

from *The Spanish-American War Volunteer*



ABOUT THE READING This reading is a military report submitted during the Spanish-American War. The Twenty-fifth Infantry was an all African-American unit.



As you read pay attention to the part played by the Twenty-fifth Infantry (the companies under the author's command). You will probably need to read the report more than once to grasp the details of the battle and why the author, Lieutenant-Colonel Daggett, feels that his men were shortchanged.

VOCABULARY

deploy bring into combat

blockhouse a fortified place from which to fire

intrenchments trenches dug to provide cover for soldiers; entrenchments

intervening coming between

HEADQUARTERS, TWENTY-FIFTH INFANTRY,
Near Santiago, Cuba, July 16, 1898.

THE ADJUTANT-GENERAL,
Second Division, Fifth Corps, near
Santiago, Cuba.

Sir: Feeling that the Twenty-fifth Infantry has not received credit for the part it took in the battle of El Caney, on the 1st instant, I have the honor to submit the following facts:

I was ordered by the brigade commander to put two companies (H, Lieutenant Caldwell, and G, Lieutenant McCorkle) on the firing line in extended order. The right being uncovered and exposed to the enemy, I ordered D company (Captain Edwards) to **deploy** as flankers. The battalion was commanded by Capt. W. S. Scott. The battalion advanced about 300 yards under fire, the Fourth Infantry on its left, where the line found cover, halted, and

Lieutenant-Colonel Daggett explains actions he took on his own during the battle. First, he brought up a company of men to protect his forces on the right.

Source: *The Spanish-American War Volunteer* by William Hilary Coston. First published 1899, reprinted 1971. The Black Heritage Library Collection, Books for Libraries Press, Freeport, New York.

The Spanish-American War Volunteer, *continued*

Primary Source

opened fire on the **blockhouse** and **intrenchments** in front of it. After the line had been steadied and had delivered an effective fire, I ordered a further advance, which was promptly made. As the Fourth Infantry did not advance, my left was exposed to a very severe fire from the village on the left. I immediately ordered Company C (Lieutenant Murdock), which was in support, to the front, and E company (Lieutenant Kinnison), from regimental reserve to take its place. Thus strengthened, the four companies moved up the hill rapidly, being skillfully handled by company officers.

When the forces to the left of his men stayed behind, Lieutenant-Colonel Daggett then brought up another company to take this position.

On arriving near the fort the white flag was waved toward our men, but the fire from the village on our left was so severe that neither our officers nor Spanish could pass over the **intervening** ground. After about twenty minutes some of the Twelfth Infantry arrived in rear of the fort, completely sheltered from the fire from the village, and received the white flag; but Privates J. H. Jones, of Company D, and T. C. Butler, H Company, Twenty-fifth Infantry, entered the fort at the same time and took possession of the Spanish flag. They were ordered to give it up by an officer of the Twelfth United States Infantry, but before doing so, they each tore a piece from it, which they now have. So much for the facts.

A white flag signals surrender, or giving in to the enemy.

I attribute the success attained by our line largely to the bravery and skill of the company officer who conducted the line to the fort. These officers are: First Lieuts. V. A. Caldwell and J. A. Moss, and Second Lieut. J. E. Hunt. It is my opinion that the two companies first deployed could not have reached the fort alone, and that it was the two companies I ordered to their support that gave them the power to reach it. I further believe that had we failed to move beyond the Fourth Infantry, the fort would not have been taken that night.

The Spanish-American War Volunteer, *continued*

Primary Source

The Twenty-fifth Infantry lost 1 officer killed and 3 wounded, and 7 men killed and 28 wounded.

Second Lieut. H. W. French, adjutant of Captain Scott's battalion, arrived at the fort near the same time as the other officers.

I request that this report be forwarded to corps headquarters.

Very respectfully,

A. S. DAGGETT,

Lieutenant-Colonel, Twenty-fifth Infantry, Commanding.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

1. Make Inferences Which infantry can you infer took credit for the surrender of the Spanish fort? Who do you think deserved the credit?

2. Make Generalizations Based on this report, what generalization might you make about the role played by African-American officers and soldiers in the Spanish-American War?
