniards and the insurgents. The Spaniards lost the war, and, of course, departed. By December he is still writing about "Insurgents"; but by February he calls them "natives" or "Indians." His tone is increasingly hostile — he thinks that the life of one American is "worth more than the whole damned island."<sup>42</sup> By March his tone has so altered that the enemy from now on are called "niggers." He is full of contempt for them. Such epithets always occur in wars. This change in attitude reflects a hardening of opinion among the American soldiers.

Andrew Wadsworth soon found himself with additional responsibility when Captain Claude H. Ough was wounded on March 7. Because Company B's first lieutenant had been promoted to another command, Wadsworth became acting company commander. In his letter Wadsworth continued: "Have been out a few days over a month and it's taking the fat off of our ribs . . . We have a scrap about three times a week. Can generally figure on one about every Sunday. Our last run was on Tuesday. We went out with 8 companies, 4 of regulars, and chased them for about 4 miles. They split up in bands and keep about 800 to 1000 yards in our lead, and all we can do is to tire ourselves out chasing over the rice ridges . . . [We] started back to Camp, and were loping along saying hard things about the

niggers, and all at once they came out of the trees and it sounded like popping corn. They had a skirmis [sic] line nearly a mile long. We faced about and took position behind some bamboo and held them with two companies till the rest of them came back and we hit them hard. Just as we advance[d] on them my captain and a private were wounded, and a private killed — shot through the head. But we smoked them out and I tell you, got about 40 guns, and we figure two niggers, to every gun, and we have a little peace again for a few days. As we have no first lieutenant I am in command of the company. And it's a position I would trade for a chance to lay out on the hill back of the house and watch the hummingbirds at play." He was glad that the peace commission was there, for "the war can last for fifty years . . . I think Uncle Sam has one foot pretty deep in the mud when he stepped on this isle."<sup>43</sup>

"But I don't want to tell all my troubles at once . . . so will put in a plug and say a few lines of the good things that have come along. We had a Christmas last week when our boxes came, and say, it was good to see the things that tumbled out of them — everything from pins to night dresses. I got candy, jell[ie]d preserves, papers, books, needles, and little things that helped to fill up, and fruit cake — was common stuff but so good . . . The weather is fine. Is quite warm in the middle of the day, but there is almost always a wind and the nights are two blankets cold, and skeeters in regiments with armor-piercing drills. Was so glad to hear from you as all the little incidents about the old home are milk and honey to this lad . . . Have some one kiss the little one for me."<sup>44</sup>

He wrote to "Dearest Sister": "Your ever welcome letter . . . came this afternoon and I will try to answer it this evening if the skeeters don't eat me up." There was hard fighting on February 5 and 6: "We had to go out and scrap them at least two or three times a week, and the strain on the boys was terrible. We had to sleep all ready to

jump to arms; and with the strain and chasing it has knocked out nearly half the Regiment. Six companies only have one commissioned officer. The last chase we had was [a] week ago Tuesday. We ran them four miles, and at the last stand they wounded my captain, a private, and killed one." When they were relieved, Andrew wrote, "Last night was the first time I have slept like a white man should for six weeks." He added, "The nearest I have been to getting snuffed was a ball through the top of my hat."<sup>45</sup>

They had some news: "See the treaty has been signed and there is a rumor we are going home soon . . . Would like to see the war put down before we leave, anyhow. But say, the goodies they packed in those bases was a caution. Everything from gum to night dresses and fruit cake . . . Appreciated them more, I think, than if they had come at Christmas time." He sent a photograph which was "rather poor stuff" because "I have lost lots of fat since the war, you can bet. Have heard from Aunt Jennie, Anna and Elbeter and Ray, and they say they had such a good time when they visited you. Hope someday it will be my turn. Don't hardly know what you mean when you would H[ug] and K[iss] this lad. The song goes, 'they used to do it when I was a kid but they wouldn't do it now.' Read the magazines. Many thanks . . . Had some genuine soda water and ice cream yesterday. Tickled my back teeth proper . . . Now I lay me down to sleep/While the lizards over me creep/And the skeeters buzz around my head/And the spider weaves his ghostly web. Lots of love to you and Harry."<sup>46</sup>

In April Andrew was in Malolos: "We arrived here last Friday and a jolly time we had getting here. Were 7 days on the trip . . . The boys were ragged, dirty, footsore and exhausted but they are improving fast now. We advanced along the r.r. line which the Insurgents tore up in places and tried to burn the bridges, but we had the track down [and] trains carrying provisions and ammunition and taking back wounded as

fast as we advanced. The 1st train came in last night with commissary on and there was a rush to buy canned pears, peaches, apricots and other good things which taste good after a week's chuck of hardtack, canned beef and salmon. But you had ought to see the trail of peaches and pork rinds we left in our rear. As the boys are bound to have fresh meat and the capacity of American boys for getting things is well known . . . I can't remember all the names of the different stations, rivers and creeks we crossed but that we got here is all that concerns me. We had 7 men wounded in my co. but none fatally. I think the regiment is fearfully reduced as we had only about 400 men in the firing line when we got here. The total casualties I believe in the 7 days was 76 wounded and 8 killed. Which for the number of skirmishes we were in is considered quite favorable. The city was entirely deserted when troops took possession . . . [The insurgents] had set fire to the depot and all the principal buildings and flew. And of all the bum places it takes the bakery. Nothing but Nepi huts, hogs, and stink to see and smell. We are camped in a stretch of bamboo timber facing a wide plain that we advanced across when we came. The co. does outpost duty once in 5 days and loafs the rest of the time . . . As volunteers have done most all the fighting would like to see the Regulars do a few turns at it."<sup>47</sup>

He continued: "Wish you could see me sitting under a bamboo shelter — nothing in sight but brown pants, blue shirts and whiskers. Have kept well and happy, and expect to come out all right. Spent Easter eating stolen chickens and wondering what the style of havanas is for this year and all those things that make life worth living in God's country . . . With love to you and all the rest and kind regards."<sup>48</sup>

In other letters he described the taking of Malolos, with "all kinds of fireworks," during which "we had the niggers going south all the time. We were a week on the march . . . We had to scrap every day, wade rivers and rice



*Filipinos killed during a skirmish.*

fields and sleep on all kinds of hard places and the raggedest, dirtiest gang I never saw. The boys were tired and footsore but as happy as it was possible to be under the circumstances; and the trail of feathers and pork rinds we left in our wake showed where we had been. I lost one wounded man for each day we were out . . . [from] heat exhaustion."<sup>49</sup>

He went on: "We have quite a heavy guard duty every night, and once in twelve days have to go on outpost about a mile on a road that goes out towards the next town. We were out 2 days ago and had a pleasant day under the palms. Brought back a large basket of mangoes, a fruit I never saw in the

States, that's the bestest stuff I never saw." But "would trade them for a shortcake anytime." The weather was "fine but very hot. See by the papers that king winter . . . made you folks rub your ears for once. I missed my annual skate very much but hope to make up some day . . . You ought to see my whiskers now, look like a bird man. Am officer of the day and they stick out more than usual. I am well and happy . . . can understand the campaign all ok. Hope to continue . . . Love to you and the lad."<sup>50</sup>

Everything abruptly changed for him a few days later, for "this lad finally had to take water and lay off for repairs." Andrew wrote an account of it: "On

Sunday, April 23, Major Bell with a troop of cavalry, went out about 4 a.m., and going 3 miles he ran into a bunch of niggers that gave him a warm time. He had to retreat for a short distance and in doing so left some of his men on the field. He sent back for help and 2 companies of Neb. went out at daylight and they held the line all the forenoon. But it was so hot they could not stand it, and about 11 o'clock . . . they sent in for 4 more companies and B. Company was one. We went out in a road that led directly onto the firing line. When we got there we rested for about 15 minutes and then got orders to deploy in a line of skirmishers to the right through an open field with our left resting on the road. We started through on the run," and once past the timber "the balls began to hum, I tell you."<sup>51</sup>

He continued: "They were shooting better than I had ever seen them, and hopped right along; and the order had just been given to left-face and go forward when I felt a jar in my left leg below the knee that turned me nearly around. Some fellow from the right on the Insurgent line had got in his work. It struck about 3 inches below the knee on the right inside and came out opposite with a hole half as long as my finger, and shattered the bone in front, but not bad. I tried to take a step before I realized what had happened and then went down in a heap. Two of the boys fell out and we soon had a first-aid bandage on, and sent for a litter, and all the time the fire was fearful. When the litter was coming on the field one of the Chino bearers was shot. My quartermaster srgt was pulling the litter around beside me when — zuck — another ball struck my leg about the width of my hand lower down and on the left front side, and is still in there. And I began to think, 'three times and out, old man.' But worse was to come. The srgt tied that up and was on his knees getting ready to lift my legs on, when he was shot through the body from right to left. He turned over on his face, straightened out his limbs in his agony, and died right there, and it all

happened inside of five minutes. He had 4 brothers on the field at the time . . . Four chino boys carried me back to the ambulance."<sup>52</sup>

The Battle of Quingua was a costly one for the Nebraskans. In addition to the dead sergeant, James F. Storch, one of those killed was Colonel John M. Stotsenburg. Andrew also broke the news of his wounding to Aunt Jennie: "I thought I was going to get through the scrap without getting punctured, but it came at last . . . Last Sunday morning the cavalry went out . . . on a scouting trip and being foggy they ran in on a bunch of niggers and they had a hot scrap . . . and in retreating they left one of their boys on the field and they sent in for help . . . We arrived in the field and they deployed us in a line . . . across an open field when the balls were just smoking, with the niggers only about 800 yards away behind breastworks that were the finest things we had been up against; we had just been ordered to advance when — zuck — I felt a blow below the knee that turned me nearly around and when I tried to go on I felt as if my leg was gone entirely. And of course I said, 'oh,' and fell all in a heap . . . When the litter came they all had to lay flat down and wait till the firing eased up a little; when — zuck — another ball hit me in the same leg . . . My quartermaster sergeant was on his knees pulling the litter around beside me when he was shot through from right to left and died right there, and things looked pretty blue, I tell you. I waved my hat to the boys, and four of them came back and carried me off, and then they took me off . . . We were taken to Malolos and made as comfortable as possible, and that night were brought down on the train, and had our wounds dressed. I am in a nice cool ward with three other Nebraska officers, so I am not so lonesome . . . The wound is what is called a clean cut, as the balls went right through; think they shattered the bone a trifle; have no fever and feel first rate."<sup>53</sup>

Andrew Wadsworth was taken to Manila to the hospital where his leg was

operated on, an experience which, he told his sister, "wasn't so Jolly but was soon done." Then he was "taken to the ward, and rested very nicely, and am getting along nicely. The hospital is a grand institution, built by the Spaniards, and is an ideal place. The room I am in is in a corner with the door facing west and has eight cots, and four of them are Nebraska officers . . . A girl looks after us and is a very fine person. They have about 2,500 here I am told. Every day is about the same — eat, sleep, and grouse about the luck. But think I will be out in 4 to 6 weeks . . . Wounds heal very slow here, but I'll be happy when I can get to sit up again . . . Is nice and cool today. Can hear a lawn mower going and two monkeys tied outside the door are having a scrap by the sound of things. Well, I think I have told troubles enough for this time." He asked his sister to tell the folks that he was "coming [along] fine."<sup>54</sup>

Despite his good humored letters, Andrew Wadsworth was not "fine." Six days before he broke the news of being wounded to his sister he had begun to keep a diary. On the fly leaf he wrote, "A few jottings of Lt. Wadsworth Co. B 1st Neb V. who joined to be a soger [sic] like lots of others! but who tried to make the folks think that he was one of the happiest of the gang and who thought he could slip through all o.k. He would be a pretty jolly kid — But — and he puts these few moments down when his troubles really began."<sup>55</sup>

He had daily notations: "Wed. April 26. Slept well. Leg dressed at 10 a.m. Commenced to hurt badly . . . Thurs. Ap. 27. Did not sleep at all. Very painful." On May 3 he "rested poorly. Leg dressed at 10. Hurting some." On May 4 he "rested very well" in the night, but has been "quite uncomfortable all day." Sun May 14: "Passed a very poor night. Leg hurt very much. 3 wks ago today I was wounded. Had a nice shower about noon." On May 25 he "passed a very good night. Leg dressed. Looking fine. Foot hurts continually. Had quite a hard wind and heavy rain." On June 1 he "had a dickens of a night.

Foot pained all day. Rec'd letter from Capt. O. Very warm. Band concert." By June 21 — two months after being shot — he was better: "Rested very nicely. Hobbled across the room. Feel very week [sic]."<sup>56</sup>

Meanwhile, on June 1 he wrote to his sister and her husband, "Hello the both of yeas [sic] . . . I haven't much to do but kill time these days. Thought I would push the pencil a little. Don't know if you know it or not, but this kid is laid up for repairs. He was a good old wagon but it done broke down. It will be six weeks Sunday since I came in and it's the hardest work I have done since I joined the harmy [sic]." He complained that the hospital was charging officers a dollar a day for an army ration that cost them only sixty cents, saying, "I would give \$25 for a short cake of the good old kind." The volunteers would be on their way home in four to six weeks, "and a happy lot of boys I tell you, as they had been put up against the niggers for three months and over. Have had about 200 killed and wounded, and in officers alone, three killed and fifteen wounded . . . But we did our duty and that's satisfaction for me." But his "satisfaction" did not survive his next paragraph: "The *Olympia* with George on board left the other day amid booming of cannon and left us here to sweat and fume over a piece of land that in my estimation hadn't ought to be on the map."<sup>57</sup>

On June 15 Andrew Wadsworth applied for a leave of absence on a surgeon's certificate of disability for one month, with permission to apply for an extension of two months, to visit the United States. The very next day the First Nebraska Volunteer Infantry was relieved from duty, and soon sailed for the United States without him. In his Manila hospital, he was eager to "pull out for home."<sup>58</sup> When he finally reached San Francisco, he wrote, "Hurray for Hurroo and then some! and here we are again in God's country, where you can get cow's milk and smile at the pretty girls. We came in this morning amid a great hurrah, and they

are sure doing the right thing for us."<sup>59</sup> Not all was well with him, however. On August 18 he wrote, "I am feeling fine. I think I will get fat if I don't look out." But "my leg does not improve much" and the doctor wanted to operate again. "I think I will let him chop on it next week. It's a small operation and it won't take long to get over it, and if it is all ok, all right; if not, there you are."<sup>60</sup> The operation was needed because "when I got off the bed at Manila [the leg] was bent at the knee. The cords had contracted so when I stood up the toes just touched the floor. [Here he has a squiggly drawing of a bent leg]."<sup>61</sup>

Andrew's leg was operated on August 30, 1899. He wrote: "They cut in above the knee and let out the ham strings . . . I almost got down to the banks of the river, so they tell me . . . Well, my troubles aren't very entertaining, but there is not much news in a hospital. Tell Will I was jolly glad to hear from him."<sup>62</sup>

Later he wrote to Anna that "this lad . . . aint forgot you." He was feeling "like my old self again . . . Will be a month tomorrow since they operated . . . I tell you what I have suffered has made me feel old and worn, and it's taken all the fat off that I had on me. I have been troubled with loss of appetite. The chloroform seems to have killed it . . . The leg is very near straight, and they say it will come straight by absorption, and the use of it with massage. But it will be many days before it will be very good as a leg." It would be October before he could leave. "The new regiments are being sent to Manila as fast as they arrive and those coming back makes it lively around the camp. This is a poor thing for a letter, but we will talk it over some day. With love, Andrew."<sup>63</sup>

He did not leave in October. He was still in the hospital, "up in a wheel chair," but able to "get out in the sunshine every day . . . We don't hear so much about George now, but he must of had a grand hurrah when he struck the city . . . We had a little excitement about 2 wks ago. A patient in the ward

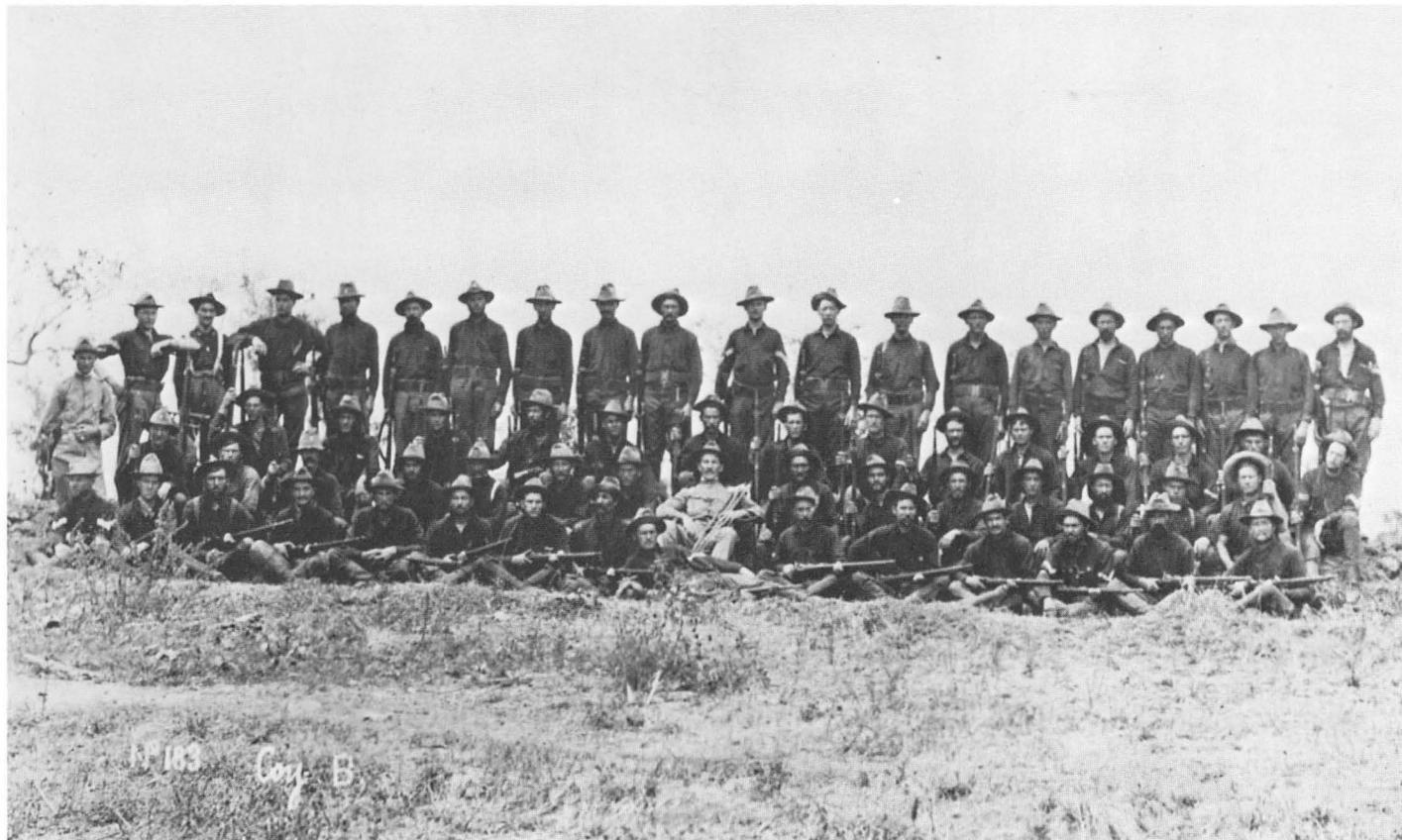
took small pox and they bundled us out and fumigated at once. Nobody else took it." Otherwise, his stock of news was "low." "As I sit and look in the stove, I wish I had some of the nuts and popcorn that the old place produces. If I don't see it next summer I will be disappointed."<sup>64</sup> By the "old place" he meant the family farm back in East Chatham, New York, where Anna lived.

On November 7 Andrew Wadsworth had his first day out of the hospital. He wrote to Anna that he was "hopeful that it will be quite a good leg after all . . . Another jolly feature — it is only about an inch short, but it might of been much worse . . . Tell Will I was jolly glad to hear from him. The days in October sent my mind to galloping around over the hills of the old place and I often wished I was surely there." By the way, he says, "I rec'd your photos long long ago . . . Don't Uncle Joe ever get in front of a mug machine. Tell him I know what it is to stick the lame foot up in the air to try to light on the good one."<sup>65</sup>

The recuperation was long and slow. In December he wrote, "It's a dull rainy day. Think it's a good time to say hello. Well, I am pretty well." He was able to "put considerable weight on the foot." Of course, he had hoped to get home for Christmas, "but no." However, at the hospital they did have a "good spread" on Thanksgiving day. "We are having nice green grass now. Hope you ain't up to your eyes in snow."<sup>66</sup>

December 27 was "a warm sunny day here. Have been out setting in the sun and wishing I was somewhere else. Am getting along very nicely. Use a crutch and cane now and can hobble a little with the cane alone. Hope to be out of this soon. It's not so bad . . . Christmas day was fine . . . We had a fine turkey dinner with trimmings which I enjoyed very much."<sup>67</sup> To Aunt Jennie he wrote: "I was jolly glad to hear from you . . . This is a lovely day and I have been out enjoying it sitting in the sunshine. I am getting along fine . . . The ankle is still quite stiff which keeps me from stepping easy. Have to walk off the ends of

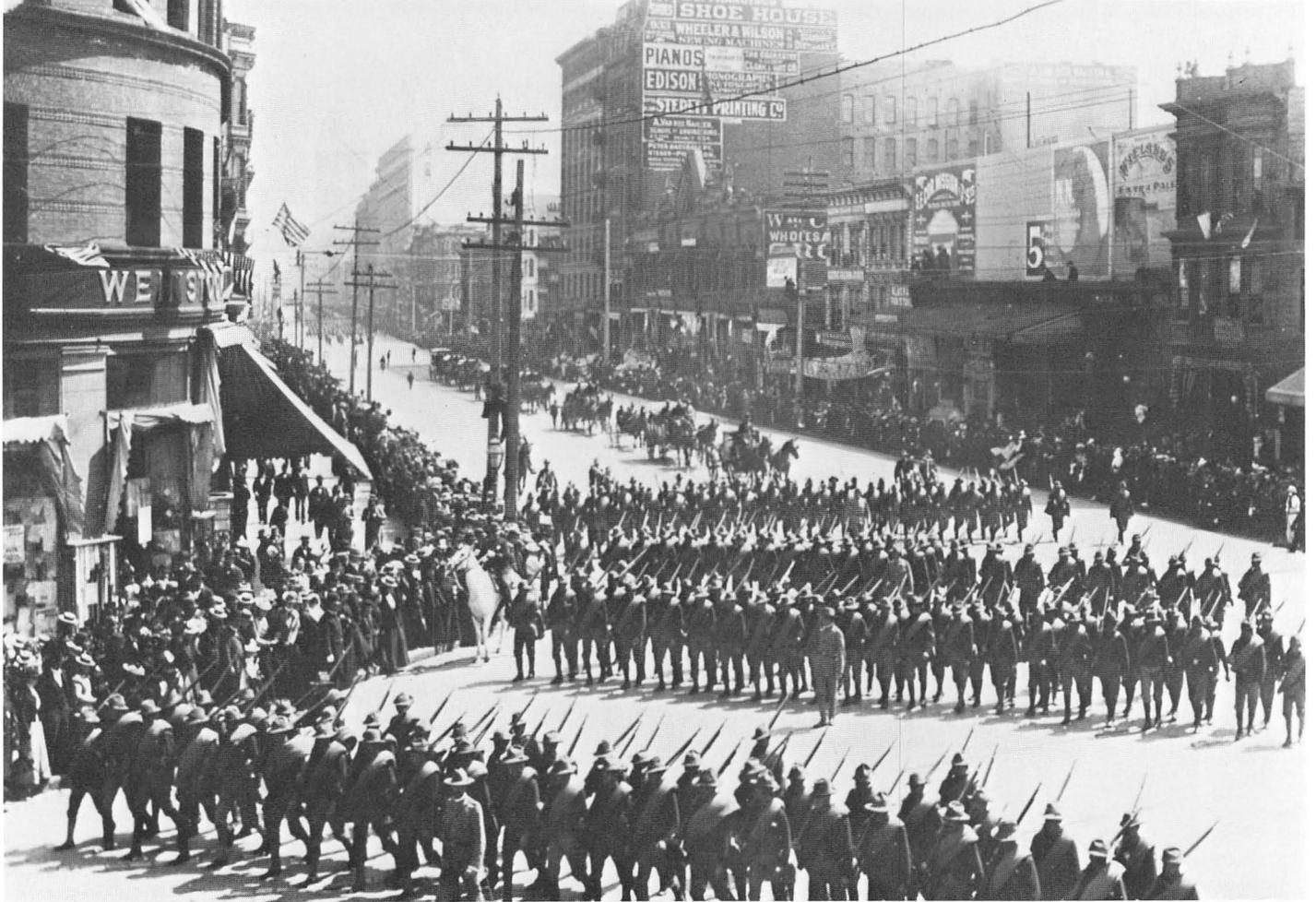
Andrew Wadsworth



*Company B, First Nebraska Regiment in the field. The officer standing at left is believed to be Andrew Wadsworth. The officer holding crutches is probably Captain Claude H. Ough, who had been wounded in the thigh.*



*First Nebraska soldiers resting, March 27, 1899.*



*Company I of the First Nebraska marching on Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco, after the regiment returned from the Philippines.*

my toes, but it is doing fine and I will soon be in Neb. . . . It has been quite cold here, and it is right on the bay, and so damp it freezes a fellow right through. But calla lillies are in full bloom in door yards and climbing roses are just fine and cattle are out to pasture. I go out most every day and take a street-car ride.”<sup>68</sup>

On January 9, 1900, Andrew Wadsworth, “late of Company B, 1st Regiment, Nebraska Volunteer Infantry” received his transportation order to return to Beatrice, Nebraska. He lingered in California, writing on January 14 to Anna that he weighed 130 pounds and felt “fine,” and that “it is pleasant here. Now warm and nice. Go out every day and chase myself around.”<sup>69</sup> To Sister Hattie he wrote, “Well, I am the same old backslider of old, but don’t know what I am going to do about it. This is a fine warm day . . . just like summer, and with all the flowers in bloom, durned if I don’t think it’s summer all the time.”<sup>70</sup>

Andrew returned to Nebraska in

March and wrote to Anna: “Well Sis, I am glad to say hello from this part of the world. I was a long time arriving . . . I had a tourist sleeper all the way through without change. It was warm and nice all the way and the jolliest crowd on the car I ever saw. We rode on the steps most of the way and got sunburned to beat the band . . . Found the folks well and the town greatly improved in every way, and the old crowd I ran with all married but me, narrow escape.” He was getting a shoe fitted and then: “will get around very handy I think,” although his leg was not like the “old original.”<sup>71</sup>

Although the Spanish-American War began as a very popular war, there were many critics of the Philippine phase and the American refusal to give the Filipinos their independence. This later portion of the war was the first American experience of fighting for some unknown goal in a distant alien country. In many ways it compares to the Vietnam War, for the Vietnamese were also a colonial population seeking

their independence. There are significant differences, however, none more remarkable than the difference in the way the home population treated the soldiers. In 1898 the American people gave the boys a great send-off and later a rousing welcome home again — in great contrast to the hostile reception accorded many of the Vietnam veterans, wounded or not.

Because the majority of his First Nebraska comrades had returned home to rousing welcomes several months earlier, Wadsworth expected that his arrival would attract little attention: “I thought I was getting in so quiet,” but “when the train pulled in there was a crowd to see the old man.” Joking as always, he commented that “the racket spoiled lots of people’s after-dinner nap.”<sup>72</sup>

The welcome involved the entire community. The Beatrice newspaper reported that “the big whistle at the water works was pressed into service to announce the glad tidings to the residents of the city . . . When they

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found out what it was they all crowded up on the depot platform and lined the street clear up to Fifth and as the train pulled in and Lieut. Wadsworth appeared at the car door, somebody proposed three cheers for Wadsworth which were given with a will . . . We are all glad to welcome him home again."<sup>73</sup>

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>The Andrew S. Wadsworth letters, 1898-1900, are among the Hussey-Wadsworth papers at the Clements Library, University of Michigan. The letters were included in the effects of Wadsworth's niece, who married a member of the Hussey family. Portions of the letters have been excerpted for this article. Quotations have been edited for punctuation.

Andrew Silas Wadsworth was born October 2, 1869, in New Lebanon, New York. He moved to Beatrice, Nebraska, in 1887 to live with his uncle, Silas W. Wadsworth. In 1890 Andrew Wadsworth enlisted in Company C of the Nebraska National Guard and re-enlisted for three years in April 1897.

Following his return from the Philippines, Wadsworth resumed his occupation as a jeweler in Beatrice. In 1913 he was working as a postal clerk there. Little is known of his later life. He died in Troy, New York, on October 3, 1945.

<sup>2</sup>Alger to G.M. Dodge, March 19, 1898. Russell A. Alger Papers, Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

<sup>3</sup>Andrew S. Wadsworth (hereafter ASW) to Sister, April 14, 1898. His letters are almost never addressed to relatives by name, only to "Sister," "Brother," "Aunt," or "Uncle." A few identifiable correspondents are Wadsworth's sisters, Anna and Harriet (Mrs. Henry Hasbrouck). "Uncle" is probably Silas Wadsworth, and "Aunt Jennie" may be Mrs. Silas Wadsworth.

<sup>4</sup>ASW to Sister, April 25, 1898.

<sup>5</sup>"History of Operations of the First Nebraska Infantry, U.S.V.," appended to Karl Irving Faust, *Campaigning in the Philippines* (San Francisco: Hicks-Judd Co., 1899), cited hereafter as "History of Operations."

<sup>6</sup>ASW to Brother, May 12, 1898.

<sup>7</sup>S.W. Wadsworth letter, May 16, 1898.

<sup>8</sup>Undated and untitled newspaper clipping accompanying Silas Wadsworth's May 16 letter.

<sup>9</sup>ASW to Dear Sister, May 25, 1898.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>ASW to Sister, June 4, 1898.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.; "History of Operations," 6; Nebraska Adjutant General, *Biennial Report, 1897-1898* (Lincoln: Woodruff Printing Co., 1899), 89.

<sup>13</sup>ASW to Sister and Brother (Harriet and Henry Hasbrouck), June 10, 1898.

<sup>14</sup>ASW to Sister, June 22, 1898.

<sup>15</sup>ASW to Sister Anna, July 20, 1898.

<sup>16</sup>ASW to Uncle, July 17, 1898.

<sup>17</sup>ASW to Sister Anna, July 20, 1898.

<sup>18</sup>ASW to Uncle, July 17, 1898. The dead soldier was Sergeant George Geddes of Company C, a victim of spinal meningitis. He was buried at sea. See "History of Operations," 7. Cavite is a seaport on the island of Luzon.

<sup>19</sup>ASW to Uncle, July 17, 1898.

<sup>20</sup>ASW to Sister, July 20, 1898. The soldiers were cheering the news of U.S. Navy Admiral William T. Sampson's victory over the Spanish fleet at Santiago, Cuba.

<sup>21</sup>ASW to Sister, July 20, 1898.

<sup>22</sup>ASW to Uncle, August 13, 1898.

<sup>23</sup>Speech in U.S. Senate, January 9, 1900; quoted in George Scheer, ed., *America in the World* (New York: Meridian Books, 1961), 19.

<sup>24</sup>ASW to Uncle, August 13, 1898.

<sup>25</sup>ASW to Sister, August 30, 1898.

<sup>26</sup>ASW to Uncle, September 11, 1898.

<sup>27</sup>ASW to Sister Anna, October 14, 1898.

<sup>28</sup>ASW to Sister and Brother, October 5, 1898.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>ASW to Sister Anna, October 14, 1898.

<sup>33</sup>ASW to Sister and Brother, November 25, 1898.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>ASW to Sister and Brother, January 2, 1899.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., along with his promotion, Wadsworth was transferred to Company B. "Report of Operations," 55.

<sup>37</sup>ASW to Brother, January 6, 1899.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

<sup>39</sup>ASW to Sister, February 19, 1899; "Report of Operations," 15, 20.

<sup>40</sup>ASW to Sister, February 19, 1899. For an account of the military career of John M. Stotsenburg, see J.R. Johnson, "Colonel John Miller Stotsenburg: A Man of Valor," *Nebraska History* 50 (Winter 1969):339-57.

<sup>41</sup>ASW to Aunt Jennie, March 8, 1899.

<sup>42</sup>ASW to Sister, February 19, 1899.

<sup>43</sup>ASW to Aunt Jennie, March 8, 1899; "Report of Operations," 54-55, 65.

<sup>44</sup>ASW to Aunt Jennie, March 8, 1899.

<sup>45</sup>ASW to Sister Hattie, March 19, 1899.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>ASW to Sister, April 4, 1899.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>ASW to Sister and Brother, April 7, 1899.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

<sup>51</sup>ASW to Sister, April 29, 1899.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.; "Report of Operations," 65; Johnson, *John Miller Stotsenburg*.

<sup>53</sup>ASW to Dear Auntie, April 26, 1899.

<sup>54</sup>ASW to Sister, April 29, 1899.

<sup>55</sup>ASW Diary, April-June, 1899.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>ASW to Sister and Brother, June 1, 1899. George was a friend from Beatrice, Nebraska.

<sup>58</sup>ASW Diary, June 25, 1899.

<sup>59</sup>ASW to Sister, not dated

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., August 18, 1899.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., November 8, 1899.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>ASW to Sister, September 26, 1899.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., October 19 or October 29, 1899.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., November 8, 1899.

<sup>66</sup>ASW to Brother, December 10, 1899.

<sup>67</sup>ASW to Brother and Sister, December 27, 1899.

<sup>68</sup>ASW to Aunt Jennie, December 27, 1899.

<sup>69</sup>ASW to Sister Anna, January 14, 1900.

<sup>70</sup>ASW to Sister Hattie, January 15, 1900.

<sup>71</sup>ASW to Sister Anna, March 20, 1900.

<sup>72</sup>ASW to Sister Hattie, March 20, 1900.

<sup>73</sup>*Beatrice Daily Express*, March 12, 1900, 3:4.