

## **Richard Harding Davis and the Beginning of Army Campaign Medals**

**by Charles P McDowell**

**Richard Harding Davis (1864-1916) was a well-known author, playwright. He was also a respected war correspondent who covered the Spanish-American War, the Boer War, and the First World War. At one point he was managing editor of *Harper's Weekly*. Davis was greatly influenced by his experiences in the Spanish-American war and became a publicist for Theodore Roosevelt and his Rough Riders. In fact, he was more than a war correspondent: during the action at Las Guasimas he personally directed fire towards the enemy and even used a carbine himself to shoot at the Spaniards.**

**Following the Battle of San Juan Hill, he wrote a stirring narrative of the action that excited public attention and thrust Theodore Roosevelt into the public limelight. His reporting on the Rough Riders not only earned him the friendship of Theodore Roosevelt, he was also made an honorary membership in the Rough Riders.<sup>1</sup>**

**His coverage of the Boer War reported the perspectives of both the Boers and the British and further strengthened his reputation. It also brought him into closer contact with the British military, where he came to admire their system of medals and decorations. He developed a strong interest in medals and decorations and was concerned over what he saw as a significant deficiency in the U.S. Army's system of recognition.**

**Sometime in the latter part of 1901 he wrote to his friend, Theodore Roosevelt, who by then had been elected twenty-sixth President of the United States (1901-1909) to express his concerns.**

**At the time Davis wrote to Roosevelt, the Army did not have any campaign medals, in spite of its recent actions in Cuba, the Philippines, and China. He felt the absence of campaign medals was detrimental to the Army in general and unfair to its soldiers in particular. Many of the points he raised were well-founded and logical. His letter ultimately played a key role in the subsequent development of Army campaign medals, and the points he made in are worthy of review. The following excerpts have been slightly reformatted and present the major points he made to the President:**

**Dear Colonel:**

**Here are the three plans of which I wrote, and which you told me to send you.**

**They refer to a proposal to issue service medals to the officers and men of our Army and Navy. For convenience I have numbered them, A, B, and C. All three plans propose the distribution of medals for the following wars:**

**The War of the Rebellion.**

**The Indian Campaigns.**

**The War With Spain.**

**The Rebellion in the Philippine Islands.**

**The Relief of Peking Expedition**

**The war with Mexico is omitted as there are few, if any veterans of that campaign now in the active list. In plan A it is proposed that the medals for all these campaigns be issued under the supervision, and by direction of the Departments of the Army and Navy, and that the expense of the medals be borne by the**

**Government. This is merely adapting to this country the system which for seventy years has obtained among the chief military powers of Europe.**

**Plan B suggests making use of the already existing military societies founded in this country by those who have served in recent campaigns, and giving to these societies a semi-official standing; on the condition that they throw open their membership to the enlisted man and limit it strictly to those who have seen active service. Where, after a campaign more than one society has been organized by the veterans of that war, the government shall designate which society it recognizes as official. As this plan is proposed chiefly to meet the possible objection of Congress to pay for service medals, it is suggested that each member of that society recognized as "official," pay for his own medal, after the Departments of the Army or Navy have testified that he is eligible to receive it. This is following out a practice which obtains in some foreign countries where decorations are distributed rather freely, but where the government is so poverty-stricken that it cannot afford to pay for the decorations it issues, and so gives only a brevet entitling the recipient to buy one for himself. It is neither a dignified nor generous plan, and is suggested here only as an alternative, in the event of Congress deciding that the laborer is not worthy of his hire.**

**Plan C is a compromise of Plans A and B, and like them presumes that the issue of service medals begins with one for the War of the Rebellion. But as the number of those engaged in that war is so great, and the work of investigating the validity of the claims for a service medal would be so enormous, and as the societies of the Loyal Legion and of the Grand Army of the Republic are already so widely recognized, it is suggested that the official service medal for that war, be the insignia of either one of these two societies. Were this, our greatest war, so disposed of the cost of issuing medals for those wars in which our Army and Navy has since engaged would be so comparatively slight that, it is hoped, Congress would vote the appropriation necessary to pay for them.**

#### **WHAT A SERVICE MEDAL IS**

**A service Medal, or as it is called in Europe, a War Medal or Campaign Medal, is one given to an officer or enlisted man to mark the fact that he has seen active service in a particular campaign against an enemy of his country. It is a sign and witness to the fact that the one who wears it was at a certain place at a certain time; that that place was a scene of conflict, and the time was between a declaration of war and a declaration of peace.**

#### **WHAT A SERVICE MEDAL IS NOT**

**A service medal is not a decoration, nor an insignia of an "order." Unlike these, it cannot be obtained by favor [or by] "influence," [and] not by inheritance. The owner can never be suspected of having received it because he had a friend at court, nor because he had a senator for an uncle, nor because his great, grand-father fought at the battle of Bunker Hill. The King of England can create a peer, or make a knight of a commoner, but unless a man has seen service in the Transvaal, he cannot give**

him a South African war medal. The Duke of Connaught, for example, who has over two hundred decorations and orders, possesses but one war medal, and to obtain that it was necessary for him to go to Egypt on the staff of the commanding general, and be "among those present" at the battle of Tel-el-Kebir.<sup>2</sup>

## THE SYSTEM OF ISSUING SERVICE MEDALS IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

In foreign countries after a campaign has taken place, certain dates are designated by the government as those embracing the most important moments of that war, and geographical lines are drawn in which an attempt is made to bound the zone of danger. Each soldier or sailor actively engaged within these fixed lines between these fixed dates is considered entitled to a service medal. And to each man present during the actions or engagements of special importance, separate bars or clasps are affixed to the ribbon of his medal, marked with the name of the action, as, for example, "Defence of Lucknow," "Omdurmann," "Defense of Ladysmith," [or] "Relief of Maefking."<sup>3</sup>

Did the same system exist in this country, special bars or clasps for our recent campaigns would probably bear the inscriptions, "Manila Bay," "San Juan Hill," "Relief of Peking," "Guasimas," "Tien Tsin," [and] "Guantanamo."

In foreign countries, while the decorations and orders consist of many grades and classes, no distinction whatsoever is made between the war medal given to the officers and to the men. In having served their country each is supposed to be deserving of equal honor.

After the medal is bestowed, the owner is required by regulations wear it. It becomes a part of his uniform, like his sword, or his service stripes. In undress, he wears simply a quarter of an inch of the ribbon of the medal sewn upon the left breast of his coat. In full dress he wears both ribbon and medal.

## STYLES OF WAR MEDALS

The style of war medal which has always been favored in Europe is a plain medal the size of a half dollar made either of silver or gun metal and suspended from a hidden clasp by a parti-colored ribbon. No effort is made to "paint" or "gild" these medals with either enamel or gold, but every effort is made to obtain for them an appropriate and beautiful design. To this end the French and British governments call to their assistance the best artists and sculptors in the country. An illustration of what beautiful work may be worthily expended on one of these small surfaces is the Dewey Medal, designed by [Daniel Chester] French. In selecting the colors for the ribbon, the rule abroad has been, when possible, to choose such colors as suggest the particular war for which the medal is issued. And the colors of the enemy's flag, or the flag itself, are generally used. The colors of the French ribbon for the Tonkin Expedition are those of the Chinese flag; for the Expeditions against Mexico, the Mexican flag; for the Capture of Khartoum, red as typical for the British red-coat; black to signify the complexion of the enemy, and yellow as typifying the complexion of the "Gypies." In the ribbon for the Boer War, khaki is the

predominating color.

## ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF SERVICE MEDALS

British officers have frequently testified that they find the service medal a great aid to discipline. Its possession gives the enlisted man a new sense of responsibility, he feels that among civilians as well as his comrades, he is a marked man, in that he is distinguished from his fellows as one who has been "under fire." I have been given many instances of unruly spirits in a regiment who, because they did not wish to do anything which might disgrace their "ribbons," became sober, steady and reliable soldiers.

As incentives to recruiting, the service medals are of undoubted assistance. They hold out an extra honor to the man who contemplates enlisting, they act as a spur to his ambition, and undoubtedly increase the "smartness" and attractiveness of the uniform.

Of course, the obvious argument in their favor is that the laborer is worthy of his hire, and that if street railroad companies and post-office authorities find that issuing good conduct stripes to their employees increases the efficiency of their service, and is an incentive to good work, certainly the government can also expect increased loyalty and effectiveness, by distinguishing those men who have served it in battle. But as it is at present, the soldier who returns from the Philippines, and who may also have served in Cuba, and China, possesses no visible proof of his service. To the eyes of the man in the street, there is no difference between him and the new recruit who has never ventured further from Governor's Island than the Bowery.

## PROBABLE COST OF SERVICE MEDALS

The writer believes that service medals ... if struck off at the Government Mint would be furnished for all the campaigns specified here, the Civil War excepted, at a cost of less than one hundred thousand dollars. This price includes the cost of designs by the best artists; ribbons made in France, where they are manufactured by hand, and are better and cheaper than any which can be had elsewhere; and the clasps; and the cost of engraving the names of the recipients. At present there are six different bills before congress to give medals to the veterans of the Civil and Spanish Wars. It is not impossible to believe that a bill which would combine the essential points of these, and which would call for the distribution of such medals as are herein enumerated, might be acceptable, and might pass.

The possible objection which might be raised to giving medals for service already rendered, might be answered by the fact that the men in our Army and Navy who participated in these campaigns are many of them still in active service and likely for some years to remain so, and that if they deserved recognition a few years ago, they have not ceased to deserve it since. We are likely to be involved in other wars, and the service medal is sure to come. If it is to come, it should come by process of law, and in a manner to convey to it, and to its recipients, the greatest possible honor. The spasmodic attempts to induce Congress to give medals for this or that campaign or to this or that particular regiment is neither equitable or just to

others in whose behalf no special legislation has been moved.

The organizing of military societies, and the permitting by congress of their members, who are also officers of the Army and Navy, to wear the insignia, is merely whipping the devil around the post and is rather a mean method of making our soldiers pay for what should be paid for by the government, and which is of greatest importance, authorized and bestowed by the Government. The Government should put an end to the suggestion, that "Our officers form a society in order to give themselves a medal." They are entitled to their service medal, and it is the place of the Government, as it should be its pleasure and privilege, to see that they get one.

Although I have not been encouraged to give an opinion on existing regulations, concerning the right of officers to wear decorations, medals, and insignia, I am going to take the liberty of calling them to your attention as I believe, after considering them, you will agree that they could stand radical revision. I know the matter is not a vital one, but I imagine that as a commander-in-chief, no matter concerning the service, if it can be shown to his satisfaction that it needs improving, will be considered unimportant.

The regulations as they are drawn up do-day seem, at least to my mind, contradictory, carelessly worded, and in one direction lax to a degree while in another they seem needlessly severe. In one breath they permit any officer of our services to deck himself at his own pleasure with a multitude of ornaments which he has done nothing to deserve, and refuse him permission to wear even the very highest honor which it is in the power of a friendly foreign government to bestow. Further, in approving the wearing by our officers of medals which they have inherited from their great, great grandfathers, I consider that the regulations are in opposition to the spirit of our government and are giving a value to a man's ancestors in the one organization where what he is himself should be all that counts. After the coronation at Moscow several of our officers ridiculed the late Major Logan for wearing a string of medals belonging to his father. At the same time these same officers were wearing medals they had inherited from their great, great grandfathers. I fail to see why they were not equally ridiculous, and yet in doing this they were supported by the regulations. I may add that I belong to several of these so-called "patriotic" societies, so I must not be accused of writing in a spirit of envy, hatred, [or] uncharitableness.

Allow me to give you a[n] ... example which will show how our present regulations can be reduced to absurdity. Paragraph 1760, U.S. Army Regulations: 'Officers and enlisted men who, in their own right, or by right of inheritance are members of military societies of men who served in the armies and navies of the United States of the War of the Revolution, the War of 1812, the Mexican War, the War of the Rebellion, or the Spanish-American War, and the incidental insurrection in the Philippines, or are members of the Regular Army and Navy Union of the United States, may wear on all occasions of ceremony the distinctive badges adopted by such societies.'

The regulations of the Navy, Chapter Three, Section thirteen, for 1900, are to same effect. According to these regulations a cadet on leaving West Point or Annapolis as a Second Lieutenant or Midshipman, if he can lay claim to any

ancestor who was even a Lieutenant of Militia in the Revolution, is entitled to place upon his uniform, 'On the left breast of the coat, suspended by a ribbon from a bar of metal,' any or all of the badges of the following 'patriotic' societies:

The Sons of the American Revolution

The Sons of the Revolution

The Society of Cincinnati

The Order of Washington

Order of Founders and Patriots of America

Society of Colonial Wars

Military Order of Foreign Wars

This [is] before the young gentleman has even reached the post or ship to which he has been assigned for duty. If he comes of a fighting line and has an ancestor who served in the War of 1812 and another in the Mexican War, he is entitled by the regulations to buy himself three more medals:

The General Society of the War of 1812

The Military Society of the War of 1812

The Aztec Club of 1847

If his father [was] an officer in the Civil War and saw some Indian fighting, and you are aware of the number of our junior officers who come of military stock, this same young man, still on ... his way to his post, is entitled to present himself with six more medals, making in all sixteen medals which by the regulations he is authorized to wear, and for not one of which he himself has rendered the slightest service

Certainly in no foreign country, appalling and fraught with danger as their decorations are, according to our Constitution, and excommunicated as they are by our regulations, would anything so absurd be tolerated as a subaltern's possessing the right to report for duty wearing sixteen decorations for services rendered before he was born, by somebody else. The medals to which his father's services entitled him are as follows:

Order of Indian Wars

Veterans of the Indian Wars

Military Order of the Loyal Legion

Regular Army and Navy Union of the United States

Grand Army of the Republic

Sons of Veterans, U.S.A.

Nor is this all. If this ... young man had the good fortune to be pitch-forked into the Cuban War and has seen some fighting in the Philippines, as have most of subalterns and ensigns, he is entitled in his own right to five more medals:

Society of the Army of Santiago

Naval and Military Order of the Spanish-American War

Society of Spanish War Veterans

And two for the Philippines; the Society of the Philippine Insurrection, and the Distinguished Service Order of the United States Army, a title which no society not instituted by the Government itself should for an instant be permitted to bear. So now, our hero has three medals for one campaign and two for another, or twenty-one in all.<sup>4</sup>

My sense of humor prevents me from supposing that any officer would go on parade wearing twenty-one medals, sixteen of which he had done nothing to deserve, but my point is that the regulations which permit him to do so must be at fault. Certainly, any man whose patriotism depends upon wearing a medal of a patriotic society is not wanted in the army.

The regulations forbidding an officer [from] wearing a foreign decoration which is, of course, strictly in keeping with the Constitution seems as though it might be more liberal and that it might be altered without shaking our government to its foundations. I would be sorry to see our government allow our officers to receive decorations given as compliments, and because they have acted merely as military attachés, or [because they] have commanded a guard of honor at a royal funeral, or a celebration at Kiel. But I cannot see why they should not be allowed to receive a decoration for services rendered on the field of battle while acting against a common enemy as an ally of the Government bestowing it.

There were many of our officers most highly commended by foreign generals for distinguished conduct during the Peking expedition;<sup>5</sup> for saving a comrade's life, for carrying off the wounded under fire, and [for] setting examples of coolness and gallant courage. It does not seem fair that these men should not be allowed to receive public recognition of their conduct which, after all, reflected credit not only on themselves, but on every American soldier and sailor.

In these particulars, our regulations seemed to me most irregular, slipshod, undemocratic and un-American. I should like to see them completely overhauled. I should like to see every society badge and medal stripped off the American uniform unless it means that the man who wears it is a veteran of a war, or has rendered exceptional service to his country in the pursuance of his duty, or as an ally of a foreign power has upheld the fighting traditions of our Army and Navy. If this were done the regulations would read as follows:

On January 8, 1902 President Roosevelt referred Davis' letter to the War Department, where it was given serious consideration. In fact, on March 14, 1902 War Department Special Orders No. 62 established a Board of Officers "for the purpose of considering and reporting upon the advisability of presenting to Congress for legislative action the question of service medals." Thus, although Davis was not alone in his quest for campaign medals, his letter was timely and was instrumental in setting into motion the train of events that culminated in the establishment of the Army campaign medals that were ultimately authorized in 1905.

Notes

1 On January 16, 2001 Roosevelt was belatedly award the Medal of Honor in 2001 for leading charges at Kettle Hill and San Juan Heights on July 1, 1898. Although he was recommended for the Medal of Honor at the time, the recommendation was turned down largely on the basis of Roosevelt's complaints to both Washington and Press about conditions in Cuba. Roosevelt also received US Army Spanish Campaign Medal No. 51 on 3 January 1908 as President.

2 The bar *Tel-el-Kebir* was issued to be worn on Britain's Egyptian Medal (1882-1899) and denoted participation in that action on September 13, 1882.

3 Editor's note: The *Defense of Lucknow* bar was authorized for Britain's Indian Mutiny Medal (1857-1858). Oddly enough, no bar for Omdurman was authorized; instead,

participants in that battle received the *Khartoum* bar to the Khedive's Sudan Medal (1896-1908). The bars *Relief of Ladysmith* and *Defense of Mafeking* were among the twenty-six bars authorized for the Queen's South Africa Medal (1898-1903).

4 Davis was *almost* correct, but he overlooked the society medals for the National Society Army of the Philippines, the Society of the Porto Rican Expeditions, the Military Order of the Dragon, the Military Order of the Carabao, and the Society of Manila Bay.

5 Editor's note: Davis is referring to the Boxer Rebellion.

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Biography of Richard Harding Davis from the Spanish American War Website

Contributed by Ray Cresswell



Richard Harding Davis was the most well-known war correspondent of the Spanish American War era.

Biography:

Richard Harding Davis was a man of his time: a reporter, a journalist, a playwright, and an internationally renowned celebrity. A world traveler and one of the highest paid literary figures of his era, he was the idol of millions. Yet he said after surviving the

skirmish at Las Guasimas, having rescued wounded troopers and led a firefight against the Spanish while suffering yet another bout of sciatica, "...we are all dirty and hungry and sleep on the ground and have grand talks on every subject around the headquarters tent. I was never so happy and content and never so well." Richard Harding Davis identified with whatever subject he encountered, related to almost every person he met, and immersed himself in whatever situation he experienced. His brother Charles noted that into his fifty-two years, "he had crowded the work, the pleasures, the kind, chivalrous deeds of many men..."

Davis was born April 18, 1864 in Philadelphia, to Lemuel Clarke Davis, editorial writer on The Philadelphia Inquirer, and novelist Rebecca Harding Davis. Rebecca Harding had achieved considerable celebrity prior to her marriage with her startlingly realistic *Life in the Iron Mills*, and other stories that transcended the usual status and norms of women writers of her era. With such literary parentage, it is little wonder that Davis determined to become a writer himself at an early age.

Many Gilded Age literary and theatrical greats frequented the Davis household. Davis found their world fascinating. The Barrymores, Drews, Booths - even Henry Irving - filled his life with a theatrical spirit and sense of drama that pervaded much of his later work. His own life and work would influence other writers, such as Sinclair Lewis, Jack London, Theodore Dreiser, H.L. Mencken, and Ernest Hemingway.

He attended Lehigh University and Johns Hopkins University from 1882 to 1886, where he was active in student organizations, sports, and student publications. Due to his indifferent grades, however, college diplomas proved elusive. But his literary career had already begun with the publication of The Adventures of My Freshman, a collection of short stories.

His father's influence enabled him to begin his newspaper career at the Philadelphia Record in 1886. He then joined the Philadelphia Press in December of that year, where he gained fame by infiltrating a gang of thieves and later covered the 1889 Johnstown Flood. Eventually, he signed with the New York Sun in 1889 - where his journalistic viewpoint was further polished under Arthur Brisbane's editorship.

His career in fiction writing achieved its first major success with the publication of the "Gallegher" stories in 1890. Their main character based on an actual newspaper copy boy in Philadelphia, the stories, later published in hardcover editions, were an instant success with the public. These were accompanied by the equally successful "Van Bibber" stories. A series of adventures and mishaps of a New York bon vivant, the stories gradually evolved the main character into a person embodying traits considered typical of Davis' characters: a strong moral sense of right and wrong, and generosity toward those considered less advantaged by society.

His literary successes enabled him to assume managing editorship of Harper's Weekly in 1890. Five years later, he had joined the New York Journal, a fledgling member of the Hearst newspaper empire.

Trips to Latin America (he is credited with bringing back the first avocados from his 1895 trip to Venezuela that resulted in his "Three Gringos in Venezuela and Central America") and travels in Cuba fed his sense of adventure in developing popular stories for the fiction market (Soldiers of Fortune, featuring the adventurous engineer Robert Clay and first published as a serial in 1896) as well as poignant press pieces (such as The Death of Rodriguez) that aroused sympathy for the Cuban cause. Other correspondents might report the tactical and administrative aspects of the coming war. Davis would report it while focusing on the human drama – and the public loved it.

The outbreak of the Spanish American War led to the formation of one of the best journalistic opportunities Davis would ever experience. Lt. Col. Theodore Roosevelt, second in command of the 1st US Volunteer Cavalry, better known as the “Rough Riders”, was far more colorful and better copy than his superior, the “cool and reserved” Colonel Leonard Wood. The regiment consisted of New York polo players, Western cowboys, Eastern college sports figures, and noted representatives of some of the best Newport and New York families. Davis wrote, “It is a great thing to bring classes together”. Roosevelt, the Rough Riders, and Davis had converged at the right place and time. Roosevelt and his regiment provided the rich material Davis wanted, and Davis became their best publicist. It was an ideal relationship.



**"Rough Rider" Theodore Roosevelt and friend Richard Harding Davis**

Davis had originally traveled, on patrol, on board Rear Admiral Sampson’s flagship, the armored cruiser NEW YORK where he witnessed the shelling of Matanzas. Davis' story made headlines, but as a result, the Navy prohibited reporters from being aboard any U.S. ship for the rest of the war. There was little material for a war correspondent in the early days of the war. It was fortunate, indeed, that he was able to join up with Roosevelt’s unit at Tampa, and again later at the landings at Daiquiri.

Davis’s reputation as an active war correspondent was solidified when, at the Las Guasimas action, he directed the fire of about half a dozen soldiers towards the Spanish,

firing some 20 rounds from a borrowed Krag carbine himself. "I knew every other one of them," he wrote home, "had played football, and all that sort of thing, with them, so I thought as an American I ought to help." Exhilarated and emboldened by this action, he had proven his latent military abilities in combat. It was not his first time under fire, having reported from the trenches during the Greco-Turkish War of 1897. But this was the only time he would involve himself as a combatant. Thereafter, he would restrain himself to reporting actions and helping with the wounded. But his involvement was not lost on Roosevelt, who offered him a commission in the unit. Davis demurred, however, and accepted instead one of the three honorary memberships ever given by the Rough Riders.

It was several days later, at the Battle of San Juan Hill on July 1, that Davis created one of the best narratives ever recorded of this action. His first impulse, he related later, was that this was a terrible blunder, a folly, a seemingly scattered, disorganized movement that almost made him want to call out to the soldiers to come back. But gradually the charge of the combined units of the Rough Riders, 9th and 10th Cavalry's, and 71st Infantry coalesced into an overwhelming action that succeeded in forcing the Spanish from the Kettle Hill and San Juan Hill trenches.

"[The Americans] had no glittering bayonets, they were not massed in regular array. There were a few men in advance, bunched together, and creeping up a steep, sunny hill, the tops of which roared and flashed with flame. The men held their guns pressed across their breasts and stepped heavily as they climbed. Behind these first few, spreading out like a fan, were single lines of men, slipping and scrambling in the smooth grass, moving forward with difficulty, as though they were wading waist-high through water, moving slowly, carefully, with strenuous effort. It was much more wonderful than any swinging charge could have been. They walked to greet death at every step, many of them, as they advanced, sinking suddenly or pitching forward in the high grass, but the others waded on, stubbornly, forming a thin blue line that kept creeping higher and higher up the hill. It was as inevitable as the rising tide".

His Cuban and Porto Rican Campaigns remains a major primary source for Spanish American War research.

Later, Davis would be the surprised recipient, along with three other correspondents, of the surrender of the Puerto Rican town of Coamo. Included in his Notes of a War Correspondent, the story still makes great reading today. The Spanish American War, with its personalized tales of heroic combat and victories easily won, made terrific copy for Davis and provided some of his best writing.

Davis later reported the Boer War from both sides, the Russo-Japanese War (but from remote locations), and World War I. During these years, he continued to write articles, short stories, novels, and plays. His most popular novel, Soldiers of Fortune, was made into a play and later a movie. His plays enjoyed moderate success and he was often part of the

Broadway scene when he was not overseas reporting the latest coronation, revolution, or war.

His married life, however, was not quite as successful. His 1899 childless marriage to Cecil Clark – who perhaps reminded him of the ideal woman, able to share a man’s adventures and his intellect – ended in divorce in 1910. He later married Elizabeth G. McEvoy (the musical comedy star and “Yama Yama Girl”, Bessie McCoy) in 1912. Their one child, Hope Harding, named after his heroine in Soldiers of Fortune, was born in 1915.

Although his later years provided some of his most mature and introspective writing, Davis’s financial difficulties, exacerbated by his lifelong tendency of financial irresponsibility, forced him to continue writing more for the remunerative value of his work than any intellectual appeal it might embody. However, his The Deserter and his description of the "German Army marching into Brussels" during World War I stand among his best works. The main character in The Deserter is a very realistic portrayal of an embittered soldier disillusioned by war – clearly there is no glamour in it. And the German Army, rather than the personalized soldiers of the Spanish American War, becomes a faceless, monstrous, nearly colorless, monolithic machine. This story remains among the best examples of Twentieth Century reporting. Clearly, these are no longer the swaggering adventurers of the Rough Riders, nor the Van Bibbers or Robert Clays of his earlier novels. These are more realistic portrayals, indicative of the mindless death machine that war had become.

Davis’s last years were also spent in charitable efforts, raising support for the Allied soldiers in World War I. Apathetic disinterest, he lectured his readers, might merit a visit to the doctor, cautioning them to tell him there was something wrong with their hearts. Ever a supporter of patriotic causes, he was a vigorous supporter of the Boy Scouts and Leonard Wood’s Plattsburg Movement – an early attempt to train a reserve officer corps in hopes of providing experienced soldiers for America’s expected involvement in the Great War. It was during April of 1916, that he finally succumbed to a heart condition that had plagued him the past several months of his life. He died, characteristically working for the cause of preparedness, at his home at NYC, during the night of April 11, a week before his fifty-second birthday.

He left a legacy of journalistic excellence, ethics, and reporting skill that still stands as an example for today’s news industry. Contemporary journalists, while not bound to the same styles of reporting of his era, would yet benefit from the ethical and moral foundations of Richard Harding Davis’s work.

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- *Cinderella and Other Stories* (1891)
- *Gallegher, and Other Stories* (1891)
- *The West from a Car Window* (1892)
- *Van Bibber and Others* (1892)
- *The Rulers of the Mediterranean* (1893)
- *The Exiles, and Other Stories* (1894)
- *Our English Cousins* (1894)
- *About Paris* (1895)
- *The Princess Aline* (1895)
- *Three Gringos in Central America and Venezuela* (1896)
- *Soldiers of Fortune* (1897)
- *Cuba in War Time* (1897)
- *Dr. Jameson's Raiders vs. the Johannesburg Reformers* (1897)
- *A Year From a Reporter's Note-Book* (1898)
- *The King's Jackal* (1898)
- *The Cuban & Porto Rican Campaigns* (1899)
- *The Lion and the Unicorn* (1899)
- *With Both Armies* (1900), on the Second Boer War
- *Ranson's Folly* (1902)
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- *Real Soldiers of Fortune* (1906) – an early biography of Winston Churchill (1874–1965), Major Frederick Russell Burnham, D.S.O., (1861–1947), Chief of Scouts, General Henry

Douglas McIver (1841–1907), James Harden-Hickey (1854–1898), Captain Philo McGiffen (1860–1897), William Walker (1824–1860)

- *The Congo and coasts of Africa* (1907)
- *The Scarlet Car* (1906)
- *Vera, the Medium* (1908)
- *The White Mice* (1909)
- *Once Upon A Time* (1910)
- *Notes of a War Correspondent* (1910)
- *The Lost Road and Other Stories* (1913)
- *Peace Manoeuvres; a Play in One Act* (1914)
- *The Boy Scout* (1914)
- *With the Allies* (1914)
- *With the French in France and Salonika* (1916)
- *The Man Who Could Not Lose* (1916)