

SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

The United States became involved in the war between Cuban nationalists and colonial Spain when the *Maine*, a battleship sent to Havana to safeguard American interests, was blown up. The United States declared war on Spain in April of 1898. Within a few weeks, Spanish troops had been ejected from both Cuba and from the Spanish possession of Puerto Rico, gaining fame for Teddy Roosevelt and his "Rough Riders." Meanwhile, Admiral George Dewey and the American fleet in the Pacific destroyed the Spanish fleet in Manila harbor, ending Spanish rule in the Philippines. Active hostilities ceased by October of 1898.

The Spanish-American War was America's first military venture overseas. Problems of transport were overwhelming; inspection was totally inadequate. Food, especially the notorious "embalmed beef," was spoiled by heat and there were numerous cases of deadly food poisoning among the American troops in Cuba.



The need for reform was obvious. A clearer understanding of nutrition led to more balanced rations. Ordering procedures were upgraded and bureaus combined for increased efficiency in transportation. The first school for military cooks was established. Better cooking utensils and mess gear were developed, field ranges replaced campfires. Improvements brought about by the Spanish-American War made future celebrations of military Thanksgivings possible.

THANKSGIVING DAY 1898
By the President of the United States: a Proclamation

...**The skies have been for a time darkened** by the cloud of war, but as we were compelled to take up the sword in the cause of humanity we are permitted to rejoice that the conflict has been of brief duration and the losses we have had to mourn, though grievous and important, have been so few, considering the great results accomplished, as to inspire us with gratitude and praise to the Lord of Hosts...

WILLIAM McKINLEY

SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR
MILITARY RECIPE FIELD BREAD

Take five quarts of flour and one and two-thirds tablespoonfuls of yeast powder; mix thoroughly while dry, adding a little salt to suit the taste; then mix in well one tablespoonful of dripping or lard; then add water, and in small quantities at a time, until a biscuit dough is made; knead slightly. Take a Government mess pan and cut off about one inch and a half of the rim, leaving a rough edge. Into this mess pan put dough enough to fill it two-third full; cover with another mess pan. A hole should previously have been dug in the ground eighteen or twenty inches in diameter and depth, and a fire burned in it five or six hours. Then take out all the cinders except a bed two or three inches deep; upon this place the mess pans and surround and cover them with hot cinders; over all spread a covering of earth, and leave for five or six hours. The bread will not burn, as in rising it will not reach the bottom of the upper mess pan. The rough-cut edges of the low mess pan afford egress to any gases that may be disengaged.

**From: *Manual for Army Cooks,*
Government Printing Office, 1896.**