

San Juan & Kettle Hills

10TH US CAVALRY, Co C



Edward Baker

US VOLUNTEERS



Albert Mills

13TH US INFANTRY, Co A



Alexander Quinn

10TH U.S. INFANTRY COMPANY F



Charles Cantrell



Andrew Cummings



William Keller



James Nash



Alfred Pollond

21ST U.S. INFANTRY COMPANY H



John Deswan



Thomas Doherty



Frank Fournia



Thomas Kelly



George Nee



Hermann Pfisterer

Though Colonel Theodore Roosevelt emerged from the Spanish-American war a *larger-than-life* hero, in great part due his reckless but valiant leadership at Kettle Hill. Never-the-less, he was denied the Medal of Honor. Many historians believe this was due to his outspoken criticism of Secretary of War Alger and other top military planners. While the public adored "Teddy" and fed vociferously on the reports of his Rough Riders, those who were the subjects of Roosevelt's scathing reports of poorly planned military actions and inept efforts to properly equip and supply his soldiers, exacted their revenge. Indeed, Roosevelt went so far as to say publicly, *"I Am Entitled to the Medal of Honor and I Want It"*.



Though 2 Medal of Honor recipients witnessed Roosevelt's actions at Kettle and San Juan Hills (Generals Shafter and Wood) and recommended the intrepid leader for a Medal of Honor, his political enemies succeeded in denying it to him during his lifetime. Beyond Roosevelt's death, his actions were debated for decades and finally, more than 100 years after his famous charge during the Spanish-American War, Congress approved the award. On January 16, 2001 President William Clinton presented Theodore Roosevelt's Medal of Honor to his great-grandson Tweed Roosevelt, in ceremonies at the White House. His award brought the total of awards earned in the July 1, 1898 battles at El Caney, Kettle Hill and San Juan Hill to an even two-dozen. Ironically, Roosevelt's long-sought Medal of Honor would be the **ONLY** posthumous award of the entire Spanish-American War.



At El Caney General Lawton prepared his troops to finally move south to join with the other two divisions, nearly a full day behind schedule.

MEDALS OF HONOR

El Caney

17TH U.S. INFANTRY

COMPANY C

1Lt Benjamin Hardaway



Corporal
Ulysses Buzzard



Private
George Berg

Private
Oscar Brookin

2Lt Charles Roberts



Private
Thomas Graves



Private
Bruno Wende

COMPANY D



Corporal
Norman Ressler



Corporal
Warren Shepherd

was all that remained to make a final valiant stand. Of the 520 Spanish soldiers who had defended the city earlier in the day, less than 100 remained to face the American charge.

The charge began as Lieutenant Kinnison of the 25th observed, *"We cannot take the trenches without charging them,"* then almost immediately fell wounded by an enemy round before he could sound the charge. Second Lieutenant A. J. Moss replaced him as yells and whoops *"which would have done credit to a Comanche Indian"* went up and down the ranks, according to Sergeant Major Frank Pullen of the 25th.

The Buffalo Soldiers charged with a fury, ignoring the men that fell around them, to charge the enemy trenches and rout the last of the enemy defenders. Company H was first to reach the blockhouse where Private Butler took possession of the enemy flag for his company. (Later an officer of the 12th infantry entered and ordered Butler to give up the flag. Dutifully, Butler followed the white officer's orders, but not before cutting a swatch from the enemy standard to later substantiate his claim that his company and his regiment had been the first to take the position.)



Within half an hour the battle was over, the city secured and the stone fort at El Viso destroyed. By five in the evening all Spaniards who had not escaped into the jungle were either dead or captured. The "two hour victory" had taken a full day, but because of the valor and determination of the young American soldiers, victory had at last come. It was not without great cost, 81 Americans killed at El Caney, another 360 wounded. Nine members of the 17th Infantry Regiment received Medals of Honor, all for **"GALLANTLY ASSISTING IN THE RESCUE OF THE WOUNDED FROM IN FRONT OF THE LINES UNDER HEAVY FIRE OF THE ENEMY."**

At both El Caney and at San Juan Hill, the efforts to bury the dead and treat and evacuate the wounded went long into the night and after the midnight hour. At San Juan the Americans pitched their tents and dined on captured enemy provisions. Throughout the night an alert vigil was maintained against the expected counter-attack that never materialized.

In addition to Sergeant Major Baker, 13 soldiers would receive Medals of Honor (six from the 21st US Infantry, five from the 10th US Infantry, and one each from the 13th US Infantry and the US Volunteers). All but Baker and Captain Albert Mills of the US Volunteers were cited simply for *"GALLANTLY ASSISTING IN THE RESCUE OF THE WOUNDED FROM IN FRONT OF THE LINES AND WHILE UNDER HEAVY FIRE FROM THE ENEMY."* Captain Mills was conspicuous for his courageous leadership in the charge, even after being shot in the head and blinded.

In all the battle at San Juan and Kettle Hills cost the American forces 124 killed and 817 wounded.

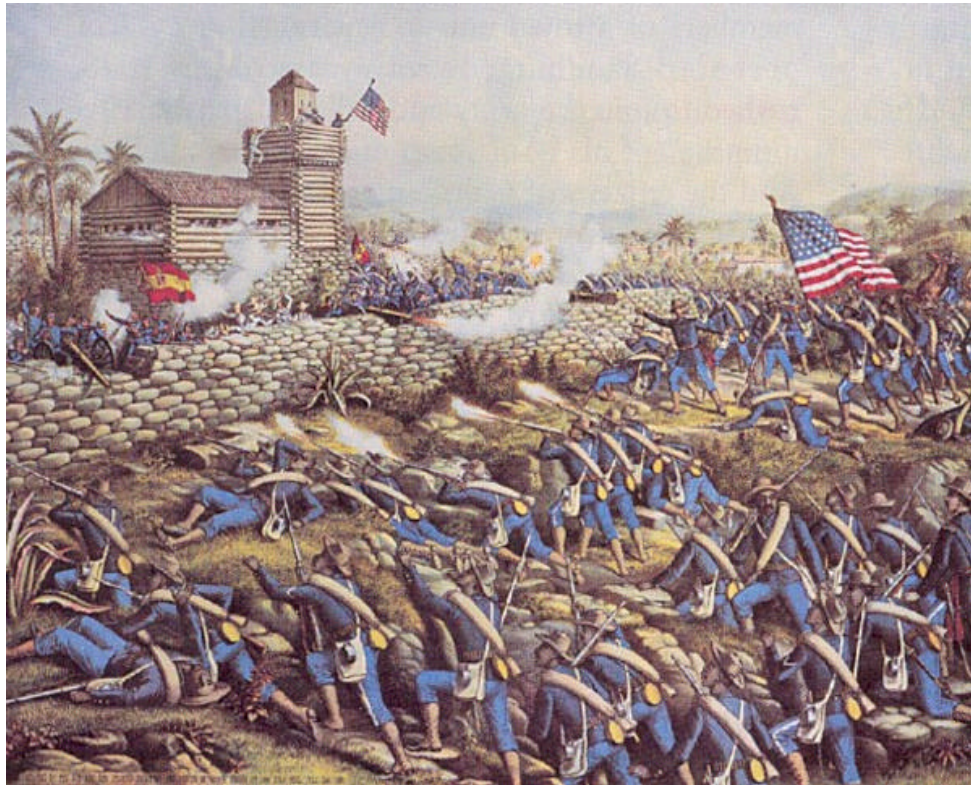


Figure 1 Members of the 24th and 25th Infantry storm the Spaniard's blockhouse.

Though the Colors of the United States of America were flying from the summits of San Juan and Kettle Hills by 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon, General Henry Lawton's 2nd Infantry Division was still struggling for both survival and victory at El Caney. Among the first to attack in the early morning was the 71st Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, many of its men falling to the devastating fire from the Spanish blockhouses. Two regular infantry regiments moved into position as the 71st fell back, the ranks of these units likewise being quickly repulsed as they pushed through the high jungle grass in their attempt to charge the enemy.

The Spanish were not, however, without their own tragic losses. General Vara de Rey fought his soldiers well, until falling himself...shot through both legs. While being carried to safety on a stretcher, he was hit again, this time in the head, and died instantly. Before the day came to a close, two of his sons, serving under him at El Caney, would also be killed.

Two hours after the US Colors had risen over San Juan Hill, Lawton's 3rd, 20th, and 25th US Infantry launched a heavy assault. Much like the earlier charge at San Juan Hill, it was an almost spontaneous eruption of brave American soldiers who had fought all day and tired of the constant rain of enemy fire from the trenches. The terrain was now littered with the bodies of dead and wounded Americans while, inside the city a small handful of leaderless Spanish soldiers

A SPLENDID LITTLE WAR

charge or by the enemy fire directed on the hill after it was taken, leaving the Colonel in command of the survivors of all six regiments.

From their vantage point on Kettle Hill the Rough Riders had an excellent view of the charge that was still in progress by General Kent's infantry on San Juan Hill. *"Obviously the proper thing to do was to help them,"* Roosevelt later said, *"and I got the men together and started them volley-firing against the Spaniards in the San Juan blockhouse and in the trenches around it."*

Upward the infantry charged, the 9th, 13th and 24th Infantry leading the way and the 71st New York and 16th Infantry following from the river bottom below (as illustrated in the painting at right by Charles Johnson Post). As the first elements neared the crest, Roosevelt ordered a halt to the firing lest the attacking American Infantry be subjected to danger from their neighboring units. The final stronghold was the yellow stucco home that had been converted into the blockhouse atop San Juan Hill. Inside 35 enemy soldiers remained barricaded as 19 Americans climbed onto the building's red, tile roof. Four dropped inside through a hole opened in the ceiling by an artillery round, all of them quickly overcome and killed by the Spanish defenders. The remaining 15 infantrymen jumped through the opening, engaging the enemy in hand-to-hand combat, subduing them and capturing their prize. It was 1:50 in the afternoon when Private Arthur Agnew of the 13th Infantry pulled down the Spanish flag.



The fight was far from over as the retreating Spanish took up positions in their trenches across a ravine from the slope of the hill. Seeing this, and taking note of the heavy fire his own men were taking from those Spanish trenches, back on Kettle Hill Colonel Roosevelt ordered a charge and rushed in the lead towards the enemy position. Dodging enemy bullets, he leaped a barbed wire fence in his fearless assault, only to find that only five of his Rough Riders had followed him. One of them was killed, another wounded, and Roosevelt realized he could not continue to lead the remaining three men in the assault. Ordering them to cover, he raced back to the top of the hill, again leaping the fence, to angrily berate the bulk of his regiment for failing to follow his lead.

The failure of the assault was in no part a matter of cowardice by the Americans. In the confusion that reigned, only five men had heard the Colonel's order to attack. A short time later, leading the rest of his Rough Riders and elements of the other cavalry regiments, Roosevelt again jumped over the barbed wire fence to attack and drive the Spanish from their positions.

THE CROWDED HOUR from the time Lieutenant Ord led the opening charge until Private Agnew pulled down the Spanish flag that flew over San Juan Hill was an amazing example of finding victory in chaos. In the years to come men of the various regiments would debate who was first to reach the crests of each hill, which regiment was foremost in battle, and who was first to plant their flag. Unquestionably Colonel Theodore Roosevelt would emerge in the American media as the hero of San Juan Hill. But the simple facts of the disorganized but united charge of the intermingled regiments of General Shafter's soldiers prove one undisputable thing. The charge at San Juan Hill was a victory that belonged not to any single soldier or commander, not to any particular regiment, not to the regular army or the volunteers, but to the entire conflagration of brave young Americans.

the wreckage of the *USS Maine*, his courageous leadership...bordering on carelessness in the face of enemy fire...inspired those who followed and generated a snap-shot view that would become a historic image of the war in Cuba.



Forty yards from the top of the hill, Colonel Roosevelt still far to the front of his regiment, reached the last line of enemy barbed wire. He dismounted, turning *Texas* over to his orderly who had managed to keep up with his colonel's reckless charge, to continue his advance on foot.

Behind him swarmed hundreds of American soldiers, the mixed assortment of volunteer cowboys, lawmen and outlaws that comprised the Rough Riders, the regular Army professionals of the 1st, 3d, and 6th US Cavalry, and the Buffalo Soldiers of the 9th and 10th Cavalry.

Color Sergeant J. E. Andrews of the 3rd Cavalry surged forward with the colors of his regiment when enemy fire struck him in the stomach. He called to his lieutenant to take the colors, but tumbled down the hill still clutching the flag, before a replacement could reach him. Sergeant George Berry of the 10th Cavalry was moving forward with the standard of his own regiment when he saw Andrews fall. Quickly he grasped the colors of the 3d Cavalry together with the colors of his own 10th Cavalry, raised them bravely and shouted "*Dress on the colors, boys, dress on the colors!*" and he valiantly carried BOTH standards up the hill.

As the Americans neared the blockhouse at the top of the hill the Spanish defenders quickly escaped down the opposite slope, retreating for the safety of Santiago. Quickly the Rough Riders planted their standards, while Sergeant George Berry planted the colors of both the 3d and 10th Cavalry. He became the only soldier in US military history to carry TWO standards through battle and plant them victoriously on the enemy's works.

The taking of Kettle Hill did not conclude the hostilities, or the ever present rain of enemy fire. From positions between Santiago and the heights, the Spanish now shelled the blockhouse and outbuildings they had occupied less than an hour earlier. Quickly fanning out across the hilltop, several soldiers took shelter behind a large kettle, presumed to have been used for processing sugar. Thus it was that the hill just to the north of San Juan Hill gained a name, KETTLE HILL. In the hours after their incredible victory, the American soldiers began digging in their own fortifications and preparing for an anticipated counter-attack. Except for Colonel Roosevelt, all senior officers of the six cavalry regiments had been killed or wounded either in the

mater when the Spanish-American War broke out. He had requested a combat assignment with the statement that, *"If I did not make every effort to obtain an opportunity for field service I should never forgive myself."*

When the young lieutenant was informed that all West Point instructors were frozen in their positions, and when repeated letters to the assistant secretary of war proved fruitless, he threatened, *"I shall resign (the West Point position) and join some National Guard or volunteer unit that stands a chance of being sent to Cuba."* Having previously served with the 10th US Cavalry, he also wrote his friend Colonel Guy V. Henry, commander of the 10th, requesting a return to service in his old unit. When Colonel Henry requested the assignment of the young lieutenant to the 10th as it prepared for duty in Cuba, the assistant secretary of war finally granted him permission to leave his teaching duties.

As a white officer among the Buffalo Soldiers of the 10th, the lieutenant had been given a nickname. Though his first name was John, he was facetiously referred to as "BLACK JACK". It was a moniker that would follow him for life, long after his service with the 10th Cavalry ended, and nearly twenty years later would become one of the most famous names in military history when Lieutenant John J. *Black Jack* Pershing would become a general and lead the United States Expeditionary forces in *The Great War*.

As Lieutenant Pershing charged up Kettle Hill among the men of his 10th Cavalry and Colonel Roosevelt's Rough Riders, he was more than impressed by what he was witnessing. He later wrote:



"Each officer or soldier next in rank took charge of the line or group immediately in his front or rear and halting to fire at each good opportunity, taking reasonable advantage of cover, the entire command moved forward as coolly as though the buzzing of bullets was the humming of bees. White regiments, black regiments, regulars and Rough Riders, representing the young manhood of the North and the South, fought shoulder to shoulder, unmindful of race or color, unmindful of whether commanded by ex-Confederate or not, and mindful of only their common duty as Americans."

Precisely BECAUSE it was a spontaneous moment, the charge to drive the Spanish from San Juan and Kettle Hills lacked any semblance of military order. What it lacked in order, it more than made up for in valor. The inter-mixing of the 13 regular and 2 volunteer regiments that assaulted the two-in-one hillside would lead to centuries of debate among historians about "who did what", and how much credit Colonel Roosevelt and his Rough Riders really deserved for their role in events. While historians continue the debate even today, the record of valor and co-operation that would result in victory is unchallenged.

Colonel Roosevelt had planned to dismount at the foot of the hill and lead his Rough Riders to victory on foot. As the sea of young soldiers rose and attacked however, he quickly found he could cover more ground more quickly on horseback, leading and encouraging his men forward. As he spurred *Texas* among the ranks of his charging Rough Riders, he soon found himself well into the lead, ahead of the attacking forces. Armed only with a pistol, appropriately salvaged from

The Crowded Hour

The Charge at
El Caney & San Juan Hills



Among the regiments assembled and digging for shelter from the enemy guns at the foot of San Juan Hill was the 6th US Infantry, a part of General Kent's 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division under Brigadier General Hamilton S. Hawkins. Among the members of Hawkins' staff was an eager young lieutenant who had told a friend he would return from battle as either a colonel or a corps. As the enemy fire continued to rain upon the stalemated American soldiers, Lieutenant Jules Ord turned to his commander. Tired of the wait he informed General Hawkins, *"General, if you will order a charge, I will lead it."*

A veteran of Civil War assaults on fortified enemy positions, General Hawkins considered the young lieutenant's offer, weighing it against the high rate of casualties he knew such a charge would create. Lieutenant Ord broke the silence of the general's contemplation. *"If you do not wish to order a charge, General, I should like to volunteer,"* he offered. *"We can't stay here, can we?"*

"I would not ask any man to volunteer," General Hawkins replied.

"If you do not FORBID it, I will start it," Ord implored. *"I only ask you not to refuse permission."*

Of a truth, it was an unusual conversation between a commanding general and a junior staffer. But the grizzled veteran also realized that Lieutenant Ord was right, the men couldn't stay where they were and continue to suffer at the mercy of the enemy guns above them. *"I will not ask for volunteers, I will not give permission and I will not refuse it,"* the general finally responded ambiguously. *"God bless you and good luck!"*

Shirtless against the heat and armed with a pistol in one hand and saber in the other, Lieutenant Ord rose up and shouted to his men, *"Come on, you men. We can't stay here. Follow me!"*. In the tension of the moment and inspired by the sight of the brave lieutenant, the men of General Hawkins' 6th Infantry rose to their feet to charge directly into the guns of the Spanish. Almost immediately, Lieutenant Ord was struck by enemy rounds and fell dead, but his shout had energized the moment and the 6th Infantry continued to rush the hillside.

To the right of the 6th, the men of the Rough Riders saw Lieutenant Ord and his men begin their assault and rose also, attacking the enemy above. To the rear the 10th US Cavalry became caught up in the excitement, rushing forward to join the attack. In the spontaneity and confusion of the moment, the all-black regiment split with part of the 10th joining the 6th Infantry to attack San Juan Hill, and the other half mingling with the Rough Riders to assault Kettle Hill.

Among the Buffalo Soldiers that mingled with the Rough Riders was the 10th Cavalry's regimental quartermaster, an 1886 graduate of West Point who had been an instructor at his alma

retreat. The devastating fire that rained on the men below San Juan and Kettle Hills continued unabated, and the only way to silence those guns was to charge and take the hill. The steady drum roll of Lieutenant Parker's Gatling's gave the hard pressed cavalry and infantry soldiers an infusion of new hope. It was a moment ripe for something extraordinary to occur, a moment for individual valor to claim the day...it was a moment for history.

"It was a moment pregnant with heroism," historian Henry Watterson wrote shortly after the battle. *"It was delivered of thousands of heroes."*

It was a moment that Colonel Theodore Roosevelt would call:



"The Crowded Hour"

San Juan Hill

The high ridge that was known as San Juan Hill was actually two hilltops, separated by a slight ravine. The southernmost point was most recognizable for the blockhouse that dominated the crest. Across the ravine to the north was another large blockhouse, and this hill would come to be known as KETTLE HILL. By 11 o'clock most of the 15 regiments tasked with wresting control of the two hills had crossed the San Juan River and were prepared for the assault. Below San Juan Hill the soldiers of General Kent's Division continued to return fire on the enemy as they awaited orders. To the Division's right the dismounted cavalry was poised to attack Kettle Hill. Despite his illness, the venerable General Fighting Joe Wheeler rode his horse to the front to watch his men, now under the leadership of General Sumner, fight their way through the blockhouses and enemy trenches to reach the top of Kettle Hill.

Over the next two hours the American struggled to survive while awaiting the arrival of General Lawton's brigade from El Caney. During the period the enemy fire continued to rake into their ranks with devastating effect, causing Roosevelt to later write, *"While we were lying in reserve we were suffering nearly as much as afterward when we charged. I think that the bulk of the Spanish fire was practically unaimed, or at least not aimed at any particular man...but they swept the whole field of battle up to the edge of the river, and man after man in our ranks fell dead or wounded, although I had the troopers scattered out far apart, taking advantage of every scrap of cover."*

Among the casualties during this dangerous few hours before the famous assault that would captivate history books for decades to follow, was the popular and famous former sheriff and mayor of Prescott, Arizona, Bucky O'Neill. Roosevelt described it as the "most serious loss that I and the regiment could have suffered." O'Neill was instantly killed when a Spanish bullet struck him in the mouth and passed through to exit the back of his head. (A memorial to Bucky O'Neill is still prominently displayed in his hometown.)

It was almost one in the afternoon when General Shafter became finally convinced that General Lawton's division was not going to arrive from its "victory" at El Caney to attack the hill from the north and ordered, *"The heights must be taken at all costs."* A few minutes later Lieutenant John H. Parker arrived with four, horse-drawn Gatling guns. When the Spanish positions had been pointed out to him, he set his guns up and began raining heavy fire across the hillside. The hum of the quick-firing Gatlings peppered the enemy and elicited cries of joy from the Americans digging for shelter from the Spanish guns above.



These events that followed became more than a military action, they became one of those spontaneous occurrences that are the lore of military legend. The men of Shafter's Fifth Corps had been ordered to the foot of San Juan Hill in a plan the General frankly admitted amounted to *"going straight at them (the enemy)."* Of a truth, there was nowhere else to go. The fierce shelling of the enemy artillery, coupled with the forward press of the rear regiments of the force, literally *trapped* the forward regiments, preventing any



The Buffalo Soldiers of the 10th were moving at a double-time through the jungle, racing for the river crossing that would position them below San Juan Hill. The regimental commander was Colonel T. A. Baldwin who, like most officers in the US Army's four, all-Black regiments (9th & 10th Cavalry and 24th & 25th Infantry), was white. As the Tenth reached the river they found the crossing littered with the bodies of dead and wounded. The place would become known as "Bloody Ford". Even as Colonel Baldwin rode up and down the banks encouraging his men ever forward, enemy fire continued to fall on the soldiers in the open valley.

Amid the whine of sniper fire and the explosion of Spanish artillery, Colonel Baldwin's horse reared back, throwing the commander to the ground. Sergeant Major Edward Baker, Jr. saw his leader fall to the ground and braved the enemy fire to race to Colonel Baldwin's side. Shrapnel from the enemy artillery had wounded Baldwin arm and side. *"I'm alright, Ed,"* the colonel told his non-com. *"Get back and rally the men."* Reluctantly, Sergeant Major Baker left Baldwin behind to continue directing his soldiers across the river.

The soldiers of the 10th needed little urging from Baker, the rain of enemy fire around the crossing motivating them to move swiftly across the river and take up firing positions in the jungle below San Juan Hill. Sergeant Major Baker dove for cover behind the heavy foliage to join his men in returning the enemy fire. Amid the sounds of battle, he heard a desperate cry for help coming from somewhere in the river.

Looking through the heavy pall of gun smoke that hung in the valley, he noticed Private Marshall, one of his soldiers, struggling to keep his head above water. Wounded, the hapless young man had fallen and was struggling to keep his head above the surface as his heavy pack threatened to pull him down. Ignoring the rain of enemy small arms and artillery fire throughout *Bloody Ford*, Sergeant Major Baker ran to the aid of the wounded private. An enemy shell passed by *"so close I could feel the heat"*, he later recalled. Diving for cover, deadly missiles reached out for him. Though wounded twice in the arm, Baker continued to make his way back to the river, rescuing Private Marshall and dragging him to safety. Then, finding the regimental surgeon, Baker instructed him to treat the wounded private while rejecting treatment for his own wounds.

The attacks at San Juan and El Caney on July 1, 1898 would see many individual acts of valor, some heralded, others unrecognized. The valor of Sergeant Major Baker was witnessed by many, and became an inspiration to the men of the 10th Cavalry on that day when they needed inspiration most. On a day that would see 24 young soldiers receive Medals of Honor, Sergeant Major Baker's was one of the first.

As the early morning assault at El Caney turned into continued battle throughout the afternoon, the main force under Generals Sumner and King could wait no longer. Without the flanking support of General Lawton's Division, the order was given to advance towards San Juan Hill. And there this force would find a similarly stiff resistance.

Shortly after Captain Grimes' battery concluded its 8:00 A.M. initial 45-minute barrage on San Juan Hill, General McClernand rode to the front to meet with General Kent. Pointing towards the blockhouse that dominated the heights of San Juan Hill, he told the commander of the 1st Infantry Division to prepare his men to take the position. Meanwhile, he ordered the Cavalry forward and to the right "to connect with Lawton"...unaware that Lawton's men would spend the entire day fighting for survival and victory at El Caney. While the infantry held its position, General Sumner's two brigades moved down the jungle trails, past the infantry and towards the San Juan valley and the river crossing. Along their route they were subjected to constant sniper fire from the surrounding jungles, and casualties mounted long before the anticipated assault could be ordered.



Behind General Wood's brigade, four men towed a large balloon from which Lieutenant Colonel Derby and Signal Corps Major Joseph Maxfield scanned the terrain. It was a bad mistake with significant consequences. While the observation balloon gave Derby and Maxfield a good sense of the friendly movements, the enemy positions, and the preferable routes to their objective, it also broadcast to the enemy the exact position and movement of the cavalry. The Spanish zeroed in on the balloon from the heights as well as from the jungle below, and released a torrent of leaden death; most of which fell on the soldiers below. As the balloon came under fire, it gradually descended; directly in the middle of the 1st and 10th Cavalry as they forded the river. Attracting enemy fire like a magnet, the result was immediate, devastating, and tragic.



Astride his pony *Texas*, Colonel Roosevelt hurried his regiment across the knee-deep ford of the San Juan River and into position below San Juan Hill. Slightly forward of the Rough Riders were the soldiers of Colonel Henry K. Carroll's 1st Brigade, lined up for assault with the 6th US Cavalry in the center, flanked on the right by the Buffalo Soldiers of the 9th Cavalry and on the left by the 3rd Cavalry. Coming up from behind to take a position to the left of the Rough Riders was the 1st US (Regular) Cavalry Regiment, followed by the 10th Cavalry.

El Caney

Spanish General Vara Del Rey had turned the town of El Caney into a virtual fort, houses along each small street serving as well defended barricades to any opposing force. His 520 soldiers were well entrenched inside six heavy timber blockhouses and held a fortified stone church at the highest point of the town, called El Viso. The enemy was well prepared when General Lawton's 3,500 soldiers began their assault. One Spanish account of the battle stated:

"The houses of El Caney...vomited out a rain of bullets over the enemy (Americans), who, in order of companies, with their chests as their only protection, fiercely to run over the village. The Americans, to tell the truth, fought that day showing a determination and courage that was really magnificent. With the first line decimated, another one came to its replacement, and one after another...but they met heroes, and even with the houses riddled with bullet holes by artillery and rifle fire, and its streets obstructed by the wounded and dead bodies, El Caney became a true volcano (sic) vomiting lava, and a place impossible to reach."

Sergeant Major Frank Pullen of the all-Black 25th Infantry Regiment later recalled the scene of battle from the American perspective. *"It (the charge on El Caney by his unit) was not the glorious run from the edge of some nearby thicket to the top of a small hill, as many may imagine. This particular charge was a tough, hard climb, over sharp, rising ground, which, were a man in perfect physical strength, he would climb slowly. Part of the charge was made over soft, plowed ground, a part through a lot of prickly pineapple plants and barbed-wire entanglements. It was slow, hard work, under a blazing sun and a perfect hailstorm of bullets."*

The advancing Americans found themselves facing snipers in the surrounding trees, fences to slow their progress, and that *perfect hailstorm of bullets* confronting them from the front. At 10 o'clock the 17th Infantry, which had been held in reserve, was ordered forward to take a high embankment that was providing a tactical advantage to the entrenched Spanish. Lieutenant Colonel Haskell and his regimental quartermaster Lieutenant Dickinson led forward movement, advancing in front of their men. Four hundred yards from the Spanish line they stumbled upon occupied trenches, both falling quickly to enemy fire. Lieutenant Dickinson, the lesser injured, rushed back to the regiment where he found Company C advancing under Lieutenant Benjamin F. Hardaway. "The Colonel is shot!" he shouted, struggling to stem the flow of blood from his own wounded arm.

Lieutenant Haradaway, Second Lieutenant Charles Roberts, along with Corporal Ulysses Buzzard sprang into the open to go to the rescue of their commander. Behind them followed four young Army privates, George Berg, Oscar Brookin, Thomas Graves, and Bruno Wende. In the fierce onslaught of enemy fire that met their valiant attempt to rescue their wounded colonel, Berg and Brookins were quickly wounded but managed to drag their shattered bodies back to safety. The remaining five men reached Colonel Haskell, half dragging and half carrying him to safety. Colonel Haskell's wounds were far too serious to save his life, but for their valiant effort to rescue their commander in the face of a withering enemy fire, all seven men would be subsequently awarded Medals of Honor. Throughout the day, both at El Caney and three miles south at San Juan Hill, other brave men would risk their lives for their wounded comrades.

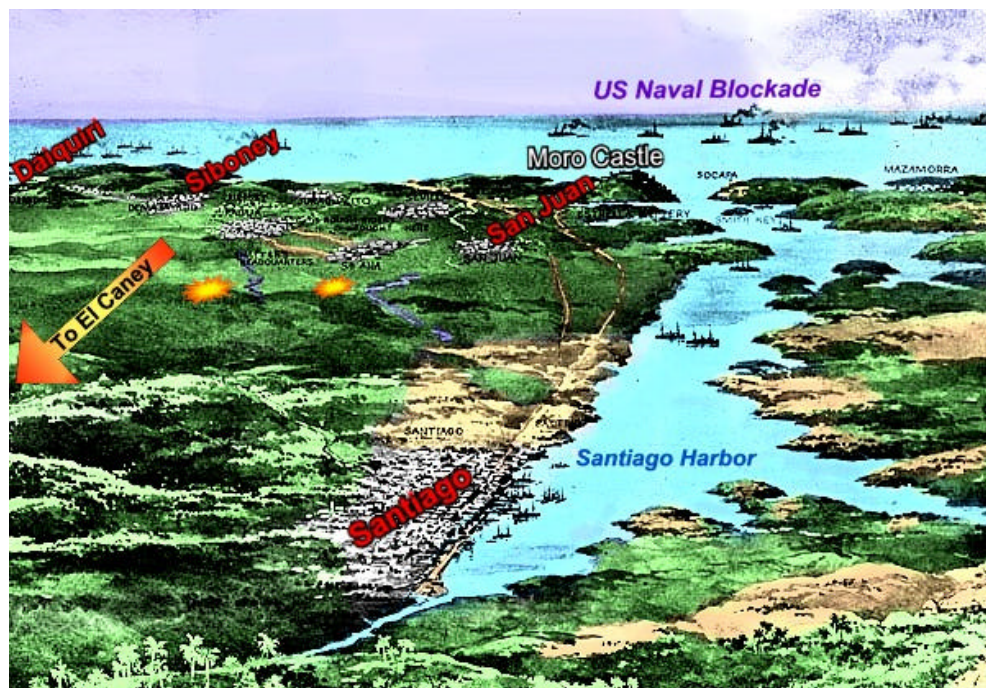
infantry. Once Lawton's men took El Caney, they would move back to join the right flank of the main assault force of some 8,000 soldiers on the primary objective of the day, the battle for San Juan Hill.

At El Pozo the men of that main force rolled their bedding, preparing their packs for their own assault. Amid the sounds of bugles, more than a dozen regiments of infantry and cavalry mustered to their colors to begin their march towards the San Juan River. One hour after Captain Capron's battery opened its big guns on El Caney, Captain George Grimes received the orders to fire his battery at San Juan Hill from its position on El Pozo Hill. Almost immediately, the Spanish returned fire from the heights.

Suddenly the heavy shells of the Spanish guns began falling on the assembled American soldiers. One of the initial rounds struck a small house at El Pozo, instantly killing two Americans and wounding several more. Survivors, along with most of the main force, quickly sought cover as everything quickly turned from optimistic hopes of glory to the harsh realities of death and violence.

On this day, virtually everything that could go wrong, would. General Shafter fell ill and was relegated to his tent at his headquarters. The heavy smoke of the American artillery filled the skies and masked the locations of the enemy positions. In the jungle, Spanish soldiers sniped with impunity at the untested young Americans, quickly proving the advantages of smokeless gun powder. Confusion reigned while the Americans tried to protect themselves from the incoming enemy fire while they awaited General Lawton's quick victory that would signal the start of their own offensive.

To make matters much worse, General Shafter had been far too optimistic in expecting his 2nd Division to engage in two separate battles in that one day. At El Caney, General Lawton found he had underestimated the resistance his own soldiers were facing. That "quick victory" would take most of the day.

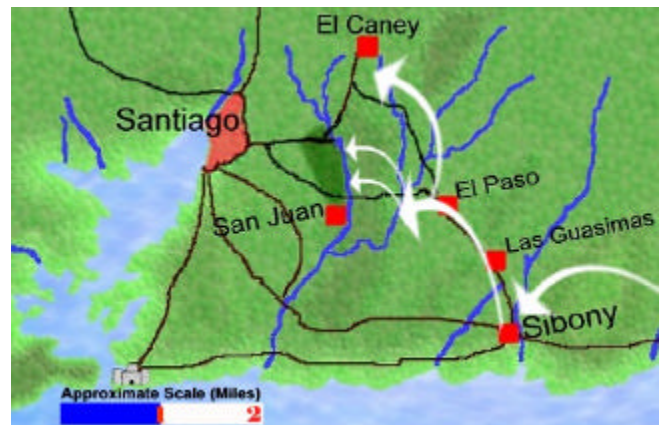


By the last day of June, the first soldiers to land on Cuban shores had already endured more than a week of the temperamental tropical climate, and several had become ill. More than a century earlier Yellow Fever and other tropical ailments had thwarted the British forces in Cuba, and General Shafter was eager to press his attack before it could take a greater toll on his men.

On June 30th General Shafter rode his horse to El Pozo to plan his attack. Joined by most of his command staff, he made a personal reconnaissance while his chief engineer officer Lieutenant Colonel George McClellan Derby surveyed the Spanish positions from a large balloon. Most of the enemy soldiers were stationed in and immediately around the city of Santiago, a force of some 10,000 well entrenched Spanish soldiers and marines under General Arsenio Linares y Pombo. To the west of the city, Cuban General Calixto Garcia Iniguez blocked any reinforcement of the Spaniards from the inland which, when coupled with the US Naval blockade of the harbor entrance, virtually isolated the Spanish ground forces as well as Admiral Cervera's squadron of ships.

General Shafter concluded that the key to taking Santiago lay first in taking the heights overlooking the city from the east. The high ridgeline, just north of the small city of San Juan and west of the San Juan River, was known as San Juan Hill. Rising up from the jungle below, the hill was well defended by 750 Spanish soldiers in heavily fortified positions, and dominated by large blockhouses. Two modern howitzers provided artillery support as well. If the Americans could take and hold this position, they would have a commanding view and a tactical advantage over the 10,000 enemy in the city below.

His reconnaissance completed, General Shafter met with General Kent of the 1st Division and Brigadier General Samuel Sumner, who had taken command of the cavalry after General Wheeler had fallen ill, to outline his battle plan. On the following morning Kent would move his forces to storm and capture San Juan Hill, flanked on the right by Sumner's cavalry. To prevent the enemy from sending reinforcements to San Juan Hill from their garrison at El Caney to the North, General Lawton would march his infantry to capture the city, then pull back to reinforce General Sumner's cavalry on the north end of the heights. General Lawton predicted that it would take about two hours to accomplish his first mission, thus his soldiers would engage the enemy first while the attack at San Juan was held back until he had taken the city.



Reveille sounded early on the morning of July 1, 1898 as anxious soldiers quickly ate their breakfast among a mixture of emotions. All had waited for this moment, the opening salvos in their battle to free Cuba. While it was true that some among them had already faced combat at Las Guasimas, this day was different. At Las Guasimas the Americans had gone in search of the enemy, little contemplating the consequences of battle. On this day their objectives were clear, mixed with a certainty that they would charge directly into the guns of the enemy.

At seven o'clock they could hear the distant sounds of the American artillery battery under Captain Allyn Capron open fire on El Caney in preparation for the assault by General Lawton's

THE BATTLES AT *El Caney* & *San Juan Hill*

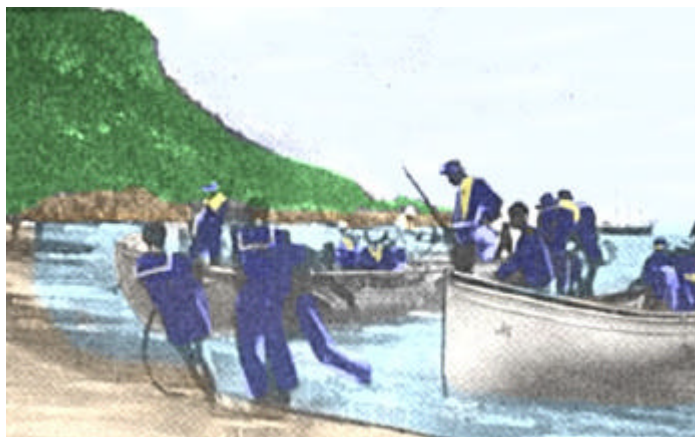


The process of landing some 16,000 troops on the shores of Cuba was an ambitious effort that was poorly accomplished due to poor prior planning and lack of suitable landing craft. The landings at Daiquiri that began on June 22nd stretched into days. As the first troops under Generals Lawton and Wheeler moved westward to secure Siboney, naval transport ships moved along the coast waiting to unload additional troops. Even as the American soldiers tasted first blood at Las



Guasimas, the men of the all-Black 9th US Cavalry were finally leaving the cramped and stuffy quarters of their transport on the beaches just south of Siboney.

As these and other arriving troops from Daiquiri began moving inland, the dismounted cavalry under General Wheeler and the infantry under General Lawton moved ahead of them, following the main routes to Santiago. General Wheeler's two brigades of dismounted cavalry



made camp at El Pozo, to the northwest of Siboney and less than five miles from Santiago. This force included Colonel Henry Carroll's three regiments (3d, 6th and 9th US Cavalries) and the newly promoted Brigadier General Leonard Wood's brigade consisting of the 1st US Cavalry, the all-Black 10th US Cavalry, and Colonel Roosevelt's Rough Riders (1st US Volunteer Cavalry). Strung out along the Santiago road from El Pozo to Siboney and east to Daiquiri were the men of Brigadier General J. Ford Kent's 1st Infantry Division.

As Thompkins moved to greet the Americans, the Spaniards opened fire from the nearby jungle, a torrent of leaden death reaching out across the beach. While two of the Buffalo Soldiers remained behind to provide cover fire, the rescued Americans were helped to the boats. Lieutenant Ahern's valiant men worked swiftly to locate and rescue all surviving members of the shore party. Then they joined the group in launching their boat into the lagoon, rowing anxiously towards their transport ship. Enemy fire continued to rain about the Americans, both the rescued and the rescuers, bullets smacking like stones into the calm waters of the lagoon. Heedless of the danger, the small boat continued to move forward. Finally, by three o'clock in the morning, the rescued shore party was safely aboard the transport ship.

Despite the danger the men had endured, Private Wanton volunteered to return to retrieve the bodies of their dead comrades. Lieutenant Johnson deemed the effort too risky however, and denied permission.



For their heroism, Privates Bell, Lee, Thompkins and Wanton were awarded Medals of Honor.

On that dark night of June 30th, miles away near Santiago de Cuba, the remainder of the Tenth Cavalry knew nothing of the historic heroism of their four comrades at Tayacoba. They, along with the other soldiers of General Shafter's Fifth Corps were preoccupied with preparations and thoughts for tomorrow. The long awaited assault on Santiago was about to begin, and with daylight the Tenth Cavalry would join Theodore Roosevelt's Rough Riders in an assault on the heights over the city. Their attack would take place near the village of San Juan.

"From the generals to the privates, all were eager to march against Santiago," Roosevelt later wrote. "In the evening, as the bands of regiment after regiment played the "Star Spangled Banner," all, officers and men alike, stood with heads uncovered, wherever they were, until the last strains of the anthem died away in the hot sunset air."

Meanwhile, further down the coast at Manzanillo, American Naval forces were engaging the Spanish in an unrelated action. The gunboat *Centinela* (named for the Spanish word "sentinela" meaning GUARD), was overtaken by three American warships. During the ensuing battle, the Spanish vessel was quickly sunk. One of the three American ships involved in the lopsided victory was the *USS Wompatuck*. Mate Frederick Muller so distinguished himself in the brief battle, he was awarded the Medal of Honor.



Back at Tayacoba, darkness was falling as the surrounded Americans on shore hid along the lagoon to hope and pray for a miracle. Aboard the *Florida*, Lieutenant Johnson met with Lieutenant George Ahern of the Tenth Cavalry to discuss the tragic situation and the failure of the previous rescue attempts. *"My only hope,"* he told the officer, *"is to try your colored boys."*

Lieutenant Ahern went below to the hold where his young cavalry soldiers had spent most of their long trip from Florida to Cuba. He appraised them of the fate of the landing party, explained the danger of any rescue effort while citing the previous four failures, and then asked for volunteers to make a fifth effort under the cover of darkness. Quickly, four of them: Privates Dennis Bell, Fitz Lee, William Thompson and George Wanton volunteered.

The four men along with Lieutenant Ahern lowered their small boat from the *Florida*, quickly rowing towards the shore under cover of darkness. As quickly as they reached the beach and began securing their boat, the Spaniards opened fire, streaks of deadly fireballs flying over their heads and smacking dully into the surrounding sand. Ignoring the enemy fire, the five volunteers slowly worked their way through the jungle growth along the beach, searching for the stranded shore party. Eventually the enemy fire ended, and an eerie silence fell over the lagoon.

Lieutenant Ahern's men continued their quiet search until the silence was interrupted by a whispered, *"Hey, over here."*

Peering into the near total darkness, Private Thompson started moving towards the sound of the voice while his comrades kept their weapons poised to open fire if it turned out to be a Spanish trick. *"Who's there?"* Thompson whispered back into the darkness when he neared the area from which he had heard the initial sounds.

"Chandler," the voice replied. *"I'm over here."*

Thompson knew that Winthrop Chandler was one of the missing men from the shore party, but still continued slowly and alertly forward in case it was an enemy ruse to draw him in. In the darkness he stumbled over a body on the ground, but ignored it to continue forward. His heart pounding, the sudden appearance of two white faces in the dark shadows may have startled him. Then he heard one of the apparitions say, *"I'm Chandler. Thank God, you found us."*

RESCUE AT TAYACOBÁ

A few members of the 10th Cavalry had been left behind when the bulk of the regiment sailed out of Tampa for Daiquiri on June 14th. Most were members of M Troop, along with a few members of A and H Troops. In all these were close to 50 Buffalo Soldiers who would not depart the American coast until June 21st, the day before the rest of their regiment began landing at Daiquiri.

When these soldiers did finally set sail for Cuba, theirs would be a different and dangerous mission. Together with their horses, 65 mules laden with ammunitions and supplies, and 375 Cuban soldiers, they were assigned the task of landing further north on the underside of the island. From there they would move through the enemy infested jungle to deliver the needed supplies and rations to the Cuban rebels fighting for their independence. On June 29th the small fleet carrying the force attempted to land them at Cienfuegos. The enemy shore batteries were too much for the single gunboat accompanying the two transports, and the convoy moved southeast to Tayacoba. On the following day, several Cubans and 28 Americans went ashore at Tayacoba to make a reconnaissance of the enemy fortifications.

The advance party slowly rowed to the shoreline in their small boats launched from the transports *Florida* and *Funita*. As soon as they reached the shoreline they hid their boats in the heavy jungle around the horse-shoe shaped bay, and began creeping inland. Suddenly enemy fire raked their midst from a Spanish blockhouse. The enemy fire was overpowering, and the party began moving back to the water, several Americans falling wounded and five or six Cubans killed in the action. When they reached the waters of the bay, they found their boats destroyed by enemy artillery.



Stranded and hopelessly outnumbered, the advance party seemed doomed to annihilation. Aboard the *Florida*, Lieutenant C. P. Johnson had heard the sounds of battle, anxiously awaiting the return of his reconnaissance patrol. When they did not materialize, he began to realize the worst. Quickly he organized four detachments of Cuban soldiers to go ashore and rescue the stranded soldiers. Each attempt was met with heavy enemy fire, all four rescue attempts failing miserably as the Cubans were turned back to their transports. It appeared that the American and Cuban soldiers who had landed at Tayacoba were hopelessly lost.

wounded men began to hum "My Country 'tis of Thee". One by one the others joined in, their refrain loud enough to be heard across the hospital, out even into the jungles where they had met and defeated the enemy.

The following day the Rough Riders buried their dead. In the fight at Las Guasimas they had lost eight men including Captain Capron whom Roosevelt described as "*the best soldier in the regiment*" and the venerable Sergeant Fish. Thirty-four Rough Riders were wounded.

The First Regulars and Tenth Cavalry also lost eight men killed, eighteen wounded. The 964 young Americans had, however, met a force of 1,100 enemy soldiers, well entrenched in fortified and camouflaged positions, and sent them scurrying back to Santiago in retreat.



After burying their dead on the afternoon of June 25th, the Rough Riders moved a couple miles from Siboney before setting up camp along a stream near a marshy, open valley. Here they would rest for five days, a badly needed break before their historic assault in General Shafter's drive to take Santiago. During this period General Young developed a fever, and Colonel Leonard Wood was promoted to Brigadier General and assumed command of the entire 2nd Brigade (First Regular and Tenth Colored Cavalries along with the Rough Riders). Theodore Roosevelt was promoted to Colonel and assumed command of the Rough Riders.

On the night of June 30th, the Rough Riders began preparations for the long-awaited assault to take Santiago that would commence the following morning. The men of the Tenth Cavalry had already distinguished themselves in the battle at Las Guasimas, and would further add to their glowing traditions on the following day. But in the day preceding the assaults on San Juan Hill and El Caney, four members of the 10th Cavalry were making history miles away on the small island of Cuba.

of June 24, 1889; he was the only hero to be so recognized for his courage in that first Army engagement of the war.

Lieutenant Colonel Roosevelt was also distinguishable for his courage and leadership in the Rough Riders baptism of fire. With the same disregard for enemy fire shown by Colonel Wood, he boldly led his men into the foray, swiftly moving to the forefront. Nearby he watched as Major Brodie, who was commanding the other three troops of Rough Riders, take a Mauser bullet in the arm. The heavy round shattered the limb, spinning Brodie completely around. Despite his severe wound, Brodie continued to lead and encourage his men, refusing to return to the rear for medical treatment. He lead valiantly until his wounds made him so faint, he had to be carried from the field of battle. Under Colonel Wood's orders, Roosevelt took command of Brodie's troops.

Slowly the enemy fire began to taper off, then cease altogether. Roosevelt was to the extreme front of the action when the enemy pulled back. Quickly he began placing his men in defensive positions in case the Spaniards returned, and ordered his men to check their ammunition and resupply their canteens. During this period he received some devastating news. Colonel Wood had been killed during the fierce fighting. Sadly but efficiently he took command of the Rough Riders, seeking to insure their firm hold now on the ridges around Las Guasimas. His soldiers took control of the nearby ranch buildings, and began gathering their wounded. Only then did Roosevelt return to the rear. It was a happy moment for him, returning to find the reports of Wood's death had been in error. For a brief moment, if even based upon false information, Theodore Roosevelt had been commander of the Rough Riders. He was happy to resume his role as executive officer when he found his friend still among the living.

By mid-afternoon the Rough Riders had built their camp, firmly staking their claim to the heights just beyond San Juan Hill and Santiago. Search details combed their way through the foliage to locate the dead and wounded. The latter carried back to Siboney on litters. Among the wounded was a non-combatant, a correspondent named Edward Marshall. The newsman had been shot in the back and no one expected him to survive his awful wound. Struggling to remain conscious, the correspondent insisted on ignoring his pain to dictate his account of the battle at Las Guasimas and record it for the newspapers back home.

Also among the wounded was Thomas Isbell, a half-breed Cherokee from L Troop. Isbell was part of Sergeant Fish's advance party, among the first to taste enemy fire. In the opening volley, Isbell was shot through the neck. Ignoring his wounds, he continued to fight, being hit again in the left thumb. Refusing medical attention, the intrepid volunteer continued to battle, receiving wounds in the hip, a second wound to the neck (the bullet remained lodged against the bones), his left hand, scalp, and a third neck wound. A total of seven times enemy rounds broke his flesh, but he had remained in the battle until he was so weakened by blood loss, he had to be carried back to Siboney.

A New Mexico cowboy named Rowland was also among the wounded. Though able to walk back to Siboney under his own power, upon arrival the physicians determined his wounds so severe that they ordered him to bed to await removal back to the United States. (That night, under cover of darkness, Rowland slipped out a window with his rifle and pack to return to the Rough Riders. His determination was met with a respectful welcome, and he continued with the regiment through the coming battles.)

The wounded like Marshall, Isbell and Rowland were all placed in a large, improvised open-air hospital at Siboney as the physicians did all they could to stem blood flow and save lives. Nearby lay the bodies of their dead comrades. Amazingly, the wounded accepted their fate without whimper, not even crying out in their agony. Sometime in the late afternoon, one of the

"There they are, Colonel," shouted Richard Harding Davis. Davis was one of two newspaper reporters Roosevelt had allowed to accompany him on this mission. Pointing across the valley to the right he yelled, *"look over there; I can see their hats near that glade."*

Finally noticing the location of the enemy, Roosevelt pointed them out to a couple of his better marksmen, who began returning fire. The first rounds fell short, but in minutes the Americans had the enemy's range and the Spaniards jumped up to run to new positions. Following their movement, Roosevelt began to make out dozens of hats of enemy soldiers. His Rough Riders began moving forward, attacking with courage and determination.

Slowly Roosevelt's men began taking casualties. Harry Heffner of G Troop was shot in the hips. He fell without uttering a sound. Two of his companions dragged him to the shelter of a nearby tree. Slowly, painfully, Heffner dragged himself up to lean against the trunk. He asked his comrades to hand him his canteen and his rifle. As the battle raged, he continued to fire at the hidden enemy while his comrades pressed ever forward. When they returned later, Heffner was dead, but he had gone down fighting.

At the front of the regiment, Sergeant Fish was one of the first casualties, killed instantly by enemy bullets. Three of his 20-man advance party also fell. A few minutes later Captain Capron was also killed.

When Captain Capron died, leadership of L Troop transferred to First Lieutenant Thomas. In minutes Thomas was shot in the leg and for the third time in less than half an hour, command changed. Second Lieutenant Day, a very young junior officer, now led the troop.

Seeing the battering Capron's troop was taking, Captain McClintock ordered B Troop, composed mostly of Arizona volunteers, to its relief. McClintock was shot in the leg, and command of B Troop fell to young First Lieutenant Wilcox.

Roosevelt ordered G Troop forward, dashing with them past the lifeless body of Sergeant Fish to the forward firing line. The cover had thinned out and the sparse line of Rough Riders was still moving forward, taking cover wherever they could find a depression in the earth, a small tree, or a boulder. Across the open expanse Colonel Wood strolled back and forth shouting orders and encouraging his men.

As casualties mounted, the Rough Riders fought with courage and grim determination. When someone fell wounded, his comrades rushed past him to press their attack. *"It was hard to leave them (the wounded) there in the jungle, where they might not be found again until the vultures and the land-crabs came,"* Roosevelt wrote, *"but war is a grim game and there was no choice."*

One man did tend to the wounded. A 32-year old assistant surgeon and former Princeton football player named James Robb Church did his best to stop the flow of blood and bind up ruptured flesh throughout the morning. Time and again he braved the fusillade of enemy Mauser bullets to enter the battlefield, locate the most badly injured, and then carry them through the gauntlet of enemy fire to the safety of the rear. So outstanding was his display of courage in saving lives not only from serious wounds, but directly under the guns of the enemy, the men of the regiment recommended him for special recognition. His was to be the first Army award of the Medal of Honor of the Spanish American War. While valor abounded on the jungle ridges around Las Guasimas on the morning





It was an exhausting pace that Colonel Wood set for his Rough Riders, many of whom were not at all comfortable with marching for two days in a row. As they struggled up steep hillsides through dense jungle, some of the men dropped their bundles or fell from the heat and exhaustion. With a detachment from the Rough Riders still back at Daiquiri guarding supplies, compounded by the men who had fallen to the heat and the march, only about 500 of the regiment's soldiers were able to complete the move northward.

"I was rather inclined to grumble to myself about Wood setting so fast a pace," Roosevelt wrote. "When the fight began I realized that it had been absolutely necessary, as otherwise we should have arrived late and the regulars would have had a very hard work indeed."

Slowly the regiment continued forward, Sergeant Hamilton Fish and 20 men of Captain Capron's troop leading the way along a trail so narrow and overgrown with jungle foliage that the men had to move forward in single file. For more than an hour the soldiers crossed the first high hill and wound their way through ridges and valleys of beautiful jungles filled with the calls of exotic birds...a setting so serene it belied the tumult that was about to erupt around them.

Colonel Wood commanded from a position forward with Captain Capron's troop, when the advance party encountered a Spanish outpost. Quickly he began deploying his Rough Riders, three troops under Roosevelt moving to the right of the trail while three troops deployed left. The final troop was held back in reserve.

Suddenly the sound of the enemy's Mausers began to erupt all around. The heavy foliage and the enemy's use of smokeless powder made them almost invisible. As bullets whipped through the air, some of the Rough Riders began cursing. *"Don't swear--SHOOT!"* grumbled Colonel Wood as he moved back and forth among his men.

Lieutenant Colonel Roosevelt was taking cover behind a large palm tree as he peered around it looking for the location of the enemy. At that moment a Mauser bullet struck the tree, passing through-and-through, showering his face and filling his left ear with dust and splinters. It was fortunate, for had Roosevelt not been looking out from the side of the tree, the bullet would have been in direct line with his head.

The opening moments of combat were both terrifying and frustrating. The men had been eager for combat, had trained and prepared for this very moment. Now, as the enemy attacked with ferocity, the Rough Riders could find nothing to shoot back at. Several soldiers including their leader probed suspected enemy locations with infrequent bursts of fire, to no effect. It was a non-combatant that finally gave them the break they needed.



become all but ignored while the Buffalo Soldiers of the Tenth and the Rough Riders of the 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry became national heroes.

General Young's main force pushed the attack, struggling through the heavy jungle to find and rout the enemy. They struggled through barbed wire fences, scaled the high ridges, and attacked with determination and courage eloquently recalled by Theodore Roosevelt himself:

"They were led most gallantly, as American regular officers always lead their men; and the men followed their leaders with the splendid courage always shown by the American regular soldier. There was not a single straggler among them, and in not one instance was an attempt made by any trooper to fall out in order to assist the wounded or carry back the dead, while so cool were they and so perfect their fire discipline, that in the entire engagement the expenditure of ammunition was not over ten rounds per man. Major Bell, who commanded the squadron, had his leg broken by a shot as he was leading his men. Captain Wainwright succeeded to the command of the squadron. Captain Knox was shot in the abdomen. He continued for some time giving orders to his troops, and refused to allow any man in the firing-line to assist him to the rear. Lieutenant Bryam was himself shot, but continued to lead his men until the wound and the heat overcame him.

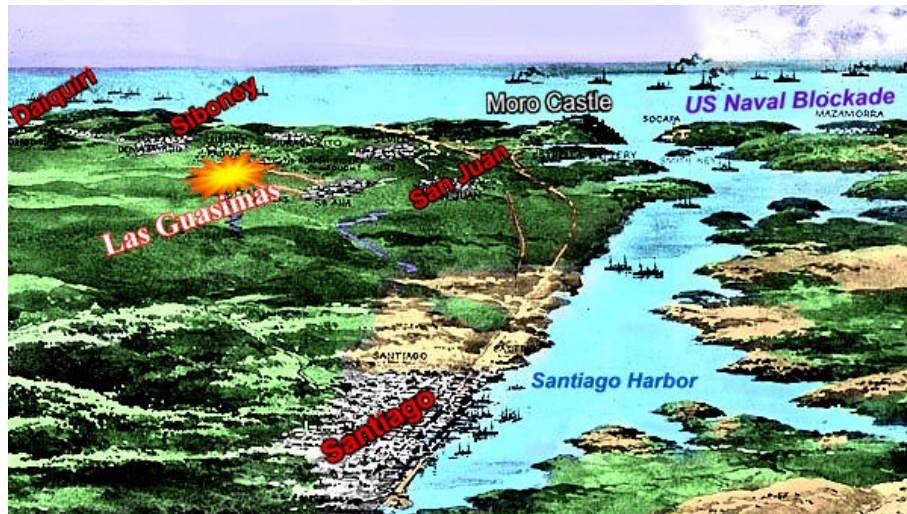
The advance was pushed forward....with the utmost energy, until the enemy's voices could be heard in the entrenchments. The Spaniards kept up a very heavy firing, but the regulars would not be denied, and as they climbed the ridges the Spaniards broke and fled."



Watching his troops attacking and routing the enemy, General Fighting Joe Wheeler couldn't help getting caught up in the excitement, though in his joy he momentarily forgot in what war he was engaged. It was later reported that in the heat of the attack he yelled out to his men:

**"Come on!
We've got the damn Yankees on the run!"**

would move out along the higher ridgelines in support of the two cavalry squadrons. If all went according to plan, they would find and destroy the enemy positions near Las Guasimas.



It didn't take long to find the Spaniards. Less than two hours later General Young's aid Captain A. L. Mills with two scouts, was leading the advance of the regular cavalry when they discovered they enemy near a junction in the road. The Spanish had dug defensive pits to fortify their position while others lay hidden in the heavy jungle surround the roads. To the right was a large ranch, also firmly under enemy control.

General Young personally rode his mule to join Captain Mills and his advance scouts, quickly making a visual reconnaissance of the enemy and their positions. He ordered his men to fill their magazines and placed his Hotchkiss battery in a firing position about 900 yards from the enemy fortifications. He deployed the 1st Regular Cavalry in position to storm the enemy, with the 10th in support.

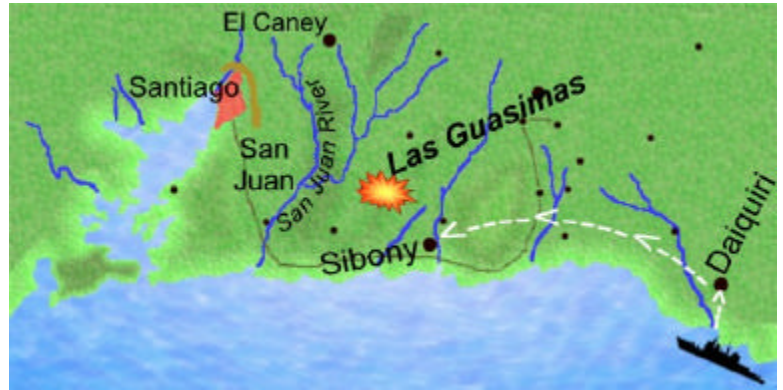
Wisely, General Young delayed his attack while he dispatched a Cuban messenger to advise Colonel Wood as to the enemy position. Knowing the more difficult jungle route the Rough Riders were taking would slow them down, he held up his assault to coincide with their arrival. During this brief delay General Wheeler personally moved to the front, reviewing and then approving Young's plan of attack.

At eight o'clock General Young ordered his Hotchkiss guns to open fire, while the brigade commander himself led his troops from the firing line. Throughout the day, indeed throughout the days of ground war that followed, it was commonplace for the commanding officers to lead from the forefront of the battle, often at greater peril than that of their enlisted soldiers.

As quickly as the American guns began their initial volley, the Spanish returned fire. The denseness of the jungle along the roadway, combined with the enemy's use of smokeless powder, made it difficult to locate the enemy positions. General Young began pushing his men forward, taking the fight to the Spaniards.

Observing the action, as was the constant case throughout the Spanish-American War, were members of the media. All expected the men of the First Regular Cavalry to perform well under fire, these being professional soldiers. The speculation was on how the other elements of the brigade would perform...the all-Black Tenth Cavalry and the all-volunteer Rough Riders. Both would give such solid account of themselves in that first battle, the First Regular Cavalry would

As General Lawton's advance guard moved westward, they encountered the Spaniards in a brief battle. The enemy quickly withdrew and, upon hearing this, Fighting Joe Wheeler himself led a reconnaissance force to determine the enemy strength and position. Moving ahead of General Lawton's advance, he found them. The enemy had pulled back inland from Siboney to fortified positions near Sevilla, which the Americans called Las Guasimas (because of a particular tree that grew around it). Wheeler ordered an assault, but quickly found the enemy resistance stronger than he had anticipated.



As he withdrew, General Wheeler sent orders to General Lawton to prepare for an assault on Las Guasimas the following day. (General Shafter was still off shore in his floating command post, and when the Corps Commander was not on the ground, General Wheeler was the senior officer with authority to issue such orders.) General Lawton wasn't happy with his new orders, was in fact even more disturbed by Fighting Joe's direct actions in defiance of Shafter's own orders. Never-the-less, orders were orders and the men were all eager for action. The ground battle for Cuba was about to begin in earnest.

Throughout the afternoon of June 23rd General Lawton's First Brigade (which included the Rough Riders) under General Young, continued its advance to Siboney. It was long after nightfall when the soldiers reached their destination and began setting up camp for the night. Almost as quickly as the Rough Riders built fires to prepare their dinner, a tropical rain storm hit, drenching them all and extinguishing their fires. The weary soldiers, men accustomed to traveling everywhere on horseback, were tired after the day's march. The heavy rain and lack of shelter did nothing to ease their comfort.

Meanwhile, Colonel Leonard Wood departed to meet with General Young. Lieutenant Colonel Roosevelt likewise met with Captain Capron of the Rough Riders as they discussed the coming battle. After a couple hours the rain ended and the men began to bed down. Close to midnight Wood returned and awakened Roosevelt to detail General Young's plan for meeting the enemy the following morning.

At a quarter to six General Young began forming up the men of his First Brigade and marching them towards Las Guasimas, four miles to the north. The main force, 244 men of the First Regular Cavalry under Major Bell, and 220 men of the all-Black 10th Regular Cavalry under Major Novell, would proceed along the roadway. Fifteen minutes after their departure the Rough Riders under Colonel Wood



LAS GUASIMAS

First Blood



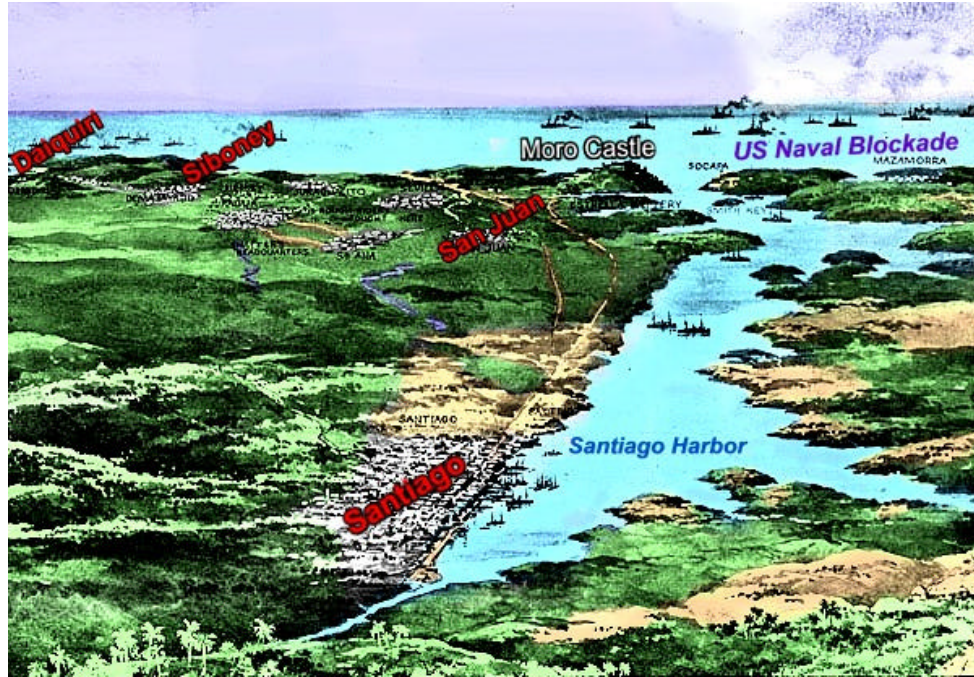
They called him "Fighting Joe", the grizzled 62-year-old Major General, commander of Volunteers and dismounted cavalry landing at Daiquiri behind General Lawton's 2nd Division. Like his counterpart General Lawton and like corps commander General Shafter, Wheeler was a veteran of the Civil War. Unlike the other two generals, "Fighting Joe" did not wear the Medal of Honor. His valor on the fields of battle, his brilliant leadership through campaigns at Stone River, Chickamauga, Knoxville and Atlanta might have earned him one but for one minor technicality.

General Joseph Wheeler had served in the Civil War as a commander of cavalry in the **CONFEDERATE** Army.

A man of immense character, Joe Wheeler quickly earned the deep respect of both friend and foe. Following the War Between the States, Fighting Joe had settled down in his home state in a community quickly named for him, Wheeler, Georgia. For almost two decades he served his state as a member of the U. S. House of Representatives, working hard for reconciliation between the North and South in the post-war years. At the outbreak of hostilities in Cuba, Fighting Joe was coaxed out of retirement to command the U.S. Volunteers. Despite his age, his reputation and sturdy nature made him legendary. The years had not diminished his faculties, his military prowess, or his individualism. In a war that often placed a group of highly competitive and fiercely independent general officers against each other, General Joseph Wheeler could hold his own.

General Shafter was proceeding, despite the disagreement of Admiral Sampson, to initiate his plan to land his troops and then move them westward to encircle and capture Santiago. This plan called for General Lawton to take the lead, moving his men westward on June 23rd to secure Siboney as a landing site for the remainder of the troops of his Fifth Army Corps, most of which consisted of General J. Ford Kent's 1st Division. Wheeler would follow, and when all was ready, a two-pronged assault would be launched against Santiago with Lawton's troops attacking from San Juan while General Kent's 1st Division and Fighting Joe's volunteers and dismounted cavalry attacked at El Caney to cover the flank. Fighting Joe however, had ideas of his own.

The following day, June 23rd, the Rough Riders continued to locate and unload their supplies. Though the men of the 1st US Volunteer Cavalry had been dismounted at Tampa, their officers had been allowed to transport their horses on other ships in the convoy. Colonel Leonard Wood found his two horses, but Lieutenant Colonel Roosevelt found only one of his two mounts, a pony he called "Texas". His larger horse, "Rain-in-the-Face" had drowned in the confusion of the landing. By late afternoon the Rough Riders were ready to move out, joining the rest of General Lawton's 2nd Division in the march to secure and occupy Siboney a few miles to the west.

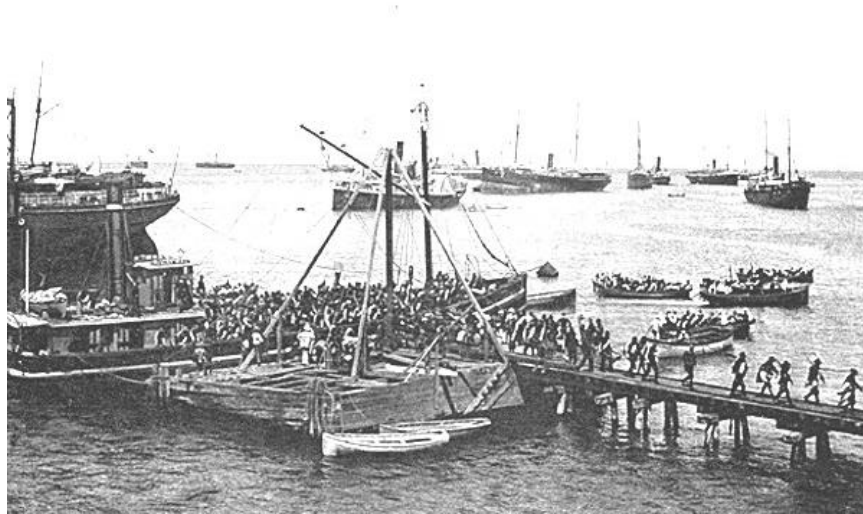


The Splendid Little War was about to become,

Not So Splendid!

The Night To Fight", Brigadier General Henry Ware Lawton was also a recipient of the Medal of Honor for his Civil War heroism. Even without his Medal, he was an impressive man at six feet, four inches tall.

Lawton and the men of his 2nd Infantry Division were assigned the task of landing, moving quickly to secure the area near Daiquiri while General Joseph Wheeler landed his own division, including the Rough Riders. Lawton was then to move swiftly westward to the neighboring village at Siboney to secure that area for additional landings.



The actual landing, like everything that had preceded it, was marred by total confusion. The Navy had only about a quarter of the necessary small boats for landing the thousands of soldiers it transported, there were no suitable landing facilities, and the surf was running high. One small boat transporting soldiers from an all Black infantry unit capsized, two of the men drowning under the weight of their equipment. (Later in the day one of the Rough Riders who was also a champion swimmer, dove to recover the rifles that were lost when the boat capsized.)

About the only positive aspect of the landing at Daiquiri was the absence of the enemy. Despite the presence of an estimated enemy force of 36,000 in and around Santiago, the landing was unopposed. Roosevelt later observed that it was fortunate that the landing was mounted against *"a broken down power, for we should surely have a deuced hard time with any other."*

By mid-afternoon, most of the Rough Riders had landed and moved inland about a quarter of a mile to set up camp on a brush-covered flat, bounded on one side by jungle and on the other by a pool of stagnant water surrounded by a few palm trees. Throughout the day the small boats moved back and forth across the shallow waters to land load after load of American soldiers. Each man carried only his weapon, ammunition, and three days of rations. The entire process consumed the entire afternoon and went well into the night as the Rough Riders bedded down in their temporary camp just south of Daiquiri.



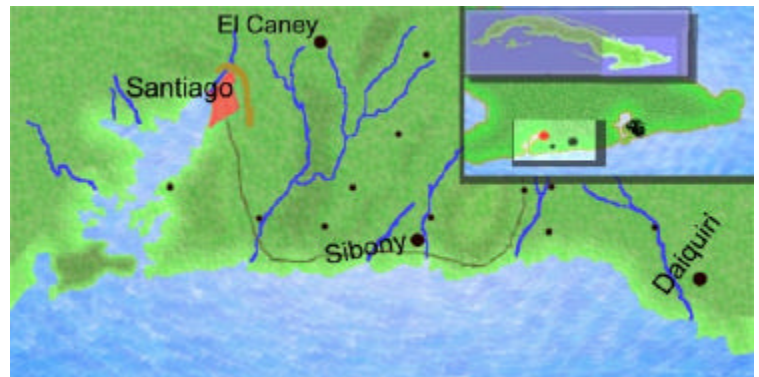
American fleet as they moved past the Marine base at Camp McCalla near Guantanamo Bay. Westward they continued, soon noticing the opening at Santiago Harbor in the distance, still blockaded by a bevy of large, Navy warships. All were anxious for their journey to end and the landing to begin.

Upon General Shafter's arrival near Santiago, Admiral Sampson who commanded the U.S. Naval fleet, met with him to discuss strategy. A veteran of the Civil War, Shafter had earned the Medal of Honor for his heroism at the Battle of Fair Oaks, Virginia. Now, as commander of the Army's Fifth Corps, he had arrived in Cuba with plans to land his troops beyond the harbor and march inland to encircle and then capture Santiago. The Naval commander had other ideas.



Admiral Sampson had the enemy flotilla trapped inside the harbor, but it was a harbor heavily protected by enemy shore batteries and deadly minefields. Unable to enter the harbor to destroy the enemy ships, the US Navy had been reduced to a blockade of the harbor entrance. Sampson wanted Shafter to land his Army and order them to attack these fortifications, thus allowing the Navy to enter the harbor, remove the mines, and then proceed to the city. Shafter saw this as a tactic that would leave the deadliest work to his ground forces, while the Navy swept in to take the city and capture the glory.

On the afternoon of June 20th, both General Shafter and Admiral Sampson took their meeting inland, scaling the high cliffs to the rebel headquarters where both met with Cuban General Calixto Garcia. As a result of this consultation, it was determined to land the first American soldiers 18 miles east of Santiago at a small village called Daiquiri.



The following day the US transport *Leone* transported 530 Cuban rebels under the command of Colonel Gonzalez Clavel to Sigua, where they landed and prepared to move the short distance to Daiquiri. On the early morning of June 22nd, as the American troop ships prepared to unload the first American soldiers, Colonel Clavel and his men attacked and quickly captured the lightly defended Spanish positions in the heights above the village which lay just four miles inland. Again confusion would reign from beginning to end. As American warships just off the coast began shelling the hillsides prior to landing the first troops under General Henry Lawton, Colonel Clavel's own men were subjected to the dangerous friendly fire.



The Fifth Corps' 2nd Infantry Division was first to land on the beaches just south of Daiquiri. The division was under the command of a highly efficient and greatly respected veteran of 22 Civil War Campaigns, numerous actions during the Indian campaigns (including leading the expedition into Mexico to capture Geronimo), and a good friend of Lieutenant Colonel Roosevelt. Nicknamed during his wars in the West as "Man Who Gets Up In

Throughout the day, amid the continued confusion, 16,000 American soldiers and their equipment were loaded aboard the transport ships that would ferry them to the shores of Cuba. The Rough Riders had been, thanks to the ingenuity and initiative of their commanders, among the first to board. Their role in the coming conflict seemed assured. As night fell the *Yucatan* moved out into the channel and dropped anchor. When all was ready, the 37 transport and support vessels would depart.

Roosevelt was already more than disgusted with the total confusion he had witnessed throughout the day. This, and continuing problems ranging from organization to supply and rations for the men of the U.S. Army, would cause him to brazenly criticize the ineptness of the bureaucracy and planning behind the war in the Caribbean. His outspoken assessment, despite his popularity with the American populace, would come back to haunt him and deprive him of his most coveted recognition, the Medal of Honor.

Among the worst of the blunders was the provision for Shafter's Fifth Corps. Most of the men, aside from the Rough Riders, were sent into combat in a tropical climate still wearing their wool uniforms. Rations were even worse. The men were issued meals that included "canned fresh beef", a foul tasting meat dish devoid of salt. Throughout the war it became universally hailed as "Embalmed Beef", a major sore spot among all the troops, most of whom refused to eat it. While combat casualties in the Spanish-American War would be light, the problems with organization, proper uniforms and rations, fresh water, even proper medical supplies, would boost casualties far beyond the limited few deaths to bullets and saber.

As the sun set on June 8th however, the soldiers of the Fifth Corps contented themselves with the fact that at last they were shipping out to Cuba in the first expedition to leave Florida. Again, fate would deal these eager volunteers another devastating blow.

As the sun rose over the Caribbean on the morning of June 9th to reveal the convoy, each ship tightly packed with hundreds...even thousands...of soldiers and their equipment, the expedition was postponed. Out in the deeper waters of the Caribbean a Naval officer had witnessed the presence of a large number of ships in the distance, and mistook them for Spanish vessels. His report raised an immediate concern, and the transport ships in Tampa were ordered to remain anchored while American warships went in search of the Spanish. For four days they searched the tropical waters, finding no sign of the enemy. During the period, soldiers aboard the anchored transports did their best to survive the hot sun and cramped quarters while the ships bobbed at anchor.

As the blunder of the Naval officer became apparent, the battleship *Indiana* arrived at Port Tampa with 7 auxiliary cruisers, to serve as protective escorts for the troop convoy. At last, on the evening of June 13th, the *Yucatan* hoisted anchor and joined the fleet in moving out for Cuba.

The trip from Tampa was a 6-day journey under the constant and alert vigilance of the accompanying warships. Moving southeast, Shafter's Fifth Corps skirted the northeastern Cuban coastline at a distance, rounding the foot at its southern tip, and then moving westward. Simply by judging the direction of their journey, most of the soldiers began to realize they were headed for Santiago. On June 20th they noticed the small picket boats of the



More devastating however, was the news that of the Rough Riders 12 troops, only eight would be joining the expedition. Each troop consisted of 70 men, which meant that of the regiment's 840 members, 560 would finally get their opportunity for action. It also meant that 280 eager, would-be heroes would have to be left behind. *"I saw more than one, both among the officers and privates, burst into tears when he found he could not go,"* Roosevelt wrote. *To the great bulk of them I think it will be a life-long sorrow."*

On the evening of June 7th Colonel Wood and Lieutenant Colonel Roosevelt received their orders. At midnight their eight troops were to meet a train for the 9-mile trip from their camp to Port Tampa where at daybreak they would board their transport ships. The orders were explicit...if they were not aboard their transport at daybreak, the Rough Riders would be left behind. Wood and Roosevelt had no intention of allowing that to happen. Neither realized the challenge meeting that goal would become.

By midnight the Rough Riders, or at least the 8 troops selected for combat duty, were waiting at their appointed boarding site. The First U.S. Cavalry was ready for war...but their trains were not. The trains were, in fact, nowhere to be found. In frustration, Colonel Wood, Lieutenant Colonel Roosevelt, and other of their officers wandered about in search of information. They found none.

At 3:00 A.M. the Rough Riders received orders to march to an entirely different track, which they promptly did. Upon arrival at their assigned destination, they again found confusion but no trains. It was a morning of anxious frustration filled with the worrisome knowledge that, unless the Rough Riders were aboard their sea-going transport at daybreak, they would miss the war.

At 6:00 A.M. a coal train moved down the track, coming from Port Tampa and going in the opposite direction. Roosevelt and Wood halted the train, seized it, and convinced the engineer to transport the Rough Riders to Port Tampa. For nine miles the coal train BACKED down the track, but the improvisational commanders reached port with moments to spare...only to find even more, and perhaps even worse, confusion.

As quickly as the appropriated coal train backed its way into Port Tampa, Wood and Roosevelt jumped to the ground and went in search of information as to which transport their men were to board. Occasionally they managed to find a general officer, but even the highest ranking of the tens of thousands of soldiers scheduled to debark from Port Tampa that morning were lost and confused. The two commanders separated and spent an hour in search of a quartermaster, meeting again when they located him at nearly the same time. Colonel Humphrey pointed out in the channel towards the *Yucatan* and a sickening realization dawned on both Wood and Roosevelt. In the mass confusion that reigned, the *Yucatan* had also been assigned as transport for the Second Regular Infantry and for the 71st New York Volunteer Infantry. The ship would be hard pressed to contain the men of their own regiment, much less all three units.

Colonel Wood seized a stray launch at the docks and directed it to the channel where he boarded the *Yucatan*. Meanwhile Lieutenant Colonel Roosevelt literally ran at his top speed, dodging through the milling thousands of soldiers and their tons of supplies, to reach his regiment. Leaving a guard for their baggage, he double-timed his soldiers back to the dock, arriving even as the *Yucatan* entered the quay, and promptly boarded her. Something of a scene developed later when the Second Infantry and the 71st New York realized that the Rough Riders had beaten them to the transport, but Roosevelt faced them down in a situation he described as their: *"having arrived a little too late, being a shade less ready than we were in the matter of individual initiative."*

For two weeks Roosevelt worked to continue the training of his Rough Riders while Colonel Wood finished the process of procuring the necessary saddles, arms, ammunition, and other material. As the month of May came to a close, soldiers from training posts around the country began to converge on Tampa, Florida. It was from here that Major General William Shafter would transport his Fifth Army Corps to the shores of Cuba. On May 25th the President called for 75,000 additional volunteers to supplement his war-time army, and the first soldiers of the Philippine Expeditionary Force departed San Francisco for Manila. At San Antonio the Rough Riders continued their drilling and exercises, chaffing to be called to service and worried that the war might end before they got their opportunity. Then their orders came through. On May 29th, even as Admiral Sampson's ships blockaded the harbor at Santiago, the Rough Riders headed for the rail yard to begin the 4-day trip to Tampa.

The regiment was broken up into seven sections for the journey east, Colonel Wood departing first with three sections, while Roosevelt's remaining four sections worked well past midnight to load their horses and their gear. In addition to 1,000 men and their mounts, the regiment had 150 pack mules so it was a sizable process simplified only by the fact that the men carried virtually no personal luggage, only the supplies necessary for warfare.

Along the route the trains were required to make periodic stops so that the horses could be tended. During these stops the enlisted men were allowed brief liberties under the supervision of the non-commissioned officers. *"Everywhere the people came out to greet us and cheer us. They brought us flowers; they brought us watermelons and other fruits, and sometimes jugs and pails of milk--all of which we greatly appreciated,"* Roosevelt later recalled. Despite the warm reception and the frequent stops, it was a long and tiring journey that took its toll on the men and their leaders. By the time the train reached the end of the infamous one-track railway that ended in Tampa, the Rough Riders were ready to fight someone... anyone.

"We disembarked in a perfect welter of confusion," Roosevelt recalled. *"Everything connected with both military and railroad matters was in an almost inextricable tangle."*

Some 30,000 American soldiers had been arriving in Tampa in previous days, and the transport and organization of such a sizable force and its equipment had taxed the abilities of both the military leadership and the railroads. No one met Colonel Wood and his Rough Riders when they arrived. There was no indication as to where the unit was to make camp. No one appeared to issue food for the first day of the regiment's tenure in Tampa. Wood, Roosevelt and the other officers purchased food for their men out of their own pockets. When at last they learned where the regiment was to make camp, they had to seize wagons to carry their supplies from the train to their camp.

Wood and Roosevelt did their best to bring order out of the chaos and organize their men and prepare them for war. During the days that followed, the men continued their training in the nearby woods, and conducted at least one mounted drill of the entire regiment. And then their orders arrived...the Rough Riders were going to war.

The notice that Shafter's Fifth Corps, including the Rough Riders, would depart at once for an unknown destination was bitter-sweet news. Sadly, the Cavalry soldiers resigned themselves to the news that their horses would have to be left behind. They would be going to war as a dismounted cavalry unit.

Dude, Hell Roarer, Tough Ike, and Rattlesnake Pete. Among the ranks were at least four former or current ministers and several former members of the famed Texas Rangers.

Originally the First United States Volunteers was allotted 780 men, but as the would-be soldiers gathered, the authorized strength was raised to 1,000. This allowed room for a few volunteers from the East, eager young men from prestigious universities like Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. Many of these were star athletes from their schools, and they mixed with the collage of rough-edged frontiersmen in a chaotic and often volatile environment.

Former Princeton football standout James Robb Church came to the Rough Riders after a variety of careers as an explorer, hunter, cook in a lumber camp, and even service as a doctor on an emigrant ship. Church was appointed as the regiment's assistant surgeon.

Colonel Wood began immediately trying to turn his strange assortment volunteers into a tangible unit, despite frequent misgivings. At one point the commander commented, *"If we don't get them to Cuba quickly to fight the Spaniards there is a great danger they'll be fighting one another."*

Back in the Nation's capitol, Lieutenant Colonel Roosevelt resigned his Navy Department post and spent a week concluding his affairs both with the department, and on behalf of his Rough Riders. Literally hundreds of volunteer units were being marshaled across the United States, and with less than two dozen Army quartermasters to supply them all, the war-time Army was suffering from a series of bad administrative decisions. Among the worst, most soldiers (as well as the Marines being sent to Guantanamo Bay) were outfitted in hot, wool uniforms... a serious error for men expected to fight in a tropical climate.

From his position in Washington, D.C. Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt "pulled the necessary strings" to outfit the Rough Riders in khaki. On Saturday April 30th, Roosevelt sent a message to Brooks Brothers of New York requesting a tailored *"lieutenant-colonel's uniform without yellow on the collar, and with leggings...so I shall have it here by next Saturday (May 7)."* It was one of many Rough Rider expenses for which he would pay out of his own pocket, and Brooks Brothers met the requested deadline.



Even far more important than the uniforms however, was the need for solid weaponry. Many of the volunteers from the west came to the regiment with their own Winchesters which would fire the Government cartridge. Those who preferred these personal weapons were allowed to retain them. Officers were armed with pistols, but the men of the regiment were, at Colonel Wood's insistence and thanks in large part to Roosevelt's *connections*, outfitted with the new Krag-Jorgensen rifles which had the advantage of using smokeless powder.

Finally wrapping up his duties in Washington, Roosevelt departed for San Antonio. On May 15th he arrived, looking impressive in his tailored Brooks Brothers uniform, to join Colonel Wood and meet his Rough Riders.

"They were a splendid set of men, these South westerners--tall and sinewy, with resolute, weather-beaten faces, and eyes that looked a man straight in the face without flinching. In all the world there could be no better material for soldiers than that afforded by these grim hunters of the mountains, these wild rough riders of the plains."

Theodore Roosevelt



The Rough Riders



"Destiny assisted Roosevelt in certain instances, but he himself usually assisted Destiny to assist him."

Author Julian Street

Within days after the call for volunteers for the First U.S. Cavalry was issued, Colonel Wood and Lieutenant Colonel Roosevelt were deluged with eager young men from all over the United States. *"The difficulty in organizing was not in selecting, but in rejecting men."* Various states offered entire, organized local militias, but Wood could only build his regiment from those within the three allotted states and the Indian Territory. Bucky O'Neill, the Mayor of Prescott, AZ and a famous frontier sheriff volunteered and was commissioned Captain of Troop A. Captain Llewellyn of New Mexico was one of the most noted peace-officers of the frontier, already shot four times in battles with outlaws. Lieutenant Ballard was another former peace officer who had gained Western fame for breaking up the infamous Black Jack Gang. Benjamin Franklin Daniels, one ear partially gone (it had been bitten off in a fight) had been the Marshall of Dodge City in its heyday, before joining the Rough Riders along with the deputy marshal of Cripple Creek, Colorado, Sherman Bell.

Yet another of the Rough Riders was a fellow named SMITH who, months later upon discharge requested a letter of recommendation from Roosevelt. *"You see, Colonel, my real name isn't Smith, it's Yancy,"* he said. *"I had to change it, because three or four years ago I had a little trouble with a gentleman, and--er--well, in fact, I had to kill him; and the District Attorney, he had it in for me, and so I just skipped the country; and now, if it ever should be brought up against me, I should like to show your certificate as to my character!"*

Colonel Wood preceded Roosevelt to San Antonio to begin assembling the men of the regiment while the latter finished up his duties in the Capitol before resigning as Under Secretary of the Navy. When Wood arrived, most of his soldiers from Arizona, New Mexico and Oklahoma were there and waiting to begin training. Within days, additional men arrived from the Indian Territories. The new recruits included Cherokee Bill, Happy Jack of Arizona, Smoky Moore, The

Roosevelt had once served in the New York State Assembly, even run unsuccessfully for mayor of New York City. Now he turned to one of his old friends, Colonel (now General) Francis Greene to seek commissions for both himself and Dr. Wood in the 71st New York. Again, there were no available slots.

Events were not favoring the two would-be leaders in America's first war on foreign shores. Then, unexpectedly, Congress authorized the raising of three cavalry regiments from among the cowboys, miners, and other woodsmen of the frontier West. Secretary Alger offered Theodore Roosevelt command of one of the regiments, if he wanted it.

To be sure, Roosevelt wanted to command a combat regiment and experience the "*supreme triumphs of war*". At the same time, Roosevelt realized his lack of military experience might delay the training of his regiment hence also delaying their deployment to Cuba. With the quick defeat of the Spanish fleet at Manila Bay, Roosevelt feared the war with Spain might end before he and his men could reach sufficient level of training to deploy, and quickly made an unusual decision. He suggested that Dr. Wood be commissioned Colonel in charge of the regiment, and that he would serve as a Lieutenant Colonel under his friend. The plan was promptly approved, and Colonel Leonard Wood was assigned commander of the First U.S. Volunteer Cavalry, mustering near San Antonio, Texas.

The men of the regiment were assembled from New Mexico, Arizona, Oklahoma, and the Indian Territory. They were an unusual lot, lawmen, outlaws, preachers, craggy cowboys, hardened miners, former Indian fighters, scouts, and Native Americans. Most were as independent, strong willed, and determined to create their own destiny as was their Executive Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt.

To the initial chagrin of the regiment's members and commanders, as training began the public assessed the nature of its members and coined a nickname for the First United States Volunteer Cavalry. "*At first we fought against the use of the term,*" Roosevelt wrote, "*When finally the Generals of Division and Brigade began to write in formal communications about our regiment....we adopted the term ourselves.*" Henceforth and for history, the First United States Volunteer Cavalry became known as:

RAISING A VOLUNTEER ARMY

The U.S. Army, under-manned and ill-prepared for war, began mobilization for the coming conflict a week before President McKinley's April 23 call for volunteers. Within days recruiting offices were swamped with patriotic young men, eager to serve in the anticipated conflict. Training began almost immediately, at several posts and stations around the United States.

Among the ranks of the eager volunteers was the 40-year-old Under Secretary of the Navy, Theodore Roosevelt. This was a war he had prepared for in the previous year and, thanks to his aggressive efforts on behalf of the Navy, America's sailors were far better equipped and prepared for war than the Army. Now Roosevelt wanted to insure that his own personal role on the fields of combat would materialize. The previous December he had made his feelings about armed conflict abundantly clear in his comments to the Naval War College that, *"No triumph of peace is quite so great as the supreme triumphs of war."* Now that war had finally come, he was determined not to sit it out behind a desk in Washington, D.C.



Among Roosevelt's circle of friends in the Capitol was an Army surgeon who frequently visited and, while in Washington, took time for long walks in the countryside with the Under Secretary. Dr. Leonard Wood had served in the Indian Campaigns under General Nelson Miles. On April 8, just weeks before the mobilization of the Army, Dr. Wood was issued the Medal of Honor for personal heroism during the Apache Campaign in Arizona Territory in the summer of 1886. Long before his award was issued, Roosevelt and Wood had talked often and passionately about events in Cuba and the prospect of war. *"We both felt very strongly that such a war would be as righteous as it would be advantageous to the honor and the interests of the nation,"* Roosevelt later wrote. *"After the blowing up of the Maine, we felt that it was inevitable. We then at once began to try and see that we had our share in it."*

Roosevelt's boss at the Navy Department, Secretary Long, was adamant in his refusal of his Under Secretary's request for a combat assignment. President McKinley also fervently resisted Roosevelt's wishes. Theodore Roosevelt however, would not be denied. In the end, both gave grudging assent to his persistence. Of no little consequence in their final decision was the fact that Roosevelt's close friend Dr. Wood was the medical advisor to both the President and to Secretary of War Russell Alger.

Dr. Wood hoped to enter the war with a commission from his native State of Massachusetts. Despite his combat experience in the West, even in spite of his recently received Medal of Honor, with ten volunteers for each available slot, the 38-year old physician didn't make the final cut.

inform the Governor Juan Marina of the situation. Commander Glass requested that the Spanish governor himself then come aboard to formalize the surrender.

Despite the situation and caught totally unawares of events elsewhere in the world, Governor Marina balked. The following day Commander Glass sent Navy Lieutenant William Braunersreuther into Piti to deliver an ultimatum to the Spanish governor, backing his demand for surrender by preparing a landing party of 30 of the *Charleston's* Marine guards. Faced with this final threat from the American commander, Governor Mariana surrendered to Lieutenant Braunersreuther with his men. That afternoon the United States Flag was raised at the abandoned Fort Santa Cruz as the troop ships sailed into the harbor, their bands playing the National Anthem. Amid the roar of naval guns, this time in salute, Commander Glass claimed the Island of Guam for the United States...the first American possession in the Pacific. (Not until the following August 12th would the Hawaiian Islands become possessions of the United States.) The Island of Guam was taken without casualty, on either side.

Mission accomplished, Glass then quickly set his convoy on course for Manila. In the years to follow, Guam would become a major military installation for the United States. In World War II the price for control of the island would be far more expensive in American lives. More than a century later, however, the Stars and Stripes still fly over the island of Guam.

The Philippine Expeditionary Force arrived at Cavite ten days later, but would see little action against the Spanish. In the Pacific, the Spanish-American War was all but over. Half a world away, however, some of the bitterest fighting remained... and unlike the tropical island of Guam, Cuba's freedom from Spain would come at a high price.

Indeed Guam mattered to Spain, the country that had claimed the island since 1668. How little importance the island held for Spain however, was quickly apparent by the size of the military presence on the island...some sixty Spanish marines under the leadership of Lieutenant Guitterez.

To be sure, though the US President and few American citizens had ever heard of Guam, US Naval planners had noted its position in the Pacific for years. The southernmost of the Mariana Islands, situated neatly between the Hawaiian and Philippine Islands some 5,000 miles west of San Francisco and 1,600 miles east of Manila Bay, the tropical island was an excellent re-coaling point for a burgeoning navy. With this in mind, on June 20th Commander Henry Glass of the *USS Charleston* (C-2) turned his ship from its normal duties as escort for the convoy of the Philippine Expeditionary Force and cruised to meet the enemy at Guam.

The strategic position of Guam in the Pacific is limited only by the nature of the land itself. The northern half of the island is almost entirely a plateau of coral formation, while the southern half is hilly and of volcanic origin. Inhabited primarily by the native Chamorro, little of the industrialized world had made its way to the island late in the 19th century. The only decent anchorage for sea-going vessels lay on the western coast in the wide Apra Harbor. It was into the Apra Harbor that Commander Glass steamed his mighty warship on June 20th.

While the troop ships remained in the open ocean, Commander Glass ordered his sailors and Marines to battle stations. As the *Charleston* entered enemy territory, the commander sighted the Spanish fort of Santa Cruz. Quickly he ordered his guns into action, firing a salvo of 12 heavy rounds, unaware that the Spanish fort had been abandoned for years. When there was no return fire, the guns of the *Charleston* fell silent, as the warship steamed menacingly into the harbor towards the city of Piti.



As the Americans neared the city, Commander Glass was surprised at the Spanish response. A small boat was slowing making its way towards the *Charleston* containing one officer and three of his men. When the four enemy had been taken aboard, Lieutenant Guitterez began apologizing in Spanish. Commander Glass couldn't believe his ears as the enemy officer's words were translated.

"We weren't aware your ship was coming to Guam," the nervous officer explained with an embarrassed look on his face. "That is why we weren't prepared to return your 12-gun salute when you entered the harbor." It was incongruous... so remote was the tropical island and of so little importance to Spain, that the garrison at Guam had not yet even learned that Spain and the United States were at war.

Then it was Lieutenant Guitterez's turn to express surprise, as Commander Glass informed him that the broadside issuing from the *USS Charleston* had NOT been a SALUTE...but a hostile act commenced in the war between the two nations. "You and your men," Commander Glass informed the stunned Spanish officer, "are now prisoners of war."

It was one of those rare anomalies of warfare, the conquest of Guam, a new chapter in that *Splendid Little War* that made it so unique. When the reality of the situation had been made clear to Lieutenant Guitterez, he and his fellow POWs were paroled and told to return to the Island and

While Richmond Hobson and his volunteers were making their valiant attempt to block the harbor at Santiago by sinking the *Merrimac*, and while US Marines were engaging the enemy on the ground at Guantanamo Bay and Cuzco Well, the first American soldiers of the United States Army were on their way to the Philippine Islands. The soldiers of the Eighth Army corps, under the command of Thomas McArthur Anderson, would require a five week voyage before arriving at Cavite in the Philippine Islands on July 1st. It was a voyage to the far side of the planet, a world away from the action in Cuba.

GUAM

A CONQUEST WITHOUT CONFLICT

The Philippine Expeditionary Force

The six troop transports carrying the first American combat soldiers to foreign shores left San Francisco on May 25th, the same day that President McKinley called for an additional 75,000 volunteers to bolster his war-time army. The slow moving convoy was well into the Pacific two weeks later when the Marines landed at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba on June 10th.

Past the Hawaiian Islands and westward toward the Philippine Islands, the convoy continued throughout the month of June.

By the 19th of June, more than half the journey had been completed, and the US Soldiers were into an open expanse of ocean just north of the equator, an area where there was little land and few inhabitants. In fact, about the only land west of Hawaii before reaching the Archipelago was the small island of Guam.

While President McKinley unabashedly admitted he couldn't find the Philippine Islands on a map "within 2,000 miles", Guam was even harder to find. The small island, almost alone in the vast western reaches of the Pacific Ocean, is only 30 miles long and 4-8 miles wide. With a total land mass of 212 square miles, it is one fifth the size of Rhode Island, our smallest state. In June of 1898 Guam didn't belong to the United States anyway, so who was to care.



At home Senator Henry Cabot Lodge wrote of the Marine triumph at Cuzco, "*The Marines had done their work most admirably and fought with the steadiness and marksmanship of experienced brush fighters.*" For his heroism at Cuzco, Sergeant John Quick was awarded the Medal of Honor, as was the young Marine Private John Fitzgerald. Of the 39 Medals of Honor yet to be earned in the *Splendid Little War*, only one more would go to a Marine. Lieutenant Colonel Harrington's First Marine Battalion had done their job so well, and fought so fiercely, they gave the enemy cause to thereafter avoid them. Not only had their battle at Cuzco well destroyed the enemy's water supply, it had robbed them of their will to fight.

While Harrington returned his valiant Marine force, now grown to nearly half of the full 647-man battalion, to Camp McCalla, Spanish survivors straggled back to the city of Guantanamo to advise General Pareja they'd been attacked by 10,000 Americans. The disturbing news caused the enemy general to halt all attacks at Camp McCalla. With the exception of those Marines stationed aboard Navy vessels, the Spanish-American war was a brief but bitter 4-day affair that rewrote Marine Corps History.

from Company C to cut off any Spanish withdrawal. A second contingent under First Lieutenant J. E. Mahoney was also dispatched to reinforce Captain Elliott's assault force.

Meanwhile, Captain Elliott requested heavy fire support from the port guns of the *U.S.S. Dolphin*, still pacing the Marines just off the Cuban beaches. On the high ridge, the leathernecks whooped with glee as one of the warship's big shells slammed into a blockhouse below, sending frantic Spanish soldiers fleeing in all directions. The accurate long-range fire of the Marines, combined with the heavy shells from the *Dolphin*, had a devastating effect on the enemy. Quickly the battle began turning into a rout. Amid the cheers of the Marines however, disaster loomed.

A short distance away Lieutenant Magill's 50-man force was furiously engaging the retreating Dons, as the shells from the *Dolphin* mopped up the action. Suddenly, as the shells fell on the Spanish, they also began raining deadly missiles on Magill's leathernecks. From the heights, Captain Elliott's Marines were about to helplessly witness the annihilation of their comrades...to errant friendly fire.

Sergeant John Quick grabbed his blue polka-dot bandanna and quickly fastened it to a stick. From the high hill he could see the *Dolphin* in the distance, and surely in his exposed position they could see him. So too, could the Dons.

"I watched his face, and it was grave and severe as a man writing in his library" Crane wrote in his own account of what happened next. "I saw Quick betray only one sign of emotion. As he swung the clumsy flag to and fro, an end of it caught on a cactus pillar. He looked annoyed."

The only way to effectively signal the American ship was to insure that they could see him. As the enemy rounds whistled through the air all around him, he bent to his task. "He spelled out his message with extreme care amid the whistling snarl of Spanish bullets all round him," Crane continued. "His back turned toward the enemy in apparent contempt for whatever they would do. He was magnificent."



Sergeant Quick's use of the flag to advise the *Dolphin* via Morse Code, resulted in the immediate end to the deadly rain of Naval gunfire. Lieutenant Magill and his 50 Marines were spared death by the quick thinking and intrepid action of a lone, leatherneck sergeant.

Within an hour it was all over, the Spanish soldiers who survived the battle at Cuzco pulling back into the jungle and retreating. Elements of Captain Elliott's strike force gave pursuit, while others entered Cuzco. Shortly after three in the afternoon they destroyed the well.

Casualties for the Marines had been light, one wounded and twenty heat casualties. Two of the Cuban insurgents were killed and two others wounded. Losses for the Spanish were much higher, though hard to estimate. Eighteen enemy soldiers were captured, perhaps as many as sixty killed, and as many as one-hundred fifty wounded. Thirty enemy Mausers were captured as well.

Half-way to their destination, Company C's commander Captain George Elliott assumed command of the force from the ailing Captain Spicer. In the distance the *Dolphin* cruised just off shore, and a stretcher party was mounted to moved down to the beach with the casualties of the heat and jungle conditions. (As yet there had been no contact with the enemy, hence no casualties to wounds received in combat.) Then the assault force continued its march to Cuzco.

A little over two miles from their destination, Elliott commanded First Lieutenant L.C. Lucas to take his platoon along with half of the Cuban rebels, and flank the advancing men of the main assault force. Lucas' men moved out with the intention of surprising any enemy pickets between the assault force and Cuzco, and cutting them off from the fortifications about to come under attack. Hot, sweaty, tired, and moving forward under sheer guts and determination, sound discipline began to falter as the leathernecks forsook the painstaking, slow movement through the jungle. As they stumbled ever forward, the enemy outposts quickly noted their presence and withdrew to the protections at Cuzco. By the time Captain Elliott's main assault force reached its destination, the element of surprise was gone and the Spanish garrison was armed and awaiting the Americans arrival.

Six companies of riflemen of the Sixth Barcelona Regiment manned the gun ports at Cuzco as the Marines arrived. Elliott's quick recon revealed a large, horseshoe-shaped hill nearly a thousand yards from the enemy. The high ground dominated the landscape and provided the Marines with a tactical advantage should they be able to reach it. Elliott gave the command and his Marines began the frantic rush to its crest. Enemy gunfire erupted



as the weary leathernecks ignored their exhaustion and the heat to force their bodies beyond reason. Even at that great distance, the heavy Mausers of the enemy were unable to unleash a lethal torrent of fire. Their rounds *"sang in the air until one thought that a good hand with a lacrosse stick could have bagged many,"* wrote Stephen Crane.

Marine Private Frank Keeler was less flowery but more succinct when he penned his observations in his diary. *"Up the hill we charged in the face of fire, but we drove them back in disarray."*

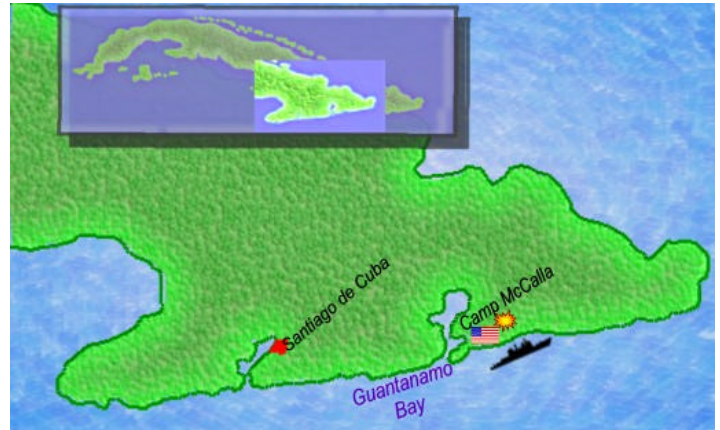
As the leathernecks scrambled for the heights, they paused only long enough to return fire. First Lieutenant Neville began to shout orders across the hilltop as he rallied his men. The boom of his voice became one of the most memorable events of the day, leading to his Marines bequeathing him a nickname. It was a moniker he would carry with him in the years to follow. From his actions 16 years later in Mexico that earned him the Medal of Honor, to his years as Commandant of the Marine Corps, he would be facetiously but affectionately remembered as "Whispering Buck".

The sounds of the battle at Cuzco could be heard all the way back to Camp McCalla, and Lieutenant Colonel Harrington quickly dispatched Second Lieutenant Louis Magill and 50 men

Into the evening Lieutenant Colonel Harrington laid out his plans, briefing his officers and NCOs while conferring further with the Cuban colonel. He had learned from the Cubans that the Spanish soldiers in the area got their own drinking water from a well at Cuzco, about three miles to the east of Camp McCalla. On the following morning Harrington would dispatch a contingent of his Marines, prepared for war in the jungles, to defeat the Spanish defenses at Cuzco and destroy their well. It was at once, a small measure of revenge and a solid tactical effort that would make war in the jungle much more difficult for the enemy.

The Cuzco Well

At dawn on Tuesday, June 14th, the Marines of Companies C and D moved out of Camp McCalla towards Cuzco. The 150-man assault force was reinforced by 50 Cuban rebels and, as they began their trek eastward, the *U.S.S. Dolphin* (PG-24) began a slow steam parallel the men along the coast line. Under the command of Captain W.F. Spicer, the 3-mile trek was doubled as the Marines slowly wound their way along the jungle trails and over the hills.



Stephen Crane accompanied the men on their mission, watching events unfold around him with a reporter's eye and later transcribing them with the same colorful language that had made his second novel The Red Badge of Courage such powerful reading.

"The Marines made their strong faces businesslike and soldierly," he reported. "Contrary to the Cubans, the bronze faces of the Americans were not stolid at all. One could note the prevalence of a curious expression--something dreamy, the symbol of minds striving to tear aside the screen of the future and perhaps expose the ambush of death. It was not fear in the least. It was simply a moment in the lives of men who have staked themselves and come to wonder which wins--red or black."

The men of the First Marine Battalion were making history which, when subsequently reported in the flowery language of Crane and Melville, would make the exploits of these leathernecks the precursor of the Marine Corps of the future. Their amphibious assault, the first combat troops in hostile territory, and now an offensive against the enemy, would provide heroes for the reading public at home and inspirations to thousands of future Marines on foreign shores.

Three days of sleepless nights and constant danger began taking its toll on the Americans, and the hot sun combined with the arduous trek began to quickly sap any remaining strength. Nearly half-way to Cuzco, these factors began to take its toll on the force. Several Marines began to suffer heat stroke. Faces flushed, minds becoming numbed and disoriented, and cramps setting in, several had reached the limit of their endurance. Among those to fall victim was the commander, Captain Spicer.

Daylight on the morning of Sunday, June 12th would afford the weary Marines no day of rest. The near disaster of warfare the previous night had given Lieutenant Colonel Harrington clear indication that his defensive positions needed to be improved, reinforced, and some even relocated. Beneath the hot, tropical sun the Marines stripped to underwear to begin the arduous task of chopping away jungle growth around their stations, digging earthen shelters, and otherwise preparing for subsequent enemy assaults.

As the Marines bent to their tasks, the Spanish snipers hidden in the jungle around Guantanamo Bay had everything going their way. In the early morning a swift and brutal attack was launched against First Lieutenant Neville's Company D. In minutes Sergeant Charles Smith was killed and three Marines were wounded. As quickly as it started, the firefight ended, and the enemy pulled back into the jungle before an effective resistance could be mounted. For three more days the *Dons* would harass the Americans with impunity in these hit-and-run assaults. The Marine battalion's executive officer, Major Henry Clay Cochrane, later referred to the events as the battalion's "*100 hours of fighting*".

Sunday night the enemy came again, the sharp bark of their Mausers shattering the stillness of the warm Caribbean breezes. For Marines who'd had little or no sleep in more than 48 hours, and who had toiled all day in the sweltering heat of the sun amid the prospect of sudden and real death, it was a night of increased terror. Stephen Crane wrote that it was a night that "*strained (the Marines') courage so near the panic point.*" During the fighting of the night, Sergeant Major Good was killed and additional Marines wounded. Lieutenant Colonel Huntington had endured the challenges of leadership well, he was a man of strong character. But his age could not weather the nights without sleep, or the strength-draining heat of the sun during the day. His health and his psyche took a terrible beating. By the time his battalion's third night at Guantanamo Bay ended with the rising sun of another hot tropical day, he was *fed up* with the way his war was going.

Huntington's frustration came, not so much from the days and nights of fighting as much as from the manner of combat. The Spanish soldiers would hide in the jungle, creep into places of concealment to snipe at and kill or wound unsuspecting Marines, and then quickly fade back into the foliage. It was almost like fighting ghosts, only these ghosts were systematically wounding or killing young American Marines with relative impunity. About the only positive thing to happen for him in four days came on Monday morning, when more than 50 Cuban soldiers (insurgents) arrived with their leader, a Cuban Colonel.

During the day, the weary Marine Battalion Commander had ample opportunity to visit with these newly arrived Cuban soldiers, men who knew the terrain well and had a good grasp of the enemy force encamped in and around Guantanamo Bay. Despite the known fact that General Blanco had at least 80,000 soldiers throughout Cuba, and in spite of the report earlier from a 40-man Marine recon unit that as many as 7,000 enemy occupied the hills and jungles in the extreme southeast part of the island, the Cuban rebels estimated that there were only 500 to 800 troops in the immediate area.

As the two military commanders watched the Marines suffering in the sweltering sun, pausing occasionally to sip the somewhat sepid water that filled their canteens, the Cuban colonel reminded Lieutenant Colonel Harrington that maintaining a fresh supply of water was a challenge for all military men on the island, Americans, Cuban freedom fighters, and even the Spanish. The turn of the conversation, combined with the new information about enemy strength in the area, slowly lead to a bold and daring plan to break the stalemate.

The patrols fought their way through the tropical foliage, quickly learning the nuances of jungle warfare. Before Elliot's leathernecks could locate the enemy, the enemy found them. The *Dons* had used the foliage to their advantage, hiding their presence until the patrol was almost upon them, then springing their ambush. Fortunately the same heavy jungle that provided camouflage, also made accurate fire difficult, and none of Elliot's Marines were seriously wounded.



Throughout the jungles the dark tropical night was interrupted by flashing lights and signal fires as the *Dons* crept ever closer to the vastly outnumbered Marines at Guantanamo Bay. Save for the sound of the breeze whispering among the large palm leaves, all was quiet. And then the stillness was shattered by the sharp crack of a Spanish Mauser, followed by another...and then a cacophony of death reaching out to claim the lives of Colonel Huntington's leathernecks.

The inky darkness became an inferno of exploding shells from McCalla's ships in the bay, the shouted commands of Marine officers and noncoms, and the chaotic but valiant efforts of the young Marines to man their positions. Private Frank Keeler later wrote,

"There was a sharp 'bang', and a bullet came whistling by my head. the bullet cut the leaves from a bush just in front of me. I ran into the post, and there we could see big palm leaves dodging from bush to bush. The crafty *Dons* had strapped the big leaves in front of them to deceive us."

In the darkness the Battalion's assistant surgeon John Blair Gibbs was killed. Before morning dawned he would be joined in death by a young Marine private, and several other Marines would be wounded. But for their training, the leadership of veteran officers and noncoms like Huntington, and the courage of the young Americans to stay their posts despite the nightmare, the small force would have been overwhelmed. Daylight finally dawned to find the Marines victorious, but exhausted from continuous battle and strained by lack of sleep.

As afternoon gave way to evening, outposts were established to protect the camp. It was an inevitability that the enemy that had been a *no-show* for the landing, would not long ignore the American presence on the island, and Huntington wanted his leathernecks well prepared. Commander McCalla promised the commander of the First Marine Battalion that, when that time came, his Marines could count on the support of Naval gunfire from his fleet. McCalla further demonstrated his respect for Huntington by telling him, *"If you're killed, I'll come and get your dead body."*

The Marines had 24 hours of unmolested opportunity to establish their presence on foreign shores, and then the enemy came. On June 11th, Company D was attacked by a Spanish force. Under the leadership of their company commander, Lieutenant Wendell C. Neville (who's heroism sixteen years later at Vera Cruz, Mexico would earn him the Medal of Honor), the leathernecks did their best to repulse the initial probe. The first shots attracted the attention of all the Marines, as well as the bevy of reporters who had followed them into Guantanamo Bay to write stories for the newspapers back home. One of them wrote, *"Up from the sea came a line of naked men, grabbing their carbines and falling into place as Lieutenant Colonel R. W. Huntington issued his orders getting a formation in a semicircle behind the brow of the hill, and waiting to see how much force would develop against them."* The untested leathernecks of the First Marine Battalion responded to their training. Most had spent the day stripped to underwear in the tropical heat and, with the first sounds of gunfire, rallied to meet the enemy. The same correspondent continued, *"There was no fun in this for naked men, but they held their places and charged with the others."*



Much of the history of the *Splendid Little War* was preserved for future generations because of the competition among newspapers and magazines back in the United States for readers. Throughout the war, seldom did a force move without a large contingent of correspondents. Indeed, as Naval ships moved from place to place, even while landing troops, movements were often hampered by the criss-crossing of smaller boats carrying the eager reporters. The media presence included some of the best-known names in American publishing, including the combat art of famed western artist Frederick Remington. Joining the Marines at Guantanamo Bay was the now famous young author of The Red Badge of Courage, Stephen Crane. Crane was reporting for *McClure's Magazine* while nearby, Moby Dick author Herman Melville also was observing the leatherneck's operation and filing dispatches for the news at home.

That first battle was brief, a quick hit-and-run of the American defenses. The prompt response by the Marines and shelling from the *Marblehead* soon caused the *Dons*, as the Spanish were called, to pull back. In the quiet that followed, the Marines assessed their casualties and found two, Privates William Dumphrey and James McColgan of Company D. Huntington quickly ordered Captain George Elliot and Company C to pursue and find the enemy. Meanwhile, Huntington himself led another patrol along with Captain Charles McCawley and Sergeant Major Henry Good.

Guantanamo Bay

The First Marine Battalion boarded the *Panther* on June 7th for the 3-day voyage to Guantanamo Bay. While they were en-route, Commander Bowman McCalla took three Navy warships into the bay on a reconnaissance mission. On the morning of June 10th McCalla assembled a force of 40 Marines from the *U.S.S. Oregon* and the *U.S.S. Marblehead* and sent them ashore to scout the area. This advance reconnaissance element made contact with local Cuban freedom fighters, scouted the proposed base area, and gathered important intelligence information. Upon returning they reported that Spanish General Felix Pareja had 7,000 troops inland, and all around Guantanamo Bay.



As the morning turned into afternoon, the *Panther* arrived with its 623 Marines. Even with the knowledge that they would be outnumbered 10 to 1, Lieutenant Colonel Huntington's leathernecks fixed bayonets and waded into the waters to make their amphibious landing. As they landed they faced their first foe on these foreign shores--but it was not the Spanish. It was the skipper of their transport ship, Commander Reiter.

As the Marines began establishing positions above the bay, their commander noted their lack of supplies. Returning to the beach he found his Marines performing stevedore duties, their landing slowing as they were required to unload their own cargo while the crew of the *Panther* simply watched in amusement. When he confronted Commander Reiter, the skipper of the *Panther* once again showed his complete disdain for the men of the Marine corps. To further infuriate Lieutenant Colonel Huntington, Reiter informed him that he had chosen to keep most of the small-arms ammunition of the First Marine Battalion aboard his ship to provide ballast.

Huntington did his best to maintain his military bearing, and immediately headed for the *Marblehead* to appeal his case to Commander McCalla. A month earlier McCalla had watched as Marines from the *Marblehead* and *Nashville* had entered Cienfuegos Harbor in small boats, braving rough seas, mines and point-blank enemy fire to cover the cable cutting mission. Having seen these young Marines in action, he had gained an appreciation for their courage and ability to fight.

McCalla went directly to Commander Reiter with orders that left no questions. "Sir," he bellowed to the skipper of the *Panther*, "*break out immediately and land with the crew of the Panther, 50,000 rounds of 6-mm ammunition. In the future, do not require Colonel Huntington to break out or land his stores with members of his command. Use your own officers and men for this purpose, and supply the Commanding Officer of Marines promptly with anything he may desire.*"

The inter-service rivalry firmly settled by Commander McCalla, Lieutenant Colonel Huntington, his officers and 623 enlisted Marines directed all their efforts to securing their positions. The unopposed landing went well and by late afternoon the leathernecks had set up their camp. Color Sergeant Richard Silvery from C Company was the first to raise the American flag over Cuba during the war, and Huntington displayed his own respect for the commander of the *Marblehead* by naming what would be the first permanent American base on foreign shores, *Camp McCalla*.

interest in their progress, insuring that Huntington's Marines were well supplied for battle. The battalion's 5 rifle companies were issued the new Lee Navy rifles, and the artillery company was supplemented with four 3-inch rapid fire guns.

During the Civil War, Huntington had been a young lieutenant during the battle of Bull Run, where the savage fighting and heavy casualties taught him the importance of training. Thirty-five years later, as a Lieutenant Colonel, the wizened old warrior was determined that his young Marines would be well prepared for battle. Under his leadership they trained constantly. (With 35 years of service and his impeccable military record, had he been in any other branch of service he would have been a general or admiral by now. But promotions were excruciatingly slow in the Corps, military men admired for their unit discipline, but for the most part considered *glorified guards* for the Navy's ships and posts. Huntington's First Marine Battalion was about to change all that, and create a new tradition for the Corps.)

The prevailing lack of respect for the Marines is quickly evident in the response to their presence on the *U.S.S. Panther*, en-route from New York to Key West, Florida. The *Panther* (AD-6) had been re-christened from a former merchantman vessel to serve as transport for the First Marine Battalion. The ship's skipper, Commander George C. Reiter saw the 623 Marines and their officers as cargo and a sometimes inconvenience. When the *Panther* arrived in Florida in May, Commander Reiter sought opportunity to empty his "cargo" and requested permission to order the Marines ashore until they received further orders. When the commodore at Key West granted his request, Reiter quickly dumped the Marines into the swamps of the Florida Keys...without their supplies.

What might have angered or frustrated lesser men, Lieutenant Colonel Huntington turned into a positive. As quickly as the Marines were dumped in the swamps on May 24th, he used their situation to continue training for the war that would come in the similar jungles and swamps of Cuba. That impromptu *training* would occupy the Marines for two weeks.

Even as the Marines learned to survive the swamps, Admiral Sampson was locating the Spanish flotilla in Santiago de Cuba, engaging in his ill-fated attempt to choke the harbor entrance with the *Merrimac*, and then building a Naval blockade outside that harbor's entrance. For the moment the Naval action was stalemated, and there was a concern that Admiral Cervera might be able to keep his ships protected in Santiago Harbor for weeks, perhaps even months. In the meantime, Sampson's war ships would have to continue their blockade of the harbor, as well as their patrols around the Caribbean island. The rotation of his vessels to Key West to re-coal was becoming both a nuisance and a tactical bombshell.

Forty miles to the east of Santiago Harbor was Guantanamo Bay, an excellent port from which to undertake the re-coaling of the American warships. Admiral Sampson was ordered to "*take possession of Guantanamo and occupy (it) as a coaling station.*" Upon receiving these orders, Sampson responded with a cable to both Key West and Washington, D.C. that simply said:



"SEND COLONEL HUNTINGTON'S MARINES!"

WAR IN THE JUNGLE

While the U.S. Navy had prospered in the period of relative peace following the Civil War, the Army and Marine Corps had not fared as well. The Army consisted of only 25,706 enlisted soldiers under the leadership of 2,116 officers. Military intelligence estimated that any ground force required to end the Spanish rule in Cuba would face more than 80,000 men under General Blanco. Two days before the United States declared war on April 25th, President McKinley issued a call for 125,000 volunteers to train and prepare for war in the Antilles.



The call to service was met with great exuberance. Whipped into a patriotic fervor by the stories of the yellow journalists, it seemed everyone from aged Civil War veterans to the youngest of America's sons wanted to go help the Cubans earn their independence. From among these volunteers eager to fight was selected a special unit. On May 15th former Under Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt arrived in San Antonio, Texas. He had resigned his position and received an Army commission as a Lieutenant Colonel to train and prepare the unit that was officially designated the First U.S. Volunteer Cavalry, but would forever be called "The Rough Riders".

Ten days into the Rough Riders two-week training program at San Antonio, the first Army expedition left San Francisco for duty in the Philippine Islands. That same day, May 25th, President McKinley issued the call for an additional 75,000 volunteers.



At the outbreak of war, the Marine Corps was perhaps even more unprepared to wage a ground war. The Corps could muster only 2,900 men, and this force was already spread thin to man 14 shore stations from coast to coast, and to serve 40 U.S. Navy ships. Most of the Marine Corps cadre of officers were graduates of the Naval academy, but these leaders numbered only 77 men, several of whom were Civil War veterans too old for field assignments.

One of these aging Civil War commanders was Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Huntington. At the outbreak of war, Colonel Commandant Charles Haywood, himself a Civil War veteran, ordered every available Marine to report for duty at New York's Brooklyn Navy Yard. Posts and receiving ships were pared to the minimum, and within days Lieutenant Colonel Huntington had mustered 23 officers and 623 enlisted men. They were designated the 1st Marine Battalion, and began training immediately for combat in Cuba. Colonel Commandant Haywood took a personal

roll of honor his name is listed as Richmond H. Hilton....his full name however...Richmond Hobson Hilton.

In his post-war years, Hobson himself chose to leave his Naval career. In 1904 he was a Presidential elector from his home state of Alabama. From 1907 to 1915 Hobson served his state's 6th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives.

One year before Hobson's namesake received the Medal of Honor, our Nation's highest award underwent several major changes. Among these was a new provision that no longer restricted award of the Medal to enlisted sailors and Marines. In future wars, heroes like Richmond Hobson would be recognized for their courage, regardless of their rank.

On April 29, 1933 Richmond Hobson was invited to the White House. The United States Congress had taken special action to add Hobson's name to the Roll of Honor along with his those of his valiant sailors. On that day, by that special act of Congress, President Franklin D. Roosevelt presented Richmond Hobson the Medal of Honor for his heroism 35 years earlier.



Elsewhere the occasion was surely a moment of unique pride for Richmond Hobson Hilton, the Spanish-American war hero's namesake. With that award, Hilton became the only known person in history, named for a Medal of Honor recipient, to have also received it himself.



Richmond Hobson and his men came home to be hailed as heroes. On November 2, 1899, all seven of the sailors who had volunteered for the *Merrimac* mission were awarded Medals of Honor. As a Naval officer, Hobson himself was ineligible for his Nation's highest recognition of uncommon valor.

(Prior to 1917, the Navy Medal of Honor was reserved for presentation ONLY to ENLISTED sailors and Marines.)



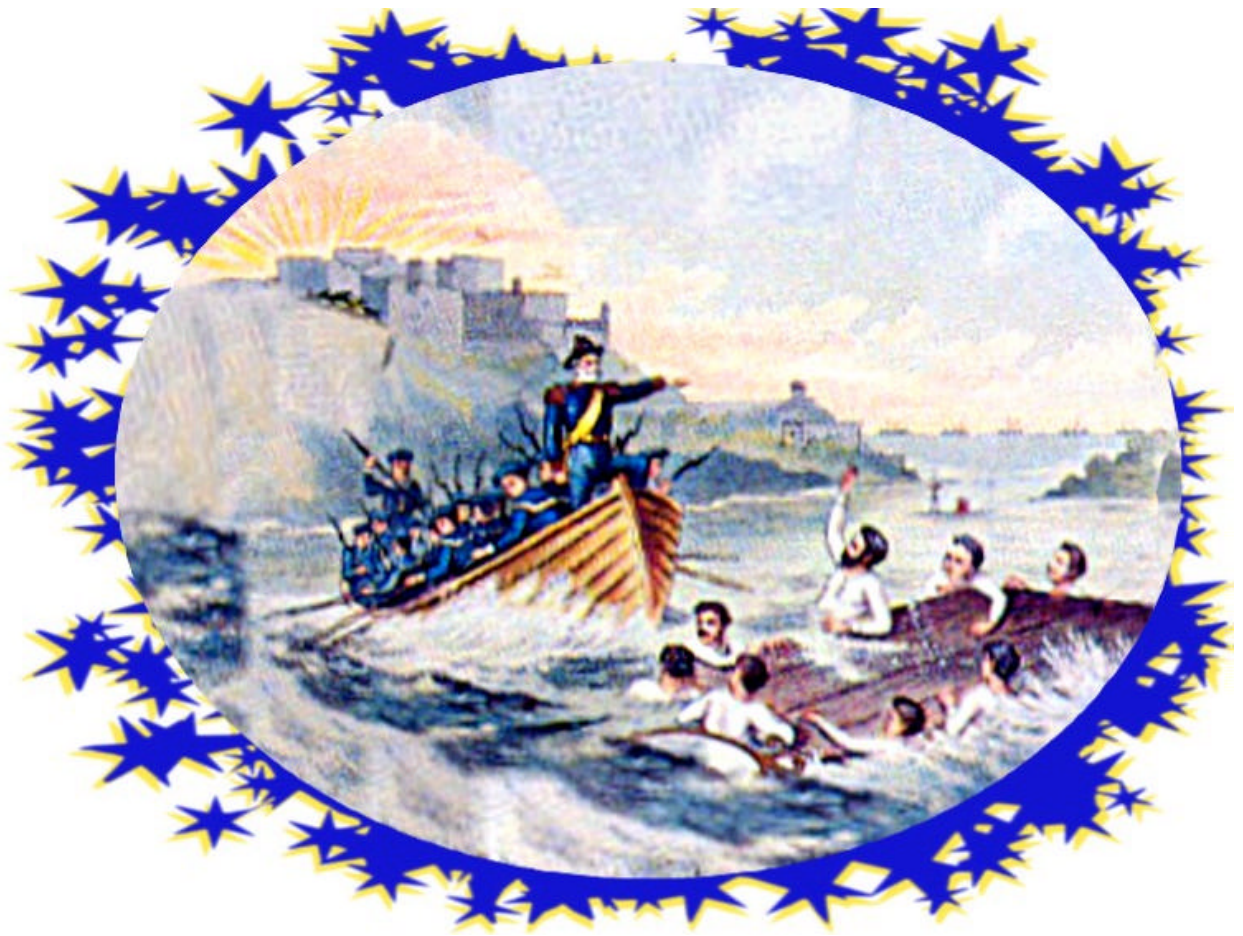
The lack of success of the mission to trap the Spanish fleet by sinking the *Merrimac* could not damper the coverage in the media, or the public adoration showered on Hobson and his heroes. Also despite Hobson's failure to receive the Medal of Honor, he became recognized as one of our Country's greatest heroes of that *Splendid Little War*.



A special commemorative poster was later widely circulated depicting the history of that conflict. The photos of 10 of the leaders and heroes of that war were printed on that poster. Richmond Hobson's photo was among the ten, positioned in the center just below a painting of the capture of his team by Admiral Cervera and the Spanish.

On October 8, 1898, just six months after Hobson's heroic mission, Mr. and Mrs. Hilton of Westville, South Carolina were blessed with a baby boy. They named him after the hero of their day. Twenty years later their son would find himself facing his own war in France, a war in which 20-year old Sergeant Hilton would earn the Medal of Honor. On the official





Valiente!

Later that afternoon a small Spanish tug left the harbor under a flag of truce. Steaming next to the *New York*, it halted while Cervera's chief-of-staff, Captain Bustamente delivered a message from the Spanish admiral that Richmond Hobson and all of his men were safe. It was a dramatic example of compassion in time of war, an enemy commander's show of respect for true heroism even when exhibited by his enemy. The message delivered, Bustamente returned to Santiago with provisions of clothing and a small amount of money for the captured sailors.

Initially the 8 prisoners were confined at Morro Castle, then later moved into the city of Santiago De Cuba. Three weeks later Daniel Montague became very sick and was moved to a hospital. (Though he recovered, the tropical illness contracted during his captivity, led to ill health in the years to follow and eventually contributed to his death in 1912.) On July 6th, after a desperate battle during which Admiral Cervera would attempt to escape the harbor with his fleet, all eight volunteers from the ill-fated *Merrimac* sinking were paroled in a prisoner exchange.



The lack of working explosives failed to sink the ship in the less than two minute span previously plotted. Instead, it remained afloat for more than an hour, burning intensely and slowly going to its grave. Only a short distance from the shallow waters, the ship had come so close, only to fail in the end to accomplish its goal.

As the *Merrimac* burned, the catamaran fell up side down into the harbor. Stripped to their underwear, the seven volunteers clung tenuously to their last vestige of haven, waiting for Hobson to leap overboard to join them. Beyond the mouth of the harbor Cadet Powell continued to move through the darkness, waiting for the heroic men of the *Merrimac* to appear. Finally, as morning dawned, he turned his launch back to rejoin the fleet with tales of the incredible display of enemy firepower he had witnessed, and the sad report that apparently none of the brave sailors had survived the night. Within minutes, word had spread throughout Admiral Sampson's ships. It was a morning for sorrow and mourning.

Inside the harbor, Richmond Hobson and his valiant sailors clung to their overturned catamaran, hoping and praying that the current would turn and sweep them back out to sea...and to safety. Instead the tide only moved them closer to the enemy.

In that first dangerous hour, small arms fire from the nearby shore forced them to use their "raft" as a shield. But as the *Merrimac* burned out and slowly sank, the enemy fire tapered off, then stopped. In the early morning haze the eight sailors noted the approach of a Spanish launch--and then it was upon them. Hobson yelled to the enemy, "Is there any officer in the boat to accept our surrender as prisoners of war."

An gentlemanly looking Spanish officer appeared and motioned towards the men, ordering his sailors to lower their weapons and help the American sailors board his launch. The officer that accepted their surrender was none other than Spanish Rear Admiral Pascual Cervera y Topete himself. As Hobson and his brave sailors surrendered to the enemy, Cervera surveyed the scene around him, taking in all that these young men had attempted to do, all that they had endured, and the risk that they had taken. Turning to them he spoke one word.....

Hobson and his seven volunteers who would return on the small catamaran once the *Merrimac* had been scuttled.

It was near total darkness as Hobson again commanded his doomed ship to move forward at full speed, riding the swell of the flood tide and hiding beneath a night no longer illuminated by the moon. Straight into the enemy guns the warriors sailed, hoping against hope that the darkness would be their one ally in the dangerous waters of the enemy. It was not to be.

Within 500 yards of the narrow channel, the *Merrimac* suddenly came under heavy enemy fire. Even in near total darkness, an enemy picket boat had discovered the ship. Despite the loss of the element of surprise, and in the face of the intense enemy fire, the volunteer crew of the *Merrimac* continued at full speed into the jaws of death. Within minutes a torrent of heavy cannon fire rained on the ship from all sides as it boldly entered the channel under the deadly guns of the Socapa Battery and Morro Castle.



The aged ship shook with the repeated battery of heavy enemy shells, but continued to steam valiantly ahead at full speed. Hobson himself later wrote, "The striking of projectiles and flying fragments produced a grinding sound, with a fine ring in it of steel on steel. The deck vibrated heavily, and we felt the full effect, lying, as we were, full-length on our faces. At each instant it seemed that certainly the next would bring a projectile among us...I looked for my own body to be cut in two diagonally, from the left hip upward, and wondered for a moment what the sensation would be."

Near the stern anchor, Montague heard a heavy round crash into the structure, cutting the anchor lashings. At the helm, Coxswain Deignan yelled to Hobson, "She won't respond sir! The tiller ropes have been shot away!" The same round had destroyed the collier's all-important steering gear. Almost beyond navigation now, the ship continued forward, propelled by the momentum of its full-speed approach and the swift currents of the flood tide. And then the ship was in the channel, braving the continuing fire but moving ever closer its destination as the crew remained at their posts. Despite the hail of fire that raked his ship, Hobson stood exposed on the bridge, stripped to his underwear, to monitor the situation. And then the *Merrimac* was sliding sideways, drifting away from the narrowest part of the channel and into deeper waters.

In the distance the Spanish warships *Colon* and *Oquendo* added their fire to the fusillade from the shore batteries. Even when the *Reina Mercedes* sent two torpedoes to make direct hits on the *Merrimac*, nearly ripping it in half, Hobson and his volunteers stood faithfully at their stations. Above the din of battle, Hobson shouted the order and Murphy dropped anchor to halt the rapidly drifting ship. The stern anchor shot away, the doomed collier continued to drift as it dragged the lone anchor across the floor of the harbor. Kelly began knocking the caps from the sea valves as Hobson set to the process of detonating the explosive charges. The enemy fire had also destroyed batteries and detonators. Only two of the charges exploded into the early morning sky.

The plan was for the mission to commence that very evening. One additional task remained. One man alone could not maneuver the 333-foot ship into the channel, drop the bow anchor, drop the stern anchor, and then detonate all ten charges. It was not a mission the Lieutenant could accomplish by himself....this time Hobson would have to recruit assistance and work as part of a team.

Before Admiral Sampson issued his request for volunteers, he explained in explicit terms just how dangerous the mission would be. For all practical purposes, it appeared to be a suicide mission, attempting to sail the old ship directly into the guns of the enemy, sink her, and then escape and evade the enemy to return on a small catamaran carried on the deck of the doomed collier. His ominous speech concluded, the Admiral asked for volunteers. Three hundred men at once offered to risk their lives, including Captain Miller who was reluctant to turn command of his vessel over to another.

From the ranks of the eager sailors, Hobson selected six men. From the *New York* he selected Gunners Mate First Class George Charette and Coxswain Randolph Clausen. From the *USS Iowa* he selected Coxswain J. E. Murphy. Remaining to guide their vessel *Merrimac* in its final voyage were three sailors who had joined the Navy little over a month earlier, volunteers all of them. Machinist First Class George Phillips and Water Tender Francis Kelly would operate the engines of the *Merrimac* for one final operation, while Coxswain Osborn Deignan would man the helm to steer his ship to her final, glorious conclusion.

Preparations for the May 1st attack did not go well. It seemed nothing had ever gone smoothly for the *Merrimac* when it joined the US Navy. All ten charges were in place, the volunteers were ready to go, but there were only enough batteries to fire six of the ten explosive charges. To Hobson's chagrin, the mission was postponed and work continued on the ship the following day.

As Hobson reviewed his plans, he felt he needed one more volunteer for the crew. Not only did he want a man to handle the task of dropping the stern anchor at the critical moment, he wanted an experienced sailor who could lead the others if anything should happen to himself. Hobson discussed the matter with the *New York's* executive officer, then approached 29-year old Master-At-Arms of the Admiral's flagship. Daniel Montague not only had seven years of experience in the United States Navy, prior to that service he had been a member of the British Royal Navy. Montague promptly volunteered for the dangerous mission.

Valiente

In the early morning darkness of May 3rd, what would become one of the most historic missions since the Great Locomotive Chase of the Civil War began. In addition to Hobson and his seven volunteers, the *Merrimac's* pilot and assistant engineer remained aboard for the first leg of the journey. As they moved the ship towards the harbor, Hobson began testing his explosive charges. To his frustration and dismay, only seven of the ten charges passed his initial test--he was going in at only 70%. Refusing to be delayed another day, Hobson ordered the *Merrimac* to continue, steaming at full speed of 9 knots.

As the *Merrimac* neared the harbor entrance she slowed momentarily. A small steam launch piloted by Cadet Powell steered close enough to take aboard the pilot and assistant engineer. The plan was for Powell to keep his launch close to the harbor entrance to pick up

Richmond P. Hobson

Assistant Naval Contractor Richmond Pearson Hobson was a 28-year old lieutenant on the staff of Admiral Sampson as the *New York* steamed towards Santiago and the Spanish squadron of Admiral Cervera. Hobson was a unique individual, somewhat of a loner who kept to himself. At the age of 15 Hobson had entered the US Naval Academy at Annapolis and four years later graduated FIRST in his class of 1889.



It was during Hobson's first three years at the Academy that much of his military personality would be shaped. A man of principle and dedication, some would say he went to the extreme. He was quick to report infractions, even when it involved midshipmen of his own class. During his first three years at Annapolis, classmates refused to talk to him except when official business required it. Hobson took the situation in stride, concentrating on his studies. In his senior year his classmates extended an olive branch, inviting the 18-year old youth back into their fraternity. Having become used to the silent treatment, young Richmond informed his classmates that he was content with the status quo.

On the night of May 29th as the *New York* headed back to Cuba, Admiral Sampson called the young officer to his quarters. Briefly he outlined the plan to sink the *Merrimac* in the shallow waters of the entrance to Santiago Harbor, looking to the Naval Contractor for assurances as to the missions viability. Hobson listened intently, then requested time to plan such a mission. The following day, his work completed, Lieutenant Hobson presented his plan to Admiral Sampson.

Hobson's plan was to fit out the aging collier with a series of explosive charges along the port side, ten of them in all. Under the cover of darkness the *Merrimac* would then enter the harbor, slowly steaming to the shallow waters in the narrowest passageway, where the bow anchor would drop causing the current to swiftly turn the ship sideways. At this point the stern anchor would drop, holding the ship in place as the torpedoes were electrically detonated. With the port side facing into the harbor entrance, the holes opened by the torpedoes would fill with water swiftly in the onrushing current, and the *Merrimac* would sink in less than two minutes.

Admiral Sampson listened attentively to Hobson's proposals, including the part of the plan that called for the young lieutenant to lead the mission personally. The Admiral approved it in its entirety, then set the men of the *New York* to the tasks of preparing the ten water-tight canisters that, when filled with nearly 80 pounds of brown powder, would be strapped below the water line on the port side of the *Merrimac*.

The following day, May 1st, Sampson's ships arrived outside the harbor entrance, far enough away to be beyond the range of the guns at Socapa Battery or the Moro Castle. The *Merrimac*, repaired again at least for the moment, was brought alongside the *New York* so that Lieutenant Hobson could supervise the placement of the ten charges that would put the old ship "out of its misery". He also carefully supervised placement of the detonators that would trigger these charges.

On the day Schley set course for Santiago, he also sent a message to Admiral Sampson indicating there was no sign of the Spanish flotilla at Cienfuegos, and that his ships did not have enough coal to maintain a blockade at the opening to Santiago harbor. Unaware that the enemy warships were hidden within the narrow harbor, on May 26th Schley left the *St. Paul* to watch the harbor, then set his squadron on a course for Key West. Enroute and about 40 miles from Santiago, the *Merrimac* broke down so completely it had to be taken under tow by the *Yale*.

In the meantime, Admiral Sampson learned that in fact, the enemy warships had taken anchor inside Santiago Harbor, and was determined to end the chase. He returned to Key West to obtain permission to personally take command of the blockade at Santiago Harbor and, he hoped, subsequently destroy Admiral Cervera's squadron. His request granted, on May 29th Admiral Sampson departed Key West for Santiago de Cuba in his flagship *U.S.S. New York*. Joining his flotilla, in addition to the *Mayflower* and the *Porter*, was the newly arrived *U.S.S. Oregon*. (The powerful battleship *Oregon*, under the command of Captain Charles Clark, had left port in San Francisco on March 12th to travel around the Cape and arrive in Florida after a 14,700 nautical mile, 71-day race against time. The length of time it took the battleship to move from coast to coast would give rise to ideas for a shorter route, perhaps a canal in the narrow finger that joined the continents of North and South America.)

The Harbor of Santiago de Cuba is a long, narrow finger of calm tropical sea that reaches inland nearly 10 miles. The shoreline is dotted with hidden coves and inlets, the perfect hiding place for small gunboats to protect any ships anchored inside. Access to the harbor from the sea could only be accomplished through a narrow inlet, only 200 yards across. The inlet itself was protected from the west by the Socapa Battery and on the eastern shore by the Morro Castle.

Before leaving Key West, Admiral Sampson had conferred with Captains Converse and Fogler and Commodore Watson in efforts to format a plan of action. Unlike the harbor at Manila, there was no hope for American warships to enter and destroy the armada. By chance, more than by design, Cervera's ships were stuck in a harbor that offered far more protection from attack than had they been able to continue to Cienfuegos. The culmination of these conferences was that, if the American ships couldn't get in to destroy Admiral Cervera, then they would pen his ships inside. There were discussions about loading several small schooners with brick and rocks and then sinking them in the narrow inlet. Captain Converse thought of the broken down, 333-foot *Merrimac* and suggested that it might provide a greater sunken barrier than several schooners.

As Admiral Sampson steamed towards the enemy in his flag ship, the plan of action had been determined. All that remained was to figure out a way to accomplish it. The mission would be a dangerous one, sailing the large ship directly into the fire of enemy cannon, then sending it to the bottom of the sea. Perhaps the HOW would be far more difficult than the WHAT, and even more critical than either perhaps,

was the WHO!



arrive on May 24th. The search for the enemy fleet was still underway in the cat-and-mouse game that was now nearly a month old.

In fact, Admiral Cervera had taken his ships inside the narrow confines of Santiago Harbor. While Cienfuegos may have been preferable, his ships were low on coal, and the 300-mile voyage to Cienfuegos had to be postponed. That action not only sheltered the Spanish flotilla, but left the Americans wondering where the *mighty armada of the Spanish Empire* had vanished.



Commodore Schley didn't leave immediately for Santiago however, remaining outside Cienfuegos where he was joined at noon on May 22nd by the *Iowa* and the *Dupont*. That afternoon he again sent his ships in closer to Cienfuegos, and this time he believed he could see the tops of an enemy man-of-war. *Dupont* was sent closer to reconnoiter and reported seeing several ships inside the harbor. Schley initially believed he had found Admiral Cervera. While continuing this blockade of Cienfuegos, the flying squadron was joined by additional American ships including the *Castine*, an armed yacht, and the aging collier *Merrimac*. On the evening of May 24th Schley ordered the *Castine* to take up position in front of the harbor at Cienfuegos, though he was now convinced the Spanish fleet was not to be found nearby. The *Dupont* was returned to Key West, and the flying squadron proceeded towards the opening to Santiago harbor 300 miles away. Schley's squadron included the *Brooklyn*, *Iowa*, *Texas*, *Massachusetts*, *Marblehead*, *Vixen*, *Hawk*, *Eagle* and *Merrimac*.

U.S.S. Merrimac



Not to be confused with the Civil War ironclad, the *Merrimac* was an aging collier the Navy purchased from T. Hogan & Sons of New York City on April 12, 1898 for the sum of \$342,000. With no armaments and no armor, the 333-foot ship was pressed into a Spanish-American War support role a few weeks after purchase, under the leadership of Commander Miller.

Almost from the beginning of the *Merrimac's* brief stint of US Naval service, it was plagued by problems. The ship broke down so frequently it was the butt of common jokes, and it was said that at times "the full engineer force of the *Brooklyn* was sent about to get her running again."

by Christopher Columbus and colonized by Ponce De Leon, the people of Puerto Rico had begun requesting independence from Spanish rule. In 1897 Madrid granted the people of Puerto Rico a limited degree of self-government, but resisted all demands for independence.

When Admiral Sampson began his reconnaissance in May 1898, the Spanish had three forts on the long, narrow island. On May 12th Sampson entered the harbor at San Juan on the western edge of the island. His fleet consisted of seven warships, a torpedo boat, a tug and supporting supply vessels. Carefully the fleet maneuvered around the sunken hulks of two ships in the harbor at San Juan, and proceeded towards the forts deep inside. Sampson had hoped to find Cervera's ships at anchor inside the calm waters, but all he found as he circled the harbor three times, were three small gunboats.

As the fleet passed the enemy forts inside the harbor at San Juan, Admiral Sampson opened fire. In the brief battles that followed, Sampson's ships neither rendered or received any major damage. As the ships withdrew however, an enemy shell exploded on the *New York*, killing two men and wounding seven. Discouraged, disappointed and now running low on fuel, Admiral Sampson directed his fleet to return to Key West for resupply and repairs.

Steaming for Key West the day following his bombardment of San Juan, Admiral Sampson received some disappointing news. The *U.S.S. Solace* caught up to the American ships with a report that Admiral Cervera's fleet had returned to Cadiz, in Spain. As the bulk of the American naval presence departed the Antilles, on May 14th the Spanish gunboats *Conde de Venadito* and *Nueva Espana* made a brief and generally ineffective sortie out of Havana. The following day the *U.S.S. Porter* caught up to Admiral Sampson bearing surprising news. The report he'd received two days earlier from the *Solace* was in error. Admiral Cervera's squadron had indeed arrived in the Antilles, and had been spotted at Martinique on May 12th, then in Curaco on the 14th. Also, on May 13th Commodore Schley's flying squadron had left Hampton Roads for Cuba.

The news, rather than raising the excitement level, served only to add to the frustration. Low on fuel, Sampson had no choice but to continue his course for Key West. In the two weeks that followed, events moved rapidly in the Caribbean and the commander of the Atlantic fleet *chaffed at the bit* to return and meet the enemy. On May 18th the *New York* arrived in Key West and Admiral Sampson met briefly with Commodore Schley and ordered him to immediately steam for the harbor at Cienfuegos, the place he deemed the most likely destination of Admiral Cervera's flotilla.

On the morning of May 19th Admiral Cervera's ships reached the entrance to Santiago harbor at the southeast end of the island of Cuba. It was the same day that the remainder of Admiral Sampson's ships finally arrived in Key West. The following day the Navy Department notified Admiral Sampson that in all probability, reports of Cervera's fleet arriving at Santiago were correct. It was anticipated that the enemy ships would proceed immediately for Cienfuegos, 300 miles and a single day's travel, further to the west. Based upon the location of Sampson's ships in Key West and the route of the flying squadron under Schley, Cervera would be unmolested in this effort.

It wasn't until midnight on May 21st that the flying squadron reached Cienfuegos, Commodore Schley's warships riding out the darkness of night from a distance of about 20 miles. With daylight however, his ships cruised closer to Cienfuegos, hoping to draw fire and confirm the presence of the enemy fleet. They met only silence. Somehow, once again, the Spanish fleet had eluded the Americans. Meanwhile Admiral Sampson had returned to the Antilles, taking a blockading position in his flagship northwest of Cuba. Here he sent a message to Commodore Schley to proceed with his flying squadron to Santiago, where Sampson expected the squadron to

The U.S. Navy Responds

As quickly as the media in the United States heard the news that Admiral Cervera's ships were heading west, the yellow journalists worked up a frenzy of fear and dread, proclaiming in large headlines that the Spanish Armada was on its way and would bombard American coastal cities within two weeks. Despite the fact that the "Armada" actually consisted of only four outdated cruisers and three smaller torpedo boats, the news reports quickly sensationalized the coming conflict to epic proportions. The panic and public outcry that followed prompted immediate naval action at home. Even as Admiral Dewey was enroute from China to Manila Bay for the infamous battle of May 1st, preparations were underway to move the US Navy's Atlantic fleet to the Caribbean.



Navy Secretary John D. Long was convinced Cervera and his ships would most likely head for San Juan, Puerto Rico on the eastern border of the Caribbean, though he left open the possibility that the Spanish Admiral might instead elect to steam straight for Havana. The Atlantic fleet was under the command of US Rear Admiral William T. Sampson, a worthy opponent for Admiral Cervera. Sampson proposed quick strikes, first to capture Havana, then a rapid voyage to shell and capture San Juan. He reasoned that such a move would deny the Spanish flotilla any safe haven when they arrived in the Caribbean, projected by Secretary Long to be on or near the date of May 10th.

Once again however, it was the media that would dictate the order of battle. Public panic and the cry for protection of American coastal waters prompted Long to split Sampson's fleet, pulling the battleships *Texas*, *Massachusetts* and *Iowa* back to Hampton Roads, Virginia as a "flying squadron" under Commodore Winfield Scott Schley. Sampson's other warships were limited to blockade duties around the island of Cuba, further stripped by the transfer of two of his cruisers to support efforts of a naval militia under Commodore John Howell that was assigned routine patrol duty of the Atlantic coastline from Maine to Florida.

Those first two weeks of the Spanish-American War were filled with frustration and boredom in the Caribbean. The inaction was further compounded when the sailors of Sampson's fleet began hearing the glorious reports of the victory at Manila Bay, half a world away. When Cervera's flotilla had not arrived in the West Indies by Secretary Long's predicted date of May 10th, the American commander, his officers, and his men were both disappointed and further frustrated. It was this continuing erosion of morale that prompted Captain McCalla of the *Marblehead* to engage his ships in the cable-cutting operation of May 11th, and that also prompted Captain Todd to send his vessels into Cardenas Harbor that same day. Both efforts had broken the boredom, but both had also ended in near disaster.

Feeling the same frustration as his men and with the Spanish flotilla proving to be a "no show", Admiral Sampson chose to commence a reconnaissance of Puerto Rico.

The small island less than 3,500 square miles was located on the eastern fringe of the Caribbean, and sat between Cuba and the expected flotilla from Cape Verde. Claimed for Spain

THE SINKING OF THE MERRIMAC

The Spanish Armada

The hide-and-seek action that ultimately ended with the naval battle at Santiago two months into the Spanish-American War started with the initial declarations of war by Spain on April 21st and the United States on April 25th. With the opening declaration of hostilities, Spain moved swiftly to protect its citizens in the Caribbean. Beyond the fleet at Manila, the remainder of the once mighty Spanish Armada was located in Spain and off the Cape Verde Islands.

The flotilla at home was undergoing maintenance and repair at Cadiz, Spain. These ships would not be battle-ready for at least a month, so defense of the Caribbean was delegated to the Cape Verde flotilla.

Rear Admiral Pascual Cervera y Topete was surprised and dismayed when he received orders to lift anchor at his haven in the Cape Verde Islands off the coast of West Africa, and proceed to the West Indies (Caribbean). *"This is a very risky adventure, for the defeat of my ships in the Caribbean could result in great danger for the Canaries, and perhaps the bombardment of our coastal cities,"* he wired back to Madrid. *"Any division of our fleet, and any separation from European seas, is a strategic mistake."*

Admiral Cervera was a respected naval officer and not a man fearful to do his job, but the orders sending his flotilla to meet the American warships in the Caribbean gave him an ominous foreboding of disaster. When his appeal to Madrid was denied, he dutifully hoisted anchor on April 29th and set a course for Cuba. Before his departure he registered his concern one more time, wiring Madrid that, *"Nothing can be expected of this expedition except the total destruction of our flotilla. With a clear conscience I go to the sacrifice, but I cannot understand the (Spanish) navy's decision."*

Wilmington. Though later repaired at Mobile, Alabama, the damage was so extensive that the *Winslow* would not again be in fighting shape before the Spanish-American war came to an end.

As night finally fell over the Caribbean on May 11th, the Navy's young sailors in the Caribbean had tasted first blood...most of it their own. The splendid little war was beginning to take its toll in American lives, a sad chapter in that war's brief history that could not be overshadowed even by the great courage of FIFTY-FIVE sailors and Marines who earned Medals of Honor on this single day.

Ten days later on the other side of the world, the *U.S.S. Concord* was on station in Manila Bay in the Philippines. Located just off the Cavite point, in a non-combat action, an accident occurred causing a dangerous explosion to one of the boilers. As dangerous steam filled the fireroom, Watertender William Crouse, Fireman First Class John Ehle, and Fireman First Class James Hull braved the intense heat and very real danger to put out fires and secure the boiler. All three subsequently earned Medals of Honor for their courage.

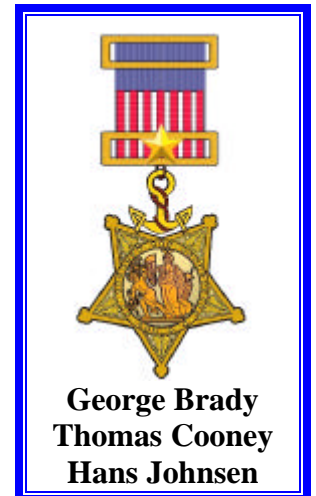
Eight days later on May 28th, a similar explosion occurred on the *U.S.S. Vixen*. Two of the ship's First Class Firemen, Peter Johnson and George Mahoney exhibited similar courage to extinguish fires and preserve their ship. Both were also awarded Medals of Honor.

While these five sailors were recognized for their heroism in saving their ship, an unusual mission was unfolding that would see seven sailors and their commander receive Medals of Honor for DESTROYING their ship. It would prove to be one of the most incredible stories in the history of our Nation's highest award.

Captain Todd's warships pulled closer together as they neared the city of Cardenas. From a distance of 1,500 yards Todd had seen a small enemy gunboat moored at the wharf near the city. With shouted commands across the waters, Lieutenant Bernadou was ordered to take his small torpedo boat closer to investigate.

As the *Winslow* approached the wharf, a gun roared from the enemy gunboat. The round flew high over the *Winslow* and the sailors aboard released a sigh of relief. Suddenly, the water around the torpedo boat was peppered with incoming rounds and the sounds of explosions ripped through the afternoon air. The first shot from the enemy gunboat had been a signal. All along the beach the enemy began firing on the *Winslow* from concealed positions. The fusillade was devastating, Lieutenant Bernadou taking a hit in the left thigh to become one of the first to be wounded.

The *Winslow* itself was taking heavy damage as well. The first round that pierced her side destroyed her steam and hand-steering gear. Chief Machinist Hans Johnsen took note of the rapidly escaping steam and, despite the very real danger of a horrible death by its intense heat, struggled to shut off and contain the escaping steam. On deck the 25 men of the *Winslow* did their best to return fire and also to control their now floundering torpedo boat. Chief Gunner's Mate George Brady alternated between keeping his guns firing, and risking his life to try and repair the steering gear, all the while under continued enemy fire. Below, Chief Machinist Thomas Cooney braved the menace wrought by the enemy gunfire to extinguish the fires near the boiler, and thus keep the tubes from burning out.



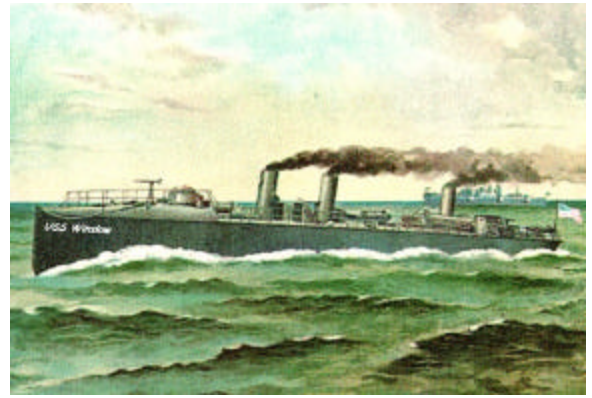
For their courage under fire, and their strict adherence to the tasks at hand, all three men would be subsequently awarded Medals Of Honor.

Another enemy round tore through the side of the *Winslow*, destroying one of the engines. The remaining engine continued to operate, causing the small vessel to turn broadside to the enemy fire. The *Winslow* was almost totally helpless. Lieutenant Bernadou ignored his own wound to encourage his 1-pound guns to maintain resistance, and then signal the *Hudson*. Under fire from the nearby *Wilmington*, the enemy fire began to abate and the *Hudson* bravely approached the stricken *Winslow*. Bernadou began employing his single, functioning engine to alternately back up and then steam ahead rapidly to begin moving his stricken ship. To facilitate the necessary actions and to monitor the ships forward progress, Bernadou turned to Ensign Bagley.

Bagley's important role required him to make repeated short trips from the deck to the engine room hatch, where he could alternately observe, then shout orders to those below. Only a skeleton crew worked below, many of the men being sent to the deck. A group of them were standing near the starboard gun as Ensign Bagley moved past to continue his coordination of the ships movement. Suddenly an enemy shell struck nearby, peppering all with deadly shrapnel. Two sailors were instantly killed, two more would later die of their wounds. There was a fifth casualty, Ensign Bagley becoming the ONLY naval OFFICER to be killed in action during the entirety of the Spanish-American war.

Somehow, the crew of the *Winslow* managed to get a rope to the *Hudson*, which then began towing the battered torpedo boat to safety. The wounded Lieutenant Bernadou turned command of his ship over to Gunner's Mate G. P. Brady, and transferred his dead and wounded to the

CARDENAS HARBOR



Torpedo boats were among the smaller and more popular of the U.S. Navy's assets as warfare at sea *prepared* for the 20th century. Only lightly armored, they could move with speed and daring, often entering waters too shallow for larger war ships. One of the torpedo boats operating on the northern coast of Cuba was the *U.S.S. Winslow*. With a crew of 25 under the command of Lieutenant J.B. Bernadou, the *Winslow* was ordered to the harbor at Cardenas and arrived about 9 A.M.

At Cardenas the *Winslow* joined a small fleet led by the *U.S.S. Wilmington* under the command of Captain Todd. In addition to these, the flotilla also included the cruiser *Machias*, the revenue cutter *Hudson*, and the *Winslow*'s sister ship, the torpedo boat *Foote*.

Captain Todd knew that three small Spanish gunboats were stationed in Cardenas Harbor, and elected to enter the harbor to capture them on May 11th. The narrow channel into the harbor would not permit the passage of the *Machias*, so the cruiser was assigned the task of attacking the nearby signal station at Caya Diana. It was a quick and highly successful engagement, the guards at the station abandoning their position and an armed boat from the *Machias* hoisting the American flag from the station's mast.

Meanwhile the *Wilmington* prepared to enter the harbor. Captain Todd placed a Cuban pilot aboard the *Winslow* as the torpedo boat and the *Hudson* began a sweep of the channel for mines. The *Hudson* struggled in the shallow waters, at one point becoming temporarily grounded. Lieutenant Bernadou continued about his tasks, completing the sweep shortly before noon. The worst was about to come.

May 11, 1898

At 12:30 the high tide was running, and the *Wilmington* began its entrance at Cardenas, the *Hudson* on the starboard side, and the *Winslow* to port. As the ships entered, the torpedo boat and the revenue cutter scanned the respective western and eastern sides of the harbor for any effort by the enemy gunboats to escape. None of the three ships saw any sign of the enemy.



Cable Cutters

Who received Medals Of Honor

<i>U.S.S. Marblehead</i>	<i>U.S.S. Nashville</i>
Navy Bennett, James (US Navy) Carter, Joseph (US Navy) Chadwick, Leonard (US Navy) Davis, John (US Navy) Doran, John (US Navy) Erickson, Nicholas (US Navy) Foss, Herbert (US Navy) Gill, Freeman (US Navy) Hart, William (US Navy) Hendrickson, Henry (US Navy) Johanson, John (US Navy) Kramer, Franz (US Navy) Levery, William (US Navy) Mager, George (US Navy) Maxwell, John (US Navy) Oakley, William (US Navy) Olsen, Anton (US Navy) Russell, Henry (US Navy) Vadas, Albert (US Navy) Wilke, Julius (US Navy) Williams, Frank (US Navy)	Navy Baker, Benjamin (US Navy) Barrow, David (US Navy) Beyer, Albert (US Navy) Blume, Robert (US Navy) Bright, George (US Navy) Durney, Austin (US Navy) Eglit, John (US Navy) Gibbons, Michael (US Navy) Hoban, Thomas (US Navy) Johansson, Johan (US Navy) Krause, Ernest (US Navy) Meyer, William (US Navy) Miller, Harry (US Navy) Miller, Willard (US Navy) Nelson, Lauritz (US Navy) Riley, John (US Navy) Sundquist, Gustav (US Navy) Van Etten, Hudson (US Navy) Volz, Robert (US Navy)
Marines Campbell, Daniel (USMC) Kuchmeister, Hermann (USMC) Meredith, James (USMC) Sullivan, Edward (USMC) West, Walter (USMC)	Marines Field, Oscar (USMC) Franklin, Joseph (USMC) Gaughan, Philip (USMC) Hill, Frank (USMC) Kearney, Michael (USMC) Parker, Pomeroy (USMC) Scott, Joseph (USMC)



Benjamin Baker



Austin Durney



H. Kuchmeister



William Meyer



Gustav Sundquist

As Naval officers, Ensign Magruder and Lieutenants Winslow and Anderson were not eligible for award of the Medal of Honor. Some Naval records list the name Marine Private Patrick Regan as participating in the cable cutting party and being fatally wounded. The name of Mr. Regan does not appear in the list of 52 Medals of Honor subsequently awarded, however Herman Kuchmeister's account of the actions that day indicate that that one man in his boat was killed. Amid sometimes conflicting accounts of the casualties, one fact remained...in the heroic actions at Cienfuegos on May 11, 1898 the United States suffered it first major casualties of the Spanish-American war, while young sailors and Marines performed their duties with dedication and honor in the face of incredible resistance.

Further north, on that same fateful day, other sailors and Marines would face a similar test.

In Kuchmeister's boat, small arms fire began poking holes in the thin wood sides below the waterline. As quickly as a hole sprouted, the Marines would plug it with one of their bullets, then continue to return fire. Kuchmeister noted what appeared to be *"the whole Santa Clara Regiment advanced in company, as on parade."* The enemy force was far too great to continue, but the Marines stayed their position to render cover fire for the sailors cutting through the cables. *"Large shells dropped around us, nearly lifting us out of the water. Shells from our own ship and the Spanish batteries passed over head."* On the U.S.S. *Nashville*, sailors who had not been selected for the mission continued to man the ship's big guns to cover their comrades. Aboard the *Nashville*, Captain Maynard was wounded and First Lieutenant Albert C. Dillingham took command.

Finally, one of the cables was cut through. The shore end was dropped in place and one of the boats from the *Marblehead* towed the other end out to sea where it was dropped after another large section of cable was removed to make it harder to repair. The enemy fire continued to intensify. A flurry of small arms fire began striking Kuchmeister's boat anew. One round struck the left side of Private Kuchmeister's face, followed by a second round that shattered his jaw and teeth and cut away a section of his tongue. The second round exited behind his ear, within a sixteenth of an inch of the jugular vein. Kuchmeister was among those given up for dead.

Finally, the second cable was cut. A remaining smaller cable on the shore would have to be ignored. The badly battered sailors and Marines, in small boats barely able to remain afloat, turned to return to their warships. As they fought the seas, the enemy began finding their range. Large shells dropped closer and closer to the small sailing ships. For a few minutes, it looked as if all of the volunteers would be lost.

In the distance Lieutenant Dillingham turned the *Nashville* towards the shore, steaming ahead and then turning again to place his warship between the enemy on the shore and the retreating smaller boats of the cable cutting crews and their Marine guards. It was a bold act, exposing his ship to intense enemy fire, but for the badly battered volunteers, it meant the difference between life and death.

The wounded were quickly taken aboard the warships for medical care. Many of the men had suffered wounds, several of them repeated wounds, and at least three were critical or fatal. Kuchmeister later said, *"The only thing I remembered after being brought aboard ship is that I insisted that I was able to walk to the operating table. As I lain in the Captains cabin, it came to me if I died it was for my country and a glorious cause."* Kuchmeister would survive after two years in Naval hospitals and 5 operations.

All 52 men, 26 from each of the *Marblehead* and the *Nashville*, were subsequently awarded Medals of Honor.



and each of the cable cutting boats carried a blacksmith, Durney from the *Nashville* and Joseph Carter from the *Marblehead*. It was these two men who would carry primary responsibility for finding a way to hack or cut through the communications cables.

The waters of the harbor were rough as the small boats began moving towards the shoreline. Near the lighthouse, large rocks could be seen protruding dangerously close to the area where the boats would have to work. To add to the dangerous task, the men could see mines floating in the water beneath them, mines that could be detonated by the enemy on shore from a small switch house. As the cable cutting crews moved closer to the shoreline, the big guns of the *Marblehead* and *Nashville* began pounding the enemy positions.

At first the Spanish soldiers held their fire, assuming according to Austin Durney's later reports, that the Americans were bent on landing on the beach. Then the men of the Spanish garrison noticed the sailors in the cable cutting boats dropping grappling hooks to dredge up the cables, and realized what was happening. From the heights of the cliffs overlooking the harbor, the enemy began to fire with great ferocity.

In his boat, Kuchmeister and the other Marines saw a group of 9 enemy soldiers sprinting for the switch house. If they reached it, they could begin detonating the mines throughout the harbor. The Marines laid down a deadly fire, dropping all 9 enemy soldiers. Then they turned their two machineguns and their 1-pound gun on the small shack itself, leveling it.

Shells from the large guns of the Spanish fortifications began to rain over the harbor, raising geysers of water and adding tumult to the already rough seas. In Durney's boat the men struggled to lift the first cable over the bow, and the blacksmith began trying to cut through it. *"As soon as I got hold of the cable,"* he said, *"I discovered that the only practical tool was a hack-saw."* Durney's small boat was less than 15 yards from shore as he set to his task. Enemy fire rained over his head, some small arms fire striking the boat. Additional and accurate fire began striking the boat from the lighthouse. While the warships and the Marines turned their fire on it, Durney continued his work. Nearby, Seaman Robert Volz was wounded four different times.

For more than an hour the small boats with their crews of brave young sailors and Marines endured the dangerous waters, the ever present mines, the crash of large rounds, and small arms fire, to continue their task. Seaman Harry Hendrickson was shot in the liver and given up for dead. Lieutenant Winslow was wounded in the hand. John Davis took a round to his right leg, and Marine Private Patrick Regan appeared to have been fatally wounded.



The men of the *Marblehead* listened eagerly to the Captain's plan. When McCalla finished laying it out, he asked for volunteers. Despite the danger, he was met with an eager response from several of his seamen and Marines. Twenty-one year old Marine Private Herman Kuchmeister was one of those to offer his services. At first, according to later accounts by Kuchmeister, Captain McCalla refused to include the young German immigrant in the group. Because of the great danger the mission posed, McCalla felt Kuchmeister was too young. The Marines of the two ships would accompany the small boats to draw enemy fire away from, and to provide cover fire for, the sailors who would dredge up and cut the cables. The eager private reminded his captain that he was among the best riflemen aboard ship, "having won a sharpshooters medal for the best score in target practice." Captain McCalla took note of Kuchmeister's argument and finally consented to add him to the group of volunteers.



All the men were excited. After weeks at sea with little to do, the prospect of action was well received. At the same time, few if any of the sailors and Marines in the volunteer group had ever heard a shot fired in anger or tasted the fear of confrontation with the enemy. *"That night as I spread my hammock out,"* Private Kuchmeister later said, *"I thought, 'Would I be on board the following night or would I be resting at the bottom of the sea'."*

May 11, 1898



The crews of both ships were up before dawn the following day, the men of the cable cutting crews anxiously finishing their breakfast of coffee and hardtack, then quickly assembling their weapons and gear for the unusual mission. *"Cable cutting was something new to all of us and I did not know just how to manage it,"* Blacksmith Austin Durney of the U.S.S. *Nashville* later said. *"To tell the truth, I didn't have the faintest idea of the work. To be prepared for all emergencies we equipped ourselves with every possible tool that suggested itself to us, and thus we took along chisels, hammers, axes, saws, etc."*

At 5:00 A.M. the parties launched from both warships. Ensign Magruder of the *Nashville* commanded a steam launch to drop the smaller sailing boats inside the harbor, then pulled his launch back to a position 150-200 yards off shore to give covering fire if needed. Overall command of the operation was under the leadership of Lieutenant Camberon Winslow and his second in command, Lieutenant Anderson. The Marine sharpshooters and guards were under the leadership of Sergeant Philip Gaughan of the *Nashville*,



While Admiral Dewey was busy destroying the Spanish fleet in Manila, American naval forces in the Caribbean were busy creating a "wall" around the island of Cuba to maintain the blockade the President ordered on April 21st. Quickly moving out of Key West, the ships assigned to the blockade arrived the following morning, quickly capturing the Spanish merchant steamers *Bonaventure* and *Pedro*. While the *New York*, the *Indiana*, and the *Iowa* remained near Havana, other US warships began patrolling the waters elsewhere around the island. On April 24th the Spanish merchant steamers *Catalina* and *Miguel Iover* were taken, and the following day two more Spanish merchant ships were captured.

On April 26th the Spanish made their first successful breach of the American blockade when the Spanish liner *Montserrat* successfully entered the harbor at Cienfuegos to unload a detachment of troops and a cargo of supplies. Ten days later the *Montserrat* again breached the blockade, successfully departing Cienfuegos to return unmolested to Spain.

Cienfuegos was a busy port town on the southern coast of the Island of Cuba, almost directly opposite Havana. The US Naval warships *U.S.S. Marblehead* and *U.S.S. Nashville* carefully patrolled the waters on the southern coastline, hence the two vessels were operating near the site of the only breach in the American blockade. Both ships began taking a closer look at Cienfuegos.



In addition to the Spanish Troops garrisoned at Cienfuegos, the harbor entrance was protected by a large lighthouse. Cienfuegos was a well defended port. It was also a military target. On May 10th Captain B.H. McCalla of the *Marblehead* located the cables that connected the troops at Cienfuegos with the rest of the world. These were large undersea cables that ran from the Spanish headquarters to transmit communications to and from Havana and Spain. Realizing the value of isolating the Spanish soldiers in Cienfuegos by cutting off their communications, Captain McCalla designed a daring, and almost disastrous, plan of action.

MAY 10, 1898

As evening fell across the Caribbean, Captain McCalla began speaking to his men aboard the *U.S.S. Marblehead*. Nearby, on the *U.S.S. Nashville*, Captain Maynard was giving a similar message to his own sailors and Marines. Briefly, each of the commanders outlined the daring plot to isolate the enemy soldiers stationed at Cienfuegos. "Tomorrow morning," Captain McCalla told his men, "parties from the *Marblehead* and the *Nashville* will enter the bay in small boats, to dredge up and cut the communications cables running out of Cienfuegos."

The operation would have to be performed close to shore, directly under the guns of the enemy soldiers garrisoned at Cienfuegos. It was not typical Naval duty. In fact, to the Captain's knowledge, such a mission had never been attempted before and may in fact, not even be successful.



Prior to World War I, most Medal of Honor citations were brief and usually only one or two sentences, as was the case with Franz Itrich. Ten days after Admiral Dewey defeated Spain's pacific fleet in Manila, near Cienfuegos, Cuba in the Caribbean, 52 sailors and Marines from two separate ships earned Medals of Honor. Only three other times in the Medal's history has it been awarded so many times for actions in a single incident, on a single day. Prior to the May 11th, 1898 action at Cienfuegos, only 25 Marines had earned Medals of Honor. On this day alone, TWELVE would earn their Nation's highest award for valor. It was a single-day feat that would remain unmatched in Marine Corps history.

The citations for all 52 heroes are almost identical, two sentences. The first sentence gives the place, date, and the ship on which each hero served. The second sentence describes the heroism for which it was awarded. Each citation simply reads:



On board the (U.S.S. Nashville or U.S.S. Marblehead) during the cutting of the cable leading from Cienfuegos, Cuba, 11 May 1898. Facing the heavy fire of the enemy, he set an example of extraordinary bravery and coolness throughout this action.

The simple language of these citations tends to make them pale in comparison to other, contemporary acts of courage, especially in light of the common concept that many early Medals of Honor were given for rather mundane acts. The simple fact, however, that more Marines earned Medals of Honor on this day than in any other single day of military action in the Corps' history, should give one cause to take a closer look.

Duero, and Velasco. Upon boarding the transport *Manila*, Itrich found it to carry 350 tons of coal, 35 head of cattle, 45 barrels of wine, and a large supply of light artillery ammunition. Using good judgment, Itrich chose to spare this ship, which was later converted to an American gunboat.

For his service that day, Franz Itrich was commended by his captain, promoted to Carpenter, and given a gratuity of \$100 from the Navy department. His actions were preserved for future generations in that one, simple sentence....

Serving in the presence of the enemy, Itrich displayed heroism during the action."

They were the explanation for an even more prestigious recognition. Franz Anton Itrich became the first American to earn the Medal of Honor in the Spanish-American war.



the valiant last stand, when all hope was gone, of the captain and crew of the *Don Antonio de Ulloa*. In Captain Gridley's report he stated, *Every officer and man did his whole duty there is only room for general praise.*" The captain of the *Olympia* paid further tribute in his report to 3 clerks who, in time of combat, voluntarily took up battle stations. He also gave a good report of a reporter from the *New York Herald*, along for the story, who *"served as a volunteer aid to the commander in chief and rendered invaluable assistance in carrying messages and in keeping an accurate account of the battle."*

Other officers similarly reported on the courage and tenacity of the men under their command. The heroism of Franz Anton Itrich, Chief Carpenter's Mate on the *U.S.S. Petrel* was recognized in a single, simple sentence...*"Serving in the presence of the enemy, Itrich displayed heroism during the action."* That description was far too brief to truly preserve for future generation the courage of this American sailor.

Born in Germany, Itrich was one of the many immigrants who chose to serve his adopted country in the latter part of the 19th century. During the 7-hour battle of Manila Bay, Itrich's ship the *Petrel* gave a solid accounting of itself. Itrich himself performed his duties coolly and professionally.



When the battle had ended and Admiral Dewey withdrew his ships to anchor abreast of Manila, the entire bay was awash with flaming wreckage and debris. Many of the Spanish ships, though reduced to hulks of twisted metal, still drifted dangerously on the swells of the bay. Of additional concern were the smaller gunboats, perhaps as many as twenty, hidden in the shallow coves and river inlets that spilled into Manila Bay. As the victorious fleet was pulled together to accept the the glorious moment of surrender at Manila, Admiral Dewey instructed Commander Wood of the *Petrel* to conduct the final sweep and destruction of the remnants of the Spanish fleet.

It was Franz Itrich who volunteered for the dangerous task. Captain Wood dispatched a whale boat with Itrich and seven men to board those enemy vessels still afloat and destroy them.

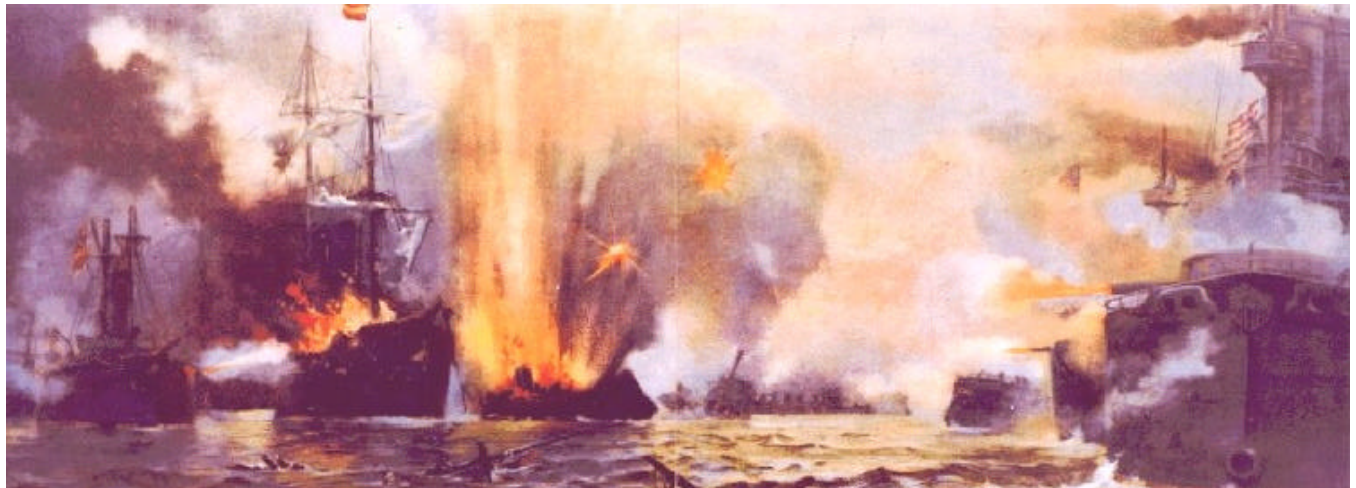
Slowly, carefully, Franz Itrich had his men row their small boat to each of the still burning enemy vessels. Itrich himself personally boarded each ship, braving flames and explosions to determine the best places both fore and aft to spread the fires that would send the floundering death-traps to the bottom of the bay. In each boarding there was always the potential for harm to himself from the flames and secondary explosions, perhaps even a very real danger of a one-on-one confrontation with an enemy who had remained behind or was wounded and unable to abandon ship. The cool, thorough manner in which Itrich completed his job resulted in the final destruction of *Don Juan de Austria*, *Isla de Cuba*, *Isla de Luzon*, *Marquis del*



"scuttle and abandon", the commander of *Ulloa* remained with his ship at anchor just inside Sangley Point. As the *Brooklyn* moved past Sangley Point, the sailors of *Ulloa* opened fire, a last valiant effort by the crew of a doomed enemy ship.

The *Brooklyn* returned fire, joined shortly thereafter by the *Olympia*. Passing to the other side of the point, the *Raleigh* joined in the swan song of the Spanish Armada, catching the *Ulloa* in a crossfire that destroyed her within minutes. Meanwhile the rest of Dewey's warships cruised past to train their guns on the arsenal at Cavite. Within half an hour the five Spanish flags were lowered at the Spanish Naval base, to be replaced by a white flag of surrender.

By 12:40 Admiral Dewey anchored his valiant fleet abreast of the city of Manila. In seven hours the untested sailors and Marines of the United States had survived their first engagement. In those seven hours they had destroyed virtually every ship of Spain's Pacific Fleet, ten huge warships now exploding, burning, or sinking. A squadron annihilated, the American forces had also captured an enemy navy yard and more than 400 enemy lay dead or wounded. For the Americans, not a single ship was disabled, not a life lost. (The only casualty of the day was the death of the engineer of the *McCulloch*, a victim of heat stroke.)



Spanish ships destroyed: *Reina Christina*, *Castilla*, *Velasco*, *Don Juan de Austria*, *Don Antonio De Ulloa*, *Isla de Cuba*, *Isla de Luzon*, *Elcano*, *General Lezo*, *Marquis del Duero*, *Argos*

The Battle of Manila Bay is considered by many to be the birth of the modern United States Navy. It was indeed, a great source of pride for all citizens of the United States, the first GOOD news since the sinking of the *U.S.S. Maine*. As could be expected, reports of the unbelievable victory in Havana made for pages of ink in the American newspapers. Admiral Dewey and Captain Gridley became instant heroes, Dewey's initial order, "You may fire when ready" the new buzz word of the times.

Admiral Montojo would not be so fortunate. Upon return to Spain he was court-martialed and cashiered.

There were many other heroes on that first day of the Spanish-American war, untested young sailors who stood in the face of violent enemy fire to courageously do their duty. Even among the ranks of the enemy, one could not overlook



line, at 6:40 Dewey ordered his line of warships to turn and pass broadside once again, this time attacking from west to east. Again the heavy guns of the US Navy rained death and destruction on the Spanish. Five times in all, three to the west and twice to the east, Admiral Dewey's ships made runs on the enemy.

At 7:00 A.M. Admiral Montojo's flagship, *Reina Cristina* tried desperately to leave the line and engage the Americans at short range. A galling fire from the *Olympia* turned her back, heavily damaged and fires erupting in several places. At least one 8-inch shell pierced the *Reina Cristina* and her fate was quickly sealed. The Admiral's flag was transferred to the nearby *Isla de Cuba*.

By 7:35 all ten ships of the Spanish fleet were almost totally in ruin and fires burned in many places across the bay. Admiral Dewey received a report, which later proved to be erroneous, that only 15 rounds of ammunition per gun remained for his 5-inch rapid fire battery. After less than two hours of battle, he called a cease-fire and pulled his ships back to regroup and redistribute ammunition. It also afforded his crew opportunity to have breakfast.

During the lull in the battle of Manila Bay, the captains of the ships of the US Navy took stock of their own damages, then made their reports to Dewey on the *Olympia*. Amazingly, considering the ferocity of the battle, casualties had been light...only three of the six battleships bore any scars. The bridge of the *Olympia* where Admiral Dewey directed the battle had been peppered with fragments of a bursting shell, Another shell struck the starboard side of the flagship while another had cut the signal halyards from the flag lieutenant's hand. The *Boston* had taken a direct hit near the water line on the port side aft, setting fire in the officers quarters. The fire had been quickly extinguished however, and the *Boston* was capable of continued battle. The *Baltimore* had survived all five passes on the Spanish fleet directly behind the flagship, and had taken the most damage. Five times the enemy shells had struck the large second-class cruiser, seven men and two officers receiving minor wounds from shrapnel. They were the only Americans wounded in the course of the entire battle.

Despite the five direct hits, not counting a sixth that had cut a hole in the Stars and Stripes that flew from its mast, compared to the burning and sinking wreckage of the Spanish ships, *Baltimore* had been fortunate indeed. The only American craft to sink had been the *Baltimore's* two quarter-boats, blown to pieces by the blasts of the *Baltimore's* own guns and subsequently cut loose to add to the wreckage in Manila Bay.

During this lull in the battle, Admiral Dewey sent a warning to the Governor-General in Havana, where the three shore batteries had maintained a steady fire on his fleet. Unless the guns were silenced, the American warships would begin shelling the city. The devastation of the US Navy's guns already apparent in the bay, Manila's Governor-General took heed of this warning and the firing from the shore batteries at Havana ended.

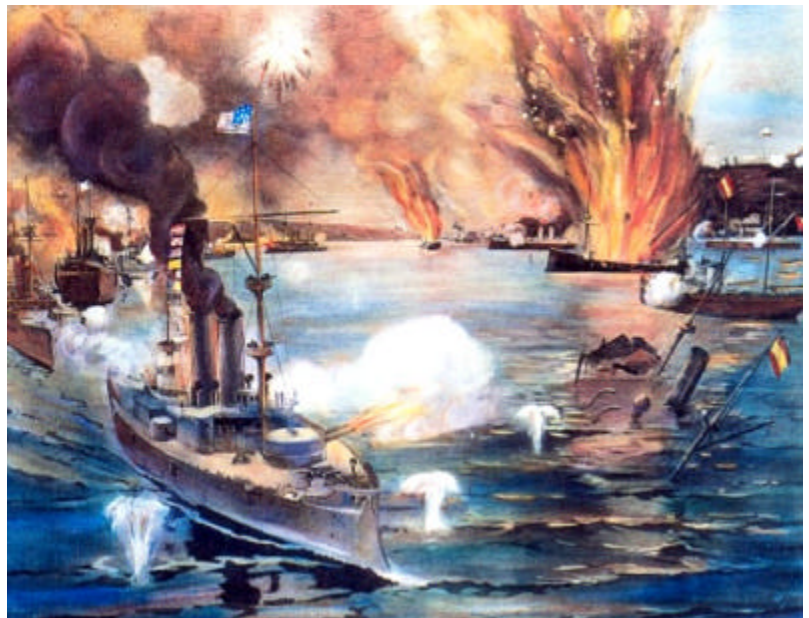
By 11:16 A.M. Admiral Dewey had regrouped his fleet, received reports from his captains, and determined that the earlier report on the shortage of ammunition was in error. A second time he turned his warships towards the enemy fleet, this time to finish the job. There wasn't much to finish. The *Reina Cristina* and one of the enemy gunboats were burning beyond hope. (Admiral Montojo later estimated his flagship had taken seventy hits before the transfer of his flag to the *Isla de Cuba*.) The Spanish cruiser *Castilla* had taken heavy fire in the first five passes and, during the lull before the second assault commenced, had been destroyed by an explosion within, presumably caused when onboard fires reached the ship's magazines. The *Don Juan de Austria*, *Isla de Cuba*, and *Isla de Luzon* had also taken heavy fire, rupturing the sea valves and causing many of the crew to abandon ship. In the "mop-up" operation, only *Don Antonio de Ulloa* remained in any semblance of fighting order. Despite Admiral Montojo's final desperate order to



May 1, 1898

The Spanish fleet was anchored in what was almost an east-to-west line across the bay as Captain Gridley made his first broadside run on the enemy battleships. From the bridge, Admiral Dewey personally directed the entire battle, most of which lasted only two hours. As the *Olympia* opened fire at 5:41 A.M., it steamed westward across the line of enemy ships. Three shore batteries at Manila opened fire on the American ships, sustaining fire for the period. Most of the rounds sailed harmlessly past Dewey's fleet to fall into the waters of the bay. Meanwhile Admiral Montojo's aging warships faced a deadly fusillade from the *Olympia* and the five American ships strung out behind it, the *Baltimore*, *Raleigh*, *Petrel*, *Concord*, and *Boston*.

The starboard batteries of the American ships pounded the port sides of the Spanish fleet with devastating effect as they made the first pass. From a distance of from 2,000 to 5,000 yards the combat was furious, but most of the return fire from Admiral Montojo's ships fell short of the Americans. Two Spanish torpedo boats broke from the anchored enemy vessels to approach the *Olympia*. One was quickly sunk, the other damaged beyond further effort and had to be subsequently beached.



The first pass left many of the ten Spanish warships badly damaged and the smoke from the fires caused by the battle hung low over the bay. Reaching the westward end of the

vessels to negotiate the passageway, thought to have been mined and directly under the shore batteries of the enemy, to find and sink the Spanish fleet. Twenty miles distant Admiral Dewey could see the lights of Manila. In front of the capitol city in a line northward from Sangley Point was anchored ten warships of Admiral Montojo. Concealment was no longer important, the Spanish now knew the Americans had arrived. Admiral Dewey's flagship became a beacon of flashing signal lights as he organized his ships for the battle that would come with dawn.

It was not until two o'clock in the morning that Admiral Montojo had been awakened to be informed that the Americans had entered the bay. He was stunned. The thought that the American commander would make the three-day trip from China and, on his first night upon arrival and without reconnaissance, dare to run the batteries and probable mine fields to enter Manila Bay in the dead of night, had never crossed his mind. Be that as it may, the Americans had arrived, and Montojo ordered his ships to raise steam. All his officers who had gone ashore to be with their families were awakened and called back to their ships.

At 4:00 A.M. coffee was served to the officers and men of Admiral Dewey's fleet. Three vessels of the reserve squadron were sent northward to lay to, while Dewey's remaining six ships continued their course towards Manila. At 5:05 A.M. the Stars and Stripes were unfurled from each of the war ships and Dewey gave the command to *"Prepare for general action."* Ten minutes later the enemy shore batteries at Sangley Point opened fire. The American ships returned fire, then turned towards the ships of Admiral Montojo.

Within minutes the early morning air was filled with the thunder of heavy guns, and geysers of water shooting heavenward as the enemy shells began falling around the American ships. Dressed in his crisp white Naval dress uniform, Admiral George Dewey stood on the bridge of his flagship *"Olympia"*. In the preceding hours he had done the unthinkable, navigating the Boca Grand to find and meet the enemy. As the smell of smoke filled the air and the shells of the enemy erupted around his fleet, Dewey led the way into battle. At 5:40 A.M. he turned to the Captain Charles V. Gridley of his flagship, the *USS Olympia* and said:



"You may fire when ready."

broken up by the tadpole shaped fortress island of Corregidor, and the smaller islands of Caballo and El Fraile. At the north end of the entrance is the Bataan Peninsula and the city of Mariveles. With heavy guns placed on fortifications at Mariveles and Corregidor, and with additional batteries on the two smaller islands and the southern tip of the entrance, an enemy attempting to enter Manila Bay would be subject to an intense cross-fire from at least five batteries. At the north end of a small peninsula just southwest of the capitol city sat the Cavite arsenal, as well as additional fortifications on Sangley Point. Admiral Montojo chose to anchor his ten warships and their transports just outside the city of Manila, knowing that before an enemy could attack him, they would first have to run the gauntlet of shore batteries at the harbor's entrance. Scattered throughout the smaller coves and river inlets to the harbor he had another 20 or more small river boats. It was a perfect place to hide or, should an enemy dare to run the gauntlet, to stand and fight.

Aboard the *Olympia*, Admiral Dewey was planning to do just that. As the ship's band played "There'll be a hot time in the old town tonight," the American commander explained his order of battle. The young moon would provide just enough light for the lead ship to spot the island of Corregidor and the entrance to Manila Bay. By midnight however, the moon would set to provide a darkened passage for his fleet as they ran the enemy gauntlet. If all went well, when morning dawned, he would find and destroy the Spanish fleet.

At 7:30 that evening, the commanders each having returned to their respective warships, Admiral Dewey began leading the convoy towards Manila Bay in his flagship. Cruising at 8 knots, strung out behind him at intervals of 400 yards, was a single line of American Naval power: *Baltimore, Raleigh, Petrel, Concord, Boston, McCulloch, Zafiro, and Nanshan*...in that order. Each ship traveled under complete blackout conditions, save for a single light aft. Even that light was shielded so as to be hid from the periphery. Only the ship directly behind could see its faint glow, as the silent warships crept in a single line towards the battlefield.

At 10:40 the lights of the enemy encampment at Corregidor came into view, and the men of the American war ships were ordered to stand by their guns. Within the half hour the "*Olympia*" entered the Boca Grand, the larger of two channels entering Manila Bay. In the darkness the dull, gray ships silently crept forward, young and untested soldiers crouching in hushed anxiety near their guns. None would sleep on this night.

By 11:30 the fleet was committed to its dangerous course when the night was lit by a rocket from Corregidor. Young sailors held their breath as they awaited the crash of enemy guns that was destined to follow. None came. The American fleet had not yet been spotted and slowly continued onward. A short time later the lights at Corregidor, Caballo Island and on the San Nicolas Banks were extinguished for the night.

Midnight and total darkness fell over the passageway, and then came the first sounds of enemy fire. At last the shore batteries had detected the passage of the American battleships, and shells began to rain over the convoy. The first rounds came from the south shore near Punta Restinga, followed by the shells from the batteries at Caballo and El Fraile. The *Raleigh* and *Concord* briefly returned fire, but the Americans quickly noted that the enemy shells were falling far over their heads. In the darkness the ships were still nearly invisible as they ran the gauntlet.

Shortly after four o'clock on the morning of May 1st, the *Olympia* was well into the harbor, the other American ships behind her and prepared for battle. Skill and daring had enabled the 9

"The North American people...have exhausted our patience and provoked war...with their acts of treachery.

"A squadron manned by foreigners, possessing neither instruction nor discipline, is preparing to come to this archipelago with the ruffianly intention of robbing us of all that means life, honor and liberty. Pretending to be inspired by a courage of which they are incapable, the North American (U.S.) seamen undertake as an enterprise capable of realization, the substitution of Protestantism for the Catholic religion you profess, to treat you as tribes refractory to civilization, to take possession of your riches as if they were unacquainted with the rights of property, and to kidnap those persons whom they consider useful to man their ships or to be exploited in agriculture or industrial labor."

When the entire text of General Basilio's March 23rd proclamation had been read, the officers of each American ship informed the crew that their destination was the Philippine Islands to "capture or destroy the Spanish fleet." The cheers of the sailors and Marines echoed across the South China Sea as the United States Navy prepared for its first major foreign test as a world power.

As morning dawned on April 30th, Admiral Dewey's fleet sighted the coastline of the largest of the Philippine islands, Luzon. The United States Navy had finally arrived, prepared for war. First however, they had to locate the enemy fleet. Spanish Admiral Patricio Montojo y Pasaron was no novice at sea, and among the more than 700 islands of the archipelago there were literally thousands of small coves that would hide his vessels.

The logical location for finding the enemy would be somewhere in the vicinity of Manila Bay, a large inlet near the Philippine capital city, midway on the western coast of Luzon. Arriving at Luzon eighty miles north of Manila Bay, Dewey dispatched his warships *Boston* and *Concord* to reconnoiter the smaller bays and inlets as the remaining seven vessels slowly continued southward towards Manila Bay.

The *Boston* and *Concord* found no sign of the enemy fleet, then proceeded to enter Subic Bay at the northwest edge of the Bataan peninsula. Again they found no sign of the enemy vessels, and turned to rejoin the fleet. As they departed the bay they met the *Baltimore*, recently dispatched ahead of the rest of Dewey's warships to meet them. (Had the reconnaissance occurred one day earlier, the *Boston* and *Concord* would have steamed directly into the Spanish fleet. Within the previous 24 hours Admiral Montojo had sailed his warships out of Subic Bay after a 4-day stay, opting to enter the shelter of the larger Manila Bay.) As the sun began to set on the evening of April 30th, Admiral Dewey's full fleet of 7 warships and 2 transports had marshaled outside Subic. He ordered the commanding officers of each ship to join him on the flag ship *Olympia*, where he outlined his plans. For the men of the United States Navy, it would be a long night.

Manila Bay is a large inlet on the western coast of Luzon, nearly twenty miles wide and twenty miles deep. Entrance to the bay is only achieved through a narrow passageway less than ten miles across, and



TROUBLE IN PARADISE



War in the Pacific

If the prospects for war with Spain had been a foregone conclusion for months, so too was the predicted outcome of such a conflict. The Spanish fleet, while still large, was an aging fleet that no longer reflected the luster and might that had made the terms "Spanish" and "Armada" synonymous. Despite the fact that many ships of the enemy fleet were constructed of steel, as were the newer warships of the U.S. Navy, they were no match for the modern guns of the American sailors. Author Sherwood Anderson had his own unique perspective of America's coming battles with Spain. He said it would be *"Like robbing an old gypsy woman in a vacant lot at night after a fair."*

Upon receiving orders to proceed, Admiral George Dewey set his own fleet on a course towards Luzon, departing Mirs Bay in China on April 27th. His flagship was the first class protected cruiser *U.S.S. Olympia*, followed by three second class cruisers *Baltimore*, *Raleigh* and *Boston*, the gunboats *Petrel* and *Concord*, the revenue cutter *Hugh MuCulloch*, and two transports *Nanshan* and *Zafiro*.

The three-day run across the South China Sea was made, as one Naval lieutenant later reported, *"As directly and with as little attempted concealment as if on a peace mission. Lights were carried at night and electric signals freely exchanged; but gruesome preparations were going on within each ship. Anchor chains were hung about exposed gun positions and wound around ammunition hoists; splinter nets were spread under boats; bulkheads, gratings and wooden chests were thrown overboard; furniture was struck below protective decks; surgical instruments were overhauled and hundreds of yards of bandaging disinfected. The sea was strewn for fifty leagues with jettisoned woodwork unfit to carry into battle."* (Lt. John Ellicott)

Once his fleet had put to sea, Admiral Dewey ordered the men to muster on each ship to hear a reading of the proclamation issued five days earlier by General Basilio Augustin Davila, the Spanish governor-general of the Philippine Islands. In that proclamation Davila asserted that,

Under Admiral William Sampson, who had earlier headed up the inquiry into the cause of the explosion on the *U.S.S. Maine*, the blockade of Cuba was already successfully underway. On the same day that war was declared, American ships bombarded the Spanish at Matanzas, Cuba.

On the other side of the globe, the U.S. Pacific fleet under Admiral George Dewey was already prepared for war as per the February 25th communiqué from Navy Undersecretary Roosevelt. Cuba in the Caribbean was not the only vestige remaining of the old Spanish Empire...Spain also held much of the series of 700 islands in the Pacific known as the Philippine Islands...which had been under the rule of Madrid since Ferdinand Magellan discovered the vast Archipelago in 1521.

While few Americans gave little notice or concern to events in the Pacific Islands, and even President McKinley confessed that he could not locate the Philippine Islands "within 2000 miles", American Naval planners had long considered the value of the natural port at Manila on Luzon, the largest of the islands. War with Spain was destined to become a global conflict, and while Admiral Sampson's ships conducted their blockade in the Caribbean, on April 27th Admiral Dewey sailed his ships out of Mirs Bay, China and set their course for Manila. The Spanish-American war would become a battlefield on two, widely separated fronts.



Back home Marine Sergeant William Anthony struggled with his new role as an American hero. On a horrible night in Havana harbor he had, as the public would loudly proclaim, been a brave and daring young leatherneck. Anthony didn't think about his *heroics* too often, instead his nights and his nightmares were filled with the agonizing cries of his fellow Marines and sailors as they perished in a moment of terror. Those nightmares, and the pressures of an adoring public that could never understand the true horror of war, pushed him to drink. He may have been the first "hero" of the *Splendid Little War* but he would not be the LAST.

By the time the brief war ended, William Anthony would be discharged from service and overcome by his past as well as his present. Despondent and unemployed, his body was found in Central Park on November 24, 1899. He committed suicide at the age of 46. For the politicians who fought their wars from comfortable desks, there might be something **SPLENDID** in war. For the young men who fight in the field, **WAR is HELL**.

The Spanish responded with some concessions, but stopped far short of granting Cuban Independence. From without, the President received pressure from the Ambassadors of England, Germany, France, Italy, Austria and Russia to avoid war with Spain. On April 6th the Pope indicated to the President that he would enter negotiations with Spain, requesting that the President delay any actions pending the outcome. The the cry from within for retaliation and U.S. support for the "freedom fighters" of Cuba continued to push the United States towards war. On April 4th the *New York Journal* dedicated an edition to the war brewing in Cuba and called upon the U.S. to intervene. The press-run was one million copies.

Finally, bowing to the rapidly deteriorating events in Cuba and the overwhelming cries for war at home, President McKinley asked Congress on April 11th to authorize American intervention to end the revolution in Cuba. Five days later the road to war was cleared in Congress when an amendment offered by Colorado Congressman Henry Teller was ratified. Designed to quiet the fears of those who opposed a war based upon an American imperialistic effort to annex Cuba, the Teller Amendment stated that the United States:

"Hereby disclaims any disposition of intention to exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction, or control over said island (Cuba) except for pacification thereof, and asserts its determination, when that is accomplished, to leave the government and control of the island to its people."

On April 20th, while Congress still debated the request for war, President McKinley signed a Joint Resolution for war with Spain, an ultimatum that was promptly forwarded to Madrid with a call for Cuban independence. The Spanish Minister to the United States promptly demanded his passport and, with his Legation, left Washington for Canada.

The following day McKinley received his answer from Madrid. General Steward Woodford, the U.S. Minister to Spain was handed his passport and told to leave the country. The Spanish government considered McKinley's ultimatum a declaration of war. With diplomatic relations suspended, President McKinley ordered a blockade of Cuba while the Spanish forces in Santiago began mining Guantanamo Bay.

The U.S. Naval fleet departed Key West, Florida on April 22nd to carry out the President's order for a blockade of Cuba. The American Navy was well prepared for war, especially against the aging Spanish fleet. But the Spanish had at least 80,000 soldiers stationed in Cuba that would require a ground war. The U.S. Army, with only 25,706 enlisted men and 2,116 officers, was not prepared for war. On April 23 the U.S. President issued a call for 125,000 volunteers. After months of patriotic fervor generated by tales of Spanish sabotage and atrocity, the recruiting stations were immediately swamped with eager young American would-be soldiers.



On April 25, 1898 the war that had been looking for an excuse to happen, finally became official. The U.S. Congress passed a resolution declaring the United States to be at war with Spain. The Naval blockade of Cuba already underway, Congress made the declaration of war effective as of April 21, thereby legitimizing military actions undertaken in the previous four days.

"Remember the *Maine*, and To Hell with Spain!"

To be sure there were cooler heads, even as the tensions mounted. Amid the cries of the firebrands and the warhawks, U.S. Speaker of the House Thomas B. Reed said, *"A war will make a large market for gravestones."* Popular author Samuel Clemmens (Mark Twain) continued to speak out against any possible war, urging the United States not to become embroiled in the affairs of distant nations.

Ten days after the explosion, Under Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt cabled Commodore George Dewey with the U.S. Pacific fleet in Hong Kong. *"Keep in full coal,"* the communiqué stated. *"In the event of declaration of war with Spain, your duty will be to see that the Spanish squadron does not leave the Asiatic coast and then offensive operations in Philippine Islands."* Itching for a fight and convinced of the truth of his earlier remarks about the glory of war to the Naval War College, Roosevelt went so far as to refer to President McKinley as a "milquetoast".

McKinley, who had served in the Civil War and participated at the tragic battle at Antietam in the earliest days of that war, told one visitor to the White House: *"I have been through one war; I have seen the dead piled up; and I do not want to see another."*

But the makings of war could not be avoided. As a matter of preparedness, President McKinley requested a \$50 million dollar war fund. On March 8th the U.S. Congress stunned Spanish observers when it unanimously approved the request. In San Francisco on the western coast, the battleship *Oregon* was dispatched for the Caribbean. On March 14 the Spanish fleet under Admiral Cervera began steaming for the Cape Verde Islands. Throughout the period the yellow journalism of competing newspapers inflamed the public with more and more stories. (During the period the New York Journal printed an unprecedented 8 pages each day related to the U.S.S. *Maine* disaster.)

Late in March the Spanish concluded its official inquiry and delivered the findings to the U.S. government on March 25. On the same day the Spanish government informed Washington that their investigators had determined the *Maine* had been destroyed by "internal combustion", the President announced the results of his recently received Sampson Inquiry. When he announced to the American public that the Naval Board of Inquiry had determined that the *Maine* was destroyed "by an external explosion (presumably a mine)", the war cries hit a feverish pitch.

Two days later President McKinley sent these findings to Spain. He also issued Spain his final terms:

- Declare an armistice
- End the reconcentration policy in Cuba initiated by General Weyler
- Begin the process of granting Cuba independence

Meanwhile, Navy Secretary John Davis Long ordered the peacetime white hulls of American warships to be painted with a dull battle gray. A song titled "My Sweetheart Went Down With the *Maine*" became the tune-of-the-day. Marine Private William Anthony, who had braved the explosions and fire of the *Maine* to seek out his captain was brought home to a hero's welcome. Honored by both the Navy and Marines, he was promoted to sergeant and hailed as the first true hero of the war that was still looking for an excuse to happen.

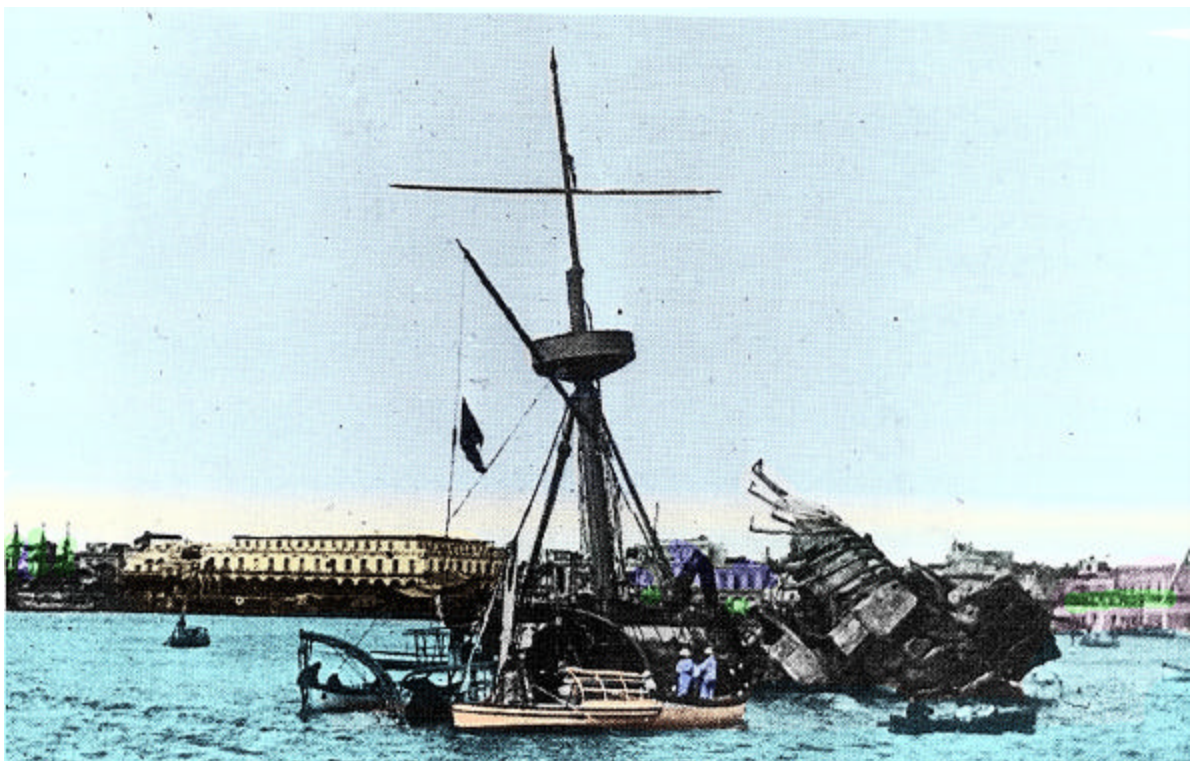
of cement struck Blandon in the head, but he recovered quickly and joined Lieutenant Hood on the poop deck, now ankle-deep in water, to begin lowering boats.

There were no Marine guards for Lieutenant Commander Wainwright to post about the ship per his Captain's orders. Nearly three-fourths of the Marines were killed in the explosion. The *U.S.S. Maine* was beyond hope, almost severed at the bow, and sinking badly. Reluctantly, Captain Sigsbee ordered the few survivors on the decks to abandon ship. As the waters of the harbor continued to reach out to claim the body of the American battleship, Sigsbee directed its evacuation. When no one else was left alive, the Captain was the last to depart.

By the time gigs from the nearby *City of Washington* and *Alfonso XII* could be dispatched to the scene of the disaster, little of the *Maine* remained above water. Through the darkness of the night the small boats searched the debris-covered waters of the harbor for survivors, Captain Sigsbee standing in one of them calling into the blackness: "*If there is anyone living on board, for God's sake say so!*" His desperate cries met only silence.

As morning dawned across the harbor, only 103 members of the crew of the *U.S.S. Maine* had survived. Two of the ship's 26 officers went down with the ship, along with 222 sailors and 28 Marines. Of the 103 survivors, 59 were wounded, 8 of them so severely that they later died as a result of their wounds. Total losses for the once proud battleship reached 260 dead or missing, a casualty rate of 75%. Among the missing was Fifer Newton whose last, memorable rendition of "Taps" had been played not only for his comrades now at rest in the deep, but for himself. In a sense it had been his own haunting eulogy.

Across the waters of the harbor, little remained of the 319-foot battleship. Only a small pile of twisted metal and the protruding mast of the *U.S.S. Maine*, still proudly "displaying the Colors".



REMEMBER THE MAINE!



"I was enclosing my letter in its envelope when the explosion came," Captain Sigsbee later testified. "It was a bursting, rending, and crashing roar of immense volume, largely metallic in character. It was followed by heavy, ominous metallic sounds. There was a trembling and lurching motion of the vessel, a list to port. The electric lights went out. Then there was intense blackness and smoke.

"The situation could not be mistaken. The Maine was blown up and sinking. For a moment the instinct of self-preservation took charge of me, but this was immediately dominated by the habit of command."

Marine Private William Anthony was on the weather deck when the *Maine* literally erupted. Captain Sigsbee's orderly, his first concern was for his captain. Though the darkness of the harbor was now awash with flame, the passageways inside the ship had been plunged into total darkness, save for flames here and there that flickered amid a heavy pall of smoke. With no concern for his own safety, Anthony search the passage ways until he found his Captain, moving towards the deck of the listing and rapidly sinking battleship. In the dim flicker of the flames, Anthony calmly saluted his captain and reported, "Sir, I have to inform you that the ship has blown up and is sinking." Both men then quickly proceeded to the weather deck, where Captain Sigsbee directed Lieutenant Commander Richard Wainwright to immediately post sentries around the ship. The first inclination was that the *Maine* was under attack.

Lieutenant Catlin later testified that he heard the sound like the "crack of a pistol and (then) the second (was) a roar that engulfed the ship's entire forward section." Indeed the entire forward section of the *Maine* had broken almost entirely in half.

On the weather deck the officers began to organize the survivors. All but two officers survived the explosion, their quarters being located aft on the battleship. The enlisted seamen and Marines were quartered below deck, most of them in the forward section where the explosion had occurred and just two decks above the powder magazines. Lieutenant Hood had witnessed the explosion from his vantage point on the deck with Lieutenant Blandon. He later described the scene. *"The whole starboard of the deck, with its sleeping berth, burst out and flew into space, as a crater of flame came through, carrying with it missiles and objects of all kinds, steel, wood, and human. (After the explosion) all was still except for the cries of the wounded, the groans of the dying, and the crackling of flame in the wreckage."*

Lieutenant Blandon foggily remembered an explosion from the port side, followed by *"a perfect rain of missiles of all descriptions, from huge pieces of cement to blocks of wood, steel railings, fragments of gratings, and all the debris that would be detachable in an explosion."* A block

face of Lieutenant John Bandon as the latter leaned against the railing to peer off at the lights of Havana. It was 9:40 P.M.

"You asleep?" Hood asked with a slight laugh.

"No, I'm on watch," Bandon answered.

And then,

the U.S.S. Maine Exploded!!



Most of Captain Charles D. Sigsbee's 24 Naval officers were graduates of the Academy at Annapolis. At least 20% of the 290 sailors they commanded were foreign born men who sought now to serve their adopted country.

A 40-man Marine guard brought the ship's total strength to 355 American servicemen. The leathernecks, under the leadership of five non-coms, were commanded by First Lieutenant Albertus W. Catlin who had graduated from the US Naval Academy with the class of 1890. (Sixteen years later as a major, Catlin would earn the Medal of Honor in the engagement at Vera Cruz, Mexico.) Nearly a fourth of the Marines were foreign-born, American immigrants.



Upon arrival in Havana on Tuesday, January 25th, the *U.S.S. Maine* anchored at Buoy #4, a space reserved for war ships. Despite this, the potential for the unrest in Cuba to turn violent, and the *Maine's* impressive array of military power, the mission was a peaceful one. Captain Sigsbee informed his crew that there would be no shore liberty while in Cuba, but for the most part the men were content to spend a brief time riding peacefully at anchor under the tropical sun of the Caribbean. After this short visit they would return to New Orleans...in time for Mardi Gras.

The Spanish welcomed, though somewhat nervously, the arrival of the *Maine*, and sent a case of sherry to the officer's mess along with an invitation to a bull fight at the "plaza de toros". Captain Sigsbee and a few of his officers dutifully accepted the invite, attending in civilian attire. On his visit ashore the commander of the *Maine* was at one point handed an anti-American propaganda pamphlet by someone in the crowd. Scrawled across it was the message, "Watch out for your ship."

Beyond the scrawled message at plaza de toros however, there was little more to indicate that the crew of the *Maine* was facing any undue danger. None-the-less, as a matter of prudence, Sigsbee ordered Lieutenant Catlin to keep his Marines at a careful state of alert.

The *Maine*, simply by her presence, seemed to have a reassuring effect upon the American Foreign Minister. General Fitzhugh Lee noted this in a communication to President McKinley and requested that when the *Maine's* tenure in Havana expired, another Naval vessel be dispatched to replace her. By Tuesday, February 15th the *Maine* had been at anchor for three weeks without incident. Though Lieutenant Catlin dutifully kept his Marines at a high state of alert, the crew of the *Maine's* biggest problem became boredom.

By the artificial light in his cabin that evening, Captain Sigsbee began was writing a letter to his family when Marine fifer C.H. Newton began playing "Taps" to signal the end of the day. *"I laid down my pen to listen to the notes of the bugle, which were singularly beautiful in the oppressive stillness of the night,"* he wrote. *"The marine bugler, Newton, who was rather given to fanciful effects, was evidently doing his best. During his pauses the echoes floated back to the ship with singular distinctness, repeating the strains of the bugle fully and exactly."* I was a dark, moonless night as the *Maine* sat idly on the smooth waters of the Caribbean harbor, anchored at peace between the the Spanish cruiser *Alfonso XII* and the American passenger ship *City of Washington*.

It was ten minutes after nine when Newton blew his haunting version of "Taps". When the last note had sounded, all was quiet. Newton returned below deck where most of the enlisted men were billeted. In his cabin, Captain Sigsbee picked up his pen to finish his letter. On deck, Lieutenant John Hood was finishing the day with a fine cigar. As he relished the smoke he noticed someone walking to the starboard side of the ship. Approaching, Hood recognized the familiar

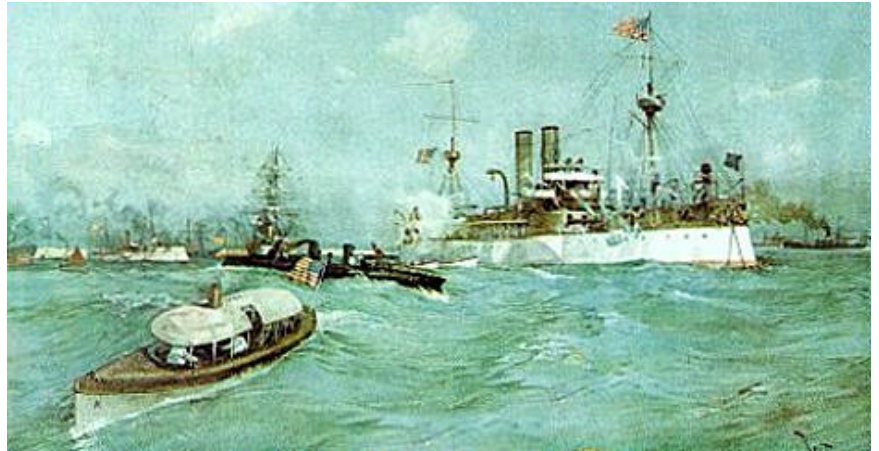
February 15, 1898



PRELUDE TO WAR

U.S.S. Maine (BB-2)

President McKinley could have selected no finer ship from the US Naval fleet to display the colors in Havana than the vessel he dispatched from Key West on January 25th. The *U.S.S. Maine* was an impressive battleship, at 319 feet long and displacing 6,682 tons it was the largest ship ever to enter the harbor at Havana. Though only a second class battleship, the nine-year-old vessel was among the most



impressive of the U.S. Naval fleet. One of our country's first steel warships, the *Maine* was unique in the fleet due the fact that it had been totally designed and built by Americans. It was the largest ship ever actually constructed in a U.S. Navy yard. Painted the bright white of a peace-time US Naval Vessel, the impressive battleship boasted four of the huge 10-inch breech-loading rifles in addition to its smaller battery armaments.

One might say that the first attack of the Spanish-American War was not made with bullets, but with words. Back in Washington, D.C. the Spanish Minister Enrique de Lome wrote a letter to a Spanish editor who was traveling in the United States. The communication was stolen by a Cuban official in the Havana Post office and passed on to the New York Journal, which printed it on February 9th. In that letter the Spanish Minister expressed his adverse personal reaction to the U.S. President's message to Congress in December of the previous year. The undiplomatic diplomat stated in his letter that President McKinley was "weak and a bidder for admiration of the crowd...(that he was) a would-be politician who tries to leave a door open behind himself while keeping on good terms with the jingoes of his party."



In fact, President McKinley had been one of the cooler heads in government where the subject of war with Spain was becoming increasingly hawkish. An American public already incensed by the yellow press, was becoming more and more ardent in their calls for American intervention in Cuba. Now the citizenry saw the attack by a Spanish diplomat on the US President as the ultimate proof of Spain's disrespect and arrogance towards the United States and events in neighboring Cuba. De Lome's resignation, and even a reluctant apology from Spain, could not assuage the anger of the American people or the sensational reporting on the incident in the media.

With the U.S.S. Maine still at anchor in Havana...



The unrest in Cuba was about to become a war...

Looking for an excuse to happen!

The heavy-handed tactics of General Weyler made for sensational reporting in the media of the *yellow press*. He became known as the "Butcher", and sensational stories of his brutality ran under blazing headlines that read: "*Spanish Cannibalism*", "*Inhuman Torture*", and worse. In the traditions of *David and Goliath*, Cuban patriots were portrayed as heroically defending their homeland against a brutal and aggressive enemy with no conscience. The truth of the news didn't matter as much as the ability of a headline to capture attention..."*Amazon Warriors Fight for Rebels*"...or the potential of a story to incite the emotions of the reader for more.

The Spanish recall of General Weyler on October 31, 1897 might have otherwise robbed the media of the prime subject of their inflammatory stories were it not for the continued unrest in Cuba. Building on stories already written and widely known, and with a battery of reporters and artists that included the likes of William Remington, the media survived. Two years earlier a 25-year old author inspired a nation by reliving the sacrifice and glory of Civil War service with the release of his second novel, *The Red Badge of Courage*. Now Stephen Crane joined the battery of writers chronicling the valiant struggle for freedom in Cuba. Even with the absence of Weyler, tensions mounted and Spain was portrayed as a poor ruler about to leap from the frying pan into the fire of Cuba.



Meanwhile the American consul in Havana, Fitzhugh Lee, was becoming increasingly concerned for the safety of American citizens in Cuba. (A Confederate general in the Civil War and nephew of Robert E. Lee, "Fitz" Lee is often confused by historians of these events with Fitzhugh Henry Lee, the son of Robert E. Lee and also a Confederate general.) On January 1, 1898 Spain demonstrated its desire to avoid war in the Caribbean when it instituted a limited political autonomy in Cuba. It was too little, too late for the ardent revolutionaries who would settle for nothing less than full independence. Meanwhile, the Spanish government had supporters of its own in Cuba, an opposing force of citizens who had supported General Weyler and who now opposed the limited autonomy afforded the island's inhabitants. On January 12th these Spanish loyalists rioted, prompting new concerns for the safety of American citizens in Cuba. Five days later Consul Lee requested the President to dispatch an American vessel in a show of American presence in the region of increasingly violent civil unrest. On January 24th, after clearing such a visit with the reluctant and nervous government in Madrid, the second class battleship *U.S.S. Maine* was dispatched from Key West, Florida. The impressive American battleship arrived in Havana the following day.

In the weeks that followed Consul Lee reported to Washington that the presence of the *Maine* had a calming effect on the unrest in Cuba. He requested that the Navy prepare to send another battleship to Havana when it came time to relieve the *Maine*. It almost appeared that the situation in Cuba might settle down. Spain didn't want war...its aging fleet would be no match for the might of the United States Navy. President McKinley had repeatedly called for negotiations, and in this new year at the close of the century, Spain had provided a limited political autonomy to the people of Cuba. Then came the first attack.

Manifest Destiny

As a philosophy, *Manifest Destiny* was a common belief throughout much of the 19th century, long before it was given a title when *Democratic Review* editor John L. Sullivan wrote in 1845 that no nation on earth should be allowed to interfere with America's "MANIFEST DESTINY to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions." Sullivan wrote his article in support of annexation of Texas, but the concept that the people of the United States had a sacred obligation to expand its borders to include all of North America (including Canada and Mexico), became the rallying cry... and excuse, for all incursions into new territory.

Sullivan defined Manifest Destiny in a three-point argument that quickly gained popularity:

God Himself was on the side of those eager to expand the US Territories. This line of thinking stemmed from the belief following the American Revolution that the United States was the land of a chosen people, delivered from Great Britain's rule and preserved by divine providence and in accordance with a divine plan.

FREE DEVELOPMENT meant that the conquest of new regions, placing them under American rule, was the liberation of previously oppressed people. In this regard, the philosophy rendered a concept of the United States as the ultimate *savior* of the western hemisphere, thereby excusing expansionist activities.

Sullivan's third point was the belief that, as the United States population grew rapidly, it was necessary to expand and inhabit new territories to accommodate the needs of the people of this *chosen* nation.

Yellow Journalism



In 1895 William Randolph Hearst acquired the New York Journal and immediately launched a circulation war against the other giant of newspaper publishing, Joseph Pulitzer's New York World. To compete for readers, the two newspapers stooped to heavy coverage of scandal and sex-related content beneath glaring headlines designed to capture attention. In addition to what we would today call "tabloid" journalism; colorful cartoons were used to draw loyal audiences.

R.F. Outcault was a cartoonist for the New York World, creating the immensely popular YELLOW KID cartoons. In May 1896 World competitor the New York Journal pulled off a journalistic coup when Hearst convinced Outcault to bring his artistic talents to his own newspaper. Pulitzer quickly brought in George Luks to keep the cartoon running in the New York World, sparking a battle between the two "yellow kids".

Thus it was that, as the two major newspapers stooped to any means from sensational news reporting to cartoon battles, the battle of the YELLOW KID lent its own name to the process to become known as "YELLOW JOURNALISM".

to Washington (known as the Ostend Manifesto) urging President Franklin Pierce to either purchase Cuba or forcefully wrest control of the island from Spain.

In the years following the American Civil War, interest in acquiring Cuba as an annexation to the United States waned, to be replaced by cries for Cuban independence. During Cuba's Ten Years' War for independence (1868-78), American sympathies lay with the Cuban insurgents who struggled to throw off the last remnants of the Spanish global empire that dated back to Christopher Columbus. Clandestine support for the Cuban rebels was common, particularly in the South where *Filibusters*...military expeditions by private adventurers...were encouraged and supported by the American citizenry. Leaders in the revolt like Jose Marti often operated on American soil as they plotted the overthrow of Spanish rule. But, after the devastating Civil War, the American populace was not ready to become involved in another war themselves.

In 1873 the Spanish captured the Cuban ship *Virginius*, a vessel of the Filibusters. It was fraudulently flying the American flag as it ferried arms to the Cuban insurgents. Captain Joseph Fry and 52 of his crew and passengers were executed, among them several American and British citizens. In other times, such an incident might have led to immediate war but, after the devastating Civil War, the US populace was not ready to become involved in another conflict...yet. Civil War hero Daniel Edgar Sickles, now the US Minister to Spain, was infuriated and might have rendered any negotiations futile. But Secretary of State Hamilton Fish took negotiations out of Sickles' hand, settling the matter peaceably with Spain, which paid an \$80,000 indemnity to the families of those Americans executed.

When the Ten Years War ended in 1878, the Cuban bid for independence had been crushed and Spain continued to tenuously hold its Caribbean asset. The sad loss could not, however, diminish the desire the Cuban patriots held for independence. Within 20 years it rose again, with a renewed fervor. Meanwhile attitudes in the United States were becoming more and more imperialistic and the American people were taking a new view of their nation in the affairs of a world that advances in technology had made much smaller. Even as rebellion broke out anew in Cuba in 1895, the United States was taking a more active role in events in the western hemisphere. While intervening in a dispute between Venezuela and Great Britain, Secretary of State Richard Olney echoed the growing American sentiment:

"The United States is practically *sovereign* upon this continent, and its fiat is law upon subjects to which it confines its interposition."

In April 1895 the bid for independence in Cuba was renewed in earnest. Patriots, willing to expend every energy and even their own lives to oust the Spanish, began arming themselves and conducting bloody campaigns against their oppressors. In response, the Spanish government sent General Valeriano Weyler y Nicolau to *pacify the island* in 1896. General Weyler responded by identifying districts that posed the greatest trouble to maintaining control over Cuba, then herded the civilian populations in those districts to detention camps near military headquarters. It was a policy he called *reconcentrado*. As a result of this action, more than 100,000 Cubans starved or died of disease before General Weyler was recalled in October, 1897.

In the United States, two trends of the times contributed greatly to the ultimate end result of the unrest in Cuba.

"We want no wars of conquest; we must avoid the temptation of territorial aggression. War should never be entered upon until every agency of peace has failed; peace is preferable to war in almost every contingency.

(President McKinley in his 1897 Inaugural Address)

A WAR LOOKING FOR AN EXCUSE

The assurances of the U.S. President aside, events in Cuba were making war with Spain an eventuality that was destined to occur.

Lying just 90 miles south of the tip of Florida, the sugar-rich island of Cuba was sometimes called the *Pearl of the Antilles*. Along with the neighboring island of Puerto Rico, Cuba was among the last holdings of the aging Spanish empire. Between the islands lay the independent Republic of Haiti

(freed from French rule in 1804) and the Dominican Republic, which declared independence from Haiti in 1844. The people of Cuba likewise sought independent rule, leading to a quarter-century of unrest. A short distance away the people of the United States watched events in the Caribbean unfold with great interest.



In 1823 Secretary of State John Quincy Adams noted, "The apple severed from the tree must fall to the ground. Cuba severed from Spain, and incapable of self-support, can gravitate only toward the North American Union (United States), which by the same law of nature cannot cast her off from its bosom." That the United States was interested in acquiring the Caribbean island with its natural port at Havana was no secret. In 1848 President James K. Polk offered Spain \$100 million for Cuba, an offer that was quickly and curtly rejected. Six years later the American ministers to France, Spain and England joined in writing a confidential memorandum

As a direct result of that brief, first major foreign war, the face of America changed forever. The Spanish American War led to the liberation of Cuba, a continued American presence in the Philippine Islands, American expansion to Guam and Puerto Rico, and the construction of the Panama Canal. It was a war fought largely by citizen soldiers from the National Guard and led to the reorganization of our reserves under the Dick Act of 1903. On the fields of combat, lifetime friendships were formed. Upon their triumphal return, American soldiers were hailed as heroes in their hometowns.

Indeed, from the perspective of United States history, if ever there were a *good war*, it was the Spanish American War. Shortly after hostilities ended in Cuba and the United States entered a period of negotiations for the peace treaty to end the Spanish American War, John Milton Hay was appointed Secretary of State by President William McKinley. Years later when Theodore Roosevelt occupied the White House, Hay wrote the President about that war. In that letter he summarized the conflict with a quote that came to be linked with the first war of American expansion beyond her borders. He called it:

"A Splendid Little War"



INTRODUCTION

It has been said somewhere that "There has never been a good WAR or a bad PEACE." War is a horrible human experience, disrupting world harmony and taking the lives of young men and women before their time. The United States of America was conceived in revolution, tested in a great civil war, and tempered through its westward expansion by armed conflict. Perhaps Thomas Jefferson best summarized the inevitability of war, as well as its desired outcome, in his letter to William Smith in 1787 when he wrote:

"The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure."

In the spring of 1898 the United States went to war with the empire of Spain. It was our Nation's first major conflict since the Civil War, and the first major foreign war in our Country's brief history. It was a war for which the United States was unprepared militarily, but a war that had been looking for an excuse to happen for a quarter-century.

It was a war that lasted less than a year from declaration of war to signing of the Treaty of Paris ending it. Violent conflict spanned a period of only 115 days with less than 400 American combat deaths. It was an unqualified victory for the United States, a success that propelled the young nation to the forefront as a world power.

It was a foreign war that received popular support on the home front, considered by many historians to be our *most popular war*. It was glamorized in the media, indeed even instigated to some degree by the leading news publishers of the day. In the early days before war was declared but when conflict appeared imminent, *New York Journal* publisher William Randolph Hearst sent the famous Western artist Frederick Remington to Cuba to sketch Cuban insurgents fighting for their independence from Spain. After several months, Remington had found little to draw and wired New York, "Everything quiet, no trouble here. There will be no war. I wish to return." Hearst reportedly responded to Remington's appraisal of the situation in Cuba and his request to come home with the following:

You furnish the pictures and I'll furnish the war."

When at last war with Spain did come, a nationalistic press sensationalized the defeats of the enemy and embellished the heroic actions of American soldiers. Several national heroes emerged "larger than life". Theodore Roosevelt would be propelled into the White House within 3 years, in large part on the basis of the stories of his exploits during the war. Just before the war began, Roosevelt summarized the sentiment of the American public well in a speech to the Naval War College when he said:

"No triumph of peace is quite so great as the supreme triumphs of war."

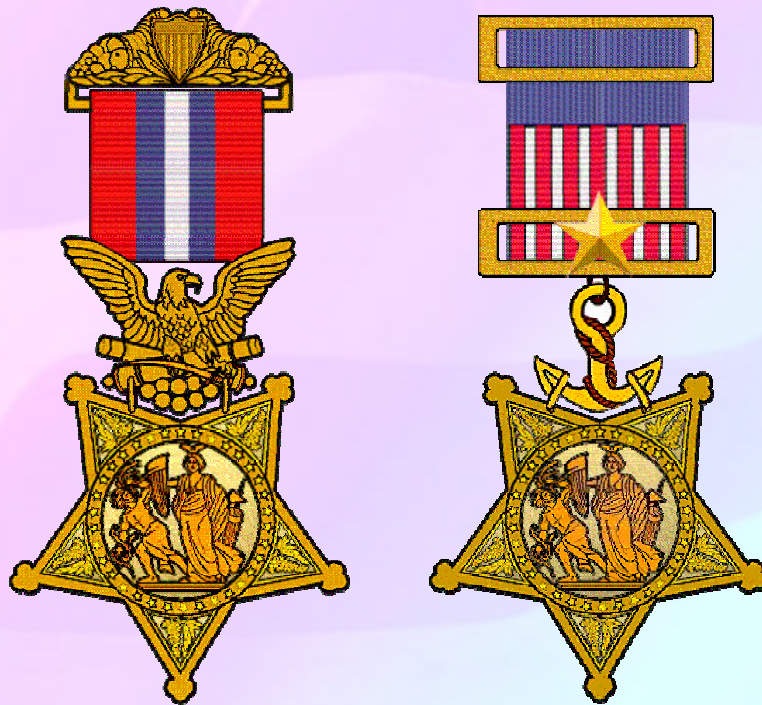
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A Splendid Little War

A Chronology of Heroism During the Spanish-American War

By
C. Douglas Sterner



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A Splendid Little War



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