

THE BELLS OF SAN LORENZO DE MARTIR
DESK GUIDE TO TRUTH



A Living Essay of the Bells of Balangiga
Bells of Opportunity and Hope
by Dan McKinnon



Actorum Memores Simui Affectamus Agenda

:

Let deeds of our past serve as guides to our future.

THE BELLS OF BALANGIGA, AN ESSAY

THE ESSAY IS ABOUT TWO CHURCH BELLS ON AN AIR FORCE BASE IN WYOMING THAT WERE BROUGHT THERE IN 1904 ABSENT LEGAL OR MORAL AUTHORITY; FROM A PHILIPPINE CATHOLIC CHURCH BELFRY DESTROYED NOT BY WAR BUT BY RETALIATION; WHO REST IN CONTRAST TO THE TREATMENT THE UNITED STATES ACCORDS FORMER ENEMIES AND THE RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL PROPERTY OF OTHER NATIONS; AND WHOSE RETURN TO THEIR CHURCH WOULD MEET THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF AMERICAN MILITARY ETHOS AND HONOR.

THE BELLS OF BALANGIGA

Reflection and Introspection

A Living Essay by Dan McKinnon

“Tell me a fact, and I’ll learn. Tell me a truth, and I’ll believe. But tell me a story, and it will live in my heart forever.”

Foreword

In 1998 retired U. S. Air Force Colonel Gerald M. Adams published a booklet, “The Bells of Balangiga”. It was printed in Cheyenne, Wyoming and described the history of two bells taken from the rubble of a burned church belfry in the Philippines and brought to Fort D. A. Russell in 1904. Today they reside on F. E. Warren Air Force Base in a brick wall structure on Trophy Park, a grassy triangle near historic officers’ quarters. Gerry Adams enjoyed local history, wrote first about the bells for the Annals of Wyoming in 1987, and authored other historical articles. Colonel Adams is no longer with us. I wish he was. I too love history. I dedicate this essay to him and all the others who cared for, or care about, the Bells of Balangiga.... most especially Ms. E. Jean Wall. (Published as a “living essay” and circulated in Wyoming in 2015 and updated in 2016, 2017 and 2018. It is now a “Desk Guide” helping pilot the anticipation of those that pray the Bells will once again ring in their Church.

This is a story without bad guys. It could end with a story about better guys.



Two “campanas colgante”, church bells from the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir in a brick wall enclosure erected for their protection by the USAF in 1967. With ownership asserted by the “Roman Catholic Church of the Parish of Balangiga”, and with the bells part of the cultural heritage of the Philippines and baptized and considered parishioners by their church, the “Bells of Balangiga” have become a subject of rancor and misunderstanding between friends.

How I Got Interested

This story and interest in the bells begins in 2010 when a friend, retired U. S. Navy Captain Dennis Wright, contacted me about an abandoned American military cemetery in the Philippines. After leaving the Navy Dennis spent several years in the Middle East working for firms supporting the U.S. Gulf War effort. From that experience and with other veterans he formed an engineering development company that won a large construction contract at the site of the former Clark U.S. Air Force (USAF) Base in the Philippines. Clark had been the largest USAF installation outside the U.S., famous to many veterans from World War Two when it was bombed along with Pearl Harbor and Wake Island, and equally renowned throughout the Korean, Vietnam and early Gulf wars. The USAF commenced moving its units out of the country just before nearby volcano Mount Pinatubo exploded on June 15, 1991. As a result of the eruption and coincidental arrival of typhoon Yunya or Diding, what was left of the base was turned over to the Philippine Air Force in November. At the same time, the Philippine Senate failed to ratify the new Military Bases Agreement which would have extended the Navy presence in Subic Bay for another decade. For reasons lost in history, the USAF military cemetery at Clark was forgotten and abandoned.

Three years later the local VFW Post embarrassed by the deterioration commenced to cut the grass, maintain headstones, remove ash and lobby agencies of our government to assume responsibility for this abandoned American military cemetery. The VFW even arranged new burials for

American veterans seeking interment in Asia. The Veterans Administration (VA) provided headstones. Veterans wrote letters, especially asking for help from the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) who cared for the beautiful Manila American Cemetery to the south and the Cabanatuan American POW Camp monument north of Clark. All entreaties were rejected with replies indicating that it was felt not to be an American cemetery, that perhaps it was local, had Japanese, Chinese or others buried there. Few in the U. S. realized the cemetery's historic and iconic character except our veterans living and working in the Philippines.

Dennis walked among the head stones and saw American names. There were references to early wars as well as Gulf wars. He hired a retired Army officer to perform research. The outcome was remarkable. Retired Army Major Scott Slaten provided Dennis proof that indeed it was an American military cemetery whose records had been lost. There were over 8,600 veterans and family members interred, including many who had died at the USAF base hospital. There were Americans who served from the Civil War to the Gulf Wars. He called and asked my help. We began a campaign. Dennis established a web site and the Clark Veterans Cemetery Restoration Association, signed up individuals and organizations as allies and champions, rounded up friends and supporters, established a board of directors that had both U. S. and Philippine leaders who understood our joint military legacy and history. He rebuilt the perimeter fence and created a Memorial Plaza. In Washington DC I met with USAF, VA and ABMC staff. Most felt they lacked authority or mission.

The reaction of ABMC was particularly perplexing. Dennis made a personal presentation to the Commissioners. The case was made that American military burial overseas was their responsibility, they were the professionals, and the Clark veteran's cemetery was located between two other ABMC sites resulting in minimal cost.

At a Congressional House hearing the ABMC Secretary, former Georgia Senator Max Cleland and a renowned Vietnam War veteran, testified against assuming responsibility. I testified for it. Dennis made a presentation to VA leadership enlisting their support. I wrote a resolution for the American Legion which was approved at our national convention within weeks after putting pencil to paper. The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) followed. The Air Force Sergeants Association piled on. Every major veterans group joined us including the Military Coalition and its 43 members and the National Military and Veterans Alliance with its 36 members. Success came finally when Republican Senator Kelly Ayotte of New Hampshire took the lead and with Democratic Senator Mark Begich of Alaska introduced bi-partisan legislation to direct ABMC to maintain the Clark American Cemetery. We lobbied hard in 2012. I walked the halls of the Senate with a 10-year-old boy from Indiana who had written a school paper about Clark and the importance of honoring veterans. He pitched the Chair of the Senate Veterans Committee and pigeon-holed John McCain in a hallway.

"The Dignified Burial and Other Veterans Improvement Act of 2012" passed both houses of Congress unanimously and was the last bill out the door in 2012 in an otherwise contentious legislative year. It was the first bill signed by the President in 2013.

Today the American Battle Monuments Commission and its professional and caring staff are ensuring those interred in the Clark American Cemetery receive the honor and dignified burial they deserve.

But what does that have to do with the Bells of Balangiga?



Philippine Scout re-enactors at the Clark American Cemetery on Memorial Day in a ceremony to honor over 8,600 American veterans and families including many USAF family children. The first U.S. Army Congressional Medal of Honor in World War II was to a Philippine Scout.

Honoring Those that Died in the Philippine American War

Located in the Clark American Cemetery is a Vermont marble monument erected and dedicated in 1908 to the unknown dead from the Spanish and Philippines American Wars. It had been moved to Clark in 1948 from the former U.S. Army's Fort McKinley cemetery in Manila, now the home of the ABMC cemetery for the fallen of World War Two. In researching this monument, we discovered that although there are a number of monuments throughout the United States to the Spanish American War (SAW), this might be the only one exclusively for those who died in the Philippines. Then we learned there might be a monument on a U.S. Air Force missile base concerning those that died in the "Massacre of Balangiga". It was in a small park adjacent to officers' quarters at F. E. Warren Air Force Base, home of the 20th Air Force of the Air Force Global Strike Command.

Thus, began a journey of discovery and study. What we discovered was an amazing story. How in 1901 during the "Philippine Insurrection" Company C of the U.S. Ninth Infantry Regiment, having just returned from China and posted to the small Philippine town of Balangiga on the island of Samar, was attacked one morning by native bolomen and the unit almost wiped out. How subsequent efforts to pacify the island of Samar resulted in it becoming called "Bloody Samar".

How church bells removed from the rubble of a belfry were taken in 1904 to Fort D. A. Russell, a formerly cavalry, infantry, and artillery post near Cheyenne, Wyoming. How the two bells remained there and in 1967 were placed in a small brick enclosure with a plaque concerning “The Massacre of Balangiga”. How it was disappointing to discover that what we had found was not a monument or war memorial but a trophy-stand in a trophy park. How the battle at Balangiga has been studied for decades for its lessons in guerilla and “hearts and minds” warfare. How almost 25 years ago efforts to return the bells to the Philippines resulted in numerous newspaper articles and often acrimonious letters that debated their return. How three times there was legislation tucked into the annual National Defense Authorization Act to keep the Bells.



The monument that started our quest. It is a monument to the unknowns and joins a plaque in Sackets Harbor, New York, as the only known memorials of the Philippine American War. It now rests at Clark American Cemetery having been moved to Clark (formerly Fort Stotsenberg) in 1948 from the Fort McKinley cemetery in Manila, a history in which my uncle played a part.

This essay is written to bring together new and old facts, try to sort out the truth, and weave it all together to tell a story about two bells. It has been called “definitive” by the American and Philippine scholars most knowledgeable on the events of Balangiga, Professor Delmendo of St John Fisher College in New York and Professor Borrinaga of the University of the Philippines. There are many books and much material on the “Massacre of Balangiga”. There is less written about the Bells. Some publications are in conflict and there have been many judgments. I will be making a few judgments as well, but trust they will be rational and considered. I am writing a

“living essay” because as new facts are discovered they will be added. This paper is not a rewrite of history. I will try to update history. Nor is this essay part of any “revisionist” movement or a journey into “political correctness”. Growing up in the Great Depression and as a child of World War II, I understand how some like to paint over unpleasant history instead of learning from it. At the end is a list of material counted on as guides, “Sources and Methods”. What was once called the “Splendid Little War” at the end of the 19th century has been tossed into the dust bin of military history as the “War to End All Wars”, World War Two and the Cold War dominated the 20th century. Now Middle Eastern wars and the War on Terror are writing military history. This story is about an important moment in a distant past. It is also contemporary history about veterans. As a veteran I understand, “Those who serve our nation in times of war determine our history. Those who come home from war determine our future”.

The Spanish American War and the Philippines

The history of the Philippines is remarkably intertwined with the United States. It was for half a century our colony. Its school system and government are in our model. Along with Canada and Great Britain it is arguably our nation’s closest ally of the past century. Because of our joint history, it is the third largest English speaking nation in the world. Over 300,000 Americans live in the Philippines and almost four million former Filipinos live in America. It is our friend and face to Asia. Of course, President McKinley could not foretell the future when the war with Spain ended at the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898. For \$20 million we became a late and unskilled colonial power with sovereignty over 7,000 islands on the other side of the world, an act that ultimately brought us to the Bells of Balangiga.



Stationed in both Italy and Philippines were an education when comparing histories. Both Christian nations have a 19th century origin from other cultures, languages and lineages of over thousands of years. Both have people who are gracious, family oriented, and do not like to say no to a stranger. A 3rd to 4th century BC ceramic funerary mask, Penablance cave sites, Northern Luzon. Writer’s collection.

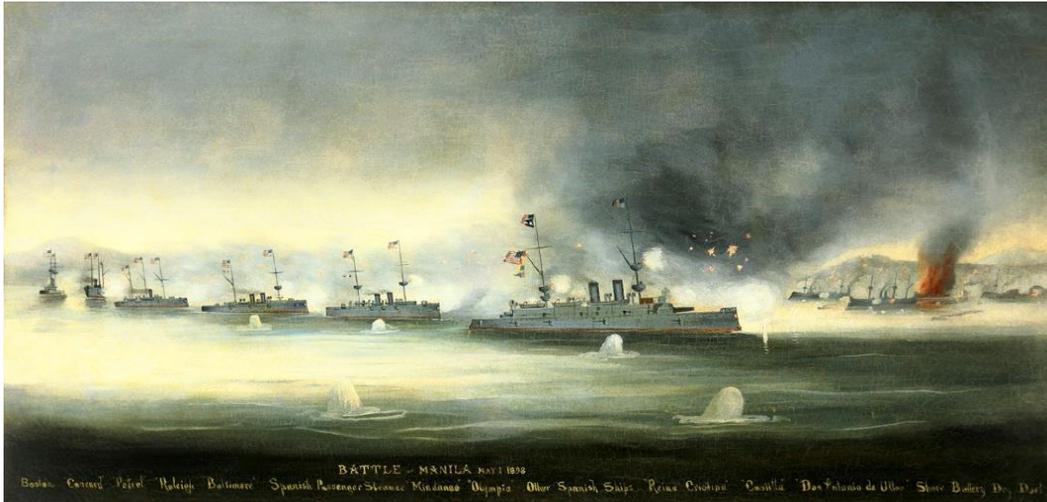
The story of the Spanish American War has been told. How it was intended to help the Cuban peoples “War of Independence” against a European power that considered the island a province and not a colony. By others it was the elimination of the last European nation tinkering in the New World. How the United States sent the Battleship Maine to the Havana Harbor to ensure the safety of Americans during an uprising. How on February, 15, 1898 the Maine sank following a massive explosion with 266 of its men killed and a Spanish torpedo blamed. How a rallying cry “Remember the Maine” and an American press comparing the events in Cuba to our American revolution coupled to the phenomena of “yellow journalism” helped pave a road to war. How our blockade of Cuba led Spain to declare war on April 21, 1898. Our Congress followed two days later historically marking one of only five times that Congress has used its constitutional “War Powers”. How Secretary of the Navy, Theodore Roosevelt stepped down and became Teddy Roosevelt of the “Rough Riders”, achieved fame and later became President. How Commodore Dewey on the other side of the world defeated the Spanish fleet in the “Battle of Manila Bay” and became my Navy’s first “Admiral of the Navy”.

The war with Spain lasted only from April 21 to December 10, 1898. Regretfully, what Ambassador to the Court of St. James and later Secretary of State John Hay called the “splendid little war” did not really end, but extended in ways never intended. It lasted unofficially up to World War One, moving away from freeing Cuba to ultimately creating a new nation, “In Our Image”. At the time that follow-on fight was called the “Philippine Insurrection”. Today it is officially known as the “Philippine American War”.

The story of the Philippine American War (PAW) is one more complex than the Spanish American War (SAW). Its origin can be found following the Civil War in how America took California and the South West from Mexico; purchased Alaska from Russia; closed the western frontier with the end of the Indian Wars in 1890; annexed the Hawaiian Islands; and looked across the Pacific Ocean to 7,000 islands held by a European power, our country becoming one of several nations trying to gain influence with the markets of China and the resources of Asia.

The Netherlands held sway over the “Dutch East Indies”; the British’s Empire held India, Hong Kong and the “Straits Settlements” of Malaysia and Singapore; Portugal had colonies; German and French ships were ever present; several nations were vying to gain trade access to China (read about the Boxer Rebellion); and Japan was rapidly becoming a power following the “Meiji Restoration”. Japan’s resource starved nation’s view of East Asia ultimately became apparent to the world just three decades later when it set about achieving hegemony over its “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere”. For us veterans of a certain age, that means World War Two.

Upon declaration of war with Spain the regular U.S. Army had about 28,000 men in arms. To fight Spain required the mobilization of state militias (today’s national guards) and what became thousands of patriotic volunteers. In the years before the sinking of the Maine, the country had slowly sought a war footing because of Cuba. A U.S. Navy advocate since his youth, Assistant Secretary of the Navy and then Acting Navy Secretary Theodore Roosevelt, ordered the North Atlantic Squadron to Key West and the Asiatic Squadron to Hong Kong. The Atlantic ships would be able to move swiftly to blockade Cuba and Dewey sail when ordered from Hong Kong to the Philippine Islands. Following the April 23, 1898 United States declaration of war, the U.S. Navy was well poised to take on Spain.



Dewey's ships in a line defeated the Spanish Fleet without a single American sailor killed.

Dewey was immediately ordered to sail to the Philippines and engage the ships of the new enemy. The first battle of the war then became Dewey's attack of the Spanish fleet off Cavite in the massive Bay of Manila. Slipping into the harbor at night, his ships on the first of May defeated the Spanish fleet sinking eleven ships without losing one of his men killed in action. Fighting the Spanish Army took longer. Troops had to be marshaled, volunteers recruited and trained, transports assembled, and units moved across the Pacific Ocean. In the Caribbean, fighting against the forces of Spain in Cuba and Puerto Rico was over by Christmas. In the Philippines, it was just beginning.

The War in the Philippines

The over 7,000 islands of the Philippines archipelago had "belonged" to Spain since "discovered" by Magellan in 1521. Filipinos playfully say they discovered Spain and Portugal and killed their first tourist. For over three hundred years Spain ruled with varying degrees of success. In the islands to the south were the Moros whose heritage and history were Muslim. Long before the Spanish and their Catholic missionaries, Arab traders and Islamic missionaries or "panditas" brought Islam to the region. Fighting sometimes occurs even today by Islamic separatist groups and ISIS as it tries to gain an Asian stronghold. To the north was the large island of Luzon, rich in resources with two magnificent harbors attractive to a sea going power like Spain as well as other nations. Subic Bay was small but deep and excellent for ships work and use as a coaling station. Following World War Two and until 1992 it was the U.S. Navy's largest overseas base. From 1980 to 1982 I was Commanding Officer of its Naval Supply Depot, the Navy's largest logistics command outside the United States. Manila Bay, on the other hand was vast and at the end of the 19th century already a place of significant Asian commerce. U. S. Navy men and women nurses stationed at Naval Station, Sangley Point in the 20th century may recall its history; at Cavite a shipyard, Spanish forts, hospital, graveyard, and famous Spanish arsenal. In the era of Asian trading the Spanish made Chinese merchants or "xiang-li" conduct business at the point of land

ultimately called Sangley Point. Since defeat of the Spanish fleet had taken place off-shore, some call Dewey's victory, the "Battle of Cavite".

Manila was Spain's colonial home in Asia. At the time of Dewey's victory, Spain had about 40,000 troops including 16,000 Filipinos in its Philippine force. Small garrisons were in coastal towns, but Manila was the center of Spanish rule. The city and the inner walled fort-city of Intramuros defined the Spanish military and cultural presence. Many nations had diplomatic, commercial, and some military presence. When Dewey and his Asiatic fleet arrived, ships of Germany, Great Britain, France and Japan were in the harbor. By that time all knew of the state of war between the U.S. and Spain. No one interfered with Dewey's fleet.... although the ambitious Germans became an annoyance. If America had not had its colonial East Asia aspirations, and after defeat of the Spanish that fall to joint Philippine and U.S. forces, had we left Germany could have tried to try to step in. It would not have lasted long. Then the lingering question would be, was the revolution strong enough to survive or would Japan with its battleships and new ambition tried to fill the vacuum? The question dangles.

By end of the 19th century the inhabitants of the Philippine Islands had slowly advanced in education, sophistication, and cohesion. There had been a gradual political amalgamation as well, especially on the central island of Luzon. Racial assimilation was taking place with cultural identities of the "Indio" for natives, a "peninsulare" or one born in Spain, the Creoles or "insulares" who were Spaniards born in the islands, and the "Chinese mestizos" all slowly giving place to "Filipino", itself a word also used to describe a Philippine-born Spaniard. For centuries there had been native resistance to Spanish rule.... those fighting were in revolt were called "Insurrectos" a Spanish word soon embraced by arriving Americans. Maybe if English had been the language of the dominating European power, they might have been called "revolutionaries". They were the locals. Some tribal groups had ancestors that arrived over 10,000 years earlier with ancient inhabitants now identified as "Austronesians". These island peoples were just emerging with a new identity. It reminded me of my years in Italy and study of its amalgamation. Many Filipinos had benefited from Spanish and Catholic education, but the general populace remained basically rural and uneducated. Over 7,000 islands and more than 170 languages and dialects made it so. Spanish rule and church held together what it could. Moro or Muslim cultures in the southern islands made that more difficult. When the peoples rebelled, the Spanish called the resistance "Insurrections". There were many.

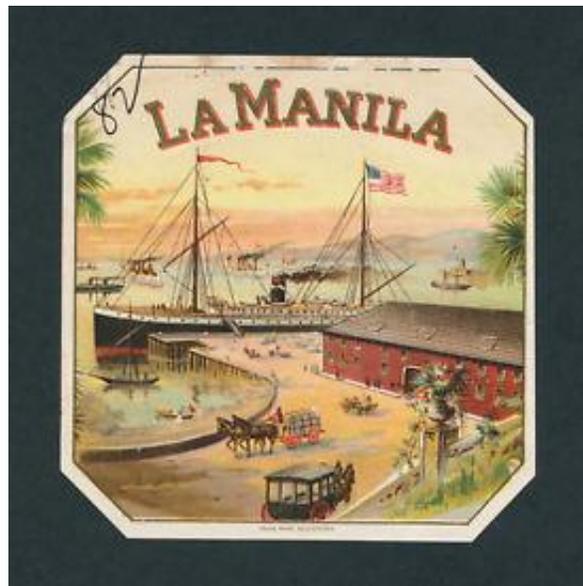
The history of the creation of a Philippine nation from Dewey's victory and the subsequent Insurrection is well documented and debated. There are those who decry perceived American imperialism, and those who celebrate when pondering the possibility of the islands becoming a colony of Germany, or even Japan. Some historians credit Teddy Roosevelt's 1905 intervention in the Russo-Japanese War to effect reconciliation as a way to deny Japan a victory (they had already won), keep Russia's distant Pacific influence in place ("loss of all of Russian possessions in East Asia" was at stake he told the Czar), thus preventing elimination of a Western presence perhaps needed in the future as counter-balance to a growing militaristic Japan.

Modern Filipinos generally value and give credit to their un-asked for American heritage. A common joke is that they are now a nation based on a history of "300 hundred years in a convent, and 50 years in Hollywood". They are an English, and not Spanish, speaking people with Filipino

and English the official languages. Filipino is derived from Tagalog, and the most common of the nation's 175 living languages.

In 1896 two years before Dewey's fleet took on the Spanish, Filipinos began their revolution in the provinces of Cavite and Manila, only a year after the Cubans had commenced their revolution. It was clear that when the United States went into Cuba there were no plans to stay.... intentions codified in our Congress by the Teller Amendment. The Philippine revolutionaries led by Don Emilio Aguinaldo y Famy also felt that the American war against Spain would be a joint war for their independence. It began that way just after sinking of the Spanish fleet as Philippine forces began attacking Spanish positions and taking captives and working with the Americans toward the eventual capture of Manila and Intramuros. When a German Naval force captured over 300 Spaniards in June, Dewey sent ships to Subic Bay to compel the Germans to turn them over to Aguinaldo's revolutionaries. It appeared that the "mop up" of Spanish ground forces was to be a joint American and Filipino campaign.

Aguinaldo on June 5th issued a decree that June 12th would be the Philippines day of independence from Spain. It was signed by 98 Filipino leaders and a retired American Colonel and on the first of August ratified by municipal presidents from 16 provinces. June 12th is now celebrated as Philippine Independence Day.

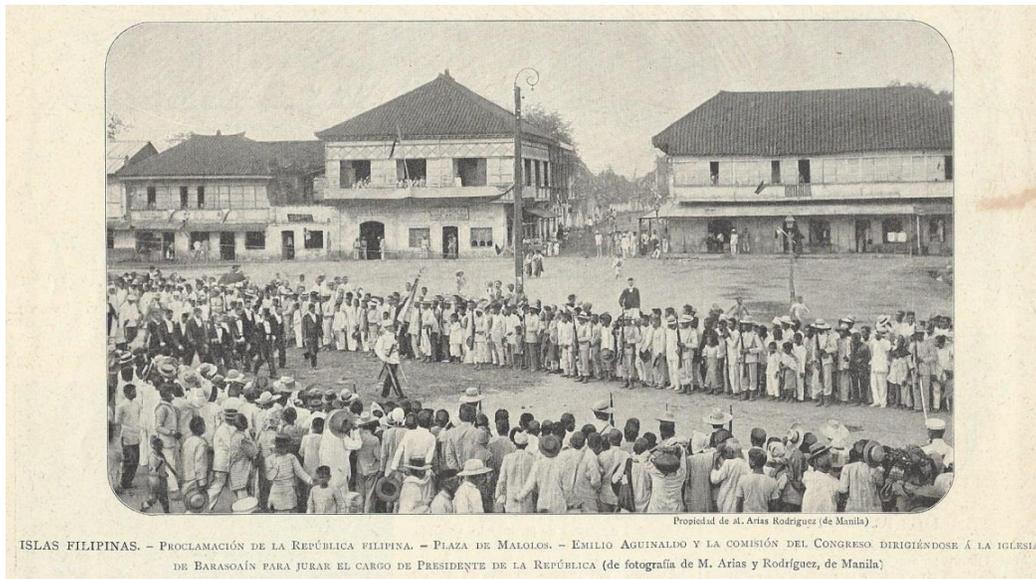


A U.S. Army Transport (USAT) discharging cargo with Dewey's fleet in the background. Cavite, circa 1899. A stone lithograph proof of a cigar label. Writer's collection.

To many a repeat of Cuba was at hand. America would oust Spain and a Philippine nation would be formed. Aguinaldo's forces took up position around Manila. The Spanish Governor General refused Aguinaldo's demand to surrender. On the other hand, Dewey had to wait for his troops while the Philippine Expeditionary Force was forming in the United States. The first troops from the U.S. came ashore the end of June and by the end of July, 1898 about 12,000 had arrived under the command of Major General Wesley Merritt. That same month Spain and the U.S. commenced talks on the suspension of hostilities. The Filipinos and American now jockeyed for position for a

final assault on Intramuros and the city. Fearing retaliation by Filipinos, the Spanish wanted to surrender to the Americans. The Americans did not want the city to fall to the Filipinos. The famous “sham battle” allowed the Spanish commander to surrender with dignity. The second week of August the city of Manila and walled inner city of Intramuros, whose population had surged from ten to over seventy thousand, were now in the hands of the Americans. Many American flags were hoisted in pride for their units. Much undeserved credit went home. Little blood was spilled. That would come later.

For the next five months a cautious relationship existed between American and Philippine forces until in December, 1898 all learned that Spain had “sold” the 7,000 islands to the United States. I found that the best book on the personalities and politics that took the U.S. to the Philippines is Gregg Jones “Honor in the Dust” published in 2012. For a complete review of the complex history of our two nations, read Stanley Karnow’s Pulitzer Prize winning, “In Our Image, America’s Empire in the Philippines”, published in 1989.



Spanish photograph of Emilio Aguinaldo with delegates of their Congress at Plaza de Malolos upon declaration of the Republic of the Philippines. This January 23, 1899 photo is believed to be in celebration of the first Philippines Republic, which although brief, is acknowledged as the first republic in Asia.

Tensions continued to mount between the two sides after the fall of Manila and further after the Paris treaty. President McKinley issued on the 21st of December 1898 a proclamation of “Benevolent Assimilation” which Major General Elwell Stephen Otis, Commanding General and Military Governor since August, published the first week of January ... after some alteration.

On the 23rd of January, 1899 the First Philippine Republic was proclaimed with Aguinaldo as its President. He issued stamps, peso currency, and is credited with the three stars and a sun design of the country’s flag. By this time most of the Philippines had been taken back from the Spanish by Filipino revolutionaries, except for American controlled Manila. With a future uncertain, relations were tense.

On February 4th 1899 shots were exchanged between Filipino troops and American sentries at the San Juan del Monte Bridge, an event which the next day led to full scale battle. In a February 5th 1899 cable from General Otis to Washington, “Insurgents in large force opened attack on our outer lines at 8:45 last evening. Renewed attack several times during night. At 4 o’clock this morning entire line engaged. All attacks repulsed.” Aguinaldo in his, “True Version of the Philippines Revolution”, describes a “fatal day of the 4th of February, during the night of which day the American forces suddenly attacked all our lines, which were in fact at the time almost deserted, because being Saturday, the day before a regular feast day, our Generals and some of the most prominent officers had obtained leave to pass the Sabbath with their respective families.” One event. Two views of history. We now know we shot first.

The Philippine American War had begun. To diplomat and war correspondent Edwin Wildman in his 1901 book, “Aguinaldo, A Narrative of Filipino Ambitions”, it was a “revolt” against an occupying power. Students of the history will find so many opinions on this unique period in our nations narrative, so many opinions, analyses, and points of view; so many facts misty in the fog of war. As scholars know, each generation of historians must flavor the soup. And winners write the history.

As American forces beat back Aguinaldo’s forces in several conventional battles, the Filipinos turned to guerilla warfare. The Philippine Insurrection lasted officially until the 4th of July 1902, but in truth lasted more than a decade longer as attested by the many Medals of Honor awarded, some tied to official periods of warfare, and others just ascribed to fights against bandits (ladrones). For many the years of guerilla warfare in the southern islands or “Moroland” became “The Moro War” finally ending in 1913 at the battle of Bud Bagsak. To call this period complicated is an understatement.



The new republic was quick to issue stamps, for revenue, registration, newspapers and telegraph. Note a face in the sun, which became an element of the first flag of the Philippines. These early stamps are very collectible as are early revolutionary currency. Writer’s collection.

In August, 1901 the first shipload of hundreds of American teachers arrived to put to work the idea of “Benevolent Assimilation”. I found the best book on the war is Brian McAllister Linn’s “The Philippine War, 1899-1902”, published in 2000. It is deeply researched with details of the fighting and Professor Linn feels the Philippine American War should be called the “Philippine War” just like the Korean and Vietnam War. James R. Arnold’s “The Moro War, How America Battled a Muslim Insurgency in the Philippine Jungle, 1902-1913” wraps up the era before leading up to America’s preoccupation with Europe and ultimately World War One.

By the middle of 1901 much of the war was winding down on the main northern islands. The many Americans who had joined with great patriotic fervor as volunteers to take on the Spanish had gone home or joined Regular Army units to fight the “Insurrectos”. Aguinaldo was captured in March, 1901 by Brigadier General Frederick Funston in a remarkably arduous journey across the mountains of Northern Luzon, a trip duplicated in 1982 by author and adventurer David Haward Bain whose book, “Sitting in Darkness, Americans in the Philippines”, gives exciting insight to the event and the history of the period. South of Luzon was Samar, an island whose terrain was so mountainous and difficult that the Spanish had concentrated their activities in four coastal ports. As James Taylor writes in his 1931 “Massacre of Balangiga”, “In each of the four ports a Spanish sergeant was stationed with ten native soldiers, and the only order ever received was to marry immediately upon arrival a woman of one of the strongest native families.... (to) save him from assassination”.

The adjacent island of Leyte was much the same. Philippine rebels on both islands were commanded by General Vincente Lukban (Lucban) who had been an early revolutionary and Aguinaldo lieutenant. After Aguinaldo’s capture to many he became the last hold-out, even given that he only had bands of guerilla insurgents on an island whose native inhabitants were fiercely independent and used to fighting off outsiders. To the Americans and the policy of “Benevolent Assimilation”, they were all “Insurrectos” until they had sworn allegiance or been “civilized by a Krag.” Lukban himself cruelly demanded loyalty from the natives. Samar was not a pleasant place to be stationed. No one in Company C, much less its new commanding officer, now in charge of the coastal town of Balangiga on the southern coast, could have seen what was coming. The conditions for engaging the enemy on Samar were not the same as what the 9th Infantry had experienced on Luzon. “Bloody Samar” would soon begin.

The Ninth Infantry Regiment Returns

The 9th Infantry had been among the first regular units to arrive in Manila in 1899 and under Colonel Emerson H. Liscum fought gallantly on Luzon earning six battle streamers. Upon outbreak of the “Boxer Uprising” in China, Colonel Liscum was directed in June 1900 to take his regiment of experienced soldiers and join the “China Relief Expedition”. Part of the “Eight Nation Alliance”, this was the first time since the American Revolution that American troops had joined militarily with other nations. They joined forces with France, Italy, Germany, Russia, Austria-Hungary, Japan, and Great Britain under the overall command of a British general to battle the infamous and fanatical “Boxers” and protect the many foreign commercial and governmental legations with a presence in China. The 9th would be gone from the Philippines from June 27, 1900 to June 2, 1901. Their service in China is what gave the 9th their now famous nickname, the “Manchus”, taken from the name of those who made up the last emperors of China. They returned

with the beautiful Liscum Bowl made of pure silver taken during the uprising and designed by the unit into one hundred pounds of Asian elegance. It remains important to 9th Infantry history and heritage. Their service in China was heroic, resulted in three battle streamers, and at Tientsin three men received the Congressional Medal of Honor. Colonel Liscum was killed at Tientsin and his final words, “Keep up the Fire”, rings out today as the motto of the Manchus. The 9th was the first of the Expedition to break into the Forbidden City, the imperial palace of the Ming and Qing dynasties in today’s Beijing.



Original map of Samar “from reconnaissance notes made by officers of 2nd & 3rd battalions, 43th Infantry, U. S. Volunteers” used in 1901 for the pacification of Samar. Balangiga is at the bottom right on the coast; Tacloban is on the island of Leyte on the left. Communications in 1901 between major units on the coasts was by boat. Writer’s collection.

When the 9th arrived back in Manila they were given provost duty and the 4th of July honor of protecting the islands new Governor, William Howard Taft. But just a month later companies A and C of the 9th were on their way to Samar on the transport Liscum, re-named for their famed commander. Company C under the command of Thomas W. Connell and First Lieutenant Edward A. Bumpus, along with Major S. Griswold, a surgeon of the U.S. Army Volunteers, and 75 men arrived on August 11th in the coastal town of Balangiga, a village of a few hundred residents whose Mayor or “Presidente” Pedro Abayan, and Captain Valeriano Abanador, the Chief of Police, would play key roles in their future. Other companies of the First and Ninth infantries took up station in other villages. The headquarters of the battalion under command of

Lieutenant Colonel Foote along with Company G under Captain Edwin V. Bookmiller was positioned at Basey just to the west on the coast of road-less Samar about 25 miles by boat from Balangiga.

In June General Robert P. Hughes had set up his U.S. Army Department of the Visayas headquarters at the capital town of Calbayog, Samar, later moved to Iloilo on the island of Panay, as units of the First Infantry and Tenth Cavalry also moved into Samar. Calbayog became the 9th regimental headquarters. Although two battalions of American volunteers had been stationed earlier in coastal ports of Samar, little headway had been made in pacifying an island harassed for years by Sulu pirates or Moro chiefs and who Taylor says, “not a single inhabitant ... has ... accepted our beneficent rule.” Balangiga had not been previously occupied by American troops.

Casualties from guerilla fighting and the use of man traps would soon be serious as small units spread out into the rugged interior on “pacification” missions. (Man traps consisted of devices where a spear was released from a bow hidden alongside a path; a pit with sharp bamboo points; and heavy logs tumbling down from overhangs or crests of hills.) In April, Americans of the 43rd Infantry had lost 18 killed and 3 wounded near Catubig, a harbinger of what would take place later at Balangiga. Company H took up station on the east coast town of Oras, also not previously held by U.S. troops, a town which was found burned and abandoned. Communications between units was by boat and heliograph, by mounted orderlies where terrain permitted, and gradually by telegraph as wire was strung. This was Samar as Company C took up their post that August of 1901 in Balangiga. It’s only outside communication was by boat.

Attack at Breakfast

It was Saturday morning, not the Sabbath that so many writers portray.

On Tuesday that fateful week, Lieutenant Bumpus and six men went over water by “barota” (a hollowed-out log with an outrigger of bamboo and propelled by paddles) to Basey to pick up long awaited mail from home and then to Tacloban to pick up supplies. It had been over two months since they had received mail in Manila. Arriving back to Balangiga late that Friday night there was little opportunity to read except by the small monthly candle ration. The light of morning was eagerly awaited. It is still contentious if they found comrades under the influence of “tuba” that night, an alcoholic drink made from the sap of a palm tree, often imbibed to relieve pain, discomfort and boredom.

The surprise attack against Company C and the death of so many men, and the retaliation directed by Brigadier General Jacob H. Smith over the next four months is what captures people’s attention when they seek understanding of the Bells of Balangiga. Samar became “Bloody Samar” and even though historians sometimes fuss over its details, the Joseph L. Schott’s 1964 “The Ordeal of Samar” can easily lead one to understand why for years when a Marine veteran of the war walked into a room, his fellows would rise and call out, “Stand Gentlemen, He served on Samar.” Forty-four courts martial and the fall from grace of a general contributed to make the era fascinating if not embarrassing history.

For those wanting better history on the surprise attack itself than the many sensationalistic articles that have been written, use the 1931 James P. Taylor book mentioned earlier. First Sergeant Taylor provided personal accounts of some of the living survivors that are often referred to by historians, even when sometimes thought exaggerated. His was the first book on the event and he cared about and was very much worried about American citizens understanding the service the veterans gave their country. (Vietnam veterans can relate to that.) He was disturbed how the United States had never seen fit to recognize the men either by military decorations or by special awards like others were receiving such as “land grants and financial aid”. Today, he would be beating down the doors of the Veterans Administration (VA).

Excellent and more recent is an article that appeared in the May-August 1998 issue of the magazine “Infantry”, carefully researched by a retired Army officer, David P. Perrine, and titled “Stability and Support Operations at the Turn of the Century—1899”. For Philippine scholarship and the most detailed and comprehensive book about that historical event, read Professor Rolando O. Borrinaga’s 2003 “The Balangiga Conflict Revisited” which derived from his doctoral thesis and was a by-product of work with the Balangiga Research Group (BRG). I had the honor of having this authentic scholar walk the streets of Balangiga with me in the summer of 2014 explaining how events unfolded. Today he is a Professor in the School of Health Sciences of the University of Philippines helping produce the remarkable medical professionals we see in the United States and around the world. To make it complete, read Professor Borrinaga’s later 2008 work, “Leyte-Samar Shadows: Essays on the History of the Eastern Visayas”. It updates some history and adds the important portrayal of a Philippine account, “The Anguren Papers”. The 1935 statement of Major Eugenio Daza is an alleged and sometimes disputed first person account. Also read Bob Couttie’s, “Hang the Dogs, the True Tragic History of the Balangiga Massacre”, published in 2004. Both Borrinaga and Couttie were members of the BRG and their works sift through the details like no other.

About 6:30 AM Saturday morning Private Adolph Gamlin having just completed breakfast was one of three soldiers on sentry duty in the town plaza. During the night about 30 natives with bolo knives had slipped into the church while others were assembled in a heavily forested area to the east. Over 80 others were being held in two conical “Sibley” tents after a week of problems relating to an incident at a Tuba store, and the forced conscription of natives to clean up the village and cut back thick vegetation. Allegedly natives brought into town to pay off taxes, they were bolomen. Sharp fighting bolos or “sundangs” had been confiscated and only bolos used for cutting brush were left, although most had been rounded up and issued only for work details. The ultimate estimated four hundred attackers from the brush and from the tents used clubs, both kinds of bolos, knives, and fighting sticks.

What some describe as a four-part planned attack commenced as Abanador approached Private Adolph Gamlin wounding and striking him to the ground, seizing his rifle. Abanador cried out, fired the rifle, and perhaps waived his cane or fighting stick for which he had known prowess, as a young “semanero” or bell ringer rapidly swung the “esquila” or signal bell from the platform of the belfry. Conch shell horns or “budiong” joined in summoning natives from the forest. Captain Connell and Lieutenant Bumpus along with surgeon Major Griswold were killed almost immediately in their billet. Fighting raged for almost an hour as the soldiers sought out weapons and used their five shot Krag rifles to stave off natives. Private Gamlin regained himself, obtained

a rifle, and this former member of Iowa volunteers who had joined the Regular Army unit just a year before, took down several attackers. Sergeant Frank Betron now the senior surviving non-commissioned officer took over as soldiers consolidated their position first at his quarters and then near the flag pole. Heroic Sergeant Betron would later live and marry in the Philippines and raise a family. Today he is interred at Clark American Cemetery, the place this story began.



A 10-centavo guerilla U.S. Army Forces Far East (USAFFE) emergency currency note issued at Balangiga in 1943. American backed Philippine guerilla fighting against the Japanese was intense. Note the school notebook paper. Writer's collection.

The soldiers rounded up the wounded and labored to escape by boat to their headquarters at Basey. Five outriggers were used for the perilous journey. Before departure the men took down the American flag (which has never been found), tried to burn some of the wooden and nipa covered buildings, loaded the boats with water and provisions and a case of whiskey from the officers' quarters. Sergeant Markley and another soldier had left an hour ahead to seek help, and crossed the Bay of San Pedro and San Pablo to Leyte where they reported to the 11th Infantry who immediately sent information to Manila about the attack. The other boats made a perilous journey down the coast. A boat capsized. Men were lost to bolomen following on the shore. The rest arrived at Basey early Sunday morning.

Quickly fifty men of Company G under Capitan Edwin V. Bookmiller boarded the launch Pittsburg along with eight men from Company C who were still able to fight and arrived back at Balangiga after picking up two survivors who were found en route. Coming up on the town about noon, they fired into the village and came ashore. They rounded up the dead burying the three officers and twenty-nine soldiers in the plaza placing individual identification in bottles. Mutilation was unlikely due to the ease of identification of men killed by bolo as well as prevailing local Christian ethos. They burned what nipa and wood structures they could, took any supplies that had not been carried away, and left for Basey about 6 PM. Out of a total of 74 officers and men of the 9th Infantry Regiment's Company C, only 26 survived the Massacre of Balangiga. Today there is a record of 28 natives who were killed. Early accounts ranged as high as 200. Names of local citizens who participated have been identified to help establish the 28. On the other hand, the 80 skilled

bolomen in the tents and others from outside the town who participated and were killed and who were not locals make an accurate identification of individuals and the total number killed problematical.

The total number is not an issue. There has never been any doubt about the courage, skill and valor of those that fought back against the attacking natives.

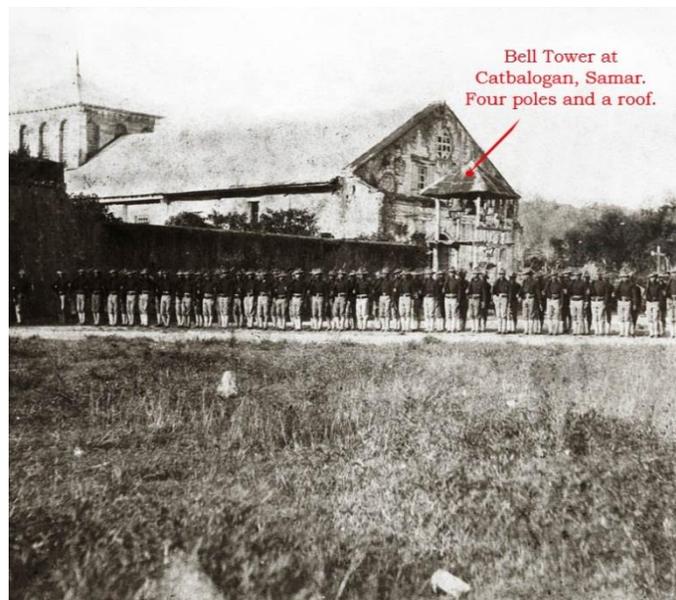


“Last Stand at Balangiga” by Frederick Remington, 1902, an “oil en grisaille” on canvas, one of four commissioned by Smith and Wesson to advertise their revolver, the 38 Military and Police model, best known as Model 10. The soldier is probably intended to be representative. There has never been any question about their heroism with recognition long denied.

Brigadier General Robert P. Hughes, commander of the Department of the Visayas, quickly ordered the 11th Infantry Regiment on Leyte to proceed across the straits from Tacloban to Balangiga to “chastise the savages if found”. Colonel Isaac D. DeRussy in command of the 11th Infantry Regiment with 132 soldiers from Companies K and L arrived Monday to find the village almost destroyed. The 11th spent the next three weeks seeking out insurgents, trying to find stolen rifles and ammunition, and disinterring the dead and preparing their remains for return. They departed back to Tacloban on October 18 taking three bronze church bells from the burned belfry in order to keep the metal from being melted and turned into weapons. General Lukban’s forces had maintained a powder mill, workshops, and a foundry at Blanca Aurora on the Gandara River which was destroyed the previous May 30th by the Ninth U.S. Cavalry.

Other Army infantry units were then sent to Samar, but the fight on and for the southern part of the island was assigned to Marines who had previously been stationed at Cavite. Under command of Army Brigadier General Jacob Hurd Smith, they sailed for Samar and Leyte, where Smith would

establish his headquarters. Major Littleton (Tony) Waller Tazewell Waller, a 45-year-old seasoned Marine who had fought in Egypt, Cuba and China, set up headquarters at Basey with companies C and D relieving Army Captain Bookmiller and Company G of the 9th. Marine Corps Capitan David D. Porter with companies F and H assumed responsibility for Balangiga. Smith wanted the campaign to be over by Christmas. He set in action what was to become “Bloody Samar” or “Ordeal of Samar” that resulted in his and Waller’s courts-martial, Waller’s exoneration, and Smith’s retirement in disgrace. A “Proclamation of Peace” was declared on February 2, 1902 and the capture of General Lukban (Lucban) by Philippine Scouts came two weeks later. The Philippine American War officially ended on the 4th of July, 1902.



Belfries on Samar were often wooden platforms due to concern about earthquakes.

The Bells ... just the Bells (Scapegoats of History)

The problem with those who write about the Bells of Balangiga is that they don't. They become completely fascinated with the Saturday morning surprise attack and the ensuing months of fighting under “Howling” Jake Smith, the forty-four resulting courts-martial, and the looting and burning of Church property. They also use the discussion to revisit the American complex history with the Philippines and why would our country, after driving out colonial powers in the Americas, chose to be one in Asia? All of this is remarkable history and worth understanding. But efforts to return the Bells to the Philippines get bogged down in sensationalism, pictures of the “water cure”, arguments over death totals, and debates on the cruelties of war. Some writers go to the 19th century yellow journalistic jingo, and not the more complex history, much of which is lost or not easily understood. As pointed out in Professor Silbey’s book, “A War of Frontier and Empire”, even labeling the attack a “massacre” instead of a “battle or skirmish”, or just an “attack” that was “carried out skillfully by the insurgents”, was among the “legends that sprang up around the attack.” Later I used “myths about the Bells” in news articles.



An old photo of a typical 19th century configuration of how campanas were hung by vines and signal bells by a yoke making the latter easy to swing and signal a warning about typhoons or pirates or summon people from the surrounding countryside to community events. Courtesy of Professor Trota Jose of the University of the Philippines.

Before churches could afford bells in the Philippines, many things were used to signal services, arrival of dignitaries, or community events. There were gongs, small bells, and conch shell horns or “budiong”; even hollowed out logs. By the end of the 19th century there were over 900 parishes with many having two if not three church bells. Bells were often baptized and considered parishioners. Balangiga got its first real church bell with one dated 1863 which is 30 inches tall and inscribed “R. San Francisco Ano El 1863” made in a Franciscan foundry, probably on Luzon. Bronze casting in the archipelago goes back to at least the 16th century. During “Spanish Times” casting proficiency often came from Spanish artillerymen skilled in cannon making. Two decades later would come a slightly smaller bell at 27 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches tall, also of Franciscan origin, and embossed with “Se Refundio Siendo Cura Parroco El M.R.P.F Augustin Delgado Ano 1889”. Augustin Delgado was the parish priest. Both of these bells were called “campanas” or “campana colgante”. They were purchased from funds raised from subscriptions from the parishioners, relatives and friends. Huge and made of bronze they had a rope pulled iron clappers usually rung underneath by young “semanero” who served as “campanero”, or bell ringers. The bells were hung high on a large beam bound by vines. In 1895 with Bernardo Aparicio as priest, the church satisfied a need for a bell with greater reach. The smaller the bell, the higher the ring-tone, the further the range. The Church of San Lorenzo acquired a signal bell that is called an “esquila”, or “campana de vuelo.” This type of bell came with a yoke rotating on an axis making it easy to swing. Although used also for religious reasons with the larger campanas, its place in the community was unique because its higher ring tone could reach out into the countryside. Distant reach was important due to pirate attacks, fire, or the many typhoons that battered the region. Embossed on the bell is “Se Refundio Siendo Parroco P. Bernardo Aparicio Ano 1895”. The Spanish word “Refundio” means that the bell had been “recast” from scrap bronze.

By this time there were a number of foundries in the Philippines. It was also not unusual for an itinerant bell caster to set up a kiln near a church, dig a casting pit, and create a church bell on the spot. I believe this is not the case for Balangiga and that their bells came from Luzon.

The belfry at Balangiga was also unique and not what Americans might expect. Although many Catholic churches had coral stone towers as part of their construction, many did not. Towers had collapsed during earthquakes. At Balangiga as in some other Samar communities the belfry was a wooden structure adjacent to the church. About 30-foot-tall, it had a standing platform accessed by a bamboo ladder and from there the bells were rung under a beamed ceiling with a nipa roof, “nipa” being thatch made from the Nipa palm. Even in cosmopolitan Manila large churches often had an adjacent open platform belfry. Indeed, just looking at them probably reminded American soldiers of a gallows back home. To me these platform belfries looked like the gallows used at Fort McNair in Washington, DC to hang participants in the Lincoln assassination.

In addition to the unusual belfry, the men of Company C at Balangiga would not have been totally comfortable with the constant clamor of bells. Each parish had its own system. There could have been a sunrise call followed by one to wake up stragglers; a call to mass; a morning break for farmers; announcement of lunch; an afternoon call for children back to prayers; a three o’clock marking of the hour of death of the Lord; a four o’clock ringing for the singing of the Salve Regina; a five o’clock tolling as time to go home; sometimes a six o’clock call to recite the Angelus; an eight p.m. call to pray for souls in Purgatory. It was a noisy day for the young American soldiers.

There is no doubt that one of the signals for commencement of the surprise attack that Saturday morning was a church bell...but it was not the only signal. There should be equally little doubt that it was a signal bell that the community was accustomed to hearing when being summoned from their homes and surrounding countryside. More than one letter to home from attack survivors tells of hearing a church bell. Use of one of the two campana could have been possible, but not likely. The esquila was smaller and easily and customarily swung on its yoke when simply pulled by an attached hemp (abaca) rope lanyard sending its higher pitch ring into the morning air to help launch history. Its purpose was to signal. It did.

When men of the 11th Infantry left Balangiga on 18 October, 1901 for Tacloban, they did not take three bronze church bells as souvenirs or for the purpose of the often-misused word, “war booty”. They just took the bronze away from an enemy site because they were supposed to. The foundries of the Philippines had a history of turning bells into weapons, especially “Lantakas”, the cannon of the islands of the archipelago, and weapons into bells. During the insurrections against the Spanish churches would be forced to, or sometimes voluntarily, give up bronze bells to be melted down for weapons. Aguinaldo commended the skills of a comrade who could melt bells into guns and bayonets. Recent scholarship from the University of Santo Tomas in Manila identifies almost forty bell casters that were active and contributed to a long legacy of Philippine church bells in the 19th century.

The bells were held at the 11th Infantry base at Tacloban, now renamed Camp Bumpus, on a site where in May, 2014 I stayed at the Leyte Park Hotel. The bells remained under protective storage of the 11th Infantry’s quartermaster, Captain Robert Alexander. Think of a scrap yard with the residue of war. Just a few months later before their departure for home, the signal bell was given

to the 9th Infantry at their headquarters at Calbayog. Folklore that it was given to them by the remaining villagers of Balangiga is just that, folklore.



An “esquila” or “campana de vuelo” that is in a U. S. Army museum in Korea. It is the signal bell removed from the ashes of the belfry and given by the 11th Infantry to the 9th Infantry. It is the “Manchu Bell” that many of today’s Manchus want back at Madison Barracks in New York.

Flushed out with new men, the 9th Infantry Regiment departed the Philippines for good and arrived in San Francisco on June 27, 1902. They received a 7th Philippine battle streamer for service on Samar. Originally slated by the Army to be posted at Forts Assiniboine and Harrison in Montana, a change was achieved by influential New Yorkers to return the unit to its old station at Madison Barracks where a brick stand or plinth was built to display its bell. There the bell stayed until 1928 when it is believed to have moved to Fort Lewis, Washington, and displayed in the Manchu War and Trophy Room. The stand at Madison Barracks sits empty on a former Army post. The signal bell continued to travel with the Manchus and today is in the Second Infantry Division Museum at Camp Red Cloud along with the Liscum Bowl below the “Demilitarized Zone” (DMZ) between North and South Korea. It remains a part of Manchu heritage and used at events like changes of command and the “Manchu Mile”, a biannual 25-mile overnight hike that honors an even longer forced march endured in the China Uprising. Unlike the two campanas, the esquila is viewed as part of Army history and heritage and is accorded so in its historical property records. It came from the Church of Balangiga but is not “The Bells of Balangiga” that have become a national icon. They took two separate historical paths. To make that distinction I call it the “Manchu Bell”. When you run the Manchu Mile, you get a Manchu belt buckle. They gave me one just for caring about Manchu heritage and history.

The Manchu Bell came to the United States the month before the 4th of July 1902 end of the Philippine American War. Had it still been in the holding yard on Leyte, it should have been returned to its church upon cession of hostilities. Because it took a different path than the Bells of Balangiga and was one of the five signals for the surprise attack, a case might be made that it is a genuine battlefield souvenir or “war booty” as described in today’s Title 10 USC 2579,

The 11th Infantry remained on Leyte engaging in skirmishes with insurgents and expeditions against Moros on Jolo and Mindanao and against what would be called “outlaw bands” or “ladrones”. In February 1904 with jubilation they were told it was time to go home. They decided to take the two larger bells with them.

They were not alone in taking church bells from the Philippines. A small pair of hand bells used in services and taken to the U.S. was returned to the Philippines in 2011. Two others about sixty pounds each and not identifiable to any particular church in the Philippine were in museum storage at West Point and an 800-pound Bell of Saint Peter that was displayed at the United States Military Academy’s Most Holy Trinity Chapel was returned to the Church of Saints Peter and Paul in Bauang, La Union, in the Philippines in the Spring of 2016.

Under command of Colonel Albert L. Meyer, the 11th Infantry Regiment arrived in San Francisco on February 15, 1904 on the USAT Thomas of “Thomasites” fame and moved on by train to Fort D. A. Russell in Cheyenne, Wyoming. With them is also a gun barrel which, unknown at the time, turns out to be a relic more important as a military artifact than the bells. Soon the two bells were displayed by the parade ground flag pole under a sign that said, “This bell hung in the church at Balangiga, PI, and rung the signal for the attack on company C, 9th U.S. Infantry, Sept 29, 1901. Taken by Company L, 11th Infantry and detachment of Company K, 11th Infantry, and the first units to reach the scene after the massacre.”

That was not the case. They were not first on the scene and the bells were not hung in a church. They also erred in etching on the back of each bell, “Used by Philipinos to sound signal for massacre of company C Ninth infantry at Balangiga P.I. September 1901.”

We now know that the bell (really bells) did not hang in the church; did not ring the signal; the attack was not on September 29th; and the 11th did not have units first to arrive. Years later, after a series of correspondence questioning its claim, the command acknowledged that the 11th Infantry was not the first there that fateful Sunday.

In that exchange of correspondence was a historically important endorsement. It said that the bells should not have been taken to the United States in the first place. As Gerry Adams points out in his book, Major General James Franklin Bell, who had served in the Philippines, in his endorsement to the string of letters questioning the 11th claim states, “it may be appropriate to question the propriety of taking (even as a souvenir) a bell belonging to the Catholic Church simply because a recreant native priest either uses it or permitted it to be used to sound a signal of attack on American soldiers. The bell belonged to the church and not the priest. It was not the fault of the church but that of the priest that it was misused.”

How prescient and important. Again, we now know that the church priest was not present and did not use the bell; that these two bells did not sound the signal of attack; and very importantly General Bell may well have acknowledged the difference in calling it church property because he understood the Lieber Code or General Order 100, which was applicable in 1902 when he was serving there, and also its later 1907 Hague Convention international update and codification. That was the year he left the Army’s Command and General Staff School and was appointed Chief of

the Army General Staff for President Roosevelt. At the college he could again see that law made it clear that religious property is private property whose seizure is prohibited. General Bell may well have understood all of the puffery and myths that sometimes follow when units came home, to say nothing of the “yellow journalism” of that era that preceded them. In 1899 he had earned a Congressional Medal of Honor for his service in the Philippines. War hero, teacher, head of the Army, he knew the bells should go home. Like General Douglas MacArthur three decades later, after serving as Army Chief of Staff, General Bell returned to the Philippines in 1911 to serve in Command of the Department of the Philippines.

An interesting footnote of history is that the village priest who was not present at the time of the attack, Father Donato Guimbaolibot, lived to the age of 83 leading a simple life in prayer turning down offers of Bishop and is still revered in his hometown of Guiuan. A native priest he spoke Spanish and played chess with Lieutenant Bumpus, a fact sometimes cited without evidence as perfidy.

In 1913 the 11th Infantry left for Texas, leaving the bells and their embarrassing historical claims behind in Wyoming. After all, the bells were not part of their history.

The Army abandoned them a second time in April 1941 when the last two artillery units left Warren ending 73 years of Army combat arms presence. Someone should have acknowledged and acted on General Bell’s insight. “Ship those bells back to their church!” That is what the Monuments Men of World War Two fame did just four years later.

Today the two Bells of Balangiga, the subject of so much misunderstanding and rancor, are in a protected place thanks to caring U.S. Air Force officers. Today’s F. E. Warren Air Force Base, an element of the Air Force Global Strike Command, began with an Army history. Officially today they are artifacts in the collection of the Museum of the United States Air Force

In 1867 the base opened as Fort D. A. Russell built by the 30th Infantry Regiment and soon became home to both cavalry and infantry units of the African-American “Buffalo Soldiers”. Over the next several decades the post was base to cavalry, infantry and artillery units. In 1930 it was renamed Fort F. E. Warren in honor of Wyoming Senator Francis E. Warren, a Civil War Medal of Honor recipient. In 1942 it became an Army Quartermaster Replacement Center and later Training Center until 1947 when it became F. E. Warren Air Force Base and an enlisted technical training center (and earlier a quiet home to German prisoners). In the 1950s it became a member of the Strategic Air Command (SAC) family and entered the Cold War world of the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM). It is Cold War Missileers that turned out to be those that began the modern history of the Bells of Balangiga. Although there was periodic local Air Force interest in the two strange bells on the base, it took Colonel Robert J. Hill, the 90th Missile Wing commander to take them from storage and obscurity in 1967. He had built a brick encasement wall for protection and display. It is doubtful he ever intended the bells to become a matter of rancor among friends.

The two bells were not the only Philippine service souvenirs brought to Wyoming by the 11th Infantry. They returned with an object that is a real article of war deserving historical preservation and understanding. You cannot read about bringing the Bells of Balangiga from Samar without

reading how they also brought back a rare English Falcon cannon. One thing the Spanish American War did for many Army bases and American city parks was provide homes for cannon. Cannons are easily acknowledgeable as “war booty”. You might argue the morality of taking church property, but cannon are fair game.

The cannon’s rarity and origin were not known until 1979. What the strategic missile base had in their possession was a seven-foot-long seven-hundred-pound gun barrel, worthless except as scrap. Like the bells it was bronze and capable of feeding a Philippine foundry and turning out weapons to be used against Americans. There is no way it would have come from primitive Balangiga or treacherous and mountainous Samar...and certainly never sat in a village plaza as some American writers, used to seeing cannon in our parks, suggest. Professor Borrinaga thinks it could have been held in storage at the church waiting to be melted down into new bells. However, even in a church, holding 700 hundred pounds of potential weapons material is doubtful, given a Philippine history of taking religious bells to make weapons to be used against both the Spanish and the Americans.



The Bells sitting on a field at former Fort D. A. Russell. Abandoned by the Army, they sat in obscurity until placed in a brick enclosure by the senior SAC officers’ in 1967.

There are other possibilities. The Spanish could have had it in their arsenal at Cavite, perhaps taken from the English during the twenty months between 1762 and 1764 during the Seven Years War when England occupied Manila and Cavite. In my view, however, its origin and possession are more likely that it was confiscated by the 11th infantry during an excursion against the Moros. The cannon of the Moros was the “Lantakas”, made of bronze from local copper and zinc from China and used on a swivel on the bow of their boats and sometimes behind ramparts on shore. They loved cannon...even those made from bamboo. The Falcon is also a cannon used both on ship and shore. The Royal Navy with its presence in the Straits Settlements had many interactions with the Moros and the cannon could have come into Moro possession by commerce or conflict. The Moros could have taken it from one of the former Spanish coastal forts along the shorelines of Jolo or Mindanao. I think it came from the Moros, by way of the Spanish, and thanks to the English.



Famous photo of some of the six to nine hundred Moro warriors, women and children killed by Gatling gun and mountain howitzer at Mount Dajo on the island of Jolo in March 1906. Bud Dajo was an ancient volcanic crater with lava outcropping that became “cotta” or forts. With minimal American losses the battle became known as the “Moro Crater Massacre” in the U.S. The Moro Wars did not end until the Battle of Bud Bagsak in June 1913. The “Massacre of Balangiga” and the “Moro Crater Massacre” are sad histories that snared two church bells making them become scapegoats of history. Writer’s collection.

The history of the 11th is not as complete as the 9th, but the cannon’s travel to Wyoming did help create another mystery. In 1979 the Wing historian learned the cannon was a rare English Falcon cannon, made by Robert Owen and cast at the Houndsditch Armory near London. (“ROBERT OWYNE MADE THYS FAVCON ANNO DNA 1557”). That discovery and the cannons subsequent preservation is wonderfully covered in Gerry Adams research. Retired Brigadier General Robert R. (Bob) Scott, also a former 90th Wing Commander then living in Cheyenne, led the “Save the Cannon” committee. Desired by both our Smithsonian and Great Britain, it is the only English cannon known bearing the monogram of Queen Mary the First, who married Philip of Spain, restored Catholicism in England and became known as Bloody Mary. Today it rests in an appropriate carriage built by the USAF 90th Civil Engineering Squadron in a secure shelter constructed by Navy Seabees.... appropriate for me because I was part of the joint U. S. Air Force and Navy partnership in the Philippines. For over half a century the barrel stood on a medal stand open to the elements.

One amazing aspect of the English Falcon Cannon is that it was not alone at Warren. The base also had a cannon taken from the Civil War and one taken from Germany during World War I. During World War II both of these real war booty souvenirs of battle made their way to one of the many scrap drives for the war effort. Why the 700-pound chunk of bronze and two useless bronze bells from the Philippines without their iron clappers did not, one can only speculate. For the bells it was no doubt divine intervention. Who knows about the cannon?

Enter Eddie Ramos

At West Point they called him “Eddie”. He was class of 1950.

Of all the efforts to return the Bells of Balangiga to the Philippines, most of the modern history began with the hopes of Fidel Ramos.... a man who began his career as a student of the U. S. Military Academy at West Point followed by a Master’s of Science at the University of Illinois. I first met him in 1981 when he was a Philippine Army General and I was a Navy Captain attending a Mutual Defense Board meeting on the Subic Naval Base. American military officers admired him as comrade. As a 2nd Lieutenant Platoon leader of a combat team in the Korean War he bravely helped take Hill Eerie inflicting heavy Chinese losses. He again joined West Point comrades in Vietnam as Chief of Staff of the First Philippine Civic Action Group. In helping oust a Philippine dictator he was named "Military Hero of the Peaceful People Revolution"; became Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines; then Secretary of National Defense. In June 1992, Fidel Ramos became the 12th President of the Republic of the Philippines, its first Protestant president and at age 64 it’s oldest. West Point accorded him its Distinguished Graduate Award in 2000. Ten years earlier when his American counter-part Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney was in Manila, he asked him to help return the bells. Nothing came of the request. Then in 1994 when President Clinton was in Manila, now President Ramos asked him to help return the bells to have them available for the 4th of July 1996 Fiftieth Anniversary of Philippine Independence. Also, nothing happened.

For over half a century the Bells of Balangiga sat somewhere on the plains of a Wyoming military base with no apparent interest by anyone in the United States or the Philippines, certainly not the U. S. Army which initially brought them to America and then abandoned them. They had been forgotten in the Philippines as well, even though they were not the only bells removed from Catholic churches and taken to the U.S. as souvenirs. The earliest records of a Philippine interest is a November 25, 1957 letter from the Department of History at the Ateneo de Manila University when the late Fr. H. de la Costa wrote the 13th Air Force at Clark Air Force Base stating that bells with Franciscan emblems belonged to the Franciscan order and that they should be returned to the Philippines.

When Fidel Ramos became President of the Republic of the Philippines in 1992, the previous year the Philippines had terminated the Military Bases Agreement thereby dictating closure of the last remaining U.S. Military facility in the Philippines, Navy Operating Base, Subic Bay. Ramos had supported continued U.S. Military presence. The 1991 negotiations for retention of the U.S. Navy for another decade did not succeed because of a dozen Philippine senators who voted against ratification of a new military bases agreement (MBA). A plebiscite would have come out differently. Nevertheless, ill feeling by Wyoming veterans may have influenced their later attitude. Some maintain U.S. military departure was a good thing. Employment today is many times that when I was there in 1982 and the areas are now leaders in business processing and call centers as well as manufacturing producing millions of dollars of exports each year.

Ramos needed the right kind of person to represent Philippine interests in Washington as his ambassador. He chose Raul Chavez Rabe for the post, a man not from politics or wealth, but a skilled member of his country’s Foreign Service. With a Bachelor of Arts and a Law degree, Rabe had spent 20 years in assignments in Romania, the United Kingdom, and Saudi Arabia, in the

United States in both Honolulu and Washington D.C., and as ambassador to South Korea. As Assistant Secretary in his government's Office of American Affairs in Manila he served as spokesman for the Philippine side during the difficult 1991 base negotiations where as a skilled mediator and diplomat, he gained respect among Americans as a "voice of reason".

In 1996 President Ramos asked his Ambassador to take a crack at returning the bells. In December Ambassador Rabe visited Wyoming with his Defense Attaché to discuss trade while meeting with the Governor, community, the Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce and other leaders about local sentiment concerning the Philippine church bells on F.E Warren Air Force Base. The following October 1997, he returned to Wyoming and as the guest at the Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce and again spoke about historic Philippine and American relations. He did not mention the bells. Earlier in the year a Wyoming State legislator had visited the Philippines and articles started appearing in local papers on their possible return to the Philippines. Interest began to accelerate. The Wall Street Journal published a comprehensive article on the Balangiga Bells and Philippine history titled, "The Bells of Balangiga Have a Different Ring in Manila, Cheyenne"

The end of November 1997, President Ramos once again officially requested return of the Bells at the Asia-Pacific Economic Conference in Vancouver, Canada, suggesting a "One Bell Compromise", i.e. each country would hold an original bell and one copy. On December 8th he spoke by phone with President Clinton suggesting, "if one can be sent back to the Philippines or two halves of the two bells can be sent back to the Philippines, then we have a win-win situation where the bells are still partly in Wyoming and the bells are partly back in the Philippines". President Clinton said, "We ought to be able to work something on that. I'll see what I can do."

The New York Times had an extensive article quoting retired USAF Colonel Joe Sestak of the American Legion in Wyoming that, "We are not involved in the business of dismantling memorials to our comrades that have fought in other wars" That position remains in the minds of some in Wyoming. Also, his objections and calling the structure at the nearby missile base a "memorial" may have begun the misperception that exists today.

In 2012, Colonel Sestak changed in mind. In a Wyoming Star-Tribune editorial, "Veteran now wants bells back in Balangiga", Colonel Sestak was quoted, "there are 55,000 veterans in Wyoming...I don't think there's 100 of them who know enough about the bells to carry on a conversation about them."

When doing research for this paper I talked with Colonel Sestak. He said that if I was interested in returning the bells to their church, then "God Bless You".

The first Congressional interest came when Representative Robert Underwood and others sponsored House Resolution 312, November 7, 1997 that the U.S. should return one bell to the Philippines. On January 9, 1998 the Wyoming Congressional delegation of Senators Thomas and Enzi and Representative Cubin wrote President Clinton stating "opposition to any plan to remove the bells of Balangiga at F.E. Warren" and that a one bell compromise was "wholly unacceptable and an affront to the soldiers massacred in Balangiga." This reaction was a puzzle to some since no soldier from Wyoming was in Company C and the Cold War U.S. Air Force base had no historic connections to the bells.

The next month Ambassador Rabe returned to Cheyenne to speak at the Cheyenne Rotary Club. Believing he was presenting American history as developed by Americans, he showed the audience a video titled, “Savage Acts: Wars, Fairs and Empire 1898-1904”, published by the American Social History Project of the City University of New York two years before. Covering American purchase of the Philippines Islands from Spain and the years of war and dispute that followed, it used a number of newspaper cartoons from that era and some of the more controversial parts of a complex history. It was a sensationalistic documentary.

On the other hand, the purpose of Ambassador Rabe’s remarks and not the video was to let Wyoming know that President Ramos would be visiting the White House in April and would like to come to Wyoming. He candidly discussed our joint history, the American contribution to Philippine school and health systems, and our comradeship in war. On the bells he said that “we should turn them into symbols of peace and friendship instead of a memorial to the past when we were fighting against each other.” He again proposed to share the bells and to “set up memorials on both sides of the Pacific to emphasize our friendship and shared history”.



The Liberty Bell and the San Lorenzo Bells share a common history. Both came from a scrap yard and did not become important to their peoples until a century later. Note the crack. A cracked bell in the Philippines was melted down to use the bronze.

Ambassador Rabe was criticized for comparing the importance of the Bells to our Liberty Bell. He was more accurate than his critics. All three were saved from a scrap yard and later became important to their peoples. The Liberty Bell did not get its name until 20 years after it was recovered. It became an icon when it traveled America a century later and then used to sell Liberty Bonds to fund our defense of Great Britain. The British did not object to the use of a Bell that originally celebrated their defeat.

Because of the 20-year attempt by first President Ramos and then each succeeding Philippine President to gain return of the Bells to their Church, including the 2017 President Duterte Philippine State of the Nation Address, the Bells have become national icons. A Philadelphia bell took 20 years to become the Liberty Bell and 100 years to become an American national icon. The Bells of Balangiga took 100 years to be discovered on an Air Force base in Wyoming and 20 years

to become a Philippine national icon. The laws of unintended consequences were hard at work. Maybe I should call them the “Ramos-Rabe Bells”.

The video Ambassador Rabe used portrayed American atrocities during the war and its aftermath following Balangiga and was strongly objected to by some veterans in the audience. I have a DVD copy and the original video studio cut.

The month after Ambassador spoke, retired USAF Colonel James David McCracken, formerly stationed at F.E. Warren and was now a respected Cheyenne citizen, spoke at the Rotary giving his strong perspective why the bells should remain in Wyoming. During that period others who joined him in opposition to returning the Bells were BGen Robert Scott, Mr. Ralph Nabs, Col Gerald Adams, and Colonel Joseph Sestak. Colonel Sestak has since changed his mind.

Dave McCracken feels the same today. I met him when visiting Wyoming in 2013 and he shared with me part of his vast files on the bells. He is honest in his feelings. He loves local history and has arranged to be buried at the old Army post cemetery near the Bells. Without his over two-decade opposition, I believe the Bells would have gone home long ago. Also because of a resistance that ultimately involved the advocacy of all succeeding Philippine presidents, simple church bells became historic icons and important cultural property to a nation’s patrimony. Someday he may also deserve credit if Company C is finally honored the right way. I gave Dave a draft of this paper before its original 2015 circulation.

I also talked to Raul Rabe who was caught off guard by the reaction of an American produced video and has offered to return and apologize to Wyoming veterans if they perceived his visit and message as derogatory in any way. I consider him a family friend; his only son and two children live near my only son and three children in Virginia. He practices law in Manila; his firm helped defend American servicemen facing criminal charges in the Philippines. He helped build new bridges between our armed forces as an advisor to the recent Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement.

March 1998 was busy. Governor Stan Hathaway, a combat veteran of World War II who took part in the firebombing of Dresden, Germany, where thousands of civilians died, wrote Senator Craig Thomas advocating return saying there would be “no forgiveness of military acts” if Germany and Japan had adopted the attitude he was seeing. Senator Thomas disagreed saying the campaign to return the bells was “part of the revisionist movement happening within the humanities”, and asked if we should return “other U.S. holdings brought here by whatever historical circumstances...?” Many members of the Wyoming State Senate and House signed an “informal” resolution “endorsing a plan to copy the two war trophies on displays at F. E. Warren Air Base so both Balangiga and Wyoming could have one authentic and one replica”. Some veteran leaders protested stating that the joint resolution was circulated as a petition instead of being introduced for a vote; that this “was the same kind of sneak attack that resulted in the loss of 54 American soldiers at Balangiga in 1901.” Wyoming chapters of the American Legion and the VFW passed resolutions in opposition. Letters to the editor appeared in Wyoming newspapers protesting return, some calling it an “affront to the soldiers who died”, the “church bells were paid for with American blood”, and some letters were even anti-Philippine while others took swipes at the Catholic Church. The debate or discussion was acrimonious.

The Ninth Infantry Regiment (Manchus) Association joined in and wrote to support the Underwood resolution. The active Army Manchus revere the Balangiga signal bell and their legacy association letter said, "The two bells that the 11th brought back to the States were abandoned by them and there is no historical connection to the F. E. Warren Air Force Base or the people of Wyoming"... and that "one if not both bells in Cheyenne should be returned to the Philippines."

President Ramos wrote directly to Senator Thomas and appealed that our countries "share the Bells of Balangiga" He noted that "the United States was a signatory to the 1899 Hague Convention which specifically prohibited belligerents from seizing enemy property unless the seizure was 'imperatively demanded by the necessities of war'. The bells are religious objects, the taking of which was clearly not demanded by a necessity of war." Ramos discussed how the Philippines was "a steadfast ally of your country, standing with American soldiers in the Second World War, the Korean War and the Vietnam War." Senator Thomas replied that the Bells should stay in Wyoming because they "represent a lasting memorial" and that removing them would be "actually dismantling a war memorial." It was this characterization that some in Wyoming still believe and it has been the principle impediment to the Bells returning to their church.

An offered counter interpretation of the Hague Convention argument was that Filipinos were not international belligerents but American subjects in uprising. There was also the argument that a bell once rung to signal an attack is no longer a bell. Church and personal property protections in international law under the Hague conventions derive from the Lieber Code whose origin was the U.S. Civil War. Those provisions did apply to the "Philippine Insurrection", now the Philippine-American War. "American subjects in uprising" has long given way to better understanding of the history of the Philippine effort to become free from Spain.

To some it was becoming apparent that the Bells might be returned by our government to the Philippines. A prominent Washington, D.C. law firm, Patton Boggs, L.L.P. produced and provided a paper to Senator Thomas and his staff, "Legal Memorandum Regarding Philippine Bells". Based on several statutes, it stated that "Taking the Bells Was Wrongful in 1901" and "Taking The Bells Would Be Wrongful Today", and that "the President has the authority he needs to return the bells to the Philippine Government".

This was not good news to those who wanted to hold on to the Bells. Restrictive legislation to block repatriation of the Bells became a necessity and was successfully introduced when in April Senator Craig Thomas of Wyoming presented Senate Bill No. 1903, "The Veterans Memorial Physical Integrity Act of 1998". Subsequently the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2000 had a provision titled, "Moratorium on the Return of Veteran Memorial Objects to Foreign Nations without Specific Authorization in Law." It became public law. That seemed to settle the matter for that decade.

Not widely known at the time was that the McCormick Tribune Foundation in Chicago had offered \$250,000 to make duplicate bells through the initiative of its president, retired Major General Neal Creighton, a West Point classmate of President Ramos. At West Point both are honored as "distinguished graduates". This time Ramos hoped to have the bells or bell in the Philippines for the June 12, 1998 centennial celebration of independence from Spain.

What had been two bronze church bells removed from the rubble of a burned belfry to keep from being melted down and becoming instruments of war; then held almost three years in a quartermaster salvage yard on Leyte as potential scrap; then brought to the United States improperly as “battlefield souvenirs” by the 11th Infantry; then abandoned as Army heritage; and rejected as heritage of the 9th Infantry; then not becoming victims of a wartime scrap drive; then put on display on an Air Force base by caring Missileers; were now “Veteran Memorial Objects” even though they were not part of a war memorial.



Manila devastation in World War II was second only to Warsaw. Governor Stan Hathaway knew what he was talking about when he said the Bells belong at their church. Over 100,000 civilians were killed, mass murders committed and cultural and architectural heritage destroyed. Is it any wonder why the Filipinos want missing parts of their cultural heritage back? Is it any wonder that people cannot understand giving Bells back to Japan and not the Philippines?

President Ramos completed his six-year term as President that year. Among the erroneous perceptions of his interest was that he wanted the publicity reelection (which was not legally possible), or to promote his political party (also highly improbable given the chaotic nature of Philippine politics where personality means more than party), or that he wanted them in Manila to display Filipino dominance over Americans. None were the case. He wanted the Bells to go home to Balangiga to their church. He understood their importance to communities where lives of the people often center on their church. He had arranged for a new coral stone, not wood, belfry where the Bells could once again summon parishioners to their faith.

Ramos Was Not Alone

In 1989 the Balangiga Historical Society in Samar petitioned the U.S. to return the town’s church bells, “The return of the bells would mean a great deal to the town people of Balangiga, as they

represent the rich heritage of the town, the emblem and the aspirations of their forefathers for freedom and liberty.” Earlier the community had erected a stature of Abanador in front of its municipal building and a historical marker accompanied it in 1982. Later in the decade by an act of the Philippine legislature, September 28, 1989 became the town’s first “Balangiga Encounter Day”, now noting that the former “massacre” would be called the softer word, “encounter”.

Improving on language given historic hindsight is not alone in the Philippines. In 1998 the United States dropped calling the war the “Philippine Insurrection” and now officially describes the war years of 1899 to 1902 as the “Philippine American War”.

“Balangiga Encounter Day” is celebrated formerly annually, and now periodically, in front of a non-judgmental Balangiga Encounter Diorama that depicts the morning attack. The earlier productions were disturbingly erroneous in some of the portrayals of American soldiers; portrayals now changed to reflect later research. Underneath the monument is a small room that holds Abanador family artifacts including his fighting stick and bolo. When visiting the museum, I was allowed to hold the bolo. It came apart. I found myself with a piece in each hand. I stood embarrassed but could not help but wonder when putting it back together if reconciliation of two opposing positions on something like church bells could also be possible. Although not a memorial, the town also displays a plaque with the known names of both Filipinos and Americans who died.

Balangiga history was also getting attention in the United States. The City University of New York in 1995 produced as part of its American Social History Project a 30-minute video “Savage Acts: Wars, Fairs and Empire 1898-1904”. This was the video that did not play well in Cheyenne. In Chicago two years later the Pintig Cultural Group, a Filipino American theater company presented a play, “Bells of Balangiga”, about the history of the massacre/encounter. It was called by some “well balanced” and decried by others as being erroneous about American soldier behavior. Joining in, Stone Productions of New York created a documentary in 2002 on the two bells in Wyoming. Narrated by Susan Sarandon “Two Bells Two Worlds” was much like “Savage Acts”, storytelling intending to sensationalize history in a manner resulting in festering and not healing wounds. Again, some use a pair of church bells to get attention. The Bells of Balangiga become scapegoats of history.

If the 1990’s story of the Bells belonged in some way to Eddie Ramos, the first decade of this century belonged to the Balangiga Research Group (BRG). If the Bells return to their Church in the second decade, I will give credit to “three veterans”; perhaps “three sailors”.

In November 1998 the University of the Philippines sponsored a “National Symposium on the Balangiga Attack of 1901” at Tacloban on the island of Leyte, made famous by General Douglas MacArthur’s landing and his “return” to the Philippines in 1944. Tacloban became tragically famous again in 2013 when it was destroyed by a typhoon with hurricane force winds higher than ever recorded. At the meeting were several teachers and students of history including now Professor Borrinaga and a British former foreign correspondent, screenwriter, and historical author, Bob Couttie. Traveling to the conference from the United States was Ms. E. Jean Wall, the daughter of Private Adolph Gamlin, the faithful and fated sentry on duty the morning of the massacre/event/revolt/conflict/surprise attack/encounter. She spoke, participated in seminars, and

even met the grandson of Abanador. Jean Wall had been studying the history of Balangiga for many years, even as a girl listening to her father. Both Borrinaga and Couttie published books from the group's research, books essential to any scholar seeking details of the event. Jean Wall's contribution was more than remarkable. Today she says she does not take sides and respects the feelings of all. She believes the men of Company C have been maligned and credited with torturous acts not performed

Adolph Gamlin was a 20-year-old farm boy from Nebraska when he enlisted in 1898 with the 51st Iowa Volunteer Infantry and was off to the Philippines. He later joined other Spanish American War volunteers by re-enlisting in the Regular Army's 9th Infantry in 1900. Back to the Philippines in November, he caught up with Company C in January of 1901 when it was still in China and returned to Manila with the unit in June. He mustered out of the Army in 1903 at Fort Niagara in New York as Sergeant Gamlin and returned to Nebraska, married, had three children before his wife died in childbirth. He started a second family.

Today his daughter, E. Jean Wall, from that marriage carries on his memory in a unique way. Over the years she has accumulated what is probably the single most complete library on Balangiga, including many letters left to her by her father. She listened and learned from him. She should record those memories. In 1928 there were still 17 survivors of the massacre and efforts were being made to grant them some form of award; recognition many times denied. A leader in that effort was George Crago who had written and visited many of the survivors. His letters to Adolph Gamlin and much of that correspondence is now with E. Jean Wall. They should be edited and published and made available to the many Army history scholars who visit the U. S. Army Heritage and Education Center in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. She readily opens her home to writers and scholars and she and her husband, Bill Fee, are perfect and generous hosts to any and all who want to learn; people like me.

The combined work and research of Jean Wall, Rolly Borrinaga and Bob Couttie is unique. They formalized their association with the title, "Balangiga Research Group" or BRG. They talked, exchanged emails, researched, and established a web site where they posted their material. They were educating over advocating.

In March 2005 the Wyoming Veterans Commission decided to review the bells issue and Ms. E. Jean Wall was invited to make a presentation on Bell history. The committee voted favorably on a resolution to the Governor to return the Bells to the Philippines.

Again, there was swift reaction in the state. Veterans organizations protested and the two state Senators Thomas and Enzi confirmed their "commitment regarding keeping the bells at F. E. Warren".

The Commission was only advisory and had no authority over the disposition or ownership with the Governor, remarking later, "The only reason we got into it is we kept being asked about it". Governor Dave Freudenthal issued a statement that he "cannot support returning the bells" and later, "I fully understand this isn't my decision. That would be the congressional delegation or U.S. State Department

That same month writing in Manila, Monsignor Pedro Quitorio “speaking for the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines” stated that the Bells are “considered Church property”, and that the “Church was willing to pay for the recasting of two replica bells, one of which would be given to the U.S. government to replace the genuine items.”

L. John Swallow published an essay that appeared in the September 28, 2000 Wyoming Tribute-Eagle titled, “Time to Resolve the Bells of Balangiga”. He identified himself with the “B-BRAC-R Campaign to Encourage Peaceful Democratic Transitions, (Bells of Balangiga Reconciliation and Valor Recognition) Campaign”.

In June 2003 House Resolution 268 was filed by Representative Filner of California to “Urge the President to authorize the transfer of ownership of one of the bells taken from the two of Balangiga ...to the people of the Philippines.” Three years later in October of 2006 he is joined by Representatives Ed Case of Hawaii and Dana Rohrabacher of California in a non-binding resolution in the House urging President George W. Bush to return the Bells. The members were part of a new Congressional Philippine Caucus working on relations and issues with our two countries and were being advised by retired Navy Captain Brian Buzzell. A Naval Aviator with over 700 aerial gunship missions in Vietnam, he has maintained a long-time interest in Southeast Asia economic and military affairs and served as Political Military Advisor for the United States side during the 1991 military base negotiations. Attorney Philip Sheuerman, Associate General Counsel, DOD Office of General Counsel, suggested to Brian in 2003 that authority might exist in Title 10 USC 2572 (b) to conduct a trade for the Bells with something of equal value. Phil is the long time Pentagon legal authority on the Bells.

Archbishop Gabriel Montalvo Higuera, Apostolic Nuncio, United States of America, wrote to President George W. Bush in November 2003 supporting the Philippine Catholic Churches’ request to “have the Bells of Balangiga return to the Church to which they originally belonged”, signifying Vatican endorsement on the matter of ownership and location. In 2016 I met an hour with the current Papal Nuncio urging once again that the Vatican be heard. Nothing happened.

One of the earliest to take an academic and professional interested in both the bells and the attack was retired Army Colonel David P Perrine, a West Point graduate. He contributed to a very balanced historical article that appeared in the May-August 1998 issue of the professional magazine Infantry titled “Stability and Support Operations at the Turn of the Century”. Over the years he collaborated closely on research with Ms. E. Jean Wall.

One of the most telling and important stands taken on the Bells came from former Governor Stan Hathaway in a March 13, 1998 letter to Senator Thomas. He said clearly that keeping the Bells lacked a moral foundation. He wrote, “As I have studied the matter, I come to the conclusion that the position of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion is wrong on this issue. As a member of those organizations and as a combat veteran of World War II, I think I have a right to express that opinion. If we adopted the same philosophy with respect to German and Japan and have no forgiveness of military acts between our nations, we would indeed be asking for more trouble. The Germans have forgiven us for killing 300,000 people in the Dresden bomb raid of 1945. I was on that mission. To hang on to some undefined military principle after one hundred years doesn’t make any sense to me or most people in Wyoming.” Two weeks later Senator

Thomas in a “Stan, my friend” letter disagreed comparing giving back the Bells to returning museum art and antiquities and an effort to “re-write the past.”



One of the two “campana colgante” at F. E. Warren AFB. They were rung by young boys who climbed in under the bell on a platform and rang an iron clapper for various religious callings throughout the day. One can only wonder about the boy’s ears.

In June 2010, Benigno Aquino III, the son of martyred Senator “Nino” Aquino, became President of the Republic of the Philippines following the path of his mother, President Corazon Aquino who had died the year before. Although having lived in the U.S. briefly and visiting often, an official visit in 2012 would be his first state visit with a planned April meeting with President Obama. The restrictive legislation that allegedly held the bells in Wyoming had expired and there was some hope for working out an arrangement.

Not so fast. Prairie winds had picked up the scent.

Two years before, former first lady Hillary Clinton had become Secretary of State in the new Obama Administration. She asked Dr. Kurt M. Campbell to become Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific. Kurt had a long career in international relations and diplomacy, taught at Harvard, been on the National Security Council Staff, and had served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, Asia and Pacific. Internationally well known as an authority on Asia, he became the face of the administration’s tilt to Asia. Eight years later he authored, “The Pivot, the Future of American Statecraft in Asia.” On a visit to his office in 2016, the day before publication, he gave me a copy signing it with a ringing bell. A friend, former Deputy of State Matt Daley, had told me “Go see Kurt”. I did. Apparently three times in various responsibilities in both OSD and State, he had participated in studies and initiatives to return the Bells to our Asian ally. He asked me why he “had failed”. I told him that he did not have the right “intel”. He had no facts to rebut what he was told. As a young Naval officer, Kurt had served in intelligence on JCS staff and understood well the importance of accurate information. I told him my objective was to find the truth.

On April 4th, 2012, Senators Enzi and Barrasso along with Representative Lummis sent a letter to Secretary of State Clinton and Secretary of Defense Panetta “on behalf of Wyoming veterans, we will strongly oppose any effort to deconstruct our war memorial that honor our fallen soldiers”and “oppose any efforts by the United States Government to move the bells to the Philippines.” A month later Governor Mead also sent a letter to the two cabinet officers that, “I strongly oppose any efforts to deconstruct our war memorial that honor our fallen soldiers.” On the 11th of May Representative Cynthia Lummis introduced a rider to the FY 2013 National Defense Authorization Act that intended to prohibit return of the Bells until after September 30th, 2017. In a newspaper article she was quoted as saying that each having one bell and one replica might be the “best we can do”.

Dr. Campbell felt that as a heavily veteran populated state, Wyoming veterans might well understand our historic military relations with the Philippines. On the 29th of May, Wyoming received a visit from Marine Corps Brigadier General Richard Simcock and Mr. Brian Harding from the Office of the Secretary of Defense. They met with state officials, congressional staff personnel, and veteran leaders. They traveled the state with a wrap-up meeting at National Guard Headquarters in Cheyenne. They could find no accommodation. Representative Lummis had already dusted off the expired legislation, and they came home with no compromise.

On November 30th Senator Barrasso announced that with Senator Enzi as co-sponsor, that a successful amendment had been added as Section 355 of the National Defense Authorization Act, “Renewal Of Expired Prohibition On Return of Veterans Memorial Objects Without Specific Authorization in Law”. This was the second time that the prohibition was extended, the statement reading; “Today U.S. Senator John Barrasso (R-Wyo) successfully included an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that requires Congressional authorization to move war memorials overseas. Senator Mike Enzi (R-Wyo) co-sponsored the amendment. Barrasso’s amendment would prohibit moving the Bells of Balangiga from F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Wyoming to the Philippines without Congressional authorization. ‘It is a long-held tradition in Wyoming to never forget the sacrifices of our brave men and women’, said Barrasso. ‘Deconstructing our war memorials is unacceptable and a disservice to those soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice fighting for our country. This amendment will preserve and protect our war memorials by ensuring they are not moved overseas without Congressional approval’. Background: On September 28, 1901, The Bells of Balangiga were used by Filipino insurgents to launch the massacre on Company C, 9th Infantry, at Balangiga, Samar Philippines. Forty-eight out of seventy-five American soldiers, including all officers were either killed, died of wounds or were listed as missing and presumed dead (some bodies were mutilated or burned beyond recognition.) The Company C troops that survived the massacre brought these bells back to Fort D. A. Russell. Within the last year, the U.S. State Department and Department of Defense initiated a process that would move the Bells of Balangiga from F.E. Warren Air Force Base to the Philippines. The majority of Wyoming’s veterans oppose moving the Bells, including the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars.”

During that time the Manchu Bell in Korea had not gone un-noticed. In addition to the Wyoming initiative, the State Department suggested to our embassy in Seoul that the bell at Camp Red Cloud could be returned to the Philippines in a ceremony by the Commander, U.S. Forces, Korea. This

bell was one of the three taken from Balangiga, but was not one of the “Bells of Balangiga” subject to a moratorium on return in law. This bell, however, was in an Army museum and important to Manchu heritage. On the 11th of December the Second Infantry Division in Korea wrote the Director, U.S. Army Center of Military History in Washington objecting. The bell was “given to the 9th Infantry Regiment by the citizens of Balangiga” and it was important to “foster the esprit de corps” of the “Division’s longest serving regiment”. There is no documented substantiation of a gift from the ravaged village. It was clearly handed over by the 11th. The Bell was on the records and in the collection of the U.S. Army Center of Military History and not a U. S. command in Korea. This initiative passed into silence as the Wyoming bells were the real focus of attention. That ended the effort to return the Bells in 2012.

In April 2015 there was a press conference in California announcing the “Committee to Return the Bells” under leadership of Logan Clarke who referred to himself as an “Indiana Jones” adventurer capable of finding and returning anything around the world. They established a web site, announced a fundraising initiative, and posted a video on Balangiga narrated by movie actor Danny Glover. The video story is of questionable accuracy, plays to the sensationalistic of that period of history over discussing the Bells, and is more likely to offend than achieve understanding and reconciliation of a morally complex matter. I talked to Logan Clarke and some of his colleagues urging accuracy. Unable to raise funds for a provocative video, the group is no longer active.

In a meeting with Dr Campbell in June 2016, he asked for a point paper on the research that had taken place on the Bells to take to the White House. He had left the Obama administration in 2013 and formed “The Asia Group”. The next month he met with National Security Council staff about a potential executive order on return of the Bells. A new president had just assumed office in the Philippines and had publicly insulted the American ambassador. There was no appetite in the White House for any special accommodation to the new government.

In November, Donald Trump defeated Hillary Clinton for President. I am of the opinion that had Mrs. Clinton been elected, Dr. Campbell would have had a top position in her administration and an executive order would have come swiftly to return the Bells. Their legislative history is checkered at best, and a strong Executive Branch push-back could have been successful.

In early 2016, with the assistance of former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matt Daley and former Ambassador to the Philippines Frank Wisner, the international law firm of Squire Patton Boggs LLP (SPB) became engaged as our legal counsel. I had only asked that the decades old Patton Boggs legal memorandum be updated but wound up as a client. The U.S.-Philippines Society with its president, Ambassador John Maisto, and Executive Director Hank Hendrickson, agreed to serve as pro bono clients to the effort. SPB’s Ludmilla Savelieff’s of SPB (my “Consigliere Straordinario”) was tasked to develop strategy to get truth about the Bells to members of Congress to forestall legislation extending the moratorium beyond September 30, 2017. We met in May to devise a strategy of preventing any new legislation, and if that failed, seek sponsorship of a law directing return. The use of the NDAA had prevented the truth about the bells from being well understood, to say nothing of the fact that the Bells had become Philippine national icons and were now an impediment in an important historical relationship and an essential future SEAsia national security partnership. We felt hitting it head on post-NDAA would result in the right outcome when stopping the clever machinations of the Wyoming delegation could not. We were

asked if Henry Howard, a founding Society board member, could join us. I had met Henry at a dinner he hosted for two friends from the Philippines, Dennis Wright and Raul Rabe and said, “more the merrier”. Henry engaged his own firm and offered to pay for duplicate bells in Wyoming. Later Henry expanded that generosity to include copies of the Manchu Bell, one for today’s Manchu to ring upon completion run of the “Manchu Mile”, and a second for a potential memorial at Sackets Harbor, New York.

On March 21, 2017, Mr. Fred Fisch, a law school classmate of Governor Mead of Wyoming wrote him on possible repatriation of one bell to the Philippines and urging him “to look into this important matter.” In a March 31st reply the governor’s office stated the governor was of the opinion that the moratorium should be extended. He said that to “destroy the current structure to enable the return of the Bells would be a moral violation to the memory of those Americans massacred at Balangiga”. He quoted a veteran who said, “The Bells are silent like voices of those Americans who lost their lives in Balangiga and the structure is the only standing structure to their memory”.

The current bell stand was not built for the purpose of memorializing the valor of Company C. It is not the only known standing Balangiga bell structure. The Balangiga plinth created for the actual signal bell remains at the 9th Infantry Regiment’s home base at Madison Barracks, Sackets Harbor, New York along with a DAR bronze memorial plaque that, among others from New York, lists the names of the men of Company C slain in the attack. It does not list the volunteer unit doctor and his medic. There is the monument to all “unknowns” from the war at Clark American Cemetery in the Philippines. If a physical memorial is desired, it would be logical to adapt the plinth at their home post at Madison Barrack\s, N. Y. where the community has designed a memorial park. There is no existing memorial or monument to the men of Company C.

On May 18th 2017, the Wyoming Veterans Commission discussed the governor’s letter and voted to endorse it. I was allowed to present a paper that encouraged them to seek other ways of honoring the men of Company C, especially requesting the Army open a case of “denied valor”.

In his State of the Nation Address (SONA) on July 21st 2017, President Duterte of the Philippines called for the Bells return stating they were part of their “national heritage”. The U.S. Embassy responded the next week with a statement that, “We will continue to work with our Filipino partners to find a resolution.” He brought up the Bells with U.S. Secretary of Defense Mattis during his October visit to the Philippines. A planned discussion with President Trump during his November Philippine trip did not take place. Again Henry Howard stepped forward and when in Manila in February 2018 for a US-Philippine Society Board meeting, he obtained personal assurance from the Philippine president and senior government officials that they would facilitate, if necessary, return of the Bells to their Church. As a youth Henry had been an exchange student at Xavier University High School and has many friends throughout the archipelago due his philanthropy.

In 2018 there were resolutions urging return of the Bells from the VFW Department of Pacific Areas, the American Legion Department of the Phillippines, the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, the American Legion Department of Wisconsin, and the U.S.-Philippines Society. A draft resolution and template is among the attachments. Dennis Wright spoke at the

January 2018 mid-year meeting of the VFW in Cody, Wyoming, where several veterans said the Bells should go home expressing, "I had no idea".

Wyoming in the Spanish and Philippine American Wars

A different twist of historical fate might have seen "Torrey's Rough Riders" of Wyoming storming San Juan Hill, and not those of Teddy Roosevelt.



On the State Capitol grounds is Wyoming's beautiful monument to its units that served in the Spanish American War. Titled "Taking the Oath", it is one of the most telling and impressive in a nation that looked to volunteers. It was Wyoming's idea of "cowboy" units that resulted in the "rough riders". State pride exists in its statues and over 100 museums to its history and heritage. Periodic claims are made by some, including the state's congressional delegation, that the Bells on F. E. Warren are part of a "Wyoming War Memorial". They are not. This one is.

In early 1898 when war with Spain seemed possible, Wyoming rancher and legislative Speaker of the House, Jay L. Torrey, headed to Washington, D.C. to argue for establishing volunteer U.S. Army outfits composed of cowboys. Three "cowboy units" were ultimately authorized by Congress and soon Colonel Jay Torrey became commander of the Second Volunteer Cavalry of Wyoming. Colonel Leonard Wood took command of the First Volunteer Cavalry with Lt Colonel Theodore Roosevelt as second in command while Melvin Grigsby of South Dakota had command of the Third. Thus, began the "Rough Riders" whose idea is credited to Torrey.

After intensive training at Fort D. A. Russell, what were now called "Torrey's Rough Riders", left in June by two trains for Jacksonville, Florida. Alas, the trains had an accident in Mississippi; five men were killed and more injured. None of the men killed were from Wyoming, but they were ultimately buried at the Fort Russell cemetery. Like for so many units of the war with Spain, disease was an enemy more vicious than bullets. Thirty of the unit died of typhoid fever. The

Wyoming Volunteer Cavalry set out the war in Jacksonville and was mustered out in October. Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders went on to fame.

Like the riders of the Pony Express a half century before, the men selected had height and weight standards and must be expert horsemen. At 230 pounds, Jay Torrey got a weight exemption. After all, it was his idea



A ten-inch shell taken from Battleship Maine and given to the State of Wyoming about 1912 as a memorial souvenir of the Spanish American War and somehow misplaced and overlooked. South Dakota received a similar shell which sat for years in obscurity until it became part of a monument in 2012. This shell rests unsung on the floor of the Sheridan Arsenal, a perfect substitute for Catholic Church bells that have no historical connection to Wyoming.

Although Wyoming volunteers would join the fight against Spain, the state already had a National Guard from which to draw fighters. Three hundred twenty-four (324) enlisted soldiers and fourteen (14) officers constituted the First Wyoming Infantry Battalion, United States Volunteers, were formed up in May 1898 for 24 months service to fight Spain in the Philippines. They arrived in Manila the end of July as part of the Philippine Expeditionary Force under Major General Wesley Merritt. The regiment would participate in the taking of Manila without casualties. When war broke out with the Filipinos, they would take part in the Insurrection on Luzon. They would return to San Francisco the end of July and in August 1899 be mustered out of service. Several would re-enlist in the Regular Army and return to the Philippines. During Philippine service the battalion had one killed in action, two died from wounds, four deserted, and ten died from disease. Disparate numbers like these were typical of both Regular and Volunteer service in the SAW/PAW.

Joining the infantry was the artillery. The "Battery A Wyoming Light Artillery" had 127 men and it departed for San Francisco in June but remained in California until November before moving on to the Philippines. It served around Cavite until July when its guns were turned over to Regulars

and the men mustered out in San Francisco. One interesting historical side note was that the U.S. government had not made provision for money to send soldiers home once separated and no longer on the payroll. Wyoming businessmen underwrote notes to pay for troop transportation back to Wyoming homes; notes later paid off by the state.

In 1904 a monument to the Wyoming volunteers was erected by the State of Wyoming and the Ladies Volunteers Aid Society on the Wyoming State capitol grounds. Titled "Taking the Oath", it is arguably one of the most impressive of those established across the country at the end of the war. The statue is dedicated to the Second Regiment U.S. Volunteer Cavalry, the First Battalion Wyoming Volunteers, and the Battery A Wyoming Volunteers.

The state also was sent a memento of the Spanish American War. One of the Spanish American War Veterans organizations sent states souvenirs of the USS Maine as a memorial testament of the participation of their patriotic volunteers. For the state of Wyoming it was a ten-inch cannon shell from the USS Maine. A similar shell was given to South Dakota and today serves in a memorial to SAW veterans. The one for Wyoming can be seen at the Wyoming Army National Guard Armory in Sheridan.

The Bells In This Story Are Not Alone

The Bells of Balangiga are not the first religious bells taken in conflict and brought to the United States.

Perhaps the most notable of bells brought to the U.S. as a product of war were those taken from Japan. The first was by Commodore Perry brought back from his Japan Expedition in 1854, a large bell made in 1456 that was displayed on the United States Naval Academy campus and for over a century has been rung to celebrate important Midshipmen athletic victories. In 1987 it was returned to the Prefecture of Okinawa as "a gesture of goodwill" and an identical substitute given to the Academy by Japan. Like the original it is now in place in front of Bancroft Hall and struck heartedly to celebrate athletic victory. The 1456 bell was considered important for cultural and historical reasons by this late enemy and was personally presented to Okinawa's Shuri Historical Museum by U.S. Marine Corps officer, Vietnam veteran, then Secretary of the Navy, and later Senator, James Webb.

In the inscription on this temple bell were words understandable in any religion, any culture.

"The sound of this bell may awaken the dreams of illusion, right the souls of mankind, and make the (leader) and his subjects guard their virtues so that there is no opportunity for the barbarians to invade his kingdom."

These words are timeless. All bells have a home and a place to peal and trigger the heart. Balangiga is the home of two lost Bells at F. E. Warren AFB.



The Naval Academy duplicate of the original bell returned to Japan by the U. S. Navy.

Also acknowledging reconciliation with an old enemy, the city of Detroit returned to Japan in 1954 a Japanese temple bell taken in 1946 by sailors of the USS Detroit. In 1994, a copy was installed in its place and is known in the city and with its veterans, the “Japan-US Friendship Bell.”

In 1954 the City of Duluth, Minnesota returned to Ohara (now Isumi), Japan, a 1686 bell given to the city by sailors of the USS Duluth in 1946. Restored in 1994, it too is called in the city the “Japan-U.S. Friendship Bell”.

Similarly, in 1961, a Japanese bell taken during World War Two was found in Atlanta, Georgia, and became an instrument of friendship between two nations and two Rotary Clubs. This bell went home to Yokosuka, Japan as a joint project of the Rotary clubs of Atlanta and Yokosuka.

And in August 1989, a temple bell brought to the city of Topeka, Kansas in 1946 was returned to its temple at Shimizu City, Japan.

In 1945 the 6th Marine Division on Okinawa removed a bell from a temple and presented it to its Division Commander, Major General Lemuel C. Shepherd. It was brought back to the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) where General Shepherd had been a 1917 graduate. This bell was returned as a gesture of reconciliation in June 1991 when VMI and its Superintendent, Major General John W. Knapp, helped place this bell in front of the island of Okinawa’s Shuri Castle.

One Japanese war time bell did go in the other direction. In 1945 the crew from the USS Boston found on the Yokosuka Navy base a 1675 bell unscathed and left remaining from a Japanese war-time scrap drive. It was brought back to Boston. In 1953 it was officially given to the city of

Boston by Manpukuji Temple of Sendai Japan “in order to create close friendship between the citizens of Boston and the citizens of Sendai as a link for the attainment of peace in the world”.

One of the more interesting stories about bells removed from their church for the right reason by Americans and then returned for a better reason are 18 bells sent back to our Cold War enemy, the former USSR and now Russia. Josef Stalin’s purges of the 1920s and 1930s resulted in churches and monasteries being closed and destroyed and thousands of religious leaders and monks executed. Monasteries not destroyed were turned into prisons or even animal barns. For centuries the city Moscow was noted for its church bells; bells that became silenced following the 1917 Bolshevik revolution. Bell ringing was banned and bells began being removed and melted down for their metal. An American industrialist was able to purchase and remove a historic set of bells that hung in Moscow’s Danilovsky Monastery keeping them from destruction. Some dated to the 17th century. They were presented as a gift to Harvard University where for 80 years they hung in the towers of the University’s Lowell House. Like the Naval Academy bell, the Harvard bells were rung following football victories. One was hung in the Business School library, no doubt to keep budding MBAs awake.

The Soviets allowed the monastery to re-open in 1988 and today it is the center of the Russian Orthodox Church. Discussions on the bells resulted in a moral decision that the bells of Danilovsky, even though owned by Harvard, should go home. They did in 2007 and 2008. Duplicates were cast in Russia for the university and today the bells of “Saint Daniel” ring once again over the streets of Moscow....as duplicates now ring on an American college campus.

Japan and Russia are not the only adversaries that have benefited from an American ethos of forgiveness and reconciliation when it comes to religious artifacts. During World War Two when Nazi Germany began losing its copper source in central Africa, it initiated a program of confiscating and smelting church bells taken from throughout Germany and occupied Europe. It was an organized program with allocations and a complex administration. In 1945 at war’s end the “The European Allies Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Division” (MFA&A) of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) (the “Monuments Men” made famous by a 2013 movie) had thousands of church bells on their hands and difficult options for their disposal. Were they non-ferrous metal badly needed to rebuild industry, or were they cultural and religious objects subject to Hague Convention protection? Already an estimated 700 railcars of bells had been sent to Soviet smelters. It was a question that did not take long to answer. Bells go home to their churches, even those associated with the regime of the National Socialist German Workers (Nazi) Party. It was the legal, moral, and right thing to do.

In 2011, two small church bells that were rung by hand were returned to the Philippines by the Sisters of Mercy of Omaha, Nebraska. Originally among possession of a California Sisters of Mercy convent, they were believed to have been taken by American soldiers from a church in Meycauyan, Bulacan.

The Philippine Catholic Church in 1903 issued a “Catalogo de las Reclamaciones” suing the United States for American troop damage to 34 churches on Leyte and Samar. Included were stolen or damaged property and the burning of nine churches and seven convents. Anger and a need to retaliate must have been motivation because it is doubtful they were being used as a fortress

and had men firing from ramparts or windows. It is clear that the church at Balangiga was burned in retaliation for concealing bolomen.



Bells being taken from Holland to be smelted down in Germany to make weapons for World War II. The “Monuments Men” made sure that after the war any that were left went home to their churches. Russian treatment of Nazi bells did not match the honor of American soldiers.

Church bells that have found themselves in the wrong place seem to get back to the right place. In 2010 three bells from an 1863 Santiago, Chile church fire that had found their way to the United Kingdom and a new 19th century home in All Saints Church in Oystermouth, Wales were returned to Chile as a gift for the country’s 200th birthday. In 2013 a Russian made bell found in California at the San Fernando Mission was identified as coming from a church in Kodiak, Alaska and returned to its Holy Resurrection Orthodox Cathedral. Wandering church bells seem to find a way home. More divine intervention.

The curator at F. E. Warren, Paula Taylor, told me to check out three bells at West Point also brought to the U.S. from the Philippine-American War. I did. Two small bells were in museum storage at the United States Military Academy, one with a plate stating “Filipino Church Bells Found in a Filipino Village by a column under command of General Edward P. Lawton, class of 1885. U.S.M.A. loaned to the U.S. Military Academy by Lieut. Col John M. Carson Class of 1885. U.S.M.A.” What little I could find on Edward P. Lawton was that he served in the Philippines with the 19th Infantry from July 1899 to June 1902 and then later returned as a Captain with the 19th Infantry from 1905 to 1907, where it is mentioned that he served on Mindanao and Jolo. These two sixty-pound bells are not identifiable to the church from which they were taken. They now rest in the Army Museum Support Facility at Anniston, Alabama.

The larger bell, a “campana” like the two in Wyoming, was at the Academy’s Most Holy Trinity Chapel with an interesting placard. “The San Pedro Bell (Barry Bell). In 1883 Fr. Mariano Garcia asst. priest of Bauang in the Philippines was given the bell by province Lt Governor Balancia and Lt DD Hilario Calica. Bell – alloy of gold, silver and copper was baptized San Pedro. Almost destroyed in the Philippine insurrection but the advance of American forces prevented it and other

bells from melted down made into guns. Thomas Barry (Class of 1877) served in the Philippines during the insurrection and became the 27th Superintendent—instrumental in the sending the bell to West Point in 1915. Bell sat in the belfry 44 years unhung unring! Discovered during the 1959 expansion. “Symbol of peace that even the ravages of war could not destroy.”

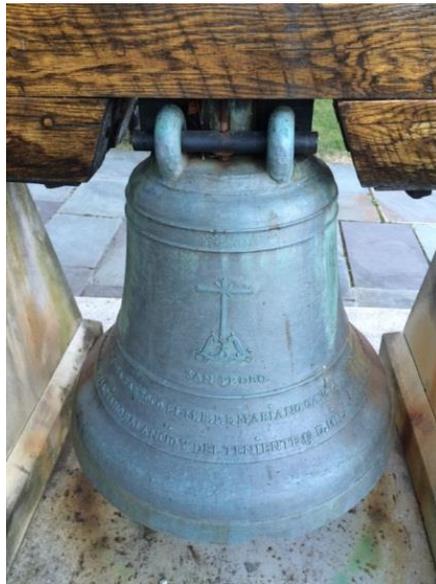


Painting by Bataan Death March survivor Ben Steele showing a Filipino family giving rice to Americans; courage and generosity that often resulted in the bayoneting of women and children. Courtesy of Mrs. Ben (Shirley) Steele.

The West Point Museum’s Curator of Art, Marlana Cook, provided photographs and background on all three bells, and confirmed that the San Pedro Bell was not on Army historical records. The Curator of the Naval Academy Museum provided historical legal, political and emotional advice on the return of the Perry bell to Japan. Professors Rolly Borrinaga and Professor Regalado Trota (Ricky) Jose researched and provided information on its origin and that it came from the province of La Union just north from where I was once stationed. The Most Holy Trinity Chapel priest, Father Joel Panzer, agreed that the bell should go home. It was not important to the chapel’s Catholic service. History on the many Catholic artifacts brought from the Philippines to America was provided to West Point’s senior chaplain, Father Matthew Pawlikowski, a Colonel who happened to be Catholic. To get the Barry bell returned could provide a valuable precedent.

In the Philippines, Dennis Wright became enthusiastic about the opportunity this bell offered. Studying its history, he and Ambassador Raul Rabe and Professor “Ricky” Jose visited the bell’s church and gained access to its library. They confirmed that the bell was presented to Spanish Friar Mariano Garcia in 1883 by Lt. Governor Balancio, Spanish chief executive of the city. Church records show Friar Garcia was assigned as pastor from 1877 to 1887. The Bauang, Province of La Union, Augustinian Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul was founded in 1587 and is one of the oldest in the Philippines. The bell itself is cast with the Augustinian symbol. The Philippine Revolution which both preceded and followed Dewey’s first of May 1898 victory found its way to La Union just three weeks later when the revolutionaries shot the “much-hated friar Mariano Garcia” and revolutionary leader, General Manuel Tinio, threw out Spanish officials replacing them with Filipinos. The bell was taken from its church to prevent melting into weapons and later taken to the U.S. as a souvenir, identical to the bells in Wyoming. Lieutenant Colonel Barry served in the Philippine American War from 1900 to 1901.

Dennis assisted the Diocese of San Fernando of La Union priest prepare a letter to the Superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy requesting return of the San Pedro Bell to its church. Lieutenant General Robert J. Caslen, Jr. approved. “Father Matt” presided over a beautiful departure ceremony. Sonny Busa, a West Point graduate, spoke on behalf of the Philippine American community. The U.S. Army sent it home by commercial air. It had brought the bell to America by sea on a U.S. Army Transport (USAT) over one hundred years ago.



The “San Pedro Bell”, a campana, displayed at the Most Holy Trinity Chapel at the United States Military Academy at West Point. It was taken from the Church of Saints Peter and Paul, founded in 1587 in Bauang, La Union, Republic of the Philippines, during the Philippine American War and sent to West Point in 1915 by Thomas Barry, the 27th Superintendent. Like the bell from the U.S. Naval Academy returned to Japan, the San Pedro Bell (called the Barry Bell at West Point) was returned to its church in La Union in May 2016 by the U.S. Military Academy. Its history is almost identical to the two campana in Wyoming

Once again, a symbol of faith taken in war is returned to its church; this time out of respect for the cultural property of a friend and in recognition of Philippine and American comradely in peace and war. The excitement, jubilation, and media coverage in the Philippines made it a national event and the contrast with the San Lorenzo Bells was noted everywhere. Dennis Wright led the speakers at the dedication mass and explained the importance of the moment. The United States Military Academy decision is more than fitting because on the West Point campus are two organizations that study military ethos, honor and ethics. Military men and women learn and understand the importance of protecting the cultural and religious heritages of nations

Ethos, Honor, Fighting Men

I met John Ripley in March of 2008 on the historic island of Iwo Jima. We were there for the annual “Reunion of Honor” between the United States and Japan. I was the guest of a member of the Iwo Jima Association of America and John was a retired U.S. Marine Corps Colonel and

Director of Marine Corps History. He was my guide into “hospital tunnel” and later showing the location where General Kuribayashi no doubt died and whose bones were still at rest. It would be years later that I learned Colonel Ripley was a war hero, a United States Marine of immense prestige and honor, and whose moral compass I could follow when trying to understand the Bells of Balangiga. John Ripley had made sure religious bells go home.

When Iwo Jima was returned to Japan in 1968, an agreement was made that United States veterans could return to the island to honor their fallen. On February 19, 1985, the 40th anniversary of the day that U.S. forces began the assault on the island, veterans from both forces gathered for a “Reunion of Honor” just a few yards away from the spot where U.S. Marines had landed on the “black sands.” During the memorial service a granite plaque was unveiled with the message: “On the 40th anniversary of the battle of Iwo Jima, American and Japanese veterans met again on these same sands, this time in peace and friendship. We commemorate our comrades, living and dead, who fought here with bravery and honor, and we pray together that our sacrifices on Iwo Jima will always be remembered and never be repeated.” The English translation faces the beaches where U.S. forces landed and the Japanese translation faces inland.

In 1994 two retired Marines, Lieutenant General Larry Snowden and Colonel Warren Wiedhahn traveled to Japan to see if they could arrange for a return of Marines and their families and make the Reunion of Honor an annual event. With the assistance of former Vice President and now Ambassador Walter Mondale, an arrangement was developed. In March of 1995 over 800 United States Marine veterans, families, and friends flew from Guam to the island of Iwo Jima (Iwo To or “Sulfur Island”) and spent a day in reflection and memory. Larry Snowden was the senior living Marine of the Battle for Iwo Jima and passed away in 2017. Warren Wiedhahn is a historian who wants to make sure that Americans both understand with their heads and feel with their hearts for those who sacrifice for their country. His tenacity and vision made it happen.

At the beginning there was some reluctance to Americans returning to Japanese soil to celebrate a victory. No longer. Where years ago, there was residual shame from Japanese family members who had loved ones killed in action, today the event is celebrated for the courage on both sides. It is more than a symbol of reconciliation. With government leaders now present, and young Marines coming across from Okinawa to help 90-year-old veterans, it is reconciliation.

For those who study the Battle of Iwo Jima, few things are more remarkable than the story of Japanese General Tadamichi Kuribayashi, made famous by Clint Eastwood's movie, “Letters from Iwo Jima”. The General was unique. He was educated in Canada, had traveled in the United States and was thought of as scholarly. He knew that Japan was doomed and his own death on Iwo Jima inevitable. In 1995 his widow attended the Reunion of Honor. The softly spoken words of Yoshii Kuribayashi, “Once enemies, now friends”, are repeated each March. The Iwo Jima Association of America encourages members to return personal property taken as “war booty” if a Japanese family member can be identified, all in spirit of reconciliation to a new generation who has become an important ally.

Iwo Jima is not alone. Some of the worst fighting in World War Two in the Philippines was around Mount Samat on the peninsula of Bataan. This time it is the Fall of Bataan and surrender of over 76,000 Filipinos and Americans to Japanese troops throughout the Philippines that prompts time for reflection and reconciliation...not easy given the brutality of the Bataan Death March. Attended by the Ambassadors of Japan and the United States and the President of the Philippines,

the “Mount Samat National Shrine” or “Shrine of Valor”, annually becomes a place where former enemies come together and look to the future. Several events take place in the U.S. to honor those over 5,000 Americans and 15,000 Filipinos who died in the Bataan Death March, and the many women and children who were killed trying to hand them rice. As a member of the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor Memorial Society and one who has taken veterans back to the prisoner-of-war/concentration camps of Cabanatuan and Camp O’Donnell, I can say with authority that forgiveness of a terrible past is not easy. It is best achieved when seen in the faces of another generation...especially the innocence of children.

When reviewing the history of bells going home to Japan, again one man’s name stands out, John Ripley. A 1962 graduate of the Naval Academy, as a Colonel he became its Senior Marine and Director of English and History. He later commanded the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) NROTC program. This is the same John Ripley that blew up “The Bridge at Dong Ha”; is honored by a Naval Academy diorama “Ripley at the Bridge” as a center of Marine Corps history and heritage; who shares with one other Marine the distinction of having more combat experience than any other active Marine with 26 major operations at the rifle company and battalion level; is widely mentioned in books on combat; who earned both the Navy Cross and Silver Star along with two Bronze Stars and two Legions of Merit, the Purple Heart, and other personal decorations; and was the first Marine to receive the Naval Academy’s Distinguished Graduate Award. He was the only Marine to be inducted in the U.S. Army Ranger Hall of Fame. He held the “Quad Body” distinction for having made it through four of the toughest military training programs in the world; the Army Rangers, Marine Reconnaissance, Army Airborne, and Britain’s Royal Marines.

Colonel John Ripley was the one individual most responsible for returning VMI’s and the Naval Academy bells to Japan; a country arguably the most vicious enemy the United States has experienced in two centuries.

I thought about this Marine I met on Iwo Jima as a way to try to understand why people can draw distinctions when it comes to former adversaries. It is clear that America has in its history an ethos of forgiveness. Whether it is from national self-interest or our religious heritage, Americans move on. It is all about the next generation. Out of World War Two, we quickly moved to rebuild Germany and Japan ... hated countries of my youth. We did not do the same with our former colony and ally, the Philippines.... the war damage of its capital second only to Warsaw.... a people who fought and died with Americans against a vicious enemy...and soon fought with us again in Korea and Vietnam. Today we continue to try to restore balance where there was formerly chaos. There is much opportunity.

John Ripley knew that bells taken in battle should go home. The turnover ceremony he attended on Okinawa was memorable to many because it was all about children. He would have known that religious items of cultural consequence taken in war for maybe a right reason should not be kept for a wrong reason. No one would ever question whether he was from the warrior class. No one would ever question his capacity for forgiveness and reconciliation. I think his moral compass was always pointed due north.

Today the Iwo Jima Association of American and the OBON Society of Oregon encourage return of personal items taken in war from the Japanese be returned to their families as a means of reconciliation.



The U.S. Naval Academy diorama, “Ripley at the Bridge”, displaying heroism of a Marine responsible for returning religious bells to Japan. More like him are needed. Courtesy, U.S. Naval Academy

Legacies of the SAW and PAW

The end of the Spanish American War was much like what we have come to experience at the end of twentieth century wars. The patriotic fervor that took us to battle with Spain ended with nationalistic jubilation. There were patriotic events held in towns and cities and memorials built. The May 1899 National Peace Jubilee held in Washington DC had a huge Pennsylvania Avenue parade in honor of those who served and those who had fallen. Many cities had similar events. As the Spanish American War morphed into the Philippine American War, that fervor began to diminish. It reemerged however, in the form of fraternal organizations that came together to retain the comradery of men-at-arms. There was the Spanish-American War Veterans; the Servicemen of the Spanish War; the American Veterans of Foreign Service; The Army of the Philippines; the Legion of Spanish War Veterans; the Spanish War Veterans, and a number of smaller fraternal groups. There were reunions, “encampments”, ladies auxiliaries, and “pin backs” and medal tokens to commemorate events. The government was lobbied for missing benefits for those who lost them in the confusion of too many wars. By World War One the groups had melded into the United Spanish War Veterans (USWV). The USWV officially ceased to exist by 1992 but its legacy lives on today with a smaller, “Sons of Spanish American War Veterans”. Many are the collectors of USWV medallions and pin-backs.

Similar lineage can be found in the heritage of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States (VFW). Four of its five original founding fraternal organizations had their beginning among those who fought in the Philippines. I joined that country’s Angeles City Post because they hosted

returning veterans on military history tours as well as because of their beautiful many year stewardship of the then abandoned Clark American Cemetery. Today my VFW lives on because it wisely took into membership all who served in foreign wars when the USWV did not. I sometimes wear a USWV pin out of respect and memory.

Memorials in behalf of those who serve their country need not be Vermont marble. It is what Americans do and what Americans think. Memorial Day parades and Memorial Day services continue to inspire.

I have so far found over 30 memorials to the Spanish American War. Most include the period of the Philippine American War up to 1902. No doubt there are more; including the many confiscated Spanish cannon that sprinkle city parks and military bases. Included is the beautiful monument, "Taking the Oath", on the grounds of the Wyoming State Capital. Most of the monuments were erected in the 1920s and 1930s through the persistence of the USWV with a bronze statue of "The Hiker" like the one at Arlington National Cemetery most notable. The American Legion maintains a list of war memorials and there are other listings on line including memorial cemeteries. There is no mention of any monument or memorial to the men of Company C. There is no mention of a memorial in Wyoming. Recognition is long overdue.

An important task of the USWV was to get battlefield souvenirs home to several states in order to facilitate an enduring memory. One such souvenir was cannon shells recovered from the wreckage of the Battleship Maine. Several states received mementoes from that fatal ship and both Wyoming and South Dakota received a ten-inch shell. Those two shells disappeared sometime after World War One (not unlike the bells) and only reappeared in the past few years. The Wyoming shell is now with the Wyoming National Guard Armory at Sheridan. The South Dakota shell was re-discovered a few years ago buried; recovered by a nervous military explosive ordnance team; and in 2012 became part of a beautiful Battleship Maine Memorial dedicated by the Deadwood Historical Society. It joins in city war remembrances with a cannon almost as unique as the one at F. E. Warren Air Force Base. Made in 1862 by the Spanish at its Royal Foundry in Seville, it was cast for the Spanish Army of the Philippines. It arrived in 1863 after a six months voyage to Manila and was captured by the U.S. Navy in 1898 during the Battle of Manila. It was taken as a battlefield souvenir and shipped to the Navy Yard in Washington DC. Upon successful petitioning by the City of Deadwood, the cannon has stood since 1900 as a Spanish American War Memorial.

South Dakota had a strong war record but not without controversy. In the spring of 1899 the governor and a senator wrote President McKinley that since the Spanish American War was over, and absent an exigency" or "declaration of war", state volunteers should be sent home. The Lieutenant Governor wrote in objection about the Governors "personal" letter. The First South Dakota Volunteers stayed on in the Philippines. In 1898 the Regiment had the highest "volunteer to population" ratio of any state. When it came home it was with a citation for "gallantry" in service. A governors political questioning was all part of a bigger question of the time.... why does the U.S. go to war against a centuries old colonial power like Spain, and end up fighting primitive island peoples of Asia?

Honoring American War Dead

The men of Company C, 9th Infantry Regiment, who died at Balangiga, have never received understanding, respect, or the recognition their valor deserved. “There are those that lead and those that bleed.”

Rancor over the Bells of Balangiga has made it worse.

The Philippine American War, the Balangiga Massacre, the Bells, and the subsequent period of retaliation and “Bloody Samar” over a century ago are always being re-discovered. The story is fascinating. I dove into it because of an abandoned U.S. cemetery in the Philippines. Others discover it for historical, academic, or sometimes political or quixotic reasons. For whatever the interest in abandoned Philippine church bells in Wyoming, the pursuit of understanding quickly digresses into other unique aspects of our 19th century transformational history.



Philippine American War dead had 6 ½ by 7-inch brass markers placed on their graves, special identification often later taken off and cast aside. Writer’s collection.

When in 1902 the Military Governor of the Philippines was questioned by Washington about whether those who had fought and those who had died at Balangiga were “entitled special recognition, and what form?” Major General Chaffee replied, “not thought ...deserve special recognition”. Subsequently he wrote, “unable to find any survivors Balangiga affair can be rewarded by promotion. List of three will be forwarded for mention in General Orders.”

I looked but could not find mention of any “three” in “general orders”.

Later that year a joint resolution of Congress authorizing a suitable bronze medal to members of the company failed to pass due to his objection that such a resolution was not justified because, “The courage and devotion displayed by them at the time is not, I think, exceptional; nor more than could be reasonably expected from any United States soldiers similarly situated”

I do not believe that was right. There are many accounts of their courage, ferocity and heroism in a fight against heavy odds. After World War I attempts were made to give the men of Company C recognition including the Congressional Medal of Honor. Many senior officers were in support.

Both George Crago and James Taylor were interviewing and collecting letters from survivors. Especially telling was a 1928 letter from Major General Mark Hersey who had been on Samar at the time as a junior officer when he said, “The statements of a few of the survivors...should, in my opinion, have greater weight than the views and opinion of General Chaffee, formed while In Manila, some 400 miles distant, and who had no personal knowledge of the situation.”

They were awarded the Purple Heart.

There are many ways to honor Company C if Wyoming, the U.S. Air Force or the U. S. Congress wishes to take a lead. Here are three ideas that might remove some of the misunderstanding and rancor; ideas that might unite and not divide



One of the many examples of public art in Wyoming that celebrates its frontier heritage. The Philippine Catholic Church bells at F. E. Warren AFB are not part of that heritage.

Idea One. Wyoming was among many states that received souvenirs of the Spanish American War, most from the Battleship Maine. Wyoming, like its frontier neighbor South Dakota who also provided cowboy Rough Riders, received a cannon shell. Both “misplaced” them. Years later they found them. South Dakota has its shell built into a brick monument at Deadwood City and dedicated in 2012 to Spanish American War veterans. Wyoming has its shell on the floor of the Sheridan National Guard Armory. One can easily picture real war booty like a cannon shell in place of church bells as a means to effect honor. You change, not deconstruct.

The USAF used its base operating funds to build the structure; perhaps it can modify and make it a memorial using the shell. The USAF could not make it a memorial without Congressional approval. But the State could.... or private funding like that of the Falcon cannon. The Bells are artifacts in the collection of the Museum of the United States Air Force.

When one looks at Trophy Park of an early Army presence, one sees a grassy space whose Army trophies went to a World Two scrap drive. The Bell enclosure is a product of the 1960s, and the Falcon Cannon enclosure a product of the 1970s. Restoration of the cannon came about by

donations from Wyoming citizens. One might wonder why the cannon is not in a more visible place for citizens to admire.... someplace like the new modern National Guard Headquarters whose legacy does include early Wyoming volunteer militiamen.

The state has a history of both recording its history in its museums; there are over a hundred including a small one in Diamondville called the “Lost Bell Museum”. (Go figure.) Wyoming has a remarkable “Art in Public Buildings Program”. When exploring Cheyenne, I admired the sculptures that acknowledge the state’s history and heritage. I don’t think anything on a military base can even compare to other opportunities that might exist.



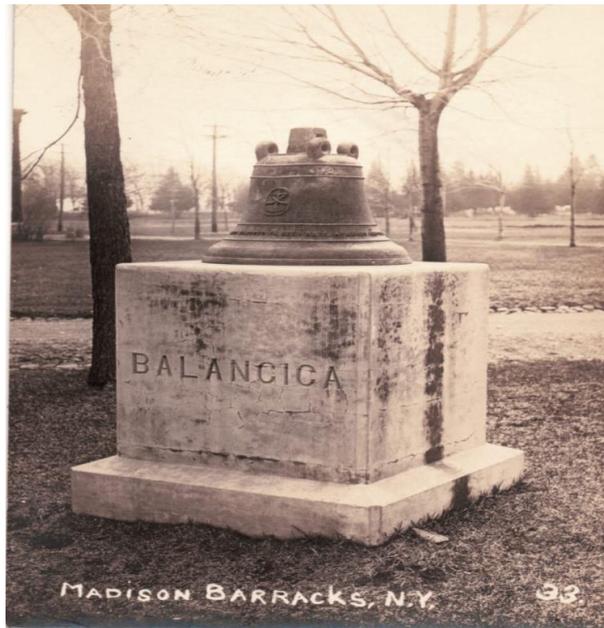
The Spanish American War Memorial with its ten-inch shell from Battleship Maine at Deadwood City, South Dakota. Perhaps a model for the Air Force and Wyoming to use to modify the brick enclosure at F. E. Warren to create something more appropriate.... maybe to honor Torrey’s Rough Riders whose story is Wyoming State history.

There are ways for Wyoming to honor the men even though they had no Wyoming connection.

Idea Two. Throughout Europe there are monuments, and American cemeteries, that honor American War Dead. There are memorials in the Philippines as well, notably the World War Two Memorial on Corregidor and the Prisoner of War Memorial at Cabanatuan. Except for the lonely monument at the Clark American Cemetery, **there is no specific memorial to Americans who fought and died in the Philippines over a century ago.** Maybe ending the rancor over church bells provides an opening for a new way to honor the fallen. Again, not deconstructing, but constructing. Not tearing down, but elevating. Not dishonoring, but honoring.

There is a design for a Philippine-American Memorial Plaza for Balangiga waiting for leadership and funding; difficult with so many competing needs in this typhoon ravaged city. The Plaza is where those men who fought bravely were buried until disinterred and brought home in 1903. I have traveled the Philippines; was stationed there. There is no historic location more preferable to Balangiga for such a memorial to the war dead of the Philippine American War and the follow-on conflict, the Moro Wars, in islands just south of Samar and Leyte. The Bells would not be part

of such a memorial. Church bells belong in churches and parishioners are waiting for their Bells to come home. The adjacent Plaza is the Memorial. A joint memorial.



The plinth built for the real signal bell is now empty. If a physical memorial is desired, the logical place is their home post at Madison Barracks, Sackets Harbor, New York using the base that still remains.

Company C's home Post was Madison Barracks at Sackets Harbor, New York, a U.S. Army historical site now maintained by the community. When the 9th returned home a plinth was constructed to hold its bell. It is simply marked "Balangiga". That empty structure remains in a community hoping that someday the Manchu Bell will return. Many of today's Manchus feel the same way and believe a duplicate bell should go to Fort Carson, Colorado, to help commemorate running the "Manchu Mile". Its nearby former military cemetery accepts interments from later Manchus. An attempt in 2009 to obtain one of the two Bells at F. E. Warren Air Force Base was not successful. A U.S. Navy shipyard was built there for the War of 1812 so clearly I am biased.

My vote would be for working with the community of Sackets Harbor, rich in history and where Manchus are buried, and create a real monument that honors their heroic fallen. After all, this was their home post. The Manchu Bell could, and maybe should, return.

Idea Three. The Bells of Balangiga in Wyoming have become an emotional part of the state's commitment to honoring veterans, even if Wyoming had few loses in the Philippine American War. It is Wyoming's veteran organizations and state political leadership that have made it so.

Perhaps that leadership can take on a new and equally honorable task.

Newspapers today often have stories about restoring denied recognition of valor, recently one as far back as the Civil War. Medals are awarded posthumously to those denied for various reasons.

There are many letters about how the men of Company C fought gallantly against heavy odds. In 1902 there was a congressional resolution for a suitable bronze medal. Today's Bronze Star was not authorized at the time. The Congressional Medal of Honor was recommended. One can't help but wonder if American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars departments in Wyoming might undertake the research necessary to see if General Mark Hersey was right? What would we give today to the courageous in similar circumstances? Since the VFW's historic legacy began in the Philippines, perhaps the VFW Department of Wyoming could take the lead and working with the Manchu Association and other VSO's petition the Secretary of the Army to open a review to determine if the heroic of Balangiga were denied the honor and recognition they deserved.

There must be other ideas on how best to honor the men of Company C. Keeping church bells of questionable authority tucked away near officer's housing far from the public on an Air Force ballistic missile base does not add luster of their sacrifice.

The Laws of Good Intentions

Up to now what you have read has been history re-discovered and recounted, and new history more recently discovered. Ideas have been offered to bring closure to this period of history.

Now the essay turns to the laws of good intentions. Most laws begin with good intentions. So did those that impact on the past and future of the Bells of Balangiga.

I wish we could separate law from emotion as effectively as we separate Church and State. As I tried to point out, the emotions that surround the Bells are too often colored by feelings or sentiments about other things. The two biggest, in my view, are first the events surrounding what happened to Company C and those events afterward that tend to make exciting and sensationalistic reading. Second, how veterans feel about honor when it comes to appreciation for their sacrifice and service.

My 35 years in the military make all this very understandable. The two tend to get mixed and sometimes muddled when conversations ensue whether the Bells should stay on an Air Force base or return to their church. I had no firm opinion when I began, but agreed that we do not tear down our monuments to the valorous. Today I believe that military honor and ethos dictate return of these Bells to their Church. I also believe, for those who need a lawyer that the laws of good intentions come to the same conclusion.

There are three groupings of law that become entwined in the Bells discussion. First is law about "war booty". Veterans don't like giving back our stuff. Second, is law about who owns the Bells. This one is complicated and involves government. Third is the curious piece of legislation specifically created to keep the Bells where they are. Each has their own fascinating history. Each has an emotional component and advocates. Each, regrettably, sometimes make the Bells a scapegoat with treatment more like the way we judge people over how we should just be judging simple church bells created for a religious purpose now denied. For Christians, bells are tolled to announce the presence of Christ, a summons also now denied. In the Philippines they were sometimes baptized like parishioners.

All About “War Booty”

I was a child of the Great Depression and a school boy of World War Two. St. Joseph, Missouri is a river and frontier town. The Pony Express began there and the eastern railroad ended there. Wagon trains forded the river and headed to California and Oregon, and cattle moving east filled our stock yards... where I worked when 17 years old. We grew up camping under the stars in summer and in tents packed warmly under snow in winter. We played “Soldiers” and “Cowboys and Indians” with toy cap guns, then moved on to BB guns, pellet rifles, then by high school I had a 22 rifle to shoot squirrel and rabbit and a 410-shot gun for quail and anything edible. We joined armies and cut down weed spears and baked mud balls inserting “cherry bomb” firecrackers to make hand grenades. At summer camp we also cut down hemp alongside the railway to keep another kind of “weed” from being smoked. I was in Tobin’s Army. We had mostly sham battles with other boy armies. When one boy lost an eye, we gave up BB guns. I bought my first-hand gun at 17 on a summer camping trip, a 380 automatic, for five dollars from behind the bar of a Minnesota roadhouse. My parents trusted my teen travels. I was a Boy Scout and attended Sunday night BTU (Baptist Training Union). We collected scrap paper and metal for the war effort and followed the battles of Europe and the Pacific. We saw souvenirs of war as they came home. My uncle sent me his leather “blood chit” from Burma. There were Lugers from the Nazis and swords from the “Japs”. One day at the “filling station” on Frederick Avenue my buddies and I fondled a souvenir from the war in the Pacific. It was a severed and shriveled ear cut from the head of a hated dead “Jap”. I lost my “war booty” virginity at age 12.

Today there are frequent news articles about the correct ownership of things taken in war and brought home. I like war booty. Title 10 U.S. Code 2579 tells me that, “The United States recognizes that battlefield souvenirs have traditionally provided military personal with a valued memento of service in a national cause.” “Battlefield souvenirs”; important words. “National cause”; also good words.

As a life member of both the American Legion and The Veterans of Foreign Wars, I know it is my right to not give back “war booty” ... unless I want to.

“Battlefield souvenirs” come from a battlefield. When the Bells were taken from Samar in 1901, it was from a church belfry burned not in battle, but later in retaliation. The Bells were properly moved to Leyte to prevent melting into weapons and certainly not as “battlefield souvenirs”. No doubt when the 11th took them to Wyoming in 1904 they thought they were taking legal souvenirs home. They were not. The war was over two years earlier and the Bells should have been returned to their owner, the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir in Balangiga.

Today real war booty is often voluntarily given back to old adversaries, especially Japanese artifacts and kamikaze suicide flags when the one who died can be identified and the American family who has the item can affect the reconciliation. The Iwo Jima Association of America and the American OBON Society encourage it.

The United States long ago returned the sword surrendered by Aguinaldo to him in respect.

Today the Smithsonian and military service museums return to their owners' items in their collections found to be absent legal or moral foundation. Some use a phrase used by lawyers when they refer to disposition of returned artifacts as coming from "fruit of the poisonous tree".

All About General Order 100 and the Lieber or Lincoln's Code

There are rules about what can be removed and confiscated in war. The subject can be contentious and complex. As it relates to the Bells of Balangiga, American forces in the Philippines looked to, "Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States in the Field", or General Order 100, published by the Army Adjutant-General in 1863. Its origin was the "Lieber Code" and to some, "Lincoln's Code". There are also the Hague conferences of 1899 to 1907 that produced the "Hague Conventions". Today there is "The Law of Armed Conflict" and the 1954 "Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict." Taking the personal property of a Church would never be permitted

By 1900 General Order 100 had become known to senior Army officers as, "Old One Hundred".

The Civil War had provided many opportunities for abuse of people and property and moral and legal direction was badly needed.... especially on such matters as how to handle spies, martial law, prisoners, civil administration, wounded enemy, to say nothing of slaves. And then there was property, both personal and public. Southern mansions were attractive. Section II of the Lieber Code covers "Public and Private Property of the Enemy".

It was clear that a victorious army could take public money, property, etc. of a hostile nation and put it to use. Pillage of homes, private property and communities, on the other hand, was strictly forbidden. Article 37 provides for "temporary and military uses" of churches but Article 34 makes it clear that property belonging to churches was not public property and not subject to confiscation. Religious property is protected, unless under Article 38, "seized only by way of military necessity", and that is only if "for the support or other benefit of the Army of the United States"; all simple understandable language of General Order 100.

The Bells were removed from Samar in 1901 and taken to Leyte to prevent being made into weapons by military necessity, but not shipped to the United States in 1904 by military necessity.

The captured military documents of the Philippine Revolution collectively called the "Philippine Insurgency Records", were taken out of military necessity, and returned to a new Philippine government as part of the heritage and history of a new nation.... a nation Americans labored to create. Religious and cultural property shipped from Europe to the U.S. in World War Two for safekeeping was sent back to original owners. It is an American ethic.

Four and now five American presidents and their administrations have sought to return the Bells. There is a 1997 Pentagon opinion that concludes the Bells are U.S. property. It was prepared during the complex and divergent discourse that took place at that time. Some note it came not long after the Philippine Supreme Court rejected a new base agreement that would have permitted the U.S. Navy to remain in Subic Bay for another decade.

Resistance in our 21st century government to sending home religious and cultural property of other nations, given what is taking place in the world, is not understood. Why anyone in our government would want to keep the Balangiga Bells must be more complex. I know that the Manchu Bell is linked to Army heritage, but those at F. E. Warren have a jaded historical connection to our nation at best.

The opinion says that all three bells were used to signal the attack and thus were “instruments of war”. Then they were taken to prevent melting into weapons. That made them “public moveable property” under article 31 of the Lieber Code, and then they were seized under Hague 1899, and later article 23(g) of The Hague rules of 1907, on the basis of “imperative military necessity”. Thus, they became property of the U.S. government.

From that construction, the paper then goes on to state that U.S. law holds that government property can be given away pursuant to acts of Congress. Then, when asked about our government sending them home, the answer comes back that the matter must be deferred to Congress.

That did not ring right...to coin a phrase. It reminded me how when we were trying to get our government to take care of the abandoned American military cemetery in the Philippines, many in opposition said the matter must defer to Congress for action, an institution not famous for action.

I wondered about the use of Lieber 31 and the “public movable property” phrase. The bells became “movable” only after the battle was over when angry soldiers burned the belfry. Article 34 makes it clear that church property is “not to be considered public property in the sense of paragraph 31”.

We now also know the Bells at F.E. Warren were not used by the natives to signal an attack.

Article 31 also talks about property of a “hostile” government and describes further holding “real” property “in abeyance during military occupation” and the “conflict complete”. Although the bells were not public or real property, the intent of Lieber is clear...property, if indeed public, goes back to its public use at the end of war.

Then the use of article 23(g) of Hague rules of 1907 was not understood. Lieber 38 would have served just as well because it uses the phrase, “seized only by way of military necessity”. Why use “imperative military necessity” of Hague 1907, words in an international convention put in place years after the event took place?

When the Spanish-American War began, the Army Judge Advocate reissued General Order 100 as a small three by five-inch pocket booklet. General Arthur MacArthur modified it in 1900 and removed some restraints on harsh treatment of the enemy but made no changes on the use of torture or the confiscation of property. Language was without subtlety. Article 31 “public movable property” simply referred to things like wagons, horses, railroad rolling stock, etc of belligerents and certainly not objects taken from a burned edifice just because they suddenly became “movable”. If they had military utility, they could be used, but not kept after the war.

The distinctions about property are important in the design of the code. In the South, it was the attractiveness of plantation mansions family silver and artifacts. In the Philippines it was Church

vestments, Santos, bells, paintings, reliques, etc. Many, including a statue of a Madonna found in Wyoming, have been given back. As for torture, use of the Philippine “water cure” and the subsequent courts-martial has a parallel in today’s debate about “water torture” ...not a subject of this essay.

Perhaps a Hague 1907 reference was used because the earlier and applicable Lieber 38 provides that for property to be forfeited it must be because of “crimes committed by or by offences of the owner” of the object.

The Bells were owned by the Catholic Church which committed no crime.

People can be evil. Church Bells used to signal the presence of Christ are not.

And then there is the simple language of Lieber 72 and 73 which makes it clear about military ethos when it comes to giving back things taken in war. Honor counts to men in uniform.

“Old One Hundred” used simple words intended to be understandable, “in the field.”

The definitive work on the history of the Lieber Code is Yale Law School professor John Fabian Witt’s book, “Lincoln’s Code, The Laws of War in American History” published in 2012.

In 1998, Patton Boggs, L.L.P provided the “Legal Memorandum Regarding Philippine Bells” discussed in the history section of this essay that went to Senator Thomas of Wyoming. As indicated earlier, it concluded that “Taking The Bells Was Wrongful In 1901”, that “Taking The Bells Would Be Wrongful Today”, and that “The President has the authority he needs to return the bells to the Philippine Government”.

It is easily understood how such a respected legal opinion could prompt legislation if one wanted to keep the Bells in place. The Bells were wrongly taken and could be sent home. The memorandum, like the later government position that came to an opposite conclusion, discussed the Hague conventions which specifically prohibited belligerents from seizing enemy property unless the seizure was “imperatively demanded by the necessities of war”, and recounted that “the Lieber Code of 1863, in effect in 1901, provided that property belonging to churches...is not to be considered public property (Article 34) and that private property could be seized only by way of military necessity”. (Article 38).

The opinion also cited “J. Ribas y Hilo v. United States. 194 U.S. 315,319,24 S. Ct 727 (1904), “private property on land may be taken (only) when it is directly useful for military purposes.”

The Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934 known as the Philippine Independence Act has also been cited as providing government authority to return property to the Philippines.

In addition to the Lieber Code and the Hague conventions, the Patton Boggs memorandum cites two other laws that give authority to return the bells to their owner; Customs law, 19 USC 2607 prohibiting the importation of stolen cultural property and the Foreign Claims Act, 10 USC 2734, on foreign claims against U.S. forces for loss of personal property due to wrongful acts.

Today's Uniform Code of Military Justice makes it clear on prohibitions against taking of personal or cultural property from an adversary. The memorandum also mentions the U.S. being a party to the Roetich Pact (Today the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict) according protected status to cultural institutions in time of war.

The "Philippines Property Act of 1946 (60 stat 419) grants the President direct authority in his discretion and under such terms and conditions as he may deem appropriate, to transfer to the Republic of the Philippines any or all of the right, title and interest of the Government of the United States or its agencies or instrumentalities to any and all personal property vested in such agencies and instrumentalities." 22 U.S.C. 1383.

The Bells are the personal property of their church. They are not the property of the U.S. and should not need congressional approval to return. The intent and moral authority in this 1946 omnibus legislation created to right any wrongs of the past should be enough.

The Patton Boggs memorandum concludes that, "The President has the authority he needs to return the bells to the Philippine Government and should exercise that authority in the spirit of equity and cooperation and consistent with the spirit and principles of International law."

As the subject of return of the Bells comes up in government, whether in an Administration or in Congress, it is time to acknowledge what was very simple language that came from our Civil War and put to work over 100 years ago; the Lieber Code or Lincoln's Code. "Old One Hundred" was easy to understand "in the field". It remains today uncomplicated in both law and morality. The legislative moratorium in 10 USC 2572 should not be there. If "truth can make you free", then maybe truth can free the Bells.

The Bells were not held after the conclusion of war in 1902 at Tacloban to prevent melting into weapons...they were just sitting there and should have been returned to their church. The war was over. Their presence in a scrap yard had no element of "military necessity". If they were really "public property", "movable" or not, they should have been given back. As "personal property" of the Church, they should not have been there in the first place. Those who loaded them onto a wagon and took them to an island steamer may have thought they were taking home "battlefield souvenirs". They were not.

The Catholic Church asserts ownership; they never gave it up. The Bells were not used to signal an attack. They were not signals of war. The bells were removed from the rubble of a burned belfry out of "military necessity" and taken from one island to another to prevent their being melted down into weapons. However, the belfry was burned later by angry soldiers in an act of retaliation... not to keep them from being melted, and not to make them available to the enemy for melting, and certainly not to make them "movable" creating an excuse to take them to the United States in 1904 two years after the war was over. They are not the kind of souvenirs of war, unlike the shells from the Battleship Maine, which should never be part of a monument to American heroes.

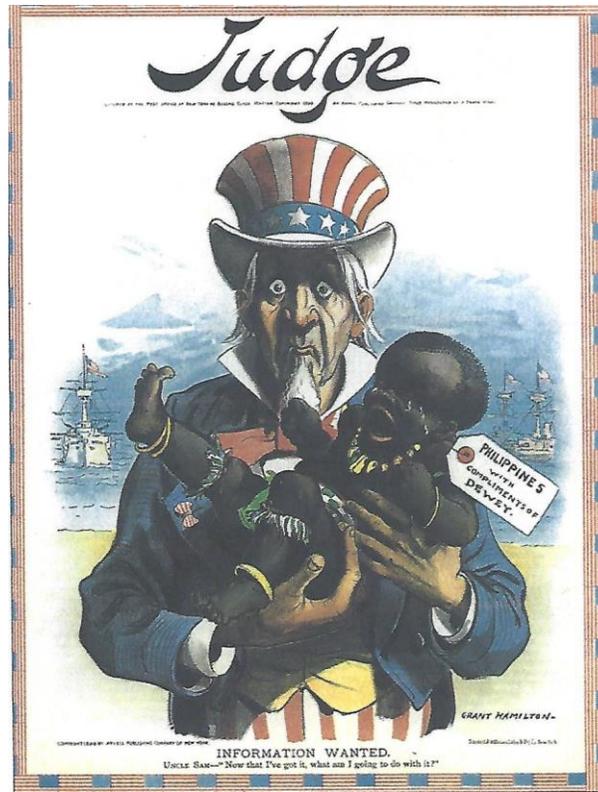


The August 10th 2017 Feast Day of Saint Lawrence the Martyr in Balangiga. The only thing missing in this joyful occasion were two bells on a USAF missile base the parishioners purchased to ring over 100 years ago. Courtesy of Professor Rolando Borrinaga, University of the Philippines.

Today American soldiers respect religious artifacts during the wars in the Middle East where our men and women have been trained to protect Islamic religious art, art whose shared history with Christianity and Judaism traces to the teachings of Abraham. American soldiers treading the grounds of a mosque know about the importance of respect for religious beliefs and will not even stoop to pick up a souvenir pebble. In 2016 Congress passed the “Protect and Preserve International Cultural Property Act” to include reporting on “actions undertaken in fulfillment of international agreements on cultural property protection, including the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, done the Hague May 14, 1954.”

The legal and moral argument is clear yesterday or today; the Bells go home.

Outraged soldiers burning down a Catholic Church belfry and taking Bells from one island to another and years later to the United States have left us a curious legacy. They even give us their own protective legislation.



Keeping the Bells of Balangiga could be discriminatory as it applies only to the Philippines when bells were returned to Japan, Germany and Russia. The House version of NDAA 18 and now public law, includes 1907 as a cut-off year. This could be perceived racist since it harkens back to a time when our colonial subjects were called gugus, Injuns, and the N-word. Cartoons like this were prevalent at the time and harmful to our international relations today.

“We do not deconstruct our war memorials.”

Each initiative to return the Bells to their church meets the same response. “We do not deconstruct our war memorials.” This has been the purpose of restrictive legislation developed specifically for two bells at F.E. Air Force Base and extended two times to keep the bells until the end of September, 2017. That has changed.

In July 2017 the Wyoming congressional delegation again sought to extend the legislation beyond September 30th. The House draft NDAA text included language that would restrict the moratorium to only those items brought to the U.S. before 1907. Draft language proposed in the Senate would have eliminated regular Congressional debate. The Senate wording was not approved due to the education effort of Squire Patton Boggs (SQB).

The belief that the Bells were somehow part of a memorial began in 1997 when retired USAF Colonel Joe Sestak, Commander, American Legion Department of Wyoming, protesting return of the Bells wrote, “We are not involved in the business of dismantling memorials to our comrades....” Fifteen years later he changed his heart and was quoted in the Wyoming Tribune Eagle, “there are 50,000 veterans in Wyoming...I don’t think there’s 100 of them who know

enough about the Bells to carry on a conversation about them”. When we talked, he said returning the bells to their church would be with “God’s blessing”.

And Joe Sestak was right. We honor the sacrifices of those that served and we value our war memorials.... not tear them down.

The November 30, 2012 amendment to the FY 2013 National Defense Authorization Act gave us the original law with the following language for insertion in 10 U. S. Code 2572.

“Sec. 355. Renewal of Expired Prohibition on Return of Veteran Memorial Objects Without Specific Authorization in Law.

(a) Codification of Prohibition. Section 2572 of title 10, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(e)(1) Except as provided in paragraph, and notwithstanding this section or any other provision of law, the President may not transfer a veterans memorial object to a foreign country or an entity controlled by a foreign government, or otherwise transfer or convey such an object to any person or entity for purposes of the ultimate transfer or conveyance of the object to a foreign country or entity controlled by a foreign government.

“(2) In this subsection:

(A) The term ‘entity’ controlled by a foreign government has the meaning given that term in section 2536(c) (1) of this title.

(B) the term ‘veteran’s memorial object’ means any object, including a physical structure or portion thereof, that

“(i) is located at a cemetery of the National Cemetery System, war memorial, or military installation in the United States;”

“(ii) is dedicated to, or otherwise memorializes, the deaths in combat or combat-related duties of members of the armed forces; and

“(iii) was brought to the United States from abroad as a memorial of combat abroad.

“(3) The prohibition imposed by paragraph (1) does not apply to a transfer of a veterans memorial object if

“(A) the transfer of that veterans memorial object is specifically authorized in law; or

“(B) the transfer is made after September 30, 2017”

Air Force regulations make it clear that monuments and memorials cannot be constructed with taxpayer money “absent specific statutory authority.” Gerry Adams calls it just, “A Wall for the Bells”. There is no mention of the wall or Bells being part of a monument or memorial in museum or engineering records. I call it a trophy case in Trophy Park. It protects the Bells and is not dedicated to or is a memorial of any members of our Armed Forces.

War memorials and monuments are big deals. Military services have regulations. Buildings and streets on bases are named, structures sponsored by veterans’ groups are approved and put on bases and federal property, at Arlington National Cemetery and at other service cemeteries. At F. E. Warren we just had good guys doing the right thing, as Bob Hill saw it. He got SAC to spend taxpayer money to build a structure to house and protect artifacts in Trophy Park. The USAF can do the same thing. They can move it, modify it, or perhaps make it something special ... perhaps

to house the one time lost and forgotten shell....and not deconstruct a thing ...and then let museum artifacts go home.

If a Commander wants a monument or memorial on their base, they must seek their Service and then Congressional authorization and appropriation. No one did.

It is not well understood that the Bells are actually artifacts of the Museum of the United States Air Force where Air Force Instruction 84-103, USAF Heritage Program (22 May 2015) governs the acquisition, preservation, display, and disposition of historical property. It would guide any process to de-accession and disposition the Bells from the USAF's historical collection.

The November 30, 2012 public statement from Senator Barrasso's office that announced the amendment to re-authorize the legislation said the survivors of Company C of the 9th Infantry (Manchus) brought the Bells back to Fort D.A. Russell. They did not. The 11th Infantry dropped them off in 1904 two years after Company C took their signal bell home to New York. The statement said sending the Bells back to their church would deconstruct a war memorial. It would not. They have never been part of a war memorial. It further said the Bells signaled an attack on Americans. They did not. The 11th infantry knew better and in 1902 gave the 9th Infantry the signal bell used in the attack. Even the 9th Infantry Association (Manchus), the fraternal legacy of Company C, agreed and said the two large Bells in Wyoming should be returned to their church.

A September 6, 2017 letter from the Wyoming Congressional delegation to the President perpetuated some of the same myths. It claimed the bells were used "to launch the massacre of Company C." They did not. It said that our Ambassador to the Philippines "pledged to dismantle a Wyoming war memorial". He did not. It said the bells "were legally brought back by the 9th Infantry to Fort D. A. Russell to honor the troops of Company C who were lost in the massacre". They were not. Two months later Senator Barrasso made a similar statement in the Senate, this time acknowledging that Company C did not bring the Bells to Wyoming. After all, the unit was from New York.

The Bells were brought to Fort Russell by the 11th Infantry years later in violation of law and Army regulation and certainly not to honor anyone. The 11th embarrassed itself by setting the Bells next to a sign where they claimed to be heroically first on the scene when the fight was over. Having no claim to the Bells they abandoned them when the unit was sent to Texas a decade later.

At eighteen years old I labored on a Missouri River dredge. Arising before dawn I went to work on the river filling sand bags to help restore levees damaged in a massive flood. I learned a great deal about sand bags and "sandbagging". That is the thought I had when reading a transcript of an exchange that took place on September 12, 2017 at a Senate confirmation hearing of a prospective Under Secretary of State.

"BARRASSO:

In Wyoming, we have a veteran memorial. It's located on F.E. Warren Air Force Base. It honors 48 U.S. soldiers that were massacred in the Philippines during the Philippine-American war.

This memorial displays the bells that the Filipino insurgents used to signal the attack on our U.S. troops. Recently, the U.S. ambassador to the Philippines publicly pledged to move the bells from this memorial to the Philippines.

During the confirmation process for Secretary Tillerson, I'd asked him about this, and he stated, quote, "The bells of Balangiga are an important war memorial that holds real significance for many Americans especially our veterans."

Secretary Tillerson assured me that he would support an inclusive process with the U.S. Department of Defense to ensure that Congress is fully informed and the views of local communities and veterans are fully respected when evaluating the management of war memorials.

So, last week, I sent a letter to the president along with Senator Enzi and Representative Cheney and the Secretary Tillerson as well and, Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that this letter to the president be included in the record.

**CORKER:
Without objection.**

**BARRASSO:
So, we sent a letter to the president and to Secretary Tillerson raising concerns about the U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines pledging to dismantle the Wyoming war memorial.**

In Wyoming, we have strong provision of never forgetting the sacrifices of our brave men and women. So, the letter asked the president to direct the Department of Defense and the Department of State to cease any efforts to deconstruct existing war and veterans' memorials.

So, my question to you is, if confirmed, will you raise this issue with this member of our diplomatic core and share with him the importance of protecting our nation's veterans' memorials?

**UELAND:
Senator, thank you very for that question, and this story is incredibly inspiring and a very significant aspect to your point of our World War II history and the work of our soldiers during that conflict.**

I do pledge that if I have the opportunity to serve as undersecretary of management as confirmed -- if confirmed that I will do everything I'm capable of to bring this information forward. I associate myself with the comments of the secretary during his confirmation hearing on this matter and provide all the appropriate information that the undersecretary of State of Management can provide in relation to this because it is an important issue I think not just for you but again for veterans across our country.

**BARRASSO:
Thank you very much."**

“World War Two”?

Is it any wonder that the Bells are subject to so much myth, misunderstanding and rancor?

The phrase “Veteran Memorial Objects” (VMO) in 10 USC 2572 was created only to prevent movement of the Bells. The phrase appears generic but was written to garner support of what through misdirection appears a high-minded cause, preventing deconstruction of war memorials, language which permitted it to easily slip into law. The only known VMOs in military museum collections are the two Bells of San Lorenzo de Martir. Not mentioned in law, they became a VMO solely by congressional member descriptive statement.

The next April Senator Barrasso submitted a written question before the hearing on the nomination of Mike Pompeo as Secretary of State. **“In Wyoming, we have a veteran memorial located on F.E. Warren Air Force base that honors 48 US soldiers that were massacred in their sleep in the Philippines on September 28, 1901. This memorial displays the bells that Filipino insurgents used to signal the attack on our US troops. Despite the fact that veterans in Wyoming overwhelmingly oppose the dismantling of this veteran memorial, the US Ambassador to the Philippines publicly pledged to move the bells to the Philippines. In Wyoming, we have a strong tradition of never forgetting the sacrifices of our brave men and women. I believe that when evaluation of the management of war memorials takes place, Congress must be fully informed and the views of the local communities and veterans are fully respected. Will you commit to me that you will not support any efforts to deconstruct our war memorials that honor our fallen soldiers and move them to foreign countries? Will you ensure that the U.S. Department of State is consulting with Congress and the veteran community prior to making the type of statements issued by the U.S Ambassador to the Philippines last year?”**

There were the same inaccuracies. The State Department assured that law would be followed.

If the Wyoming Congressional Delegation wants a monument or memorial to the men of Company C, why hide behind a fictitious creation? Craft specific legislation! Send a proposal to the Congressional Veterans Committees who handle war memorials. Don’t conceal it as part of an NDAA amendment bundle under jurisdiction of Armed Services Committees. To do that, however, would remove the fig leaf. It would make many wonder. Why a monument in Wyoming? A right answer might result in recognition that any monument or memorial should go where it should, Company C’s home at Madison Barracks, Sackets Harbor, New York.

Henry Howard, who along with Dennis Wright is a founding member of the U.S.-Philippine Society Board of Directors, offered to pay for the casting of duplicate bells for Wyoming. I like that idea. It too would open questions that might lead to resolution. Where would the bells go; back to the Museum of the U.S. Air Force? On a missile base not normally open to the public? Cheyenne would be logical. But then that opens the question, why the Bells and not the Falcon Cannon? It too is in Trophy Park, is real war booty, and has a Cheyenne connection. The answer becomes obvious. Bells should go home to Balangiga and the citizens that paid for their creation. The Falcon Cannon should go to Cheyenne and the citizens that paid for its restoration.

In the second week of November 2017 the final conference committee report was published. The previous moratorium had expired the end of September. The matter had to be resolved at the highest levels of the Armed Services Committees of both Houses. It no doubt did not make the Wyoming Congressional delegation pleased.

“SEC. 2864. MODIFICATION OF PROHIBITION ON TRANSFER OF VETERANS MEMORIAL OBJECTS TO FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS WITHOUT SPECIFIC AUTHORIZATION IN LAW.

(a) DESCRIPTION OF OBJECTS.—Paragraph 9(2)(B)(iii) of section 2572(e) of title 10, United States Code, is amended by striking “from abroad” and inserting “from abroad before 1907”

(b) EXTENSION OF PROHIBITION.—Paragraph (3)(B) of section 2572(e) of such title is amended by striking “September 30, 2017” and inserting “September 30, 2022”.

(c) PERMITTING TRANSFER OF BELLS OF BALANGIGA.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 2572(e) of title 10, United States Code, the President may transfer the veterans memorial object known as the “Bells of Balangiga” to the Republic of the Philippines if the Secretary of Defense certifies to Congress that—

(A) the transfer of the object is in the national security interests of the United States; and

(B) appropriate steps have been taken to preserve the history of the veterans associated with the object, including consultation with associated veterans organizations and government officials in the State of Wyoming, as appropriate.

(2) TIMING OF TRANSFER.—The President may not carry out the transfer described in this subsection until at least 90 days after the Secretary of Defense provides Congress with the certification required under paragraph (1).

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect October 1, 2017.”

For the first time the Bells are mentioned in a legislative proposal. That is more forthright than the three previous times when few would understand that a VMO was a pair of Catholic Church bells brought to the U.S. against Army orders. Who could argue against “deconstructing war memorials?” It was a surprise, however, to learn that the law did not need to mention the Bells. An attorney told me that it was good enough just for a member of Congress to make a public statement that they were. A member of Congress can take something that is not and say that it is and thus it must be. One can call a pig a horse and expect to hear an oink from the paddock.

The President signed NDAA 18 on 12 December 2017, two and half months after the prior legislation had expired. NDAA signing is usually late following expiration of the fiscal year for which the legislation is intended. Although there was some concern that NDAA 19 might be used to halt return of the Bells, it did not happen. NDAA 19 moved swiftly through Congress, and the “John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019” was signed with great ceremony at Fort Drum, New York, only 25 miles from Company C’s home post at Sackets

Harbor. The President did not mention the recently deceased war hero and former Chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee. The new five-year moratorium on returning the Bells took effect in an updated 10 USC 2572 backdated to 1 October 2017.

Between 1 October and 12 December authority existed to return the bells, the moratorium having expired. That was hardly likely given the political considerations extant.

The new provisions on the Bells moratorium did provide challenges to the Pentagon. OSD requested a simple Secretary of Defense authority to return the Bells to their Church if a determination could be made and Congress notified that returning them to a long-time national ally was in the “national security interest”. Language was added in the NDAA congressional conference committee that some considered “poison pills”. First, any notification had to include a certification. Then came a requirement for consultation with veterans’ groups. And there was a 90 day “cooling off” period established to allow time and opportunity for opponents to raise objections. As in previous legislation, language was used concerning presidential “transfer” authority. These requirements did not become insurmountable. They did add time.

The “Manchu Bell” at the Second Infantry Division museum on the DMZ in Korea offered a dilemma. It had not specifically been mentioned in law and covered by the moratorium. The two bells on F.E. Warren had become known as the “Bells of Balangiga” because of Gerald Adam’s book and the resulting two decades of uproar and rancor caused by the attempts of Philippine and American presidents to affect return. The few who cared about the bells in Wyoming were not aware or even cared about the Manchu Bell. The Balangiga Research Group (BRG) “found” and publicized its existence. Others might not care, but the Manchus did.

The Manchu Bell will join the other two, all originally from Balangiga, by determination of the Secretary of Defense. Years from now all three will be called, “The Bells of Balangiga”.

Many would prefer to have had the legislation lapse. The new legislation does offer what I call “opportunity and hope”. The Bells can go home if the Secretary of Defense finds it in our national interest. It certainly is. The door opened for people of good will to find the right way to honor the men of Company C. Many ideas are offered. A decision will come from those who conduct their affairs with the highest standards of ethical and moral understanding.

Good intentions coupled to misguided information has led to mistaken legislation. How such a thing could happen was discussed in a Cheyenne Wyoming Tribune Eagle Memorial Day 2016 Op-ed, “Myths, Mystery, Misunderstanding and the Moral Compass of Veterans”, a copy of which appears at the end of this essay. An Op-ed that appeared on the 4th of July a year later, “The Fourth of July; Is that the Day to return the Bells?” dispelled more myths and offered ideas how best to honor the heroes of Company C. A letter to the President on how to take this moment in history and turn it into a time of “reconciliation and hope” will also be found.

In the first week of 2018 a committee of the U.S. House of Representatives, The Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, wrote the Secretary of Defense asking that, “We urge that you do not provide certification for the returning the bells until the Philippines’s government makes clear, measurable efforts to stop extra-judicial killings in their “war on drugs””. Obviously well-

intentioned, the letter lacked understanding that returning the Bells had no connection to human rights abuse taking place in a nation but was indeed about the rights of a people and their Christian faith. The following letter was sent to the Commission the next week.

January 8, 2018

Congressman Randy Hultgren
Congressman James P. McGovern
Co-Chair, Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
4150 O'Neill Federal Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Hultgren and McGovern:

I write as the author of “The Bells of San Lorenzo de Martir, A Desk Guide to Truth,” a living essay on the “Bells of Balangiga”. You recently wrote the Secretary of Defense about a decision he must make on returning the Bells to the Philippines and current concerns over human rights violations in that country.

There should be no pre-condition on returning the “Bells of Balangiga” to their Church. It is simply a matter of returning personal property to its owner.

The Bell’s future is not about policies of a nation’s leader; it is about its people. It is not about returning Bells to a country; it is about returning Bells to a Church. It is not about a disregard for human rights abuse; it is about restoring honor.

This is not a political matter. It is finally responding to the repeated petitions of the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir, its Priest and Bishop, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, and the Vatican.

It is about how the people of our nation can respect the people and religious patrimony of a country “created in our image” the same way we respect religious and cultural property of other nations and former adversaries. I see in that a reflection of human rights and the mission of your commission.

It is a very simple matter made complex by curious law.

The Bells are held in the mistaken belief that their presence in the United States is somehow a war memorial when in fact they were brought here following a period of military history that saw the burning and looting of convents and churches. As poisoned property of that period they have no place in a monument to the valiant. Their place should be with the parishioners who paid to have them cast and with a simple act of restoration we may achieve final release from a toxic history.

Those of us laboring to overcome the myths and misinformation associated with their complex history had looked to the expiration of the moratorium for returning the Bells under U.S. law as the time in their journey where the “Bells of Balangiga” could once again ring as the Bells of San Lorenzo de Martir. It would tighten the bond between two peoples with a unique intertwined history, result in a better way to honor American heroes by means other than stolen church property, and make their return a religious and not a political moment in history.

The moratorium was again extended but with an opportunity given to the Secretary of Defense to decide the future of the Bells of San Lorenzo de Martir.

In my view the certification and outreach responsibility given to the Secretary offer opportunity and hope. Whether for reasons of national security or reasons associated with restoration of Catholic Church Bells to their parishioners so they can return to their original purpose; to signal the presence of Christ for those who come to worship. I am confident that by the Feast Day of Saint Lawrence the Martyr the Bells will once again ring to summon the faithful to prayer and children to fiesta.

I believe this act of faith and restoration of religious property is in keeping with your charter to “promote, defend and advocate international recognized human rights”.

Saint Lawrence is the Patron Saint of the Poor.

I would be glad to discuss the real story of the Bells of Balangiga with you or appropriate members of your staff.

Most respectfully,

s/

Daniel W. McKinnon, Jr.

Rear Admiral, United States Navy, Retired

Copy to:

The Honorable James N. Mattis, Secretary of Defense

The Year 2018 Finally Brought Closure.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2485 in Angeles City in the Philippines, where Dennis Wright and I are life members, had offered a resolution I submitted for return of the Bells that was approved by the Department of the Pacific Areas but deferred at the 2017 VFW national convention. With changes made by Dennis, it was again submitted for the 2018 national convention and this time approved. It had both national office and Pentagon support. With duplicate wording a resolution was sponsored by the American Legion Department of Wisconsin under Brian Buzzell’s leadership that was approved at its 2018 national convention. Dennis had long counseled the importance of all veterans drowning out the few in Wyoming who were adamant that a memorial was about to be desecrated. In January, in spite of caution from some, he attended a VFW Department of Wyoming mid-year meeting and presented the case for return. Senator Barrasso attended the meeting, but not the presentation. Dennis made several converts,

especially among younger Gulf War veterans. In the next few months the Pentagon was successful in satisfying the legislative requirement for “*consultation with associated veterans organizations and government officials in the State of Wyoming, as appropriate*”. The American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars resolutions put the icing on the cake. Nothing was further heard from the Wyoming congressional delegation.

The balance of 2018 saw numerous events leading to eventual repatriation. On the 9th of August, 2018 (by divine providence the 10th in Balangiga just as the church was celebrating the feast day of San Lorenzo), the Secretary of Defense notified the Congress of the intent to return the Bells of Balangiga to their church. The letter was classified because the determination had been made on the basis of national security and not on the basis of law or the other reasons used to make the earlier case for return. Thus, began the “cooling off” period that would end on 9 November if prohibiting legislation or political obstacles rose to halt the return.

Quickly the Wyoming delegation issued a statement.

“For over 100 years the Bells of Balangiga have been in Wyoming as a memorial to the American soldiers who lost their lives overseas,” the Wyoming delegation said. *“A majority of Wyoming veterans continue to oppose any efforts to deconstruct or disturb this veteran’s memorial. While we have respect for the relationship between the United States and the Government of the Philippines, we believe that moving the Bells establishes a dangerous precedent for future veterans’ memorials. We have a strong tradition of honoring the sacrifices of our brave men and women in uniform. These bells are memorials to American war dead and should not be transferred to the Philippines. We oppose any efforts by the Administration to move the Bells to the Philippines without the support of Wyoming’s veterans community.”*

The statement included previous distortions and it is understood that the delegation did not respond to press inquiries. Perhaps it was understood that the Wyoming veterans were really not in unity, ambivalent, and finally understood that destroying a war memorial was really a myth. At the American Legion national convention an earlier 2016 Department of Wyoming resolution on retaining the Bells was rescinded.

There were final shots taken at the intentions of the Defense Department. On 16 May 2018 Congressman Steve Russell of Oklahoma introduced an amendment that would have made the moratorium permanent. The amendment did not pass, and the congressman, an Army veteran, did not get reelected.

Another shot was taken when language appeared in June 18th Department of Defense Appropriations Bill for 2019 that said:

“Transfer of Veterans Memorial Objects to Foreign Governments. — The Committee directs that the use of any funds appropriated in this act to carry out authorities under section 2864 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2018 be subject to normal reprogramming procedures.”

It was clever, but ineffective.

On the 14th of November 2018, at a “Veteran Remembrance Ceremony” hosted by Colonel Stacy Jo Huser, Commander 90th Missile Wing in Wyoming, the Secretary of Defense, the Honorable James N. Mattis, announced the beginning of a “process” to return the bells to the Philippines and their church. On the 13 of December the Philippines Secretary of National Defense Delfin Lorenzana, announced that there would be a turnover ceremony at Colonel Jesus Villamor Air Force Base and the Bells sent to Balangiga in time for the start of “sunbang gabi”, nine days of dawn Masses on December 16th, and that residents would hear the bells peal again in Balangiga during “misa de Gallo”, Christmas Eve Mass.



The Bells turnover ceremony at PAFB Villamor. U.S. Ambassador Sung Kim, Admiral Philip Davidson (USINDOPACOM), and DASD Joseph Felter represented the United States. Philippine Secretary of National Defense Delfin Lorenzana and Senator Richard Gordon represented the Republic of the Philippines. The “Spirit of MacArthur” is in the background.

On the 11 of December the Bells were turned over the Armed Forces of the Philippines by the Armed Forces of the United States at Villamor Air Base with the Philippines represented by Secretary of the National Defense Delfin Lorenzana and Senator Richard Gordon, and the United States by Ambassador Sung Kim, Commander U.S. Indo-Pacom Phil Davidson, and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Joseph Felter. The action officer that shepherded the complex Pentagon process to a successful conclusion was Lieutenant Colonel Leo Liebreich who accompanied the Bells to the Philippines on a U.S. military aircraft nicknamed, the “Spirit of MacArthur”. The Wyoming bells had been refurbished by Henry Howard. On Saturday the Bells came home to the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir in Balangiga. An impressive celebration took place in the afternoon with uniformed members of the Knights of Columbus serving as honor guard. An evening “National Mass of Thanksgiving for the Balangiga Bells” was held at the beautifully restored church damaged by Typhoon Yolanda five years before. President Duterte spoke at an afternoon commemoration event but did not attend Mass. The happiness on the faces of the crowds could not help but remind how Beethoven, although deaf, put music to Schiller’s “Ode to Joy” and stirred the souls of mankind. Is it possible to compare?

Reflections

“Ethos” is defined as guiding beliefs. The United States military is recognized as having a higher calling, the highest ideals of deportment, and an ethos of acting nobly with honor.

A favorite quotation comes from General Sir John Winthrop Hackett from an address he gave at the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1970.

“It is my conviction that the major service of the military institution to the community of men it serves may well be neither within the political sphere nor the functional. It could easily be within the moral.”

I thought about that when putting together the following reflections on the Bells at F. E. Warren.

The Catholic Church states the Bells are the property of the Church. U.S. Air Force public affairs officials say the bells are owned by the American people. It can't be both. Church bells hold a place in the heart of each community in this predominately Catholic country. The moral and legal owner is the Diocese of Borongan, the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir in Balangiga, a position taken by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines and supported by the Vatican.

The Bells of Balangiga are not the first religious bells that have been taken as by-products of war, many from former vicious and hated enemies. Almost all have gone home.... most notably to Japanese, Communist and Nazi sites.... back to their places of worship. This American spirit of reconciliation and generosity stands in stark contrast to the treatment of the Bells of San Lorenzo de Martir.

The Philippine Government has asked for return of the Bells several times...using words of reconciliation, recognizing our common history and acknowledging our common brotherhood through many wars. The Bells are part of the nation's Cultural Heritage. American soldiers protect the cultural heritage of other nations, even enemies. We can reconcile with adversaries, why not friends?

Today our men and women in uniform protect the Cultural Heritage of all nations. I retired from the Navy in 1991, not long after a trip to Kuwait. “Operation Desert Storm” arrived in the Middle East just as I retired. The Rules of Engagement were, “Taking war trophies is prohibited.” Our moral compass was at work in a religious contentious world. Our men and women treading through a dangerous Middle East understand the importance of religious beliefs and will not even take as a souvenir a peddle from the grounds of a mosque. Why would we treat a Christian nation with less respect?

It is with the Japanese that we hold the Annual Reunion of Honor on Iwo Jima. It is to Japanese families that we urge return of family items taken in war even when not legally bound to do so. It is American survivors of Bataan and Corregidor that visit Japan each year with the “Japanese/American POW Friendship Program”, visits that provide lessons to Japanese children

about the horrors of war caused by past generations. It was Japan and Nazi Germany that we helped rebuild, and not our ally and former colony the Philippines. A disheartening imbalance is at work. If the Philippines view the Bells as part of their Cultural Heritage, how can we view that in moral disbelief?

The United States is a world leader in protecting, promoting, and if necessary returning, the Cultural Heritage of nations and personal property of victims. Think Holocaust.

The Lieber Code and later Hague Conventions made it clear that church property is private property and not subject to confiscation.... or appropriate as battlefield souvenirs. The American Lieber Code formed the moral and intellectual foundation for the international Hague conventions. Although the Bells were properly removed from the burned belfry to prevent conversion to weapons under the "military necessity" standard, they should have been returned to their owners in 1902 as required upon cession of war. As our colony, the islands were also subject to our protection.... both its personal property and its Cultural Heritage property. It was, and is, the legal and morally right thing to do.

"Battlefield souvenirs" authorized by U.S. law are those from a battlefield. The Bells were not. The fight was over on Saturday. The Bells, even though removed for the right reason, were taken from rubble of a church belfry destroyed not in battle but later in retaliation. There is no legal or moral argument that can describe them as "battlefield souvenirs", or more recently "instruments of war." Even the destruction of Monte Cassino in World War Two was because this beautiful and iconic historic Italian and religious edifice of cultural history with its early Christian artwork was thought to have Nazi soldiers hidden within. Not so in Balangiga.... or the many churches and convents destroyed in retribution.

The logic is simple. Cultural Heritage is important to national pride and identity; strong countries are secure countries; strong and secure countries are precious allies.

The famous Lakota "Ghost Shirt" taken from the Massacre of Wounded Knee that found its way to Great Britain in 1892 was returned to South Dakota in 1998, not due to international law, but to international understanding of what is the right thing to do. It was a religious article of an American people, intended to make them invulnerable in battle. An article of an ancient American faith found its way back to its American home thanks to the friendship of an ally.

The legislation intended to keep the bells in Wyoming says the "President may not transfer a veterans memorial object to a foreign country or an entity controlled by a foreign government, or otherwise transfer or convey such an object to any person or entity for purposes of the ultimate transfer or conveyance of the object to a foreign country or entity controlled by a foreign government."

This legislative restriction was written specifically for two bells in Wyoming. It is discriminatory when compared to the treatment of the artifacts of former enemies. The law also states that a "veteran memorial object" is something that was "brought to the United States as a memorial of combat abroad."

The bells were not. They were not even legal “battlefield souvenirs”. The structure in which they rest is neither “monument” nor “war memorial”. It is a trophy stand in a Trophy Park viewed most often by lounging antelope and returning senior officers to nearby historic brick officers’ quarters. USAF regulations prohibit construction of memorials and monuments without statutory authority. There was none.

The legislative restriction was written with good intentions. It was crafted with the interest of veterans. I am a veteran. But it does not stand up to a moral suasion given that any return would be to a Catholic Church. Not a government. Not a museum. Not an entity controlled by a foreign government. Also, they were not brought to Wyoming as a “memorial of combat”. They are not “souvenirs of combat”. They are not in a memorial and are not “veteran memorial objects”.

The Bells should never be part of an American War Memorial. It would be adding a third embarrassment to a tragic period of American military history. First, the killing of American soldiers in a surprise attack by natives using knives. Then followed “Bloody Samar” with its burning of churches and convents, orders to “kill and burn”, and subsequent multiple courts-martials. Church property taken and used under those dishonorable circumstances would be, as lawyers like to say, “Fruit of the poisoned tree.” That would neither respect nor memorialize heroic war dead. We do not use religious artifacts in war memorials, any more than we prevent artifacts from synagogues destroyed by Nazi Germany from returning to their religious purpose.

The legislative restriction was also written to ensure that those who read it would see a high-minded purpose and not object. It created a VMO. It did not say it was about the Bells. Only the statements of Senators did. There is only one VMO. Forthright legislation would have placed a memorial in New York and not Wyoming. When the Bells return, that provision of 10 USC 2572 will become like what a lad at Boy Scout camp experienced when given a bag and sent on a “snipe hunt”. He returned with an empty sack.

The reason the Bells remain in Wyoming is due to political courtesy. Our government, the President, Secretaries of Defense or Air Force, could act to return the Bells. The Wyoming delegation has always stood in opposition believing it was the will of veterans and that moving the Bells would desecrate a monument. Several administrations have demurred out of political deference. Wyoming should join in finding another way to honor the men of Company C.

The Bells come from a country that is still in the process of nation building. Its heritage and history are recent. Its economy is expanding, the middle class is growing, it has lost its dependence on the U.S. military, and it is climbing out of third world status. It is our countries most important partner in Asia in the “War on Terror”. Over one thousand Philippine troops have been casualties in the effort to prevent ISIS from gaining a foothold in South East Asia. Casualties were high because Philippine soldiers would not fire into a Mosque.

Today our militaries work together in training and U.S. strategic enclaves are being established to support a rotational presence for joint national security. It is in our interest to have a strong and supportive ally on the rim of Asia in a time when we see China’s ascendance in the waters of Southeast Asia, a life line of international commerce, including ours. Ours is an historic common bond in language and law. Much of their cultural heritage is American. We should respect it. The

The judgments about the two bells now located at F. E. Warren Air Force Base from the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir in Balangiga, Samar, Republic of the Philippines, are that:

...the Bells are the property of the Roman Catholic Church, the Diocese of Borongan, the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir of Balangiga.

...Bells in this unique Christian nation are part of the fabric of the community and used to signal events in addition to calls to faith...essentials of culture in addition to religious devotion.

... the Bells were not rung as one of the many signals used to summon attackers during the Saturday morning surprise attack on American soldiers at Balangiga.

...association with the attack, an event in history told as the “Massacre of Balangiga”, resulted in the two Bells taking on a pejorative use and became known as the “Bells of Balangiga”.

... the Bells of Balangiga became scapegoats beneficial to writers fascinated with the Spanish and Philippine American Wars, Imperialism, Bloody Samar, the “Massacre”. The Bells become lost in the stories and metaphors of others and suffer in words of sensationalism, thus becoming detached from their pure and religious intent.

...the belfry and its church were burned in acts of retaliation to an attack on American soldiers posted to Balangiga.

...the Bells were removed from a burned platform belfry to prevent melting and conversion to weapons.

...the Bells are not “battlefield souvenirs” or in slang, “war booty”.

...the Bells are not “instruments of war”. People can be evil. The Bells are not.

...the Bells were held for almost three years in a quartermaster holding yard at Tacloban, Leyte.

...the Bells should have been returned to their church in 1902 upon cession of war.

... in 1904 the 11th Infantry brought the Bells to Fort D.A. Russell in Wyoming.

... the 11th infantry abandoned the Bells in 1913. The Army abandoned the Bells in 1941.

...the Bells are not part of U.S. Army history and heritage.

...the Bells are not part of U.S. Air Force history and heritage.

...the Bells are not part of Wyoming history and heritage.

...the Bells sat in obscurity and storage for decades as a former Army post transitioned to a U.S. Air Force base, holding today's 90th Missile Wing, 20th Air Force, Global Strike Command.

...in 1967 the Bells were placed on display in a brick wall protective enclosure in Trophy Park.

...the Bells are in the collection of the Museum of the United States Air Force.

...many efforts by the Philippine Government, four U.S. Administrations and the Catholic Church, have been rebuffed out of political deference to the Wyoming Congressional delegation who believed they were representing the desire of local veterans.

...four times the National Defense Authorization Act {NDAA} had language intended to keep the Bells in Wyoming.

...the legislation describes the Bells as a "veterans memorial object (VMO)". They are not. The Bells are USAF museum artifacts in a brick enclosure on a military base, inaccessible to the public due to military "force protection". They are not part of a monument or war memorial. It is unlikely that there are other VMOs.

...construction of the enclosure with appropriated funds was authorized for protection, but there was no authority to create a monument or memorial. The structure is neither. Gerry Adams, whose 1998 publication was definitive at the time, called it "The Wall for the Bells".

... an agency of government, from base command or higher, with moral suasion, could initiate action to return the Bells to their owner.

...the Bells presence in their current location, and the resistance to their repatriation, stands in embarrassing and moral contrast to how Americans have been returning religious bells and artifacts to former enemies. It is discriminatory.

...the Bells history makes them totally inappropriate as part of any memorial to the heroism of the men of Company C.

...the Bells come from a grim time in American military history. First the successful surprise attack on American soldiers by natives armed with knives with terrible loss of life. Then an equally embarrassing period known as "Bloody Samar" when churches and convents were burned, thousands killed, resulting in the cashiering of an Army general and many courts-martial's. Keeping the Bells from returning to their church would add a third embarrassment. In their Church they would ring. In a memorial they would be silent reminders of retribution and horror. This is not how Americans create memorials to honor the heroic and the fallen.

...their unnecessary notoriety has caused too much rancor between two allies with a common history, common bonds in war, and common security interests in South East Asia.

...elimination of the rancor would serve the interests of both countries, both in national security and strengthening cultural heritage necessary to nation building, critical considerations today on the rim of Asia. There should be no law preventing return to their Church.

...the U.S. Army should open a case of denied valor and our government explore placing a monument to the heroes of Company C at their home post, Madison Barracks, New York.

...returning the Bells to the church of San Lorenzo de Martir would be in accord with the highest standards of military honor and ethos.

There is no legal or moral foundation for the Bells location. They rest silently on an American military base far from where they were created to give voice to a higher power. It is time for the Bells of Balangiga to go home ...to call the faithful to prayer and children to fiesta...to Balangiga....to the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir.

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HERE IS HOW THIS STORY SHOULD END

At the beginning I used a writer's quotation, "Tell me a story, and I'll learn. Tell me a truth, and I'll believe. But tell me a story and it will live in my heart forever". This living essay was an effort to discover the truth. If the Bells of Balangiga return to the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir, their story will live in the hearts of millions of Filipinos forever.

It was the summer of 2014 when I stood in front the famous stature of General MacArthur and his staff coming ashore on the island of Leyte as the advance continued on to Japan and the liberation of our Philippine Commonwealth in World War II. Dennis Wright and I were gazing at the beautiful Leyte Landing Memorial at the MacArthur Landing Memorial Park, now battered by the recent Typhoon Haiyan, the strongest hurricane of modern history. We were on Leyte as part of a learning journey to the town of Balangiga on the nearby island of Samar to understand an event that has come down in military history as the "Massacre of Balangiga". The church bells in Wyoming are known as the "Bells of Balangiga".

But it was not the Bells I thought about standing in front of this battered memorial. My thoughts were about Normandy, France and the huge celebration that takes place each year as Americans flock to the site of the invasion of France and defeat of Nazi Germany. I was standing on an equally important historic spot and knew Americans do not recognize Leyte the same as Normandy. There is a ceremony each year but nothing approaching how Americans view their European allies and the invasion that set them free. Should we view our Philippine experience differently? A similar contrast is evident at the sparsely attended annual World War II celebration at the Shrine of Valor on Mount Samat on Luzon. Nearby is the path of the notorious Bataan Death March where over 15,000 Filipinos died at the hands of brutality and Philippine women and children were bayoneted for giving starving American soldiers a handful of rice. The Bataan

peninsula is where the U.S. Army Calvary had its last horse charge scattering Japanese troops and the first Medal of Honor awarded for heroism. Few know that last charge was by Filipinos and our highest medal for valor awarded to a Philippine Scout. And I thought about the U.S. Pacific War memorial on Corregidor Island built by the United States whose care by the American Battle Monuments Commission is authorized in law but ignored in practice.

The Bells illuminate other contrasts in how we treat the Philippines.

1. MacArthur helped rebuild Japan, the Marshall Plan rebuilt Europe, but only two hundred million dollars was provided to rebuild the Philippines, our former colony.
2. The Philippine Rescission Act of 1946 stripped Filipinos who were American citizens in our Armed Forces of rights to military benefits and it took until 2009 to recognize and provide modest restoration.
3. Americans returned bells to Japan and Russia and the Monuments Men ensured bells stolen by Nazis were returned to their Christian churches.
4. The annual “Reunion of Honor” on Iwo Jima is a time for reconciliation with Japan for a war that ended in 1945. There is nothing comparable for a war that ended in the Philippines in 1902. The Bells represent opportunity.

It is time to renew our common bond. It is time to respect our history in the Philippines. It is time to understand how Filipinos view their culture and their icons.

The “Bells of Balangiga” have become iconic to the patrimony of a nation whose cultural artifacts were heavily destroyed in World War II.

It is time for the “Bells of Balangiga” to go home.

Can we use their return to create a new history between two nations?

The answer is **yes!**

First. The “Bells of Balangiga” should return as the “Bells of San Lorenzo de Martir” to their church in a ceremonial event that matches the annual Reunion of Honor with Japan. Perhaps it could be called, “The Celebration of Reconciliation and Hope.”

Second. The actual signal bell taken from Balangiga and given to the 9th Infantry Regiment, the “Manchu Bell”, now in a museum in Korea, could become a symbol of unity between United States and Philippine Armed Forces.

On a moral and legal level, this Bell should join the other two at their church. But it took a different path. It was used as a signal of attack. It came to Madison Barracks in June of 1902, a month before the war was officially over. The “Bells of Balangiga” came to Wyoming two years later. It is now the “Manchu Bell”, which along with the Liscum Bowl are important symbols of a unit’s history and heritage. Maybe it can be treated differently ... if all would agree.

The idea is simple. The U.S. gives the bell to the Philippines and the Philippines immediately gives it back. That is what happened with the Boston/Sendai bell taken by the cruiser USS Boston from Japan in 1945 and brought to the city of Boston. Boston after offering its return in 1953 saw the city of Sendai gift it back as a gesture of “close friendship”. Like the bells from Balangiga and our Liberty Bell, the Boston/Sendai bell began its journey from a scrap yard. Each year during the “Korea Revisit”, Philippine and American veterans gather in Korea. This annual joining of UN forces that fought in the Korean War is a rare time when Philippine and American veterans come together. One can only picture what a ceremony would look like between military leaders; perhaps at the site of Philippine Korean War Monument in Goyang City, South Korea, or the War Memorial of Korea located at Yongsan-Dong near Seoul. It could include both the Philippine PEFTOK Association and the U.S. Korean War Veterans Association. Former President Fidel Ramos was the first Philippine president to request return of the Balangiga Bells to their Church. As a freshly minted second lieutenant from West Point, he was a combat successful platoon leader during the Korean War. His presence in a joint United States and Philippine ceremony would be a remarkable symbol of a bond between two peoples. To complete the vision, the Manchu Bell would return to its memorial site at Madison Barracks and a duplicate made to ring at the running of the “Manchu Run” at Fort Carson, Colorado. The duplicate Perry Bell in front of Bancroft Hall at the U.S Naval Academy that is rung to celebrate an athletic victory is precedent for a duplicate to celebrate running the Manchu Mile. Midshipmen have no problem ringing a duplicate. Neither should a Manchu after a run that earns a Manchu belt buckle. This idea was presented in a letter to President Trump in October, 2017 prior to his visit to the Philippines.

Third. The U.S. Secretary of the Army should direct the Senior Army Decorations Board to open a review of the heroism of the men of Company C, 9th Infantry Regiment, who fought valiantly at Balangiga and who many believe did not receive the recognition they deserved. It is done today, from the Civil War to the Gulf Wars. Historians write about recommendations made and recommendations denied out of embarrassment. Use this opportunity to right a wrong.

Fourth. The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) should undertake a study of the monuments and opportunities of the joint American Philippine military history with a view toward: (1) making the U.S. Pacific War Memorial more of an icon of recognition to Americans; (2) working jointly with Philippine authorities to make the MacArthur Landing Memorial Park a destination of relevance to U.S citizens and veterans (3) working with the U.S. Embassy in the Philippines on ways to achieve the dream of a “Pacific American War Memorial Plaza” in Balangiga; and (4) study the possibility of extending the ABMC Cabanatuan POW memorial to include the now disintegrating Bataan Death March markers.

Fifth. Approve the request made in a November 4th, 1960 letter from Philippine Secretary of Foreign Affairs Carlos P. Romulo to United States Secretary of State Christian A. Herter that the lettering on the United States Marine Corps Memorial, “Philippine Insurrection”, become more accurately, the “Philippine American War 1899-1902”. The United States made such a name change in 1999. The new and proper name should become general use in future memorials.



The Bell of St. Peter receiving the priest's blessing along with West Point cadets. The Bell was heading home from the Most Holy Trinity Chapel at West Point to the Church of Saint Peter and Paul. There is no mistaking the moral compass of those future officers there that day.

Final Reflection. Carlos P. Romulo was a general in the Philippine as well as the United States Army, earning both our Purple Heart and Silver Star, and President of the United Nations and the United Nations Security Council. At the 1945 United Nations charter convention in San Francisco he received the only standing ovation with, "Let us make this place the last battlefield".

In his letter to Secretary Herter he understood the importance of symbolism stating the name change "would also serve to underscore America's innate sense of truth and justice as well as its constant desire to enhance and foster the friendship and good will between our two peoples."

The "Bells of Balangiga" should reassume identify as the Bells of "San Lorenzo de Martir" and go home to joy as the symbolic cultural property of a nation and the personal property of the Catholic Church.

At the 1951 Japanese Peace Conference in San Francisco, the future course of Asian nations like the Philippines was defined. A press statement said it beautifully. "Today as the ceremony was completed, the diplomats of 49 nations went their separate ways. A flock of pigeons fluttered around the fast emptying war memorial opera house. And there was peace."

Perhaps pigeons can be released in Balangiga when the Bells come home.

Christians have used Bells for centuries to summon the faithful for recitation of the Lord's Prayer. They can signal the presence of Christ. "Christus apud te sit" means, "Christ is with you." Someday the Bells of San Lorenzo de Martir will again call out to those summoned for prayer knowing that, "Christus apud te sit". Why deny that? People can be evil; Church Bells are not.

Decades from now Americans visiting Balangiga will be able to see the Bells and learn from their history. They will be told that two bells displaying the emblems of the Franciscan order were once held on a Cold War missile base in Wyoming. Now, along with their holy purpose, they are also able to represent memories of men who fought for what they believed. From a long and arduous journey, the “Bells of Balangiga” have become symbols, perhaps ultimately BELLS OF RECONCILIATION AND HOPE.



Saturday, the 15th of December, 2018. Joy and jubilation in Balangiga were just as expected.

THE ESSAY IS OVER

You have been reading a “living essay” that was continuously updated over the past four years in the belief that truth and understanding could right an old wrong. But why now? Why after attempts over two decades that included the administrations of four U.S. and four Philippine presidents? My simple answer is, “**tenacity and truth**”. With tenacity, people of good-will set out five years ago to do the right thing with many joining and contributing to success. With truth, myths, misinformation and misunderstanding evaporated. A path to the goal became clear even though the journey was tortuous. Many details remain to be added to the history. Many played a role and many will claim credit. My response is wisdom from “The Tao”. **“The journey is the reward.”** That should be enough.

By the end of 2019 the “Living Essay” will have added detail and become a monograph for historians. It will be titled, “Bells of Balangiga – Journey Home, A Tale of Tenacity and Truth”.

Ahead are two Opinion Editorials (Op-Eds) which appeared in the Wyoming state capital newspaper, a 2016-point paper prepared for the White House, a draft or template of a VSO resolution, two letters to the U. S. Air Force, three papers prepared for the Congress, sections on bibliography and biography, and a description of the actual surprise attack prepared by a Philippine scholar. There is a letter to the President and finally a fantasy newspaper article. Added in October 2018 are suggestions provided to both governments how to make return an event unique in our joint histories The attachments are for historical reference. Warning. There is a redundancy in material that was prepared for various audiences at different times.

Enjoy the photos and illustrations.



Hmmm, the Philippines. Where are they?

McKinnon: Myths, mystery and the moral compass of vets

Dan McKinnon

[Wyoming Tribune Eagle](#) | Sat, 28 May 2016 06:00:00 -0600

It was 2013 when fellow Navy veteran Dennis Wright and I visited F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne to see what we thought was a memorial to those killed in the Philippine-American War.

What we found was not a memorial, but a brick enclosure protecting two church bells taken from the Philippines in 1904.

Why were they there? Why had they not gone home? Although on U.S. Air Force property not open to the public, we were told they belonged to the American people, and Wyoming was keeping them – not the U.S. Air Force. This did not make sense. Dennis and I had just completed a two-year effort to get our government to take care of an abandoned U.S. Air Force military cemetery in the Philippines that held more than 8,000 of our veterans and families.

We understand the Philippines and our historic bond. To handle the cemetery, we had rallied every organization for veterans. Hanging on to church bells and thinking of them as war booty did not seem like something veterans would do.

The first thing we noticed was how this attitude contrasted with how veterans treat Japan. I have attended the Reunion of Honor on Iwo Jima and have walked the Bataan Death March route into Camp O'Donnell, the infamous POW camp. A member of the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor Memorial Society, I have

observed firsthand how Americans have come to reconcile with a country unquestionably its most vicious enemy in war.

American cities have given Japan back their religious bells, along with the Virginia Military Institute and the U.S. Naval Academy. Why had church bells taken from the Philippines not been returned to our country's strongest friend in Asia, who was with us in Korea and Vietnam, and whose soldiers were our soldiers and died with us in World War II? It was a mystery and still is.

A bell like the two in Wyoming was recently discovered in a chapel at the U.S. Military Academy. It was identified and linked back to its former church in the Philippines. Its pastor asked for its return. West Point said yes, held a Mass and departure ceremony, rang this bell of Saint Peter and sent it home. That is what military honor is all about. Church bells belong in churches; they are not wartime souvenirs.

West Point houses two organizations that are all about honor: The Center for the Army Profession and Ethic and the Simon Center for the Professional Military Ethic. The bell taken as a product of war was in good company. Cadets joined in blessing the Bell of Saint Peter, making it clear to all present that the moral compass of a great institution was pointing due north.

These same cadets will no doubt serve in the war on terror. This war has a terrible religious component. But here again, it is American honor and ethic that confronts hate and stands high above all others. American soldiers treading the grounds of a mosque know about the importance of respect for religious beliefs and will not even stoop to pick up a souvenir pebble.

Once more, the contrast with two Philippine church bells held on an Air Force base is hard to understand. Founded as a Christian nation, we welcome and respect the cultures and beliefs of all countries, even in the face of Islamic extremism. How then can we have a problem

doing something as just as returning Catholic Church bells to a Christian nation? As West Point said, it is "the right and honorable thing to do."

There is a curious imbalance here in how we are treating religious property of a country that was our colony and today is ally and friend. Can we accord more respect to the cultural property of adversaries than allies?

These feelings came after two years of study. As a veteran, I like my war booty. But implements of God that signal the presence of Christ are not battlefield souvenirs. The reasons two church bells are still on a military base is all about myth and misunderstanding.

The myths began in 1904, when our 11th Infantry brought two bells to a fort in Wyoming and displayed them under a sign that held three myths. The first myth was that the 11th was the first on the scene after the infamous Balangiga Massacre. They were not. The second was that the surprise attack took place on Sunday. It was on Saturday. And the third and most harmful to history was that the bells had rung to signal a surprise attack against Americans. They had not. The 11th knew better. They had given the signal bell used in the surprise attack to the 9th Infantry two years before.

It was not long after that a former Army chief of staff who held a Philippine-American War Medal of Honor said the bells should not have been taken in the first place. He was there. He knew. It was a violation of the Army's General Order 100.

The next set of myths emerged about 60 years later after the Army had abandoned the bells. The two bells escaped the scrap metal drives of World War II, and in 1967, the U.S. Air Force placed them in a protective brick enclosure. About two decades later, a West Point graduate, who later became Philippine president, began to ask for their return.

Just as suddenly, new myths appeared. First the Philippine president's motives were questioned in the press – that he wanted the bells for political reasons. Not so; he wanted them for their church. Second was that the bells were battlefield souvenirs, or war booty. They were actually taken from under a wooden platform belfry burned by angry American soldiers after the battle was over. Third was that the brick trophy enclosure in Trophy Park on F.E. Warren Air Force Base was a war memorial. It is neither monument nor memorial.

The Bells of Balangiga, created to call the faithful to prayer and children to fiesta, are scapegoats of history.

The myths led to misunderstanding. Misunderstanding led to rancor between friends and allies. Maybe the moral code working at West Point will help remove the rancor that sadly existed in Wyoming years ago, rancor I believe does not exist among veterans there today.

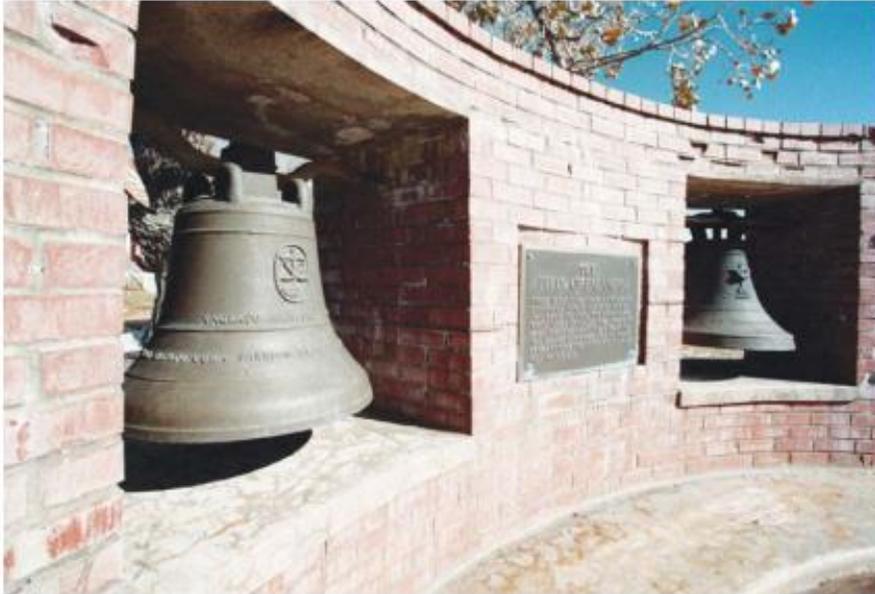
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McKinnon: Fourth of July ... is the day to return the bells?

By Dan McKinnon Jul 3, 2017



Two church bells taken from the Philippines in 1904 are housed at F. E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne. WTE/file

The Fourth of July is a day of American patriotism. It also is special in Philippine-American history.

On July 4, 1946, Philippine independence was granted after four decades of creating a nation that Pulitzer Prize author Stanley Karnow said was "in our image." On July 4, 1902, the Philippine-American War ended and "benevolent assimilation" began.

On that date, personal property taken during the war was to return to their owners. The two church bells at F.E. Air Force Base in Cheyenne that were removed from Samar and taken to Leyte to prevent being melted into weapons should have gone home to their church.

Last year, an op-ed was published in this newspaper to fully explain the bells ("Myths, mystery, misunderstanding and the moral compass of veterans," WTE, May 28, 2016). But myths do not end. When legislation was passed to keep the bells, a statement said Company C, 9th Infantry Regiment, the unit that fought in the Balangiga Massacre, brought the bells in 1904 to Fort D.A. Russell.

They had not.

Company C took the signal bell home in 1902 to Madison Barrack's, New York. The 11th Infantry brought the two bells to Wyoming in 1904 in violation of Army orders. The 9th Infantry (Manchu) Association said, "The two bells that the 11th brought back to the States were abandoned by them, and there is no historic connection to F.E. Warren Air Force Base or the people of Wyoming."

A recent letter from the governor's office to a law school classmate said the bells were in the only known structure that honored Company C. This is not true. There are three: a bell stand marked "Balangiga" at Madison Barracks; a DAR memorial naming those killed on the historic stone tower; and a monument to those whose bodies were not recovered at an American Battle Monuments memorial cemetery in the Philippines.

The myth that USAF museum bells at F.E. Warren were somehow part of a memorial began in 1997 when Joe Sestak, an American Legion leader protesting returning the bells, wrote, "We are not involved in the business of dismantling memorials to our comrades ..." Fifteen years later, he changed his heart and was quoted in this newspaper as saying, "There are 50,000 veterans in Wyoming ... I don't think there's 100 of them who know enough about the bells to carry on a conversation about them."

When we talked, he said returning the bells to their church would be "God's blessing."

Former Wyoming Gov. Stan Hathaway, having flown combat missions over Dresden, Germany, that killed thousands of civilians ("I was on that mission") called for their return, contrasting wartime forgiveness from Germans and Japanese. "After 100 years, (keeping the bells) doesn't make any sense to me or most people in Wyoming."

Many then and now incorrectly thought the bells were part of a monument or memorial. Others felt it would be wrongfully returning museum art and antiques. It would not. Museums and the Smithsonian legally and morally return stolen personal property brought to the U.S. in war, notably Nazi loot from the Holocaust and stolen Islamic artifacts from Middle East wars. Not returning stolen property of Christians is embarrassing.

Another embarrassing contrast is that last year West Point returned a bell identical to the two at F.E. Warren to the Philippines. The Naval Academy, VMI and many cities returned religious bells to Japan. The "Monuments Men" ensured bells stolen by Germans were returned to their churches. The Iwo Jima Association of America encourages veterans to return to Japanese families personal items as a gesture of reconciliation.

A congressional moratorium expires in September. Veterans who understand the Philippines was our ally in World War II, Korea, Vietnam and today's war on terror want to recognize the heroic men of Company C. Proposals for a special bronze medal, the Congressional Medal of Honor or other recognition were squashed decades ago out of possible embarrassment.

Some want the U.S. Army to open a "case of denied valor." An American businessman designed a memorial plaza in the town of Balangiga, and a Sackets Harbor businessman has plans for expanding Madison's Barracks Park to hold the granite "Balangiga" plinth, as well as the DAR memorial that lists heroic dead.

After the Balangiga Massacre, a four-month rampage ensued that resulted in hundreds of Filipinos dead, and the looting and burning of churches and convents. The resulting 44 courts martial and the cashiering of an Army general were part of a tragic period of history. Bells owned by a church named for a martyred saint should not become the poisoned fruit of that history and a monument to American valiant.

The real story of the Bells of San Lorenzo de Martir is found in a living essay, a product of two years of research on a VFW website, <http://www.vfwpost2485.com/BELLS.pdf>. It offers Wyoming many ideas for honoring the men of Company C and covers the state's beautiful treatment of its history and its monuments.

The 75th anniversary year of the Bataan Death March, where more than 500 American and 2,000 Filipino comrades at arms died together, and Filipino women and children were bayoneted for giving a handful of rice to our starving soldiers, is the year that rancor must end. Church bells created to signal the presence of Christ go home.

People can be evil. Church bells are not. Giving back is what Americans do.

Retired Rear Admiral Dan McKinnon is a 35-year U.S. Navy veteran and life member of the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars. He is a member of the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor Memorial Society, Company of Military Historians, and life member of the American Defense Industrial Association and the 9th Infantry Regiment (Manchu) Association. Email: themckinnons@aol.com.

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A paper provided the White House in July 2016 offering a “Balanced Conclusion.”

Subject: The Bells of San Lorenzo de Martir (Bells of Balangiga)

Background: The “Bells” are two large 600-pound Catholic Church bells, property of the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir of Balangiga, Samar, Republic of the Philippines, held in a brick protective enclosure on federal property at F.E. Warren AFB in Cheyenne, Wyoming. For almost three decades they have been the subject of rancor and misunderstanding between two friends and allies. Brought to Wyoming in 1904 in violation of Army orders and kept from the public by military force protection, they have been prevented from returning to their church out of deference to the Wyoming congressional delegation who believe they are following veteran intentions. [A former American Legion leader who fought return now believes they should go home saying, “I don’t think there’s 100 (veterans who) know enough about the bells to carry on a conversation”.]

The Bells were believed to have signaled a bolo knife attack against American soldiers in 1901; they did not. There was concern that returning the Bells would mean “deconstructing” a “war memorial”; it would not. Their protection is neither memorial nor monument. Public financed memorials and monuments on federal property require congressional authorization and appropriation. There were none.

A Veterans Day 2015 history essay of the Bells states:

- ...the Bells are not part of US Army history and heritage.
- ...the Bells are not part of US Air Force history and heritage.
- ...the Bells are not part of Wyoming history and heritage.
- ...the Bells were twice abandoned by the US Army.
- ...the Bells treatment should have been in accord with the Lieber Code, (G.O. 100).
- ...the Bells should have been returned to their owner in 1902 upon cession of war.
- ...the Bells were taken from Samar following burning of their belfry by angry soldiers.
- ...the Bells’ belfry was a wood platform burned not in battle but in retaliation.
- ...the Bells are not NDAA “veteran’s memorial objects”.
- ...the Bells are not 10 USC 2579 “battlefield souvenirs”, or slang “war booty.”
- ...the Bells are not “instruments of war”.
- ...the Bells are not property of the American people.
- ...the Bells current location and resistance to return to their church stand in moral and embarrassing contrast to how men and women in uniform protect cultural property of nations and personal property of individuals. Americans have ensured that religious bells taken from former vicious enemies such as Germany, Japan, and Russia go home to their places of worship. American soldiers will not even stoop to pick up a souvenir pebble on the grounds of a mosque when facing Islamic extremism. Contrary treatment of Christian religious artifacts of an American ally in World War Two, Korea, Vietnam, and the War on Terror lacks honor.

Law and Regulation: The Bells are subject to several U.S. laws. U.S. Army General Order 100 (the Lieber or Lincoln’s Code) applicable in the Philippines makes clear Church property is personal property and not subject to military confiscation. Property confiscated for “military necessity” must be returned to its owner upon cession of war.

Three times the National Defense Authorization Act had a provision intended to keep the Bells in place by calling them a “veteran’s memorial object” ... they are not ... and prevent return “to a foreign country or an entity controlled by a foreign government” ... they would return to their church.

The Philippines Property Act of 1946 passed upon Philippine independence states, “the President of the United States is authorized, in his discretion and under such terms and conditions as he may deem appropriate, to transfer to the Republic of the Philippines any or all of the right, title, and interest of the Government of the United States or its agencies or instrumentalities to any or all real and personal property vested in such agencies or instrumentalities”. This was a law intended to clear all faults. A 1998 Patton Boggs legal analysis on these and other laws provided Wyoming stated, “Taking the bells was wrongful in 1901...taking the bells would be wrongful today...that the President has authority he needs to return the bells to the Philippine government.”

A Balanced Conclusion: Last April the 800-pound Bell of Saint Peter, almost identical in history, was sent home by the U.S. Military Academy to its church in the Philippines to national jubilation as the “right and honorable thing to do.” At any time, the new Duterte administration, or the Church, may request return of the Bells of Saint Lawrence.

The Administration should act now.

Concerning the Bells, it is recommended that: (1) the initiative to return them come from the U.S.; (2) The USAF be directed to return the Bells to their church.

Concerning the historical interest of Wyoming veterans about honoring those Americans that died, it is recommended that: (1) the U.S. Army opens an inquiry of potential denied valor ... there is evidence of support; (2) a proposal that the Balangiga village plaza be a memorial becomes a U.S. and Philippine Armed Forces project of a future joint training exercise.

August 10th is the feast day of St. Lawrence Martyr, the most celebratory day of the year in Balangiga, perfect for the Bells return or a White House announcement. St. Lawrence is also the Patron Saint of the Poor, a natural juxtaposition for any Administration.

The Church of San Lorenzo de Martir is waiting for the return of its Bells to call the faithful to prayer and children to fiesta. This is the third church built on the site. The belfry of 1901 was a raised platform of wood with a nipa palm roof several yards to the right from this view.

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The following draft resolution has been offered as a template useful to Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs). As of April 2018, resolutions have been approved by the VFW Department of Pacific Areas, the American Legion Department of the Philippines, the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, and the US-Philippines Society. Later in 2018 both the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion approved repatriation

resolutions based on this original draft. The VFW effort was led by Dennis Wright and the American Legion effort led by Brian Buzzell.

DRAFT VSO RESOLUTION ON RETURN OF THE BELLS OF SAN LORENZO

Background. In 1904 a US Army unit brought two church bells to Wyoming from the Philippine American War to what is now FE Warren AFB. The Army abandoned the bells as not part of their history and heritage and in 1967 senior SAC officers placed them in a brick enclosure. In the past 20 years the parishioners of the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir and the Philippine government have unsuccessfully asked for their return. Each request has been blocked in the mistaken belief they were part of a war memorial when in fact they are in the collection of the Museum of the USAF. The Parish priest has asked for return and has been supported by VFW Department of the Pacific Areas and the American Legion Department of the Philippines resolutions. There is a noble tradition in the United States of restoring bells taken in conflict to Japan, Russia and Germany. In 2017 Congress gave decision authority to the Secretary of Defense. History will be found in “The Bells of San Lorenzo de Martir, A Desk Guide to Truth”, on a VFW web site, VFWPost2485.org, under “Articles of Interest”.

Notional Resolution. The following draft resolution is offered for consideration by Veterans Service Organizations in support of the return of the Bells.

Resolution on Repatriation of the Bells of San Lorenzo de Martir to their Church

Whereas two bells of the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir, the town of Balangiga, Province of Eastern Samar, Republic of the Philippines, known as the “Bells of Balangiga”, are in the possession of the National Museum of the United States Air Force (USAF) on an intercontinental ballistic missile base in Wyoming denied public access due to “force protection”;

Whereas the “Bells” were brought to the United States in 1904 by a U.S. Army unit and abandoned as not part of Army history and heritage, and for the past two decades been prevented from return to their church out of mistaken belief they represent a war memorial to the men of Company C, Ninth Infantry Regiment, who died at the “Massacre of Balangiga”,

Whereas the Bells are personal property of a church and cultural icons of the Philippines, akin to the American Liberty Bell, denied repatriation in spite of repeated appeals of the Church, its Bishop, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, the Vatican, and five presidents of the Republic of the Philippines;

Whereas the Bells come from a period of little understood American history once known as the “Philippine Insurrection”, today officially acknowledged as the “Philippine-American War”, then taking place in a time now recognized as the “First Philippine Republic (Malolos Republic)”, the first republic in Asia;

Whereas Church bells are the golden threads in the fabric of a Philippine community warning of danger and calling the faithful to prayer and children to fiesta, purposes now denied two bells in a grassy park adjacent to 19th century cavalry parade grounds on a USAF base in Wyoming;

Whereas the United States Military Academy returned the Bell of Saint Peter to its Philippine church because it was the “right and honorable thing to do”; the United States Naval Academy, the Virginian Military Institute and others, have returned bells taken in conflict to Japan, Russia, and Germany; and the Iwo Jima Association of America encourages return to Japanese families of personal items taken in war as a gesture of reconciliation and friendship;

Whereas for over a century the Philippines has been America’s strongest friend in Asia and a staunch ally in World War Two, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the War on Terror, and whose 2017 celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Bataan Death March acknowledged the courage and death of over 500 American and 5,000 Philippine men at arms.

Whereas United States Code provides authority for the Secretary of Defense to return the Bells to their Church;

Whereas our history and common bond was forged in the Philippines and on August first, 1914, the “Army of the Philippines, Cuba and Puerto Rico” became the “Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States”; (*this provision only for VFW posts and departments*)

Whereas return of the Bells to the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir acknowledges and strengthens the alliance of peoples with a unique interlocking history and kinship in language, governance, religion, and comradeship in war; now therefore, be it

Resolved, that (1) the (*appropriate VSO post or department*) urges the United States Secretary of Defense to find that returning the Bells of San Lorenzo de Martir to their Church is a correct and moral act and in the interests of the United States of America and the Republic of the Philippines, as well as helping ensure enduring friendship between two peoples with shared bonds in religion, governance, language and comradeship in war, and (2) the Secretary of Army open a review of the “Massacre of Balangiga” to determine if those heroic men who died were denied the honors and recognition they deserved.

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The following is a letter from the Priest of the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir asking for return of the Bells to his parishioners just like West Point returned an almost identical bell to its home church in the Philippines.

July 4, 2017

Colonel Stacey J. Huser, USAF

Commander, 90th Missile Wing
F.E. Warren Air Force Base
Cheyenne, Wy 82005

Dear Colonel Huser,

Peace in the Lord!

I am writing in regard to two church bells that are presently displayed on your post with the hope that I can work with you to have them returned to the church from which they were taken.

My name is Father Serafin B. Tybaco, Jr., I am the Parish Priest of the Church of San Lorenzo de Martyr in Balangiga, Eastern Samar, Philippines. The church of San Lorenzo was founded in 1854 and over the next three decades, through the sacrifices of our parishioners, acquired three church bells. In 1901, the bells were taken after a military engagement between Filipinos fighting for their independence and the American forces garrisoned in the town. There is much history with some acrimony associated with both the engagement and the bells.

The bells were initially taken and stored in a military camp in Leyte after the encounter, and later in 1904 two of the three bells were carried by the 11th Infantry back to the U.S. where they ended up at Fort D. A. Russell. The third bell was given to the 9th Infantry. The 11th Infantry was decommissioned in 1915. The bells were abandoned by the Army until one of your predecessors found them in 1967 and directed that they be put in display.

As I am sure you are aware, the Philippines is a predominantly Catholic country. As such, church bells are an integral part of our heritage, culture and traditions – especially in smaller towns like Balangiga, where church bells are used to announce weddings, deaths and call parishioners to prayer or announce important community events.

Our church was totally ruined after Super typhoon Yolanda destroyed our town in November 2013. Yolanda not only devastated the lives of so many who had so little, it also destroyed the church which is the center of our spiritual lives when we needed it the most. Thankfully, through the generosity of the U. S. Conference of Catholics Bishops (USCCB), our church was restored in April last year. As part of that effort and to complement the work of the USCCB, our parishioners raised Php500,000 (\$11,000) to acquire two new bells. The fact that people who do not have much money to begin with donated sufficient funds to buy two new church bells, demonstrates just how important bells are to our parishioners. While these bells are functional, they cannot replace the esteem, love and devotion we have for the original bells of San Lorenzo de Martyr that were taken in 1901.

There are substantial precedents I would like to call to your attention. In January 2016, Lieutenant General Robert L. Caslen, Jr., Superintendent of the U. S. Military Academy at West Point, approved the return of a similar bell that had also been taken in 1901 from a sister parish, the Church of Saints Peter and Paul in Bauang, La Union. It had been on display at West Point since 1915 and on May 23rd of last year, thousands of people attended the church service to witness the return of San Pedro Bell.

Similarly, in 1987, the U. S. Naval Academy returned a bell which sat outside Bancroft Hall to Japan. Another Japanese bell was returned to Okinawa by the Virginia Military Institute in 1991, and in 2007 Harvard University returned 18 bells to Russia which had hung outside of Lowell House. Many cities in the U. S. also returned bells to Japan they inherited from returning ships of the same namesake after WWII. This includes the cities of Duluth, Topeka and Atlanta.

Returning private property, and especially church bells, to their original and rightful owners has been an underlying and recurring theme as evidenced in the above precedents and as illustrated several recent films including the “Monuments Men” and “Woman in Gold” – because it is the right and honorable thing to do. We sincerely hope and pray that you too will honor our request and allow us the opportunity to once again be reunited with our bells – the Bells of San Lorenzo de Martyr.

In closing, I am reminded of a work taken from Meditation 17, written by John Donne, an English cleric and poet in 1624. Ernest Hemingway also borrowed lines for his book and movie “for whom the Bell Tolls.” Donne’s work describes the “interconnectedness” of humanity. It is perhaps most appropriate and relevant then that we reflect on what it says:

No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the
main.

If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less; as well as if a promontory were.
As well as if a manor of thy friend’s, or of thine own were.

Any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore, never
ask for
Whom the bell tolls, for it tolls for thee.

These words resonated as Filipinos witnessed the first tolling of the San Pedro Bell on May 23rd after 115 years of silence. We hope and pray that one day we will similarly hear the ringing of the Bells of San Lorenzo de Martyr in Balangiga knowing that these bells would be tolling for all of us – the givers and the receivers reinforcing the interconnectedness of our two nations.

Yours in Christ;



Rev. Fr. SERAFIN B. TYBACO, JR.
Parish Priest

Copy to:

His Eminence Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, Archbishop of Manila
Most Reverend Timothy P. Broglio, Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA
Most Reverend Paul D. Etienne, Archbishop of Cheyenne

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A letter to the Chief of Staff, USAF, supporting the letter from the Balangiga village Priest to the F.E. Warren Air Force Base Wing Commander.

September 7, 2017

General David L. Goldfein
Chief of Staff, United States Air Force
The Pentagon
Washington D.C.

Dear General Goldfein:

It has been five years since two former USAF Chiefs of Staff helped retired Navy Captain Dennis Wright and myself right a serious wrong. That wrong was the accidental abandonment of the U.S. military cemetery at the former Clark Air Force Base. It was made right by-passing legislation making over 8,000 American graves, many whom were USAF children that died in the adjoining base hospital, the responsibility of the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC).

Tony McPeak as Chair of ABMC worked with us. Nortie Schwartz and his wife visited the cemetery and assigned a lawyer on your staff to help me. The Air Force Sergeants Associate joined and soon the Military Coalition and its 43 members and the National Military and Veterans Alliance and its 36 members joined us. It was Senator Kelly Ayotte, whose husband flew with the USAF, that championed the cause. Former Naval Aviator Commander John McCain, who in February 1973 was a former POW guest of the hospital next to that cemetery, and now Senator McCain, Chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee, supported what became, "The Dignified Burial and Other Veterans Improvement Act of 2012". It was a beautiful partnership. It is wonderful history.

We come to you to recommend again how a wrong can be made right. Perhaps a new partnership and new history.

In the collection of the Museum of the United States Air Force are two church bells looted from a Philippine church after the Philippine American War. Following what yellow journalism called at the time the “Massacre of Balangiga” and fodder for both the pro-expansion and the anti-imperialism causes, churches and convents were looted and burned. It was not a good time in American history. A surprise attack by natives, some who hid in the church and using bolo knives, almost wiped out a company of Army soldiers. It was an embarrassing defeat then compared to Little Big Horn.

Afterward became what was called “Bloody Samar”, over 40 courts martial, the sacking of an Army General, and prevalent theft of Catholic Church property later brought to the U.S. as souvenirs. Much has gone home over the decades. Such is the jaded history of two bells in a brick trophy case in Trophy Park on F.E. Warren Air Force Base.

When you get this letter, it will no doubt come with USAF staff point papers on the political history of why these two Bells have not gone home to their church. That too is fascinating history, much of it wrong. If an attorney says your hands are tied because the Bells are “instruments of war”. Don’t accept it. If a public affairs official says that the Bells “belong to the American people”, don’t accept it. These old misconceptions should no longer exist.

In truth, recent politics and history are almost just as unique. Twenty years ago, a West Point graduate who became President of the Philippines asked for return of the Bells to the Church of San Lornezo de Martir. Their parishioners had paid to have them cast. A retired USAF Colonel who was Commander, American Legion Department of Wyoming, objected saying that taking the Bells from their enclosure would be “deconstructing” a war memorial. He has long since changed his mind....and heart. Many believed him and that commenced two decades of legislative effort by the Wyoming Congressional delegation to keep the Bells on a base generally not open to the public. Former Senator Craig Thomas, believing he was doing the right thing, introduced legislation Governor Stan Hathaway, a USAF hero of WW II and his friend, objected. Having flown and been part of the destruction of Dresden, he could not understand the absence of reconciliation with an enemy and not an ally. Many feel the same today as they contrast how Americans have ensured religious bells taken in war have gone home to old adversaries like Japan, Germany and Russia. Why not the Philippines? After all, in WW II the destruction of Manila was second only to Warsaw. After all, the Bells are part of a nation’s cultural heritage almost destroyed by war. After all, the Bells were brought to the U.S in violation of Army orders. After all, the Bells are the personal property of the Holy Roman Catholic Church.

And the Bells have no connection to U.S. Air Force history and heritage.

The legislation that keeps the Bells in the USAF museum collection is also unique. It is also a fiction. Conceived with then good intentions by a member of a Senator’s staff was the creation of a fiction called, “Veterans Memorial Objects (VMOs)”. Included was wording that VMOs could only leave the U.S. with approval of Congress. It was couched in high minded language to

which no veteran or member of Congress could object. Three times it easily passed as part of the NDAA. Three times no one realized that there is no such thing as VMOs in the collection of a U.S. Military museum. Only two Bells once created to signal the presence of Christ. The legislation does not mention the Bells; only a public statement by a Senator. Had a F.E. Warren Wing Commander or a curator of the Museum of the U.S. Air Force wanted to use the Bells as part of a monument or memorial, your regulations can make it happen. You just propose, get USAF HQ concurrence, and Congress can authorize it. None of that took place. Also, the Wyoming Congressional delegation did not handle the matter head on. There was no proposed legislation to create a memorial or monument in Wyoming. If they had, the memorial would have gone to the U.S. Army home post of the fallen in New York.

Over a year ago an identical bell was discovered at West Point. In the Philippines the priest of Church of Saint Peter and Paul asked for its return and the Superintendent agreed. The Bell went home to national jubilation.

In June the priest of the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir wrote to the Commander of the 90th Missile Wing at F. E. Warren AFB asking for return of its Church Bells. If West Point can do it, then F.E. Warren can do it. Today there is high hope in the Philippines. Even the President of the Philippines recently asked for their return in his State of the Nation Address.

The Bells of the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir are the personal property of the Church. They are also the cultural property of a nation who has been our country's closest ally in Asia; WW II, Korea, Vietnam and now ISIS and the War on Terror.

The letter request from the village priest is now working somewhere in the USAF.

I pray the reply is "yes".

Sincerely and most respectfully,
s/

Daniel W. McKinnon, Jr.
Rear Admiral, United States Navy, Retired.

Copy to:

Honorable John S. McCain, Jr., Senator, Chair, Senate Armed Services Committee
Director, Museum of the United States Air Force.
Commander, 20th Air Force, AFGSC
Chief of Chaplains, United States Air Force
Commander, 90th Missile Wing, F.E. Warren Air Force Base
Archbishop for the Military Services, USA



The Church of San Lorenzo de Martir waiting for the return of its bells to call the faithful to prayer and children to fiesta. Restored after the 2013 typhoon, this is the third church built on the site. The belfry of 1901 was a raised platform of wood with a nipa palm roof several yards to the right from this view.

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A letter with suggestions that unites and not divides and ends the Bells story.

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
Washington DC 20500

October 8, 2017

Dear Mr. President:

Recently a Congressional moratorium on keeping the “Bells of Balangiga” expired. The law that prevented the return to their Church of two Philippine Catholic Church bells on a Minuteman Missile base in Wyoming was crafted years ago out of mistaken belief they were part of a war memorial. It was contrived to make it appear memorials were being “deconstructed” and not Church Bells held captive to myth and misunderstanding. A recent assertion that the bells are a Wyoming War Memorial is another myth. We now know better. Many veterans and others who understand our history with 7,000 islands on the other side of the Pacific and our joint religious, language, and cultural identity interceded so that Congress now knows better as well.

So, what is next? I believe that as we move away from a past that was darkened by rancor there is opportunity for a future that can be brightened by hope.

Soon you travel to the Philippines, a nation that has seen over a thousand of its troops killed or wounded in the past year in the war on ISIS. Returning the Bells will result in national jubilation

The “Bells of Balangiga” are important to the patrimony of a nation whose cultural artifacts were heavily destroyed in World War II.

It is time to renew our common bond. It is time to respect our history in the Philippines. It is time for the “Bells of Balangiga” to go home.

I believe we can use their return to create a new history between two nations.

First. The “Bells of Balangiga” should return as the “Bells of San Lorenzo de Martir” to their church in a ceremonial event that matches the annual Reunion of Honor with Japan. A “Committee of the Wise” should start planning now. Perhaps it could be called “The Celebration of Reconciliation and Hope.” If we can reconcile with adversaries of a World War that ended in 1945, why can’t we reconcile with adversaries of a war that ended in 1902?

Second. The real signal bell originally taken from Balangiga and given to the 9th Infantry Regiment, the “Manchu Bell” now in a museum in Korea, should become a symbol of unity between U.S. and Philippine Armed Forces in a ceremony during the Fall 2018 “Korea Revisit”. This annual coming together of UN forces that fought together in the Korean War is one of the few times Philippine and American veterans join together as comrades in arms. The Armed Forces of the Philippines would give the signal bell or a duplicate to the Manchus as a symbol of remembrance so that forever when a Manchu runs the “Manchu Mile” and rings the “Manchu Bell”, they will remember their Philippine comrades and a history that binds, not divides.

Third. The U.S. Secretary of the Army should open a review of the heroism of the men of Company C, 9th Infantry Regiment, who fought valiantly at Balangiga and who many believe did not receive the recognition they deserved.

Fourth The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) should undertake a study of the monuments and opportunities of the joint American Philippine military history with a view toward: (1) making the U.S. Pacific War Memorial more of an icon of recognition to Americans; (2) working jointly with Philippine authorities to make the MacArthur Landing Memorial Park a destination of relevance to U.S. citizens and veterans; (3) working with the U.S. Embassy in the Philippines on ways to achieve the dream of a “Pacific American War Memorial Plaza” in Balangiga; and (4) study the possibility of extending the ABMC Cabanatuan POW memorial to include the now disintegrating Bataan Death March markers.

Fifth. During the upcoming restoration of the United States Marine Corps Memorial, approve the request made in a November 4th, 1960 letter from Philippine Secretary of Foreign Affairs Carlos P. Romulo to United States Secretary of State Christian A. Herter that the words on the monument “Philippine Insurrection” become more

appropriately the "Philippine American War 1899-1902"". The United States made such an official name change in 1999.

The "Bells of Balangiga" should re-assume identify as the Bells of "San Lorenzo de Martir" and return as what they are; the cultural property of a nation and the personal property of the Catholic Church.

At the 1951 Japanese Peace Conference in San Francisco, the future course of Asian nations like the Philippines was defined. A press statement said it beautifully. "Today as the ceremony was completed, the diplomats of 49 nations went their separate ways. A flock of pigeons fluttered around the fast emptying war memorial opera house. And there was peace."

Perhaps pigeons can be released in Balangiga when the Bells come home.

Sincerely and most respectfully,

s/Daniel W. McKinnon, Jr.

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The next three attachments are point/discussion papers used by veterans and several distinguished advocates to educate members of Congress, their committees and staffs, on the truth about the Bells. There is redundancy.

THE BELLS OF SAN LORENZO DE MARTIR

The Bells of San Lorenzo de Martir – also known as the Bells of Balangiga – were taken from a Philippine Catholic Church and brought to a fort in Wyoming as souvenirs two years after the end of the Philippine- American War, in violation of international law and Army orders. The Bells were taken from the village of Balangiga, Samar, in 1901 from under a belfry burned by angry soldiers following the so-called "Massacre of Balangiga," a surprise attack on Company C of New York's 9th Infantry Regiment. Months of retaliatory attacks led to the deaths of hundreds of Filipinos, as well as the looting and burning of churches and convents. The Bells were mistakenly believed to have signaled the surprise attack and were brought to Fort D.A. Russell in Wyoming in 1904, where they were placed on display.

The regiment abandoned the Bells when they moved from Fort Russell and the Army abandoned them when Fort Russell became part of the U.S. Air Force. In 1967, they were placed in a brick

protective closure near officers' quarters on what is now F.E. Warren Air Force Base and became artifacts of the Museum of the U.S. Air Force.

The subject of much debate, the Bells have remained in the United States ever since. Language has previously been included in the *National Defense Authorization Act* ("NDAA," codified at 10 U.S.C. 2572) three times to prevent return of the Bells to the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir. Section 2841 of the House's version of the FY2018 NDAA (H.R. 2810) would extend the moratorium yet again.

Now is the time to return the Bells to their home Church:

- There are growing calls by the veteran community to return the Bells. West Point returned an identical bell to the Philippines last year, calling it the "right and honorable thing to do." The VFW's Department of the Pacific approved a petition honoring the 75th anniversary of the Bataan Death March and calling for return of the Bells to the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir. A leader of the American Legion who previously argued the Bells should remain in the U.S. now says, "...I don't think there's [sic] 100 (veterans in Wyoming) who know enough about the bells to carry on a conversation...."

- The Bells discussion is replete with historical inaccuracies. Scapegoats of history, the Bells were not brought to Wyoming by Company C, nor did they serve as signals of the surprise attack. They were shipped to the U.S. from a scrap yard. They are not a part of U.S. Army or Air Force history or heritage. Army regulations dictate the Bells should have been returned to their Church after July 4, 1902, when the war ended.

- The men of New York's Company C should be honored, but not through church property. Church bells are part of the familial and cultural fabric of the Philippines and are even baptized as members of the church community. Americans have returned bells to Japan, Russia, and Germany. Personal property is returned to Japanese families as part of the annual "Reunion of Honor." The men of Company C should be more appropriately honored by a monument at their home post at Madison Barracks where the granite Balangiga plinth and bronze memorial already exists, or by opening a case of "denied valor."

- Regardless of history, the Bells belong at their Church. Former Wyoming Governor Stan Hathaway, a World War II combat veteran, wrote then-Senator Craig Thomas calling for return. Having taken part in the bombing of Dresden, Germany, where thousands of civilians died, he talked of the "forgiveness of military acts between nations."

The Bells of San Lorenzo de Martir should be allowed to return to their church in the Philippines, where their political, cultural, and religious significance are of paramount importance. NDAA conferees should therefore strike Section 2841 from H.R. 2810.

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Six reasons why a provision on "Veterans Memorial Objects" should not be in the FY 18 National Defense Authorization Act. September 2017

The purpose is to prevent two bells in the U.S. Air Force Museum from being de-accessioned and returned to their Church in the mistaken belief it would deconstruct a war memorial and dishonor heroes. Quite the opposite. Dishonor would occur if personal property of the Catholic Church and cultural property of an ally became part of a military monument.

The existing law lacks an accurate historical foundation. The history for 10 USC 2572 has incorrectly said returning the bells back to their church would “tear down a memorial to U.S. soldiers”; the “9th Infantry took two of the church bells used to signal the attack with them back to Wyoming as a memorial to the fallen soldiers”, and “Company C troops that survived the massacre brought these bells back to Fort D.A Russell”, etc.

The provision bypasses Congressional and military procedures for authorizing and paying for war memorials. The USAF has regulations and members of Congress can use legislation. A request has been made to appropriate House members to evaluate the possibility of a monument to Company C at their home barracks in New York.

The existing law has a tenuous connection between the Bells and its wording. The provision creates the phrase, “Veterans Memorial Object”, and said, “the President may not transfer a ‘veterans memorial object’ or convey such an object to a foreign government or entity controlled by a foreign government”. It defines a VMO as one located at a “cemetery of the National Cemetery System, war memorial, or military installation.....”; “dedicated to, or otherwise memorializes, the deaths in combat...”; “brought to the United States from abroad as a memorial of combat abroad”. A transfer could not take place unless “authorized by law”.

Although appearing generic, its intent is keeping Bells on a USAF missile base closed to the public.

The Bells would return to their church, do not memorialize, and were not brought to the U.S. as a memorial. There are no known VMO congressional transfer requests by military services. The two Bells are the only artifacts associated with the phrase and connected only by a November 30, 2012 statement that refers to the Bells

The existing law is absent understanding, if not disrespects, Philippine American history and comradeship. The Philippines were our colony, created “in our image”, and ally in World War Two, Korea, Vietnam and the War on Terror. Keeping the Bells contrasts with bells sent home to 20th century adversaries Japan, Russia, and Nazi Germany.

Research polls have Filipinos with higher regard for Americans than any other nation, including our own.

This is the 75th anniversary of the Bataan Death March where hundreds of Filipinos and Americans died together and Filipino women and children were bayoneted for trying to give our men a handful of rice.

The existing law is absent understanding the role of Church Bells in the Philippines. Church Bells are part of the fabric of the Christian community with a meaning different than the American

experience. They share a history with our Liberty Bell in that both were removed from a scrap yard and later became important to their people.

Our Liberty Bell became a national icon when used to raise money for America's defense of Great Britain. The British did not protest use of a symbol that signified their defeat at the hands of Americans.

American protection and return of religious artifacts of Islam in the war on ISIS and not according the same treatment to Christian artifacts creates a moral vacuum.

The existing law is seemingly discriminatory. The FY 18 NDAA discusses the importance of our security and economic interest in East Asia facing a Chinese competitor. A "Sense of Congress" is given to the importance of alliances with Korea and Japan and the defense partnership with Taiwan. The NDAA says the Philippine archipelago is essential to the protection of the South China Sea and "regional security and prosperity" and calls out Chinese violation of "Philippines' sovereign rights". No mention is made of our Philippine alliance.

The House-passed version of the NDAA would amend the existing law so it only covers VMOs brought to the U.S. before 1907. That means only those from the Philippines ... not our foes of WW I, WW II, Cold War, ISIS, etc.

The Bells are artifacts of the Museum of the United States Air Force. The Smithsonian and American museums deaccession articles found in their collections wrongly brought to the U.S., most notably World War II Holocaust personal property and Islamic relics taken from Middle East wars.

The existing law is harmful to national security. An ally today in the war against Islamic extremism, singled out as one the top three threats in Asia, where their AFP and U.S. forces work hand in hand, a nation whose archipelago sits astride a sea route that channels a third of the world's commerce, one who faces Chinese encroachment and militarization of the shoals of the South China Sea, our nation to nation relations have never been more important. The same with people-to-people and Church-to Church. Returning elements of Philippine culture to a country where so much was destroyed in WW II would, like last year's return of an identical bell from West Point to national jubilation, strengthen ties between two peoples whose modern heritage in Asia is found both in our religious and moral tenants and the English language.

Lawmakers should allow the moratorium to lapse. The Church of San Lornezo de Martir and the Museum of the USAF work together to send the Bells home to their people.

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Talking Paper used in Congressional discussions September, 2017

...The Bells of Balangiga are two Church bells in the collection of the Museum of the USAF

...are the pejorative words used by sensationalistic writers as descriptors

...are in a brick enclosure on Trophy Park at F.E. Warren AFB, Cheyenne, WY

...are on a Minuteman Missile base denied public access due to force protection

...were not one of the five signals used in a 1901 surprise attack against Americans

...were brought to the U.S. in 1904 by the 11th Infantry in violation of law and regulation

...should have returned to their church in 1902 upon cessation of war

...stand in contrast to the signal bell given by the 11th to 9th Infantry Regiment in 1901

...are not part of a monument or memorial

...are not part of U.S. Army history and heritage

...are not part of U.S. Air Force history and heritage

...are not part of Wyoming history and heritage

...are not “battle field souvenirs” or “war booty”

...are not “instruments of war”

...are the Personal Property of the Church of Saint Lawrence the Martir on Samar

...are the Cultural Property of the Republic of the Philippines.

...are a source of rancor with an ally of WW II, Korea, Vietnam, and the War on Terror

...are in the U.S. out of political deference and deceptive legislation

...whose presence stand in embarrassing contrast to bells returned to former enemies

...whose political acrimony inhibit a proper memorial to Company C in New York

...have become a moral compass pointing to absence of recognition for valor

...have become scapegoats of history with a Christian purpose now denied.

Seven Days to Balangiga

In the essay and history, I have concentrated on the Bells leaving the Massacre of Balangiga to others in the belief that the acrimonious debate over the surprise attack and the aftermath distracted from the conversation about the Bells. I was right. Nevertheless, I am asked about what happened. I believe that on the technical details, using both American the Philippine sources, especially material that came from the various native dialects, the attached article by the University of the Philippines professor most knowledgeable on the history of the Island of Samar, a member of the American, British, and Philippine Balangiga Research Group (BRG), is about as close as anyone is ever going to get. In my bibliography there are many opportunities to read more, but nothing to this level of detail. The best memories on how U.S. soldiers heroically responded are found in the compilation of letters in James Taylor 1931 book. It might be interesting to mention a former Marine told me the surprise attack was just clever tactics; comparable to combat deception used on both sides in the Middle East Wars. There are several publications on the subsequent retaliation and “Bloody Samar”. Much written about this awkward period of military history is in conflict. We know it has been studied in classes on asymmetric warfare.

I see this compilation of writings of Professor Borrinaga as the “Seven Days to Balangiga.”

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Balangiga Timeline 1901

By Prof. Rolando O. Borrinaga

BALANGIGA TIMELINE 1901 – 1

Sunday, 22 September 1901 - In the afternoon of that day, two drunken American soldiers made improper advances on the girl tending a local *tubâ* store. They were beaten up by the girl’s two brothers, who came to her rescue. In reaction to this incident, Capt. Thomas W. Connell, commander of Co. C, 9th U.S. Infantry Regiment, called for an emergency public meeting at the town plaza. After the residents had gathered, he ordered his soldiers to round up all the males, about 143 of them, and detained them under two conical Sibley tents newly erected on the ground northwest of the municipal building (each of which could accommodate only 16 people). Then the detainees were told that they had been taken prisoners. Thus, started the tension in Balangiga, which culminated in the famous “Balangiga Massacre” on Saturday, September 28, 1901.

The photo below illustrates the concept of the first Philippine-American War Memorial Plaza proposed to be realized in Balangiga, after the Bells of San Lorenzo de Martir would have been returned from the U.S.



BALANGIGA TIMELINE 1901 – 2

Monday, 23 September 1901 - From Sunday afternoon until morning of this day, the 143 detained males of Balangiga had not received any food. The Americans did not feed them, but relatives were allowed to bring food to them around 10:00 a.m. Captain Connell also freed some detainees (more than 60) the same morning because of age consideration (elderly or minors), but retained 80 able-bodied men for police work to clean up the town.

Accompanying photo: Featured here is a scan of a newspaper clip related to the Balangiga centennial in 2001 - my only extant photo item from that commemoration. There are spelling errors in the caption, including my name. I am shown here with the elderly Gamlin siblings: Jean Wall and Richard Adolph Gamlin+ (third and second from right). They are children of Pvt. Adolph Gamlin, the first U.S. soldier to be attacked during the Sept. 28, 1901 battle of Balangiga, but who also turned the attack around despite severe injuries inflicted by Capt. Valeriano Abanador, the chief of police and attack leader, and Mariano Valdenor, the assistant chief of police. Both braved the panic after 9/11 in the U.S. in 2011 and Jean's recent leg surgery to travel and attend the centennial commemoration. The newsmen who was accompanying the two officials in the photo at left failed to recognize Mrs. Aurea Amano (right), the host of the Balangiga Research Group in town.



BALANGIGA TIMELINE 1901 – 3

Tuesday, September 24, 1901 - Key officials of Balangiga met the night before at an undisclosed place, presumably the vice-mayor's house in Barrio Bachao outside the town proper, to discuss their local crisis. They decided to get rid of the Americans and discussed the tactic to do this (i.e., to attack at mealtime when the soldiers would be temporarily without weapons). The agreed date for the attack was September 28, 1901. The meeting broke up around 2:00 a.m.

During this day, two groups of 10 Filipino prisoners each, with American guards, went around the town and conducted house-to-house search to confiscate all deadly weapons, weeding bolos, and *sundangs*. All the confiscated weapons were placed inside sacks and brought to the American headquarters. Three sacks full of these items were collected from Burabod and four sacks from Sabang, both districts in the town proper. The weapons were then sorted out. The Americans kept the sharp *sundangs* while the weeding bolos were issued to the prisoners to be used in cleaning the town.

On the same day, the local officials who had met the night before spread out to all the outlying barrios of Balangiga and held conferences with the different barrio lieutenants, to orient them on the planned attack and to recruit manpower for this communal action.

BALANGIGA TIMELINE 1901 – 4

Wednesday, September 25, 1901 - Captain Connell ordered the Balangiga prisoners to cut down all the banana trees around the town and to confiscate and destroy (by burning) the stored rice of the residents, so that the *insurrectos* (insurgents) would not invade the town to get these items. The point of no return had been reached.

On this day in 1901, there was no more turning back for the people of Balangiga. For cutting down the bananas and other vegetation with food value, they had already violated the written edict of the Philippine Revolutionary Government in Samar under Gen. Vicente Lukban (punishable on first offense). But Captain Connell's order to also confiscate and burn the rice

stocks of the people, and on a famine month at that, was a grievous cultural insult. “*Pagkulban hin kaldero*” (To cause one's cooking pot to be upturned), a figurative way of saying someone is being deprived of the economic means - ex., a job - to buy food, is viewed as a source of shame (*awod*) by the intended recipient of the act and a display of insensitivity and insult by the known perpetrator. It has to be avenged in the most public manner possible. Connell's order had much greater implications than simply “*pagkulob han kaldero.*”

The accompanying photo shows the art design for the poster, brochure cover, t-shirts and other paraphernalia for the 1998 Balangiga *Lakbay-Aral* of the University of the Philippines, which I co-coordinated in September that year, the Centennial of the Declaration of Philippine Independence.

BALANGIGA TIMELINE 1901 – 5

Thursday, September 26, 1901 - The detailed plan for the attack was finalized this day during a secret meeting in the forested area of Amanlara, north of the town proper. The meeting was attended by heads of clans and village chiefs. It was agreed that Capitan Valeriano Abanador would be the overall leader of the attack, and Mariano Valdenor would be his second-in-command. All families of Balangiga were reportedly represented in this meeting. At the time, Balangiga's outlying villages included the present towns of Lawaan and Giporlos, and of Quinapundan, a town served by the Balangiga parish priest.

During the day, Abanador managed to negotiate with Captain Connell a “prisoner swap.” A number of detainees from the *población* were freed and replaced with alleged “tax defaulters” that the local officials had recruited and brought in from the outlying villages. The number of forced laborers that cleaned the town and repaired the roof of the barracks remained around 80.



The above photo was taken during the “National Symposium on the Balangiga Attack” that I convened for the University of the Philippines on September 26, 1998, exactly 19 years ago today. Jean Wall, daughter of Pvt. Adolph Gamlin, the first soldier to be attacked by Capitan

Valeriano Abanador during the famous battle, was the keynote speaker at that forum. On the same occasion, she also performed a ritual embrace of reconciliation with Engr. Ted Amano, representing the Balangiga descendants. Amano's ascendants include Abanador and Valdenor, both of whom serially inflicted injuries on Pvt. Gamlin, before he turned the attack around after picking up a rifle and started shooting. In Balangiga for the 97th Balangiga Encounter Day two days later, Jean was the guest at the ancestral house of Mrs. Yolly Abanador-Amano.

The symposium speakers (seated on the table) were: Charo Nabong-Cabardo, Dr. Rey Imperial, myself, and Bob Couttie.

BALANGIGA TIMELINE 1901 – 6

Friday, September 27, 1901 - The events of this day remain the most confusing and fantastic in the entire Balangiga episode. What echoed through a century was apparently a drunk soldier-survivor's account of an afternoon funeral procession with coffins of dead children, which were suspected of containing bolos brought into the church, that were used for the attack the next day. Some soldier tried to pry open a coffin-like cover and saw "two feet of a child." He heard something like "*el calenturon*" (cholera) and, suddenly frightened, shut the box tight.

However, many other documents, including the first official report of the action at Balangiga, present a logical and more credible sequence of events, which highlighted Capitan Valeriano Abanador's key tactical role in their unfolding.

Abanador apparently succeeded in another "prisoner swap" this day, which freed more detainees from the *población* in exchange for "tax defaulters" from the outskirts.

Work on the cleanup of the town and the roofing of the barracks apparently stopped around noon. Abanador seemed to have convinced Captain Connell about preparing for and celebrating a fiesta that day, which happened to be the 42nd anniversary of the erection of the Balangiga parish on September 27, 1859. The natives butchered a Carabao in the afternoon, probably in the town plaza in full view and with participation of some U.S. soldiers.

A component of this fiesta was a religious procession, where most of the local residents presumably joined and paraded all their religious images, and prayed for divine guidance and success for the next day's attack from all their saints and deities. One of the paraded images seemed to have been the *Santo Intierro*, the lying image of the Interred Christ, which was contained in a coffin-like structure. When the curious drunk soldier tried to lift its (cloth) cover to probe its content, he was probably told in the local language "*Santo Intierro iton*," and misheard it as "*calenturon*."

Abanador's fiesta gambit apparently worked. Behind the cover of feting and feeding a company of soldiers, he succeeded in getting them drunk with *tubâ*, the native drink that virtually flowed

in the afternoon and into the night. Perhaps, only the assigned guards on duty (two hours on, two hours off) that day could not participate in the festivities.



One of these guards was Pvt. Adolph Gamlin. Late in his life, when he had become the last living American survivor of Balangiga, he revealed that “they [soldiers of Co. C] were all drunk the night before [the attack].”

The above photo shows the Abanador memorabilia usually displayed during the Balangiga Encounter Day commemorations. Among the items is the cane-cum-arnis-stick that Abanador was said to have raised and waved in the air to signal the ringing of the church bell after the attack had started with his assault on Pvt. Gamlin. The ringing of the bell was a signal for the other bolo-armed fighters hidden in the town’s outskirts to join the fighting around the municipal building and main barracks of the U.S. soldiers.

BALANGIGA TIMELINE 1901 – 7

Saturday, September 28, 1901 - Capitan Valeriano Abanador attacked Pvt. Adolph Gamlin and signaled the start of the battle of Balangiga. The rest is history.

The Balangiga Incident and Its Aftermath

By Rolando O. Borrinaga

(Published in slightly edited form under the title “Filipino victory in Balangiga recalled” in the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Sept. 28, 2001

In the morning of Saturday (not the mythic Sunday), Sept. 28 1901. Hundreds of native fighters mostly armed with bolos, some of them disguised as women church worshippers,

staged a successful surprise attack on US troops who were mostly eating or lining up for breakfast in Balangiga town, at the southern coast of Samar Island.

Described as the “worst single defeat” of the US military in the Philippines, that event became known in history as the Balangiga Massacre.

Cross-purposes. The natives plotted to resist forced starvation on a famine season due to the destruction or confiscation of their food stocks, to free about 80 male residents who had been rounded up for forced labor and detained for days in crowded conditions with little food and water, and to fight for honor after having been publicly shamed by these two faulty military impositions.

The US troops belonged to Company C, 9th US Infantry Regiment, who were stationed in Balangiga to keep its small port closed and prevent any trading. Their mission was to deprive the Filipino revolutionary forces of supplies during the Philippine-American War, which had spread to the Visayas.

A glamour unit, Company C was assigned provost duty and guarded the captured Pres. Emilio Aguinaldo upon their return to the Philippines in June 1901, after fighting Boxer rebels and helping capture Peking in China. They also performed as honor guard during the historic July 4, 1901 inauguration of the American civil government in the Philippines and the installation as first civil governor of William Howard Taft, later president of the US.

Company C, commanded by Capt. Thomas W. Connell, a West Point graduate, arrived in Balangiga a few weeks later on Aug. 11.

The attackers. The attacking force, commanded by Valeriano Abanador, the local chief of police, was composed of around 500 men in seven different units. They represented virtually all families of Balangiga, whose outlying villages then included the present towns of Lawaan and Giporlos, and of Quinapundan, a town served by the priest in Balangiga.

Only two of the eight main plotters were identified as revolutionary officers under the command of Brig. Gen. Vicente Lukban, the politico-military governor of Samar appointed by Pres. Aguinaldo. They were Capt. Eugenio Daza, a former teacher who became Lukban’s area officer for tax collection and food security in southeastern Samar, and Pedro Duran, Sr., a Balangigan sergeant under Daza.

Contrary to the century-old attribution that Daza masterminded the attack, the essentially all-Balangigan plot appeared to be the handiwork of Abanador, a Letran dropout who played chess opposite Company C's surgeon, Maj. Richard Sill Griswold, and a tournament caliber *arnis* (stick fighting) master.

The attack. Abanador’s deft move to neutralize the moving armed guard, Pvt. Adolph Gamlin, by grabbing his gun from behind and hitting him unconscious with its butt on the head, served as

the cue for the communal laborers positioned in and around the town plaza to make the rush at the two other stationary armed guards and the unarmed men of Company C.



Photograph of a diorama depicting the start of the attack on the American troops in Balangiga. (Originally published with an article about Balangiga in the *Sunday Inquirer Magazine*.)

Abanador then picked up his rattan cane, waved it above his head, and yelled: “*Atake, mga Balangigan-on!* (Attack, men of Balangiga!)”

A church bell was rung seconds later, to announce that the attack had begun. (This was probably the smallest of the three bells, the ringing of which is allowed for secular or civic uses.)

Fierce fighting ensued, resulting in one of the biggest number of American casualties in a single encounter.

Of the 74 men of Company C, 36 were killed during the attack (including all commissioned officers), eight of the wounded died later during the escape by bancas to Basey town, and four were missing and presumed dead.

Of the 26 survivors, only four were not wounded. The natives suffered 28 deaths and 22 wounded.

“Howling wilderness”. Considered one of the worst defeats in US military history, the Filipino victory in Balangiga was followed by a shameful episode that the US government has not yet regretted nor apologized for.

US military authorities retaliated with a “kill and burn” policy to take back Samar, deliberately equating a victorious small town with an entire island, from October 1901 to March 1902.

Implemented by the Sixth Separate Brigade under Brig. Gen. Jacob H. Smith of the US Army, which included a battalion of US Marines under Maj. Littleton T. W. Waller, the campaign was blamed for the alleged disappearance of some 50,000 people in Samar. (*NOTE: The 50,000*

population loss is now known to be an error traceable to two American historians - Blount and Young. Studies after 2001 showed that the Samar population had an estimated population deficit of only about 15,000 between the parish census figures for 1896 and the US Census conducted in 1903.)

The general reportedly gave orders to kill anybody capable of bearing arms (specifically, 10 years old and above) during the combat operations to reduce Samar into a “howling wilderness.”

Aside from the population loss, the Samar Campaign resulted in massive devastation of the rural economic base in terms of hundreds of burned houses, destroyed native boats, and slaughtered draft carabaos. US troops likewise burned confiscated rice and food stocks and market-ready *abaca* (hemp) fibers, the principal source of local cash income.

General Smith was eventually made the scapegoat for the shameful policy on Samar. He was forced to retire from the US Army following a court martial.

The Bells of Balangiga. The three church bells of Balangiga were taken days after the attack by members of the 11th US Infantry, another US Army unit that occupied the abandoned town. These “war trophies” were shipped out of the Leyte-Samar region from the headquarters of the 11th Infantry at the former Camp Bumpus, now the Leyte Park Resort in Tacloban City.

The camp was named after Lt. Edward A. Bumpus, Harvard graduate and second in command of Company C, who was also killed in Balangiga.

The smallest bell was turned over to the 9th US Infantry in Calbayog, Samar (*Manila in distributed copies and newspaper account, which is wrong*). This relic is on permanent display at the traveling museum of the 9th US Infantry, now stationed in Korea.

The two bigger bells were brought to the US by returning 11th Infantry soldiers to their home station at the former Fort D.A. Russell, now the F.E. Warren Air Force Base, in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Both are now displayed at its Trophy Park.

The return of the bells to the Philippines remains the last issue of contention between the US and Philippine governments related to the Philippine-American War.

Note: The contents of this document were serialized in my Facebook account from September 22 to 28, 2017. RB.

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Bells Sources and Methods

My friend Dennis Wright was invited to go fishing in Wyoming in 2013. He called me. He would combine the brief vacation from his work in the Philippines, use it to see family in the U.S. and suggested I visit Wyoming and see two church bells with him. It had seemed to us they were part of only two known memorials to Americans who had fought in the Philippine American War.

I arrived two days early to play Cheyenne tourist, visited museums, flea markets, enjoying a return to the West. When Dennis arrived, we met and talked with two retired officers whom I had read were most conversant on the history of why the bells were there on an Air Force base and why they were staying there. Both Dave McCracken and Bob Craft were good hosts providing information from their personal histories. We told them about the monument at Clark. We have kept in touch over time, including after the typhoon destroyed Balangiga and Dennis and his firm took on the charitable work of rebuilding schools.

In 2014 when the now Clark American Cemetery was officially turned over to the American Battle Monuments Commission and Dennis and I spoke, we used that opportunity for more travel and understanding. We flew to Balangiga and trekked the battle site with Professor “Rolly” Borrinaga of the University of Philippines. Dennis presented to city officials his concept of taking the Plaza in front of the church where the men of Company C were originally buried, and creating a “Philippine American War Memorial Plaza”. Urgent projects like schools make the Plaza a future dream.

Before flying home, Dennis joined me on a return trip to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea, a spot I had visited in uniform in 1990 provoking some excitement when I was mistakenly thought by the North to be the new senior negotiator for the United Nations, a position always held by a Navy flag officer. This time the visit in casual tourist attire was to visit the Second Infantry Division Museum at Camp Red Cloud and see the third Bell of Balangiga. We had now touched them all ...and the location from which they had commenced their travels as part of the travails of war. As “writer”, an important fourth destination was the home of E. Jean Wall. She was my hostess for two days allowing much rummaging in her extensive Arizona library on all things Balangiga. Subsequently I have understood what a treasure trove she has in her home after spending many hours in study with the National Archives and Records Administration and the Army’s Heritage and Education Center.

A Man Cave

My wife and I are “Americana” collectors. In 2013 I became a collector of books, pamphlets, and memorabilia about the U.S. conflict with Spain at the end of the 19th century, and the subsequent history of our “involvement” in the Philippine Islands. I have almost one hundred books and publications, some rare. They all tell a story.... some accurate, some not so accurate. The early ones were rushed into print and are very patriotic. Some entertain. Some of the writers genuinely sought understanding about perceived imperialism, and why the United States would become involved in a 20th century Asian military and economic ascendancy. Some wrote with an agenda. All add to the education of anyone who wants to make the journey I did. Here is my list. I have noted the books believed to be of value to understanding, “The Massacre of Balangiga”.

A List of Readables

“The Battle of Manila Bay”, printed in “The Bounding Billow”, “published in intervals on U. S. F. S. Olympia, Manila, Philippines Islands, June, 1898, Vol. 1 No. 5”, a 16-page shipboard newspaper containing the details of the battle, patriotic poems, editorials, and translated accounts of the events from the Spanish. The shipboard editors apologizing for the tardiness of the issue recount say, “We were delayed by lack of paper and only through the kindness of some of our shipmates who brought us paper which Spaniards left on evacuating Cavite, are we enabled to print this issue...” They also note in this issue the passing of a man famous for the cry, “You may fire when you are ready, Gridley”; i.e. Captain Charles V. Gridley who died at Kobe, Japan on board the steamer Coptic, 5 June, having been ordered home on sick leave. (Battle took place 1 May 1898, a month before publication.)

“The Story of the Spanish American War and the Revolt in the Philippines”, Told by W. Nephew King, Lieutenant, USN, “illustrated from drawings in black and white photographs taken at the front and paintings by the best artists, published by Peter Fenelon Collier and endorsed by O. O. Howard, MG US Army (ret) and Robley D. Evans, Captain USN. A large folio book with both colored and black and white plates. 1898.

“The Story of the Philippines and Our New Possessions”, “The Eldorado of the Orient”, by Murat Halstead, 1898.

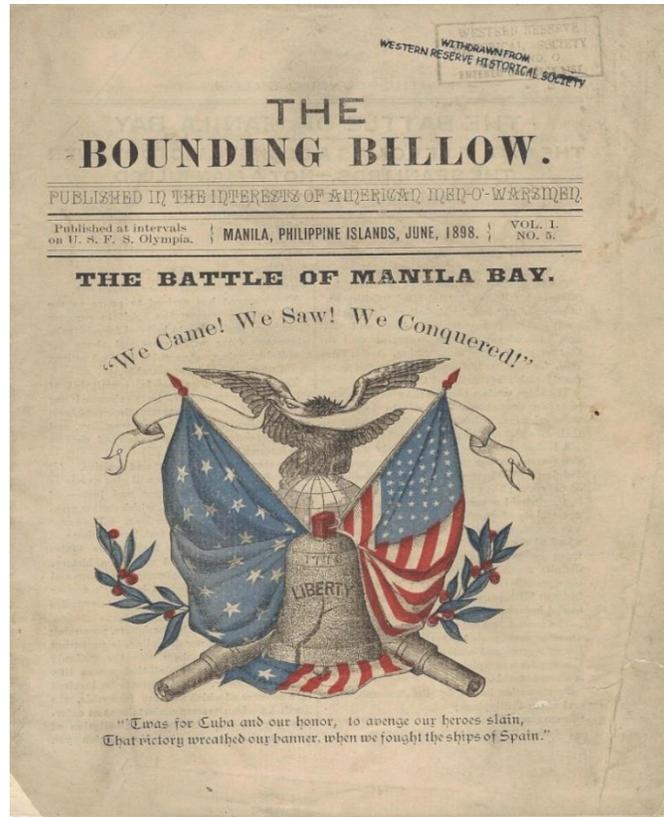
“Our New Possessions. Four Books in One. A graphic account, descriptive and historical, of the tropic islands of the sea which have fallen under our sway, their cities, peoples and commerce, natural resources and the opportunities they offer to Americans”. Book I. The Philippines. Book II Puerto Rico. Book III. Cuba. Book IV. The Hawaiian Islands”, by Trumbull White, 1898.

“Pictorial History of Our War with Spain for Cuba’s Freedom. A thrilling account of the land and naval operations of American soldiers in our War with Spain, and the heroic struggles of Cuban patriots against Spanish tyranny.” By Trumbull White, 1898.

“Sketches from the Spanish-America War in the Philippine Islands”, by J. A. Wisner, and H. F. Humphrey, May to August, 1898. A reproduction of the original pamphlet about the Battle of Manila Bay.

“Guide for the American in the Philippines. A description of each of the provinces of the archipelago, its history, area, topographical conditions, climate, language, number of inhabitants, towns, products, industries, mines, and other features of interest, ending with instructions for this country”. A rare and the first tourist book for Americans in the Philippines, translated from the Spanish by F. C. Fisher, dedicated to Major General Otis, intended to be used by Americans involved in the annexation. 1899. One of two copies known.

“Taking Manila or in the Philippines with Dewey, giving the life and exploits of Admiral George Dewey, U.S.N.”, by Henry L. Williams, copyright by Thomas D. Hurst, 1899, Hurst and Company Publishers, New York.



The front cover of the U.S.F.S. Olympia June 1898 shipboard newspaper, a remarkable 16-page document that describes Dewey's victory just days after in exciting detail and in 19th century elegant poetry and prose. A rare artifact from the writer's collection. Perhaps the first American document printed in the Philippines.

“Fighting In The Philippines, Authentic Original Photographs”. Copyright 1899 by F. Tennyson Neely. A book of photographs taken in and around Manila of various U.S. military units, men, battlements, city life, etc. during the Philippine Insurrection.

“Life and Achievements of Admiral Dewey From Montpelier to Manila”, by Mural Halstead, 1899.

“On to Manila”, by Douglas White and Pierre N. Boeringer, Pacific Historical Magazine, 1899.

“Reminiscences and Thrilling Stories of the War by Returned Heroes containing Vivid Accounts of Personal Experience by Officers and Men.....” a unique contemporaneous book with pictures, autographs, glorious descriptions of the battles of the Spanish American War, including “Daring Deeds of our Brave Regulars and Volunteers at Santiago, in Porto Rico and the Philippines Islands, Reminiscences of life in Camp, Field and Hospital.....by Hon. James Rankin Young, Member of Congress and for many years Clerk of the United States Senate in collaboration with J. Hampton Moore The well-known author and newspaper correspondent”. Published by J. L. Nichols and Co., 1899.

“True Version of the Philippines Revolution”, by Don Emilio Aguinaldo y Famy, Tarlak, 23rd September, 1899. Dedicated by the author, “To all civilized nations and especially to the great North American Republic. I dedicate to you this modest work with a view to informing you respecting the international events which have occurred during the past three years and are still going in the Philippines, in order that you be fully acquainted with the facts and be thereby placed in a position to pronounce judgment upon the issue and be satisfied and assured of the Justice which forms the basis and is in fact the foundation of our Cause. I place the simple truth respectfully before and dedicate it to you as an act of homage and as testimony of my admiration for and recognition of the wide knowledge, the brilliant achievements and the real power of other nations, whom I salute, in the name of the Philippine nation, with every effusion of my soul.” A 2009 Valde Books reprint.

“1900 Guard Duty Book”, U.S. Army, likely the one studied by PFC Gamlin when on guard duty during the Balangiga guerrilla attack. This rare book was prepared for use by volunteers and state militias coming on duty for the Spanish American War.

“Harper’s History of the War in the Philippines”, edited by Marion Wilcox, B.A., LLB, illustrated. Large 11 ½ by 16-inch table top book full of colored and black and white illustrations and extensive discussion of events. Published by Harper and Brothers, New York and London, 1900. (Harper’s and Leslie’s competed for exposure during the war, had correspondents on site, and filled their publications with photographs and stories.)

“Leslie’s Official History of the Spanish-American War, A Pictorial and Descriptive Records of the Cuban Rebellion, the Causes that Involved the United States, and Complete Narrative of our Conflict with Spain on Land and Sea. Supplemented with fullest information respecting, Cuba, Porto Rico, the Philippines and Hawaii, their commerce, climate, productions, history and people. Compiled and written directly from the Official Records at Washington, with the endorsement of the President, of the Secretary of War, and of the Commanding Officers of the Army and Navy.” Harry P. Mawson, Leslie’s Weekly, J.W. Buel, Historian, copyright 1899 by General Marcus F. Wright, War Records Office, Washington. Sold by subscription only”.

“The Official and Pictorial record of the War with Spain and Philippines including the Life, Messages and Papers of President McKinley, with fullest information respecting Cuba, Porto Rico, The Philippines and Hawaii, ‘Their Commerce, Climate and Productions. Compiled and written directly from the Official Records at Washington, with endorsement of the President, of the Secretary of the War, and of the Commanding Officers of the Army and Navy.” Copyright 1900. General Marcus F. Wright, War Records Office, Washington. “Sold by subscription only.” The edition of the earlier Leslie’s book but without the Leslies attribution was printed in 1902 and has more material on the Philippines in it.

“Aguinaldo, A Narrative of Filipino Ambitions” by Edwin Wildman, former Vice and Deputy Consul-General at Hong Kong; War correspondent during the Filipino Revolt; Special Commissioner to China during the Boxer Rebellion”, Lothrop Publishing, 1901.

Stirring Description of the Heroic Fight for Life Made by Captain Connell and His Men Against Tremendous Odds”, an article dated October 15 1901, written at Basay Samar by correspondent

Stephen Bonsal, that appeared in the New York Herald. A good contemptuous story with an onsite American perspective.

Final Report of Brig. Gen. Robert F. Hughes. U. S. Army, Commanding the Department of the Visayas. Headquarters Department of the Visayas, Iloilo, Panay, P. I. November 30, 1901.

“Under MacArthur In Luzon, Or Last Battles in the Philippines”, 1901, by Edward Stratemeyer. One of a group of novels known as the, “Old Glory Series”, showcasing American heroism during that period. Another was “Under Dewey at Manila”, “Under Otis in the Philippines”, and then, “A Young Volunteer in Cuba”, “Fighting in Cuban Waters”, and “The Campaign of the Jungle”, which was about Lawton on Luzon.

“Correspondence Relating to The War with Spain, Including the Insurrection in the Philippine Islands and the China Relief Expedition”, Volumes 1 and 2, published in 1992 by the Center of Military History, US Army, 1902. A gift presented in 2014 to RADM McKinnon, by Robert Dalessandro, Director of History, U.S. Army.

“For the Love I bear my dead, as a Testimony to the Courage and Devotion of the Comrades Who, with Him, Gave Their lives to Their Country. This tribute is dedicated To The Memory of my Son EDWARD AVERY BUMPUS First Lieutenant Company C, Ninth United States Infantry, And of his Companions in Arms, Captain Thomas W. Connell Surgeon Richard S. Griswold and the members of his company who were killed 28 September 1901 in the island of Samar, P.I. by Evert C. Bumpus, Published by his friend Waller M. Jackson.” This is an important book written in love and in hope of understanding about the officers who were slain by one of their fathers.

“Scenes Taken in the Philippines and in the Pacific, relating to soldiers”, Photos by J. D. Givens, S.P, published and purchased in San Francisco from 1905 to about 1915. See Givens, a photographer of some renowned, biography. Over the years he published many series of photos on our new possessions.

“An Observer in the Philippines or Life in Our New Possessions”, by John Bancroft Devins, 1905. A report on the progress and activities of Americans three years after end of the Insurrection.

“History of the Ninth US Infantry, 1799-1909”, by Fred R. Brown, Chapter X, “The Campaign in Samar”, pages 542 to 624. The book is rare and hard to find. My pages came from Army records. The book is essential to any who write on the history of the event.

“Reminiscences of the Spanish-American War in Cuba and the Philippines”, by Charles F. Gauvreau, 1915. A recent Nabu Public Domain Reprint published for historians of Gauvreau original thoughts as a volunteer private...his “reminiscences of actual service at the front”.

“The Camp Fire Boys in the Philippines”, by Latharo Hoover, 1930. One of many fun books on those who in the 20s and 30s followed what our country was doing in the Philippines.

“The Massacre of Balangiga: Being an Authentic Account by Several of the Few Survivors”, by James P. Taylor, 1931. This rare book is essential to any study of the events of Balangiga. The

book came about because Taylor felt the need to record the thoughts of survivors in order to get recognition they deserved. It is often quoted and sometimes criticized about perceived exaggerations about atrocities; its contribution is unique and cannot be ignored.

“Soldiers in the Sun” by William Thaddeus Sexton published in 1939, and later in 1945 under the title “Soldiers in the Philippines” as part of the Infantry Journal Fighting Forces Series, it is based on then Captain Sexton’s (later Major General) 1931 Philippine tour of duty followed by years of research in the oddly named “Philippine Insurrection”. Based on official records it covers details of the fighting from the U.S. perspective and was “selected by scholars as being culturally important and part of the knowledge base of civilization.”

“Pensions – Philippine Uprisings and Campaigns from July 5, 1902 to December 31, 1913”. Report of “Hearing before the Committee on Invalid Pensions, House of Representatives, 76th Congress, and July 25, 1940”. This 1940 hearing was interesting because the fighting that took place after the war “over” in 1902 took decades to sort out who deserved pensions. Flea market pamphlet finds are sometimes exciting finds.

“Sons of Gunboats”, by Commander Frederick L. Sawyer, published by the United States Naval Institute in 1946. A wonderful story of the U.S.S. Panay, a gunboat fighting in the Philippine islands during the “Insurrection”. A first-person account that Vietnam veterans of Riverine warfare may relate to. Events took place in and around Samar, Leyte, and the Visayas in 1900 and included many examples of local community treachery, which made me wonder why a village massacre a year later was a surprise. Where was the Intel?

“Little Brown Brother, How the United States Purchased and Pacified the Philippine Islands at the Century’s Turn”, by Leon Wolff, 1960. A wonderful little book on our Philippine history I found in my office in Subic in 1980 and brought it home because nobody else cared.

“Waller of Samar – Part I.” by Captain Robert B. Asprey, May 1961, published in Leatherneck Magazine. His part in the complex history of Samar has been the subject of much study, and also a distraction when it comes to the Bells.

“Bolo Massacre at Balangiga”, by Pete Dayton, Argosy Magazine, June 1963

“The Ordeal of Samar”, by Joseph L. Schott, 1964. As mentioned in the essay, an essential “read” on the complexities of this period of history. Forgive any historical errors; just be glad you were not there.



Map of the Philippine islands showing “Manilla” published during the period of Spanish and Portuguesa exploration, Bellin cartographer, 1754. Samar at bottom right.

“The Balangiga Massacre”, by Richard P. Weaver, American History Illustrated, August 1966.. A typical and reasonable history of the time, but again the author relies on the accounts of others, believes the attack took place on Sunday, and misses much detail now available.

“American Imperialism and the Philippines Insurrection, Testimony taken from Hearings on Affairs in the Philippines Islands before the Senate Committee on the Philippines – 1902”. Edited by Henry F. Graff, Columbia University, and published by Little, Brown and Company, Boston 1969.

“Response to Imperialism, The United States and the Philippine-American War, 1899-1902.” By Richard W. Welch, Jr., 1979. A study of the Philippine American War on U.S. “society and politics.”

“Benevolent Assimilation, The American Conquest of the Philippines, 1899-1903”, by Stuart Creighton Miller, 1982.

“Sitting in Darkness, Americans in the Philippines”, by David Haward Bain, 1984. A good read previously mentioned.

“The F.E. Warren Air Force Base War Trophies from Balangiga”, P.I., by Gerald M. Adams, from the Annals of Wyoming, 1987.

“Manila Envelopes”, Oregon volunteer Lt. George F. Telfers’s Spanish-American War Letters edited by Sara Bunnett”, Published by Oregon Historical Society Press, 1987. The best, and very recent, compilation of letters about what military life was like in the Philippines. It covers well the difficult problems of living conditions, and especially issues with mental and physical health.

“In Our Image, America’s Empire in the Philippines”, by Stanley Karnow, 1989. An essential read to our overall history in the Philippines, as mentioned in the narrative.

“Historical Document’s About 1899 Philippine-American War in Samar (Battle of Balangiga), A Project of Kaanak 1896, Descendants of Filipino Heroes”, 1992. A compilation of documents on the planning of the Balangiga and leadership of Don Eugenio Daza.

“The U.S. Army and Counterinsurgency in the Philippine War, 1899-1902”, by Brian McAllister Linn, The University of North Carolina Press, 1989. This and Texas A&M Professor Linn’s later book on the Philippine War published in 2000 have the most detail of any authority on details of the war.

“Savage Acts: Wars, Fairs and Empire 1898-1904”, a 30-minute documentary video by the American Social History Project, 1996. The provocative video that helped contribute to keeping the bells where they are.

“The Balangiga Massacre: Getting Even”, by Victor Nebrida, published by the Philippine History Group of Los Angeles, 1997.



The photo I took of the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir in Balangiga in May 2014 showing the missing roof and devastation inside from Typhoon Yolanda or Haiyan. Two years later the church had been restored from American generosity of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

“Stability and Support Operations at the turn of the century - 1898”. Published in the May-August 1998 issue of INFANTRY, with collaboration of Colonel David P. Perrine and the benefit of the

diary of Walter James Berthoff who wrote about Balangiga and its aftermath. Dave Perrine was among the first to study the Massacre and collaborated with Jean

“The Bells of Balangiga”, by Gerald M. Adams, 88-page booklet published in 1998 in Cheyenne.

“The Bells of Balangiga, An Appeal for Support”, by Leonardo LY. Medroso, D.D., 1999, an often-repeated article by the Bishop of Borongan in his effort to recover the Bells for their Church.

“The Philippine War 1899-1902”, by Brian McAllister Linn, 2000. The best book on the war. It followed his PhD dissertation and the 1989 book on the counterinsurgency is the premier reference source.

“The Bells of Balangiga: A Case of Selective Amnesia”, by James A. Helzer, 2002. The local essay that questioned why Wyoming is the best place to honor the fallen of Balangiga.

“Vestiges of War, The Philippine-American War and the Aftermath of an Imperial Dream, 1899-1999”, Edited by Angel Velasco Shaw and Luis H. Francia, 2002.

“Two Bells/Two Worlds”, a video written, directed and produced by Bernard Stone in 2002. Another effort to discover Americans at their worst. Not helpful.

“Project Balangiga”, a play produced by the Ma-Yi Theater Company at the Blue Heron Arts Center, New York, August 22, 2002. It was one of nine plays presented on the “Savage Stage” said to create a “theater of disturbance “about the “savage” Asians offering an alternative view on their character. It will be found in the book,” Savage Stage, Plays by Ma-Yi Theater Company”, published by the Ma-Yi Theater Company, 2006.

“The Pacification of the Philippines” by John M. Gates, The U.S. Army and Irregular Warfare, Chapter Three, 2002.

“Private Adolph Gamlin: The Greater American Hero in Balangiga” by Prof. Rolando O. Borrinaga, 2002. An important study of a lone sentry on duty and the recognition he did not receive.

“The Gallant Fortress” by Bob Couttie. An article on the heroism by Pfc Adolph Gamlin during the Balangiga surprise attack.

“The Balangiga Conflict Revisited” by Rolando O. Borrinaga, 2003, by New Day Publishers in the Philippines, and the “must read” on the Saturday morning attack. Professor Borrinaga was a key member of the Balangiga Research Group (BRG).

“Legal Ownership Over the Balangiga Bells: For Whom Do the Bells Toll?”, by Victor Johann Espiritu, Fall 2003. A Georgetown University research paper that covers the laws applicable to the period when the bells were brought to the United States, the Lieber Code and The Hague Conventions.

“The Forbidden Book, The Philippine-American War in Political Cartoons”, 2004. A remarkable expose of the cartoons that were all over early America about our adventure in the Philippines. Clearly anti-colonial. Unsure about the message...given that by 2004 the Philippines were doing just fine.

“The Star-Entangled Banner, One Hundred Years of America in the Philippine”, by Professor Sharon Delmendo, 2004. A personal discovery by a thoughtful college professor whose mother was one of the first Peace Corps volunteers in the Philippines;

“Hang the Dogs, The True Tragic History of the Balangiga Massacre”, by Bob Couttie, 2004. An important book from the BRG and their remarkable work to sort out the details of that fateful day.

“The Anguren Account of the Balangiga Incident, Its Context and Aftermath”, by Eustaquio Rosaldo and Rolando O. Borrinaga, 2006. A unique Philippine discussion of the events.

“Ghosts of the Insurrection, A novel”, by Wilmo C. Orejola, a story by a Philippine-American physician born in Basey, Eastern Samar, near Balangiga, about the period and the massacre.

“Philippine American War, 1899-1902”, by Arnaldo Dumindin, 2006. A Philippine perspective from a Philippine scholar.

“The Bells of The Balangiga”, by Abner P. Mercado, 2006.

“The Philippines Insurrection 1899-1902, America’s Only Try for an Overseas Empire”, by John E. Walsh. 1973. A short history with photos of the history up to 1901, but no mention of Balangiga and insurrection further south.

“A War of Frontier and Empire, The Philippine-American War, 1899-1902” by David J. Silbey, 2007. An easy and excellent well researched read on the PhilAm War.

“The Spanish-American War and Philippine Insurrection 1898-1902,” by Alejandro de Quesada, 2007. “This book details the uniforms and weapons of the ‘American, Spanish, Cuban and Filipino forces involved in the United States Army’s first overseas war.”

“The Balangiga Massacre Monument”, published at Tacloban City, Leyte, as an on-line discourse and commentary, 2008.

“Leyte-Samar Shadows: Essays on the History of Eastern Visayas”, by Rolando O. Borrinaga, 2008. An essential must read following his seminal first work, with updated details.

” The War Over Plunder: Who Owns Art Stolen in War?” by Colin Woodard, MHQ Magazine, 2010.

“The Moro War: How America Battled a Muslim Insurgency in the Philippine Jungle, 1902-1913” by James R. Arnold, 2011.

“God’s Arbiters, Americans and the Philippines, 1898- 1902”, by Susan K. Harris, 2011.



An early photo of scarp bronze including damaged church bells headed for melting as a source of bronze for an early Philippine foundry. The islands had plenty of copper with tin coming from China. Courtesy of Professor Trota Jose, University of the Philippines.

“The Truth” About the Balangiga Massacre, 2011, by Cristologo L. Ramasasa. A Filipino writers account, good overall with some discrepancies. Very nationalistic in describing the attackers. “Their strong determination for self identity and patriotism were implanted within their hearts.”

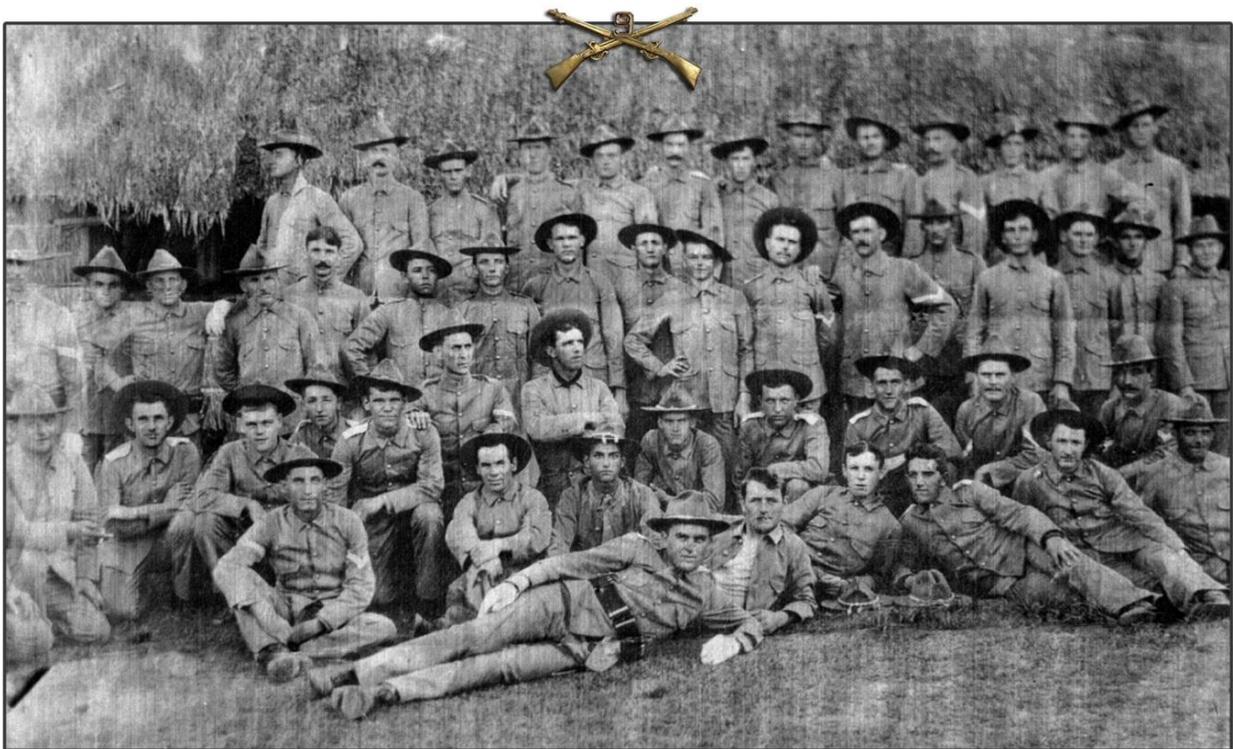
“The ‘Massacre’ and the Aftermath: Remembering Balangiga & The War in the Philippines”, by Alvi Akiboh, 2012.

“The Devil’s Causeway, The True Story of America’s First Prisoners of War in the Philippines, and the Heroic Expedition Sent to Their Rescue”, by Matthew Westfall, 2012.

“Honor in the Dust, Theodore Roosevelt, War in the Philippines, and the Rise and Fall of America’s Imperial Dream”, by Greg Jones, 2012. The very best book on why we were in the Philippines in the first place.

“Lincoln’s Code – The Laws of War in American History”, by John Fabian Witt, 2012, published by the Free Press Division of Simon and Schuster. A history of the Lieber Code that takes it through the Hague conventions up to the Law of Armed Conflict.

“The Balangiga Inflection, Massacre, Media, and the United States’ Understanding of empire in the Philippines 1898-1902”. A Department of History honors thesis by David Alan Fuller, Harvard University, 2013.



**Company C, 9th Infantry Regiment Group Photo
July 1901 - In Front of the units Nipa Barracks**

A haunting photo of 51 men from Company C, 9th Infantry Regiment likely taken in front of the Paco barracks outside Manila. This photo is composed of junior enlisted men and Corporals from Company C. The Non-commissioned Officers and Officers from the company are not present. The man reclining at front and center has just been relieved from guard duty and is still wearing his blue web belt with Krag Rifle bayonet and white gloves. A large percentage of the men in this photo were killed in action by bolo sword wielding natives two months later during the attack at Balangiga, Samar on September 28, 1901.

“Of War and Peace: Lantakas and Bells in Search of Foundries in the Philippines”, Part One Lantaka: from 16th to 19th Centuries by W-A Miallhe De Burgh and Fe B. Mangalhas, 2013, and Part Two Bagting: The Valuation of Time and Memory in Spanish Colonial Philippines, by Regalado Trota Jose, 2014. A rare and recent publication on the foundries in the Philippines, their history, and their production of church bells and cannon.

“A Brief History of the 1st Wyoming Volunteer Infantry”, by Patrick McSherry.

“Spanish American and Philippine War Monuments in America”, an on-line inventory. Included is the base of the Monument to the Battle of Balangiga at Madison Barracks, Sackets Harbor, New York, the bell now being part of the Army’s Manchu traveling museum in Korea. Missing is the structure at F.E. Warren AFB and the monument to the unknowns formerly at Fort McKinley in Manila and now at ABMC’s Clark American Cemetery....and many more.

“The State of Wyoming In The Spanish American War, February 15th 1898, to July 4th, 1902”, taken from the Spanish American War Database, Sons of Spanish American War Veterans. 2014.

“Bells and Gongs for Peace (&/or International Friendship) Around the World”, an article and compendium about bells and how they have become a means to achieve national reconciliation after conflict.

“Military Personnel of the Philippines American War, Including: Henry Ware Lawton, Welborn C. Wood, Charles Hovey, John M. Stotsenburg, John Alexander Logan, Jr., Harry C. Egbert, George Dewey, Lucius Roy Holbrook, Leonard Wood, John L. Hines, Irving Hale.” A recent Hephaestus Book that is material put together from many sources for historical purposes.

“The Philippine-American War: A Military History Including the Background, Conflict Origin, Consequences, and More”, Edited by Gaby Alex from high quality Wikipedia articles and published for historical purposes.

“The National Guard in the Spanish-American War and Philippine Insurrection, 1898-1899”. Author: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, published by CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 24 Sept 2014.

About the Writer

Dan McKinnon is a retired Navy officer with 35 years of service. He is a life member of the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars and the National Defense Industrial Association. He first visited the Philippines in 1968 while serving with Marines on USS Princeton, an amphibious assault ship. The ship would leave Vietnam and visit Subic Bay for repair, resupply and recreation. In 1980 he became Commanding Officer of Naval Supply Depot, Subic and the Navy's largest overseas logistics center serving Navy and Marine Corps operations in the Asian Pacific and Indian Ocean. He would return often over the next several years first on business and later to pursue an interest in military history. He led veteran tours to Corregidor, Intramuros, the Cabanatuan POW camp, and walked the route of the Bataan Death March. He co-founded three charities that worked in the country; the first to get young men off the streets of Olongapo into trade skills and jobs; the second a foundation to provide help to a hospital and an Amerasian orphanage; and the most recent to care for the remains of thousands of American veterans and their families. He was made an honorary citizen of Olongapo and received its Apo award along with singer Freddie Aguilar, an Olongapo boy who became the Elvis Presley of the Philippines. As President of the Project Handclasp Foundation he initiated, in collaboration with the US-Philippines Society and the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation, the “Children of Marawi Project” to provide education and health care to children displaced during the “Siege of Marawi. Another connection is an uncle, a World War Two Army Air Corps Staff Sergeant who became a mortician and joined the Army Graves Registration Service. He was assigned to Manila and prepared battle field remains from the Philippines and Southeast Asia for interment at the American Battle Monuments Commission's (ABMC) Manila American Cemetery and Memorial, the United States largest overseas military cemetery.

In 2011 Dan wrote the successful American Legion resolution that requested the United States assume responsibility for the abandoned Clark cemetery which in the next year our Congress directed ABMC to do. A decade earlier he had been asked by the VFW in Hawaii to give the 20th

anniversary Memorial Day address at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (Punchbowl). His remarks were dedicated to those who had earned the Congressional Medal of Honor in the Pacific. Notable and quoted in the press was his reflection that, “Those who serve our nation in times of war determine our history. Those who come home from war determine our future”. Near where he spoke was the burial site of famous World War Two war correspondent, Ernie Pyle, whose remains his uncle had prepared on Okinawa for burial in Punchbowl. Dan recalls a conversation about the wife of the Pulitzer Prize winner objecting to the original movement of his remains to Okinawa from the island of Ie Shima where he was killed. There is an old military ethos that the dust of the fallen should remain where they die in battle. His reflections on the Bells of Balangiga helped him conclude their current location is not a place to honor the fallen of Company C.



The writer at a display of real war booty at a military history conference. Religious and cultural artifacts are not legal, moral or appropriate battlefield souvenirs. The Iwo Jima Association encourages the return of battlefield souvenirs to Japanese families as means of reconciliation if family information can be identified on the artifact. Out of friendship and respect, Dan gave outgoing Ambassador to the United States and former Philippine Minister of Foreign Affairs Secretary, Albert del Rosario, his family copy of the original program of the July 4th, 1946 Philippine Independence Ceremony

Dan is a member of the Company of Military Historians, the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor Memorial Society, the US-Philippines Society, the Military Order of the Carabao, and the 9th Infantry Regiment (Manchu) Association...and former officer or director of many other organizations whose mission concerns the greater military family. His “man cave” has tokens of past wars including a small original flag of the Philippines taken from an “Insurrecto”. He donated a compass from a WW II Japanese aircraft to the Pacific Aviation Museum and family Japanese surrender documents to the Battleship Missouri Memorial. Near his desk are Philippine bolos used against the Japanese. His second career was in the field of training and employment of people with disabilities where he was recognized by the “Keeping the American Promise” award of the Association for Service Disabled Veterans. Active duty decorations include three awards of the Meritorious Service Medal, two awards of the Legion of Merit, the Navy Distinguished Service

Medal, and the Defense Distinguished Service Medal. His Navy Achievement Medal for service with Marines displays the Combat V. He is the former Commander of the Naval Supply Systems Command and 36th Chief of Supply Corps, having retired as a Rear Admiral in 1991.

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A fantasy newspaper article of a better future.

The Bells Go Home on Cheyenne Frontier Days

Wyoming Tribune Eagle July 20, Someday

The Governor of Wyoming and the Secretary of the Air Force met today to commemorate a new, beautiful, and historic connection between our frontier state and its U.S. Army Calvary history.



Frontier Days is the biggest event of the year in Cheyenne. The Feast Day of Saint Lawrence the Martyr is the biggest event of the year in Balangiga. So much in common. So far apart.

On the field below this Frontier Day were re-enactors of Philippine Scout Calvary, men that each year don their U.S. Army uniforms and spats to commemorate American war dead in the Philippines. Today's F. E. Warren Air Force Base was Fort D. A. Russell when in 1867 the U.S. Calvary established the post, the same year that Cheyenne was founded. Few know that this famous cavalry legacy has a history with the Philippines. Few know that the last United States horse mounted cavalry charge against an enemy of our country was by Filipinos against Japanese invaders. Few know that First Lieutenant Ed Ramsey, a son of the nearby Kansas prairie, ordered by General Wainwright to halt the Japanese advance at Moron (Morong) on the Bataan peninsula, routed a larger Japanese force with the ferocity of his Philippine Scouts. "I brought my arm down and yelled to my men to charge. Bent nearly prone across the horses' necks, we flung ourselves at the Japanese advance, pistols firing full into the startled faces. A few returned our fire, but most fled in confusion, some wading back into the river, others running madly for the swamps. To them

we must have seemed a vision from another century, wild-eyed horses pounding headlong, cheering, whooping men firing from the saddles.” All who know the Bataan Death March know that it was Americans and Filipinos marching and dying side-by-side that sealed a bond that exists today. The first U.S. Army Medal of World War Two was to a Philippine Scout.

The Scouts are here to help celebrate an historic event. The Governor and Secretary of the Air Force said that they were proud that they would soon be flying to the Philippines to return the two bells from F. E. Warren to their church in Balangiga. The ceremony will take place in two weeks on August 10th, the most celebrated day of the year in Balangiga. It is the feast day of their patron saint and the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir. The Secretary is following the footsteps of the Secretary of the Navy who just over 30 years before returned a bell to Japan, a former enemy, and is now able to return two bells to the Philippines, an ally of many wars. The Secretary is bringing two iron clappers; one as gift from the state VFW and the other from the American Legion.

The Secretary also once again acknowledged the Air Force and Navy partnership because it was Navy Seabees and Air Force engineers that had created a home for the Falcon cannon on board F. E. Warren Air Force Base. Recently it was Navy Seabees on the annual U.S. Navy Pacific Partnership mission that helped rebuild a school in Balangiga and construct the new Philippine American War Memorial Plaza. The U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines will help dedicate the Plaza at a special mass as the Bells ascend into their new belfry. Also, the American Battle Monuments Commission, noting absence of a memorial to the Philippine American War, has agreed to erect a polished slab of gray Vermont granite as a “witness stone”. This will be the second non-World War One or Two memorial constructed outside the United States and is similar to one erected in 2013 as the U.S. Korean War Memorial at the United Nations Cemetery at Busan, South Korea.

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NOTE TO READERS. THE ABOVE WAS INDEED PURE FANTISY. THOSE FEW IN WYOMING THAT COULD JUST NOT UNDERSTAND WOULD NOT HAVE LET IT HAPPEN. THAT IS SAD.

Copied below is another short essay offered by email on 9 October 2018 to parties in both governments that would play a role in repatriation of the Bells. It is philosophical, but it is intended to promote thinking. Let us not look back ten years from now and count regrets and lost opportunities. That was its message. History did, and will, provide the answer.

The Bells of Balangiga ... Journey Home

Property of a parish; cultural icons of a people; patrimony of a nation.

The following ideas are offered on the celebratory events that will take place at the Church of San Lorenzo de Martir in Balangiga, Province of Eastern Samar. (In Bisayan, “Parokya ni San Lorenzo Martir.”)

When the living essay was circulated in Wyoming in 2015 prior to publication, the last page was called, “A fantasy newspaper article of a better future”. It described what might have been a means to celebrate the return of the Bells using the cowboy legacy of Wyoming coupled to U.S. Philippine military history in the Philippines.

We have moved on. With the cooling off period ending in a month and the prospects of the Bells being home for Christmas, careful reflection is needed on making their return to Balangiga a joyous and memorial event.

Early last month a short essay was provided to three Philippine friends on what might occur. In the U.S. few will care. In the Philippines millions will care. Whatever takes place, their history and their sensitivities to that history is paramount. Let us not lose the purity of the moment. It was always clear that the Bells belonged to the parishioners that paid for them and the Church that owned them. That has not changed. There will be some that think the Bells are museum artifacts or symbols of American defeat in a revolutionary war. Thinking or using them that way takes away a beautiful opportunity of putting aside differences of an earlier century and advancing a relationship in this century.

This is an historic time between two peoples. It should not be lost or politicized. It can and should be used to provide symbols and memories that can be studied for generations on how two great partners of the past can be one in the future.

Like the trilogy, three events can be one.

First is Church. Two decades ago the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines spoke forcibly for return of the “Bells of Balangiga”. Today they can help in defining this religious moment. The Catholic Bishops Conference, the Diocese of Borongan, and the Parish Priest roles are foremost. The model would be the dignity seen two years ago when the “San Pedro Bell” returned to the Church of Saints Peter and Paul in Bauang, La Union. It can be an opportunity for the Catholic Church of the Philippines and the Republic’s leaders

to sit and share a moment of quiet reflection perhaps unique in Philippine spiritual history. Cardinal Antonio Luis “Chito” Tagle, Archbishop of Manila in faith, President of Caritas Internationalis in charity, could lead the celebratory Mass.

Second is comradeship between armed forces who have been allies in World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the War on Terror. The model would be the “Reunion of Honor” that takes place annually on Iwo Jima between the Armed Forces of Japan and the Armed Forces of the United States. Each country provides honor guards, military bands, national colors. A parallel unification ceremony on the plaza of Balangiga would help define this moment. If such a coming together of nations can take place between the U.S. and a histrionic enemy, why not a brother? Leading U.S. Forces could be General Vince Brooks, the UN and US Commander in Korea and the Senior Manchu. The symbolism would speak for itself. Participants could include The Philippine Scouts Heritage Society and Scout reenactors. The first U.S. Army Medal of Honor in WW II was to a Philippine Scout. There are the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion posts throughout the Philippines that could participate as well as the Philippine Expeditionary Force to Korea (PEFTOK) who annually meets members of the Korean War Veterans Association (KWVA) during the” Korean Revisit”. It could be an inspiring and unique moment in military history.

Third would be national. The Bells are returning not only as property of a Church for also as cultural icons and national patrimony of a people. The model would be as determined by the Government of the Philippines. The President of the Republic of Philippines would lead along with dignitaries the government invited. It would display the solidarity of two nations with a common bond of history, language, religion, past comradeship in war, and future partnership in regional security.

Other considerations:

The two secular components can be planned as one.

The Bells were brought to the United States by U.S. Forces in violation of law and regulation and should be returned to their parish by U.S. Forces.

If third party assistance is needed, the US-Philippine Society is an NGO with leadership in both countries.

Final decisions on arrangements will be those of the Church and Government of the Philippines.

To summarize:

First, a Mass with Church and National leaders.

Second, a military ceremony that honors comradeship.

Third, a national event celebrating return of cultural heritage.

An opportunity to re-
boot.

3 October 2018

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FINI



“Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free”. John 8:32

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