

Soldiers in the Philippines Documents

Document Set A: Source: Testimony to the U.S. Senate on the conduct of American soldiers in the Philippines. "Affairs in the Philippine Islands," Senate Committee on the Philippines, 57th Congress, 1st Session, April 1902.

Between January and June 1902, the U.S. Senate conducted hearings on the war in the Philippines. The excerpts below come from testimony given at those hearings.

Testimony of Corporal Richard T. O'Brien

We entered the town. It was just daybreak. The first thing we saw was a boy coming down on a water buffalo, and the first sergeant . . . shot at the boy. . . . The boy jumped off the water buffalo and fled. . . . Everybody fired at him. . . .

That brought the people in the houses out, brought them to the doors and out into the street, and how the order started and who gave it I don't know, but the town was fired on. I saw an old fellow come to the door, and he looked out; he got a shot in the abdomen and fell to his knees and turned around and died. . . .

After that two old men came out, hand in hand. I should think they were over 50 years old, probably between 50 and 70 years old. They had a white flag. They were shot down.

Testimony of Corporal Daniel J. Evans

The first thing one of the Americans — I mean one of the natives who was a scout for the Americans— grabbed one of the men by the head and jerked his head back, and then they took a tomato can and poured water down his throat until he could hold no more, and during this time one of the scouts had a whip . . . and he struck him on the face and on the bare back, and every time they would strike him it would raise a large welt, and some blood would come. And when this native could hold no more water, then they forced a gag into his mouth; they stood him up and tied his hands behind him; they stood him up against a post and fastened him so he could not move. Then one man, an American soldier, who was over six feet tall, and who was very strong, too, struck this native in the pit of the stomach as hard as he could strike him, just as rapidly as he could. It seemed as if he didn't get tired of striking him.

Document Set B: Source: A. A. Barnes, published by The Standard, Greensburg, Indiana, May 8, 1899

This excerpt is from a letter written by A. A. Barnes, an American soldier, to his brother on March 20, 1899.

The town of Titatia was surrendered to us a few days ago and two companies occupy the same. Last night one of our boys was found shot and his stomach cut open. Immediately orders were received from Gen. Wheaton to burn the town and kill every native in sight, which was done to a finish. About 1,000 men, women, and children were reported killed. I am probably growing hard-hearted, for I am in my glory when I can sight my gun on some dark skin and pull the trigger.

Document C: Historian's Account Source: Excerpt from Filipino historian Teodoro Agoncillo's book *Malolos: The Crisis of the Republic*, written in 1960.

The guerillas, in violation of [Philippine President Emilio] Aguinaldo's orders and circulars, treated captured Americans with barbaric cruelty. Noses and ears were lopped off and the bleeding wounds seasoned with salt. In some cases, American prisoners were buried alive. Kicking, slapping, spitting at the faces of American prisoners were common, the hatred of the American being such that the guerillas forgot or conveniently forgot Aguinaldo's injunctions regarding the good treatment to be accorded the prisoners.

Document D: Source: Letter written by Frederick Funston that was published in the *Kansas City Journal* on April 22, 1899.

Frederick Funston fought in 19 battles in the Philippines in less than a year and was involved in an undercover operation that led him to the headquarters of Philippine President Emilio Aguinaldo. He earned a Medal of Honor and returned to the U.S. a national hero for his actions in the Philippines. Funston wrote and spoke often about the Philippine-American War in order to increase public support for American involvement in the conflict.

I am afraid that some people at home will lie awake [at] night worrying about the ethics of this war, thinking that our enemy is fighting for the right to self-government. . . . [The Filipinos] have a certain number of educated leaders – educated, however, about the same way a parrot is. They are, as a rule, an illiterate, semi-savage people who are waging war not against tyranny, but against Anglo-Saxon order and decency. . . . I, for one, hope that Uncle Sam will apply the chastening rod good, hard and plenty, and lay it on until they come in to the reservation and promise to be good "Injuns."