

THE STORY OF CHESTER HULL, SOLDIER

Chester Hull, son of Henry and Elizabeth Hutchins Hull, was born in 1865 in Albany, New York. By the time he was 27, he was living in Perinton and working as a laborer.

Chester, however, was looking for something more exciting, and in May of 1886 he enlisted in the U.S. Cavalry. His enlistment papers note that he was 5'9" tall and had gray eyes and brown hair. He was assigned to Troop G of the 6th Cavalry and was stationed at Fort Niobiara, Nebraska. He participated in the 1886 campaign against Geronimo and the 1890 and 1891 campaigns against the Sioux. He was also ranked as a marksman 1st class in 1888, 1898, and 1890. In 1891, he reenlisted and was sent to Fort Wingate, New Mexico, as part of Troop G of the 2nd Cavalry, where he reenlisted again in 1896 and in 1899. By 1899 Hull had become First Sergeant and was seen by his superiors as excellent in character and "honest and faithful" in service. During this time he also attended Non-Commissioned Officers School at Fort Reilly, Kansas.

In general, Hull served during times of relative peace with no major wars. During his early years in the service he participated in the on and off "Indian Wars" and then in the Spanish-American War, serving in Cuba from February 1899 to January 1902. While stationed at Matanzas, Cuba, he reenlisted for yet another three year term. By the end of that term (1902) he was back in the United States and stationed at Fort Myer, Virginia, where he again extended his service until 1905.

In 1902, the Captain and Adjutant of the 2nd Cavalry received a letter from the Adjutant General dated March 7, 1902, which in part stated the following:

The Lieutenant General commanding the Army directs that a Sergeant of Cavalry, a good horseman, mounted, provided with a reliable well broken horse be temporarily [sic] detailed for the president of the United States during the illness of Sergeant McDermott, 4th Battery Field Artillery. The Sergeant detailed will report at the Office of Colonel Bingham, room 24, War Department so as to be able to go on duty at 3:30 o'clock this afternoon.

Sergeant Chester Hull was chosen and served as orderly to President Theodore Roosevelt until March 24th, when Sergeant McDermott returned.

Sergeant Hull's next posting was to the Philippines with Troop C of the 2nd Cavalry. He served there from 1904 to 1906 at Camp Stotsenburg, Pampanga, and San Mateo, Rizal, Philippines. As a result of the Spanish-American War, the United States acquired Cuba, the Philippines, and Guam. Between 1899 and 1902, the U.S. waged war against the forces in the Philippines that wanted independence. Although the war was considered by many to be over by 1902, there were skirmishes until 1913, and the Philippines remained a U.S. possession until 1946. The U.S. kept a military presence there at Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Base until 1992.

Returning to the United States, Hull was stationed at Fort Assiniboine, Montana, in 1907 and Fort Des Moines, Iowa, in 1908. However, he was sent back to Augur Barracks in Jolo, Philippines, in 1909. His enlistment was up in 1910 and this time Chester Hull chose retirement. As of November 12, 1910, Sergeant Hull was "placed upon the retired list" and was furnished "the necessary transportation", which meant a 2nd class train ticket and 6 days travel allowance, to return to his home on South Main Street in Fairport, having served 24 years in the 6th and 2nd U.S. Cavalry. While he had not participated in extensive battles, Hull was an exemplary soldier, receiving "excellent" character ratings and "excellent" horsemanship ratings. He maintained at least a either a "sharpshooter" or "marksman" ranking in marksmanship and received certificates of

proficiency in Security and Information, Firing Regulations, and Small Arms Firing Manual (1909).

Chester Hull settled in at 130 South Main Street, joined the United Spanish War Veterans and then the American Legion, and lived quietly for seven years. He never married.

In June 1917, as the United States entered World War I, Hull was recalled to active duty and ordered to report to a Buffalo recruiting station where he served as recruiting officer until his second retirement on September 9, 1918. He subsequently returned to his residence at 130 South Main Street and, according to the 1932 Fairport directory, worked for the American Can Company. He died on September 24, 1945, and is buried in Macedon Center Cemetery.

Cavalry life was good for Chester Hull. This “most excellent first sergeant” in the course of his service had seen the United States go from a country seeking to subdue and settle its own lands, to a nation with colonies, and finally to a nation that, however reluctantly, had become a world power. Sergeant Hull was one of many that helped that transition to take place.