



Whipping Our Army into Shape To Whip Spain—

THEODORE ROOSEVELT Tells of Thrilling War Days in '98.

27th Article.

Gen. Joseph Wheeler (in foreground)
Commander of Left Wing of Army Before
San Juan Hill. (Left to Right) Maj. Geo. M. Davis,
Col. Brodie, Chaplain Brown, Leonard Wood,
and Colonel Theodore Roosevelt.

It would be instructive to remember, if only we were willing to do so, the fairly comic panic which swept in waves over our seacoast, first when it became evident that war was about to be declared, and then when it was declared. The public waked up to the sufficiently obvious fact that the Government was in its usual state—perennial unreadiness for war. Thereupon the people of the seaboard district passed at one bound from unreasoning confidence that war never could come to unreasoning fear as to what might happen now that it had come. That acute philosopher, Mr. Dooley, proclaimed that in the Spanish War we were in a dream, but that the Spaniards were in a trance. This just about summed up the facts. Our people had for decades scoffed at the thought of making ready for possible war. Now, when it was too late, they not only backed every measure, wise and unwise, that offered a chance of supplying a need that ought to have been met before, but they also fell into a condition of panic apprehension as to what the foe might do.

For years we had been saying, just as any number of our people now say, that no nation would venture to attack us. Then when we did go to war with an exceedingly feeble nation, we for the time being, rushed to the other extreme of feeling and attributed to this feeble nation plans of offensive warfare which it never dreamed of making, and which, if made, it would have been wholly unable to execute. Some of my readers doubtless remember the sinister intentions and unlimited possibilities for destruction with which the fertile imagination of the yellow press endowed the armored cruiser *Vicaya* when she appeared in American waters just before war was declared. The state of nervousness along much of the seacoast was funny in view of the lack of foundation for it; but it offered food for serious thought as to what would happen if we ever became engaged with a serious foe.

The Governor of one state actually announced that he would not permit the National Guard of that state to leave its borders, the idea being to retain it against a possible invasion. So many of the business men of the City of Boston took their securities inland to Worcester that the safety deposit companies of Worcester proved unable to take care of them. In my own neighborhood on Long Island, clauses were gravely put into leases to the effect that in case the property were destroyed by the Spaniards the lease should lapse. As Assistant Secretary of the Navy I had every conceivable impossible request made to me. Members of Congress who had actively opposed building any navy came clamorously around to ask each for a ship for some special purpose of protection connected with his district. It seems incredible, but it is true that not only these Congressmen, but the Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade of different coast cities all lost their heads for the time being and raised a deafening clamor and brought every species of pressure to bear on the Administration to get it to adopt the most fatal course—that is, to distribute the Navy, ship by ship, at all kinds of points and in all kinds of ports, with the idea of protecting everything everywhere and thereby rendering it absolutely certain that even the Spanish fleet, poor though it was, would be able to pick up our own Navy ship by ship in detail. One Congressman besought me for a ship to protect Jewell Island, off the coast of Georgia, an island which derived its sole consequence because it contained the Winter homes of certain millionaires. A lady whose husband occupied a very influential position and who was normally a most admirable and sensible woman, came to insist that a ship should be anchored off a huge seaside hotel because she had a house in the neighborhood.

Smooth-Bore Defense.
There were many such instances. One stood out above the others. A certain seaboard state contained in its Congressional delegation one of the most influential men in the Senate and

one of the most influential men in the lower house. These two men had been worse than lukewarm about building up the Navy and had scoffed at the idea of there ever being any danger from any foreign power. With the advent of war the feelings of their constituents, and therefore their own feelings, suffered an immediate change and they demanded that a ship be anchored in the harbor of their city as a protection. Getting no comfort from me, they went "higher up" and became a kind of permanent committee in attendance upon the President. They were very influential men in the houses, with whom it was important for the Administration to keep on good terms; and moreover, they possessed a pertinacity as great as the widow who won her case from the unjust judge. Finally the President gave in and no effort was made to see that a ship was sent to the city in question. I was bound that, as long as a ship had to be sent, it should not be a ship worth anything. Accordingly a Civil War monitor, with one smooth-bore gun, manned by a crew of about 31 naval militia, was sent to the city in question, under the command of a young man who had been a member of the House of Representatives. The monitor was a hazardous trip for the unfortunate naval militia men, but it was safely accomplished; and joy and peace descended upon the Senator and Congressman and upon the President when they had joined the vessel. Incidentally, the fact that the protecting war vessel would not have been a formidable foe to any antagonist of much more modern construction than the galleys of Alcibiades seemed to disturb nobody.

The Call to Arms.
This was one side of the picture. The other side was that the crisis at once brought to the front any amount of latent fighting strength. There were plenty of Congressmen who showed cool-headed wisdom and resolution. The plain people, the men and women back of the persons who lost their heads, set seriously to work to see that we did whatever was necessary, and made the job a thorough one. The young men swarmed to enlist. In time of peace it had been difficult to fill the scanty regular Army and Navy, and there were innumerable desertions; now the ships and regiments were over-animated, and so many deserters returned in order to fight that it became difficult to decide what to do with them. The war was a patriotic war, and the men were friendly. The great powers of continental Europe were all unfriendly. They jeered at our ships and men, and with fatuous politeness insisted that the Spaniards would prove too much for our "mercenary" because we were a commercial people of low ideals who could not fight, while the men whom we attempted to hire for that purpose were certain to run on the day of battle.

Leonard Wood.
Among my friends was the then Army Surgeon Leonard Wood. He was a surgeon. Not having an income, he had to earn his own living. He had gone through the Harvard Medical School, and had then joined the Army in the Southwest as a contract doctor. He had every physical, moral and mental quality which fitted him for a soldier's life and for the exercise of command. In the inconceivably wearing and harassing campaigns against the Apaches he had served nominally as a surgeon, really in command of troops, on more than one expedition. He was as anxious as I was that if there were war we should both have our part in it. I had always felt that if there were a serious war I wished to be in a position to explain to my children why I did take part in it. Moreover, I had very deeply felt that it was our duty to force the Spaniards to fight, and I had publicly expressed this feeling, and when a man takes such a position, he ought to be willing to make his words good by his deeds unless there is some very strong reason to the contrary. He should pay with his body.

The Rough Riders.
As soon as war was upon us, Wood and I began to try for a chance to go to the front. Congress had authorized the raising of three National Volunteer Cavalry regiments, wholly apart from the state contingents. Secretary Alger, of the War Department, was fond of me personally, and Wood was his family doctor. Alger had been a gal-

lant soldier in the Civil War, and was almost the only member of the Administration who felt all along that we would have to go to war with Spain over Cuba. He liked my attitude in the matter, and because of his remembrance of his own experiences he sympathized with my desire to go to the front. Accordingly he offered me the command of one of the regiments. I told him that after six weeks' service in the field I would feel competent to handle the regiment, but that I would not know how to equip it or how to get it into the first action, but that Wood was entirely competent at once to take command, and that if he would make Wood Lieutenant-Colonel, and that Wood would be a ship worth anything, but I answered that I did not wish to rise on any man's shoulders; that I hoped to be given every chance that my deeds and abilities warranted; but that I did not wish what I did not earn, and that, above all, I did not wish to hold any position where anyone else did the work. He laughed at me a little and said I was foolish, but I do not think he really minded, and he promised to do as I wished. True to his word, he secured the appointment of Wood as Colonel and of myself as Lieutenant-Colonel of the First United States Volunteer Cavalry. This was soon nicknamed, both by the public and by the rest of the Army the Rough Riders, doubtless because the bulk of the men were from the southwestern ranch country and were skilled in the wild horsemanship of the great plains.

Raising the Regiment.
Wood instantly began the work of raising the regiment. He first assembled several old non-commissioned officers of experience, put them in office and gave them blanks for requisitions for the full equipment of a cavalry regiment. He selected San Antonio as the gathering place for it, in a good horse country, near the Gulf, from some port on which we would have to embark, and near an old arsenal and a large number of men. We got a good deal of stuff, some of it practically condemned, but which we found serviceable at a pinch, and much better than nothing. He organized a horse band in Texas and began purchasing all horses that were not too big and were sound. A day or two after he was commissioned he wrote out in the office of the Secretary of War, telegrams to the Governors of Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Indian Territory in substance as follows:

The President desires to raise volunteers in your Territory to form part of a regiment of mounted riflemen to be commanded by Leonard Wood, Colonel; Theodore Roosevelt, Lieutenant-Colonel. He desires that the men selected should be young, sound, good shots and good riders, and that you expedite by all means in your power the enrollment of these men.

(Signed)
R. A. ALGER, Secretary of War.
As soon as he had attended to a few more odds and ends he left Washington, and the day after his arrival in San Antonio the troops began to arrive.

The Value of Black Top Boots.
For several weeks before I joined the regiment, to which Wood went ahead of me, I continued as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, trying to get some coherence of plan between the War Department and the Navy Department; and also being used by Wood to finish getting the equipment for the regiment. As regards finding out what the plans of the War Department were, the task was simple. They had no plans. Even during the first months before the outbreak of hostilities very little was done in the way of efficient preparation. On one occasion, when we knew that the declaration of war was sure to come in a few days, I went on military business to the office of one of the highest line generals of the Army, a man who at that moment ought to have been working 18 hours out of the 24 on the vital problems ahead of him. What he was ac-

tually doing was trying on a new type of smart-looking uniform on certain enlisted men; and he called me in to ask my advice as to the position of the pockets in the blouse with a view to making it look attractive. An aide of this general—funny enough a good fighting man in actual service—when I consulted him as to what my uniform for the campaign should be, laid special stress upon my purchasing a pair of black top-boots for full dress, explaining that they were very effective on hotel piazzas and in parlors. I did not suppose that the people who took so much interest in the army; demagogues clamored against it, and inadequate though it was in size, insisted that it should be still further reduced. Popular orators always appealed to the volunteers; the regulars had no votes and there was no point in politicians thinking of them. The chief activity shown by Congressmen about the army was in getting special army posts built in places where there was no need for them. Even the work of the army in its campaigns against the Indians was of a character that it was generally performed by small bodies of 50 or 100 men. Until a man ceased being a Lieutenant he usually had plenty of professional work to attend to and was employed in the field, and in short, had almost no opportunity to perform any work corresponding to his rank and no little opportunity to do any military work whatsoever. The very best men, men like Lawton, Chaffee, Hawkins and Sumner, men that only men under or beside whom I served, remained good soldiers, soldiers of the best stamp, in spite of the disheartening conditions. But it was not to be expected that the average man could continue to grow when every influence was against him. Accordingly, when the Spanish War suddenly burst upon us, a number of inert soldiers, Captains and field officers were, much against their own wishes, suddenly thrust into the command of regiments, brigades and even divisions and army corps. Often these men failed painfully. This was not their fault; it was the fault of the Nation, that is, the fault of all of us, of you, my readers, and of myself, and of those like us, because we had permitted conditions to be such as to render these men unfit for command. Take the case of Captain of the Civil War, the conditions were such that after a few years the army officer stagnated so far as his professional training was concerned. When the Spanish War broke out, the army was largely on a war footing, as any navy which is even respectably cared for in time of peace must be. The admiral, actually shooting at a foe most of the time, got the equipment for the navy on board ship went through in time of peace practically all that they would have to go through in time of war. The regular army was in the Navy Department were for the most part men who had seen sea service,

upon his devoted head. He was made scapegoat for our Nation's shortcomings. The fault was not his; the fault and responsibility lay with us, the people, who for 33 years had permitted our representatives in Congress and in National executive office to bear themselves so that it was absolutely impossible to avoid the great bulk of all the trouble that occurred, and of all the shortcomings of which our people complained, during the Spanish War. The chief immediate cause was the condition of red-tape bureaucracy which existed in the War Department at Washington, which had prevented any good organization or the preparation of any good plan of operation for using our men and supplies. The recurrence of these conditions, even though in somewhat less aggravated form, in any future emergency is as certain as sunrise unless we bring about the principle of a four years' detail in the staff corps—a principle which Congress has now for years stubbornly refused to grant.

How High to Shave a Mule's Tail.
All this was changed so far as the army was concerned. Not only was it possible to decrease the efficiency of the army without being called to account for it, but the only way in which the Secretary of War could gain credit for himself or the Administration was by economy, and the easiest way to economize was in connection with something that would not be felt unless war should arise. The people took no interest whatever in the army; demagogues clamored against it, and inadequate though it was in size, insisted that it should be still further reduced. Popular orators always appealed to the volunteers; the regulars had no votes and there was no point in politicians thinking of them. The chief activity shown by Congressmen about the army was in getting special army posts built in places where there was no need for them. Even the work of the army in its campaigns against the Indians was of a character that it was generally performed by small bodies of 50 or 100 men. Until a man ceased being a Lieutenant he usually had plenty of professional work to attend to and was employed in the field, and in short, had almost no opportunity to perform any work corresponding to his rank and no little opportunity to do any military work whatsoever. The very best men, men like Lawton, Chaffee, Hawkins and Sumner, men that only men under or beside whom I served, remained good soldiers, soldiers of the best stamp, in spite of the disheartening conditions. But it was not to be expected that the average man could continue to grow when every influence was against him. Accordingly, when the Spanish War suddenly burst upon us, a number of inert soldiers, Captains and field officers were, much against their own wishes, suddenly thrust into the command of regiments, brigades and even divisions and army corps. Often these men failed painfully. This was not their fault; it was the fault of the Nation, that is, the fault of all of us, of you, my readers, and of myself, and of those like us, because we had permitted conditions to be such as to render these men unfit for command. Take the case of Captain of the Civil War, the conditions were such that after a few years the army officer stagnated so far as his professional training was concerned. When the Spanish War broke out, the army was largely on a war footing, as any navy which is even respectably cared for in time of peace must be. The admiral, actually shooting at a foe most of the time, got the equipment for the navy on board ship went through in time of peace practically all that they would have to go through in time of war. The regular army was in the Navy Department were for the most part men who had seen sea service,

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The Lesson of NoGI.
There are nations who only need to have peaceful ideals inculcated, and to whom militarism is a curse and a misfortune. There are other nations, like our own, so happily situated that they may be said to have no military in their minds. They are wholly free from any tendency improperly to exalt or to practice militarism. These nations, like our own, are not nations of peace. They are nations of peace, and their military ideals no less than peaceful ideals. The exaltation of NoGI's career, set forth so strikingly in Stanley Washburn's little volume on the great Japanese warrior, contains much that is especially needed for us of America, prone as we are to regard the exigencies of a purely commercial and industrial civilization as excluding us from the need of admiring and practicing the heroic and warlike virtues.

Lariat and Black Powder.
Our people are not military. We need normally only a small standing army; but there should be behind it a reserve of instructed men big enough to fill it up to full war strength, which is over twice the peace strength. Moreover, the young men of the country should realize that it is the duty of every one of them to prepare himself so that in time of need he may speedily become an efficient soldier—a duty now generally forgotten, but which should be known just what smokeless powder is, and should get first choice. Wood's experience was what enabled us to equip ourselves in short order. There was another cavalry organization whose commander was at the War Department about this time, and we had been eyeing him with much alertness as a rival. One day I asked him what his plans were about arming and drilling his troops, who were of precisely the type of our own men. He answered that he expected "to give each of the boys two revolvers and a lariat, and then just turn them loose." I reported the conversation to Wood, with the remark that we might feel ourselves safe from rivalry in that quarter; and safe we were.

Incompetency and War.
The bureau chiefs were for the most part elderly incompetents, whose idea was to do their routine duties in such way as to escape the censure of routine bureaucratic superiors and to avoid a Congressional investigation. They had not the slightest conception of preparing the army for war. It was impossible that they could have any such conception. The people and the Congress did not want the army prepared for war; and those editors and philanthropists and peace advocates who felt vaguely that if the army were incompetent their principles were safe, actually inveighed against any proposal to make it efficient, on the ground that this showed a natural bloodthirstiness in the proposer. When such were the conditions, it was absolutely impossible that either the War Department or the army could do well in the event of war. Secretary Alger happened to be Secretary when war broke out, and all the responsibility for the shortcomings of the department was visited

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crossbows and mangonels. We succeeded, thanks to Wood, in getting the same cavalry carbines that were used by the regulars. We were determined to do this, not only because the weapons were good, but because this would in all probability mean that we should be brigaded with the regular cavalry, which it was certain would be sent immediately to the front for the fighting.

Bureaucracy and Red Tape.
There was one worthy bureau chief who was continually refusing applications of mine as irregular. In each case I wrote an appeal to Secretary Alger—who helped me in every way—and got an order from him countenancing the irregularity. For instance, I found out that as we were nearer the July date than the January date for the issuance of clothing, and as it had long been customary to issue the winter clothing in July, so as to give ample leisure for getting it to all the various posts, it was therefore solemnly proposed to issue this same winter clothing to us who were about to start for a summer campaign in the tropics. This would seem incredible to those who have never dealt with an inert officialdom, a red-tape bureaucracy, but such is the fact. I rectified this and got an order for khaki clothing. We were then told we would have to advertise 30 days for horses. This meant that I had this office running in such a groove that I had to advertise for horses. So I made another successful appeal to the Secretary. Other difficulties came up about wagons, and various other articles, and in each case the same result followed. On the last occasion, when I came up in triumph with the needed order, the words my office head who bore me no animosity, but who did feel that fate had been very unkind, threw himself back in his chair and exclaimed with a look of intense indignation: "This is the worst of it, that war was an illness, and that the work of the War Department."

There were of course department heads and bureau chiefs and assistants who, in spite of the worthlessness of the system, and of the paralyzing conditions that had prevailed, remained first-class men. An example of this was Commissary-General Weston. His energy, activity, administrative efficiency, and common sense were supplemented by an eager desire to help everyone to vice. It is that better for the country, by making him a major-general.

(The next installment of Mr. Roosevelt's "Chapters of a Possible Autobiography" is entitled "The Rough Riders in Cuba." It will appear in the Oregonian next Sunday.)

The Lure of the City.
Atlantic.
People flock to the cities for the advantages there offered and find disadvantages. Parents sell their wholesome country homes on account of their children and go where there are grand churches, superior schools, and attractive libraries, to find themselves close to drinking saloons, gambling dens, dancehalls and insaneful places. The cities are open every week day, day long and far into the night. Boys and young men are not attracted to the churches. The saloons hold out all sorts of attractions to beguile them within their doors. What wonder that so many city boys grow up with disordered appetites and depraved tastes? A gentleman was recently heard to say: "As I go along the street the sight of cigars in the store windows make me want to smoke and I step in and buy when otherwise I should not think of it." This gentleman is an eminent scholar, a principal of a boys' school, an advocate of reforms, and influential in church and society. If the temptation of the store windows was too much for him, can we expect his pupils to be proof against it?