

MAN WHO CARRIED MESSAGE TO GARCIA EMERGES FROM OBLIVION TO GET LONG-DELAYED REWARD

Lieut. Col. Rowan, Now Retired and White-Haired, Surprised Government Should Give Distinguished Service Cross for "Just Doing One's Duty"

BUSY WRITING HISTORY OF MEXICO AND MAY PUT HIS EXPLOIT ON SCREEN

Young Lieutenant Startled World by Carrying News of Declaration of War Against Spain to Cubans in Their Jungle Fastnesses



Lieutenant Colonel Rowan, who braved the jungles of Cuba to carry a message from America to General Garcia

HE CARRIED the famous message to Garcia in 1898. He plunged into a dark and unknown wilderness to find a man, whose whereabouts he did not know.

Through death and desolation, through a land of swamps and tangle and undergrowth, mysterious, sinister, bristling with hostile guns, he bore messages of vital significance to the happiness and freedom of a tyrant-oppressed and desperate people.

After experiences which beggar the wildest dreams of fiction, he dropped into a quarter century of oblivion, to be rewarded in the end with a kind of ironic fatefulness, by a government too long silent.

And his only comment is: "What did I do to deserve it? 'Distinguished service' by a soldier or any one else is to do what he is ordered to do."

Today, in his beautiful California summer home, overlooking the green depths of canyons, he is writing a history of Mexico—condensing material enough for four bulky volumes into one—which, in his own words, "is a bigger job than any I ever tackled."

His name, Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Summers Rowan, retired, is unknown to three-quarters of the citizens of this country who will recognize "the man who carried the message to Garcia." And—mark it down to the vagaries of fate and the agencies of governmental diplomacy—even that characterization of him would be unknown, had it not been for the astuteness of a man who saw in Rowan's story a striking moral for the world of business.

Elbert Hubbard Gave World Story of Rowan's Exploit

The world is enriched by its men of resourcefulness, of calm unflinching nerve. Elbert Hubbard, in his famous pamphlet, realized this. And not only is the world enriched, but it is interested.

It will be interested to know that Lieutenant Colonel Rowan, white-haired today, is characteristically the same man he was when he slept on the stone ballast in the bottom of a pirate's open boat; when he tore his way on foot through clinging thickets; when he bravely and cunningly picked a road of safety through a maze of enemy guns; when he dashed, one-half of his hazardous journey done, up to that amazing man of Bayamo with his strange scar on his forehead, which told the story of a bullet wound self-inflicted in a darker day when the cause dear to his heart seemed hopeless and life not worth living—when he dashed up to that strong silent man, General Garcia.

Lieutenant Rowan has not changed, except in outward appearance. Today marks the close of a stranger, after all, perhaps a more courageous, trip he has been making for the past decade, and the beginning of the difficult return.

"For the last twelve years," he said the other day, "I have been studying the life of the land of Mexico. I have been reading hundreds of histories to supplement my personal survey, completed some while ago under General Hancock. I have been working steadily, every day, sorting, compiling, eliminating piles of data. And I have material for four volumes, and I am now pouring them down to one—a pragmatic history of Mexico, written with the absolute conviction that the United States should control everything between the Rio Grande and the Panama Canal; that she should be supreme from the Arctic Ocean to the Atrato.

"The happiest part of those twelve years' work now lies before me—the business of condensation. But when my work is done I shall give America the first history of Mexico written in fifty years. I have published his splendid volume in 1917, and I shall offer the first history of his kind written from the viewpoint of a soldier, of a West Point man."

Has Solitude of Summer To Aid Him in His Work

In a suit of wash-outing clothes, seated in a well-worn and comfortable wicker chair, the hero forgotten for twenty-four years, after transcribing notes from a pile of manuscript. In that perfect solitude the staccato of his portable typewriter and the screaming of jays were the only sounds.

A glance at him and a few moments' conversation disclose the fact that yesterday's soldier, the man who last a distinguished Service Cross for carrying the message to Garcia in 1898 and a silver star for his gallantry at Cebu, is today's alert citizen, abreast of the times, interested in the policies and progress of his country. He is an enthusiastic golfer with a handicap the envy of his friends, and a vigorous

they were still suspicious, we were to rise at a signal and give them a volley, and then run for it."

If caught, their fate was inevitable. Rowan was a spy and his companions were filibusters. It meant death to all four and failure of their mission.

All day they sailed, sleeping only in snatches. At midnight they anchored within fifty yards of Gran Rincon, Cuba.

With the coming of another dawn they made out a ragged native figure on the shore. Signals were exchanged. The boat approached closer in to shore until the keel crunched on the sand. A half-naked Cuban boy, with two terrible scars from Spanish Mauser bullets on his breast, lead them stealthily into the depths of the thicket paralleling the shore.

The next day, afoot, they literally dived into the wilderness of swamp and forest. Up ravines, down ravines, cutting through the underbrush—ever watchful of the sleepless Spanish pickets and their unflinching musketry. Through this jungle of death they fought their way, pausing only when fatigue or hunger forced them to.

Out of the thorn and cactus thicket they pushed, already foot-sore, to the foothills of the Sierras. This area was full of wretched Cuban refugees. On the morning of April 27, the party had begun to climb the mountains in the district of Pilon.

Sent Off to Find Garcia, But Had No Definite Goal

It was a delicate task. No one knew where General Garcia, commander-in-chief of the Cuban forces in the eastern portion of the island, was stationed. After the fashion of the native warriors, he remained long in no one place.

In addition, the inaccessibility of approach, the almost impenetrable lines of Spanish forces, the close blockade of the island by ships, made the task apparently insurmountable. But it had to be done. It could only be accomplished by a man of a quick, resourceful brain and unflinching nerve. It could only be done by a man who dared make the trip alone.

Garcia was somewhere in the mountain fastnesses. No mail or telegraph communication could reach him. The situation demanded an instant choice. And some one said to President McKinley, "There is a fellow by the name of Rowan who will find Garcia for you, if anybody can."

"I was the instrument chosen by the War Department for learning more of the military possibilities of Eastern Cuba," is the way Rowan put it.

Rowan, a lieutenant, took President McKinley's letter, addressed to General Calixto Garcia, sealed it in an oil-skin pouch, and strapped it to his chest, and forthwith went to Kingston, Jamaica.

"There I placed myself in the hands of unknown friends," says the lieutenant colonel.

About 3 o'clock noon, April 23, the day President McKinley issued a call for 125,000 volunteers and two days before formal declaration of war, a closed carriage dashed up to the door of the house where Rowan had concealed himself.

Rowan leaped into the carriage, which was soon followed by another. They drove at a killing pace until 10 o'clock that night. The carriage stopped and Rowan found himself and his insurgent friends in inkly darkness. A flickering light from a hut drew them inside for a hasty supper. Here he met Gervasio Sabio, who was charged with his safe delivery into the hands of Garcia.

Most of that night they drove along the silent black roads, and at the first slow peep of dawn they reached the shore. Fifty yards out on the water could be distinguished the outlines of a small fishing smack. It was the boat of Gervasio, the wiry, heavily mustached pirate.

No word was spoken, excepting a hoarse warning from the pirate that they must be cautious. The voyage northward across the water would be fraught with danger. Spanish patrols were everywhere, darting here and there, in the more or less successful attempt to waylay just such parties as Rowan's.

Had Plan to Use French Flag to Fool Spaniards

"If we were signalled by one of these sentry ships we planned to hoist the French flag and lie flat in the bottom of the boat," said the brave officer. "If

the idea of planting a three-inch field piece on a very high and precipitous mountain facing the position held by the insurgents. It was an exceedingly difficult task to accomplish. Rowan went back to the city of Cebu, twelve miles away and went aboard one of our battleships there. Borrowing a block and tackle, with some heavy rope, he returned to his camp, dismounted the gun, tied the rope around it, and fastening the block and tackle to a tree, began to drag the cannon up the mountain. Shifting from tree to tree, he gradually made the ascent and mounted the piece after three days of terrific labor on the part of his whole company.

"I recommended that Rowan be given a medal for this service, as his unparalleled labor undoubtedly resulted in saving the lives of many of our men."

At 11 o'clock that night they pulled out under cover of darkness, leaving behind the harbor of Manati and entering a choppy sea.

"It was desperately hard rowing, and the big waves were continually washing over the gunwales, wetting our stores and keeping us busy bailing. All night long we worked steadily without a bit of sleep. At dawn the next morning the

guano-tree gave lasting proof of its presence. "Sails had to be improvised," said Rowan, in his story of the flight. "from hammock canopies, and food collected from the neighboring forests. About sunset on May 5 we cut our way through the grape thicket that walls in the sea and drew a little cockle-shell of a boat from under a mangrove bush. It had an capacity of only 104 cubic feet, much too small for our party of six. There was small comfort in thinking of a long and dangerous voyage at sea in such a craft."

At 11 o'clock that night they pulled out under cover of darkness, leaving behind the harbor of Manati and entering a choppy sea.

"It was desperately hard rowing, and the big waves were continually washing over the gunwales, wetting our stores and keeping us busy bailing. All night long we worked steadily without a bit of sleep. At dawn the next morning the

man at the helm called out 'un vapor'—a steamer."

Won Quick Recognition From Miles for His Deed

By a good piece of luck they had overhauled a sponging steamer, with a crew of thirteen Negroes, who carried them to Nassau. There the American Consul made arrangements for sending Rowan by the schooner Fearless to Key West, at which place he arrived four days later.

There the Secretary of War and General Miles anxiously awaited him. He made his report and later General Miles wrote to Washington:

"I recommend that First Lieutenant Andrew S. Rowan, Nineteenth United States Infantry, be made a lieutenant colonel of one of the regiments of infantry, Lieutenant Rowan made a journey across Cuba, was with the insurgent army under Lieutenant Colonel Garcia, and brought most important and valuable information to the Government. This was a most perilous undertaking, and, in my judgment, Lieutenant Rowan performed an act of heroism and cool daring that has rarely been excelled in the annals of warfare."

And Elbert Hubbard wrote in his business sermon: "When President McKinley gave Rowan a letter to be delivered to Garcia, Rowan took the letter and did not ask: 'Where is he at?' By the eternal, there is a man whose form should be cast in deathless bronze and the statue placed in every college of the land. It is not book-learning young men need, nor instruction about this and that, but a stiffening of the vertebrae which will cause them to be loyal to a trust, to act promptly, concentrate their energies, do the thing, 'Carry a message to Garcia.'"

Return More Important Than His First Journey

The new party had for its guides Colonel Carlos Hernandez, now postmaster general of Cuba, and General Enrique Collazo. That evening, just before midnight, they camped near the Cauto River. At sunrise next morning they took up the long march again, crossed the Cauto—the largest river in Cuba—and then made their way through tropical jungle and treacherous meadowland, until at Las Arucas, they camped once more for the night. A long ride two days later—about fifty miles—brought Rowan and his party to Ramasau, where they made preparations for the voyage from the north coast. For hours their course had led through obstructing growth—through brush, where the poisonous



Lieutenant Rowan received this medal—the silver star—in July, 1922.

During what remained of the Spanish War Rowan acquitted himself well with the Sixth United States Infantry. And after the short but decisive clash with Spain, Rowan, now a captain, continued to reap laurels with the Eighteenth Infantry in the Philippines.

For a while after the incidents at Cebu he was under a cloud for having burned a native village. But investigation later proved that, as usual, he had done nothing but his duty. A native spy had entered his camp of the regulars to murder the captain, with the conviction that once the leader was out of the way the troops would be captured, and their town was burned to ashes. Captain Rowan was duty exonerated from any charge of cruelty.

Later, he served with the Fifteenth Infantry at Fort Douglas, Utah. But the inactive life there irritated a man

of his energy and he finally, twelve years ago, handed in his resignation.

Cuban Was Too Proud to Accept Needed Cash

An entertaining sequel followed Rowan's trip across Cuba. One of the guides who made the return trip with him was Colonel Carlos Hernandez. Hernandez was to proceed to Washington, to offer his services to the Government. He knew Cuba as possibly no other man knew it, and was, consequently, a valuable man to have at that most central of headquarters.

Hernandez had no money when he arrived at Key West. Nor had Garcia when he bid Hernandez and Rowan farewell at Bayamo. The Cubans had been in the mountains and jungle for three years worrying Spain.

Hernandez borrowed \$125 from a friend at Key West, spent \$10 for a "hand-me-down" suit and made for the West Coast of Florida. On reaching Tampa, almost the first man to grasp his hand was General Fred Funston. Hernandez and he had fought side by side in Cuba when Funston was there as a filibustering commander of artillery.

"Here, Charley," cried Funston, "is some money," and he pulled out a roll of bills, suspecting his friend's needs. "I expect to be sent to Cuba. Gay days, those. Khaki was not the rule in the United States Army, as dress uniform was not in the discard. And there were birds of brilliant plumage from abroad to be encountered every hand. Especially did these show forth at general reviews—attaches, the then great military Powers of Europe, resplendent in brilliant uniforms with cockade and feathered headgear many of them; stiff, rigid, unapproachable except from their own classes.

"What was to be done? Well, it had to be faced. So the Cuban rode forth on review day, on a huge American cavalry horse—twice the size. It must have seemed to him, of the wiry little ponies he rode in the field—his hand-me-down trousers drawn halfway to his knees disconsolate, humiliated. But compensation hovered near.

He, Too, Carried Message to Garcia in Cuban Wilds

"At the parade grounds he stood somewhat aside—and longed for the jungles. Presently there was a blare of trumpets and up the field rode Miles and his staff at a gallop. And when the came to the group Miles rode straight ahead, past them all—and up to Hernandez, to whom he extended his hand. "The crowd knew who he was and appreciated what had happened, and I great cry went up. 'The Cuban! The

and I'll have no use for this. When we meet again, you can give it back to me."

But the Cuban was proud. He refused the money. His transportation and meals were taken care of by the army. Stationed at army and navy headquarters in Washington, he worked literally day and night. He was invaluable.

But he had no money and he still wore his \$10 hand-me-down, although his apartments were luxurious enough, and his meals extraordinarily so, compared to those he had eaten in the wilds of Cuba. There seemed to be no way to get money, unless he borrowed it from his newly made friends in Washington. But pride prevailed.

He feared, too, that he would prejudice the cause of Cuba, if he appealed to the Americans for gold—and perhaps outrage his countrymen.

During this period, however, he became tremendously popular. Citizens stopped him on the streets when he passed by. They knew he was an important Government service. He became a romantic figure.

Then, transpired an hour or two, which doubtless Postmaster General Hernandez remembers to this day. A report of these hours has been vividly recalled recently.

"One day came an invitation—which, under the circumstances, was virtually a command—to appear at a review of troops at Washington by General Miles.

"Not only is the book in progress, but Colonel Rowan contemplates making a motion picture to be called 'A Message to Garcia.'"

"I will accept the offer of a movie company," he explained. "If it will permit the picture to be made in the country in which the episode really occurred. Then such a picture will have an educational value as well."

Colonel Rowan treasures the book in which General Miles records the history of his achievement, and wherein he states that the secret information which Rowan secured enabled the speedy capture of Santiago and the virtual termination of the war.

"It's General McClelland, however," he said, "who ought to have the star for that Cebu affair. He commanded the company which did the work."

The general and Mrs. McClelland lead a useful life in the picturesque city of Easton. Colonel Rowan and his wife spend the winter at 1036 Vallejo street, San Francisco, Calif., an hour's ride from their summer home in Mill Valley. Rowan himself is a Virginian by birth and a Kansan by adoption.