


## Oscar Jefferson Upham



<b>Born</b>	December 14, 1871 Toledo, Ohio, U.S.
<b>Died</b>	February 18, 1949 (aged 77)
<b>Place of burial</b>	Summit View Cemetery Guthrie, Oklahoma
<b>Allegiance</b>	 United States
<b>Service/branch</b>	United States Marine Corps
<b>Years of service</b>	1896 - 1901
<b>Rank</b>	Private
<b>Battles/wars</b>	Spanish American War Boxer Rebellion
<b>Awards</b>	Medal of Honor

**Oscar Jefferson Upham** (December 14, 1871 – February 18, 1949) was a Private serving in the United States Marine Corps during the Boxer Rebellion who received the Medal of Honor for bravery.

In addition to his service during the Boxer rebellion he also served in the Spanish American War and is credited as shooting the first shot from the USS Oregon which started the Spanish American War.

Upham was born December 14, 1871 in Toledo, Ohio and enlisted into the Marine Corps in 1896 at the age of 25 before the start of the Spanish American War. He was sent to Mare Island, California and after being there for a year was ordered to sea duty aboard the USS *Oregon*. When the Spanish fleet tried to escape from the harbor at Santiago, Cuba on July 3, 1898, he was serving as a powder monkey for one of the six-inch guns on the Oregon's bridge, he was given the order to shoot and Upham is credited as shooting the first shot which began the Spanish American War.

During the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, he and his fellow Marines were erecting barricades in Peking, China, when the Chinese rebels surrounded the group and settled down for a three-month siege. A quotation from his diary, kept during the siege, reads: "We are holding out no hope for rescue and many do not give rescue a second thought." He was awarded the Medal of Honor for this action — one of 33 Marines to win that award during the rebellion. He received the Medal of Honor for his action in Peking, China from on July 21-August 17, 1900.

During his enlistment, Upham kept a detailed diary of events. Portions of that diary have been published multiple times. He retired from the US Postal Service and he died February 14, 1949 in Guthrie, where many of his descents live today. He is buried in Summit View Cemetery Guthrie, Oklahoma.

### **Citation**

In the presence of the enemy at Peking, China, 21 July to 17 August 1900. Although under a heavy fire from the enemy during this period, Upham assisted in the erection of barricades.