

# Part XI: Perry Miles recounts what led to Philippines Insurrection

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On Feb. 4, 1899, the tension in Manila between the U.S. troops and the Filipino insurrectionists finally erupted. 1st Lt. Perry Miles, who was serving with the 14th Infantry unit, recorded the moments in his memoir, "Fallen Leaves: Memories of an Old Soldier":

"On February 4th, I was on outpost duty again in the Blockhouse 14 area. This time, I had taken out Company I, one of the newly organized units of the regiment raised at Camp Merritt at the Presidio of San Francisco, so at this time the men were nearly all new recruits, unlike my own Company E, a veteran organization. This was the first time I had had any kind of duty with this company, so I knew very few of the men.

"We had the usual advance post of a dozen men and as I left that post to find out whether these troublesome insurgents across from Blockhouse 14 were up to any new enterprises, I supposed that I would find them once again somewhere on our side of the line. But wonderful to tell, for once, they were where they belonged! Was I this time to have a quiet, uneventful tour of outpost duty? It appeared that way because nothing, worthy of note or comment occurred all day.

"At dusk, however, I thought there was something suspicious about blinking lights back of my station on the Cingalon Road in the Malate district. The lights seemed to come from windows of houses and had a regularity that would be unnatural if made by moving objects that just happened to be between me and the light. I thought I might report this for further observation when I came off outpost next forenoon, but subsequent events made that unnecessary.

"Within a half hour of the time I observed these lights in the outskirts of Malate, I heard rifle firing off to the northeast. The noise of musketry continued and became louder. There could no longer be any doubt that what we had been expecting for so long now had happened. I afterward learned that it started on the front north of the Pasig River in the Santa Mesa district. A patrol from an outpost of the 1st Nebraska Volunteers moving well with American lines unexpectedly came upon a similar party of armed insurgents. The leading man of the American patrol at once challenged and ordered the insurgent patrol to halt. Instead, the insurgents cocked their pieces and kept on coming. After once more challenging, the soldier in the lead of the 1st Nebraska patrol fired. The American patrol then fell back on the outpost which sent it out. Insurgents from Blockhouse 7, evidently the body from which the insurgent patrol had been sent, immediately advanced on the 1st Nebraska outpost and opened fire upon it.

"This was the kindling of the conflict. Its flames gradually spread around the city. Officers and soldiers everywhere in Manila were conscripting calesas (horse-drawn buggies) and victorias (horse-drawn



carriages with elevated seats) and every other kind of transportation they could find on the streets to help them make speed in getting back to their companies before they were moved out to their assigned positions on the line. Many companies were moved before the absentees rejoined, stragglers, hurrying individually from barracks, where they picked up their arms and field equipment, to find their proper units on the defensive lines.”

Miles now began his second war known as the Philippines Insurrection.

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