

ARTHUR MACARTHUR: SHORT OF MEMORY, LONG OF SHADOW

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One of the lesser known, but most influential American military officers of the Nineteenth Century was Lt. General Arthur MacArthur. In his long military career, MacArthur spanned the gamut of military service. This young hero of the Civil War, longtime junior officer during the era of the Indian Wars and tradition changing staff officer would blossom into a general officer who would fight a war a new style of war in a new century before going on to be one of the first of the new type of political generals who would figure so prominently in the Twentieth Century. His precedent and the guidance he gave to his



son would extend his influence through the century in which he lived for only a few years.

HERO OF MISSIONARY RIDGE

Born on June 2, 1845 in Chicopee, Massachusetts, MacArthur moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the city which he would call home, in 1849. There his father, Arthur MacArthur, Sr., a Scottish immigrant, achieved success as a lawyer, politician and judge. His father was a Union Democrat who served for a time as Lt. Governor of Wisconsin before beginning a long judicial career. Throughout his life, Arthur, Sr. would use his political influence to assist his son in his military career.

As the nation drifted toward Civil War, Arthur was advancing his education at a military academy in Illinois. As war raged, Arthur was determined to play his part, despite his father's efforts to protect him. Arthur Sr. withheld permission for Arthur Jr. to enlist until a compromise was reached. Arthur, Jr. agreed to return to the military academy while his father attempted to secure him an appointment to West Point. When the earliest appointment available was for entry in 1863, Arthur, Jr. could no longer be denied permission to enlist.

The 24th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry was being formed and Judge MacArthur's influence and a lie about his age combined to obtain Arthur's appointment as adjutant. Arthur's youthful appearance and juvenile mistakes made his training period a rocky start to his military career. Eventually the 24th did get into action. After early encounters at Perryville, Kentucky and Murfreesboro, Tennessee, the 24th moved on to Chattanooga where Arthur would win glory at Missionary Ridge on November 25, 1863.

The scene was set for MacArthur's first moment in the sun. The Union Army, driven back into Chattanooga by the defeat at Chickamauga, prepared another attack to the south under new command. MacArthur, on sick leave in Milwaukee, hurried by train to rejoin the 24th Wisconsin. Moving with the attack, the 24th spent November 24 at the base of Missionary Ridge, from which it watched the nearby assault on Lookout Mountain.

At about 10 a.m. on the 25th, the 150 men of the 24th were ordered to move forward a quarter mile to the edge of the woods forming the no-man's land separating the two armies. The 24th found itself in the center of a 2-mile line running between two rivers. In their front the ridge rose almost 600 feet, broken by ravines, gullies and enemy rifle pits. At about three o'clock, the siege guns signaled the advance. After moving out, the 24th charged three-quarters mile to the Confederate rifle pits at the base of the ridge. Despite the enemy rifle and artillery fire, the Union line overran the lightly defended Confederate pits. After routing the enemy, the victorious Union troops found themselves in an exposed position. Realizing the danger of their position, and unwilling to retreat, the 24th Wisconsin opened another charge up the ridge. Led by Captain Edwin B. Parsons and MacArthur, the 24th led the Union line up the ridge. Seeing the charge, General Grant demanded to know *Who ordered those men up the ridge?* Learning that they were advancing without orders, he had no choice but to watch the battle. Using natural cover, the second line of Confederate rifle pits were overtaken. Halfway up the ridge the color sergeant faltered. MacArthur grabbed the colors, waved them high, shouted *24th Wisconsin* and led the entire Union line up the hill. After a canister explosion blew MacArthur's hat away and tore the flag, MacArthur again waived the flag and led his men further up the hill. MacArthur, pistol in one hand and flag in the other, was the first Union soldier to reach the top of Missionary Ridge, as the Confederate defenders were breaking into retreat. After taking the ridge, MacArthur and the regiment were complimented by General Sherman, who complied with the men's request for food.

The regiment's commander, Major Baumbach, included in his official report of the battle:

Among the many acts of personal intrepidity on that memorable occasion, none are worthy of higher commendation than that of young MacArthur, ...who seizing the Colors of his regiment at a critical moment, contributed materially to the general result. He was the most distinguished in action on a field where many in the regiment displayed conspicuous gallantry, worthy of highest praise.

For the next month, MacArthur and the 24th progressed in the Atlanta campaign, arriving in Atlanta on August 24.

The next dramatic stand for the 24th would be at the Battle of Franklin, Tennessee. On November 30, 1864, the 24th was assigned to a resting area behind the front lines, secure in the belief that no attack would be coming that day. From a distance of 300 yards, the 24th heard increased fire, but paid it no heed until retreating Union troops ran through the campgrounds, followed by the sound of the Rebel Yell. MacArthur was soon in the saddle, giving the order *Stand fast 24th!* Seven regiments, without orders, drew up into a battle line. MacArthur was in front of them with a pistol in one hand and a saber in the other.

yelling *Give them hell, 24th!* The line stopped the Confederate charge, threw the attackers back and saved the Union army from disaster. Before the battle was over, MacArthur would be hit by a musket balls just below the left knee and in the shoulder near the clavicle. After the fighting stopped, the men found the wounded MacArthur and took him to a field hospital where he was treated. After two weeks of treatment in a Nashville hospital, MacArthur was returned to Milwaukee for further recuperation.

POST WAR ARMY

With the coming of peace, MacArthur applied for a commission in the down-sized army. While awaiting a decision on his application, MacArthur studied law and was admitted to the Wisconsin Bar. In April 1866, he accepted a commission as a Second Lieutenant. Over the next 30 years he would serve in a series of frontier posts throughout the West. During a respite from frontier duty, MacArthur was assigned to New Orleans in October 1874. While there he met Mary Pinckney *Pinky* Hardy of Norfolk, Virginia. Arthur, an Episcopalian, and Pinky, a Methodist, were married in St. Mary Catholic Church in Norfolk on May 19, 1875. Tradition has it that no other clergyman in Norfolk join a Southern belle and a Yankee war hero in holy matrimony. For the next several years, the MacArthurs were transferred to various posts in the west and south.

The interwar period was one in which MacArthur was able to effect significant changes in the army. While serving as the post commander at Fort Selden, New Mexico, in 1866, MacArthur compensated for the absence of a sutler by establishing an enlisted men canteen, the profits of which were returned to the men in the form of better recreational facilities and lower prices. Other commanders copied the canteen concept which eventually developed into the modern PX.

In 1889, MacArthur was promoted to the grade of Major and transferred to the Adjutant General office in Washington, D.C. While on this assignment he contributed to the movement for army reforms that led to a new promotion system based on ability, rather than strictly on seniority.

Of particular interest to MacArthur was the system for recognition of distinguished service by officers. Civil War officers were not given medals for bravery in combat. Valor was recognized by the award of brevets or honorary promotions, which often were unrecognized in peace time. His research revealed that later amendments had repealed the initial prohibition against the award of the Medal of Honor to officers. He then convinced the Army to alter its policy and award the Medal of Honor to 68 officers for bravery in the Civil War. MacArthur gallantly at Missionary Ridge placed him among the awardees. MacArthur was still on staff duty when storm clouds on the horizon foreshadowed his opportunity to march onto the world stage.

SOLDIER FOR EMPIRE

The outbreak of hostilities with Spain found Colonel MacArthur serving as Adjutant of the Department of the Dakotas, headquartered in St. Paul. This gave he and the family much

opportunity to participate in the Milwaukee social scene. With the declaration of war with Spain, MacArthur applied for a transfer back to the infantry. In early May 1898, MacArthur was ordered to Camp Thomas at Chickamauga, Georgia to serve as Adjutant General of the 3rd Army Corps.

On June 1, 1898, MacArthur received notification of his appointment as Brigadier General of volunteers. His assignment to the Philippines rather than Cuba came as a surprise. Much of the American public had assumed that Admiral Dewey's victory in Manila Bay had placed the whole archipelago under American control. The truth was much more complex. The military situation was a three-sided standoff. The American fleet blockaded the harbor, while the land was contested by 35,000 Spanish troops and the Philippine insurgents. MacArthur was to be one of the leading generals in the American Army charged with the completion of the conquest begun by Dewey and the Navy. The planning for this campaign began in the Palace Hotel in San Francisco. After training at Camp Merritt near San Francisco, MacArthur and his brigade sailed aboard six transports on June 26, 1898.

After stopping in Honolulu, MacArthur and his men passed Corrigidor while entering Manila Bay on July 31. Following conferences aboard ship, the landings were begun the next day and continued for a week. The first action was an assault on the Spanish blockhouses around Manila on August 13. The Spaniards, fearful of atrocities at the hands of the Filipinos, had arranged a token defense followed by a surrender to the Americans with General Merritt, the American commander. To this end, the Filipino Republican Army was ordered to stay out of the way, even though Merritt had not advised his subordinates of the deal. MacArthur's brigade moved forward at about 10:30. As they advanced, the Americans were crowded by Filipino warriors. When the Spaniards saw the Filipinos, resistance strengthened. The Spaniards were fighting from a blockhouse across the road from the American lines. MacArthur ordered the Astor Battery, which had been equipped by John Jacob Astor, to open fire with its twelve-pound, mobile Hotchkiss guns. Like the Rough Riders, the men of the Astor Battery, which included many college graduates, had been specially selected. Ignoring orders to desist, the Filipinos charged along side the Americans, who soon found themselves in a crossfire between the Spaniards in front and the Filipinos in the rear. After a skirmish ended Filipino resistance, the Americans advanced along the road and into the old city of Manila. The fighting stopped with Americans in control of Manila and with the Philippine army occupying the blockhouses surrounding the city. General Aguinaldo, Filipino commander, angered by the denial of Manila, ordered the Americans confined to the city. While awaiting action, the U.S. forces were put to the task of restoring order in Manila and maintaining themselves in fighting shape.

While American troops waited in Manila, the peace conference continued in Paris, and *Imperial Policy* was debated in the U.S. Young Republican politicians, including Henry Cabot Lodge, Theodore Roosevelt, and Albert Jeremiah Beveridge, worked for annexation of the Philippines. These Imperialists argued for an American Empire to provide markets for American goods, which were being excluded from European Empires. This appeal to materialism was leavened by an invocation of the ideals of expanding American liberty, justice, and equality for all. The presence of foreign ships in Manila Harbor raised the

specter of the Philippines falling under other foreign domination, rather than independence, if U.S. forces were withdrawn.

Anti-imperialists, primarily members of the Democratic Party, argued that the Constitution prevented the acquiring of territory not destined for statehood. Popular support for annexation revealed itself in Republican gains in the elections of 1898. These results stiffened the resolve of President McKinley to order the U.S. Delegation at the Paris Peace Conference to demand the entire Philippine archipelago. After Spanish outrage and an American threat to restart the war, Spain agreed to sell the Philippines to the U.S. for \$20 million. The annexation drove the Philippine Republican Army to prepare for war against the Americans.

With the acceptance of the peace treaty, the American forces confronted the Philippine Republican Army, rather than the Spanish Army. While the Filipinos encircled Manila to landward, the Americans in the city planned the breakout. During December 1898, meetings the U.S. Army Commander, General Otis, Generals MacArthur and Anderson, and Admiral Dewey, drew up the plans for the offensive. By mid January 1899, the preparations made it clear that the uneasy peace would not last long. The long awaited spark came in MacArthur sector of the line at about 8:30 on the evening of Saturday, February 4, as MacArthur was enjoying an after party card game. Filipino skirmishers got involved in a fire fight with the 1st Nebraska Volunteers. When news of the fight reached MacArthur, he gave orders for all units to mobilize and march to the front. By midnight the shooting had stopped and the troops settled down for the night. The next morning Aguinaldo, in accord with the practice of the Spaniards, expected to be invited to negotiate a cease-fire with General Otis. Rather than using the incident as a setup for negotiations, Otis used it as the excuse to begin the



*Lieutenant General Arthur MacArthur
Union*

Arthur MacArthur
Assistant Adjutant General.

occupation of the Luzon, as ordered by President McKinley. At 6 a.m., naval bombardments assaulted the Filipino lines. MacArthur land artillery joined the attack. As the Filipino lines were decimated by the bombardment, the infantry began its advance. At about 12:30, MacArthur ordered a bayonet charge against the enemy entrenchments which routed the Filipinos. Having advanced the line about four miles, MacArthur was ordered by Otis to halt the advance because the American lines had been stretched thin and many Filipinos were trapped behind the line. After the battle, Aguinaldo was again surprised to have his overtures for negotiations met with a call for unconditional surrender.

Emboldened by the clash of arms in Manila, the U.S. Senate ratified the treaty annexing the Philippines on February 6, 1899, 57 to 27, one vote more than the two-thirds required for ratification. It is possible that MacArthur advance provided the margin of passage. After a few days of calm, MacArthur troops began a gradual advance northward along the rail line from Manila, arriving in Dagupan on Lingayen Gulf in November. Throughout this offensive, MacArthur troops were slowed by orders from superiors, Major General Henry W. Lawton, a veteran of the Union Army, and Brigadier General Joe Wheeler, a political appointee and veteran of the Confederate Army who had previously served in the Cuban campaign of the Spanish American War. By the end of this offensive, the Philippine Republican Army had been dispersed and had turned to guerrilla warfare.

The conclusion of hostilities against organized units of the Filipino Army brought new challenges for the American troops. The troops were assigned to garrison duty in 33 occupied towns. The dangers associated with this boring duty confronted MacArthur with problems faced by American commanders in another Asian trouble spot some 65 years later. The troops garrisoning towns frequently appointed local officials who were, in fact, revolutionary leaders. One volunteer reported that the villagers greeted the Americans *with kindly expressions, while the same ones slip away, go out into the bushes, get their guns, and waylay you further down the road. You rout them & scatter them; they hide their guns and take to their house & claim to be amigos.* Another volunteer reported that the Filipinos were *quick change* artists. American abandonment of a village was frequently followed by retaliation against any Filipino who had assisted or collaborated with the Americans. The war had degenerated into a series of minor skirmishes, one of which, on December 8, claimed the life of General Henry Lawton. Like a later Asian war, the mounting casualty lists created cries on the home front for a change in action in the Philippines. These pressures yielded promotions for MacArthur.

The new year got off to a good start on January 2, 1900 when MacArthur received notice of his promotion to Brigadier General in the Regular Army. On May 5, 1900, he assumed the duties of Military Governor of the Philippine Islands. MacArthur moved into Malacanan, a Moorish edifice which has served as the residence of the Spanish governors-general. As William Manchester noted, MacArthur, in this role, was called upon to be *an economist, a political scientist, an engineer, a manufacturing executive, [and] a teacher.* His military command, the Division of the Philippines, the largest in the Army at the time, included 71,727 enlisted men and 2,367 officers in 502 garrisons throughout the islands.

MacArthur's unchallenged rule would, however, be cut short by the arrival of the second Philippine Commission, headed by William Howard Taft on June 3. A struggle for power between MacArthur and the Commission began immediately. MacArthur viewed the Commission as an advisory body without any real power. He questioned the authority of the President to appoint a civilian commission to command the military in a war zone. Taft, on the other hand, saw MacArthur as the military commander and chief executive officer while the Commission served in a legislative role comparable to that of Congress.

MacArthur continued to believe that the Filipinos were still seeking independence, while Taft was sending home messages that the rebellion was virtually over, a message which would be helpful to the McKinley administration in the 1900 elections. As the political campaign progressed throughout the summer and fall, the Philippine Republicans pinned their hopes on the candidacy of William Jennings Bryan, the Democratic Anti-Imperialist. The reelection of McKinley, led to the surrender of thousands of Filipino guerrillas. Throughout this time, MacArthur maintained military pressure. A break came when intelligence revealed the location of General Aguinaldo. In a daring raid approved by MacArthur, a small American party, assisted by Filipino scouts, captured Aguinaldo and his staff and delivered them to MacArthur. MacArthur conducted extensive negotiations with Aguinaldo. When Aguinaldo swore allegiance to the United States, the rebellion virtually collapsed.

With the war essentially over, MacArthur proceeded with the gradual establishment of civilian rule. Municipal governments were established in pacified areas and martial law was lifted in Manila. The passage of the Spooner bill by Congress enabled the President to rule the Philippines under Congressional authority, rather than in his role as Commander-in-Chief. This led to the transition to the civilian governor, William Howard Taft, on July 4, 1901. On July 5, MacArthur left for Japan which he visited on his way back to the United States. His arrival in San Francisco was virtually ignored, due in large part to the negative reports which Secretary of War Elihu Root had received from Taft. MacArthur's star seemed to rise when he met with President McKinley at McKinley's home in Canton, Ohio about September 1. The two veterans established a friendship while reliving their wartime experiences. This influence was lost, however, on September 4 when McKinley was mortally wounded in Buffalo, New York.

MacArthur's next assignment was as Commander of the Department of the Pacific. While serving in this role, MacArthur ran into trouble with his superiors over a number of matters, including comments over the rising power of Kaiser Wilhelm which led to a reprimand from Secretary Root. MacArthur's fortunes had suffered a decline when Theodore Roosevelt, a friend of Root and Taft, had succeeded to the presidency. It sank further when his arch enemy, Taft, was appointed Secretary of War. An escape from a mutually unpleasant situation presented itself when MacArthur's request to be appointed a military observer to Japan during the Russo-Japanese War was approved. MacArthur served in this post from January to September 1905. With the coming of peace, MacArthur was approved to take a grand tour of Asia with his wife and son, Lt. Douglas MacArthur. The tour lasted from November 1905 through June, 1906. The tour included Japan, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Ceylon, a trip across India, Burma, Bangkok, Batavia, Singapore,

Rangoon, and Saigon. On this trip Douglas claimed to have learned to understand the Asian mind. The MacArthurs were probably among the first American officers to visit Vietnam.

Upon return to the U.S., MacArthur, a Congressional favorite, was promoted to Lt. General, the highest grade in the Army since the Civil War, in September 1906. His highest dreams were shattered, however, in January 1907, when an officer inferior in rank was appointed Chief of Staff. In April 1909, MacArthur was relieved of command of the Department of the Pacific. After accompanying a visiting delegation of Japanese officers, MacArthur was assigned to duty at his home in Milwaukee. After enjoying the social life of Milwaukee, MacArthur died in Milwaukee on September 5, 1912 while addressing a reunion of the 24th Wisconsin.

The career of Arthur MacArthur had come full circle. The young officer from Milwaukee had won glory on the battlefield at Missionary Ridge. He had shared the boredom of army life throughout the long, slow years in the post Civil War Army. As a commander in the remote Western posts, he had established the institution of the PX. As a staff officer, he had won the Medal of Honor for Civil War officers. As a commander, he had played a leading role in winning America's first overseas empire. With the start of a new century, MacArthur would be among the first to confront challenges which many of his successors would as the century progressed. He was called upon to establish government throughout a conquered land, as would many other officers, including his son while serving in Japan after World War II. He would confront the problems of an enemy which fought for victory, not only on an Asian battlefield, but also on the field of American public opinion. In fighting a guerilla war, MacArthur would confront the challenges of pacifying a land against the hit and run tactics of enemies who would slip in and out of the surrounding countryside at will, as would later American officers who would venture into Asian wars. Finally, Arthur MacArthur died in the city he called home, in the company of the men whom he had led into battle fifty years before.

Arthur MacArthur's influence did not end on September 5, 1912. He had sired and trained America's most prominent officer of the Pacific during the Twentieth Century, General of the Army Douglas MacArthur. Like his father, Douglas would engage in struggles with civilian superiors. Like his father, Douglas would play a major role in the creation and implementation of American military policy in Asia, and like his father, Douglas would come home without the official adulation of the government under which he had served. Arthur MacArthur was, perhaps, the only man who his son would acknowledge as his better. Today, Arthur MacArthur is a largely forgotten man, but much of the story of the American role in the Pacific in the Twentieth Century falls under the shadow of Arthur MacArthur.