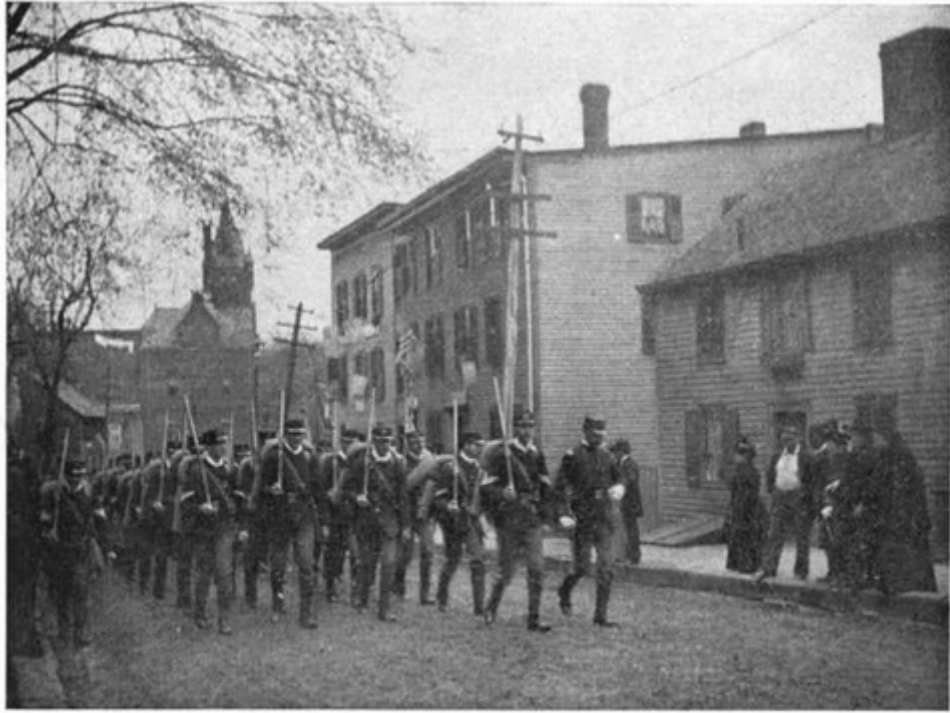


**Pvt. Edward C. Fowler**





"HEADS UP."

COMPANY K COMING UP ELM STREET, HARTFORD,  
WEDNESDAY, MAY 4, 1898.

On April 25, 1898 the United States declared war on Spain following the sinking of the Battleship Maine in Havana harbor on February 15, 1898. A quest for adventure and patriotism spurred over three thousand, four hundred men Connecticut men to enlist. The First Connecticut Volunteer Infantry was mustered into service between May and July 14, 1898 and mustered out, without having set foot on foreign soil, on October 31, 1898 in Hartford, CT.

Edward C. Fowler, my paternal second great-uncle, served as a Private in Company K of the First Connecticut Volunteer Infantry. The story might had ended there had I not found a history of Company K written by George B. Thayer. A history that is rich in stories, quirky biographies and photographs. The history even includes a short story penned by Edward entitled, [Among the Recruits \(p.121\)](#), in which he writes:

*One of the red letter days in our military experience was the one in which we began to learn the manual of arms. We soon*

*discovered that it was easy to learn the different movements, but, we had to apply the old adage, "Practice makes perfect," to the work. We would think we were doing finely until Captain Saunders would come and watch us drill, when we soon found how far from perfect we were.*

After boot camp in Portland, Maine the 1st Connecticut was stationed in Northern Virginia and they struck camp in East Falls Church, less than two miles from where I currently reside! Below are a couple of excerpts from Private George B. Thayer:

PRIVATE EDWARD C. FOWLER.

Surely, He shall deliver us from the snare of the fowler.

—*Psalm 91:3.*

If Company K had no more to fear from the noisome pestilence of Camp Alger than from the snare of this fowler, the command would have feared nothing. A more reliable member was not in the company. He descended from English and Dutch ancestors, had a great-grand-father in the War of 1812 and an uncle in the Civil war. Private Fowler was born at Cornwall, Connecticut and his home is now in Bloomfield.

**Friday, August 26, 1898** – Up at 5 am. After breakfast we set fire to the arbor, which for so many days has kept the sun's heat from us, applied a torch to the kitchen struck camp and at 9.30 left the old cornfield for good we hope. The route to East Falls Church was by Dunn Loring and alongside the tracks part of the way and part of the time along the highway.

**Monday, August 29, 1898** – Corporal Gruener and I took the trolley for Washington at 9 o'clock and went by boat to Mount Vernon. Returning at 2 we visited the capitol and congressional library and got back to camp at 6:30 p.m. The heat was intense.

Edward C. Fowler returned back to civilian life, working as a farmer in Bloomfield Connecticut, until his death in 1929.

---

[Jack Brutus, Connecticut War Dog – Who Knew?](#) (Source: [ConnecticutHistory.org](#))



JACK BRUTUS,  
Armed and Equipped.

*... that although Jack Brutus's military status was unofficial, he became the official mascot of Company K of the First Connecticut Volunteer Infantry during the Spanish-American War.*

Jack Brutus, or "Old Jack" as he became known, was born in Cumberland, Maine, in 1891. He led an exciting life even before his stint in the military as part of Company K of the First Connecticut Volunteer Infantry. According to Private Thayer, Jack "had friends in most of the cities in New England through his associations with the traveling public at the West End Hotel in Portland. Frequently he visited them in their own homes, taking passage in some steamer or boarding some train, and returning to Portland in due time." In his travels, Thayer claims Jack Brutus visited Boston, New Brunswick, and New York, as well as many other cities on the steamer lines.

### ***Old Jack Enters the Military***

Company K first met Old Jack while stationed at Fort Preble in Portland, Maine, in May of 1898. Jack quickly became a favorite of the soldiers and, eventually, the company's official mascot. He went on to travel with the unit as they encamped up and down the Eastern Seaboard providing coastal

defense during the Spanish-American War.

Jack was a large breed dog and often had health issues throughout his service with Company K. During a heat spell at Camp Alger near Falls Church, Virginia, Jack had trouble breathing and suffered in the heat. Thayer noted, "Poor Jack—the noble mastiff we brought from Portland is suffering from the heat extremely and it is doubtful if he survives." Fearing for Jack's life, the men took to nursing him and he eventually recovered.

Jack also had a snoring problem. The men on night duty, to allow the men asleep in their tents to remain that way, often enticed Jack far away from camp so that his snoring did not disturb the sleeping soldiers. When "loudest snorer" elections took place among the men, Jack came in second.

Wagoner Edward Ahearn mustered out of the army in late 1898, and when he did, he took Jack Brutus home with him. Old Jack died from spinal troubles and constipation while under a physician's care on November 20, 1898, but will always be remembered as a loyal Connecticut war dog.

Thayer, George B., ed. [History of Company K, First Connecticut Volunteer Infantry, During the Spanish-American War](#). Hartford, CT: Press of R.S. Peck & Co., 1899.

***Comments/Reviews Appreciated!***

© David R. French and French in Name Only, 2017. Unauthorized use and/or duplication of this material without express and written permission from this blog's author and/or owner is strictly prohibited. Excerpts and links may be used, provided that full and clear credit is given to David French and French in Name Only with appropriate and specific direction to the original content.