

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen
Weber Freiligrath Frey
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Lichtenberg Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer
Trackl Stevenson Lenz Hambrecht Doyle Gjellerup
Mommssen Thoma Tolstoi Hanrieder Droste-Hülshoff
Dach Thoma Verne Hägele Hauptmann Humboldt
Karrillon Reuter Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer George
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Grimm Jerome Rilke Bebel Proust
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy
Storm Casanova Lessing Langbein Gilm Gryphius
Chamberlain Schiller Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates
Brentano Strachwitz Katharina II. von Rußland Bellamy Schilling Kralik Raabe Gibbon Tschechow
Lons Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Wilde Gleim Vulpius
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Morgenstern Goedicke
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Kleist Mörike Musil
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo Moltke
Nestroy Marie de France
Nietzsche Nansen Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht Ringelnatz
Marx Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz
von Ossietzky May vom Stein Lawrence Irving
Petalozzi Platon Pückler Michelangelo Knigge Kock Kafka
Sachs Poe Liebermann Kock Korolenko
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**History of the Gatling Gun
Detachment, Fifth Army Corps, at
Santiago With a Few Unvarnished
Truths Concerning that Expedition**

John H. (John Henry) Parker

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DEDICATION.

To the Enlisted Members of the Detachment, Who, by Their Devotion,
Courage and Endurance, Made Its Success Possible, this Volume is
Dedicated as a Token of Esteem by the Author.

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The photographic illustrations in this work are due to the courage and kindness of Mr. John N. Weigle, of Gettysburg, Pa. This young man was first sergeant of the Gatling Gun Detachment, and took with him a large supply of material. It was his delight to photograph everything that occurred, and his pleasure to furnish a set of photographs for the use of the author. Mr. Weigle was recommended for a commission in the Regular Army of the United States, for his extreme gallantry in action, and is a magnificent type of the American youth. The thanks of the author are tendered to him for the photographic illustrations so generously supplied.

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PREFACE.

On the morning of July 1st, the dismounted cavalry, including my regiment, stormed Kettle Hill, driving the Spaniards from their trenches. After taking the crest, I made the men under me turn and begin volley-firing at the San Juan Blockhouse and intrenchments against which Hawkins' and Kent's Infantry were advancing. While thus firing, there suddenly smote on our ears a peculiar drumming sound. One or two of the men cried out, "The Spanish machine guns!" but, after listening a moment, I leaped to my feet and called, "It's the Gatlings, men! It's our Gatlings!" Immediately the troopers began to cheer lustily, for the sound was most inspiring. Whenever the drumming stopped, it was only to open again a little nearer the front. Our artillery, using black powder, had not been able to stand within range of the Spanish rifles, but it was perfectly evident that the Gatlings were troubled by no such consideration, for they were advancing all the while.

Soon the infantry took San Juan Hill, and, after one false start, we in turn rushed the next line of block-houses and intrenchments, and then swung to the left and took the chain of hills immediately fronting Santiago. Here I found myself on the extreme front, in command of the fragments of all six regiments of the cavalry division. I received orders to halt where I was, but to hold the hill at all hazards. The Spaniards were heavily reinforced and they opened a tremendous fire upon us from their batteries and trenches. We laid down just behind the gentle crest of the hill, firing as we got the chance, but, for the most part, taking the fire without responding. As the afternoon wore on, however, the Spaniards became bolder, and made an attack upon the position. They did not push it home, but they did advance, their firing being redoubled. We at once ran forward to the crest and opened on them, and, as we did so, the unmistakable drumming of the Gatlings opened abreast of us, to our right, and the men cheered again. As soon as the attack was definitely repulsed, I strolled over to find out about the Gatlings,

and there I found Lieut. Parker with two of his guns right on our left, abreast of our men, who at that time were closer to the Spaniards than any others.

From thence on, Parker's Gatlings were our inseparable companions throughout the siege. They were right up at the front. When we dug our trenches, he took off the wheels of his guns and put them in the trenches. His men and ours slept in the same bomb-proofs and shared with one another whenever either side got a supply of beans or coffee and sugar. At no hour of the day or night was Parker anywhere but where we wished him to be, in the event of an attack. If a troop of my regiment was sent off to guard some road or some break in the lines, we were almost certain to get Parker to send a Gatling along, and, whether the change was made by day or by night, the Gatling went. Sometimes we took the initiative and started to quell the fire of the Spanish trenches; sometimes they opened upon us; but, at whatever hour of the twenty-four the fighting began, the drumming of the Gatlings was soon heard through the cracking of our own carbines.

[Illustration: Map—Santiago and Surrounding Area.]

I have had too little experience to make my judgment final; but certainly, if I were to command either a regiment or a brigade, whether of cavalry or infantry, I would try to get a Gatling battery—under a good man—with me. I feel sure that the greatest possible assistance would be rendered, under almost all circumstances, by such a Gatling battery, if well handled; for I believe that it could be pushed fairly to the front of the firing-line. At any rate, this is the way that Lieut. Parker used his battery when he went into action at San Juan, and when he kept it in the trenches beside the Rough Riders before Santiago.

Theodore Roosevelt.

CHAPTER I.

L'ENVOI.

The history of the Gatling Gun Detachment, Fifth Army Corps, is to a certain extent the history of the Santiago campaign. The detachment was organized on the spur of the moment, to utilize material which would otherwise have been useless, and was with the Fifth Corps in all the campaign. It participated in all the fighting of that campaign, except the fight at La Guasimas, and was disbanded upon the return of the Fifth Corps to Montauk. Whatever hardships were endured by the Fifth Corps were shared by this detachment; whatever dangers were faced by the Fifth Corps were faced by it also; where the hottest fighting occurred this detachment went in and stayed; and at the surrender it was paraded, to use the words of General Shafter, "Upon that portion of the line which it occupied so promptly and defended so well."

But this memoir is not intended as a history of that campaign nor of the Fifth Corps. The author has not the data available to cover so large a field, nor the ability to do justice to the courage, fortitude, and endurance so heroically displayed by that gallant army. That story will be written by abler pens, and will be the wonder of the world when it is told.

This story is that of an experiment. It is told to lay before the general public, as well as the military critic, the work of a little detachment of thirty-seven men, armed with an untried weapon, organized in the short space of four days preceding July 1, 1898, and which without proper equipment, adequate instruction, or previous training, in the face of discouragements and sneers, and in spite of obstacles enough to make the mere retrospect sickening, still achieved for itself a warm place in the hearts of all true soldiers, and covered itself with glory upon the hardest fought battle-field of the Hispano-American War.

This story is to commemorate the gallantry of the enlisted men who helped to make history and revolutionize tactics at Santiago. It will tell of the heroism of the plain American Regular, who, without hope of preferment or possibility of reward, boldly undertook to confute the erroneous theories of military compilers, who, without originality or reason, have unblushingly cribbed the labored efforts of foreign officers, and foisted these compilations of second-hand opinions upon the American Army as military text-books of authority and weight. These literary soldiers declared, following the lead of their foreign guides, that "The value of machine guns on the battle-field is doubtful," and that "Their offensive value is probably very small." They also agreed, with most touching unanimity, that "A direct assault upon a fortified position, occupied by good, unshaken infantry, armed with the modern rifle and plentifully supplied with ammunition is sure to fail, unless made by overwhelming numbers and prepared by strong and accurate fire by artillery."

These servile imitators of foreign pen soldiers were destined to see all their pet theories exploded by the grim old mountain puma from California and his brave Fifth Corps. They were to learn, so far as they are capable of learning, that the American Regular makes tactics as he needs them; that the rules of war established by pen soldiers do not form the basis of actual operations in the field; that theories must go to the wall before the stern logic of irrefutable facts; and that deductions based on the drill-made automatons of European armies are not applicable to an army composed of American Volunteer Regulars, led by our trained officers.

We shall see that an army destitute of cavalry, and hence without "eyes"; not supported by artillery; in the most difficult country over which soldiers ever operated, and without maps or reconnaissance—in twenty days shut up and captured an army of twice its own effective strength, in a strongly fortified city, with better served and more numerous artillery.

We shall find that when the "sledge" was not at hand, American ingenuity was able to use the "mallet" instead, making light machine guns perform all the function of artillery, and dispensing altogether, so far as any practical results were concerned, with that expensive and much overrated arm; that the Regular private is ca-

pable of meeting all demands upon his intelligence, and that the American non. com. is the superior of foreign officers.

It is also hoped to place before the intelligent American public some correct ideas of the new arm which was tried thoroughly at Santiago for the first time in the history of the world. The machine gun is the latest practical product of American inventive genius applied to war. The first form of this weapon tried, the mitrailleuse, was not very successful. It failed, not on account of faults of construction, or imperfect mechanism, but because its proper tactical employment had not been thought out by the French army. Since that time machine guns have been greatly improved, but no one has succeeded in making their great value appreciated by military authorities. The failures of the French brought the gun into disfavor, and created a prejudice against its employment.

The Artillery of the world, which poses in every country as an elite body of scientific fighters, and is often found on the battle-field to be an aggregation of abstruse theorists, were jealous and contemptuous. They said, "See how easily the artillery knocked out machine guns at Gravelotte." The Cavalry of the world, famous everywhere for an *esprit-du-corps* which looks haughtily down on all other arms of the service, were too deeply absorbed in the merits of saber vs. revolver, and in the proper length of their spectacular plumes, to give a second thought to this new, untried, and therefore worthless weapon. The world's Infantry, resting upon the assumption that it is the backbone of all armies, and the only real, reliable fighting body under all conditions, left the consideration of these vague dreams of mechanical destructiveness to lunatics, cranks, and philanthropists.

In our own country the Ordnance Department, which is the trial court before which all military inventions must appear, scouted the idea of usefulness of machine guns even after war was declared, and adhered to the view that machine guns, in the very nature of things, could never be useful except in the defense of fortified positions; that they never could be brought up on the battlefield, nor used if they were brought up. This view was that of a prominent young officer of that department who wrote a report on the subject, and it seemed to express the views of the department.

This view must have been that of our War Department, for it did not even acknowledge the receipt of drawings and specifications for a machine gun carriage, offered freely to the Government as a gift by the inventor six months before the war, together with the first correct tactical outline of the proper use of machine guns ever filed in any War Office in the world. This invention was designed to facilitate the use of the machine gun by making its advance with the skirmish line possible on the offensive, and was recommended by the whole staff of the Infantry and Cavalry School as a meritorious device, worthy of trial. The discussion filed with the invention pointed out, for the first time, the correct tactical employment of the weapon, and staked the military reputation and ability of the author and inventor on the correctness of his views.

From these facts it may be gathered that there was required a certain degree of originality and energy to get together and organize a machine gun battery for the Santiago campaign.

The project was conceived and executed. The service rendered by this battery has forever set at rest the question of the proper tactical use of the machine gun arm, both on the offensive and defensive. These things are now beyond the realm of theory. They are a demonstrated problem. The solution is universally acknowledged to be correct.

This is the history of that detachment.

CHAPTER II.

INCEPTION.

From the 26th of April until the 6th of June, Tampa and Port Tampa were the military centers of greatest interest in the United States. Troops were rushed into these places on special trains and camped on available sites, pending the organization of a proposed expedition to—somewhere. Supplies of every description came pouring in on long trains of express and freight cars; mounted officers and orderlies ploughed their rushing way through great heaps and dunes of ever-shifting sand, leaving behind them stifling clouds of scintillating particles, which filtered through every conceivable crevice and made the effort to breathe a suffocating nightmare. Over all the tumultuous scene a torrid sun beat down from a cloudless sky, while its scorching rays, reflected from the fierce sand under foot, produced a heat so intolerable that even the tropical vegetation looked withered and dying. In this climate officers and men, gathered mostly from Northern posts, were to "acclimate" themselves for a tropical campaign—somewhere.

[Illustration: Skirmish Drill at Tampa.]

They never encountered as deadly a heat, nor a more pernicious climate, in Cuba nor in Porto Rico, than that of southern Florida. Its first effect upon men just emerging from a bracing Northern winter was akin to prostration. Then began to follow a decided tendency to languor; after this one was liable to sudden attacks of bowel troubles. The deadly malaria began to insidiously prepare the way for a hospital cot; the patient lost flesh, relish of food became a reminiscence, and an hour's exertion in the sun was enough to put a man on his back for the rest of the day. Exposure to the direct action of the sun's rays was frequently followed by nausea, a slight chill, and then a high fever. The doctors subsequently called this "thermal fever," which is suspected to be a high-sounding name calculated to cover up a very dense ignorance of the nature of the disease, because no one ever obtained any relief from it from them. Recurrence

of the exposure brought recurrence of the fever, and, if persisted in, finally produced a severe illness.

One reason for this was that the troops continued to wear the winter clothing they had worn on their arrival. The promised "kha-ki" did not materialize. Some regiments drew the brown canvas fatigue uniform, but the only use made of it was to put the white blanket-roll through the legs of the trousers, thereby adding to the weight of the roll, without perceptible benefit to the soldier.

Such a climate, under such surroundings, was not conducive to original thought, prolonged exertion, or sustained study. Everybody felt "mean" and was eager for a change. Nobody wanted to listen to any new schemes. The highest ambition seemed to be to get out of it to somewhere with just as little delay and exertion as possible. It was at this juncture that the plan of organizing a Gatling gun battery was conceived, and the attempt to obtain authority began.

The Gatling gun is one of the two machine guns adopted in the land service of the United States. Not to enter into a technical description, but merely to convey a general idea of its working and uses, it may be described as follows:

The gun is a cluster of rifle barrels, without stocks, arranged around a rod, and parallel to it. Each barrel has its own lock or bolt, and the whole cluster can be made to revolve by turning a crank. The bolts are all covered in a brass case at the breech, and the machine is loaded by means of a vertical groove in which cartridges are placed, twenty at a time, and from which they fall into the receivers one at a time. As the cluster of barrels revolves each one is fired at the lowest point, and reloaded as it completes the revolution. The gun is mounted on a wye-shaped trunnion; the lower end of the wye passes down into a socket in the axle. The gun is pointed by a lever just as one points a garden hose or sprinkler, with the advantage that the gun can be clamped at any instant, and will then continue to sprinkle its drops of death over the same row of plants until the clamps are released. The axle is hollow and will hold about a thousand cartridges. It is horizontal, and on its ends are heavy Archibald wheels. There is also a heavy hollow trail, in which tools and additional ammunition can be stored. The limber resembles

that used by the Artillery, and is capable of carrying about 9600 rounds of cartridges. The whole gun, thus mounted, can be drawn by two mules, and worked to good advantage by from six to eight men. It is built of various calibers, and can fire from 300 to 900 shots per minute. The guns used by the Gatling Gun Detachment, Fifth Army Corps, were built by the Colt's Arms Co., were the latest improved model, long ten-barrel gun, and fired the Krag-Jorgenson ammunition used by the Regular Army.

The attempt to obtain authority to organize a machine gun battery met with many discouragements and repeated failures. No one seemed to have thought anything about the subject, and Tampa was not a good place nor climate in which to indulge in that form of exercise, apparently. Perhaps the climate was one reason why so little thinking was done, and everything went "at sixes and sevens."

[Illustration: Skirmish Drill at Tampa.]

The officer who had conceived the scheme was a young man, too. He was only a second lieutenant ("Second lieutenants are fit for nothing except to take reveille"), and had never, so far as his military superiors knew, heard the whistle of a hostile bullet. He had made no brilliant record at the Academy, had never distinguished himself in the service, and was not anybody's "pet." He was, apparently, a safe man to ignore or snub if occasion or bad temper made it desirable to ignore or snub somebody, and, above all, had no political friends who would be offended thereby.

"Politics" cut quite a figure in Tampa in some respects. An officer who was known to be a personal friend of Senator Somebody, or protege of this or that great man, was regarded with considerable awe and reverence by the common herd. It was ludicrous to see the weight attached to the crumbs of wisdom that fell from the friends of the friends of somebody. They shone only by a reflected light, it is true; but nobody there at Tampa had a lamp of his own, except the few who had won renown in the Civil War, and reflected light was better than none at all. A very young and green second lieutenant who was able to boast that he had declined to be a major in a certain State was at once an oracle to other lieutenants—and to some who were not lieutenants. The policy which governed these

appointments was not so well understood at that date in the campaign as it is now.

When the court of a reigning favorite was established at the Tampa Bay Hotel as a brigadier, and people began to get themselves a little settled into the idea that they knew who was in command, they were suddenly disillusioned by the appointment of another and senior brigadier to the command. They settled down to get acquainted with the new authority, and were just beginning to find out who was who, when the telegraph flashed the news that the deposed potentate had been made a major-general, and, of course, was now in command. The thing was becoming interesting. Bets began to be made as to which would come in ahead under the wire. The other also became a major-general. Then came a period of uncertainty, because the question of rank hinged upon some obscure and musty record of forgotten service some thirty-four years before. From these facts will be apparent the difficulty under which a subordinate labored in trying to create anything.

It is hardly worth while in any case of that sort to waste time with subordinates. The projector of an enterprise had better go straight to the one who has the necessary authority to order what is wanted; if access to him can be had, and he can be brought to recognize the merits of the plan—that settles it; if not—that also settles it. In either case the matter becomes a settled thing, and one knows what to depend upon.

But who was the man to see there at Tampa? Nobody knew.

The first officer approached was the one in direct line of superiority, Col. A. T. Smith, 13th Infantry. The idea was to ascertain his views and try to obtain from him a favorable endorsement upon a written plan to be submitted through military channels to the commanding general at Tampa. Perhaps it was the deadly climate; for the reply to a request for a few minutes' audience on the subject of machine guns was very gruff and curt: "I don't want to hear anything about it. I don't believe in it, and I don't feel like hearing it. If you want to see me about this subject, come to me in office hours." That settled it. Any effort to get a written plan through would have to carry the weight of official disapproval from the start, and even a