

**STRATEGY
RESEARCH
PROJECT**

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THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

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The paper focuses on the following questions concerning the Spanish-American War (SP WAR): What were the causes of the SP War? What strategic principles were applied in the SP War? What influence did the strategic thinkers of the day have on the SP War? What was the state of readiness of the combatants? What was the effect of disparate technologies that were used in the SP War? What was the nature of the ground campaign? What effect did naval forces have on the strategic aspects of the war? To what extent did the American ground and naval forces cooperate operationally; and why was it necessary for them to do so? How were "joint operations" coordinated? What was the command structure? Was there anything in the command structure that resembled our modern concept of joint command? Was there any "unity of command" principle applied? What were the strategic implications of the outcome of the war? What effect did the SP War have on attempts to improve future readiness of American forces?

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PREFACE

101 years after the Spanish-American War the collective American memory of it can be boiled down to only a few simple bromides, such as:

- it was an unnecessary war incited by self-indulgent news media moguls
- it was waged against a country that was wrongfully accused by imperialists of sinking of an American battleship
- "Teddy" Roosevelt (who did not like to be called Teddy) charged up San Juan Hill.

It has also been characterized as a war with comic opera overtones in which bungling Americans all too easily defeated incompetent Spaniards. The fact that there was little or no mention or remembrance of the war's centennial outside of some military circles belies the fact that it is now more of a national discomfiture than a source of pride.

What we seem to have collectively forgotten is that it was a defining moment that thrust America into the role of a global power. It was a moment defined by much patriotism, pride, and a genuine outpouring of humanitarian concern for the people of Cuba. There was also a great deal of true heroism, sacrifice, determination and competence displayed by a large number soldiers, sailors and marines.

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THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

It has been a splendid little war; begun with the highest motives; carried on with magnificent intelligence and spirit, favored by that fortune which loves the brave.

— John Hay, in a letter to Theodore Roosevelt, Jr.

An hour or two at Manila, an hour or two at Santiago, and the maps of the world were changed.

— Rear Admiral Albert S. Barker

CAUSES OF THE WAR

The German theorist Carl Von Clausewitz taught us that success in war depends upon the "remarkable trinity" of the Army, the Government and the People. If one of these members of the "trinity" is weak or missing, the war effort will suffer accordingly. There is no doubt that the will of the American people was the prominent factor in the cause of the War with Spain, and that it was strongly supportive to the end. History has seen many cases where governments and armies have compelled their people into war, but in the War with Spain it was the people who pushed the government and the army into action. President McKinley's administration wanted to avoid war even after the USS Maine affair in Havana. In the end, the will of people could no longer be resisted and President McKinley was obliged to deliver an ultimatum to the Spanish government.¹

Spain's trouble with Cuba goes back long before the 1890s. In 1868 the first large insurrection started and it took ten years to put down. In 1892 a group of exiled Cubans led by Jose Marti created a new Revolutionary Party in New York City. They had the support of many private citizens including American sympathizers and a large population of Cuban exiles. Hard economic times in the U.S. led to heavy tariffs on Cuban sugar, which was a hard blow to an already weak Cuban economy. By 1895 another serious insurrection was underway. Spain committed 80,000 troops in an attempt to defeat the rebels. The insurgents adopted a "scorched earth" policy aimed at destroying Cuba's economic value to Spain and ensuring that the population would remain in a general state of misery. The insurgent leaders also believed that ultimate victory would depend upon American intervention.²

In 1896 Spain sent General Valeriano Weyler to take command. Weyler quickly became the most popular villain his time. He implemented a scheme that partitioned the country into "trochas" or zones separated by fortified frontiers stretching from coast to coast, believing that the quickest way to end the war was to be as drastic as possible (he claimed to be an admirer of General William T. Sherman). This measure greatly constrained the mobility of rebel columns moving through the countryside and prevented mutual support between rebel forces. Most

controversial was Weyler's "reconcentration" program in which the entire rural population was ordered into camps inside fortified towns. Spanish troops were then free to consider anyone not in a camp as a rebel. This tactic deprived rebel troops of their support network and places of sanctuary. These methods were quite successful and Weyler was on his way to winning the war in the field. However, these tactics had a devastating impact on the Cuban population that could not be hidden from the outside world. Hunger, disease and warfare led to the deaths of between 200,000 and 400,000 "reconcentrados."³ Enthusiastic American journalists gobbled up stories of Spanish atrocities fed them by the rebel network operating both in Cuba and the U.S. These so-called "yellow journalists" undoubtedly exaggerated some of these stories and fabricated others. There is no doubt that the plight of the average Cuban was a very poor one, but the part of the story that Americans did not see in their morning newspapers was the Cuban insurgent role in adding to the suffering. News of what was happening in Cuba outraged the American public to the point where it became one of the main concerns of the nation. This of course had an effect on Congress and President McKinley. McKinley was concerned about the Cuba situation, but as a combat veteran of the Civil War he was most anxious to find a peaceful resolution.

Throughout 1897 the McKinley administration mounted a diplomatic campaign to resolve the issue with Spain. This was a difficult process since Spain had long considered Cuba to be its most valuable possession and they believed the insurrection survived only because of U.S. support. Internal Spanish politics were such that survival of the ruling regime hinged upon not losing Cuba without an honorable fight. Nevertheless, by December 1897 the McKinley administration persuaded Spain to grant a measure of autonomy to both Cuba and Puerto Rico. While it seemed that a solution had finally been reached, the Cuban rebels negated the deal by refusing to settle for anything less than total independence. They were totally committed to an all-or-nothing policy of bringing the U.S. into the war.⁴

On 12 January 1898, Spanish officers and Cuban loyalists angry about the notion of Cuban autonomy fomented riots in the city. At the same time German naval vessels were making a series of port calls throughout the Caribbean and were due to arrive in Havana shortly. Concern for the safety of Americans, and a long held fear that Spain might sell Cuba to Germany prompted the McKinley administration to send the battleship USS Maine to Havana for an extended port visit. The Maine would serve as symbol of American resolve to both Spain and Germany.

Arriving on 25 January 1898, the Maine received a cordial welcome in Havana and the visit actually seemed to allay some of

the tension between the U.S. and Spain. Two weeks into the port visit the Cuban rebel party in New York City succeeded in intercepting a letter from Enrique Dupuy de Lome the Spanish ambassador in Washington DC to a friend in Madrid. The letter contained disparaging remarks about President McKinley and the American press was given a copy, which they of course published. The Spanish government issued an apology for the letter on 14 February, but the very next day a mysterious explosion sank the USS Maine in Havana harbor killing 268 out of 374 crewmen. Both the U.S. and Spain conducted separate inquiries into the cause of the explosion. On 21 March a U.S. Navy report determined the cause to be an external explosion that caused secondary explosions in the ship's forward powder magazines. The very next day Spain released a report that lay the blame on an internal magazine explosion caused by spontaneous combustion inside a coal bunker.⁵

Needless to say the Maine incident caused uproar in the American newspapers and the Cuba problem was elevated from being one of the main public concerns to the overriding issue of the day. Even so, the McKinley administration was still committed to avoiding war (with of course notable exceptions such as Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt, Jr.) even though they realized that Congress and the public was surely going to force the issue. (Many in Congress wanted to declare

war even if the President did not ask for it.) A renewed diplomatic campaign obtained some results. Spain agreed to stop the reconcentration program and to implement an armistice. However, they refused an American demand to submit the question of Cuban independence to arbitration. Accordingly, on 11 April 1898 President McKinley asked Congress for permission to intervene in Cuba, which was approved on the 19th. By 21 April the U.S. Navy had put Cuba under blockade and Spain declared war on 24 April 1898.⁶

STRATEGIC ALTERNATIVES AND OPENING MOVES

The first major battle of the war came quickly after the exchange of declarations, and nowhere near Cuba. Firmly believing in Alfred Thayer Mahan's theories of naval strategy, U.S. naval planners knew that the primary consideration must be the Spanish fleet. There were three Spanish naval forces that had to be dealt with. The first was the Spanish naval squadron in the Philippines commanded by Admiral Montojo. The second was Admiral Cervera's Cape Verde squadron in the Eastern Atlantic. Another, more potent force was undergoing repairs in Cadiz, Spain and would not be ready for battle for two more months.

The U.S. course of action in dealing with Motojo was clear and non-controversial. For quite sometime Commodore Dewey, commanding the U.S. Asiatic Squadron had been preparing and positioning himself for an attack on Montojo. By the 27th of

April, Dewey had put to sea in search of the Admiral Montojo's Squadron that he knew was somewhere in the Manila Bay area. Knowing that he was outclassed, Montojo positioned his force in a shallow anchorage supported by shore batteries. He denied himself the ability to maneuver or escape believing that his force was incapable of success. Dewey found him there on 1 May 1898 and destroyed his force in a very one-sided battle.⁷

In the Atlantic/Caribbean Theater the first American course of action was easily arrived at. A blockade of Havana was quickly implemented even before declarations of war had been exchanged. It was what to do next that was the problem. Admiral Cervera's force was strong on paper but weak in reality. His ships were in a poor state of repair and readiness (a general condition throughout the Spanish Navy).⁸

Knowing that the U.S. fleet also outclassed his force, Cervera advocated keeping the squadron in the Canary Islands. If he had been allowed to do this his squadron would have become what Mahan called a "fleet in being." In this role his position and readiness to move would be a constant potential threat that would force the U.S. Navy to restrict its operations in order to be always prepared to deal with a sortie. It would have magnified the value of this somewhat weak force. However, the Spanish government's decision making process was consumed by political considerations.⁹ Spain was an imperial power and

empires demand protection, so it was with the Spanish possessions in the Caribbean. After much vacillation, the Spanish government yielded to pressure from its possessions for protection, and Cervera was ordered to set sail for Puerto Rico on 29 April.¹⁰

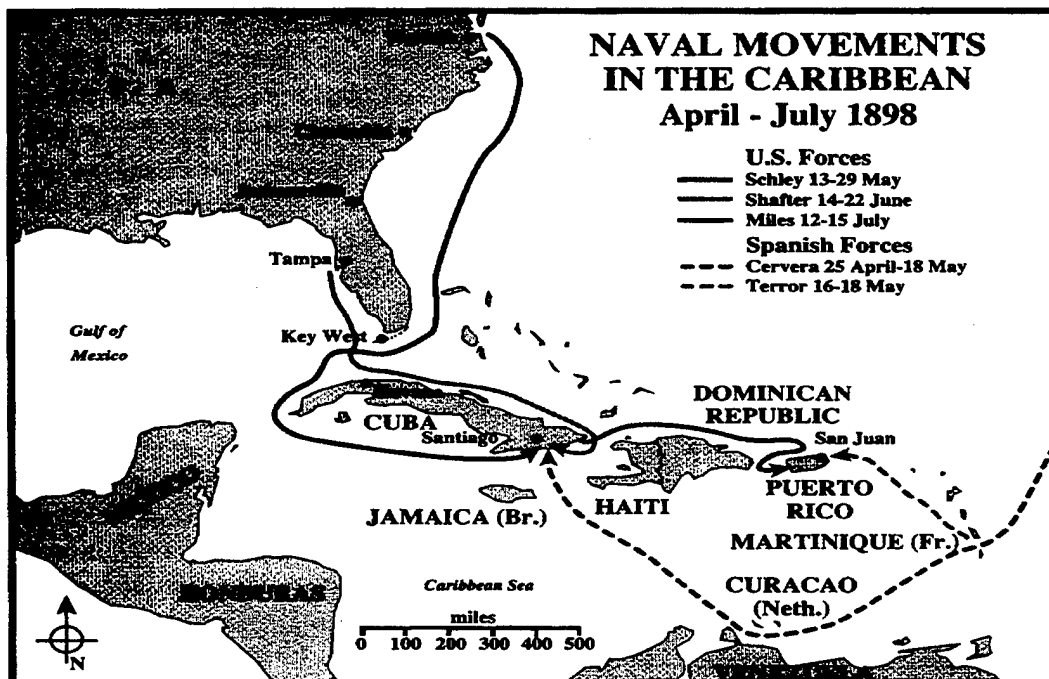


Figure 1: Strategic Movements, Caribbean Theater

Even before Cervera began his voyage, there was much consternation and disagreement in the U.S. as to how to deal with him. The Navy, committed to be precepts of Mahan, wanted to keep the Atlantic force concentrated so it could intercept Cervera on the high seas and overwhelm it before it could

threaten the U.S. East Coast or endanger the expeditionary force that was being prepared. However, the American press had magnified Cervera's squadron into a menace that would wreak destruction on the coastal population centers of the U.S. Before long the East Coast cities were all demanding "their own battleship" to protect their harbors; a policy which would have allowed the fleet to be destroyed piecemeal. Mahan's writings had a great influence upon his contemporaries (not only in the U.S. but around the world as well). The McKinley administration believed in his principles (Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. was an ardent supporter) and they guided the decision cycle. Nevertheless, the interplay of politics demanded a compromise. The Army was directed to bolster harbor defenses (a role that Mahan said belonged with the Army, not the Navy) and the Navy recommissioned several Civil War Era iron-clads to distribute among the port cities. In addition to this, the main battle fleet was in fact divided.¹¹ Two battleships and three cruisers were detached from Rear Admiral William Sampson's North Atlantic Squadron in Key West, Florida. This detachment was dubbed the Flying Squadron and was positioned at Hampton Roads, Virginia where it could quickly respond to a Spanish raid on any point of the U.S. East Coast.

Cervera's departure from Cape Verde temporarily raised the strategic value of his force. In the early phase of the war the

threat posed by this squadron dominated discussions of naval strategy, and as it turned out the strategy for employment of the Army as well. In those days a fleet on the high seas was an enigma to those who had to deal with it. Where was it? When and where would it appear again? Will we have forces properly positioned to confront it when it emerges from the open ocean? These are the questions that plagued everyone's mind while Cervera was crossing the Atlantic.

While American planners correctly guessed that Cervera intended to use San Juan, Puerto Rico as a base of operations, the Army and Navy argued about the next course of action. The Navy wanted an immediate landing in Cuba so they would be relieved of the burden of blockading the island and also being able to concentrate force against Cervera at the same time. The Army said it needed time to train its large volunteer force that was being raised and did not want to commence a campaign in Cuba right before its notorious fever season started. This was unacceptable to the Navy since it meant they would have to blockade Cuba well into the hurricane season. An interim Army/Navy agreement to deprive Cervera of his base by taking San Juan, Puerto Rico was rejected by President McKinley who wanted a landing in Cuba inside of a month. The Army and Navy then engaged in a feud in which each tried to prove to the President

that the other was incapable of mounting such an operation that quickly.¹²

On 10 May, Admiral Cervera settled the argument by showing up in the Caribbean port of Martinique looking for fuel. At this moment Cervera's squadron ceased being a Mahanian "fleet-in-being." Now, knowing for sure that the U.S. East Coast was not Cervera's destination, the U.S. Flying Squadron under Commodore Schley was free to steam to the Caribbean at best speed. Having been denied coal by the French government at Martinique, Cervera was in a quandary. He wanted to make for San Juan, Puerto Rico but decided against it when he realized he might encounter an American naval force there. He could reach Cuba with what little fuel he had left, but of the three best harbors two of them, Cienfuegos and Havana, had been blockaded. That left Santiago de Cuba as the only friendly fortified harbor he could reach without having to fight his way past an American naval force. Thus it was that Cervera's squadron arrived in Santiago on 19 May. The U.S. Flying Squadron, which had been searching the Cuban coast, found Cervera at Santiago on 28 May. Both the Flying Squadron and Admiral Sampson's North Atlantic Squadron promptly blockaded Santiago after landing Marines at Guantanamo Bay to establish a coaling station. Cervera was "bottled up" but he was safe for the time being due to the

fortifications guarding the narrow waters leading into the harbor.¹³

In Washington, DC the next course of action suddenly became very clear. In a true Mahanian fashion, the McKinley administration's attention was still riveted on Cervera's squadron. If Cervera's force could be destroyed a threat to the homeland would be eliminated, while at the same time severing Cuba from Mother Spain. Cervera's ships were the "center of gravity!" On 31 May, General Shafter was directed to take his expeditionary V Corps to Santiago and "in cooperation with the Navy ... capture and destroy the Spanish Fleet." Not only was this going to be America's first large-scale joint expeditionary operation beyond the confines of the North American continent; the Army was going to help the Navy defeat an enemy naval force!

MOBILIZATION

In 1898 the U.S Regular Army was a proficient, but small professional force of 28,000. It was scattered among approximately 100 different posts, and there were no formations larger than a regiment. Since this force was not large enough to attack the far-flung Spanish Empire, it had to be augmented quickly. The best way to do this in 1898 was to federalize the state militias, which had come to be known as the National Guard. This National Guard was capable of mustering up to

115,000 troops but the Commanding General of the Army, Major General Nelson Miles preferred to expand the Regular Army instead. However, the National Guard's political influence ensured that it would not be left out of the war. After considerable dispute Congress authorized an expansion of the Regular Army to 65,000. There would also be a Volunteer Army raised by the states with the governors appointing all the regimental officers. This arrangement was exactly like the system used to expand the Army in 1861 with the exception that this time the initial rounds of recruiting were limited to members of the National Guard. The actual mobilization commenced six days prior to receiving Spain's declaration of war. Eventually a force totaling 270,000 was raised and concentrated into makeshift camps in New Orleans, Mobile, Tampa and the Chickamauga Battlefield Park. Keeping these men adequately supplied was very problematic until late in the war.¹⁴

THE SANTIAGO CAMPAIGN

LOGISTICS AND MOVEMENT

President McKinley had set a departure date of 4 June for General Shafter's V Corps in Tampa, but this turned out to be impossible. The port of Tampa was the closest port to Cuba having rail connections to the interior of the U.S.

Nevertheless, it was inadequate for the task of handling an expeditionary force of 25,000. The logistics problems were frightening. The rail lines, yards and warehouses were totally overwhelmed. There was a logjam of rail cars standing on track sidings north of Tampa that extended hundreds of miles. Many of the freight cars lacked bills of lading, which meant they had to be physically opened to see what was in them. The food shipments were more than adequate but they had been shipped in bulk form from the contractors. This meant that the V Corps supply staff had to repackage everything into rations that could be distributed and loaded aboard ship.¹⁵

As if this was not bad enough, the Port of Tampa was actually nine miles from Tampa and was connected by a single-track rail line. Movement to the port, was of course, extremely difficult.¹⁶

The scene at the Port of Tampa was a frantic one. The port had only one wharf and that was capable of taking only nine ships at time. Thirty-one freighters had been chartered for the expedition. The rail line was 50 feet inshore of the wharf, so all the supplies had to be carried to the waiting ships by hand. A lack of cranes forced reliance on the ships' hoists. The freight loading process had begun as early as 26 May, but was not completed until 7 June.¹⁷ Once the freight was loaded, the process of rotating the ships back to the wharf was repeated to

load the troops. Since there was not enough room, each regiment had to leave one-third of its men behind and the cavalry units had to leave their horses. The loading plan quickly broke down and regiments were scurrying to get aboard any ship they could.¹⁸

After a hectic day of embarkation the force was ready to depart on 8 June. Unfortunately, the transports had to spend four more days swinging at anchor in Tampa Harbor while the Navy tracked down a false report that Spanish warships were in the area. Finally on 12 June the expedition set sail with its naval escort and arrived off Santiago de Cuba on 20 June after an uneventful voyage.

PLANNING

There was no joint force commander for the Santiago expedition. No provision for appointing a joint force commander existed at the time. At the national level President McKinley quickly realized that some form of joint decision making was both lacking and necessary, so he took it upon himself to form a semblance of a joint command center in the White House. He hosted regular conferences of the service secretaries and service chiefs that included State Department and other cabinet officials. It was at these conferences that McKinley coordinated the planning and conduct of the various campaigns. At the service level, the Navy established a Naval War Board and

for quite some time had used the Naval War College as an early "think tank" where papers were frequently written on various scenarios might possibly become reality. The final war plan that President McKinley adopted was a direct descendent of these War College papers with ground force operations tacked on. The Army formed its own boards for managing the mobilization and other purposes, and eventually a small Army/Navy liaison group was established to coordinate operations.¹⁹ After the war a formal Joint Army and Navy Board was established to give permanence to this liaison group, but the task of creating true joint task forces with unity of command was left to future generations.²⁰

When the War Department or the Navy Department recognized that one of their field commanders would have to operate with the other service, a statement calling for cooperation was written into his orders and it was assumed that that was good enough. As a result there was a dual chain of command in all operations. The commanders met and discussed options with each being free to reject the notions of the other.²¹

THE LANDING

When General Shafter arrived at Santiago he was immediately confronted with the need to talk to the Navy. Admiral Sampson quickly let Shafter know that we wanted him to seize the forts

guarding the harbor entrance so the fleet could enter and attack the Spanish squadron. Shafter had no intention of making a frontal assault of that nature, but he did not make it clear to the Admiral that he disagreed. They did agree on a landing plan that called for a landing at the small coastal town of Daiquiri 16 miles east of Santiago. Daiquiri was selected because Shafter wanted to land his force in an area that was not too close to the main Spanish forces defending Santiago. The landing was accompanied by naval deception bombardments and Cuban insurgent diversionary attacks. A company size force of Spanish troops initially defended the landing area but Cuban insurgent attacks and a naval bombardment persuaded them to leave.

Throughout the campaign the Spanish never attempted a decisive concentration of force anywhere. Spain had a total of 200,000 regulars and volunteers stationed throughout Cuba. LTG Linares, the commander of Oriente Province, had 35,000 troops under his command of which 10,500 were positioned in and around Santiago. So, if the Spanish had more than enough troops to overwhelm Shafter's V Corps, why did they continually commit only piecemeal blocking forces in his way? The main answer seems to be the Cuban insurgents who were also present throughout the island. In Oriente Province alone there were 15,000 rebel troops. Half of these were dispersed throughout

the province. The rest were available for operations in the Santiago area.²²

The decision to land at Daiquiri turned out to be a fairly sound one since unloading a force of 16,000 troops and all its equipment at anchor was difficult for V Corps (it would have been difficult for anyone in 1898). The force had brought only one tug, three steam launches and two barges (one was lost at sea in route) to assist with the landing. Other than that, ship's lifeboats were the primary method of debarkation. Much needed supplies were still being off-loaded days later after the troops were moving into contact with the enemy.

FIRST CONTACT

The first part of the force to establish a good lodgment was Brigadier General Lawton's 2nd Division who advanced eight miles west to Siboney. This town became an additional landing site and the main supply depot for the operation. Shafter wanted to wait until the entire force was ashore before forcing any engagements and told Lawton to stay entrenched at Siboney. However the Cavalry Division under Major General Joe Wheeler was now on the scene as well.²³ Wheeler had learned from the Cuban guerrillas that a force of about 2,000 Spanish troops was only three miles to the northwest at Las Guasimas occupying a ridge

astride the road to Santiago. Although it was clearly against Shafter's known intentions, Wheeler authorized Brigadier General

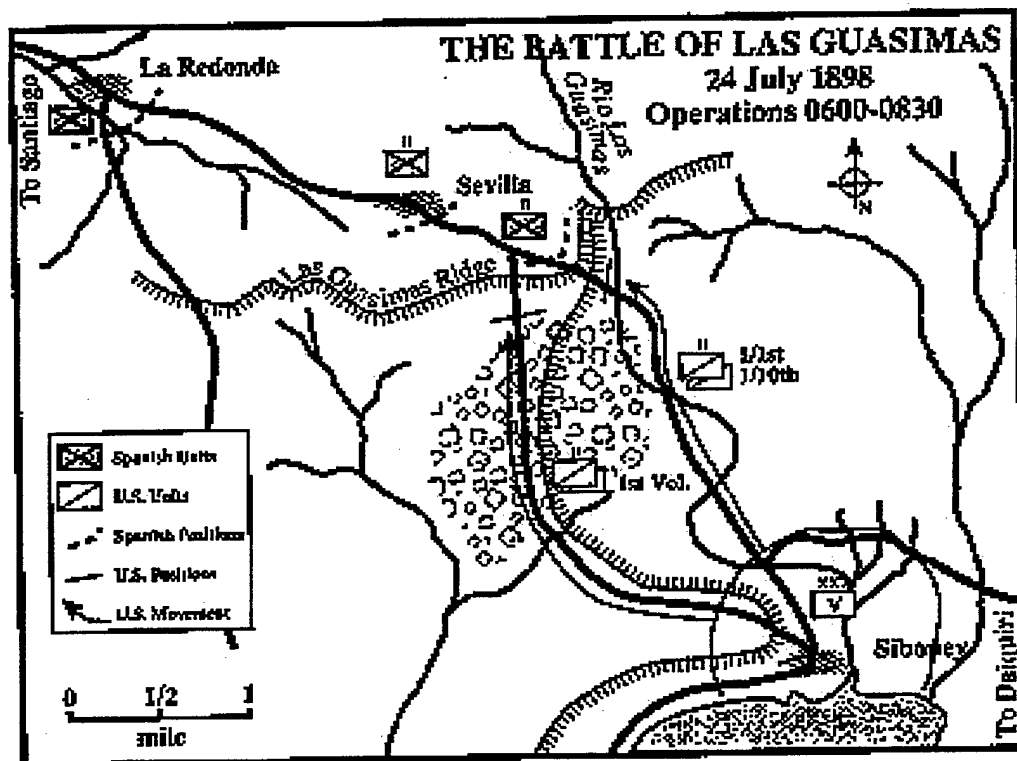


Figure 2: First Contact at Las Guasimas

Young to make a reconnaissance-in-force toward Las Guasimas with the Cavalry Division (minus horses).

Using two roads that converged on Las Guasimas, Young sent elements of the 1st and 10th Cavalry Regiments up the right hand road and the 1st Volunteer Cavalry (Rough Riders), a total of 1,300, up the left hand road at first light on the morning of 24 July.

Brigadier General Antonio Rubin, the Spanish commander at Las Guasimas, had been directed to fight delaying actions to buy time for General Linares to finish preparing the defensive works around Santiago. His force (actually numbered 1,500) was arrayed in a three layer defense-in-depth beginning on the Las Guasimas ridge and extending back to the village of La Redonda. The two roads traversed thick vegetation and the two columns were headed toward the U.S. Army's first experience in jungle warfare. Neither column was capable of seeing or supporting the other during the approach march. At the edge of a clearing they suddenly came under heavy fire from the opposite edge. (The newspapers would later call it an ambush.) The first minutes were desperate as the Spanish Mausers took a heavy toll while allowing the enemy to remain invisible to the Americans. Once a notion was gained of where the enemy was shooting from, an orderly leapfrog advance commenced with part of the men providing covering fire for those advancing in succession. The vegetation opened up as the advance reached the ridge and a hacienda functioning as a strong point could be seen at the summit.

Colonel Leonard Wood, commanding the Rough Riders, and his second-in-command, Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. led their men in a charge up the ridge. At the same time the Regulars were emerging from the forest on the right (after

themselves being held off for awhile by the Mausers) on the defenders left flank. Meanwhile General Rubin had already starting falling back and his rear-guard was quickly driven off the ridge.²⁴

The first encounter was now over and the objective was obtained, but at a cost of 8% casualties. General Rubin probably could have held much longer and inflicted many more casualties if he had put more of his men on the Las Guasimas line. As it was, he withdrew well beyond his second and third prepared positions all the way to the village of El Pozo, only a mile east of the main Spanish line at the San Juan River.

Following the encounter at Las Guasimas, V Corps slowly advanced toward the villages of Sevilla and El Pozo. General Shafter wanted to avoid any more engagements until the entire expedition was off-loaded and capable of operating as a single mass while his subordinates were eager to occupy better positions closer to the enemy. They knew that the Spanish Army had now withdrawn all the way to San Juan Heights. By the 27th Shafter had reluctantly agreed to let General Wheeler advance all the way to El Pozo.

From El Pozo Wheeler could see the Spanish preparing trenches and barbed wire barriers on San Juan Hill. In front of, and slightly to the right, lay Kettle Hill that was also being prepared for defense. A wooden blockhouse had been built

on the summit of San Juan Hill, and a sugar refinery (with a large kettle) sat atop Kettle Hill. Eight miles to the northeast the Spanish had also fortified high ground at the village of El Caney. The El Caney position was a potential threat to the flank of any force assaulting San Juan and Kettle Hills. General Linares had a total of 9,000 personnel under his command, including soldiers, gunners, engineers, volunteers and civil guards. Most of these were used to man the city's inner defensive ring. Only 500 were positioned at the San Juan/Kettle Hill position with another 500 at El Caney. Linares was too pre-occupied with the insurgent threat to consider any form of maneuver warfare. There were reports of 15,000 Cuban rebels assembling near Santiago and Linares felt obliged to limit himself to a static defense of the inner defenses of the city.²⁵

SHAFTER'S PLAN OF ATTACK

On 30 June Shafter was finally ready to develop a concept for the main drive to Santiago. The attack would occur on 1 July. General Lawton's Division was assigned two tasks; the first was the early elimination of the threat to the right flank posed by the El Caney position. This task was to be completed by mid-day. Once El Caney was taken Lawton would be in position to descend upon the left flank of the Spanish positions at San Juan and Kettle Hills. The rest of the force would deploy in

front of the San Juan and Kettle positions while Lawton was dealing with El Caney. The main attack was planned to commence at 1000 hours when Lawton would be able to move against the enemies' left. Although the concept of removing the El Caney position and the flanking movement were sound ideas, Shafter made a mistake in assigning both of these tasks to the same unit.²⁶

THE BATTLE OF EL CANEY

Lawton's force of 6,650 launched the attack on El Caney at first light on 1 July. He was able to get good artillery support from a battery positioned on a hill south of El Caney, but only because there was no Spanish artillery at El Caney that could return counter-battery fire. The obsolete American guns would have been forced to cease-fire if Spanish Krupp guns had been available to the defenders. Even so the determined Spanish defenders were well entrenched on the high ground and even had a small stone fort to anchor their position. Firing from these positions the Spanish Mausers pinned down the American advance for three hours. It was so bad that the 2nd Massachusetts Volunteer Regiment had to be pulled out of the line because it was too dangerous for them to return fire with their black powder rifles.²⁷ By mid-day General Shafter was telling Lawton to break off the attack and continue on with the plan to

outflank the San Juan Hill position. Lawton protested that it was now too dangerous to disengage and the attack continued. Meanwhile that artillery battery managed to gain a better firing position that allowed them to reduce the fort. At 1300 hours Lawton committed his reserve brigade and the entire division rushed the summit. By 1330 the Americans were "mopping up" the Spanish defenders. The El Caney position was eliminated, but at a high cost. Lawton's division had suffered 10% casualties and was now unable to support the attack on San Juan Hill, which was already in progress.²⁸

THE BATTLES OF EL CANEY AND THE RESULTS OF SAN JUAN

1 July 1898, Situation about 1300 hours
(For clarity, units and command symbols have been simplified).

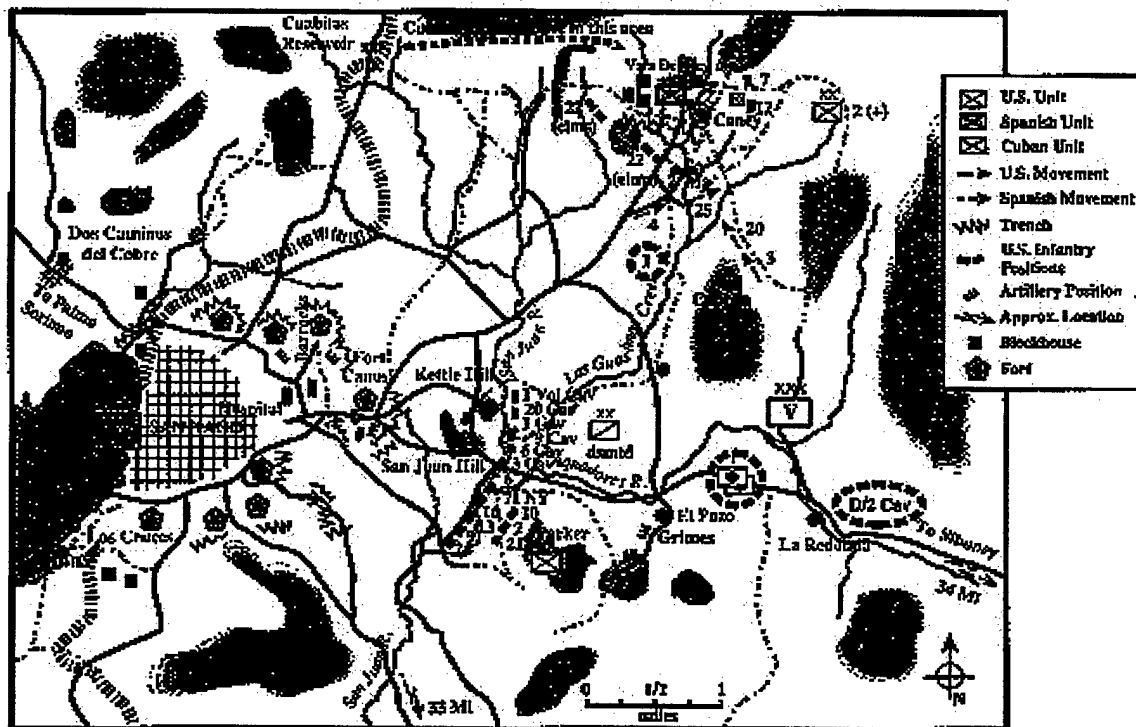


Figure 3: El Caney and San Juan Heights

KETTLE HILL AND SAN JUAN HILL

While Lawton was launching his attack on El Caney, the two remaining divisions of Vth Corps, about 8,000 troops, began their advance toward San Juan Hill down the narrow Camino Real Road. At the point where the road meets the San Juan River the force was to split off to the right and left taking up positions below the Spanish lines. As the force reached the area of the ford they came under fire from the heights. The Spanish concentrated blind fire into this area knowing that the Americans were passing through it. They were aided by the presence of an American observation balloon that conveniently marked the movements. The ford became known as the Bloody Ford for the losses incurred in this area.

Due to the congestion on the road and the unfamiliar terrain it was 1200 by the time the last unit was in position. The Cavalry Division commanded by General Sumner (Wheeler was now ill), was facing Kettle Hill from the East side of the river while 1st Division under General Kent faced San Juan Hill on the West bank of the river. Some of these units had been in position since 1000 and all the time taking deadly fire from the hills. The American artillery battery supporting the attack had been forced to cease fire as early as 0900 since their black powder had made them easy targets for Spanish counter-battery fire coming from modern Krupp guns. The attackers, who were now

two hours behind schedule, stood waiting for Lawton to arrive from El Caney.²⁹

By 1230 the situation was fairly desperate and no orders were coming from General Shafter.³⁰ It was clear to the brigade and division commanders on the line that the attack had to start soon before losses rendered their units ineffective. (One regiment, the 71st New York Volunteers, had in fact become very badly shaken.) Finally one of Shafter's aides on the scene gave the chafing commanders the authority to attack. By 1300 the order to attack was spreading through the line and units were advancing. The frontal assault on San Juan Hill was quickly pinned down, but fortunately the attack on Kettle Hill had already succeeded. The Cavalry Division, (including the Rough Riders now commanded by Roosevelt), who had cleared the hill of defenders, were now in a position to provide covering fire for the San Juan Hill attack. At the same time a battery of Gatling guns had arrived at Bloody Ford and was forcing the Spanish to keep their heads down. The attack regained momentum and closed in on the summit while Roosevelt led the Rough Riders against the north end of San Juan Hill. By 1400 hours the hill was secured and the Americans prepared for a Spanish counterattack that never came. Once again the losses had amounted to 10%.³¹

THE SIEGE OF SANTIAGO

The capture of San Juan Hill was only the first step in what became an effort to besiege Santiago from all sides and force its capitulation. Nevertheless it precipitated an event of great strategic importance. On the evening of the very same day of the attack, Admiral Cervera and the Spanish Governor-General of Cuba became concerned about the safety of the fleet. General Linares gave them a pessimistic appraisal of his ability to give the fleet sufficient warning of the collapse of his defenses. Admiral Cervera in typically fatalistic fashion suggested that the resources of the fleet be absorbed into the city's defenses rather than face destruction at sea. The Governor-General rejected this idea and ordered Cervera to sortie.³²

On the morning of 3 July Cervera's squadron emerged from Santiago harbor. His only plan was to use his flagship to ram the fastest American ship in order to give the others a chance to make a helter-skelter escape. No thought was given to any attempt to maintain a disciplined line-of-battle and fight it out. The ram attempt failed and the blockading American ships methodically destroyed Cervera's entire force at a cost of only one American sailor killed.³³

Back in Santiago the siege continued, and over a period of several days Shafter managed to surround the city and cut off

its only supply of fresh water. In the mean time the Americans had been struck by an epidemic of yellow fever that had General Shafter wondering if he would have to abandon the campaign. Fortunately, with their water, food and contact with Spain gone, the defenders saw no point in prolonging the agony and they surrendered the city on 17 July. Although the execution of the operation was very flawed Shafter still attained his dual objective. He had not only captured Santiago, he had flushed Cervera's ships out of hiding and indirectly caused their destruction. Although there were still 140,000 regular Spanish troops in Cuba, the capture of Santiago and the destruction of the fleet had cut them off from the rest of the Spanish Empire.³⁴

The surrender of Santiago also had a profound effect on the campaign in the Western Pacific. During the Santiago campaign Spain had managed to patch together one last naval squadron to commit to the war. This one posed more of a threat since it featured a new battleship and a recently overhauled heavy cruiser. Once it was ready to sail, there was disagreement in Spain over how it should be employed. One choice was to send it on a harassment mission against the U.S. East Coast that might take pressure off the besieged forces in Cuba. Another would be to leave it near Spain as a defensive measure. The last choice was to send it to the Philippines in an effort to restore the balance of naval power in the Western Pacific. In this case the

needs of the Empire won out and the squadron under Admiral Camara sailed east toward the Pacific Ocean on 17 June. If this force had reached the Philippines, its battleship would have posed an ominous threat to the American Pacific fleet under Admiral Dewey. However Camara was recalled to Spain on 7 July once it was realized that the destruction of Cervera's squadron had freed the U.S. North Atlantic Fleet for operations against the Spanish homeland. (In fact a new Eastern Atlantic Squadron had been formed with orders to attack the Spanish coast if Camara transited the Suez Canal.) Although this threat never materialized, it was enough to fix the position of this squadron near Spain for the rest of the war.³⁵ This served as yet another example of Mahan's "fleet-in-being" concept in action.

THE PHILIPPINES

The day after Admiral Dewey destroyed the Spanish squadron at Manila Bay on 1 May, he realized he had a unique problem on his hands. Although he was now master of the strategic situation he had little influence over events ashore. He had an agreement with the Spanish Governor-General that he would not bombard Manila if the Spanish shore batteries refrained from firing on his ships. Dewey also used his Marines to seize the Cavite naval base for his fleet, but he had no way to compel Spain to surrender the Philippine archipelago. He realized that he needed the Army and requested at least 5,000 troops to deal

with the 10,000 Spanish troops in the Manila area. He received 20,000.

On 25 May, (three weeks before the Santiago Expedition left Tampa), the first Philippine troop convoy departed San Francisco. Several more convoys followed over the next two months. Although there were problems, these expeditions were well organized compared to the Santiago force, no doubt because San Francisco was a vastly superior to Tampa as a port facility.³⁶ By 31 July 11,000 U.S. troops were on the ground (the rest were still en route) under the command of Major General Wesley Merritt, commanding VIII Corps.

Dewey and Merritt were now able to enter into negotiations with the Spanish and the large force of Philippine insurgents commanded by Emilio Aguinaldo. Although the Spanish had 10,000 men in Manila and a total of 40,000 throughout the archipelago, their will to offer strong resistance was already gone. There were 30,000 insurgents in the Manila area in addition to the 11,000 Americans. They were aware that they were cut off from Spain with no hope of relief and that peace negotiations were already underway between the two governments. Nevertheless, Spanish honor had to be preserved. In a secret deal the Governor-General agreed to surrender under two conditions. He demanded that the Americans launch a ground attack against Manila. He also wanted the insurgents excluded from the attack

and denied entry into Manila after the surrender. In return he would fly the white flag after sufficient fire had been exchanged. On 13 August the attack was launched. Dewey's ships bombarded the main fort while Merrit's Corps advanced from the South. After some fairly hard fighting in which several Spanish blockhouses guarding the approaches to Manila were captured, the Governor-General surrendered as promised.³⁷

PUERTO RICO

When the war started it was thought that Puerto Rico might be the first objective instead of Cuba. This option contained less risk in terms of the numbers and quality of Spanish troops and the relative lack of a summer fever season. Puerto Rico could have served as a proving ground for American troops while yielding good naval bases. In the end the first objective had to be Cuba because of the opportunity to "bag" Admiral Cervera's naval squadron. Accordingly, all available sealift resources were allocated to the Santiago expedition. Nevertheless, as soon as sufficient transports became available, a force under the personal command of Nelson Miles, Commanding General of the Army, was dispatched to Puerto Rico by way of Santiago. After departing Santiago on 21 July, Miles announced that the landing point would not be San Juan as advertised, even though it was still the main objective. Word had gotten out that the Americans were headed for San Juan and the Spanish were

reinforcing this area. Miles therefore changed the landing site to Guanica on the South coast of Puerto Rico. Although he would have to advance across the island to reach San Juan, this change restored the element of surprise and allowed Miles to secure a lodgment under minimal opposition.³⁸

The initial force of 3,500 landed at Guanica on 25 July and quickly moved inland. The Spanish Governor-General believed this landing was a diversion so he refused to send his main force South. Instead, only a few units were committed in piecemeal fashion. The best they could do was to throw minor delays into the American advance across the island. Soon the American force had grown to 15,000 against Spain's 8,000 regulars, and most of the 18,000 Puerto Rican militia that the Governor-General was counting on did not report for duty. By 13 August the American force held about one third of the island when word came that an armistice was in effect.³⁹

AFTERMATH

The basic terms of the peace agreement were independence for Cuba after a short period of American occupation and the annexation of Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines (now in a state of rebellion against the U.S. because of annexation to yet another foreign power). In due course Hawaii, Samoa and the Panama Canal Zone were added to this list of possessions. Prior to this war the United States was only a marginal force in

world affairs. Now it had a stature equal to the other world powers and would continue to expand its involvement in geopolitics.⁴⁰

The lasting legacy of this war might be better appreciated if one considers what the world would have look like if it had never happened. To begin with, it is entirely possible that Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. would not have become President of the United States. Without his driving force, a country other than the U.S might have built a canal across the Central American isthmus. The Navy might not have grown into the world class force that Roosevelt envisioned and the U.S. would have remained a third-rate power confined to North America. Furthermore, Germany probably would have bought the Philippines from Spain. Since the Japanese were awarded all of Germany's Pacific Ocean holdings after World War I, they could have been in possession of the Philippines in the 1930s.⁴¹

Like the nation, the armed forces underwent a dramatic change as a result of this war. The Navy was spared from most of the controversies brought about by stories of gross inefficiencies during the prosecution of the war. The Navy, by its very nature, was already postured to fight an external enemy and was not faced with the massive mobilization problem that the Army had to deal with. The overwhelming victories at Manila Bay and Santiago notwithstanding, the Navy was subjected to a good

degree of criticism and embarrassment over its gunnery performance. Even though two Spanish naval squadrons had been utterly destroyed, the low percentage of confirmed hits led to reforms in training. There was also recognition that there should be provisions for planning above and beyond reliance on papers written at the Naval War College. Accordingly, a General Board of the Navy was established in 1900. The Navy did not, however, adopt an organization similar to the Army General staff until the establishment of the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations in 1915. The Navy was also subjected to "bad press" due to a bitter public dispute between Admirals Sampson and Schley over which of the two deserved the credit for the victory at the naval battle of Santiago.⁴²

More dramatic was the effect of the war on the U.S. Army. In the years preceding the war, the nation's leadership laid part of the power projection foundation by building a capable naval force that was naturally disposed toward the contemplation of global missions. The part that was unanticipated was the need to exploit naval victories overseas with ground forces. Overnight, a frontier constabulary force had been thrust into a global power projection mission. It is no wonder that this sudden transformation was difficult. The Army was suddenly faced with a massive mobilization that was far larger than

anyone in the War Department expected and, in retrospect, proved to be more than necessary.

In the post-war years significant reforms were initiated within the Army. The war was scarcely over when public attention turned to stories about inadequate shelter, food and medical care that plagued the Army throughout the entire affair. Outbreaks of yellow fever had almost rendered Shafter's Vth Corps combat ineffective while it was in Cuba. It was fortunate that Spanish resolve had been broken by the destruction of its naval squadrons before the disease had a catastrophic effect.

These and other stories about lack of supplies, obsolete weapons, and poor camp sanitation created a major stir in the newspapers. Ironically, the situation had been improving as the war progressed. The beleaguered War Department had succeeded in solving many of the early problems caused by the overwhelming surge of mobilized manpower in the very beginning. Since the public did not learn of these problems until the war was almost over, the firestorm of controversy hit just as things had started to work well. At this same time, General Miles came home from the Puerto Rico expedition complaining of "embalmed beef" that he had been supplied. (This was the first war in which a commissariat attempted to utilize a meat supply that was not "on the hoof." The "embalmed beef" was refrigerated beef

that had allegedly injected with preservatives that made the meat unpalatable.)

All of this led to a hue and cry that forced President McKinley to appoint a War Department Investigating Commission that became known as the "Dodge Commission." The commission focused on logistical matters such as food, housing transportation and medical care. Over a period of 3 months the commission noted many problems and deficiencies but found no sensational revelations of gross incompetence or corruption. They concluded that the lack of preparedness in 1898 was not the fault of the War Department but the result of the historic aversion of the United States to the maintenance of a large standing army in peacetime. It was even noted that the "embalmed beef" was an acceptable ration although it may have been unsuitable for use in the tropics.⁴³

Even so, President McKinley was stung by all the allegations and criticism. In August 1899 he appointed Elihu Root, a brilliant New York lawyer, as Secretary of War with the hope that he would address the problems that had been cited and the inefficiencies in the War Department. Root pushed for deep reaching reforms over a period of five years. The first issue he addressed was manpower. It was clear that a standing authorization of only 28,000 troops was insufficient now that America had become an international power. (There was already a

great demand for manpower due to the Philippine Insurrection.) In 1901 he won approval of an increase in the authorized strength of the Regular Army to a minimum of 60,000 and a maximum of 100,000.⁴⁴

He also instituted a professional education system that began at every military post and led to special service schools for advanced training with the old infantry and cavalry school at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas being transformed into the General Service and Staff College. In 1901 he secured funding for the crown jewel in this program, an Army War College, that would train officers in planning and strategy was dedicated in Washington, D.C. in February 1903.⁴⁵ The War College did more than provide academic instruction. It encouraged the study of war and the application of knowledge gained from prior experience. It also worked in close cooperation with the new General Staff in war planning and particularly planning for logistics and mobilization.⁴⁶

Among the by-products of these reforms were improvements in the administration and logistics systems of the Army. In response to the need for improved medical care in the field the Nurse Corps was established in 1901. Since the Dodge Commission had cited a break down in the Inspector General mission, new measures were taken to improve the enforcement of sanitary regulations and the Veterinary Corps was given the task of

inspecting food supplies. The Quartermaster, Subsistence and Paymaster Departments were merged into one Supply Department in an effort to consolidate and focus logistics. A new three-inch field gun was adopted that featured smokeless powder and a recoilless carriage. In addition, the 1903 Springfield rifle was introduced to replace the Krag-Jorgenson. Both of these weapons served the Army well up through World War I.⁴⁷

In order to avoid a repeat of the 1898 National Guard controversy he won approval of the Dick Militia Act of 1903 that formalized the Army's relationship with the National Guard making it the first source of reserves for the Army instead of the old volunteer regiment system. (Even though Root and others would have preferred a federally owned and operated reserve force.) In addition, the bill instituted the certification of National Guard officers and gave the War Department authority to arm the National Guard with standard weapons. Root's new education system was open to the Guard and there would be joint field training along with the detailing of regular Army personnel to serve as instructors for Guard units.⁴⁸ This legislation also stipulated that at the end of nine months of active service the National Guard units could volunteer for federal service. This was the best solution that could be arrived at in the political atmosphere of that time.⁴⁹

Root's greatest struggle and most far-reaching reform came from the need to deal with existence of the office of the Commanding General of the Army. The Commanding General concept had existed since 1812, and it was clearly understood that in wartime he would lead or direct the Army in the field. It was the peacetime role that was confusing and controversial. The very title "Commanding General" gave him implied authority that overlapped that of the Secretary of War. Furthermore, the chiefs of the administrative departments such as the quartermaster general and adjutant general had grown to become distinct enclaves of competing power, due to the practice of permanently assigning officers to these positions. By Root's time these departments had become more closely aligned with the Secretary's office than that of the Commanding General.⁵⁰

After assuming the duties of Secretary of War, Root came into contact with the nearly forgotten writings of General Emory Upton, who in 1878 had outlined the concept of a General Staff Corps.⁵¹ Under this concept the administrative departments would be combined into a General Staff headed by a Chief-of-Staff. Instead of being a battlefield commander the Chief-of-Staff would be responsible for the formulation of plans and readiness. The Chief and all the staff officers would be selected by merit instead of seniority and serve four-year terms. This would reaffirm civilian authority in the chain of command with

authority flowing from the President directly to the Secretary of War. Despite a very significant obstacle in the form of General Nelson Miles, the incumbent Commanding General, the authorization bill was passed by Congress and implemented in August 1903, one week after General Miles retired.⁵² Elihu Root's tenure as Secretary of War and the lessons learned from the War with Spain had given the Army a renaissance in leadership development, a logical command structure and a method of continuous strategic planning. It was now a proper Army for an Empire and an Army for a democracy.

WORD COUNT = 8,637

ENDNOTES

¹ David F. Trask, The War with Spain in 1898 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), p. 50.

² Trask, p. 20.

³ Albert A. Nofi, The Spanish American War, 1898 (Pennsylvania: Combined Books, 1996), p. 31.

⁴ Trask, pp. 31-32.

⁵ H. G. Rickover, How The Battleship Maine Was Destroyed (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Navy, 1976), p. 91.

Spontaneous combustion of bituminous coal was a common hazard in those days. Modern investigations have tended to side with the spontaneous combustion theory, but the external explosion theory has not been totally debunked either. It must be remembered that Spain had nothing to gain from sabotaging an American warship, although the Cuban rebels would have had much to gain from it. If it were an external explosion, the most likely perpetrators would have been the Cuban rebels who were fully committed to a policy of drawing the U.S. into the war.

⁶ Ivan Musicant, The Spanish-American War and the Dawn of the American Century (New York: Henry Holt And Company, 1998), p. 187.

⁷ Frank Freidel, The Splendid Little War (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1958), pp. 13-31.

⁸ Trask, pp. 60-71.

⁹ Trask, pp. 66-67.

This is a good example of Clausewitz's dictum that war and politics are inseparable. The government was a recently restored monarchy dominated by Queen Regent Christina but there was still a very strong political opposition to the existence of the monarchy. Her overarching concern throughout all of this was the preservation of the regime, not the Empire.

¹⁰ A. B. Feuer, "Spanish Fleet Sacrificed at Santiago Harbor," Military History, June 1998, p. 55.

The Spanish government also had an underlying fear of the Spanish Army and a strong pessimism concerning Spain's ability to prevail in this war. Since the Army was seen as more of a threat to the government, it was better to sacrifice the Navy in order to give Spain a face saving way out of the Cuba problem!

¹¹ Nofi, pp. 82-83.

This decision greatly distressed Alfred Thayer Mahan, who by this time was serving as a member of the Naval War Board, a strategic advisory committee. As it turned out, either force would have been capable of defeating Cervera on its own, but this fact was not readily apparent at the time, even though some in the U.S. Navy suspected that Cervera's ships and crews were of poor quality.

¹² Nofi, pp. 82-83.

¹³ Musicant, pp. 322-324.

¹⁴ Nofi, pp. 61-64.

After the war President McKinley was roundly criticized for mobilizing far more troops than was needed to defeat Spain. Veterans benefits for this large group would be expensive! However, KcKinley was only trying to redress the lesson learned from the start of the Civil War when President Lincoln called up too few for too short a term.

¹⁵ Freidel, pp. 59-60.

Dealing with unmarked shipping containers was still a problem as recently as the 1991 Gulf War.

¹⁶ Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., The Rough Riders (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922), p. 58.

One of Theodore Roosevelt's better stories tells what it was like. Having been directed to wait in a particular spot for a particular train, the 1st Volunteer Cavalry Regiment (nicknamed Rough Riders) waited in vain for quite some time. Terrified that they might be left behind if they did not get to the wharf (they and other regiments had already been forced to leave

behind 25% of their men, and all trooper horses) they commandeered a passing train of empty coal cars. They arrived dirty but still had plenty of time to get aboard a ship.

¹⁷ Freidel, pp. 59-60.

Shafter and his staff had daily meetings that focused on all these problems. They very much wanted to sort it out and make it run well but there was too much working against them. In the end Shafter had to personally supervise the loading.

¹⁸ Roosevelt, pp. 59-60.

Here again Roosevelt tells us how his regiment was told to board the steamship Yucatan. While the commanding officer, Colonel Leonard Wood, commandeered a boat to get the Yucatan to come alongside, Roosevelt learned that the ship was actually assigned to two other regiments. The Rough Riders rushed aboard anyway which caused a heated confrontation when the assigned passengers showed up a few minutes later.

¹⁹ Nofi, pp. 64-66.

²⁰ Philip C. Jessup, Elihu Root, 2 vols. (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1938), p. 263.

²¹ Graham A. Cosmas, Joint Operations in the Spanish-American War, ed. James C. Bradford, Crucible of Empire (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1993), pp. 102-121.

²² Nofi, pp. 120-123.

The Spanish seemed more concerned about losing the island to the insurgents than losing it to a foreign invader. In the strange political atmosphere back in Madrid there may actually have been a de facto policy of ensuring that if Cuba had to be lost, that it be lost to a foreign invader instead of the Cuban rebels. By losing the island to a foreign power they hoped save what little measure of prestige might be left to the dying Spanish Empire. Indeed the whole issue of allowing the process to escalate into war was seen in Madrid as a face saving measure even though there was little hope of prevailing. So in the strategic sense, the Cuban rebels had a critical effect on the outcome even though they were of minimal value to the American force in its conventional battles with the Spanish Army.

²³ Nathan Miller, Theodore Roosevelt, A Life (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1992), p. 282.

Known as "Fighting Joe" Wheeler, he was a famous Confederate Civil War cavalry commander who had served with great distinction in the Western Theater. In 1898 he was a long standing Congressman and Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. President McKinley shrewdly gave him and other former Confederate officers volunteer commissions in order to garner support for the war effort in the Old South. This approach was highly successful. The former Confederate states wanted their troops to have priority in the commitment of forces for the campaign.

²⁴ Nofi, pp.123-128.

Folklore tells us that at this point in the battle the old Confederate Joe Wheeler got carried away in the spirit of the moment and came riding through the ranks shouting, "Come on boys, we've got the damned Yankees on the run!"

²⁵ Nofi, p. 129.

²⁶ Angus Konstam, San Juan Hill 1898, America's Emergence as a World Power (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 1998), pp. 44-45.

²⁷ W. H. B. Smith, Mauser Rifles and Pistols (Harrisburg: Stackpole and Heck, Inc., 1946), pp. 107-112.

One sad lesson that jumps out at us from accounts of the War with Spain is fact that we sent competent, highly motivated soldiers into battle with weapons that were inferior to those of the enemy. So even though they had superior numbers, American troops suffered a much higher casualty rate than should have been expected.

The Cuba campaign was the first major military engagement in which infantry weapons firing smokeless powder were used on opposing sides. All U.S. regulars (and the volunteer cavalry) carried a modern smokeless powder Krag-Jorgenson rifle while the volunteer regiments still had Model 1873 Springfields (known as the "trapdoor" Springfield after its breech loading mechanism) that fired black powder cartridges. The Spanish Army, despite all of its inadequacies had the finest rifle of the day, the German made 7mm Mauser. Firing smokeless powder with a muzzle velocity of 2,300 feet per second, the Mauser's ballistic performance outclassed all other modern rifles and made the

black powder Springfield as useful as a crossbow. In the rain forest terrain of Cuba black powder weapons made units clearly visible to the enemy who could fire upon them from long range without receiving return fire. The Mauser's superior bolt-action and magazine design also gave it a high rate of fire. American regiments armed with the Krag-Jorgenson found the Mauser to be a terrible weapon to deal with, but for the black powder carrying volunteers it was impossible. During the battles of El Caney and San Juan Hill there were instances in which volunteer regiments had to be pulled out of the line of battle because they were taking exorbitant casualties with no ability to return any meaningful fire.

Artillery was a problem as well. General Shafter's V Corps was equipped with black powder cannon that lacked self-recoil. Not only did they produce large volumes of smoke, they had to be returned to battery after every shot. At the battle of El Caney these guns were used with good effect, but only because there was no Spanish artillery to oppose them. At San Juan Hill the Spanish had modern Krupp artillery with self-recoil and smokeless powder. As soon as our artillery opened fire they immediately received accurate counter-battery fire. After only 20 minutes the U.S. artillery ceased fire and remained silent the rest of the day. They were already out of ammunition, but even so it would have been too dangerous for them to continue.

²⁸ Konstam, pp. 47-60.

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 60-62.

³⁰ Trask, pp. 234-235.

The overweight General Shafter was somewhat indisposed by heat exhaustion and was unable to personally observe the battle. He sent his staff forward to observe and report back but this did not work well. These officers had to make decisions for Shafter on the spot.

³¹ Nofi, pp. 142-147.

³² Ibid., pp. 171-172.

³³ Freidel, pp. 193-211.

Of the 2,227 crewman aboard the six Spanish ships, 323 were dead and 151 were wounded. 1,720 men, including the wounded,

were taken prisoner. Only 180 Spanish sailors made it to shore and escaped.

³⁴ Trask, pp. 311-319.

³⁵ Musicant, pp. 551-554.

³⁶ Nofi, pp. 276-282.

While Dewey waited he had to deal with an intimidating German naval squadron that invited itself into Manila Bay. It was quite obvious to both Dewey and the McKinley administration that if the U.S. did not seize the Philippines, the Germans would. A British naval squadron was present as well. Although they helped Dewey stare down the Germans, they let it be known that if the U.S. did not occupy the Philippines, they might do it themselves if only to deny them to Germany.

³⁷ Allan Keller, The Spanish American War: A Compact History (New York: Hawthorne Books, Inc., 1969), pp. 230-237.

³⁸ Miguel Hernandez, "San Juan Under Siege," Military History, April 1998, pp. 49-51.

³⁹ Trask, p. 364.

⁴⁰ Musicant, pp. 626-627.

⁴¹ James W. Hammond, Jr. "We Are Products of 1898," Proceedings, August 1998, p. 65.

⁴² Nofi, pp. 186-188.

Schley was faulted for not intercepting Admiral Cervera's naval squadron before it slipped into Santiago harbor. Additionally, on the day of battle Schley's Flying Squadron was attached to Sampson's North Atlantic Squadron. Sampson had sailed off to the east in his flagship, the armored cruiser New York, in order to go ashore to confer with General Shafter. Sampson therefore missed the battle when Cervera's squadron sortied. In Sampson's absence, Schley directed the U.S. fleet throughout the engagement. This was followed by an ugly public dispute between Schley and Sampson over whose victory it was.

⁴³ Joseph Smith, "War Department Investigating Commission," in The War of 1898 and U.S. Interventions 1898-1934: An Encyclopedia, ed. Benjamin R. Beede (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1994), p. 584.

⁴⁴ Richard W. Leopold, Elihu Root and the Conservative Tradition (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1954), p. 38.

⁴⁵ Jessup, p. 259.

⁴⁶ Russell F. Weigley, History of the United States Army (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967), p. 325.

⁴⁷ Weigley, p. 318.

⁴⁸ Jessup, pp. 265-268.

⁴⁹ Weigley, p. 322.

⁵⁰ Leopold, p. 41.

⁵¹ Jessup, p. 242.

The basic concepts for many of Elihu Root's other reforms also came from Emory Upton's writings.

⁵² Leopold. pp. 41-42.

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