

Chapter I

Forty-six years of active service in the Navy and Marine Corps of the United States, forty-two of which were spent as an officer on the active list of the United States Marine Corps, are the underlying reasons for the selection of the title, "Soldier and Sailor Too," from the title of Rudyard Kipling's famous poem about the British Marines.

The regular U. S. Marine, must indeed, be a "soldier and sailor too." In my case, this was particularly true, because my class of 1881 was the first graduating class of the United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, from which second lieutenants of the Marine Corps were commissioned.

When asked upon graduation to submit in writing my individual preference for assignment, Line - Engineer Corps - or Marine Corps, I made my first choice "Marine Corps." This decision I have never regretted in forty-two years service in the famous Corps of which the late Admiral of the Navy, George Dewey, said, "I consider the Marine Corps the finest aggregation of fighting men on earth."

With pride and a thousand thrills, I have seen the United States Marine Corps grow from a small organization of about two thousand men and seventy-one officers all told, line and staff, to the large World War Corps of some seventy-five thousand men and three thousand officers.

I consider myself fortunate in having been in the Corps during this growth, and finally at the most important period of its history, selected as its Major General Commandant, in which position I served from February 25th, 1914 to June 30th, 1920.

My duties in the Corps have taken me to all parts of the world; I have sailed the Seven Seas under its symbols, globe, eagle and anchor, and through it has come what success I have won in life. The one prayer of my heart, where the United States Marines are concerned, is Tiny Tim's "God bless them, every one."

Early in my naval career, I learned the value of keeping an accurate mental record of events. As I have had a rather unusual life, I decided to jot down in more or less chronological order the principal happenings in my life. In this way I meant to preserve them in permanent shape for the members of my family. In my twenty years of travel outside the United States, either on board naval cruising vessels or on foreign duty on shore, I kept no diary or notes. What I write of those years is entirely from memory.

I will attempt no elaborate descriptions of places or people seen on my travels and tours of duty. This is simply the story of impressions mentally recorded in my years of naval service. It is written in the fond hope that it will lead Americans to a fuller realization of the glories and achievements of the U. S. Navy and Marine Corps.

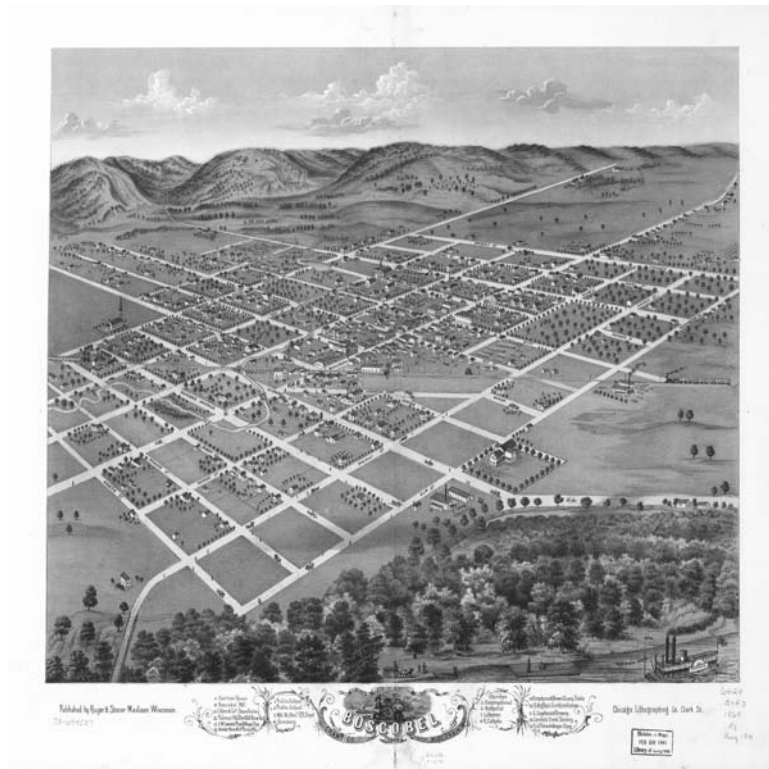
I was born in Lancaster, Grant County, Wisconsin on December 9th, 1859. When I was two years old my family moved to Boscobel, Wisconsin, where I lived until I entered the U. S. Naval Academy. I attended the public schools of the town.

My home was a good, comfortable one of the type that was a “home” before that splendid American institution went out of fashion. Therein I was taught to fear God; to love my Country and to strive toward a useful manhood. I thank God that my dear mother lived to know of any honor I won in the Naval service. She died in 1921 when eighty-seven years old.

A half century ago the life of a boy in the west was far different from what it is now, not only in the west but elsewhere. While we were encouraged in all kinds of sport, especially sleighing, skating, hunting, fishing, riding, base ball, etc., we were required to do many things a boy would now resent. We were impressed with the fact that we could not be drones but had to do a reasonable amount of useful work. We had to shovel snow, bring in wood, kindling, etc. in winter, besides attending to the cows and ponies. We all had ponies but on condition that the boys of the family attended to not only theirs but their sisters'. We also had what seems to be almost lacking now- that is respect for our parents and our seniors. The words of our parents and of our teachers in school were more respected than most laws are now. Not only did we have to do work as indicated above, but we had to cut grass, attend to the vegetable garden, hoe corn and potatoes, pick currants and berries and do a thousand and one useful chores about home. After work we

could play and no country ever furnished more sport for a boy. The streams were full of trout and the river of catfish and there were many splendid swimming holes. Our ponies furnished a never ending source of amusement and for weeks after a circus the youngsters of the town tried hard to copy the stunts of the circus riders. My practice in horsemanship as a boy has stood me in good stead all my life.

In the same town of Boscobel lived the Hon. George C. Hazelton, member of Congress from the Third Wisconsin District. As my boyish ambition was to go to West Point, I was interested in the man who could send me



Boscobel in 1869.

Barnett's father was mayor of this community in south west Wisconsin.

there. Mr. Hazelton was elected to Congress in November, 1876. As he was a neighbor, I asked my father if he would speak to Mr. Hazelton and request an appointment for me to West Point, but fate had other things in store for me. My father did not wish to ask Mr. Hazelton this favor. The subject was dropped. Up to that time I never had thought of the Naval Academy. I never had seen a graduate of Annapolis, and living so far inland, of course, I had no opportunity of knowing anything of salt water or of life on the sea.



Congressman George C. Hazelton

Going home from school to lunch one April day in 1877, I met Congressman Hazelton. He

stopped me, after my greeting, and said, drawing an official looking letter from his pocket: "George, how would you like to go to the Naval Academy at Annapolis?" I was thrilled and could hardly credit my good luck. Then he told me the letter was from the Secretary of the Navy informing him that there was a vacancy at Annapolis from his district. I accepted, contingent upon my parents' consent. Then I turned and ran all the way home.

Boy though I was, I saw what a changed life this appointment would mean to me. My parents, at first, were not inclined to allow me to choose a naval career. But I solicited the help of certain excellent friends of my family and my father and mother were finally convinced and gave their consent. I have often thought of what my life might have been if I had not met Mr. Hazelton that April day, or if Mr. Hazelton had met some other boy of the school, and he had been the lucky one. If I had not gone to Annapolis, I probably would have followed in the footsteps of a large percentage of the graduates of High Schools in Wisconsin, and attended the State University at Madison. At least, that was my idea at the time. If I had graduated at Madison, of course, it is impossible for me to say now what my life would have been thereafter.

About the same time Mr. Hazelton gave me an appointment to Annapolis, he gave an appointment to West Point to a young man named Charles G. Treat. He accepted the appointment and graduated at West Point and is now a retired Major General of the Army. Strange to say he is living almost directly across the street from me in Washington at the present time.

Not long after I received my official appointment from the Navy Department, I started for Annapolis. It was a great adventure, for I had never been away from home for

more than a day at a time. To start for a strange place nearly twelve hundred miles away seemed to me a gigantic undertaking. I learned from the newspapers that a boy from Milwaukee, M. J. Donnelly, was leaving for Annapolis at about the same time. I wrote to him and we arranged to go together. My father thought of accompanying me, and would have done so but for the fact that Lt. Joel A. Barber¹, U. S. Navy, of Lancaster, Wisconsin, was at home on leave about that time. He told my father that it would be far better for me to go alone because, as he said, if I had anything in me it would be better to put me upon my own resources at once, and, that in his opinion, during the examinations at Annapolis, parents of prospective candidates rather injured their chances.

Lt. Barber also gave me several pieces of advice as to my conduct during the time I was to be at Annapolis. First, he told me to remember that I would have four years of very hard work; therefore, he recommended great energy and application. He also warned me that one of the foundations of the service was absolute truth. "In fact", he remarked, "in the service truth and honesty are not comparative terms; a man is either truthful or he is a liar. And he is honest or he is a thief". He gave me another piece of advice which I put in practice not only at Annapolis but have used to advantage all my life. He said that when an instructor asked me a question during recitation I should look him straight in the eyes while answering. He said he felt assured (having been an instructor there himself) that a boy who followed that advice would get better marks than a boy who allowed his eyes to wander about instead of looking at the instructor. In that connection I remember an incident which came to my notice forty years later. I heard an officer of very high rank in the service trying to convince the Secretary of the Navy of the wisdom of a certain line

of action which the Secretary was questioning. I noticed that the officer's eyes were wandering all over the room. Instantly the advice of Lt. Barber came back to me. I was not surprised when the conversation was over to find that the officer had lost out on his argument.

So I left home and started on my great adventure with a light heart and the enthusiasm of youth. I was dressed in the best suit of clothes I had ever had. I felt that life had little more to give me, at that particular moment. The trip was without particular incident, although everything was novel to our young eyes. In Pittsburgh - it was during the terrible railroad strike of 1877- troops were guarding the railroad yards. They were United States Marines. They were the first Marines I had ever seen. Little did I dream that after my graduation at Annapolis I would spend nearly my whole life in the Marine Corps.

At Baltimore where we registered at the old



¹ Barber was an 1871 graduate of Annapolis. He was a Master in 1877, was promoted to Lieutenant (j.g.) in 1883 and resigned later that same year.

Barnum's Hotel, we were amazed by the number of colored people there. I had seen but few colored men. It was hard for me to understand that there were so many colored people in Baltimore. I had thought that they were all concentrated in the far south. The waiters at Barnum's were all colored. Our first meal was dinner. As we sat down to the table, the blackest man I ever saw, about six feet four inches tall, came to wait on us, and handed us the menu card. We did not bother about looking at the menu because we knew what we wanted. Natives of the west, at a time before cold storage was as plentiful as it is today, we never had eaten any real raw oysters, except very small ones sent out from Baltimore frozen, in tin cans. We had discussed this on the way east and were ready for some real raw oysters. This we told the waiter. He asked us how many we wanted. Having in mind the small ones we had seen in Wisconsin, we told him about three dozen each. He smiled and went away. We noticed that on his way to the kitchen he stopped and spoke to other waiters and they all laughed. Presently he came back, another waiter with him, each carrying the largest trays I ever saw, filled with oysters on the half shell. Each oyster seemed as large as a hand. Not only our waiter but the other waiters in the dining room were all smiling. We saw the joke on us and only ate, of course, a small portion of our large orders.

The next morning we wandered about Baltimore and saw the sights of interest. We had never been to Washington, and as it was considered a perfectly marvelous place by western boys, we were anxious to visit it. The day being Sunday we found we could not get to Annapolis (the railroad facilities were poor at the time). So we decided to spend the day in Washington and report in Annapolis on Monday morning. We were wonderfully impressed by the necessity of getting to Annapolis as soon as possible, and found we could reach Annapolis as quickly from Washington as from Baltimore. Before we left, we asked our waiter what was the best place in Washington to get sea food. He told us "Harvey's". And he advised that the best thing Harvey served was "steamed oysters". That Sunday afternoon we drifted into Harvey's and ordered steamed oysters. The colored waiter asked us how many we wanted, a peck or a half bushel. That was new lingo to us. We concluded that the waiter in Baltimore had communicated with a friend of his at Harvey's as to our break the night before. So we were chary about ordering in that quantity. By questioning the waiter we learned that a peck would be about right as he explained, "that they were measured with the shells on". We found that they were quite as delicious as they had been represented and for us, that meal put Harvey's on the map forever.

We enjoyed our day in the Capital very much. As western boys, we had very high ideas about the capital of our country, and had taken a great deal of interest in the affairs of our nation, common to boys of our age. It being Sunday, most of the sight seeing places were closed, so we simply got a general idea of Washington. Then and there I formed an idea I consider should apply to all public places in Washington. The show places should be opened all day long on Sunday.

The next morning we started for Annapolis. Upon arrival, we went to the Maryland Hotel, registered, and then went to the Naval Academy, as soon as possible.

We had heard of “hazing”, so it was with fear and trembling that we entered the Academy gates. Neither of us had ever seen salt water. One of our chief desires was to swim in it. That evening after dark we went into the Academy grounds again. No one stopped us and we made our way to the sea wall. There, behind a pile of coal, we undressed. Fortunately for me, young Donnelly undressed faster than I did and jumped in. The result of this jump made me decide not to go in at all. He went too near the gas house and the water was covered on the surface with coal tar. Out he scrambled very quickly. I tried to rub the tar off of him with our towels without much success. I did get off enough of it so he could put his clothes on. We returned to the hotel and spent the greater part of the night trying to remove the remainder of the tar from poor Donnelly. The next day we went down to the sea wall near the Catholic Church and had a real swim in salt water. While we enjoyed our swim, it resulted in a terrible earache for me, the agony of which I remember to this day.



John W. Weeks, Congressman (1905-1913), Senator (1913-1919), Secretary of War (1921-1925).

Our first bills at the hotel were too high for our purses so we soon located in a boarding house not far away and worked on preparations for the entrance examinations. A couple of days after this, I met the young man who was afterwards my room mate for four years in the Academy, and my life long friend, John W. Weeks of New Hampshire, afterwards a member of Congress from Massachusetts; later United States Senator and later, Secretary of War. Weeks and I were congenial from the first and decided that, if we passed the examinations, we would room together. It was the custom at that time for cadets to choose their room mates as far as possible. Weeks and I were about the only pair in our class to room together the whole four years.

Finally the time came for the examinations. It was a nerve racking time for all of us. When they were finished, we were told to assemble in front of the Gunnery Building at nine o'clock on a

certain morning where the results would be made known to us. A couple of hundred applicants assembled on time a bright morning in May and the Academy band was playing. The late Professor William W. Fay, in the Department of English, read off the names of those who had passed. By a strange coincidence thirty-five years later a son of this same Professor Fay, who was not born then, was an officer in the Marine Corps and was one of the first aides I had on my staff as Major General. A daughter of his, then not

born, married a classmate of mine, Gen. Charles A. Doyen, and I was best man at the wedding. Another daughter of his married Joseph H. Pendleton, at present a Major General in the Marine Corps, and my friend to this day. In this connection, it became my privilege as Major General Commandant of the Marine Corps to detail Gen. Doyen as the first commanding officer of Marine Brigade in France during the war. It was a source of grief to me that he did not live to lead them in their famous battles in France, feeling as I do, that they would have done as well under him as they did under that splendid soldier, Gen. James G. Harbord U. S. A.

Of course there were a good many candidates who did not pass. Just as Professor Fay finished reading off the names of the fortunate ones, the band played "Home Sweet Home". Although a delightful piece of music at the proper time it must have made the losers even more sad than the naturally would have been. My name beginning with "B", appeared very early in Professor Fay's reading. I at once started on the run to the telegraph office about a mile away to telegraph my family the glad tidings that I had passed. Young Donnelly found he had passed; also Weeks, and Weller, afterwards Senator from Maryland. Our class, including those who passed the examinations and those turned back from the previous class, numbered one hundred and twenty-nine. Among our classmates were three young Japanese, Urui, at present an Admiral of the Japanese Navy, the late Admiral Enoye, and the late Captain Serata; together with Admiral Henry B. Wilson, later superintendent of the Naval Academy; Capt. William H. Stayton, president of the Baltimore Steamship Company; Rear Admiral Hoogewerff; William M. Emmett, Chief Electrician of the General Electric Company; F. E. Buntess, one of the leading surgeons of the United States; Eugene Carroll, one of the best authorities on hydraulics in the whole west; Rear Admiral R. P. Foreshow, for many years commanding officer of the New York Naval Reserve. As we ran for the telegraph office that morning, we were not thinking of the future greatness of the members of the class; we were only anxious to inform our parents, as soon as possible, that we had passed the examination.

Before going on the U. S. Santee, we were all assembled in the office of the Secretary of the Academy, Mr. Chase, for the purpose of taking the oath of allegiance. We of course had

Christopher Raymond Perry Rodgers (1819-1892) served in the Mexican-American War, the American Civil War and as Superintendent of the USNA.



to state our ages. Since that time it has been of no use for any of us to try to cover up our exact years because there it is in black and white sworn to in our youth. After leaving the Secretary's office, I happened to see a man I thought must be the Superintendent of the Academy because he wore more gold lace than I thought anyone could wear on one suit. In addition, he had on an immensely high beaver hat covered with gold lace. I was awestruck. Later I found that this apparition was none other than Denver, the Drum Major of the Naval Academy Band. It was not until later that I saw the real Superintendent, that splendid sailor man and gentleman, Rear Admiral C. R. P. Rodgers, who was, as he always had been, an officer well worthy of the admiration and the emulation of the youngsters under his command.