

The Lost Patrol

By P. L. STANGL

It was a beautiful spring morning in the year 1900. The commanding officer of a battalion of American infantry quarters in the town of Laguna, ordered the first sergeant of company D to get his command ready for a practice and reconnaissance march. Word had come in that the surrounding hills were alive with the enemy, under General Juan Cailles, and that there was danger of a raid on some of the barrios lying beyond easy reach of the garrison towns. The colonel of the regiment had mounted several companies, immediately dubbed *the horse marines*, on native ponies seized from the enemy in the American advance on their lines. Company D, at this particular garrison, was one of the mounted companies, and the C. O. thought it a good idea to exercise the men and horses by sending them on patrol.

Hence the order.

But there seemed no use in sending out a commissioned officer, most of whom were either wounded or sick anyway; there was little danger of anything transpiring that would call for an officer of the line, so the C. O. put the sergeant in charge of the company and started them off, together with the medical steward and a couple of hospital corps men. The sergeant was Irish, a man of many years' service with the regulars, who provided his men with plenty of ammunition for an emergency. His orders merely covered the general route to be followed.

The hills were beautiful in their rich foliage; the many rills and streams that rushed musically along added to the attractiveness of the scenery; the soldiers, most of them youngsters, new to army life and discipline, were happy to get away from the camp and to get into the open, and treated the whole affair as a picnic. To the south of them lay Tayabas province, from which a complicated system of hills and mountains separated them, with small lakes embedded in the pockets of the hills and surrounded by coconut groves and other trees. Here and there nipa huts, which invariably were empty, peeped from among the verdure. The occupants had either fled long ago, were with the enemy in the mountains to the south, or in hiding from the Americans.

Before many miles had been passed, the guide had given the command the slip; the day was young yet, and the question was what to do next. A council of war, held by the sergeant, Doc, the steward, and the other sergeant, decided to push on notwithstanding, as they had a good map, which the sergeant had secured without the knowledge of his C. O., so the party gaily crossed ridge after ridge, rivulet after rivulet, till at a halt was called beside a small lake to drink the milk of a lot of green coconuts knocked off the palms all about them, and to make a picnic of it with the rations carried along for the purpose. When about to order the troop to mount again, the first sergeant took out his map and studied it attentively for awhile, then called his cronies and said:

"Boys, just beyond here is the crossroad that leads to Tayabas (naming a town just beyond the border), and this other way goes to S. . . . (regiment's headquarters). Shall we go back or go on, and which way?"

Bill, the other sergeant and next in rank, opined they had better turn around, while Doc was in favor of going ahead. After much discussion, all thought it would be fun to *get lost*, ride toward the frontier, and then swing in a wide semicircle so as to get to S. . . . from the southeast, instead of west, as they were now, and give as their excuse that they had lost their guide and the way, and that the horses needed to be shod. In that way they could have a gorgeous picnic, get the *Old Man* to protect them from court martial by the C. O., and escape drill and guard duty for a couple of days at least.

This program was joyfully adopted. Remounting, they rode along like a lot of school boys let out of class, which they greatly resembled.

Dusk found them on the wrong side of the mountains from their starting point, and in a valley where the hasty abandonment by the occupants showed a barrio with rice just cook-

ing, and a number of chickens squawking around the trees where they roosted. But not a native to be seen. After a futile effort to get hold of somebody to explain that they were not out to capture or kill, the soldiers gleefully captured some of the unlucky fowl, which, with the rice and some fruit and *embalmed beef* of the ration, made an opulent meal to which all did justice. After which they proceeded to sleep in the shacks, first looking after their horses, posting a guard and making everything snug for the night.

Early next morning, after a hearty breakfast, all mounted and rode away, leaving a few cans of salmon and some coins to pay for the food commandeered, which no doubt surprised the natives on returning to their homes, full of wonder at finding nothing burned down or destroyed.

Meanwhile, at L. . . . , when neither man nor horse appeared, nor tidings as to their fate or whereabouts, no little uneasiness was beginning to be felt, and the military telephone and telegraph were busy seeking tidings of the lost patrol—the men who were having the time of their lives. As they neared a barrio or town, they were met by signs of submission in the shape of white flags, consisting of towels, sheets, petticoats or other domestic gear, tied to a piece of bamboo and stuck out of windows as they approached; but only old women or men could be seen, who claimed utter lack of comprehension of anything else than Tagalog, in which tongue some of the soldiers, who had not wasted their time in the islands, managed to extract the valuable information that they were all *arrigos* there, that no soldiers were within miles (presumably), and that they were *mucho pobres* and had nothing to give the Americans.

By noon a halt was made and the return journey planned.

As rations had long since been consumed, or swapped for other things, or left in payment of

supplies taken, and to feed so large a body of men was likely to become a problem, the first sergeant concluded that the shortest way to an army post—any army post—was the greatest need of the time, and hence it was decided to strike across country for S. . . . , as the nearest and safest place under the circumstances.

With the help of the map it was found that they were near a crossroad that would connect their present road with the main road to S. . . . from the south. So tightening belts and putting a little pep into their steeds, they galloped at top speed to cover the twenty odd miles between them and S. . . . , which they reached just as the colonel was returning from guard mount.

Riding up and reporting, the top sergeant stated that they had been lost, having first been abandoned by their native guide, and, fearing treachery and being unacquainted with the country, had got too far southeast, and that only late that day they had fallen in with people who could direct them, who had sent them on the road which landed them there.

Whether the colonel suspected something, or whether he wanted to keep the C. O. at L. . . . who was not a favorite of his, on nettles, the upshot was that the troop was ordered to remain at S. . . . and, after putting up their steeds, to quarter and mess with the company at the *conviento*, while the medical department men went joyfully to the post hospital, sure of good chow and quarters.

But the top sergeant was not done yet. He respectfully invited the attention of the colonel to the condition of the feet of the horses of his troop, and asked permission to have them shod next morning, which was granted, thereby insuring at one stroke that they would have nearly another day to loaf. Also, their whereabouts now being reported by wire to the C. O. at L. . . . , his resentment, calling for unpleasant explanations, was allowed time to cool. The orders of the colonel served at once as the men's protection, and an explanation of their prolonged absence.

To the great disgust of the troops at S. . . . while they had had to drill, stand guard and otherwise disport themselves, the *lost patrol*



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The Parable of the Mosquito Larvae

By ANNE MILTIMORE PENDELTON

And now, Dearly Beloved, shall I relate unto thee a parable, even though the telling of it be not pleasant to me, for that the lesson of the parable did hurt my pride, of which, forsooth, I have too much, as thou mayst or mayst not know.

Now it so happeneth that for some time there hath been a creature of venomous intent and stinging purpose who dwelleth among us quite against the wishes of the Community. And it hath been so ordained by the Authorities that such animals as the dog and the horse, yea, even the fowls of the barnyard, shall be awarded neither housing nor yarding privileges of College Hill, which Hill do be the place whereon the good Man of My House and I do have our Dwelling Place. And we do think that we who Dwell on this Hill do be of the Elite—ahem!

Howbeit, speaking of the order concerning the Domestic, I may say in strictest confidence

that this order be not at all enforced, hence by this token, am I constrained to believe that the Anopheles was emboldened to think that the restrictions against his taking up his abode among the Elite would be equally unenforced.

And to this end he abode among us for some time, making many of our servants to ache with agonizing pains and raging fevers in a most malignant form so that they could not so much as endure the thought of food or exertion of any kind, particularly the performance of their duties, though truth compels me to state that I think the nonperformance of their duties was the least of their grievances. And I must not forget to add that this strange and virulent form of malaria attacked naught but the servant and lower class Filipino, and did not once affect the upper stratum of Filipino society, nor yet any of the whites, that is to say, it did not affect

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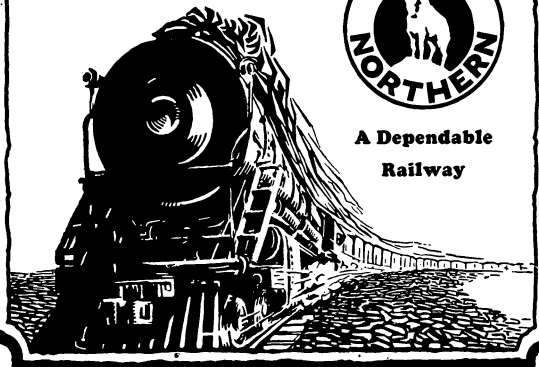
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loafed gloriously till late afternoon, as the one farrier and blacksmith at S..... was not able to finish shoeing all the horses until near sunset, whereupon the troop remounted, reviewed by the colonel and his staff, and at a smart trot made the five miles home, reaching there as the bright moon was silversing all the countryside with its unearthly beauty. After reporting to a C. O., who was so utterly disgusted by the orders wired from S..... as to be nearly speechless, the men gleefully rejoined their less fortunate brethren, after first vowing solemn silence on the exact manner of their being lost; so that when the *non-coms* of the patrol were lined up for a stiff cross-examination before the exasperated C. O. and his brother officers, the innocent faces and uniform testimony of all of them left no loophole for action, and while they were within short distance of a court martial, the fact that they, as their Irish sergeant put it, *saw the colonel first, saved their bacon.*

But for the rest of the time the battalion lay at L....., the *horse marines* were never sent on patrol duty; and it was not many weeks later that the quartermaster turned in all the horses to the corral at Manila, and the doughboys were again reduced to Shanks' mare for transportation.

For many years the legend of the flying column, which in time grew to the dimensions of a regiment, was current in that part of Laguna among the inhabitants, and their wild ride and wilder antics pictured in the colors of an exterminating and devastating horde like unto the Huns of Attila, notwithstanding the fact that the only gun fired was the pistol of the hospital steward, who shot a wild pig the last day out, which, being roasted with yams, made an excellent supper. And digging yams and splitting coconuts was the only use to which bayonets were put.