

# DEEDS OF J. FRANKLIN BELL

BY EDWARD B. CLARK  
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MAJOR GENERAL J. FRANKLIN BELL

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**W**ASHINGTON. — President Taft has reappointed Maj. Gen. J. Franklin Bell as chief of the general staff, United States army. Gen. Bell has held this office for some years, and it is understood that at the end of another year of service in the position, he will be succeeded by Maj. Gen. Leonard Wood.

Some second Kipling should write of one of the deeds of J. Franklin Bell. The general went over to the Philippines as a first lieutenant of the Seventh cavalry. He had not been in the islands long before he was put in command of a volunteer force composed almost wholly of regulars whose terms of enlistment had expired, but who were willing to take on a short term of duty to help in the clearing up of the work which they aided in starting.

Back in one of the provinces was a band of Tagalogs who had given the government forces all kinds of trouble. One of their chief villages was "located," and Gen. Bell with his following of old campaigners took the trail for its capture. The commanding officer had been through campaigns against the Sioux, the Apaches, and other tribes of the mountains and plains, and taken more than one leaf from the book of knowledge of savage warfare.

Guides led the force to the vicinity of the Tagalog village. Night fell and the Tagalogs were all unsuspecting of the approach of the white enemy. At three o'clock in the morning, when sleep always hangs heavy on the eyes, Bell led his men toward the village. The Tagalogs had sentinels posted along an outlying line. After the manner of the people of the plains the soldiers crept silently between the pickets, only one of whom was vigilant enough to detect the presence of the enemy. He was silenced before he had a chance to startle the air with a cry or a shot.

Straight into the village went Bell at the head of his men. Dawn streaks were beginning to show in the sky, but the warriors were asleep past the ordinary waking, for were not the sentinels posted, and were they not bound by every tradition of tribal honor to be awake and watchful?

Lieut. Bell had given his men orders. The village was cordoned with troops and there wasn't a mousehole of escape. Bell has a whimsical humor. In the very heart of the Tagalog village was an old muzzle-loading brass cannon, a trophy taken by the Tagalogs from the Spaniards of another day, and which the natives were hoping to use against the equally hated Americans. Bell detailed a loading party of three men. The three became boys again, and they rammed the piece full of powder and grass wadding, after the manner of loading a Fourth of July cannon on the village green in the home land.

The light of coming day was strong enough for the conducting of operations. A lanyard was pulled and the brazen piece roared out its reveille. The sound of it shook the foundations of the Tagalog huts; it roused the warrior sleepers as would the cracking of doomsday. They came armed, but naked to the fray. The Tagalogs looked on bayonet points and down gun barrels and surrender came instant.

Gen. J. Franklin Bell is the youngest officer who ever held the position of chief of staff. He is a genial general and he is willing to talk when he properly may on the subjects touching his profession. As the joker put it, he is a Bell who knows when to ring off. He avoids the sins of silence and of speech, wherein he shows that he is wiser in his generation than some of his predecessors were in their generation.

When his promotion came the chief of staff jumped from a captaincy to a brigadier generalship, and his tremendous rank stride did not bring forth one word of criticism from soldier or civilian. Since then he has become a major general. The army officers who were jumped said that Bell earned his promotion, and that if other promotions were, like his, based solely on service quality, there would be no heart burnings under the blouses.

When the Seventh cavalry, in which Gen. Bell was then a lieutenant, reached the Philippines, the Spanish troops were still in possession, for Dewey had reduced the fleet, but not Manila city and its immediate defenses. Information was wanted concerning the Spanish earthworks. Lieut. Bell volunteered to get it. He didn't tell any one

how he was going to get it. His method was daring and novel.

Under cover of the darkness he went to the water front, stripped off his clothes and plunged in. He is a

once a private in the ranks. For two years he was an enlisted man, serving in the regulars. He joined in 1861, choosing the cavalry arm of the service, and to it he remained faithful through all the years of his duty. He is one of the finest riders that the army claims.

There have been many stories of Japanese spies who have been found taking notes of American army operations and equipment. The Japs got their first object lesson in the way American soldiers do things from Gen. Chaffee. That object lesson doubtless has had some influence in modifying the thought which the orientals held that they could whip the Americans out of hand. Gen. Chaffee was in command of the expedition which went to the relief of the beleaguered embassies at Peking. Japanese officers and men saw him there. The general won a fame in China which is not confined to the American continent.

The generals of Europe have given testimony that Adna R. Chaffee is a great soldier. Orders to take command of the Chinese expedition reached Gen. Chaffee while he was at Nagasaki on board a steamer which was to take him to the Philippines. The order was unexpected, and the general had practically no chance for campaign preparations. He was to go into a strange land, to lead an expedition against a strange people, and not only was it expected of him that he be successful, but that success be won quickly, for the lives of many Americans were in danger within sight of the walls of the "Forbidden City."

The general arrived at Tientsin too late to take part in the battle in which the brave Maj. Liscum of the Ninth Infantry lost his life. Not only was the American soldier spurred to quick marching action by the knowledge of the imminent peril of the Americans at Peking, but he was spurred by the knowledge that the soldiers of other nations were to take part in the relief expedition, and he wished the men of his own country to show themselves worthy in the sight of the men of other countries.

They did show themselves worthy, and they responded to the call of their commander with an alacrity that made the American leaders instead of followers in that march beset with difficulties and dangers almost unparalleled in modern warfare.

There are men in the army to-day who firmly believe that Gen. Chaffee did not sleep an hour during the march to Peking. The soldiers who made the march declare that the nights in China are black; that it is impossible to see anything at all without the aid of artificial light, and these in the bivouacs of the soldiers were forbidden for precautionary reasons. There was no definite knowledge of the forces that might be in the path of the expedition, and no one knew what surprises the night might cover. Gen. Chaffee, his soldiers say, constituted himself a sentinel who refused to be relieved from guard, and through the nights he was alert and watching, and through the days he was alert and marching.

There are stories by the scores of men who are supposed to bear charmed lives. The hero of the book of fiction sheds bullets as a slate roof sheds rain, and in the reading of it one finds it hard to believe that any truth could be stranger than this fiction. If Gen. Chaffee doesn't bear a charmed life he has the largest allowance of luck that has fallen to any one man.

Gen. Chaffee has been four times brevetted for bravery. Two of the brevet commissions came to him for gallantry in the civil war service, and two for gallantry in battles with the Indians. He once led a cavalry charge over rough and precipitous bluffs, where a cavalry charge was thought to be a feat well-nigh impossible.

He rode at the head of his men straight into a body of armed Indians, scattering them, but not until they had poured volley after volley into Chaffee's oncoming command. That charge gave the soldier his brevet commission as a lieutenant colonel.

When the Spanish-American war broke out Chaffee was made a brigadier general of volunteers. He was in the very thick of the fighting in front of Santiago. Capt. Arthur Lee, a British army officer detailed by his government to watch the field operations in Cuba, attached himself to the headquarters of Gen. Chaffee. Capt. Lee wrote a story about the campaign in which he paid to Gen. Chaffee the highest tribute that it is possible for one soldier to pay to another.

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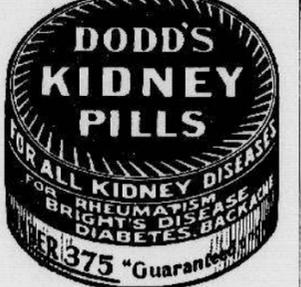
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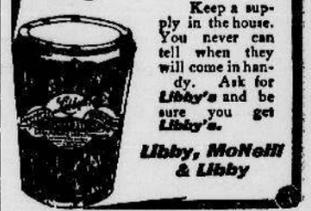


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