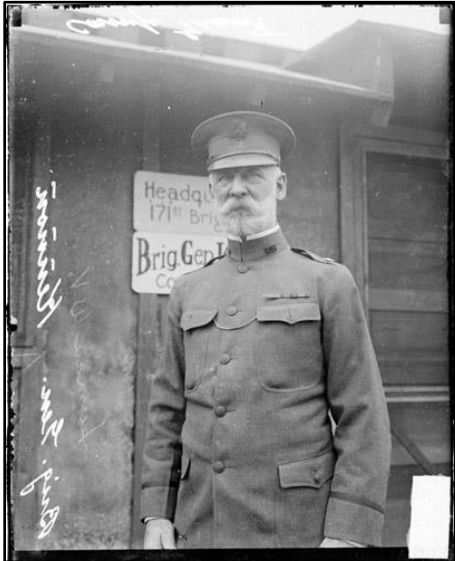


Lyman Walter Vere Kennon

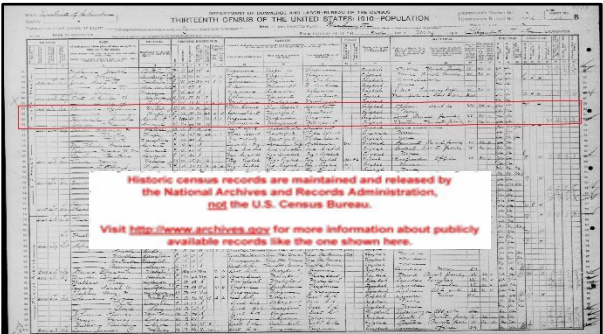
U.S. Army Brigadier General, Census Enumerator, and Author

The U.S. Census Bureau has always been a home to veterans of the United States armed forces. Superintendent of the 1840 Census, William Augustus Weaver, received wounds in the War of 1812. Francis Amasa Walker, the highly influential superintendent of the 1870 and 1880 Censuses, was a veteran of the Civil War and former prisoner of war. In 1890, census legislation gave honorably discharged veterans of the armed services preference for employment as enumerators—a practice that continues to this day and one that has been further strengthened and expanded through civil service reforms. In 2015, for instance, the U.S. Department of Commerce, to which the Census Bureau belongs, employed 5,684 veterans (12 percent of its workforce). The Census Bureau is proud to utilize the proven discipline and motivation of this unique and patriotic workforce.



Brig. General Lyman W.V. Kennon
at Camp Grant, Illinois (c. 1917).
*Chicago Daily News-Achieves
of the Chicago Daily News.*

Lyman Walter Vere Kennon was born on September 2, 1858, in Providence, Rhode Island, to Charles Henry Vere Kennon and Adelaide (Hall) Kennon. Although he was born in Rhode Island, Lyman grew up in New York City after his father, a Quartermaster General in the 2nd Rhode Island Cavalry, died on May 23, 1863, in Louisiana, and his mother remarried George G. Lambertson. On June 14, 1876, Lyman entered the United States Military Academy at West Point but graduated with the Class of 1881 after being suspended 1 year for hazing. After graduating from West Point, newly commissioned Lieutenant Kennon served with the cavalry as they moved the Ute people to a reservation in northeastern Utah.



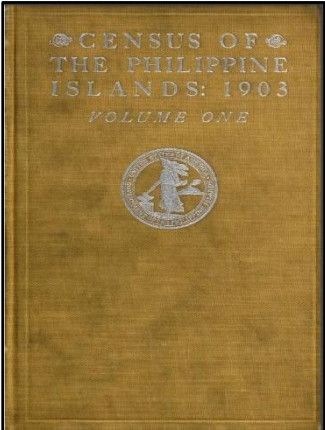
L.W.V. Kennon, his wife Anne, and their two servants were
enumerated in Washington, DC,
according to this 1910 Census schedule.

In 1883, Lyman married Anne Beecher Rice. One year later, he wrote the *Manual of Duties of Guards and Sentinels*, which the United States quickly adopted as its first manual describing guard duty. Throughout the remainder of the 1880s, Lyman produced a host of other influential publications and served as an aid to General George Crook. After Crook’s death in 1890, Lyman served with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Central America, where he surveyed a possible route for an inter-oceanic canal and Mexico’s border with Guatemala.

After the Spanish-American War began on April 21, 1898, Lyman, Commander of Company E of the 6th Infantry Regiment, became the second American officer to reach the blockhouse on the top of San Juan Hill. For his actions, Lyman’s superiors recommended him for a brevet promotion to lieutenant colonel. Following the end of the Spanish-American War on December 10, 1898, Lyman served as the acting U.S. secretary of commerce and agriculture in Cuba before being ordered to the Philippines, where he participated in numerous military actions in the Philippine-American War. During the war, Lyman also served as the U.S. military governor of the province of Ilocos Norte between November 1900 and March 1901.

In 1901, Lyman moved to Iligan on the island of Mindanao to monitor the Moro population which fought against U.S. forces between April 13, 1902, and July 4, 1902. When the first chapter of the Moro Rebellion

ended in July 1902, U.S. civilian and military officials and various members of the Philippines’ diverse population focused on the task of governing and rebuilding the areas affected by the conflict. Thanks to the 1902 Philippine Organic Act, the newly elected Philippine Assembly commenced a government reorganization. To properly elect a representational body, they needed a census. However, in the chaos of a former warzone that spread across hundreds of islands and people that spoke over 175 languages, the only people who had the knowledge to act as enumerators of the fledgling territory were U.S. soldiers. In his position as a respected military commander and dedicated public servant with some knowledge of Islam and other local cultures, Kennon perfectly fit the mold for a census enumerator in the Iligan district of the Philippines in 1903.



Volume One of the Final Reports for the 1903 Census of the Philippines Islands.

Prior to the commencement of the census on March 2, 1903, Kennon received his schedules and maps by mail from Manila. Aware of the deeply suspicious nature of the Moros, the first act of Kennon as enumerator was to meet with the local *datos* and *sultans* to establish a plan for the census. After explaining the purpose of the census and securing the cooperation of the local leaders, Kennon made subsequent visits to the central points in his enumeration district and encouraged various chiefs to take the census schedules back to their *rancherias*, fill them out, and then return the completed schedules.

Because some of the chiefs feared U.S. officials would use the census data for tax purposes, or just expressed a general suspicion toward the enumeration process, Kennon occasionally offered reluctant chiefs a small payment or a gift in exchange for their participation in the census. Kennon also demonstrated his knowledge of local customs and alleviated some of the chiefs’ fear that they would be forced to adopt American culture. Kennon’s various strategies proved successful, even as he acknowledged “the result...represents the best obtainable [data] in the time at my disposal or that could be obtained except by a house-to-house enumeration, which was...entirely impracticable.” At the conclusion of census operations in the province of Misamis, Kennon had enumerated 3,239 members of the population in Iligan. He then teamed up with [John J. Pershing](#) and enumerated a combined total of 95,893 Moros living in the Iligan and Lake Lanao districts.



Kennon Road construction crew near Camp 5, Tuba, Benguet, setting explosives into a sheer cliff of the Bued River Cayon (c. 1903).
Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

By the time he left the Philippines around 1906, Kennon had overseen the construction of the Iligan to Lake Lanao Road in 1903 and the completion of the Benguet Road in 1905. Three years after its completion, American Governor General Leonard Wood issued an executive order that renamed the Benguet Road the Kennon Road, in honor of its creator. For completing the Kennon Road in 18 months, when many people expected the project to take 3 years, Kennon received a personal letter of commendation from President Theodore Roosevelt. After serving in the Philippines, Kennon spent the next few years traveling around the world performing a wide range of duties which included examining railroads

in Japan, serving as a delegate and military attaché to the 1906 Pan-American Congress in Brazil, and surveying part of the border between Alaska and Canada. In 1910, Kennon completed his graduate studies at the U. S. Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Five years after graduating from the U.S. Army War College, Kennon commanded the 161st Depot Brigade which was stationed at the U.S.-Mexico border and supported U.S. forces during the U.S.-Mexico Border War.

Finally, in 1918, Kennon assumed command of the 86th Infantry Division, after training 17,000 troops at Camp Greene, North Carolina, and commanding the 171st Infantry Brigade as the U.S. built up its military forces and began fully participating in the First World War. Unfortunately, medical issues prevented him from leading his division when they departed for Europe. Soon afterwards, Brigade General Kennon passed away on September 9, 1918, and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. We are grateful for a lifetime of service that benefited not just the Census Bureau, but the United States, many Latin American nations, and the fledgling country of the Philippines.