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LESSON #5: Emergence to World Power & WWI

Slide #2: Fall of the Spanish Empire

After 1865, only Cuba and Puerto Rico and the Spanish East Indies (the Philippines, Guam and nearby Pacific islands) remained under Spanish control in the Indies. The Cuban war for independence was cut short by U.S. intervention in what became known as the Spanish–American War in 1898. Spain also lost Puerto Rico and the Philippines in that conflict. The following year, Spain then sold its remaining Pacific Ocean possessions to Germany in the German–Spanish Treaty, retaining only its African territories. An increasing level of nationalist, anti-colonial uprisings in various colonies culminated with the Spanish–American War of 1898, fought primarily over Cuba. Military defeat was followed by the independence of Cuba and the cession of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines to the United States, receiving US\$ 20 million in compensation for the Philippines.

Slide #3: Cuban Revolution

While tension increased among the Cubans and Spanish Government, popular support of intervention began to spring up in the United States, due to the emergence of the "Cuba Libre" movement and the fact that many Americans had drawn parallels between the American Revolution and the Cuban revolt, seeing the Spanish Government as the tyrannical colonial oppressor.

President McKinley, aware of the political complexity surrounding the conflict, wanted to end the revolt peacefully. In accordance with this policy, McKinley began to negotiate with the Spanish government, hoping that the negotiations would be able to end the yellow journalism in the United States, and therefore, end the loudest calls to go to war with Spain. An attempt was made to negotiate a peace before McKinley took office. However, the Spanish refused to take part in the negotiations.

Slide #4: Interest in Cuba

The Cubans initiated a decade-long rebellion, when they rose up once more against continuing repression by the mother country. Many Americans soon favored intervention, but President Grover Cleveland was determined that the United States should adhere to a policy of strict neutrality. Events in Cuba increasingly made this difficult. When after almost a year of costly fighting the Spanish had failed to suppress the rebellion, they turned to harsher measures. A new Captain-General in Cuba, Valeriano Weyler, attempted to isolate the rebels from the population by herding women, children, and old people from the countryside into detention camps and garrisoned towns. This poorly executed reconcentrado policy led to the death of

thousands of civilians from disease and starvation. Weyler's methods gave newspapers in the United States an opportunity to make sensationalistic attacks on Spanish policies. They portrayed the war in Cuba as a struggle between the "butcher" Weyler and high-minded patriots struggling bravely for freedom from Old World authoritarianism.

Despite mounting public pressure, Cleveland's successor as President, William McKinley, also tried to avoid war with Spain. He might have succeeded had the American battleship Maine not been sunk on February 15, 1898, in Havana harbor as a result of a mysterious explosion with a loss of 260 lives. The vessel was in port ostensibly on a courtesy call, but actually to provide protection for American citizens in Cuba. A naval investigating commission appointed by the President announced on March 25 that the Maine had gone down as a result of an external explosion, a conclusion that even today is in doubt. To most Americans, however, the report indicated Spanish treachery. After diplomatic efforts failed to defuse the crisis, Congress on April 19 authorized the use of force to secure Cuba's independence. Six days later, on April 25, Congress issued a formal declaration of war. So began the conflict that McKinley and Cleveland had tried to avoid, a war for which the country was ill prepared.

Slide #5: Strategy for Invasion

To the extent the United States had a strategy for the conduct of the war against Spain, it consisted of maintaining a naval blockade of Cuba while Cuban insurgent forces carried on a harassing campaign against Spanish troops on the island. Supporters of this policy believed that it would lead eventually to the surrender of the Spanish forces and the liberation of Cuba. No direct clash between American and Spanish troops was visualized; American land forces would simply occupy Cuba as soon as the Spanish departed.

The decision to mobilize large volunteer forces compounded the problems of equipping, training, and supplying the Army. In the spring and summer of 1898, thousands of enthusiastic but inexperienced volunteers poured into newly established camps. A taste of military life soon curbed the enthusiasm of most of them, for in the camps they found chronic shortages of the most essential equipment. Even such basic items as underwear, socks, and shoes were lacking. A steady diet of badly prepared food, unbelievably poor sanitary conditions, and inadequate medical facilities complemented the equipment shortages. Red tape and poor management in the War Department's supply bureaus delayed correction of some of the worst deficiencies, while the shortage of capable volunteer officers further limited the quality of training received in the camps.

Slide #6: Invasion of Cuba

On June 22, after heavy shelling of the landing areas, the V Corps disembarked amid circumstances almost as confused and hectic as those at Tampa. Captains of many of the chartered merchant ships refused to bring their vessels close to shore. Their reluctance slowed the landing of troops and equipment already handicapped by a shortage of lighters. Horses, simply dropped overboard to get ashore on their own, swam out to sea in some instances and were lost. An alert enemy defense might well have taken advantage of the chaotic conditions to oppose the landings effectively. But the Spanish, though they had more than 200,000 troops in Cuba—36,000 of them in Santiago Province—did nothing to prevent Shafter's men from getting ashore. Some 6,000 landed on June 22 and most of the remaining 11,000 on the two days

following. In addition, 4,000 to 5,000 insurgents under General Garcia supplemented the American force.

Slide #7: Battle of San Juan Hill

The order was given for the men to march the 8 miles (13 km) along the road to Santiago from the outpost they had been holding. Originally, Colonel Roosevelt had no specific orders for himself and his men. They were simply to march to San Juan Heights, where over one thousand Spanish soldiers held the area, and hold position. It was decided that Brigadier General Henry Lawton's division would be the main fighters in the battle while taking El Caney, a Spanish stronghold, a few miles (kilometers) away. The cavalry was to simply serve as a distraction while artillery and battery struck the Spanish from afar. Lawton's infantry would begin the battle and The Rough Riders were to march and meet with them mid-battle.

San Juan Hill and another hill were separated by a small valley and pond; the river ran near the foot of both. Together, this geography formed San Juan Heights. Colonel Roosevelt and The Rough Riders made their way to the foot of what was dubbed Kettle Hill because of the old sugar refinement cauldrons which lay along it. The battle of San Juan Heights began with the firing of the artillery and battery at the Spanish location. Soon after battery-fire was returned and The Rough Riders, standing at the position of the friendly artillery, had to promptly move to avoid shells. The men moved down from their position and began making their way through and along the San Juan River towards the base of Kettle Hill. There they took cover along the riverbank and in the tall grass to avoid sniper and artillery fire that was being directed towards their position, however they were left vulnerable and pinned down. The Spanish rifles were able to discharge eight rounds in the twenty seconds it took for the United States rifles to reload. In this way they had a strong advantage over the Americans. The rounds they fired were 7mm Mauser bullets, which moved at a high velocity and inflicted small, clean wounds. Although some of the men were hit, few were mortally wounded or killed.

Finally, the Rough Riders received orders to assist the regulars in their assault on the hill's front. Roosevelt, riding on horseback, got his men onto their feet and into position to begin making their way up the hill. He claimed that he wished to fight on foot as he did at Las Guasimas; however he would have found it difficult to move up and down the hill to supervise his men in a quick and efficient manner on foot. He also recognized that he could see his men better from the elevated horseback, and they could see him better as well. Roosevelt chided his own men to not leave him alone in a charge up the hill, and drawing his sidearm promised nearby black soldiers separated from their own units that he would fire at them if they turned back, warning them he kept his promises. His Rough Riders chanted: "Oh he always does, he always does!" The soldiers, laughing, fell in with the volunteers to prepare for the assault.

As the troops of the various units began slowly creeping up the hill, firing their rifles at the opposition as they climbed, Roosevelt went to the captain of the platoons in back and had a word with him. He stated that it was his opinion that they could not effectively take the hill due to an insufficient ability to effectively return fire, and that the solution was to charge it full-on. The captain reiterated his colonel's orders to hold position. Roosevelt, recognizing the absence of the other Colonel, declared himself the ranking officer and ordered a charge up Kettle Hill. The captain stood hesitant, and Colonel Roosevelt rode off on his horse, Texas, leading his own men

uphill while waving his hat in the air and cheering. The Rough Riders followed him with enthusiasm and obedience without hesitation. By then, the other men from the different units on the hill became stirred by this event and began bolting up the hill alongside their countrymen. The 'charge' was actually a series of short rushes by mixed groups of regulars and Rough Riders. Within twenty minutes, Kettle Hill was taken, although casualties were heavy. The rest of San Juan Heights was taken within the following hour.

The Rough Riders' charge on Kettle Hill was facilitated by a hail of covering fire from three Gatling Guns commanded by Lt. John H. Parker, which fired some 18,000 .30 Army rounds into the Spanish trenches atop the crest of both hills. Col. Roosevelt noted that the hammering sound of the Gatling guns visibly raised the spirits of his men: *"There suddenly smote on our ears a peculiar drumming sound. One or two of the men cried out, 'The Spanish machine guns!' but, after listening a moment, I leaped to my feet and called, 'It's the Gatlings, men! Our Gatlings!' Immediately the troopers began to cheer lustily, for the sound was most inspiring."*

Trooper Jesse D. Langdon of the 1st Volunteer Infantry, who accompanied Col. Theodore Roosevelt and the Rough Riders in their assault on Kettle Hill, reported: *"We were exposed to the Spanish fire, but there was very little because just before we started, why, the Gatling guns opened up at the bottom of the hill, and everybody yelled, 'The Gatlings! The Gatlings!' and away we went. The Gatlings just enfiladed the top of those trenches. We'd never have been able to take Kettle Hill if it hadn't been for Parker's Gatling guns."*

A Spanish counterattack on Kettle Hill by some 600 infantry was quickly devastated by one of Lt. Parker's Gatling guns recently emplaced on the summit of San Juan Hill, which killed all but forty of the attackers before they had closed to within 250 yards (230 m) of the Americans on Kettle Hill. Col. Roosevelt was so impressed by the actions of Lt. Parker and his men that he placed his regiment's two 7mm Colt–Browning machine guns and the volunteers manning them under Parker, who immediately emplaced them—along with 10,000 rounds of captured 7mm Mauser ammunition—at tactical firing points in the American line.

Colonel Roosevelt gave a large share of the credit for the successful charge to Lt. Parker and his Gatling Gun Detachment: *"I think Parker deserved rather more credit than any other one man in the entire campaign ... he had the rare good judgment and foresight to see the possibilities of the machine-guns. He then, by his own exertions, got it to the front and proved that it could do invaluable work on the field of battle, as much in attack as in defense."*

Slide #8: The Philippines

The first battle between American and Spanish forces was at Manila Bay where, on May 1, Commodore George Dewey, in a matter of hours defeated a Spanish squadron under Admiral Patricio Montojo. Dewey managed this with only nine wounded. With the German seizure of Tsingtao in 1897, Dewey's squadron had become the only naval force in the Far East without a local base of its own, and was beset with coal and ammunition problems.

Following Dewey's victory, Manila Bay was filled with the warships of Britain, Germany, France, and Japan. The German fleet of eight ships, ostensibly in Philippine waters to protect German interests, acted provocatively – cutting in front of American ships, refusing to salute the United States flag (according to customs of naval courtesy), taking soundings of the harbor, and

landing supplies for the besieged Spanish. The Germans, with interests of their own, were eager to take advantage of whatever opportunities the conflict in the islands might afford. There was a fear at the time that the islands would become a German possession. The Americans called the bluff of the Germans, threatening conflict if the aggression continued, and the Germans backed down. At the time, the Germans expected the confrontation in the Philippines to end in an American defeat, with the revolutionaries capturing Manila and leaving the Philippines ripe for German picking.

On August 13, with American commanders unaware that a cease-fire had been signed between Spain and the U.S. on the previous day in Washington D.C., American forces captured the city of Manila from the Spanish in the Battle of Manila. This battle marked the end of Filipino–American collaboration, as the American action of preventing Filipino forces from entering the captured city of Manila was deeply resented by the Filipinos. On December 10, 1898, the Spanish government ceded the Philippines to the United States in the Treaty of Paris. Armed conflict broke out between U.S. forces and the Filipinos when U.S. troops began to take the place of the Spanish in control of the country after the end of the war, quickly escalating into the Philippine–American War.

Fighting erupted between forces of the United States and those of the Philippine Republic on February 4, 1899, in what became known as the 1899 Battle of Manila. The war resulted in the deaths of at least 200,000 Filipino civilians, mostly due to famine and disease. Some estimates for total civilian dead reach up to a million. The war, and especially the following occupation by the U.S., changed the culture of the islands, leading to the disestablishment of the Catholic Church in the Philippines as a state religion, and the introduction of English to the islands as the primary language of government, education, business, industry, and, in future decades, among upper-class families and educated individuals.

Slide #9: The Boxer Uprising

The Siege of the International Legations occurred in the summer of 1900 in Peking (today Beijing), the capital of the Qing Empire, during the Boxer Rebellion. Menaced by the Boxers, an anti-Christian, anti-foreign peasant movement, 900 soldiers, marines, and civilians, largely from Europe, Japan, and the United States, and about 2,800 Chinese Christians took refuge in the Peking Legation Quarter. The Qing government took the side of the Boxers. The foreigners and Chinese Christians in the Legation Quarter survived a 55-day siege by the Qing Army and Boxers. The siege was broken by an international military force which marched from the coast of China, defeated the Qing army, and occupied Beijing. The siege was called by the New York Sun "the most exciting episode ever known to civilization."

Slide #11: Origins of the War

With the announcement, German U-boats would without warning attempt to sink all ships traveling to or from British or French ports. Under the new strategy, U-boats had sunk three American merchant ships with a heavy loss of American life in March 1917. Two days after Wilson's speech, the Senate overwhelmingly declared that a state of war existed between Germany and the United States. Two days later the House of Representatives followed suit. The United States had entered "the Great War."

The United States had joined a war that was entering into its fourth bitter year by the summer of 1917. After the opening battles of August 1914, the British and French armies and their German foes had settled into an almost continuous line of elaborate entrenchments from the English Channel to Switzerland that became known as the Western Front. To break this stalemate, each side sought to rupture the other's lines, using huge infantry armies supported by increasingly massive and sophisticated artillery fire, as well as poison gas. Nevertheless, against the barbed wire and interlocking machine guns of the trenches, compounded by the mud churned up by massive artillery barrages, these attempts floundered and failed to make meaningful penetrations. Into this stalemate the U.S. Army would throw a force of over 2 million men by the end of the war. Half of these men fought in the trenches of northern France, mostly in the last six months of the war. It would prove to be the military weight needed to tip the strategic balance in the favor of the Allies.

Slide #12: The AEF Arrives in Europe

With the decision to send a division overseas, MG Scott, the Chief of Staff, directed the General Staff to study a divisional structure of two infantry brigades, each consisting of two infantry regiments. In consultation with Joffre's staff, the Army planners, headed by Maj. John M. Palmer, developed a division organization with four regiments of 17,700 men, of which 11,000 were infantrymen.

While Palmer's committee worked on its study, Scott asked MG Pershing, to select four infantry regiments and a field artillery regiment for overseas service. Pershing chose the 6th Field Artillery and the 16th, 18th, 26th, and 28th Infantries. Although these regiments were among the readiest in the Regular Army, they all needed an infusion of recruits to reach full strength. By the time the regiments left for France, they were composed of about two-thirds raw recruits. Nevertheless, on June 8, Brig. Gen William L. Sibert assumed command of the 1st Expeditionary Division and four days later sailed for France. The division would provide the nucleus of a larger American force in France.

On June 26 the advance elements of the 1st Division joined Pershing and his staff in France. From St. Nazaire, the port of debarkation, the division traveled to the Gondrecourt area in Lorraine, about 120 miles southwest of Paris. There, the division would undergo badly needed training. Not only had the War Department brought its regiments up to strength with new recruits, but it had also siphoned off many of their long-service, well-trained regulars to provide the nucleus for the new divisions forming in the United States.

Before Pershing departed for France, Secretary Baker told him: *"I will give you only two orders, one to go to France and the other to come home. In the meantime, your authority in France will be supreme."* Baker thus had given Pershing a free hand to make basic decisions and plan for the shape and form of the American ground contribution to the war in Europe.

When the team returned, they recommended that the AEF assume the section of the Allied line from St. Mihiel to Belfort. They considered the training areas in the region adequate. Pershing's staff believed that the area offered important military objectives (coal and iron mines and vital railroads) within reasonable striking distance.

Slide #14: Placement of the AEF

With the massive armies of Germany, France, and Great Britain stalemated in the trenches of northern Europe since 1914, there was little chance of the Americans' exercising much strategic judgment in choosing their zone of operations. On the Allied northern flank, the British Expeditionary Forces guarded the English Channel ports that provided their logistical link with Great Britain and provided an escape route from Europe in case the Western Front collapsed. To the British right, nationalism compelled the French armies to cover the approaches to Paris, the French capital. Moreover, the Allied armies were already straining the supply lines of northern France, especially the overburdened Paris railroad network. Any attempt to place a large American army north of Verdun would not only disrupt the British and French armies and limit any independent American activity, but it would also risk a complete breakdown of the supply system. These considerations left Lorraine as the only real choice for the American sector.

Although the military situation of 1917 had determined that the American sector would be on the Allied southern flank, neither Pershing nor his staff lamented the circumstance. On the contrary, they believed that Lorraine was ideally suited to deploy a large, independent AEF. Logisticians supplying an American army in Lorraine would avoid the congested northern logistical facilities by using the railroads of central France that stretched back to the ports along the southwestern French coast. Furthermore, the Americans could move into the region with relative ease and without disturbing any major Allied forces, since only a relatively few French troops occupied Lorraine.

Slide #18: Meuse-Argonne Offensive (The Lost Battalion)

By the night of 2 October, after a long day of fighting, Major Whittlesey received information that the men had found a way up the right of Hill 198. At around this same moment the French experienced a massive counterattack by the Germans and were forced to fall back exposing the left flank of the 308th. The same occurred on the right flank with the other American Division, causing the 308th to be outflanked on both sides. However, they did not discover this until shortly after they reached the peak of Hill 198. The hill was now in their control; however, it was too quiet for Whittlesey. He realized that he could hear nothing of the 307th that was supposed to be on their flank. "Either they had broken through the line as well and reached their objective over there, or they had been licked and fallen back. The former would be good news for the 308th ... The latter, however, was unthinkable; orders forbade it..."

Whilst this was happening, to the rear of the main action George W. Quinn, a runner with the battalion was killed while attempting to reach Major Whittlesey with a message from Whittlesey's adjutant, Lieutenant Arthur McKeogh. Whittlesey earlier in the day had sent McKeogh back about 150 yards (140 m) with 15 men with light machine guns to silence German machine gunners who had cut communications between Whittlesey's battalion and the American rear during the night. The Germans were taking ground from which they could surround Whittlesey's men. McKeogh's undelivered message asked for a mortar to use against the strong German position. Quinn was found four months later to have killed three German soldiers who had mortally wounded him before he could reach Whittlesey.

The men dug in on Hill 198 and created what is known as "the pocket" in what was a fairly good defensive position. The two best companies were on the flanks, with support from the weaker companies. A single company took up the front of the pocket. The rear was the least protected from attack and was defended by only a few riflemen and several machine guns. The hill sloped steeply from the front of the pocket, making it difficult for Germans to bomb the battalion from that direction. The biggest flaw in their position was that their holes were dug too close together, and too many men were occupying the holes at the same time. This created easy targets for mortars and snipers. By about 22:30, Whittlesey realized that Hill 205 was still occupied by the Germans on the left, and the ravine to the right was also full of enemy soldiers.

The morning of 3 October was spent trying to re-establish contact with the flanks and with the companies that were left behind. Whittlesey sent out runners to the French and American units that were supposed to be on his flanks. None of the runners returned, neither from the flanks nor from trying to connect with the companies that Whittlesey had left behind. All were killed or captured by the enemy. The more time that passed without any messages the more Whittlesey was concluding that they were actually surrounded. However, the Germans were not attacking; the German forces within the ravine believed that they were outnumbered by the Americans.

That afternoon, the Germans attacked from all sides. *"A single one up front might not have been so bad, but there were others on the flanks, and sniper fire ringing out as well."* At this time, Captain Holderman, an officer working with Whittlesey, realized the predicament that the men were in. The German forces had nearly doubled and were closing in on them. Their communication line was cut and so they could not receive supplies of food or ammunition. Holderman tried to lead an assault out through the back of the pocket, but failed to break out, incurring heavy casualties in the process. This infuriated Whittlesey, but seeing that there was nothing he could do he simply sent the survivors back to their defensive positions. Next came a grenade assault followed by mortars raining in on them, but the Americans did not stagger. Another attack came a little after 17:00, and it lasted for about 45 minutes. After this attack was over, the Germans began to settle down for the day. The Americans had suffered many casualties, but inflicted similarly heavy losses on the attacking Germans.

On the morning of 4 October, patrols were sent out on their morning routes, and Whittlesey was unsure that any of the carrier pigeons had made it through. He was unsure if command knew of the desperate situation that was unfolding. Whittlesey believed that his orders to hold this position still applied, because the position was the key to breaking through the German lines. T Whittlesey and his men were shelled by their own artillery. Some believe that Whittlesey had relayed the wrong coordinates, while others believe that Whittlesey had gotten the coordinates right and the artillery's aim was off. Whittlesey released his final carrier pigeon, named Cher Ami, to call off the barrage. *"A shell exploded directly below the bird, killing five of our men and stunning the pigeon so that it fluttered to the ground midway between the spring...and the bridge we crossed to get into the Pocket."*

The pigeon managed to take flight again and despite being severely wounded, successfully delivered the message: *"We are along the road parallel to 276.4. Our own artillery is dropping a barrage directly on us. For heavens sake stop it."* Cher Ami had been shot through the breast, blinded in one eye, and had a leg hanging only by a tendon. The pigeon was tended to by army

medics, and was considered a hero of the 77th division for helping to save the lives of the 194 survivors.

As soon as the Allied shelling had stopped, the Germans launched an attack. After many losses and much hand-to-hand combat, the German forces were driven back once again. Although many had been killed or captured, the unit still remained intact, but morale was low and sickness was setting in. Many men only had a few bullets left and no food. Bandages were being taken off of the dead and reused on the wounded. A package was reported to have been dropped in for the men to resupply, but all reports point to it falling into German territory. Water was accessible, but getting to it required exposing oneself to German fire.

From 5–8 October, the Germans continued to attack. They also sent messengers asking for the 308th to surrender. Whittlesey did not respond. There were many controversies at the time as to what he had done, but records indicate that he said and did nothing. At least one surrender demand carried by an 18-year-old soldier, captured by the Germans and then released to carry the message, said *"the suffering of your wounded men can be heard over here in German lines, and we are appealing to your humane sentiments to stop....please treat (the messenger) as an honorable man. He is quite a soldier. We envy you."* The same memoir states that Whittlesey wrote in his official Operations Report in capital letters, *"No reply to the demand to surrender seemed necessary."*

While Whittlesey and his men tenaciously defended their position, their parent 154th Brigade and the entire 77th Division launched a ferocious series of attacks to get to them. But with each attack, these efforts grew weaker and weaker as the combat power of the 77th ebbed. In the first 4 days of these attacks, the rest of the 308th infantry alone lost 766 men.

The news of the Lost Battalion's dilemma reached the highest levels of AEF command. While the 77th's power ground down, a powerful U.S. force under General Hunter Liggett's I Corps (United States) was being put together. The veteran 28th Infantry Division was oriented to reach Whittlesey and the fresh 82nd Infantry Division was moved to reinforce the 28th's flank. Meanwhile, Pershing ordered Liggett reinforced by the 1st Infantry Division "The Big Red One" which had received some replacements and some rest after St Mihiel.

Observing the movement of the 1st Division, the Germans ordered a Prussian Guards Division to reinforce their forces in the sector. The Germans also sent an elite battalion of "Storm Troopers" reinforced with flamethrowers to aid the German Infantry attacking Whittlesey. For the next few days, the Pocket held firm and the powerful American attacks started to push the Germans back and the 77th Division was now trying to infiltrate troops into the pocket.

Whittlesey, meanwhile, asked for a volunteer to sneak through the lines and lead back help. Private Abraham Krotoshinsky undertook this mission and skillfully left the pocket by a circuitous route to the north which ultimately led to an infiltrating company of the 307th Infantry. Krotoshinsky acted as a guide to lead this group to help rescue the trapped company and establish a route for further fresh troops to come into the pocket. So on 8 October, the 77th relief force had linked up with Whittlesey's men. Immediately upon their relief, Whittlesey was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel.