

## THE BATTLE OF MANILA.

The following very interesting letter anent the battle of Manila in which the Utah boys participated, comes from a former employe of the Co-operative Wagon and Machine company in this city:

Camp Dewey, Near Manila,

August 4, 1898.

Dear Fellow Employes and Friends:

When I left the city of the Saints, a poor, unsophisticated little "ink dealer," I had formed an idea that all we had to do was to get to Manila, and we would be at Manila. Well, we are at Manila and yet we are not at Manila. I thought all we had to do was to walk into the town and "bum" for a few months and then come back home heroes. As usual, I was "out on a limb" and got called. The beautiful (?) city of Manila is  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles from here, but the sand around the gates scorches your feet so we don't like to go in. The Spanish are very hospitable, and freely invite us up, but the food they have for us is largely composed of hot ingredients, and as many of us came from a country somewhat cooler than this we are afraid the aforesaid food may somewhat impair our indigestion.

When I left my Ma and Pa some one (a great many "some ones") told me the Spanish were cowards, couldn't fight, and would surrender just as soon as I asked them to.

You can put it down as being straight that they can fight; are not cowards, and would not surrender if I asked them too. We had a little three-round contest the other night. You may hear of it before you get this letter.

The wall around Manila is 25 or 30 feet high and 20 or 25 feet thick. The Spanish trenches are about 300 yards from the wall and can evidently be easily entered from the city by tunnels under the wall. The trenches are not as high as ours. The wall, trenches, and insurgents' trenches extend all around the city.

Our trenches are about 700 yards back of the Spanish trenches, and extend from the coast to the road; a distance of 270 yards. The insurgents are supposed to have control of the trenches extending from the road on the right clean around the city. There were no insurgents around us at all the night of the fight.

Our trenches are about 6 feet high, 5 feet thick at the top and about 12 feet thick at the bottom. One hundred yards back of our intrenchments are a portion of trenches which were turned over to us by the insurgents as a basis of operations. Here (in the old trench) is where the first American artillery was planted on the field. This was on July 29th, and the first two guns were the first and second section guns of Battery A. The first gun of American artillery fired in this war was the gun belonging to my section. C. E. Varian was the gunner. This, however, was on the night of the 31st.

On the morning of the 31st, about 2:30 a. m., Lieut. Naylor had the two guns brought up into the new intrenchments. The Colorado boys built the intrenchment on the night of July 29th.

One of Battery B's guns was brought up on the new intrenchment on July 30th. The Spaniards must have seen this gun brought up as it was done in the day time. But I do not think they knew about our other three guns. An embrasure about three feet wide and made in four places in the intrenchment and some of the matting made of bamboo by the natives was laid over the front. These mats were then covered with about 6 inches of loose earth thus making the intrenchment appear unbroken. This no doubt deceived the Spanish.

On the night of July 31st our force was as follows: Four companies of the Tenth Pennsylvania and fifteen men from each of Utah's batteries including officers. Our lieutenant was Gibbs and B's Grow. It happened to be my turn to go up—or not exactly my turn but the regular order of men went up from the battery. As I was ranking sergeant, I went and gunners Varian and Kneass were to handle the guns. Each gunner had five men under him, and one extra man for the two detachments.

The men in Varian's detachment were: No. 1, Privates Duffin, G., No. 2, Jacobson, No. 3, Peters, No. 4, Leaver, No. 5, Nielsen. In Kneass: No. 1, Privates Robinson, No. 2, Ryan, No. 3, Doty, No. 4, Jensen, No. 5, Morgan, extra Private Robinson. I do not know who the men were in battery B, but they are all heroes.

Two companies of the Tenth Pennsylvania were back a mile from the entrenchments as a reserve, and two companies of the same regiment were out making our proposed entrenchment extensions. About twenty of the Pennsylvania men were out as outposts directly in front of where their men were working. This makes the force in the entrenchments four companies of sixty men each, 240; fifteen battery B, fifteen battery A, were thirty men; total, 270.

There may have been more than sixty men to their companies, but I don't think so. Understand, the Pennsylvania regiment was in the trenches above. No other command. It was their turn. They were armed with the 45 caliber Springfield rifle, the same as the N. G. U. has.

A little hexagonal building was occupied by some Spanish sharpshooters, and also contained a rapid fire gun. We wanted to blow this up during the day time on the 31st, but the orders forbid our artillery firing unless compelled to do so to resist an attack. A square building directly on our intrenchments was a monastery originally occupied by the Spanish before we came. The Spanish had been driven out by the insurgents, who took possession, until they, in turn, were driven out by the Spanish artillery, at the time we took possession, it was vacated and completely riddled with shot and shell. Two of our guns, "A," were on the right of it, and "B's" two guns on the left. The gun numbered 1 was run by Gunner Kneass and No. 2 by Gunner Varian.

Up to noon on the 31st we had occasional shots from Spanish sharpshooters but after that time all was quiet—too quiet in fact, for their complete silence was ominous. The Spaniards were at Maso all day, and at night had vespers.

At about 10:30 a. m. one of the outposts discerned what he thought was a man, and fired two shots in quick succession at him. He was answered by a single report from the Spanish. In a few more minutes our outposts fired a volley, and shortly after a volley rang out from the direction in which our outposts had fired. Our outposts were gradually working back to the entrenchments, but just before they reached them, the Spanish fired from the sea coast on our left, and as far to the right as we could see. This was at 11:20 p. m., and they kept up this firing until nearly 2:30 a. m., or nearly three hours and ten minutes.

As soon as they opened fire, all we could see was a sheet of flame about eighteen inches wide and over a mile long. The Pennsylvania four companies under Major Cuthbertson returned the fire, and all you could hear was the crack of rifles, commands of officers and the songs the balls sang as they came whistling over our heads. The two companies back in the reserve and the

two companies of outposts came to our assistance immediately, making our force 8 companies artillery, infantry, force eight companies infantry—480; artillery, 30, of 510 were in all.

We (artillery) had been cautioned not to fire unless absolutely compelled to do so, and we must have stood there for nearly half an hour listening to all the music without taking any part. But finally the Spanish came so close we could hear their Mauser's magazines working. (The Mauser is a gun about the same style as the Kragg-Jorgensen) and we knew they must be nearly on us. It was then we received the command to "load," and immediately after "fire." The gun belonging to my section blazed away first threw up our masking thirty-five or forty feet into the air. This was the signal for the other three guns and soon all four were pegging away with shrapnel punched at zero.

Now a word of explanation might not be amiss here. A shrapnel shell, such as we use is about eleven inches long and nearly the same diameter as the gun (necessarily). I say "nearly" as it is not quite. A band of copper about one half of an inch wide extends around the shell about one and a half or two inches from the base. This is of soft copper and prevents the shell from otherwise tearing or injuring the rifling of the cannon. The shell itself is of iron, hollow, tapering to a point. Thickness of shell sides about one-fourth to one-half inch. Each shell contains 228 balls the size of a good rifle ball, and four ounces of explosive to explode the same.

The exploding of the shell is done by means of a fuse in the top of the shell running around in a spiral which extends (from top to bottom) about two and a half inches long the shell going in a spiral around it. The spiral fuse is protected by a brass cap which fits around the shell completely enclosing it. In this cap are ninety holes punctured (in ours) which are divided into fifteen seconds. Each second is subdivided into sixths. These holes are punched by means of a small "gunner's punch" but as both our punches broke, we were forced to punch ours with safety pins. When the hole is punched it connects the fuse with the four ounces of explosive. The fuse is ignited by the discharge and when the time at which the fuse is punched expires, the shell explodes. We began by punching ours at one second and from 0 to 4 5-6, we alternately used the time limit as the Spanish advanced and retreated.

Our fire must have put many of them on the "bum." Many of the infantry boys said when we fired many men went up from among the Dons. We aimed high, low, and swept their ranks right and left. Some idea of the danger our men were in, and particularly the gunners, may be formed when you take into consideration the fact that we were placed in the worst possible position any light artillery ever had. We were from 75 to 700 yards from their infantry, according as they advanced or retreated, and their rapid fire guns were continually pouring it into us. A perfect rain of bullets continually poured into us from 11:20 until 2:30. We had some old G. A. R. men among the Tenth Penn. and they all said the Spanish fire was the most severe they ever experienced. An open space four feet wide laid open our gun and through this space bullets continually "plunged." After each shot our guns would recoil fifteen feet, and the gunner, No. 1, 2, and 3 or 5 had to run the gun "by hand to the front" back into place. The gun was then swabbed, the shell inserted and rammed into place, the powder (cartridge) inserted,