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FORM NO. 20.



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Charge

Aug 4. 1898. 1.13 a.m. Received at

WAR DEPARTMENT.

From 431 Santiago-De-Cuba Via Hayti Aug 3rd 1898.

(WHERE ANY REPLY SHOULD BE SENT.)

Adjutant General U-S Army,

Washington.

189

Following letter giving the views of the general officers of this command and is sent for the consideration of the War Department to Major General W. R. Shafter, Commanding U. S. forces in Cuba. We the undersigned General Officers commanding various brigades divisions Etc of the U S Army of occupation in Cuba are of the unanimous opinion that this army must be at once taken out of the Island of Cuba and sent to some point on the northern sea-coast of United States that this can be done without danger to the people of the United States that there is no epidemic of yellow fever in the army at present only a few sporadic cases that the army is disabled by malarial fever to such an extent that its efficiency is destroyed and it is in a condition to be practically entirely destroyed by the epidemic of yellow fever sure to come in the near future. We know from reports from competent officers and from personal observations that the army is unable to move to the interior and that there are no facilities for such move if attempted and will not be until too late, moreover

(End Sheet 1)

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THE COMMERCIAL CABLE COMPANY

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THE COMMERCIAL CABLE COMPANY, 100 WALL STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y.

Number of Pages 2
Date 1918. Dec. 22. Sheet 2

Cable

Received at

WAR DEPARTMENT.

CONTINUED-DE-ORIG VIA HOTEL AUG 22D 1918 WE ANY REPLY SHOULD BE SENT.

From
Adjutant General U-S Army, Washington.

189

The best medical authorities in the island say that with our present equipment we could not live in the interior during the rainy season without losses from malarial fever almost as badly as from yellow fever. This army must be moved at once or it will perish as an army. It can be safely moved now. Person responsible for preventing such a move will be responsible for the unnecessary loss of many thousands of lives. Our opinions are the result of careful personal observations and are also based upon the unanimous opinion of our medical officers who are with us.

(end sheet 2)

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WILHELM REICH, U. S. A. DIRECTOR. JOHN A. STEVEN, MANAGER. LEONARD H. BRAYBROOK, PRESIDENT.



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1687Y RB OU

From Santiago DE Cuba

Act General

Army and understand the situation absolutely. signed Jos Wheeler,
 Major General vols. Samuel S. Sumner, commanding Cavalry Brigade,
 William Ludlow Brig General USV command 1st. Brig. 2nd div. Adelbert
 Ames, Brig Gen. U S Vols. command 3rd brig. 1st div. Leonard Wood brig
 Gen. USV command City Santiago, Theodore Roosevelt col. command. 2nd cav.
 Brigade, J Ford Kent. Maj General vols. command 1st Div. 5th. corps,
 J O Bayles Maj general vols. command prov. div. 5th corps, Adna R Chaffee
 Maj Gen command 3rd brig 2nd div 5th corps, H W Norton Maj Gen vols,
 command 2nd div. 5th corps (O W Rippen Brig Gen, USV command 2nd brig. 2nd
 div. *C. McKibbin*)
 Shafter,
 Maj General.

418 FOVT 113 AM Aug 4th 1898.

*Confidential copies furnished
 to the President
 and other Gen. staff
 Aug 7/98
 Surgeon General
 A. M.
 8/4/98*

No inquiry respecting this message can be attended to without the production of this paper. Repetitions of doubtful words should be obtained through the Company's offices, and not by DIRECT application to the sender.

SANTIAGO DE CUBA, August 3d (delayed in transmission).— Summoned by Major-General Shafter, a meeting was held here this morning at head-quarters, and in the presence of every commanding and medical officer of the Fifth Army Corps, General Shafter read a cable message from Secretary Alger, ordering him, on the recommendation of Surgeon-General Sternberg, to move the army into the interior, to San Luis, where it is healthier.

As a result of the conference General Shafter will insist upon the immediate withdrawal of the army North.

As an explanation of the situation the following letter from Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, commanding the First Cavalry, to General Shafter, was handed by the latter to the correspondent of the Associated Press for publication:

MAJOR-GENERAL SHAFTER.

SIR: In a meeting of the general and medical officers called by you at the Palace this morning we were all, as you know, unanimous in our views of what should be done with the army. To keep us here, in the opinion of every officer commanding a division or a brigade, will simply involve the destruction of thousands. There is no possible reason for not shipping practically the entire command North at once. Yellow-fever cases are very few in the cavalry division, where I command one of the two brigades, and not one true case of yellow fever has occurred in this division, except among the men sent to the hospital at Siboney, where they have, I believe, contracted it.

But in this division there have been 1,500 cases of malarial fever. Hardly a man has yet died from it, but the whole command is so weakened and shattered as to be ripe for dying like rotten sheep, when a real yellow-fever epidemic instead of a fake epidemic, like

the present one, strikes us, as it is bound to do if we stay here at the height of the sickness season, August and the beginning of September. Quarantine against malarial fever is much like quarantining against the toothache.

All of us are certain that as soon as the authorities at Washington fully appreciate the condition of the army, we shall be sent home. If we are kept here it will in all human possibility mean an appalling disaster, for the surgeons here estimate that over half the army, if kept here during the sickly season, will die.

This is not only terrible from the stand-point of the individual lives lost, but it means ruin from the stand-point of military efficiency of the flower of the American army, for the great bulk of the regulars are here with you. The sick list, large though it is, exceeding four thousand, affords but a faint index of the debilitation of the army. Not twenty per cent. are fit for active work.

Six weeks on the North Maine coast, for instance, or elsewhere where the yellow-fever germ cannot possibly propagate, would make us all as fit as fighting-cocks, as able as we are eager to take a leading part in the great campaign against Havana in the fall, even if we are not allowed to try Porto Rico.

We can be moved North, if moved at once, with absolute safety to the country, although, of course, it would have been infinitely better if we had been moved North or to Porto Rico two weeks ago. If there were any object in keeping us here, we would face yellow fever with as much indifference as we faced bullets. But there is no object.

The four immune regiments ordered here are sufficient to garrison the city and surrounding towns, and there is absolutely nothing for us to do here, and there has not been since the city surrendered. It is impossible to move into the interior. Every shifting of camp doubles the sick-rate in our present weakened condition, and, anyhow, the interior is rather worse than the coast, as I have found by actual reconnoissance. Our present camps are as healthy as any camps at this end of the island can be.

I write only because I cannot see our men, who have fought so bravely and who have endured extreme hardship and danger so uncomplainingly, go to destruction without striving so far as lies in me to avert a doom as fearful as it is unnecessary and undeserved.

Yours respectfully,

THEODORE ROOSEVELT,
Colonel Commanding Second Cavalry Brigade.

After Colonel Roosevelt had taken the initiative, all the American general officers united in a "round robin" addressed to General Shafter. It reads:

We, the undersigned officers commanding the various brigades, divisions, etc., of the Army of Occupation in Cuba, are of the unanimous opinion that this army should be at once taken out of the island of Cuba and sent to some point on the Northern sea-coast of the United States; that can be done without danger to the people of the United States; that yellow fever in the army at present is not epidemic; that there are only a few sporadic cases; but that the army is disabled by malarial fever to the extent that its efficiency is destroyed, and that it is in a condition to be practically entirely destroyed by an epidemic of yellow fever, which is sure to come in

the near future. We know from the reports of competent officers and from personal observations that the army is unable to move into the interior, and that there are no facilities for such a move if attempted, and that it could not be attempted until too late. Moreover, the best medical authorities of the island say that with our present equipment we could not live in the interior during the rainy season without losses from malarial fever, which is almost as deadly as yellow fever.

This army must be moved at once, or perish. As the army can be safely moved now, the persons responsible for preventing such a move will be responsible for the unnecessary loss of many thousands of lives.

Our opinions are the result of careful personal observation, and they are also based on the unanimous opinion of our medical officers with the army, who understand the situation absolutely.

J. FORD KENT, *Major-General Volunteers Commanding First Division, Fifth Corps.*

J. C. BATES, *Major-General Volunteers Commanding Provisional Division.*

ADNAH R. CHAFFEE, *Major-General Commanding Third Brigade, Second Division.*

SAMUEL S. SUMNER, *Brigadier-General Volunteers Commanding First Brigade, Cavalry.*

WILL LUDLOW, *Brigadier-General Volunteers Commanding First Brigade, Second Division.*

ADELBERT AMES, *Brigadier-General Volunteers Commanding Third Brigade, First Division.*

LEONARD WOOD, *Brigadier-General Volunteers Commanding the City of Santiago.*

THEODORE ROOSEVELT, *Colonel Commanding Second Cavalry Brigade.*

Major M. W. Wood, the chief Surgeon of the First Division, said: "The army must be moved North," adding, with emphasis, "or it will be unable to move itself."

- Transcription and explanation taken from Bartleby.com
<http://www.bartleby.com/51/c.html>