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# Pershing and the Mount Bagsak Campaign of 1913

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DONALD SMYTHE

ON AUGUST 23, 1912, Brigadier General John J. Pershing, military governor of the Moro Province in the Philippines, sat down and wrote to his superior, Major General J. Franklin Bell. Things were going quite well in the Moro Province, reported Pershing. Ever since they had decided to disarm the Moros a year ago, the problem of lawlessness, a perennial problem wherever Moros were concerned, had decreased. Theft and robbery had been replaced by peace and industry. Moros now could leave their farm animals outside overnight with assurance that they would still be there in the morning. Human life was now worth something. Criminals were easier to catch. "Never in the history of the Moro Province," reported Pershing, "has [sic] there been such peaceful conditions as at present."<sup>1</sup>

Such optimism was reassuring, but not entirely justified. It was true that the disarmament of the Moros had, by and large, been a success. The disarmament order had been promulgated September 8, 1911, and thousands of guns had been turned in. But on the island of Jolo, one of the five divisions of the

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<sup>1</sup> John J. Pershing Papers (Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.), Box 371. The Pershing Papers and their box numbers will hereinafter be cited thus: JJP, 371.

I wish to thank Major General James L. Collins for reading the manuscript and making helpful suggestions. He was Pershing's aide de camp during the Mount Bagsak campaign.

Province which Pershing governed, the Moros had been particularly uncooperative. In December, 1911 Pershing had been forced to throw over one thousand men into the field to break resistance at Bud Dajo, a sacred mountain which the Moros had fortified in opposition to disarmament.<sup>2</sup> Even this did not end the opposition. In fact, within a few months after Pershing wrote so glowingly to his superior, it became evident that there was again trouble on the island of Jolo.

Reports kept coming in of Moros firing on American troops on the trails or even into American camps. In Lati Ward especially, an area of about twenty square miles, under the leadership of a chieftain named Amil, the Moros steadily collected arms and men until they numbered between five and eight thousand. They made no secret of what they had in mind. Amil sent a message to Lieutenant William W. Gordon who served as governor of the area: "Tell the soldiers to come on and fight."<sup>3</sup>

Fighting Moros was not a particularly pleasant experience. They were defensive fighters, holing up in fortified earthenworks called *cottas*, which were surrounded by deep ditches and camouflaged pits containing bamboo shafts on which to impale their enemies. Their courage was phenomenal. "He is absolutely fearless," Pershing said of the Moro fighter, "and once committed to combat he counts death as a mere incident. It matters not how he is armed, he goes directly at his adversary."<sup>4</sup>

American troops had stood up to the Moro and beaten him. But the Moro was a proud individual and the defeat of Moros in one section of the country meant little to those in another section. They considered themselves different. They were tougher. Furthermore, American policy in the

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<sup>2</sup> For details, see Pershing, "Report on Bud Dajo Operations," May 31, 1912, JJP, 371.

<sup>3</sup> First Lieutenant William W. Gordon to Pershing, January 14, 1913, JJP, 278.

<sup>4</sup> Brig. Gen. John J. Pershing, *The Annual Report of the Governor of the Moro Province, for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1913* (Zamboanga: Mindanao Herald Pub. Co., 1913), p. 65.

Philippines recently had been to withdraw American troops and replace them with Christian Filipino troops under American officers. The Moro had not the same fear of the Christian Filipino as he had for the American. In fact, he despised him. Pershing himself, who rarely underestimated an opponent, said: "The terrorizing effect of the charging Moro fanatic, with flashing steel, closing in a hand-to-hand death struggle, is more than the average Filipino is able to withstand."<sup>5</sup>

Two skirmishes occurred in late January, 1913, Moros being the aggressors in each. Immediately afterwards, some five to ten thousand of them stampeded to Mount Bagsak, where they had a series of fortified strongholds built on top of an extinct volcano. As was the Moro custom, they took their wives and children with them—thus complicating an assault against Bagsak by American forces. It would mean the killing of many innocent persons. Estimates of these ran as three-fourths of the total force.<sup>6</sup>

Pershing's inclination was to go slow, to avoid a fight if he could, to starve out an enemy rather than attack him by frontal assault. It was a policy he had followed all through his career in the Philippines, ever since he had first come there as a Major in 1899. It was a policy not always understood. Robert L. Bullard, one of the A.E.F. division, corps, and army commanders in World War I, said in his diary on December 3, 1917: "I am writing a good many prophecies in this book these days. . . . I shall now add one: It is, that our General Pershing is not a fighter; he is in all his history a pacifist and, unless driven thereto. . . will do no fighting. . . I have had some (perhaps better than others) means and opportunity, in the Moro country in the Philippine Islands of observing and judging him. He is. . . not a warrior."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*; Pershing, "Autobiography," 1934-1935, ch. xviii, p. 15, JJP, 379.

<sup>6</sup> Major General J. Franklin Bell to Adjutant General of the Army, July 3, 1913, JJP, 278; Gordon to Pershing, February 25, 1913, JJP, 278.

<sup>7</sup> Maj. Gen. Robert Lee Bullard, USA (Ret.), *Personalities and Reminiscences of the War* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1925), pp. 92-93. Bullard later changed his opinion of Pershing.

No matter what others might say, it seemed best to Pershing to let the Moros stay up on top of their mountain fortress until they ran out of provisions or until it was time for them to plant their crops. Then the Moros would have to come out in the open and he could negotiate with them. As he said to William Cameron Forbes, the American governor general of the Philippines: "My avowed and announced policy with reference to these Moros has been to disarm them by any means except by fighting. I have been and am especially anxious to avoid a big fight. I have been trying to scare, bluff or tire them out, and am willing to do anything, except run away, to avoid shooting them up."<sup>8</sup>

Although Governor General Forbes assured Pershing of his "entire confidence in your handling of the affair,"<sup>9</sup> rumors began to circulate that things were getting out of hand in Jolo. James G. Harbord (who at this time seemed to lack the friendliness which he later manifested as Pershing's Chief of Staff in World War I) wrote unfavorably of him to General Leonard Wood, the Chief of Staff in Washington. Moros were firing into the city of Jolo repeatedly, said Harbord. Army wives and their children had been removed from there and transported across the water to Zamboanga.<sup>10</sup>

Worried, Forbes called Pershing on February 27, 1913: "Constant rumors from various sources indicate bad conditions in Jolo growing worse." He heard that the Lati Ward Moros were pillaging and murdering other Moros who had surrendered their guns to the government. "It is my belief," said Forbes, "that there are times when as many men as are thought necessary should be sent in so as to absolutely smother any difficulty. I will support you in whatever action may be necessary for public order. Send me report as to conditions."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Pershing to Bell, March 11, 1913, JJP, 371; Pershing to Forbes, February 7, 1913, JJP, 76.

<sup>9</sup> Forbes to Pershing, February 5, 1913, JJP, 76.

<sup>10</sup> April 18, 1913, James G. Harbord Papers (Library of Congress), Private Letters, Vol. V.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in Pershing, "Autobiography," ch. xix, p. 8.

Pershing's reply the following day was born of years of experience in dealing with the Moros. It showed perceptive knowledge of their character and their psychology. Said Pershing: "[The Moro] is not all overawed or impressed by an overwhelming force. If he takes a notion to fight he will fight regardless of the number of men brought against him. You cannot bluff him."

Already there were more than enough troops on the island of Jolo, continued Pershing. They could "smother" the defiant element. But reports indicated that Mount Bagsak had five or six times as many women and children as Moro warriors. "While I do not believe... that the Moros who are openly opposing us will all yield without a fight, yet I am not prepared to rush in and attack them while they are surrounded by women and children."<sup>12</sup>

By the middle of February the Bagsak Moros were willing to talk. Their supplies were running short and government troops at the base of the mountain prevented them from being resupplied. Pershing wanted to talk too. Planting time was coming on and if the Moros did not soon return to their fields the Province government in a few months would find itself with thousands of starving Moros on its hands. Yet as long as troops stayed in the Lati Ward area the Moros simply would not return.<sup>13</sup>

Lieutenant Bill Gordon, on the spot in Jolo, recommended that they pull back their troops. Three-quarters of the people atop Bagsak were women and children, he told Pershing in late February. He asked permission to negotiate: the Moros to surrender their weapons and the government to withdraw its troops.<sup>14</sup>

Pershing approved and negotiations began. On March 7, 1913, Amil led 1,500 Moro fighting men with 300 guns to Taglibi for a conference. Representing the government was the Moro Sultan of Sulu and Datto Mandi of Zamboanga, both

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>13</sup> Pershing to Bell, March 12, 1913, JJP, 278.

<sup>14</sup> Gordon to Pershing, February 24 and 25, 1913, JJP, 278.

Moros themselves and both cooperative with Pershing and the Americans. After three hours an agreement was reached. Government troops would be pulled back as far as Jolo City. The Bagsak Moros would return to their homes and take care of their planting. For the time being, they would be allowed to carry cutting weapons again on the roads and trails. As for surrender of their guns, they could keep them for the present but they promised to do whatever Pershing would later ask of them through the Sultan of Sulu.<sup>15</sup>

Not the best agreement certainly, but better than nothing. It avoided a fight and got the Moros back to work their fields. It also made the surrender of the guns only a matter of time—if the Moros kept their promise.

Pershing was not too sure that they would. He was willing to be lenient, he had always been. He told Gordon, that, if it came right down to it, he would forget about all past offenses as long as the guns were turned in. But everything depended on that. Would they surrender the guns in the long run, he asked Gordon on March 9? He wanted badly to know. Rumors were circulating throughout the Philippines (and even the United States) that a serious situation was forming on the island of Jolo. The War Department had cabled, demanding to know what the military situation was there.<sup>16</sup>

In Pershing's mind it was good. "Newspaper report alleging general lawless condition with many casualties Jolo entirely unfounded," he cabled General Bell, his superior, on March 12, 1913. "No doubt maliciously circulated by vagabonds being driven out by provincial authorities or by other irresponsible parties. There has been no disturbance Island Jolo outside disaffected district Lati Ward with exception dozen shots at Moubu one mile from [the city of] Jolo.... Conditions in other parts archipelago peaceful and normal. Situation very encouraging."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Same to same, March 8, 1913, JJP, 278; Pershing to Bell, March 12, 1913.

<sup>16</sup> JJP, 278.

<sup>17</sup> JJP, 278.

Even the disaffected area was completely under control, Pershing told Bell in a letter of March 11, 1913. That he had not stamped out resistance there was not due to inability but to patience. The Moros would be disarmed in good time. "There has not been a single moment... when we could not have gone on top of Bagsak and cleaned up this bunch of Moros with small loss to ourselves.... But the possibility of slaughtering innocent women and children would deter me a long time from an engagement against this mountain position. This settlement must appeal to the soul of anybody with a humane instinct, and I would rather defer the final outcome several months than to be guilty of such a crime."<sup>18</sup>

In his heart Pershing must have suspected what the final outcome would be. His past experience with the Moros clearly indicated that with some, at least, no agreement was trustworthy, any show of kindness was misconstrued as weakness, and, in the last analysis, only resort to arms, only force used against force, would compel surrender of prohibited weapons and submission to the government. If it came to that, he would have to find some way to segregate the non-combatants from the warriors. But he continued to hope for the best.

"Is every reason to believe that the end of opposition is at hand..." he wrote Governor General Forbes on April 7, 1913, on learning that some of the rebels had surrendered their guns.<sup>19</sup> To Gordon in Jolo he again repeated his instructions to offer complete amnesty to Amil and his followers if they surrendered their guns. "The guns are all we want.... If he will turn in their guns nothing will ever be said about past offences."<sup>20</sup>

But the surrender of guns soon slowed down to a trickle and then stopped. Most of the worst rebels—fanatics, cattle thieves, desperados—did not come down from Bagsak permanently. Those who had come down to work their fields held themselves in constant readiness to bolt for Bagsak at the

<sup>18</sup> JJP, 371.

<sup>19</sup> JJP, 371.

<sup>20</sup> April 10, 1913, JJP, 278.



first indication of the return of troops to enforce disarmament. Their women and children would again go with them, of course.<sup>21</sup>

From Jolo came a message from Gordon, counselling that any punitive expedition against the Moros be delayed until after planting. "They are plowing now, and I am afraid that if we went into the country the people would leave the fields before they finish their planting and they would have nothing at all to show for the work they have been doing since the withdrawal of the troops. I think the troops can be sent through the country as soon as the crops start growing."<sup>22</sup>

Meanwhile negotiations went on. More meetings. More conferences. The Moros were good at this, especially when it served their purpose. At a meeting at Bun Bun in Jolo, some of the rebels agreed to visit the city of Jolo later to discuss final conditions for surrender.<sup>23</sup>

By the end of May, however, the sham was dropped. The rebels declared they would never lay down their arms. They proclaimed their defiance of the government, confident that the latter was afraid to fight. As a gesture of contempt, they crept up in the dark of night and fired into the army barracks at Jolo, the capital. The troops there took to sleeping on the floor, propping their mattresses against the wall as a defense against stray bullets.<sup>24</sup>

Here was a test of Pershing as governor of the Moro Province. What to do? In 1911, when he had crushed the rebellion at Bud Dajo, the Lati Ward Moros had stampeded to Mount Bagsak and prepared for a fight. That time he had chosen to ignore them, hoping they would cool down in time. Dajo, like Bagsak, had been considered impregnable, and look what he had done to that.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Pershing, "Report of Bud Bagsak Operations," p. 2, October 15, 1913, JJP, 371. Cited hereinafter as Pershing, "Bagsak."

<sup>22</sup> Gordon to Pershing, April 10, 1913, JJP, 279.

<sup>23</sup> Pershing, "Bagsak," pp. 2-3.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3; K. L. Sherman, "Pershing and a World Peace," *Survey Graphic*, XXIX (November, 1940), 551.

<sup>25</sup> Pershing, "Autobiography," ch. xix, p. 9.

But these Moros never learned. In early 1913 they had again stampeded to Bagsak. Government troops had moved into the area, then withdrawn, leaving the rebels atop the mountain secure and giving the impression (at least to Moros who wanted to think so) that the troops were afraid to fight.

Now the Moros openly defied the government and were molesting the capital city. Pershing could not ignore this. Ninety percent of governing this unruly province was convincing the natives that you were strong and brave, and that you could crush anyone who flaunted your authority. Once let the idea get abroad that you were weak or cowardly, and the whole provincial government would dissolve in chaos.

Yet any move at all against the Lati Ward would send the Moros—men, women, and children—scrambling towards their mountain stronghold. The men did not particularly bother him, but Pershing was most wary of killing women and children. General Leonard Wood had done it in 1906, in attacking a Moro *cotta*. Pershing had said of that action (in a private letter to his wife): “would not have... [that] on my conscience for the fame of Napoleon....”<sup>26</sup>

His only hope, then, lay in somehow segregating the combatants from the non-combatants, in attacking Mount Bagsak before the rebels had a chance to bring in their women and children. He would have to move so fast that the Moros wouldn't know what hit them.

To do this he would have to get their guard down, make them think they were safe, make them think that the government was retreating even more. About June 5, 1913, he cabled the commanding officer in Jolo, calling off all field operations and reconnaissance.<sup>27</sup>

On June 9, 1913, he cabled again, saying that he was leaving his headquarters at Zamboanga to visit his wife and children, then summering at Camp Overton, Mindanao. That

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<sup>26</sup> December 21, 1911, JJP, 3.

<sup>27</sup> Maj. James L. Collins, “The Battle of Bud Bagsak and the Part Played by the Mountain Guns Therein,” *Field Artillery Journal*, XV (November-December, 1925), p. 560.

evening, taking with him his aide-de-camp, Lieutenant James L. Collins, he embarked on the transport *Wright* which pulled out of Zamboanga and steered northwest—the usual route around the peninsula in order to get to Overton.

Once out of sight of Zamboanga, however, the *Wright* changed course, heading south for the island of Jolo. On the way, pulling in at Isabela, Basilan, the party (which by now everyone realized was a “war party”) embarked Captain George C. Charlton and his 51st Company, Philippine Scouts.<sup>28</sup>

Heading south again, they steamed past Jolo and pulled into Siasi, where they embarked Captain Taylor A. Nichols and his 52nd Company, Philippine Scouts, about noon on June 10. Then they sailed north for Jolo City, arriving at 8:00 p.m. with lights out.<sup>29</sup>

The secret had so far been well kept. When Collins arrived at the commanding officer's house with orders to assemble the men immediately for an attack on Bagsak at dawn, he found practically all the officers on the post in dress white, paying a social call with their wives.<sup>30</sup>

The enlisted men too had no inkling of what was planned. True, there had been rumors of an expedition against Bagsak, and a troop build-up in Jolo had seemed to indicate that it would be soon. But everyone knew that it wasn't scheduled before June 20, at the earliest, when there would be a full moon and good conditions for night work. And the latest “dope” indicated that the expedition would not take place even then. The story around the barracks in Jolo now was that there would be another try to win over Amil without a fight. Everything seemed to confirm this. Hadn't Pershing left Jolo on June 9 and returned to the mainland? Hadn't he then taken ship for Camp Overton, almost four hundred miles up the coast? And hadn't all the troops that had been

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<sup>28</sup> Although most of the Philippine Scouts were Christian Filipinos, some companies were composed of Moros. The 51st and 52nd Companies, Philippine Scouts, which led the final attack on Mount Bagsak, were Moro troops.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*; Pershing, “Bagsak,” p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> Collins, p. 560.

brought to Jolo for the expedition recently been sent away by boat, including practically all the white troops who had composed the Jolo garrison?<sup>31</sup>

But there was one soldier in Jolo who was not so sure. Major George C. Shaw, awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for action against the Moros of Lake Lanao in 1903, had served under Pershing there and knew something of his methods with the Moros. "I felt sure he would talk for a while and win over the wavering ones but in the end there would be one big fight in which all the bad ones would be finished." So Shaw, although rumors were against an expedition, kept his Philippine Scouts in readiness. "[We] got our field kits where we could grab them at once as we soon learned that Gen. Pershing moved things quicker than ever and he was always some[what] swift."<sup>32</sup>

He was too swift, it turned out, for some people. One of the officers stationed at Jolo, seeing that the expedition appeared to be postponed indefinitely, celebrated by getting drunk. This would not ordinarily have had such serious consequences but for the fact that he was one of the two officers on the whole expedition who had accurate knowledge of the Bagsak terrain and the trails leading to it. He spent the night being ducked innumerable times in the cold water of the *Wright's* bathtub, which just about got him sobered up enough to be of some use the next morning when the attack was made. (Actually he conducted himself very well, once the fight began. He was killed in action in World War I.)<sup>33</sup>

Things moved with speed that night in Jolo. By 11:00 p.m. two companies of Philippine Scouts (24th and 31st) were on the march to invest Mount Bagsak on the south and prevent entrance or exit by that direction. They were to arrive

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<sup>31</sup> George C. Shaw to Mr. and Mrs. William R. Davis, August 30, 1913, Shaw Papers; George C. Shaw, "Autobiography," January, 1938, V. 483, Shaw Papers. The Shaw Papers, hereinafter cited as SP, were graciously loaned to the author by Shaw's daughter, Mrs. Edmund K. Daley, of Arlington, Va.

<sup>32</sup> Shaw to the Davises, August 30, 1913.

<sup>33</sup> Collins, p. 560.

there by daylight. A detachment of fifty men of the 8th U.S. Cavalry, together with the pack train and the mules which would carry the mountain guns in the field, left to march seventeen miles along the coast to Bun Bun, which was to be the base camp for the attack on Bagsak, three and one-half miles inland. The rest of the force—the main body—comprising six infantry companies, two mountain-gun detachments, a medical department, and a demolition squad, left at 1:00 a.m. to go by water aboard four launches: the *Wright*, *Jewell*, *Geary* and *New Orleans*. All told the expedition against Mount Bagsak numbered about 1,200 officers and men.<sup>34</sup>

At 3:30 a.m. on June 11, 1913, an unopposed landing was made at Bun Bun. This was unexpected; they had not dared to hope that the surprise would be that complete. They rendezvoused with the pack train and the cavalry which had travelled overland, established a base camp, transferred the mountain guns from the launches to the backs of the mules, formed two columns, and by 5:15 a.m. moved out for the attack.

Major Shaw commanded the right column and Captain Nichols the left. Each column had a mountain gun detachment plus two and three companies of infantry. Held in reserve at Bun Bun was the cavalry and one infantry company. A dressing station for the wounded was established there.<sup>35</sup>

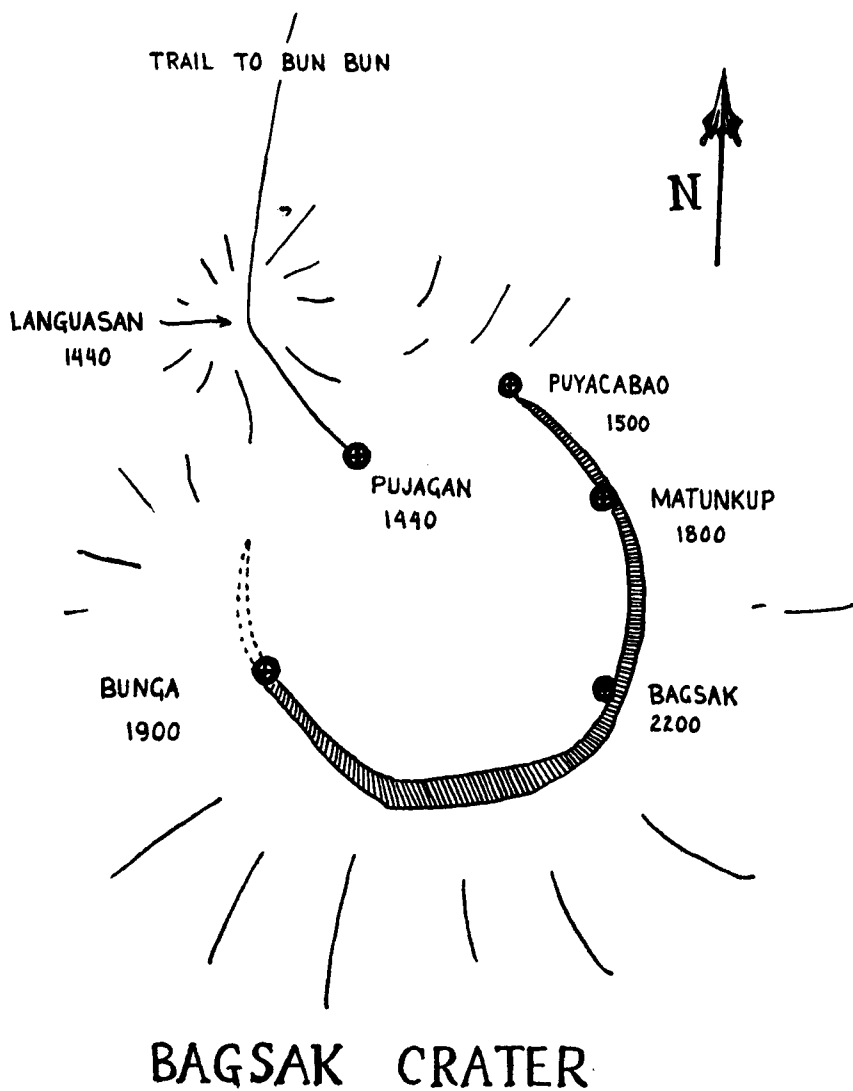
Approaching Mount Bagsak, the troops could understand why the Moros believed it impregnable. Bagsak was a great volcanic cone rising some 2,200 feet above the sea. About half way up it became quite steep, and thereafter rose more and more vertically. In most places the last one hundred feet was almost perpendicular, and in other places quite literally up and down.

At the top was a crater about eight hundred yards wide and one thousand yards long. It was shaped like a gigantic warped horseshoe with *cottas* or forts at all the prominent points and fortified trenches along the rim. Part of the rim had broken down where the lava had poured out, and this sec-

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<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 562; Pershing, "Bagsak," pp. 3-4.

<sup>35</sup> Collins, p. 563; Pershing, "Bagsak," pp. 5-6.



tion (which would correspond to the area between the heels of the horseshoe) served as the main entrance to the crater. Here Amil, leader of the rebels, had constructed a heavy defensive trench and fortified it with a *cotta* called Pujagan. Flanking it on either side were two other *cottas*, both higher up on the part of the rim that had not broken down, which could fire down into the area if the trench and Pujagan were captured. The *cotta* on the left was named Puyacabao; the one of the right, Bunga.

Leading into the entrance at Pujagan was Languasan Hill, a bald knoll of volcanic ash about two hundred yards away and separated from it by a valley one hundred feet deep. Commanding this knoll were the guns of Pujagan, Bunga, and Puyacabao, as well as those of a fourth *cotta* (Matunkup) situated still higher up on the left side of the rim, halfway between Puyacabao and the toe of the horseshoe.

Occupying the toe was still a fifth major *cotta*, Bagsak, the strongest of them all, three hundred feet higher than any other and on the highest point of the rim. It looked directly across the crater to Languasan Hill and could also reach it with its fire.<sup>36</sup>

Against Languasan Pershing sent Shaw's right column, consisting of Company M, 8th U.S. Infantry, and 40th Company, Philippine Scouts, with orders to seize it and cut the main escape route. Shaw's men struggled up the steep hill covered with upland rice and grass, taking shots literally from all directions, front, side, and rear, from Moros who hadn't been able to get atop Bagsak in time. Second Lieutenant Carl F. McKinney's mountain gun, attached to Shaw's column, banged away at Pujagan and Bunga, while First Lieutenant Thomas F. Van Natta's gun, attached to the left column, opened fire on Puyacabao, trying to relieve pressure on the infantry.<sup>37</sup>

At 11:00 a.m. Shaw's men took Languasan with a rush, then dug in as fast as they could since bullets were coming

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<sup>36</sup> Pershing, "Bagsak," p. 6; George C. Shaw, "Mixing with the Moros," *Arms and the Man*, LIV (August 28, 1913), 433.

<sup>37</sup> Pershing, "Bagsak," p. 7; Shaw, "Autobiography," V, 486.

at them from all sides: from Pujagan in front, from Puyacabao and Matunkup to the left, from Bunga to the right, and from Bagsak across the crater. The Scouts lacked intrenching tools (a fact which Shaw bewailed in his report on the operation), and so his men had to dig in with their table knives and mess kits. They lost two killed and five wounded before they could get under cover; the wonder is that they did not lose more.<sup>33</sup>

Straight in front of them and on their low level was the Pujagan *cotta*. Shaw had McKinney's mountain gun brought up the hill (the last five hundred feet had to be by hand—the hill was so steep) and put in the foremost position with its muzzle pointing at Pujagan. They contented themselves for the rest of the day shooting at that target. An attack on Pujagan would have been foolhardy as it meant crossing an open space two hundred yards wide, in the middle of which was a valley one hundred feet deep. They themselves were still under fire from Pujagan and other Moro *cottas* and trenches on higher ground, especially Bagsak and Bunga.<sup>39</sup>

Meanwhile the left column under Captain Nichols had been doing good work. The 51st Company, Philippine Scouts, scaled a sheer cliff hand-over-hand on *bejuco* vines for one hundred feet and captured Matunkup. The 29th and 52nd Companies, Philippine Scouts, took Puyacabao. To do this Nichols had led his men up the side of the mountain at a point between Puyacabao and Matunkup, gained the *inside* of the crater, then worked his way down and around until he finally came up against Puyacabao from behind and on higher ground. The garrison was completely surprised and wiped out. Nichols lost only five men wounded.<sup>40</sup>

The capture of Matunkup and Puyacabao—both by 12:20 p.m.—was a severe blow to the Moros. These *cottas* had been considered impregnable and their loss rendered untenable se-

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<sup>38</sup> Shaw, "Autobiography," V, 486-87; George C. Shaw, "Report of Operations against Mt. Bagsak," June 18, 1913, pp. 1-2, 4, SP. Shaw's report is cited hereinafter as Shaw, "Bagsak."

<sup>39</sup> Shaw, "Bagsak," p. 1.

<sup>40</sup> Pershing, "Bagsak," pp. 7-8.



veral other strong *cottas* inside the crater which were below Matunkup and Puyacabao and could be fired down into. The only *cotta*, in fact, which was substantially higher than these was Bagsak itself, destined to be the last to be taken.

Another advantage of the capture of Matunkup and Puyacabao was to take pressure off Shaw's right column, dug in across Languasan, which had been under considerable fire from these two positions. Shaw's position, in fact, was of great tactical importance, blocking as it did the mouth of the crater and preventing the entrance of friends or families of the defenders. The Moros now seemed to realize this and concentrated upon it the fire of their remaining major *cottas*: Pujagan, Bunga, and Bagsak.<sup>41</sup>

At 4:00 p.m. on June 11, 1913, Pershing reinforced Shaw with Van Natta's mountain gun. Shaw placed it in the front line with the other gun, and a short time later a good shot from this gun knocked out one end of a Moro trench near Bunga which had been molesting them. There was no more firing from that point after that.<sup>42</sup>

Before dark Pershing sent word to Shaw to drop back down the hill for the night if he thought Languasan too dangerous to hold. Now that they held Matunkup and Puyacabao, they had superior ground from which to fire down into the Moros, should the latter occupy the area during the night. Shaw sent word back that they would stay where they were.<sup>43</sup>

It was a very black night until the moon rose at 2:00 a.m. The mountain guns were loaded with shrapnel with the fuse set at zero, so they could fire a canister shot if the Moros came on in the dark. Shaw entrenched his men in a circle, every man in a trench, every other man awake while his neighbor tried to get some sleep. "It was a very dangerous place," said Shaw afterwards, "as there were Moros all around us and we did not know when they might take a notion to

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*; Shaw to the Davises, August 30, 1913.

<sup>42</sup> Shaw, "Bagsak," p. 2.

<sup>43</sup> Pershing to Shaw, June 11, 1913, SP.

rush us... There were alarms during the night probably from animals but while there was some firing nothing happened and we were very glad when daylight came."<sup>44</sup>

In the morning firing began bright and early. At 9:00 a.m. Pershing reinforced Shaw still further with two more companies of Philippine Scouts. These were the troops who had marched to the south side of Mount Bagsak on the night of June 10-11 to cut off approach from that direction. Shaw's seizure of the main entrance meant they were no longer needed there.<sup>45</sup>

Meanwhile the position of the Pujagan Moros was becoming intolerable. They were being hit from head on at close range (just two hundred yards) by Shaw's two mountain guns and by the withering fire of four companies of infantry (over three hundred men) stretched out across Languasan Hill. In addition, they were under fire from Matunkup and Puyacabao, both of which were higher up and afforded excellent positions from which to fire down on their target.

During the night the Pujagan Moros had beat tom-toms and made a lot of noise shouting. In the morning they increased this. Soon they could be seen in the trenches all dressed up in their best finery, wearing the bright, gaudy costumes they saved for special occasions. Old-timers in Shaw's trenches who had been around Moros nodded knowingly to one another. "They're going to charge," they told the younger men. "They've gotten themselves all dressed up to die."<sup>46</sup>

At 9:30 a.m. the Moros poured out of Pujagan with blood-curdling yells and screams, waving spears, kris, barongs, and daggers. Shaw's men opened fire with everything they had, dropping a number of Moros in their tracks almost immediately.

But the others disappeared into the deep valley which separated Pujagan from the American position and for a minute were lost from sight. Then they appeared—less than fifty

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<sup>44</sup> Collins, p. 564; Shaw, "Autobiography," V, 488.

<sup>45</sup> Shaw, "Bagsak," p. 2.

<sup>46</sup> Shaw, "Autobiography," V, 489.

yards away—screaming like banshees and coming straight on, wild-eyed, sweating, and bearing death in their waving barongs and spears. Shaw's men stood up in their trenches and fired just as fast as they could. The two mountain guns belched flame and shrapnel. It was a slaughter. They cut them right down. Only Jami, one of the Moro leaders, and his son got within fifteen yards of Shaw's trenches. They were shot to pieces there.

That took care of Pujagan. "This rush," said Shaw afterwards, "was a most exciting and spectacular affair and is an illustration of the fanatical bravery of the Moro."<sup>47</sup>

Soon after his attack Captain Nichols came over from Puyacabao. "There's a sharpshooter on Bagsak," he warned. "He has a high-powered rifle and he's a good shot."

Shaw thanked him for the warning. His men had noticed puffs of white smoke coming from Bagsak and had seen bullets fall near by, but they had not been sure that it wasn't their own men firing at Bagsak from the other side and overshooting.

Directing some of his men to fire at the point from which the shots seemed to be coming, Shaw started with Nichols across an open space to get back from the line of fire.

"Look out!" someone cried.

Out of the corner of his eye, Shaw saw a little puff of white smoke about a foot in diameter near the Bagsak cotta across the crater. "Down!" he yelled to Nichols and dove for the ground. As he hit the dirt he heard a queer sound beside him—a pop like a cork being pulled from a bottle. Looking up he saw Nichols slumped to his knees, doubled over, with blood pouring from a hole under his right eye like water from a pitcher. He died on the spot.<sup>48</sup>

Shaw, a brave soldier and a real man, had only one short comment on the experience. "It made me sick."<sup>49</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Shaw, "Mixing with the Moros," pp. 433 and 436.

<sup>48</sup> Shaw to the Davises, August 30, 1913; Shaw, "Autobiography," V, 489-90.

<sup>49</sup> Shaw, "Autobiography," V, 490.

Pershing meanwhile had given orders that no one was to go to Pujagan under any circumstances. Nothing would be gained by it, since the defenders were all dead. Furthermore, since Pujagan was located inside the crater and five hundred feet lower than the rest of the rim, it would be subject to fire from the remaining Moro *cottas*, Bagsak and Bunga.

To the conquest of these two *cottas*, Pershing now set his mind. Bagsak was the strongest; it was three hundred feet above the rest of the rim and most heavily defended. Pershing's closest position was Matunkup, only six hundred yards away from Bagsak, but an attack from there was out of the question. The path was along a very narrow ridge, only wide enough for one man at a time. When ten Philippine Scouts had attempted a dash across it, every one had been killed or wounded.

That left Bunga as the next *cotta* to be taken. It was farther away from Bagsak than Matunkup was, but it provided a better route for the attack. Besides, they would have to clean it out anyway, otherwise they would be shot at from behind when they were working against Bagsak.<sup>50</sup>

On the morning of June 13, Pershing detached the 24th and 31st Companies from Shaw's command and sent them around to the right to take Bunga. With them went Van Natta's mountain-gun detachment. Two other companies from Captain Nichols' former command (51st and 52nd, Philippine Scouts) were sent from Matunkup and Puyacabao to work up to Bagsak from the south side.<sup>51</sup>

It was tough going against Bunga, for it was accessible only by two hog-backs, with sheer up-and-down sides. Once they scaled the heights, the troops found the *cotta* loaded with Moros who—fortunately—did not have many guns, although they had an abundance of cutting weapons.

During the fight Second Lieutenant Albert Tucker encountered a Moro woman bearing down on him with blood

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 489; Shaw, "Mixing with the Moros," p. 433.

<sup>51</sup> Shaw, "Mixing with the Moros," p. 436.

in her eye and an upraised barong. Not wanting to kill her, he jumped backwards off a twenty foot cliff. "I think I made a pretty good choice," he said afterwards. "I did not like the looks of that woman and I think she would have killed me if I'd waited."<sup>52</sup>

Bunga fell about 1:30 p.m. with minor losses: one soldier killed and one wounded. The one killed was almost cut in two with a barong.<sup>53</sup>

Taking advantage of the fight at Bunga, Pershing took his aide, James Collins, and ten men to make a reconnaissance of Bagsak. Crawling along the edge of the crater rim, they advanced to within seventy-five yards of the enemy position, where they could see the Moros watching the fight at Bunga and talking excitedly. "It was an extremely dangerous reconnaissance," said Collins afterwards, "and I have often thought since that a single volley from the Moros on Bagsak that day might have changed considerably America's part in the World War."<sup>54</sup>

On the way back they caught a wig-wag signal from across the crater, announcing the capture of Bunga. But the sides of the mountain were too steep for the mountain gun, the message added. It would have to be taken apart and carried up by hand, delaying any use of it against Bagsak until at least 10:00 the next morning.<sup>55</sup>

During the days of the battle the weather had been fearfully hot, with frequent showers. By June 14 the stench from the dead at Pujagan had become very bad, so Shaw, despite Pershing's orders, advanced a detachment to the *cotta* there, gathered up the corpses, and buried them in one of the large trenches. Turning over one of the bodies, they found that it was Amil, leader of the rebellious Moros. He had been killed as he led his men out of the Pujagan defenses on their last desperate charge. Shaw got Amil's fine ivory and gold

<sup>52</sup> Shaw, "Autobiography," V, 490.

<sup>53</sup> Pershing, Bagsak," p. 9; Shaw, "Mixing with the Moros," p. 436.

<sup>54</sup> Collins, p. 566.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

mounted barong, and some of the troops got other souvenirs. But they did not take many as they knew souvenir hunting was frowned on by the commanding general.

They also found some wounded Moros in the Pujagan *cotta*—in pretty bad shape after lying there for several days. Bringing them out, they treated them and sent them to the hospital at Jolo. Often it took some persuading to convince the Moros, especially the women, that American surgeons had no malicious intent when they approached with knives or scalpels.<sup>56</sup>

By 12:30 p.m. on June 14 Van Natta's mountain gun had been set up in position on Bunga. It banged away at Bagsak all day, softening it up for the assault on the morrow. Meanwhile the 51st and 52nd companies, accompanied by the cavalry, had reconnoitered the rim of the crater between Bunga and Bagsak. About six hundred yards from the latter, and on the south slope of the hill, they found a favorable position in which to concentrate for the final attack.<sup>57</sup>

June 15 dawned with a heavy fog. By 7:30 a.m. it cleared and Van Natta on Bunga opened up on Bagsak with his gun, taking up where he had left off the day before. At 9:00 a.m. the signal was given for the advance of the infantry.

The attack was to be made by the 51st and 52nd Companies, Philippine Scouts. Both were Moro units commanded by American officers. They moved out from a grove about 450 yards from the Bagsak *cotta*, at the bottom of the steep ridge on which it was situated several hundred feet above. It would be an uphill fight all the way. To their right was a heavily wooded section, more or less untraversable, channeling their advance to the left along a sharp incline which was open and heavily fortified. Some eight to ten bamboo block-houses dotted the heights up which they must charge. In front and between them the Moros had constructed standing trenches. The last one hundred yards below the Bagsak *cotta*

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<sup>56</sup> Shaw, "Autobiography," V, 490-91.

<sup>57</sup> Shaw, "Mixing with the Moros," p. 436; Pershing, "Bagsak," pp. 9-10.

were particularly strong. Here the ridge narrowed and turned sharply to the left. Across the whole length of the ground the Moros had constructed three successive standing trenches, faced on the front with logs, and heavily occupied. All along this area, to the right and left, they had cleverly constructed bamboo fences, preventing a flanking maneuver. The attack had to be head on.<sup>58</sup>

At the start the shrapnel fire from the mountain gun and the small-arms fire from other troops in the vicinity kept the Moros down, and the 51st and 52nd, commanded by Captain George Charlton, made good progress. But when they began to hit the trenches, their progress slowed. "The resistance was very tenacious," said Pershing in his dry, colorless official report on the battle afterwards.<sup>59</sup> Privately, in a letter to his wife, he stated more frankly what it really was: "The fighting was the fiercest I have ever seen."<sup>60</sup> The Moros fought with desperation. More than ever before, in this last major stand they were to make against American authority, in this *cotta* which they considered impregnable, they justified the observation Pershing had made of them earlier. "They are absolutely fearless, and once committed to combat they count death as a mere incident."<sup>61</sup>

The battle was to last nine hours. At 10:20 a.m. Pershing reinforced Charlton with the 24th Company, Philippine Scouts, under First Lieutenant Ralph G. Craven. At 1:40 p.m. Shaw received orders to send 7,200 rounds of ammunition to the attacking forces.

At 2:45 p.m. a demolition squad attached to Shaw was also sent. They were not used. Such a squad was new in the army and the hand grenades furnished by the War Department had not yet been perfected. They lacked "punch." The troops found it more effective to use homemade grenades (four sticks of dynamite tied in a bundle with a fuse in the middle), which did a good job against Moro earthworks. The

<sup>58</sup> Collins, p. 566; Pershing, "Bagsak," p. 10.

<sup>59</sup> Pershing, "Bagsak," p. 10.

<sup>60</sup> June 19, 1913, JJP, 371.

<sup>61</sup> Pershing, *Annual Report for 1913*, p. 65.

only trouble was that if they made the fuse too long the Moros threw the dynamite back at them.

By 1:30 p.m. Charlton's men had reached within one hundred yards of the Bagsak *cotta* and had begun to traverse the difficult area defended by the three final trenches. There was no room to maneuver. The Moros, reconciled from the start to losing their lives, fought with abandon and skill. Both Pershing and his aide Collins stated that for a time it looked as though they would not take Bagsak.<sup>62</sup>

"Precarious" was the word used by Collins to describe the situation at one point. "Desperate" was the word used by Captain Charlton.<sup>63</sup>

During the battle Pershing came up to the very front line to direct the attack personally. "I think it was largely due to his coolness and courage that the soldiers did such effective work," said a participant afterwards. "General Pershing stood so close to the trench, directing operations, that his life was endangered by flying barongs and spears which were being continually hurled from the Moro stronghold. This was at the risk of his own life and above the call of duty."<sup>64</sup>

Until now Pershing's instructions had been for the American officers to stay behind the lines and direct the advance through the non-commissioned Moro officers in the front. The battle thus far had been Moro against Moro and the Scouts had done well, but when Pershing arrived they had lost six killed and some ten wounded, the fight was particularly fierce, and the Scouts, uneasy, were beginning to hold back.

<sup>62</sup> Shaw, "Bagsak," p. 3; Shaw, "Autobiography," V, 494; Collins, p. 568; Pershing to Mrs. Pershing, June 19, 1913, JJP, 371; First Lieutenant Ralph G. Craven, "Report on the Bagsak Operations," June 20, 1913 (National Archives, Washington, D.C.), Incl. 41 of 2114117 AGO 1914. The National Archives are hereinafter cited thus: NA.

<sup>63</sup> Collins, p. 568; George C. Charlton to Adjutant General of the Army, September 7, 1913, JJP, 279.

<sup>64</sup> First Lieutenant George P. Stallman to Adjutant General of the Army, September 14, 1913, JJP, 279.



Pershing therefore reversed his order, sending the American officers back into the front lines to lead the attack personally.<sup>65</sup>

"The effect was electric," said Collins. A wave of energy seemed to sweep over the attackers and they pushed the assault with vigor and speed. Disregarding flying barongs and spears, they began to tear down the bamboo fences on the right. Soon they were flanking the Moros on that side, firing at them through the fences and catching them in a cross-fire. As more and more fences were torn down, more and more of the attackers infiltrated the defenses and the end was only a matter of time.

Their trenches flanked and useless, the remaining Moros leaped up, dashed out, and threw themselves violently against the troops. Collins saw one soldier struck full in the chest with a long spear. He fell backwards into a trench, the spear quivering crazily in his body. Another soldier planted his foot heavily on his chest and pulled it out.<sup>66</sup>

The end came quickly. Charlton's men overran the remaining trenches and took the Bagsak *cotta* at 4:40 p.m.

Thus ended the battle of Mount Bagsak. The supposedly invulnerable mountain had been overrun and taken. Government losses in the five-day engagement were fifteen dead and twenty-five wounded—almost half of these on the last day against Bagsak. Total Moro losses are unknown, but an estimated three hundred to five hundred were atop Mount Bagsak at the start of the campaign. A number of these escaped in the course of the battles.<sup>67</sup>

Despite Pershing's attempt to isolate warriors and non-combatants, some of the Moro dead were women and children. Such was inevitable, given the Moro policy of taking their families with them when they fought their battles.

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<sup>65</sup> Pershing to Mrs. Pershing, June 19, 1913, JJP, 371; Pershing, "Autobiography," ch. xviii, p. 19.

<sup>66</sup> Collins, p. 569.

<sup>67</sup> Captain George C. Charlton, "Report on Bagsak Operations," June 30, 1913 (NA), Incl. 58 of 2114117 AGO 1914; Pershing, "Bagsak," pp. 10-11; Shaw to the Davises, August 30, 1913.

But public opinion, which had not then seen two terrible world wars in which the dividing line between non-combatants and soldiers came to be more and more blurred, was very sensitive in 1913 to any account of the killing of innocent women and children. Hence American papers readily picked up a story related by one John McClean in San Francisco on July 30, 1913, to the effect that Pershing at Mount Bagsak had killed 196 women and 340 children whom the Moros had held up as shields. Just back from Manila, McClean stated that the story had been censored in the Philippines and that three newsmen there were in danger of being jailed for trying to release it.<sup>68</sup>

Denials were not long in coming. "The statement... is untrue, and was undoubtedly circulated with malicious intent," said Pershing.<sup>69</sup> "McClean was a discharged soldier originally," added one R. McDonald, a transportation agent who had supervised McClean's work (he was a plumber) during four years at Fort McKinley in Manila. "He worked in Jolo awhile, about nine months, but was at McKinley when the Bagsak fight took place and knew nothing about who was killed there. In fact he was reading the papers about the fight one day at our mess, which incidentally, he beat out of a big board bill."<sup>70</sup>

Although McClean's account can be safely disregarded, the fact remains that Pershing's troops *did* kill women and children at Bagsak, and this fact, in time, came to color the whole operation and cast it in a bad light. In 1938 Colonel Adelno Gibson wrote an article on the use of chemicals in warfare, citing the operation at Mount Bagsak as an example of how the use of gas could have achieved victory without loss of life on either side. When he submitted the article to *The Military Engineer*, it was rejected on the ground that the Mount Bagsak operation was in disfavor and should not be

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<sup>68</sup> *The Washington Herald*, July 31, 1913; *Army and Navy Journal of the Philippines*, August 9, 1913.

<sup>69</sup> Pershing to Commanding General, Philippines Department, September 28, 1913 (NA), 2065548, filed with 2016194 AGO 1913.

<sup>70</sup> *Army and Navy Journal of the Philippines*, August 9, 1913.

publicized. The editor quoted a letter from the Chief of Chemical Warfare Service, disapproving publication "because it is believed that the actions at Bud Dajo<sup>71</sup> and Bud Bag Sak [sic] represent incidents which should not be unduly publicized. This discussion of these actions may revive public attention to military operations that might well remain forgotten."<sup>72</sup>

It is easy to find fault, especially from the advantage of hindsight and from the comfortable security of an office thousands of miles removed from the tension and heat of a given historical, flesh-and-blood moment. Given the problem he was faced with, it is hard to see how Pershing could have done anything but what he did. He bent over backwards to avoid killing *anybody* and, if anything, might be subject to the criticism of showing too much patience, or going slowly in his dealings with rebellious Moros. As a matter of fact, General Bell, in his report to the War Department on the Bagsak operation, July 3, 1913, related that Pershing had been subjected to "much criticism" by other Americans for his patient negotiations, forbearance, and efforts to avoid an armed clash.<sup>73</sup>

Certainly those on the scene in 1913 (and who were in a position to know) made no criticism of Pershing's conduct of the affair. Governor General Forbes told the Secretary of War that Pershing's attack on Bagsak was necessary, that he had exhausted patience, and that he had handled the situation well.<sup>74</sup> General Bell, in the endorsement attached to Pershing's report on the Mount Bagsak operation, stated: "I know of nothing which has taken place in the Department in the wisdom of which I do not concur. The policy of disarmament also had my cordial concurrence." He added: "I know of nothing connected with the service of General Persh-

<sup>71</sup> An action in 1906 under General Leonard Wood in which women and children were killed.

<sup>72</sup> W. P. Wooten, editor of *The Military Engineer*, to Adelno Gibson, July 19, 1938. Col. Gibson, who now lives in Washington, D.C., graciously permitted me to examine the article and the letter.

<sup>73</sup> July 3, 1913, JJP, 278.

<sup>74</sup> Telegram of June 21, 1913, JJP, 278.

ing and the Army in Mindanao during the past three years which merits anything but praise. Much hard work has been done and most remarkable results have been brought about. Conditions in Mindanao have improved in every possible way since my arrival in the Department [January 13, 1911], and conditions of peace, prosperity and industry are no better anywhere in the Department than they seem to be in the District of Mindanao."<sup>75</sup>

This report was written November 24, 1913, just three weeks before Pershing's term as Governor of the Moro Province came to a close. It may stand as a tribute and commentary on his work there. Just four years previous, when he had taken over as Governor, he had found the Moros armed and more or less running wild. "There is a laxity in the enforcement of law and order," he had informed the Governor General then.<sup>76</sup> Now he left the Province with the Moros disarmed and chastened by a humiliating defeat on supposedly impregnable terrain. Some 7,000 firearms were surrendered, two-thirds of them breech-loaders. "The backbone of outlawry and resistance in Jolo is broken," he told his superiors in Washington. "They were given a thrashing which I think they will not soon forget."<sup>77</sup>

Nor did they. Significant is the passing remark of Edward Bowditch, writing from the Philippines to Pershing in San Francisco just one year after the battle of Mount Bagsak: "Conditions appear quiet throughout the Department. Sulu [i.e., Jolo] is very peaceful."<sup>78</sup>

Because of his action in the front lines at Bagsak on June 15, 1913, Pershing was recommended for the Medal of Honor. Captain George C. Charlton, who wrote one of the five testimonial letters which were forwarded to the War De-

<sup>75</sup> Endorsement dated November 24, 1913, JJP, 371.

<sup>76</sup> Pershing to William Cameron Forbes, December 24, 1909, JJP, 76.

<sup>77</sup> Pershing, *Annual Report for 1913*, p. 63; Pershing to Major General Leonard Wood, July 9, 1913, JJP, 371. The sentence order in the quotation has been inverted.

<sup>78</sup> June 2, 1914, JJP, 279.

partment, said that Pershing "personally assumed command of the firing line when matters looked desperate for our side and by his personal presence, encouragement, and example in the firing line" brought about victory. His action "was entirely voluntary, and was way and above the call of duty."<sup>79</sup>

Pershing would not hear of it. Shortly after he learned about the testimonial letters from Charlton and others, he wrote the War Department to disapprove the recommendation. "I do not consider that my action on that occasion was such as to entitle me to be decorated with a Medal of Honor," he said. "I went to that part of the line because my presence there was needed."<sup>80</sup>

The War Department agreed. In fact, the decorations board had voted against the recommendation even before receiving Pershing's letter, sent through channels.<sup>81</sup>

Around 1922, after Congress authorized the Distinguished Service Cross, the decorations board again reviewed Pershing's action at Mount Bagsak and recommended him for the D.S.C. John Weeks, who was Secretary of War then, planned to surprise Pershing with the award. But the latter, getting wind of it, again balked. As he was Chief of Staff at the time (and therefore exercised control over the decorations board), he did not feel it proper to receive the honor.<sup>82</sup>

Finally in 1940, twenty-seven years after the event and sixteen years after he had retired from the service, Pershing, now in his eightieth year, was awarded the D.S.C. for Bagsak. "For extraordinary heroism in action against hostile, fanatical Moros," read the citation. "His encouragement and splendid example of personal heroism resulted in a general advance and the prompt capture of the hostile stronghold."<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Charlton to the Adjutant General of the Army, September 7, 1913, JJP, 279.

<sup>80</sup> Pershing to the Adjutant General of the Army, September 30, 1913, JJP, 279.

<sup>81</sup> 2d Endorsement (dated October 8, 1913) on Pershing's letter of September 30, 1913 (NA), Incl. I of 2098044 AGO 1913, filed with 3849 A.C.P. 86.

<sup>82</sup> Sherman, p. 552n.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

True it was that the Moros were hostile and fanatical. But they were more to Pershing than that. They were people, human beings, with all the aspirations and feelings of humankind. Pershing liked them and had extraordinary success in dealing with them. Only with regret did he fight them at Bagsak and, even in battle, they commanded his respect and admiration. "In this hour of exultation," he told his soldiers in his published order commending their action at Mount Bagsak, "let us not forget the vanquished foe. . . . He fought with an unswerving courage and a superb gallantry that was the admiration of all. Let our assurances of good will be extended to him in his defeat, and let no opportunity be allowed to pass by to do a kindly act, or to extend a word of encouragement to this brave people."<sup>84</sup>

To call anyone "a brave people" was just about the greatest compliment General John J. Pershing could pay.

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<sup>84</sup> Memo, Pershing to Shaw, June 19, 1913, sub: Action at Bagsak, SP.