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The Philippine Scouts: America's Colonial Army, 1899-1913

CLAYTON D. LAURIE

Late nineteenth-century European colonial empires were rarely unilateral creations. In establishing their colonial empires in Africa and Asia, Britain and France, for example, relied heavily on native levies for initial conquest and subsequent pacification. By skillful manipulation of certain native groups, large populations could be subjugated and colonies maintained with a minimum expenditure of European resources. As long as indigenous peoples were disunited and could be recruited for European-led native armies Europeans easily dominated. This lesson was not lost on the United States which practised a similar policy in the Philippines after 1898.

The war against Spain, which began a permanent American presence in Southeast Asia, was short and victorious. Unpredictably, however, the war developed into a guerrilla conflict against the Filipino people, ostensibly the same people the United States claimed they were liberating from brutal and despotic Spanish rule. It became increasingly apparent to the United States Army that the Philippine insurrection was not only a war for the acquisition of territory, but a war for the hearts and minds of Filipinos. Americans had to convince the Filipino people that Americans were their true liberators and benefactors, and that insurrectionists were bandits and hooligans out for selfish political and monetary gain.

To quickly and cheaply end the insurrection, and to win the support of Filipinos, the United States Army began to recruit Filipinos to fight against the insurrectionists of Philippine Republican leader Emilio Aguinaldo. The subsequent military collaboration of 7,000 Philippine Scouts helped the United States firmly establish suzerainty in the islands. The Scouts performed valuable combat service during the insurrection, and equally valuable police functions during the pacification program that followed. Although small by European standards,

the Philippine Scouts formed the only sizeable and permanent colonial army ever raised by the United States.

The enlistment of Filipinos further provided the United States Army with a psychological edge that undermined popular support for the insurrection and stifled the development of Philippine nationalism for decades. The Philippine Scouts demonstrated that collaboration with American military and civil authorities was beneficial for Filipinos, and that such service provided a means of social mobility for the native population under American colonial rule. The United States would not have obtained the success it did in the Philippines if it had not had the cooperation of native military units.

THE PROBLEMS OF AMERICAN TROOPS

The acquisition of the Philippines was not a goal of the McKinley administration in 1898, although military contingency plans concerning the Spanish colony were developed as early as 1896. When a Spanish-American war appeared imminent in April 1898, American naval forces in Hong Kong quickly set sail for Manila. The Philippines was considered a sideshow to military operations against Spanish possessions in the Western hemisphere, and Admiral George Dewey's rapid naval victory over the Spanish in Manila Bay on 1 May 1898 found the United States unprepared to exploit its victory on land. Lacking troops, Dewey appealed for help to Emilio Aguinaldo, self-proclaimed president of the Philippine Republic, and leader of a sizable, popular-based revolutionary government and army that had sporadically fought the Spanish since 1896. Filipino-American collaboration quickly ended Spanish resistance, but this unity soon turned to estrangement over who would control the islands after the Spanish surrender. Aguinaldo, as leader of the Philippine Republic, demanded American withdrawal and immediate independence, claiming such guarantees had been made to him by American Consuls Williams at Manila, Wildman at Hong Kong, and E. Spencer Pratt at Singapore.¹ The McKinley administration, however, perceived a moral duty to "uplift the uncivilized Filipinos," and realized the enormous economic potential of the Philippines and the China market, as well as the Asian designs of other European powers. Aguinaldo's demands were ignored, and promises made to him during the Spanish war were

1. G.L. Godkin, "Who is Responsible for Aguinaldo?" *The Nation* 68 (2 March 1899):159; and "Aid and Comfort to the Enemy," *The Nation* 68 (29 June 1899):490.

disclaimed.² By August 1898 the McKinley administration had decided to annex the Philippines. Aguinaldo denounced what he believed an outright betrayal and vowed resistance to American rule.

The United States faced a parallel indigenous government, which increased tensions around Manila where army forces faced Aguinaldo's Philippine Revolutionary Army. Two days prior to Senate ratification of the Paris Treaty, 4 February 1899, fighting erupted in Manila. This resumption of hostilities presented the United States Army with a new tropical war against an unknown people, in unfamiliar surroundings. American military commanders expected difficulties and voiced their concerns. Major General Wesley Merritt, commander of the two Army regiments in the Philippines, knew their number was insufficient for the tasks that lie ahead, especially,

When the work to be done consists of conquering a territory 7,000 miles from our base, defended by a regularly trained and acclimatized army . . . and inhabited by 14 millions [sic] of people, the majority of whom will regard us with intense hatred of both race and religion.³

In addition to Aguinaldo's force of 30,000 men, Americans faced thousands of former Spanish native troops, who when released from American custody joined Aguinaldo or began independent attacks on American forces.⁴ Although American units forced Aguinaldo's troops from the Manila area to Northern Luzon, a quick victory proved elusive.

Success was assured when American forces could locate and engage large masses of insurgents on American terms. Filipinos swiftly realized the American advantage in firepower, however, and were ordered by Aguinaldo to break into small bands of forty men to harass American forces while refusing open engagements that allowed better equipped, trained, and led Americans to prevail.⁵ Early attempts by the United States Army to crush the insurgency in Luzon failed, as the conflict took the form of a guerrilla war. When a 4,000-man American force was ambushed in June 1899, suffering heavy casualties, shock waves reverberated through American military and civilian circles.⁶

2. Charles Denby, "Shall We Keep the Philippines?," *Forum* 26 (November 1898): 280. Denby, former United States Minister to China eloquently summed up the annexationist viewpoint.

3. Robert Asprey, *War in the Shadows: The Guerilla in History*, 2 vols. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1975), 1:184.

4. United States War Department, *Report of Major General E.S. Otis, Military Operations in the Philippines* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1899):51.

5. Major C.J. Crane, 38th Inf., US Volunteers, "The Fighting Tactics of Filipinos," *Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States* 30 (July 1902): 496.

6. Asprey, *War in the Shadows*, p. 187.

By August 1899, it was clear the war would require greater resources. American troop strength was doubled to 45,000 men, largely United States Volunteer Regiments transferred from Cuba and Puerto Rico, under command of Major General Elwell Otis. Otis launched a major offensive in Luzon that September. As before, Filipino insurgents refused large-scale engagements and fled to the mountainous jungles. In response, Otis created a string of outposts garrisoned by Americans instructed to conduct search and destroy missions. Within months, hit and run tactics characterized operations on both sides. As the American presence grew and spread to unconquered territory, Filipino resistance increased in severity to the chagrin of American military and civilian authorities.⁷

These early American difficulties were due to many factors. Except for the inapplicable experience gained in frontier Indian wars, the United States Army had no practical experience of either guerrilla warfare or colonial rule. This inexperience frustrated American forces, the majority of whom were partially trained volunteers. Regular army units were not appreciably more knowledgeable of irregular warfare. American troops lacked information concerning geography and indigenous populations, customs, and languages. In addition, Americans were alien in race and religion and among a population that was described as "outwardly filled with zeal for the American cause, and secretly betraying every movement of the United States forces to the insurgents." One American officer wrote, "Every Filipino was our enemy, and each bare-footed chewer of the betel nut mixture a spy, and a fleet and sure giver of information of our approach, and even the dogs, seemed to be trained to bark peculiarly at an American."⁸

These difficulties increased resentments and frustrations. Rumors of American atrocities committed upon captured Filipino insurgents began to circulate in the islands and the United States. American military leaders were not reassuring about pacification. General William Shafter believed that it would "be necessary to kill half the Filipinos in order that the remaining half of the population may be advanced to a higher plane of life." British observer Major Francis Younghusband noted that to those "on the spot, it was apparent that the authorities in the distance were hardly alive to the complications that

7. Ibid.

8. Capt. Charles D. Rhodes, "Utilization of Native Troops in Our Foreign Possession," *Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States* 30 (January 1902): 12; and Crane, "The Fighting Tactics of Filipinos," p. 503.

existed," and that "American army officers at the seat of war were almost unanimous in deprecating the annexation of the Philippines."⁹

American political goals in the Philippines were vague, undefined, and under increasing attack from the press and anti-imperialists.¹⁰ Widespread doubts about the war and military reverses had an adverse effect on military operations. Morale plummeted, especially in volunteer regiments. Illness claimed increasing numbers of troops—usually malarial deaths and diarrhea diseases. The Chief Surgeon of the Philippine Division reported in mid-1900 that mortality from all causes during the seven months ending 31 July 1900, was 24 officers and 971 men, a mortality rate of 26.7 per 1000 men per annum, or an average of 4.7 deaths daily. The ratio of deaths due to disease, and those due to wounds, was about 3 to 1.¹¹

In May 1900, Otis was replaced by Major General Arthur MacArthur, while troop strength was boosted to 70,000 men.¹² MacArthur attempted to reverse American setbacks by an amnesty program, punitive expeditions, and the bribery of Filipino tribal officials—all expedients which failed.¹³

THE USE OF FILIPINO TROOPS

Many military and civilian leaders believed increased numbers of American troops, with all of their inherent disadvantages in tropical warfare, could not rapidly defeat or pacify the Filipinos. The answer lay with the Filipinos themselves. Despite increasing resistance throughout the Philippines, not all Filipinos were supporters of Aguinaldo and revolution. Numerous tribes of potential martial value were willing to cooperate with Americans against other Filipinos. This was true, for example, of the Macabebes from the village of the same name in Pampanga Province in Luzon.

Due to service in the Spanish colonial army, the Macabebes were not sympathetic to the insurrection, and were despised by other

9. Felix Razon, *The Oppression of the Indigenous Peoples of the Philippines* (Copenhagen: International Workgroup for Indigenous Affairs, 1976), p. 11; R. Ogden, "The Policy of Ignorance and Drift," *The Nation* 68 (27 April 1899):306-07.

10. Garel Grunden and W. Livezey, *The Philippines and the United States* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1951), p. 53.

11. United States Congress, Senate, *Report of Surgeon General M. Sternberg, U.S.A.* Senate Document 114, 55th Congress, 3rd Session, 1899; and Rhodes, "Utilization of Native Troops," pp. 4-5; also see "Why We Can Not Conquer the Filipinos" *Nation* 69 (24 August 1899):114.

12. Asprey, *War in the Shadows*, p. 192.

13. *Ibid.*

Filipinos, especially Aguinaldo's Tagalogs. In early 1899 the Macabebes came to the attention of Lieutenant Matthew A. Batson of the Fourth United States Cavalry. Batson had encountered difficulty maneuvering cavalry over the many waterways of Northern Luzon during General Henry Lawton's campaign, and hired Macabebes as boatmen and guides. They proved so useful that Batson requested that Lawton consider their enlistment in the Regular United States Army.¹⁴ Lawton approved and the first unit of Macabebe Scouts was officially organized by Special Order 112 on 10 September 1899.¹⁵ The Macabebe success was followed the next month by the creation of two further companies of 100 men each.

Under the command of Regular United States Army officers, Scouts were equipped and uniformed like other regulars and enlisted for three years. Macabebes performed their duties well, inspiring fear in the native population. The propensity of Macabebes to rob, abuse, and treat captives cruelly, however, caused many officers, including Gen. Otis, to initially use them sparingly. By early 1900 such fears had diminished, because of the need for fighting forces of any variety, and Otis, Lawton, and MacArthur praised the "fearlessness of the Macabebes," valuing their "efficient service" as America's "main reliance and support."¹⁶ American commanders began to view the large numbers of camp followers as potential allies rather than useless nuisances or enemy sympathizers.

By General Order 25 of 24 May 1900, further units of Macabebes were authorized and officially designated as the Philippine Squadron of Cavalry, United States Regular Army. Each company of 120 men took an oath of loyalty to the United States, agreeing to "obey and abide by all such laws, orders, and regulations as have been, or may be hereafter prescribed."¹⁷

14. Antonio Tabaniag, "The Pre-War Philippine Scouts," *Journal of East Asia Studies* (Manila) 9 (April 1960): pp. 8-9; also see Romeo Cruz, "Filipino Collaboration With the Americans, 1899-1902," (M.A. thesis, University of the Philippines, Quezon City, 1956): 102.

15. United States War Department, *Report of the Military Governor of the Philippines, September 1899-May 1900* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900): 13-14; also see Cruz, "Filipino Collaboration," pp. 105-06.

16. United States War Department, *Report of the Military Governor, 1899-1900*, pp. 13-14; also see United States War Department, *Annual Report of the War Department for 1900* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900), p. 266.

17. United States Army Philippines Division, *General Orders and Circular, 7 April 1900* (Headquarters Department of the Pacific and Eighth Army Corps, Headquarters Division of the Pacific, 1900): Document no. 25.

The reputation of the Philippine Squadron of Cavalry spread rapidly, and was well known to the military, the civilian Philippine Commission, and United States Congress by late 1900. The Philippine Commission sought opinions of military officers in the islands, and was unanimous in deciding that large numbers of native troops should be raised to pacify the islands and allow American volunteer units to go home.¹⁸ The Commission declared,

Whilst the American soldier is unsurpassed in war, as it is understood among civilized people, he does not make the best policeman, especially among people whose language and customs are new and strange to him, and in our opinion should not be put to that use when . . . a better substitute is at hand. We therefore earnestly urge the organization of ten regiments of native troops of infantry and cavalry . . .¹⁹

The Commission's suggestion was readily seconded by many military men who believed Filipinos could perform valuable service during the insurrection, and beyond, as an American colonial army.²⁰

The advantages were numerous. Filipino units could relieve American troops, as it was deemed politically and fiscally undesirable to permanently maintain an American Army in the Philippines. American troops, it was believed, were not well suited, or trained, for guerrilla warfare, and such duty was unpopular among troops unacquainted with native languages and habits. Further, American soldiers could not distinguish between "good" and "bad" Filipinos, who often played a double role, where native Scouts could make the distinction.²¹ Filipino troops were cheaper, and their enlistment would enable them to gain confidence, education, money, training, and courage that would inspire other Filipinos to cooperate with American authorities against the rebels. This would aid nation building.²² Native soldiers would facilitate the redistribution of American troops

18. United States Philippine Commission, *Annual Report of the Philippine Commission, 1901* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1901), p. 77.

19. *Ibid.*

20. See L.L. Seaman, "Native Troops for Our Colonial Possessions," *North American Review* 171, no. 6 (December 1900):849-60; Col. James W. Powell, "Utilization of Native Troops in Our Foreign Possessions," *Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States* 30 (January 1902):23; and Rhodes, "Utilization of Native Troops," p. 1.

21. *Annual Report, 1901*, pp. 79-80; also see United States Philippines Commission, *Annual Report of the Philippines Commission, 1900-1903* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904), p. 181; also see J.N. Munro, "The Philippine Native Scouts," *Infantry Journal* 2 (July 1905): 178.

22. *Annual Reports, 1900-1903*, p. 181; also see United States, Philippine Commission, *Annual Reports of the War Department* vol. 13, part 3, 1904 (Washington, D.C.:

from dangerous, scattered, and costly rural outposts, to the security of populous urban areas. Rural pacification would be better effected by cheaper indigenous units with aid from American forces when necessary.²³

Loyalty and reliability were major concerns, as Army leaders did not want to risk arming Filipinos who might desert to insurgent forces with their arms and equipment. The Macabebes, for example, were acceptable because of their well-known hostility toward the Tagalogs. The Philippine Commission believed the question of loyalty would be assured by "judicious selection and discipline," and concluded that,

every soldier has a natural feeling of loyalty for the flag he serves. Respect for his officers and obedience to their orders becomes to him a habit of life. When decently treated, he becomes sincerely attached to them and cheerfully obeys their orders. It is our deliberate judgement that . . . the organization of native regiments here is not premature.²⁴

While the main criteria for selecting recruits was loyalty, one officer claimed that "any one of the principal tribes . . . can be utilized as material for military organization."²⁵

Use of native troops by Europeans was a major consideration. Spain had maintained the islands effectively prior to 1896 with only 5,000 Spanish regulars, relying on native troops who were loyal until the end, even though they were poorly paid, housed, fed, equipped, and were often abused by their Spanish officers. Britain, France, Germany, and the Netherlands all successfully employed native forces in their possessions, often using one tribe against another within the same colony.²⁶

The Philippine Commission's findings were read avidly by members of the McKinley administration. When the new Army Bill reached Congress in January 1901, Secretary of War Elihu Root proposed enlisting Filipinos for United States military service. By Act of Congress, 2 February 1901, the president was authorized to enlist Philip-

Government Printing Office, 1904): 21; and Daniel Schirmer, *Republic or Empire, American Resistance to the Philippine War* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1972), p. 227; and Rhodes, "Utilization of Native Troops," pp. 15-16.

23. *Annual Reports, 1900-1903*, p. 182.

24. *Annual Report, 1901*, p. 81.

25. *Annual Report, 1900-1903*, pp. 80-81; and Munro, "Philippine Native Scouts," pp. 178-79.

26. *Annual Report, 1901*, pp. 80-81; also see Rhodes, "Utilization of Native Troops," pp. 1-3; Powell, "Utilization of Native Troops," pp. 23-24; and Seaman, "Native Troops," pp. 849-60.

pine natives for service in the United States regular Army, not to exceed 12,000 men.²⁷

The Scouts were paid by the United States Treasury at the same rate as army regulars. Privates received \$15.60 per month and sergeant majors \$30.00 per month. In addition, Filipinos received \$3.00 per month clothing allowance, and a \$0.13 daily food ration.²⁸ Ironically, after consultation with American officers, it was discovered that similar results could be obtained with less pay. Scout salaries between 1899 and September 1901 were perceived as exorbitant when compared to the low peasant standard of living. To avoid "massive economic dislocation" of the Philippine economy, Scout pay was halved to \$7.80 per private per month, and \$15.00 per sergeant. Clothing and ration allowances were not reduced. To the gratification of the War Department and Congress, Filipino troops cost one-half that of American troops—\$500.00 annually compared to \$1000.00. The retrenchments had no effect on Scout enlistments, loyalties, or effectiveness. Even at these reduced wages, the average Scout was still wealthy by Philippine standards.²⁹

FULL SCALE RECRUITMENT OF FILIPINOS

The 1901 Act of Congress initiated full-scale recruitment of Filipinos. In total, the Army enlisted eleven Scout companies of Macabebes, thirteen of Ilocanos, four of Tagalogs, two of Bicolos, and sixteen Visayan companies. Later, Filipinos from Bohol, Panay, and Cebu were recruited. By mid-1901 5,500 Filipinos had joined the Scouts, and enlistments peaked at nearly 8,000 men in 100 companies, in 1916. The Scouts were initially stationed throughout the islands, within three military districts, concentrating on trouble spots and areas of high rural population. Thirty-four Scout companies served with American units in the Department of Luzon, thirteen in the Visayan Department, and three companies in the Mindanao Department.

27. *Annual Report, War Department, 1904*, p. 17; also see Schirmer, *Republic or Empire*, p. 227.

28. United States Army, Philippine Division, *General Orders and Circulars*, General Order 25.

29. *Annual Report, 1901*, p. 78; also see Tabaniag, *Philippine Scouts*, p. 11; and Cruz "Filipino Collaboration," p. 131; also see W. Cameron Forbes, *The Philippine Islands*, 2 vols. (New York: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1928) 1:200; and James H. Blount, *The American Occupation of the Philippines, 1898-1912*, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1912), p. 600.

Originally, Scouts were recruited by tribe and served outside their home province. It was discovered, however, that many tribes providing Scouts were traditional enemies of tribes in their region who actively supported the insurgents. Taking advantage of this traditional hostility, the Army posted Scouts in the areas of their birth and recruitment. As the insurrection diminished in intensity, the United States desired a more homogeneous nation, and tribal Scout units were mixed to prevent further rivalry and sectionalism; although incidents were reported of subsequent fights between Scouts and units of different tribes.³⁰

Scouts were always commanded by American Army officers, usually a first and second lieutenant. Officers applying for Scout duty had to be two year veterans of the Army, between ages 21 and 30, unmarried, physically fit, and of good moral character.³¹ Competent white officers were believed the key to the success of the Scout program. Filipinos were deemed incapable of leading themselves, and an early request by Lt. Batson to commission two Filipinos was flatly rejected. One officer claimed that "the native officer is not fit to lead or command against disciplined white troops, he is wholly without initiative," while another claimed "that the yellow and black races make excellent fighting material, when properly led by whites."³² It was further stated that,

The Filipinos, like all people, will fight when properly paid, fed, and disciplined, but above all when properly led. This is the keynote to an entirely successful use of Filipinos as soldiers, whether they be employed in this archipelago or elsewhere.³³

These opinions were in spite of the fact that Filipino insurgents had successfully resisted American hegemony for two years under Filipino

30. United States Army Philippines Division, *Roster of Troops Serving in the Division of the Philippines*, Major General George W. Davis, U.S.A., Commanding (Manila: Bureau of Public Printing, 1902), p. 6; also see Cruz, "Filipino Collaboration," pp. 130-31; and Charles W. Franklyn, *A History of the Philippine Scouts, 1898-1936* (Fort Humphreys, District of Columbia: Army War College, 1935): Table B-1; also see Capt. Cromwell Stacey, 21st Inf., "Philippine Scouts," *Infantry Journal* 4 (September 1901), p. 223.

31. *Roster of Troops*, p. 61; also Tabaniag, *Philippine Scouts*, p. 13; and United States Army Philippines Division, *Appointment of Second Lieutenants in the Philippine Scouts* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1917), p. 7.

32. James R. Woolard, "The Philippine Scouts: The Development of America's Colonial Army" (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1975), p. 13; also Powell, "Utilization of Native Troops," p. 24; and Seaman, "Native Troops," p. 853.

33. United States, Philippine Commission, *Annual Report of the Philippine Commission*, 1903, vol. 3 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1904), p. 46.

leadership. Capable Filipinos were allowed promotion to noncommissioned officer ranks. William Howard Taft, Chairman of the Philippine Commission, further testified to the need for able officers, stating that it would be unwise for Filipinos to lead Filipinos, as they would then be prone to banditry. American officers would insure Filipino loyalty and trustworthiness.³⁴

Under American officers Filipinos performed well. According to the Philippine Commission and War Department, the Scouts "uniformly performed faithful and effective service" and "were ready to follow, or precede their officers into any danger, blindly and without question."³⁵ They were not considered the equal of American troops, but "in ferreting out insurgents and criminals and in understanding motives and methods of the natives . . . they are of inestimable value."³⁶ Any problems were perceived due to a lack of training or discipline. Military authorities were certain these were correctable. After all,

the Filipino soldier was inordinately fond of the show and glitter of military life. He wears his uniform with a conscious sense of pride and increased importance, difficult of appreciation by those who are unfamiliar with his characteristics and modes of thought. The pay, clothing, and ration, which seems insignificant to an American, are regarded with a very different eye by the native.³⁷

Scout service, according to Gen. Otis and Commissioner Taft, was popular. Otis claimed "any number of natives" could be obtained, "for less pay than Americans received." Taft testified that, "none of the 1,000 men employed as Scouts have thus far deceived us," and levels of desertion were far below those of Americans.³⁸ Other military leaders, such as Arthur MacArthur, Frederick Funston, and Henry Lawton, praised the Philippine Scouts. General Frank Baldwin's remarks were typical,

34. Henry F. Graff, *American Imperialism and the Philippine Insurrection* (Boston: Little Brown Company, 1969), p. 121.

35. *Annual Reports, 1900-1903*, p. 182; also see; Rod J. Fariñas, *The Philippine Constabulary* (Quezon City: The Constable, 1976): 181; also Munro, "Philippine Native Scouts," pp. 178, 185-86.

36. Donald Chaput, "The Founding of the Leyte Scouts," *Leyte-Samar Studies* (Philippines) 9 (February 1975): 6; also James Parker, "Some Random Notes on the Fighting in the Philippines," *Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States* 27 (November 1900): 338.

37. *Annual Report, 1901*, p. 78.

38. *Annual Reports, 1900-1903*, p. 182; also see *Report of the Military Governor, 1899-1900*, p. 365; and Graff, *American Imperialism*, p. 121.

I consider them the finest body of native troops in existence and as an auxiliary force to our regulars . . . are unexcelled . . . they are less expensive in their organization and maintenance than our regular troops. With an organized command composed of one-third Americans, I would not hesitate to engage any troops in the world.³⁹

The Philippine Commission concluded, "the service of native troops has conclusively shown the wisdom of their creation."⁴⁰ It was further discovered that upon enlisting a Filipino "the United States Army gained a legion of friends," as "the family was the basic fulcrum of existence. Right or wrong . . . kin stood together," and "the soldier's relatives inevitably sided with him."⁴¹

The Scouts, however, had critics in the United States and the Philippines. The majority of criticism stemmed from brutalities routinely attributed to Scouts, especially Macabebes. Gen. Otis reported in 1900:

We have had difficulties because of the cruelties they practice on their own people. With them looting is no crime, and the application of torture to extort confession of guilt or information is not only legitimate, but in consonance with the proper performance of duty. They have been difficult to manage . . . the inhabitants of these islands fear the approach of the native Scout, be he Macabebe, Tagalog, or Visayan.⁴²

Otis was not certain if these traits were inherent character flaws or Spanish instilled behavior. In any event, Otis believed, Scouts required close supervision. Other leaders had doubts as well. Brigadier General Lloyd Wheaton "maintained . . . that all natives," not just Macabebes, "if given the chance, were liable to commit murder and indulge in robbery regardless of tribal animosities." Other critics believed all Filipinos "were liable to abuse the power which identification with the American military gave them, unless they were officered by men who demanded proper military conduct and accepted nothing less."⁴³ General Frederick Funston, hero of Cuba and the Philippines, confessed that "many . . . were not men of a great deal of intelligence,"⁴⁴ while another American officer, who commanded Philippine Scouts and Constables, commented that they were "outfits of doubtful

39. Tabaniag, *Philippine Scouts*, p. 20.

40. *Annual Report, 1904*, p. 21.

41. Woolard, "The Philippine Scouts," p. 233; also Powell, "Utilization of Native Troops," pp. 23-24.

42. *Report of Military Governor, 1899-1900*, pp. 14, 365.

43. Woolard, "Philippine Scouts," pp. 42, 84-85.

44. Blount, *American Occupation*, pp. 403-04.

loyalty, and at best, wholly inadequate. . . for maintenance of public order."⁴⁵

It was commonly held by American anti-imperialists that native Scouts had taught Americans techniques of torture better left unlearned, especially "the fiendish expedient of the 'water cure.'" Proof was provided by testimony from returning American veterans that such tactics were used on innocent captives.⁴⁶ Indeed, between August 1898 and March 1901, ten officers, thirty-six soldiers, Scouts, and camp-followers were tried "for cruelty to natives and violations of the laws of war," including torture, shooting of prisoners, rape, looting, robbery with violence, and assault. Of these cases "one officer was sentenced to dismissal, with five years imprisonment, six others were reprimanded, eleven private soldiers were put to death, two were fined, and twenty-one dismissed from the service." Although no case of "water torture" appeared in the court records, it was admitted by Lt. Batson and Gen. Funston that "our native allies did resort occasionally to this method of inflicting pain, as a means of extorting information from unwilling witnesses."⁴⁷ Nonetheless, the Army maintained that acts of cruelty were sporadic and "foreign to the nature and practice of the American soldier."⁴⁸

Anti-imperialist Senator Richard Pettigrew doubted the ultimate value of Filipinos who would fight their own people,

Large-scale use of native troops would increase the severity of the United States war against the guerrillas. Only the more savage peoples like Macabebes, traditionally hostile to the majority of the Filipinos would enlist as mercenary troops. The Macabebes were prone to murder, burn, and rob, and were difficult to keep within the lines of civilized warfare.⁴⁹

Convinced of the war's immorality, anti-imperialists were equally certain of the immorality of recruiting Filipinos. They considered Filipinos innocent, childlike people—uninitiated in the brutalities of modern warfare. Others doubted Scout loyalty and suspected their enlistment concealed plots to attack the Army from within. Such concerns were ridiculed by Republican newspapers. The *St. Paul Pioneer Press* wrote,

45. Frederick Funston, *Memories of Two Wars: Cuban and Philippine Experiences* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911), p. 399.

46. Schirmer, *Republic or Empire*, p. 227.

47. "The Charges of Cruelty in the Philippines," *Outlook* 70 (22 March 1902): 711.

48. "Cruelty in the Philippines," *Outlook* 70 (26 April 1902):998.

49. Schirmer, *Republic or Empire*, p. 227.

Some of the 'Aunties' have awful visions of Filipinos trained to serve in the American Army turning their guns on the Americans. What! These gentle, intelligent Filipinos, so admirably qualified to govern themselves!⁵⁰

Anti-imperialist concerns about the Philippine Scouts, however, had a negligible effect on Army policy.

The greatest hatred for the Scouts was harbored by insurgents who controlled large portions of the islands when the Americans arrived. Collaborators, especially Scouts, were dealt with harshly. One American officer noted that the Scout was "marked" and dared not go anywhere unarmed as he "was in constant danger of assassination at the hands of the insurgents." In one incident a Scout was hacked to death in broad daylight by insurgent bolomen in the center of a large garrison town within 100 yards of a barracks where 200 soldiers were quartered.⁵¹ Insurgent leader Aguinaldo declared in January 1901, after countless alleged American atrocities, that another was committed by hiring Filipinos to fight Filipinos in contravention of the International Treaty of Geneva. By doing this, Aguinaldo predicted, the seeds of future civil war were sown, which would further devastate a poor and ravaged nation after the insurrection.⁵²

Insurrectionists attempted through terror tactics to stifle all collaboration by killing those who were known or believed to be friendly to the Americans. The number of insurrectionist victims, according to Major General Adna Chaffee, reached "high into the thousands." One officer wrote that those "who dared manifest any partiality for the American cause were boloed, buried alive, or otherwise horribly murdered until a reign of terror tied every Tagalog tongue."⁵³ The Philippine Scouts were deemed crucial, however, not only for defeating the insurrection, but for demonstrating the power and benevolence of the American colonial government. An integral part of American colonial policy, the Scout program continued.

PHILIPPINE SCOUT OPERATIONS: 1899-1904

Philippine Scouts rendered extensive service to the Army throughout the Philippines between 1899 and 1904. Scouts served against

50. Thomas B. Esty, *Views of the American Press on the Philippines* (New York: Esty and Esty, 1899), p. 11, no. 19.

51. Rhodes, "Utilization of Native Troops," p. 111.

52. Theodore M. Kalaw, *The Philippine Revolution* (Manila: Manila Book Company, 1925; Reprint ed., Kawilihan: Jorge B. Vargas Filipiniana Foundation, 1969), p. 273.

53. "Charges of Cruelty," *Outlook*, p. 712; and Rhodes, "Utilization of Native Troops," p. 12.

insurgents in major battles such as those at Santiago, Zaragoza, and Carmen in Central Luzon, and in battles on the islands of Negros, Samar, and Leyte. No matter how effective, however, Scouts rarely operated independently of American units until the latter stages of the insurrection, and often performed noncombat occupation, construction, and utility duties.

In spite of lingering doubts about Scout usefulness and loyalty, two Scout operations, in February 1901 and March 1902, boosted their image in American eyes. A Macabebe unit under Frederick Funston captured insurgent leader Emilio Aguinaldo, and a company of Leyte Scouts captured Vicente Lukban, Aguinaldo's lieutenant in Samar. The capture of these two rebel leaders, and Aguinaldo's pledge of allegiance to the United States in April 1901, were major setbacks to the insurrectionists. Indeed, Lukban's capture ended major rebel activity.⁵⁴

The insurrection quickly diminished in intensity, martial law was lifted on 4 July 1901, and an American civilian government was installed. The eight-member Philippine Commission deemed it imperative that America's role in the Philippines be decreased. The Commission reported, "in this country it is politically most important that Filipinos should suppress Filipino disturbances and arrest Filipino outlaws."⁵⁵ The number of Scouts, therefore, was increased and a separate civilian-controlled Philippine Constabulary was created.

Scout pacification of rural areas allowed the Philippine Commission to implement the recommendations made by the Schurman Commission of 1900. The Commission revamped the system of government by creating an American-style Supreme Court, a Filipino legislature, massive education programs, new municipal and provincial law codes, departments to manage natural resources, and land reforms. Not all changes were immediate or successful, and most tended to be erratic, but they were perceived by Americans, and many previously anti-American Filipino elites, as improvements over Spanish and revolutionary rule. The Philippine Organic Act of 1902, planned for joint American-Filipino rule by 1907, with Filipinos participating in an elected legislature with the Philippine Commission performing executive functions.⁵⁶

54. Chaput, *Leyte Scouts*, pp. 5-9; also Tabaniag, *Philippine Scouts*, p. 24; Funston, *Memories*, p. 396.

55. *Annual Reports, 1900-1903*, p. 182.

56. Asprey, *War in Shadows*, p. 196; also see Daniel E.G. Hall, *A History of Southeast Asia*, 4th edition (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), pp. 808-09.

America's military role decreased with the intensity of insurgent activity. Gen. MacArthur was replaced by Gen. Adna Chaffee, and the remaining volunteer troops reached the United States by April 1901. American troop strength leveled off at 12,000 men, concentrated in urban areas. The Scout role in suppressing the remaining insurgents was expanded, and Americans were relegated to technical support and reserve roles. The Philippine Commission was able to report in early 1902 that,

Since . . . civil governments were established throughout the Christian Filipino provinces and the military control . . . ceased, not a single shot has been fired by an American soldier in the preservation of peace and order, and no request has yet been made of the Commanding General for assistance in the suppressing of violence or disturbance.⁵⁷

In reality only the American combat role had lessened.

When President Theodore Roosevelt officially declared the insurrection at an end of 4 July 1902, fighting continued throughout the islands, primarily between Scouts and enemies variously labeled as *ladrones* (common thieves), *ladrones politicos* (antigovernment "bandits"), and *ladrones-fanaticos* (peasant religious bandits).⁵⁸ The end of Spanish rule, the insurrection, and advent of American jurisdiction, was devastating to the Philippine rural society. The introduction of a new American government and culture produced new tensions. Educated elites, in urban areas, pacified by American promises of political power and wealth, tended toward cooperation with American authorities. Peasants, excluded from these privileges, resisted American inroads as they had those of Spain. As insurgent activity slackened, Filipino, and, to a lesser extent, American units had to contend with fanatical religious revolts. Operations against peasant religious groups, led by "Popes," were frequent between 1902 and 1906. Scout units saw action in Luzon, Paragua, Jolo, Bantayan, Samar, Mindanao, and Laguna.⁵⁹ They fought strange and diverse groups like the Pulajanes, Moros, Colorados, Cazadores, Babailanes, Santos Niños, Soldados Militantes de la Iglesia, Dios-Dios, Cruz-Cruz, and Anting-Anting. Most of these movements were short-lived, but others, such as those led by Macario Sakay and Artemio Ricarte, lasted for years and required Army

57. *Annual Reports, 1900-1903*, p. 312.

58. *Annual Report, 1903*, pp. 79-134; also Asprey, *War in Shadows*, p. 196; and David R. Sturtevant, *Popular Uprisings in the Philippines, 1840-1940* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1976), p. 119.

59. Franklyn, *History of Philippine Scouts*, p. 49.

resistance to quell.⁶⁰ Operations in 1905 alone involved 3,500 Scouts and 11,000 regular Army troops, and resulted in the capture of 9,155 lardrons and the deaths of 2,500.⁶¹

The Moros of Mindanao resisted American hegemony as fiercely as they did that of Spain. Increased numbers of Scouts failed to maintain order, and the Army intervened in 1906, staying until 1913 when indigenous troops could hold the province. Resistance diminished after the Moros were pacified and American troop strength continued to decline until 1917. In that year only one American garrison was located south of Manila—the remaining posts having been occupied by Scout and Constabulary units. Pacification, except for sporadic resistance, was completed by 1913.

The United States Congress passed the Jones Act in 1916, which called for future Philippine independence, more indigenous political participation, and the end of the Philippine Commission. This step was made possible by the increasing loyalty of the Filipino population, and the pacification of the islands by Filipino and American units.

CONCLUSION

The Philippine Scouts were crucial to American policy in the Philippines between 1898 and 1916, and instrumental to American success. Their contribution was apparent physically and psychologically. Scouts provided valuable tactical assistance to American forces who were ignorant of tropical geography, guerrilla warfare, and the native population. Native collaboration allowed American military superiority to prevail against an elusive enemy. Without Scout guides, interpreters, boatmen, and garrison troops, larger numbers of Americans would have been necessary to pacify the islands with an even greater loss of life and property.

Enlistment of Filipinos diminished the Army role, thereby placating the American public which doubted the wisdom of the Philippine war. The United States government benefitted from reduced expenditure for American troops, by enlisting Filipinos whose lower costs decreased military expenditure by half.

The value of the Scouts to the United States extended well beyond mere numbers. Filipino units were able to operate more effectively

60. Sturtevant, *Popular Uprisings*, p. 119; also Bonifacio Salamanca, *The Filipino Reaction to American Rule, 1901-1903*, (Hamden, Conn.: Shoe String Press, 1968), pp. 178-81.

61. Forbes, *Philippine Islands*, pp. 205-06.

and efficiently, in smaller numbers, than American troops, who were viewed as foreigners and showed little inclination, or desire, to understand the Filipino people or their way of life.

Scouts improved Filipino-American relations by actively demonstrating to American troops, civilian leaders, and the public, that not all Filipinos were insurrectionists, brutal, ignorant, and uncivilized. Although they were considered inferior, childlike soldiers, who needed constant supervision to prevent irresponsible behavior, Scout participation came at a time when the Army desperately needed troops, and Filipino friends to demonstrate that American policies were having some positive effect.

Filipino collaboration provided American military and civilian authorities a powerful propaganda weapon. The American public, especially the anti-imperialists, were shown proof in the existence of Scout regiments that the war was not fought just for American gains. Scouts gave legitimacy to government views that the war was perpetrated by a small group of greedy, self-interested Filipinos uninterested in liberty and democracy for all Filipinos. Natives would not serve foreign masters, it was claimed, if the end result would represent a retrogression to pre-1898 conditions. The Scouts were, therefore, living examples of the benefits of collaboration. They were consistently better fed, paid, housed, and clothed than Filipino peasants, and their wealth, position, and status in American eyes eventually attracted either peasant support or acquiescence. Filipino collaboration further demonstrated the inevitability of American colonial rule, as it destroyed the viability of the Philippine revolution and assured American success.

Through the creation and perpetuation of the Philippine Scouts, the United States Army proved, as European imperial powers had previously shown, that indigenous forces were a vital factor in the successful conquest and pacification of overseas colonies. Utilizing the Philippine Scouts, the United States was able to dominate that country until independence was granted in 1946.