

## PROTECTION OF AMERICAN INTERESTS

PREPARED BY DIVISION OF OPERATIONS AND TRAINING, U. S. MARINE CORPS

**W**HEN news of disorders in foreign countries appears in the daily papers throughout the United States, the general public becomes aware of certain citizens of this country who are living abroad, and the large amount of investments which are endangered. The United States insists upon the safety of its citizens and their property in foreign countries being accorded them by the governments (either *de facto* or *de jure*) of those countries.

When such foreign governments are unable to afford the necessary protection to our nationals and their property, then the obligation devolves upon the United States itself. Herein lies the use of the United States Navy and its mobile force of sea soldiers, the United States Marines. How often and how well this duty has been performed by these components of our national forces, history can reveal.

For several years past, conditions in Nicaragua and China have required frequent use of vessels of the United States Navy and the Marines to insure proper safeguarding of our citizens and their property in those countries. At the end of 1926, conditions in both of the countries mentioned had reached such a state, through failure of the responsible governments to protect our nationals, that the use of separate and independent forces adequate for their mission was deemed necessary. The operations are described separately below and show how well the mission of the United States Navy with its Marine Corps has been fulfilled when called upon to afford protection to United States citizens and their property.

### NICARAGUAN EXPEDITION 1926-1927

Having passed through several years of comparative peace and stability due to the presence of a detachment of United States Marines stationed in its capital, Nicaragua returned to its old state of internal disorders and periodic revolutions shortly after their withdrawal in August, 1925.

The outcome of the confusion which ensued was a *coup d'état* by General Chamorro, dean of the revolutionists, who had reappeared. The incumbent president was persuaded to resign and the vice-president, having refused to be coerced, left the country and came to the United States, where he continued to take an active interest in home affairs. Knowing that he was ineligible for the Presidency, having been a leader of a revolution, Chamorro had himself appointed "First Designate" which entitled him to executive power. The United States refused recognition of Chamorro in accordance with the treaty made with the Central American Republics in 1923, providing that recognition should not be extended to any government set up by force. In 1926, Adolfo Diaz was legally elected to the presidency by the legislative body of Nicaragua and, subsequently, was recognized by the United States

Government. Juan B. Sacassa, Vice-president under Chamorro, who had left the country prior to the election, returned to Nicaragua in the fall of 1926 and laid claim to the Presidency on the ground that he had never abdicated and as Vice-president he was the rightful "heir to the throne", Chamorro having left the country prior to the election. Having exhausted all other means in his endeavor to obtain the presidency, Sacassa, as was the custom in his country, finally decided to resort to force of arms.

During the fall and winter of 1926, the revolutionary movement of the liberals, commanded by Sacassa, against the regular government under President Diaz, reached such serious proportions that it became necessary for the landing forces of the Special Service Squadron serving in the Caribbean to land at various points in Nicaragua for the protection of American lives, property and interests. The mission of the landing detachment in each case was to declare a neutral zone in which there should be no fighting and, consequently, no danger to American or other foreign interests. Landings took place at Corinto, Bluefields and El Bluff, Bragman's Bluff, Rio Grande Bar and Pearl Lagoon.

The situation did not improve to any great extent and in the early part of January the Commander of the Special Service Squadron requested that the Marine Expeditionary Battalion at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, be dispatched to Nicaragua. This battalion, 2d Battalion, 5th Regiment (less one company), consisting of 15 officers and 317 enlisted, embarked on board the U. S. S. *Argonne* on January 7, 1927. Lieutenant Colonel James J. Meade was ordered in command of the battalion. It arrived at Bluefields, Nicaragua, on January 10, 1927. The disembarkation was completed the following day. The force then left for Rama, Nicaragua, *via* the Escondido River. It was preceded by an officer who visited all revolutionary posts on the river and informed the local leaders that a neutral zone had been established by the American forces in which no fighting would be allowed. The same afternoon the battalion arrived at Rama and occupied the town, establishing outposts and patrols.

The battalion remained at Rama until January 18th. During this period everything was quiet. Duty consisted of the maintenance of outposts, river and town patrols, interior guard and police of Rama, and scouting. Orders were received to reëmbark and shortly after midnight January 17th the battalion (less one company which remained to garrison Rama) embarked on tugs and barges for Bluefields where it reëmbarked on the U. S. S. *Argonne* the following day. The *Argonne* proceeded to sea en route to Corinto, Nicaragua, *via* the Panama Canal, arriving there on January 24th. On January 31st, February 1st and 2nd, it disembarked and proceeded by rail to Managua, where it took over the duties of the Legation guard, relieving the landing force of the U. S. S. *Galveston* which returned to Corinto on February 1st.

During the month of February the civil war between Nicaraguan Government troops and revolutionists continued in western Nicaragua. The principal engagement occurred in the vicinity of Chinandega. On February 19th the 18th Company (rifle) and one platoon of the 77th Machine Gun Com-

pany, under command of Lieutenant Colonel James J. Meade, United States Marine Corps, was dispatched to León to establish a railroad guard. Detachments from vessels of the Special Service Squadron established guards at Corinto and Chinandega and also reënforced the guard at León. Next day the detachment established a post at La Paz.

Continuance of the civil war made it advisable to have more United States forces on hand. The following reënforcements were therefore asked for and sent: The Marine Battalion of the Scouting Fleet, composed of the detachments from the *Texas*, *Florida* and *Arkansas*, which arrived at Corinto February 21st; the Marine Observation Squadron and 1st Provisional Company (rifle) from San Diego, California, which arrived February 26th; and the 5th Regiment (less Second Battalion) and the staff of the Second Brigade under command of Brigadier General Logan Feland, which arrived the 7th of March.

The Second Brigade of Marines, under command of Brigadier General Feland, constituted as above noted, with the addition of Marine detachments of vessels of the Special Service Squadron, was assigned the mission of protecting American lives and property in Nicaragua under the orders of the Commander of the Special Service Squadron, Rear Admiral J. L. Latimer, U. S. Navy.

Brigade Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Observation Squadron 4-M, Service Company, 5th Regiment, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 5th Regiment, and detachments of the First and Second Battalions, numbering all told approximately 700 officers and men, were established in Managua, the capital. The remaining organizations garrisoned the towns of Corinto, Granada, Matagalpa, Muy Muy, Ocotal, Chinandega, León and some fifteen others which, by reason of the presence of American nationals and American interests, warranted the protection of American troops. Each town and surrounding country for a distance of 2000 yards, garrisoned by Marines, was declared neutral territory. This measure precluded the possibility of military activities being carried out in any of the neutral zones by either of the contending forces. The establishment of neutral zones had the desired effect insofar as the protection of American lives and properties were concerned. The mission of the Marines—the protection of lives and property of Americans and other neutrals—was being carried out most successfully but the civil war continued unabated.

With the hope of bringing about an agreement between the regular government under President Diaz and the revolutionary government under Sacassa, President Coolidge, in April, sent the Honorable Henry L. Stimson to Nicaragua as his special representative to arrange a peace between the warring factions. The result of the negotiations was an agreement between President Diaz and General Moncado to surrender all of their arms and munitions to the Marine Brigade, representing the United States Government. President Diaz was to retain his office until the election of a president of Nicaragua in 1928, under the supervision of representatives of the United States, to insure a fair and impartial election. In the meantime, a native

constabulary was to be organized, equipped and trained by officers and men of the United States Marine Corps and Navy.

By reason of the fact that the arms and munitions to be turned in were in the hands of forces widely scattered throughout the republic and the integrity and loyalty of some of the subordinate commanders of the liberal forces were rather doubtful, request was made on the Navy Department at Washington for 800 additional Marines. Accordingly, on May 21st and 22nd the Eleventh Regiment (less one battalion) and Observation Squadron No. 4 from Quantico, arrived at Corinto and joined the Second Brigade. Their arrival gave the brigade a total strength of 178 officers and 2725 enlisted men, excluding the 51st Company at Rama, composed of three officers and seventy-five men.

Advices recently received indicate that all factions, with the exception of bands of guerillas commanded by "Generals" Sandino and Cabulla, have surrendered their arms and ammunition and splendid progress is being made in the organization of the native constabulary of which Lieutenant Colonel Elias R. Beadle, United States Marine Corps, recently ordered to Nicaragua, is the chief.

Thus far the Marines have had only four armed clashes and in each instance they were on the defensive—warding off attacks by guerilla bands. The first occurred at Chinandega, May 15th, when the Marines repulsed an attack by a band of rebels and drove them off. There were no American casualties.

About 2.00 A.M., May 16th, a band of revolutionary guerillas made an attack, without warning, upon the town of La Paz Centro, where a Marine company, commanded by Captain Buchanan, was encamped. Many of the bullets fired by the revolutionists struck in various parts of the camp. Call to arms was sounded at once and Captain Buchanan led his company in a gallant effort to drive off the attacking force which consisted of over 300 men, most of whom were mounted. Though outnumbered by about seven to one, the Marines soon put the attackers to flight, but during the engagement Captain Buchanan and Private Marvin A. Jackson were shot and killed and Corporal Anthony J. Rausch and Private William F. Simon were wounded by rifle fire of the Nicaraguan guerillas. In reporting the results of the engagement to the Secretary of the Navy, the Commander of the Special Service Squadron said: "Under unfavorable and unequal conditions the conduct and efficiency of our men deserves the highest commendation."

On the night of May 25-26 General Cabulla, the "Pancho Villa", celebrated bad man of Nicaragua, entered the little town of Chinandega, at the head of a band of toughs, on a marauding expedition. (It has been reported that Cabulla was the leader of the rebel band which had but recently attacked the Marine detachment of which Captain Buchanan and Private Jackson were killed.) Soon after his arrival in town he started on a rampage. The natives appealed to Captain Richards, whose camp was near by, for protection. Captain Richards, accompanied by two Marines, set out at once to look for this "dare devil" and big gunman of Nicaragua. He ran across

Cabulla as he and his followers were leaving a saloon. The moment Cabulla saw the American officer approaching he reached for his gun, but Captain Richards, a crack pistol shot, was too quick for him. Nicaragua was quickly relieved of one of its worst criminals.

The only armed band of outlaws now remaining in the country was that headed by the former Liberal, General Sandino, who, it appears, was destined to meet his "Waterloo" at the hands of the United States Marines. Boasting that he would "drink Yankee blood" Sandino, at daylight, July 15th, at the head of a guerilla band numbering approximately 400, attacked the Marine detachment of 39 men at Ocotal, commanded by Captain G. D. Hatfield, reinforced by a constabulary detachment of forty-seven men commanded by Lieutenant Grover Darnell, United States Marine Corps. One Marine, Michael Obleski, was killed, and another, C. S. Garrison, was seriously wounded; one member of the constabulary was also wounded. No official confirmation as to the rebel losses has yet been received. However, according to press reports, although the Marines were outnumbered approximately five to one, it appears that numbers were not the decisive factor.

This engagement took the form of a sixteen-hour siege. The siege was dramatically terminated by the arrival of a group of five bombing planes under the command of Major Rowell, which drove off the attacking party by the use of bombs and machine guns. The enemy's losses amounted to at least 100 killed.

The foregoing is typical of Marine Corps service in Latin American countries. Since 1895 it has performed that class of duty in Panama, Santo Domingo, Cuba, Honduras, Nicaragua, Haiti and Mexico.

Expeditions of this kind are most trying, dull, monotonous, watchful waiting, devoid of the thrills and glory of actual combat. To suffer all the inconveniences and hardships of field service in a tropical country full of mosquitoes and malaria, poor roads, terrific heat, torrential rains, isolated in the jungles, and with no form of amusement, calls for the highest order of morale, discipline, patience, and diplomacy.

#### OPERATIONS IN CHINA. 1926-1927

The unsettled conditions of war which have prevailed for some time in China caused the Commander-in-Chief of the Asiatic Fleet, Admiral Williams, to transfer most of the available Marines from Guam and the Philippines to China for the protection of American lives and property. The first of these forces consisted of two officers and 125 enlisted men, who left Guam on December 7, 1926, *via* the U. S. S. *Gold Star*, and disembarked at Chingwangtao on December 12th. The *Gold Star* then returned to Guam, and embarked twelve officers and 160 enlisted men on January 29, 1927, for Cavite, P. I., arriving at the latter place on February 3d. This second detachment from Guam, together with three officers and eighty-five enlisted men from Cavite, embarked on the U. S. S. *Pecos* on February 4, 1927, for Shanghai, where it was disembarked on February 9th. This force was augmented by three officers and eighty-five enlisted men from the U. S. S.

*Asheville*; the whole being formed into The Expeditionary Battalion, United States Asiatic Fleet, with the mission of assisting in the guarding of the International Settlement at Shanghai.

Conditions in China becoming more critical, and the small force of Marines available there being deemed inadequate, the 4th Regiment (less 2nd Battalion), Colonel C. S. Hill, commanding, was quickly mobilized at San Diego, sixty-six officers and 1162 enlisted men. This force embarked on board the U. S. S. *Chaumont* at San Diego on February 3, 1927, and arrived at Shanghai on February 4th. It was retained on board the U. S. S. *Chaumont* until March 6th, when it landed for the purpose of exercising. Initially this took the form of a regimental parade in the city of Shanghai, the results of which were exceedingly gratifying to the Marine Corps. Such parades by troops of other nations had been executed from time to time, and the exhibition by the United States Marines was highly creditable both to the Navy and to the United States. On the 4th of March, a detachment of thirty Marines from this regiment, under Lieutenant Colonel F. D. Kilgore, was dispatched to intercept a launch of the Standard Oil Company which had been captured by defeated Chinese forces. This force covered the seizure of the launch by a Marine detachment from the U. S. S. *Pittsburgh* and its return to the Standard Oil Company. Another parade was held in Shanghai by the regiment on the 16th of March, which again elicited favorable comment on the military appearance of the command. On the 16th of March, the 4th Regiment landed in Shanghai in accordance with a previously prepared field order (issued as tentative on March 5, 1927). This order described the situation and the mission of the 4th Regiment as follows:

"Mobs consisting of disorganized units of retreating Chinese armies and of striking laborers are expected to riot and cause disorder within the International Settlement . . .

"This regiment, with the 88th Company (U. S. S. *Sacramento* and *Asheville*) and the Expeditionary Battalion, U. S. Asiatic Fleet (U. S. S. *Pecos*) attached, will land at H hour on D day for the protection of American and foreign life and property with areas as follows . . . :"

This movement was initiated at 12.30 P.M. and by 6.15 P.M. that day, the entire force was ashore and in billets. The Regimental Commander conferred with Major General Duncan (British), the senior officer of the International Forces, and the measures to be taken by the Marine force in the defense of the International Concession and in the event of emergencies were agreed upon. In addition to forming a part of the interior guard of the Settlement, a detachment of Marines was assigned the duty of guarding the Shanghai waterworks.

On March 22nd, rioting became general outside the Settlement, particularly in the Capei and Honkew districts, and attempts were made by mobs to enter the International Settlement, but were repulsed by units of the Durham Infantry (British). Rifle fire became general along the boundary, with occasional shots landing in the Marines' billets, without casualties. The 3d Battalion, 4th Marines, was issued orders to "Support British units on the line on call from local commander" (along Soochow Creek).

On March 23d, the British commander at Markham Road Bridge requested support from the 3d Battalion, 4th Marines. This was accomplished by the movement of one machine gun section, one trench mortar section and one rifle squad to Markham Bridge. In addition, a strong patrol with one machine gun was stationed at Carter and Sinza Roads to prevent infiltration around the Coldstream Guards' right flank.

On March 24th, orders were issued to the 25th Company, Marines, to stand by to assist in the defense of the Baptist College, which is located about 500 yards north of the northeast corner of the Settlement boundary. A rocket was to be fired in case assistance by the Marines was desired; but fortunately this call was not made.

On March 6th, Brigadier General Smedley D. Butler, U.S.M.C., with certain brigade staff officers, left San Francisco, Calif., *via* the S. S. *President Pierce*, arriving at Shanghai on March 25th. General Butler immediately took command of the Marine Corps Expeditionary Forces, United States Asiatic Fleet, under the direct command of Admiral Williams, Commander-in-Chief, United States Asiatic Fleet.

On March 26th and 27th, Marine forces were ordered to "stand by" to reinforce French forces guarding the French Settlement. This was due to information that Cantonese troops were reported to be entering that part of the International Settlement.

In accordance with the orders of the Commander-in-Chief, United States Asiatic Fleet, the operations of the United States Marines had been confined absolutely to interior security of the Settlement, and they had had no part so far in the preservation of the integrity of the international boundary line. However, there was always the possibility that the front lines held by other international troops might be broken and thousands of fanatical Chinese would pour into the settlement, creating a situation that would be critical to control. This problem appeared to be difficult of solution in view of the responsibility of our forces to guarantee protection to nationals and their property.

As with all problems, however, there is always a solution. In accordance with a plan evolved by conference between Admiral Williams and General Butler, the operations of the Marine Expeditionary Force were confined to the formation of a mobile second line of defense, with motorized patrols on streets directly in the rear of the foreign forces' first line on the boundary. Thus in case of serious danger to the first line of defense, the Marines could either take up a position in rear of the first line and hold that position, or join with other foreign units in the first line and assist in the integrity of that line.

On March 26th, the Commander-in-Chief, Asiatic Fleet, requested that additional Marine forces be sent to Chinese waters, as the forces then present would be incapable of handling a serious situation. In accordance therewith, the 6th Regiment Marines (less 3d Battalion), 3d Brigade Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3d Brigade Service Company, one battery 75-mm. tractor-drawn artillery, and one squadron of scouting, pursuit and amphib-

ian planes, were embarked on board the U. S. S. *Henderson* at San Diego on April 7, 1927, and arrived at Shanghai on May 2d.

On April 17th the remaining units of the reënforced brigade, 3d Brigade U. S. Marines, embarked on board the S. S. *President Grant* at San Diego, and disembarked on May 4th at Olongapo, P. I. This latter force consisted of the 3d Battalion, 6th Marines, 2d Battalion, 4th Marines, 1st Battalion, 10th Regiment Marine Artillery (75-mm. tractor-drawn) less one battery, one light tank platoon, one company engineers (Marines) and the remainder of the 3d Brigade aviation force.

On the 11th of April, the aviation detachment at Guam embarked on the U. S. S. *Gold Star*, and arrived at Shanghai on April 25th. This detachment was consolidated with the aviation force already at Shanghai, but, owing to a redistribution of forces and the lack of available landing fields at Shanghai, the 3d Brigade Aviation was dispatched to Olongapo to be prepared for further movement to other Chinese ports.

The 3d Battalion, 6th Marines, and the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines, was organized at Olongapo into a provisional regiment during the month of April, to be prepared for movement to any north China port as the necessity might demand, upon orders of the Commander-in-Chief. The U. S. S. *Chaumont* was held alongside the dock at Olongapo so as to be immediately available to transport this force to any field of action.

The 6th Marines, less 3d Battalion, was held ready for immediate departure to any other threatened northern Chinese port, with the U. S. S. *Henderson* available alongside the Standard Oil Company compound about four miles down the Yangtse River. This regiment was increased on the 21st of May by the addition of the auxiliary troops at Olongapo, namely, the 1st Battalion (less one battery) 10th Artillery, the light tank platoon and the engineer company.

This redistribution of Marines permitted the movement of about 1700 men, infantry and artillery to Tientsin in three days from Shanghai and another similar force from Olongapo to Tientsin in about six days. Tientsin, it was thought, would probably be the next port at which our nationals would be concentrated in the north.

Press dispatches later indicated the possibility of our Legation at Peking moving down to Tientsin, due to the necessity of guarding the long line of communications from Tientsin to Peking in the event that our people remained at Peking. As developed later, diplomatic and other reasons were responsible for the retention of our Legation at Peking with a mobile force of Marines at Tientsin ready to move to any danger point in that vicinity.

About the last of June, the U. S. S. *Henderson*, which was standing by at the Standard Oil Company compound dock, left Shanghai with the 6th Marines (less 3d Battalion), 1st Battalion, 10th Artillery, one light tank platoon, engineer company (less one platoon) for Tientsin, arriving there on June 4th. About ten days later, the Provisional Regiment, then at Olongapo, arrived at Shanghai *via* the U. S. S. *Chaumont*, taking the billet



vacated by the 6th Marines. With this Provisional Regiment arrived also the 3d Brigade Aviation force.

On June 23d, the U. S. S. *Chaumont* left Shanghai with the Provisional Regiment, arriving at Tientsin on June 25th. These forces were finally consolidated into a reënforced brigade with the arrival of the 3d Brigade Headquarters and Headquarters Company *via* the U. S. S. *Pecos* at Tientsin, with Brigadier General Butler commanding. The 4th Regiment Marines remained at Shanghai.

These operations, in which our naval forces have participated, require the highest degree of tact and resourcefulness on the part of our commanders, and the highest degree of discipline and morale on the part of our men. That they have so far been successful in their difficult mission speaks well for our diplomatic naval forces.