

# GUEST CHIEF'S CORNER

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## THE LISCUM BOWL AND THE 9TH INFANTRY REGIMENT IN THE BOXER REBELLION

In 1900, the 9th Infantry Regiment was operating in the Philippines under the command of Col. Emerson H. Liscum. They were ordered to the aid of the foreign legations in Peking (present-day Beijing), China, who were under siege by the Boxers, a secret society that practiced martial arts and fought foreign influence in China. The transports arrived at the Taku Forts in Tientsin (present-day Tianjin), China, on 6 July. There, they joined with the other troops of the Eight-Nation Alliance: Austria-Hungary, Germany, France, Italy, Japan, Russia, and the British Empire.

Companies A, B, C, D, E, and the Regimental Band arrived in Tientsin the evening of the tenth, spending the next two days consolidating and setting up quarters. On 13 July, while leading the majority of the regiment in support of allied Japanese troops, Colonel Liscum received a fatal wound after retrieving the National Colors from a wounded color-sergeant. The commander of the 1st Battalion, Maj. Jesse M. Lee, then took command of the regiment and sent word to the rear for reinforcements. The regiment held its position, successfully securing the right flank of the Japanese

force until nightfall. Losses among the regiment for the day's fighting were Colonel Liscum and seventeen others killed, five officers and seventy-two enlisted wounded, and one missing in action.

On 15 July, after alliance forces had occupied Tientsin, soldiers of the 9th Infantry moved to secure a silver stockpile in the American sector, with an estimated value of \$376,300 (today around \$14.5 million). Capt. Frank DeWitt Ramsey was ordered to escort the silver to the U.S. Marine camp inside a walled compound for safekeeping. It was then that Captain Ramsey received, on behalf of the 9th Infantry, two melted masses of silver, weighing around 90 pounds, from the Qing government as thanks for protecting the stockpile from pillage.

In the spring of 1901, Captain Ramsey called an informal meeting of officers to discuss what to do with the silver. They decided to create a punch bowl set that would be "symbolic of China," a decision that was later approved by the regimental commander, Col. C. F. Robe. They initially contracted a Chinese silversmith in Peking to make fifty-two cups for the punch bowl. In April 1902, the remaining silver was sent to Yokohama, Japan,

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to be made into the bowl by the silversmiths Arthur & Bond. A U.S. cruiser delivered the bowl to the regiment at Madison Barracks in New York in April 1903.

The final result was a 14-gallon punch bowl with four handles in the shape of Eastern dragons, a platter with dragon designs, a ladle, and fifty-two small cups (five more were added later). Each cup is engraved with multiple names of the officers of the regiment, a tradition that continued until the 1970s. During the Korean War, the regiment would add forty-four larger cups to the set, engraved with the names of soldiers who died during the conflict.

The Liscum Bowl and set remained in the possession of the regiment until they sent it for much-needed restoration. Afterward, the U.S. Army Center of Military History

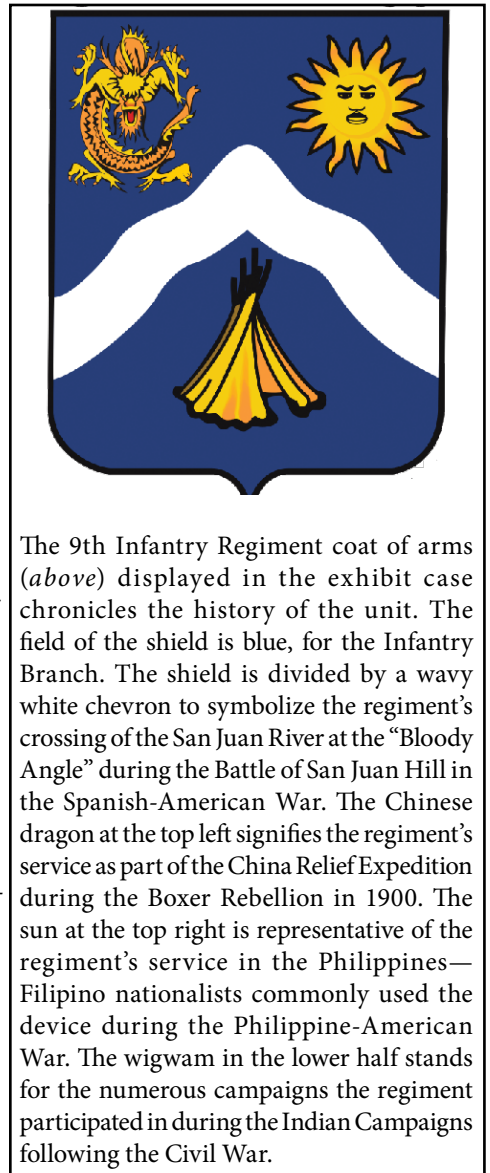


(CMH) placed it on display in Washington, D.C., at Fort Lesley J. McNair. In 2006, CMH sent it to Korea following the activation of the 1st and 2d Battalions as part of the 2d Infantry Division. It remained on display at Camp Red Cloud until it followed the 4th Battalion to Fort Carson, Colorado, in 2018. It remains on display at the 4th Infantry Division and Fort Carson Museum.

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#### Further Reading

Brown, Fred Radford. *History of the Ninth U.S. Infantry, 1799-1909* (Chicago: R. R. Donnelley & Sons, 1909).



The 9th Infantry Regiment coat of arms (*above*) displayed in the exhibit case chronicles the history of the unit. The field of the shield is blue, for the Infantry Branch. The shield is divided by a wavy white chevron to symbolize the regiment's crossing of the San Juan River at the "Bloody Angle" during the Battle of San Juan Hill in the Spanish-American War. The Chinese dragon at the top left signifies the regiment's service as part of the China Relief Expedition during the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. The sun at the top right is representative of the regiment's service in the Philippines—Filipino nationalists commonly used the device during the Philippine-American War. The wigwam in the lower half stands for the numerous campaigns the regiment participated in during the Indian Campaigns following the Civil War.

