

The Spanish-American War aka "A Splendid Little War"

Background Information

The National Guard Encampment in Mount Gretna, PA played a vital part in the mobilization of Pennsylvania troops for the Spanish-American War. From 1895-1898 Cuban revolutionaries had been in bitter conflict with Spain to gain their independence. Americans were aware of the unruly situation and concerned about the economic and political instability of the nearby region. Many United States citizens wanted America to intervene.

In 1898, conditions became worse and President William McKinley sent the battleship *U.S.S. Maine* to the area to protect American citizens and interests in Cuba. February 15, 1898 an explosion caused the *Maine* to sink in Havana Harbor. War against Spain was declared April 21, 1898.

On April 25, 1898, Pennsylvania Governor Daniel Hastings ordered the PA National Guard to report to the Mt. Gretna training camp. The camp was named "Camp Hastings" in honor of the Governor. The guard's purpose was to ready themselves for participation in the Spanish-American War.

Camp Hastings

10,800 soldiers began arriving April 27th welcomed by rain, sleet, and snow. Many wore only civilian clothes expecting uniforms. Railroads became jammed with 175 coaches and sleeping cars, 100 baggage, box, stock, and flat cars. Tents and blankets had not yet arrived.

Thursday, April 28, 1898

*"When we reached Mt. Gretna it was raining to beat seven of a kind.
We were quartered in the barracks without food, water or blankets.
But we expect to get something to eat by next Tuesday."*

Men were quartered in the Farmer's Exposition Building, bunks were set up in the auditorium, some slept in Chautauqua cottages, and others stayed on the train. They were given permission to strip cottages of burnable materials for fires. Records were maintained to compensate cottage owners for damages.

By April 29th 8,994 officers and men had reached Camp Hastings. Tents were pitched and "life began to settle into a routine." Cavalry and infantry had to feed, water, and clean the horses. Some men were on guard duty and all were drilling and training.

In order to serve, Pennsylvania National Guardsmen were required to muster-out of State service to enlist in Federal service. Before making this transition, Guardsmen with families could decline enlistment. However, seventy percent of those in Camp mustered into Federal service including cavalry, infantry, and artillery.

May 3-5, 1898 Governor Hastings inspected the troops. May 6th the first troops mustered-in were ordered to report to Newport News, Virginia. By June 12th the only unit remaining was the "Governors Troop" cavalry. Before they departed the men created a monument by stacking stones. This monument was inadvertently destroyed in 1908 and rebuilt in 1909. Located on Conewago Hill, Mt Gretna, PA a plaque made of bronze from the wreck of the *U.S.S. Maine* was added in 1916. Two additional monuments remain in Mt. Gretna to honor the men of the "Sheridan's Troop" cavalry, and 16th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry.

August 12, 1898 a cease-fire was signed and the war officially ended with the signing of the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898. John Hay, future U.S. Secretary of State, told Theodore Roosevelt this had been a "Splendid Little War" because the United States won a swift and decisive victory with relatively few deaths and began establishing itself as a "formidable world power." Cuba gained its independence from Spain and ceded Puerto Rico and Guam to the United States. And, the United States was permitted to purchase the Philippine Islands from Spain for \$20 million.

The war cost the United States \$250 million and 3,000 lives, 90% of whom perished from yellow fever, typhoid fever and other infectious diseases, 266 went down with the *U.S.S. Maine*. Pennsylvania was one of the largest contributors of men during the Spanish-American War with 17,000 Pennsylvanians serving in the Pennsylvania Volunteer forces and many more in the Federal army and navy.

Camp Hastings 1898 Mount Gretna, PA

1898 Muster for the Spanish-American War

Command

- Governor Daniel Hastings – Commander-in-Chief
 - Lieutenant Colonel Charles H. Howell – Division Quartermaster
 - Brigadier General John W. Schall – First Brigade
 - Brigadier General John A. Wiley – Second Brigade
 - Brigadier General J.P.S. Gobin – Third Brigade
 - Troops included Infantry, Cavalry, Light Batteries and Heavy Batteries
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- April 25, 1898-With the Declaration of War with Spain, Pennsylvania Governor Daniel Hastings ordered the National Guard to report to their training camp in Mount Gretna.
 - Troops from all over Pennsylvania began to arrive April 27, 1898. The railroad was jammed with men and supplies.
 - The weather was miserable with snow, sleet, rain, and mud. Tents has not yet arrived.
 - Men were quartered in buildings and pavilions on the Exposition (skating rink) and Chautauqua grounds, dwellings (cottages), and auditorium (playhouse). Some stayed on the train. Permission was given to collect what they could from Chautauqua cottages for warmth and fire.
 - Uniforms had not arrived and troops were not dressed for the weather.



- By April 29th 8,994 officers and troops were in camp. Tents were pitched and routines established. (drilling, training, guard duty, hauling water from Mt. Gretna lake, care of horses, mess tents...)
- Troops who passed the medical examination took the Oath of Office mustering in to Federal service.
- Men with families could decline enlisting into Federal service, however, 70% did enlist.
- May 6, 1898 The first troops to receive orders were Batteries A and C. By June 12 only the "Governor's Troop" Cavalry remained.
- The Governor's Troop created a monument by stacking stones before departing, rebuilt and located on Conewago Hill, Mt. Gretna.
- Other Mt. Gretna monuments include a carved stone by "Sheridan's Troop" and monument at the far end of the Soldier's Field honoring the 16th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry. A fourth monument is located on Encampment grounds somewhere obscure and unknown.

WHAT HAPPENED AROUND THE TIME OF THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR?



1895 Jell-O was created

1895 Jack Dempsey was born. He held the world heavyweight boxing title from 1919 to 1926.

1895 Gennaro Lombardi opened the **first pizzeria in the U.S.** in New York City.

1895 Fredrick E. Blaisdell of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania received **1st U.S. patent for a paper pencil** (paper-wrapped crayons or marking lead with a pull-string to reveal more lead).

1895 Volleyball is invented by William G. Morgan, a WMCA physical education director.

1896 The **first public beach in the nation** opened in Revere, Massachusetts.

1896 Harvey Hubbell of Bridgeport, Connecticut received U.S. patent for an on/off **pull-chain electric light** 'Socket for Incandescent Lamps.'

1896 Michelob beer was introduced by Anheuser-Busch Brewery.

1896 Leo Hirshfield introduced the **Tootsie Roll** at his small store in New York City, and named it after his 5-year-old daughter, whose nickname was 'Tootsie.' It was the first individually wrapped penny candy.

1896 Opening day of the **first modern Olympic games in Athens, Greece.** The last Olympics were held more than 1,500 years prior.

1897 Henry J. Heinz registered **'Heinz' trademark.**

1897 Alfred L. Cralle of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, patented an **"Ice-Cream Mold and Disher"** (ice cream scoop). His basic design is still used.

1897 Campbell's Soup invents **condensed soup.**

1897 John Lee Love of Fall River, Massachusetts received for the simple **portable pencil sharpener**, the same type still used today.

1897 Deere and Co. registered **'John Deere' trademark.**

1898 Hawaii was formally annexed to the United States.

1899 The **first motorized vacuum cleaner** was patented by John S. Thurman. This "pneumatic carpet renovator" was gasoline powered.