

Spanish American War vets are recalled

□ VETS

Continued from page 6
in particular to Westford Academy schoolmates.

He was a popular boy in town and an excellent student. He was in his second year at Dartmouth when he volunteered. It is not known if he had the approval of his family when he appeared at Framingham along with other recruits. He was assigned to Co. E, 46th Regiment, U.S. Volunteers, and eventually sent to the Pacific region, specifically Malta Barracks, in the Philippines.

In a letter to Academy classmate Charles G. Sargent, written four months before his death, to be passed around to other students and to Preceptor William E. Frost, he wrote of his pleasure in hearing from them, especially since he had just returned from a seven days' hard march.

He wrote "We had covered about 90 miles during which we had had several skirmishes and one engagement. We were tired, hungry and footsore." At one point, they had to dig in "with only one shovel and a pointed stick to use and the insurgents were taking a shot every time you showed your head."

"For nearly two weeks we were kept in the trenches day and night, and by that time were nearly dead, for we could get hardly any sleep and our rations consisted of 1 1/2 slices of bacon, two hardtacks and black coffee."

At a moment's notice

It was a long letter, recently revealed, which covered many details of various hardships, the "terrific heat, the jungles, the

sniping of the insurgents." Writing in answer to a batch of communications he had just received from Westford, he stated: "We are stationed in the old Spanish barracks in Manila, waiting for orders to move out at a minute's notice to the south where our troops are having hard fighting. When I began, I didn't think I would have time to finish the letter."

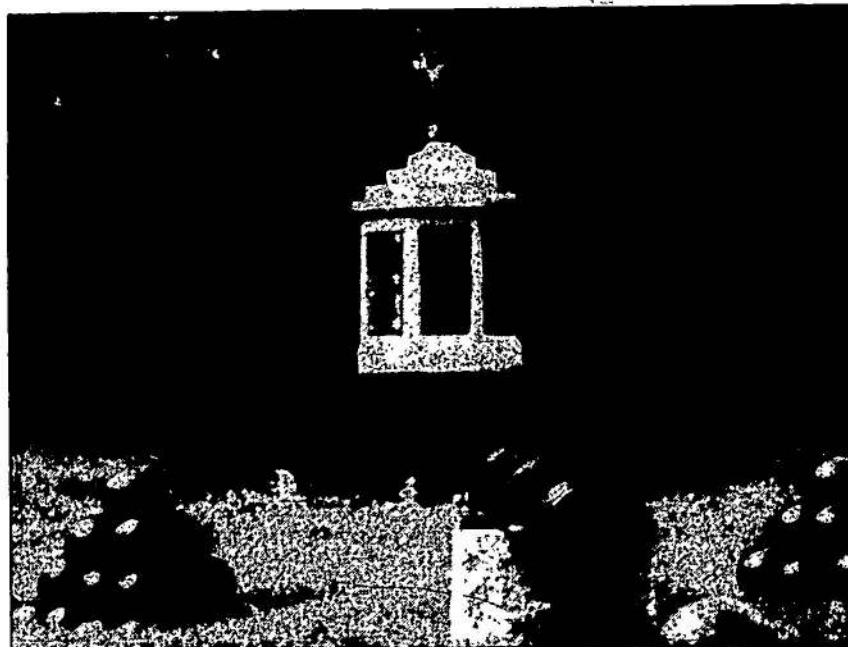
It apparently was his last. The next news, from the War Office, was an official notification of his death. His body now lies in the family plot in Fairview Cemetery.

Prescott was clerk of his company, well-liked by his fellow men and officers, who wrote later in high terms of him as a soldier.

His parents were from a long line of early Westford settlers. Noah Prescott, a quarrying man who specialized in granite paving blocks, was married to Frances Tower. They built a fine Victorian home at 23 Boston Road in the late 1800s and were parents to six children. Harry was an architect-engineer in Boston, Frances married Oscar R. Spalding, Waldo was in charge of the park system in Tacoma, Charlotte was town treasurer for 33 years, and Robert, an apple grower.

Cannon for monument

Westford did its best to honor the three men who died in service as well as others who were more fortunate to come back. Selectman Sherman D. Fletcher located an ancient cannon from the navy yard near Washington through Navy Secretary John D.



THE CANNON that aims from the point of town common down Main Street is an everyday reminder of the sacrifice of three Westford men in the Spanish American War. Their names are inscribed on the monument behind the cannon, which was acquired from a navy yard in Washington.

(Photo courtesy of Gordon Seavey)

Long, a former preceptor of the Academy. Along with it came an undisclosed number of Civil War cannonballs, which were placed in pyramid form around the cannon with enough left over to line the driveway of the then-new Academy building, now the Roudenbush Community Center.

The irony of it is that the balls are about 1 1/2 inches too large to fit the bore of the gun. Two appropriate bronze tablets were affixed to the granite base which

supported the cannon. These were removed by vandals several years ago.

Even though the Spanish-American War was a relatively minor conflict, the three local boys who died as a result of their service will be remembered — always.

Gordon Seavey, a Westford native, spent many hours as a boy atop the sturdy old cannon, perhaps dreaming he was one of Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders.