



Record Traffic From The Past

by Steve Anderson

Shadows lingered in the early morning half-light, their inky fingers retreating hesitantly from the awakening sun. The air hung moist and heavy over the Pacific waters that licked at the sandy beaches. The only sound was the slight rustle of palm fronds disturbed by the warm tropic breezes.

Suddenly, tearing through the quiet and jarring awake the peaceful dawn, the first artillery rounds exploded along the Philippine shoreline. Naval guns boomed from the east, hurtling their





destructive force onto the beachhead at Manila.

And then, all was quiet. As suddenly as it had started, the shelling stopped: but silently, out of the clearing haze, hundreds of dark figures could be seen wading through the shallows toward land. Indeed, the battle was not yet over. Led by the

1st Colorado Regiment, the US Army splashed ashore at Manila on Aug 13, 1898, to climax the battle for the Philippines.

Along the left flank of the attack spearhead, a Signal detachment uncoiled telegraph wire as its men sloshed ashore. Two of the soldiers carried large wigwag flags to communicate the Army's advance to the fleet.

As the sun climbed, the Americans took the beachhead, overwhelming the token Spanish force at Fort Malate. One of the wigwag porters, SGT George S. Gibbs, was among the first to reach the fort. Gibbs clambered to the top of the wall and signaled the news of the fort's capture to the fleet. He then ran to the flag pole and pulled down the Spanish flag. As the stars and stripes were raised at Fort Malate, Gibbs and the other members of the Signal Corps continued to coordinate communications between the different segments of the Army during the successful assault on Manila.

After the Spanish-American conflict, George S. Gibbs continued to serve with the Signal Corps. Distinguishing himself with over 30 years service, his last four years were spent as chief signal officer (1928-1931).

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