

A SECTIONAL VIEW OF THE BATTLESHIP MAINE.

## THE MAINE BLOWN UP BY A MINE.

### REPORT OF THE COURT OF INQUIRY AND THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

#### A Mine Destroyed The Ship—No Lax Discipline on Board.

**Captain Sigbee Exonerated. There Were Two Explosions, Says the Report, the First of Which Lifted the Big Vessel—The Investigators Unable to Fix the Responsibility For the Disaster—The President's Message to Congress on the Report.**

The following is the full text of the report of the court of inquiry appointed to investigate the disaster to the Maine at Havana:

United States Steamer Iowa, First Rate, Key West, Fla., Monday, March 21, 1898.

After full and mature consideration of all the testimony before it, the court finds as follows:

1. That the United States battleship Maine arrived in the harbor of Havana, Cuba, on the 25th day of January, 1898, and was taken to buoy No. 4, in from five to six fathoms of water, by the regular government pilot.

The United States consul general at Havana had notified the authorities at that place, the previous evening, of the intended arrival of the Maine.

2. The state of discipline on board the Maine was excellent, and all orders and regulations in regard to the care and safety of the ship were strictly carried out.

All ammunition was stowed in accordance with prescribed instructions, and proper care was taken whenever ammunition was handled.

Nothing was stowed in any one of the magazines or shell rooms which was not permitted to be stowed there.

The magazines and shell rooms were always locked after having been opened, and after the destruction of the Maine the keys were found in their proper place in the captain's cabin, everything having been reported secure that evening at 8 p. m. The temperatures of the magazine and shell room were taken daily and reported.

The only magazine which had an undue amount of heat was the after ten inch magazine, and that did not explode at the time the Maine was destroyed.



CAPTAIN SAMPSON.

The torpedo warheads were all stowed in the after part of the ship under the ward room, and neither caused nor participated in the destruction of the Maine.

The dry gun cotton primers and detonators were stowed in the cabin aft, and remote from the scene of the explosion.

Waste was carefully looked after on board the Maine to obviate danger. Special orders in regard to this had been given by the commanding officer.

Varnishes, driers, alcohol and other combustibles of this nature were stowed on or above the main deck and could not have had anything to do with the destruction of the Maine.

The medical stores were stowed aft under the ward room and remote from the scene of the explosion.

No dangerous stores of any kind were stowed below in any of the other store rooms.

The coal bunkers were inspected daily. Of those bunkers adjacent to the forward magazines and shell rooms four were empty, namely, B 3, B 4, B 5, B 6.

A 5 had been in use that day, and A 16 was full of new river coal. This coal had been carefully inspected before receiving it on board. The bunker

in which it was stowed was accessible on three sides at all times, and the fourth side at this time on account of bunkers B 4 and B 6 being empty. This bunker, A 16, had been inspected Monday by the engineer officer on duty.

The fire alarms in the bunkers were in working order, and there had never been a case of spontaneous combustion of coal on board the Maine.

The two after boilers of the ship were in use at the time of the disaster, but for auxiliary purposes only, with a comparatively low pressure of steam and being tended by a reliable watch. These boilers could not have caused the explosion of the ship. The four forward boilers have since been found by the divers and are in a fair condition.

On the night of the destruction of the Maine everything had been reported secure for the night at 8 p. m. by reliable persons, through the proper authorities, to the commanding officer. At the time the Maine was destroyed the ship was quiet, and therefore least liable to accident caused by movements from those on board.

3. The destruction of the Maine occurred at 9:40 p. m. on the 15th day of February, 1898, in the harbor of Havana, Cuba, she being at the time moored to the same buoy to which she had been taken upon her arrival.

There were two explosions of a distinctly different character, with a very short but distinct interval between them, and the forward part of the ship was lifted to a marked degree at the time of the first explosion.

The first explosion was more in the nature of a report, like that of a gun, while the second explosion was more open, prolonged, and of greater volume. This second explosion was, in the opinion of the court, caused by the partial explosion of two or more of the forward magazines of the Maine.

4. The evidence bearing upon this, be-



SECRETARY ALGER.

ing principally obtained from divers, did not enable the court to form a definite conclusion as to the condition of the wreck, although it was established that the after part of the ship was practically intact and sank in that condition a very few minutes after the destruction of the forward part.

The following facts in regard to the forward part of the ship are, however, established by the testimony.

That portion of the port side of the protective deck which extends from about frame 30 to about frame 41 was blown up aft, and over to port. The main deck from about frame 30 to about frame 41 was blown up aft, and slightly over to starboard, folding the forward part of the middle superstructure over and on top of the after part.



THE OREGON.

This was, in the opinion of the court, caused by the partial explosion of two or more of the forward magazines of the Maine.

5. At frame 17 the outer shell of the ship from a point eleven and one-half feet from the middle line of the ship and six feet above the keel when in its normal position has been forced up so as to be now about four feet above the surface of the water; therefore, about 34 feet above where it would be had the ship sunk uninjured. The outside bottom plating is bent into a reversed V shape, the after wing of which, about 15 feet broad and 32 feet in length (from frame 17 to frame 25), is doubled back upon itself against the continuation of the same plating extending forward.

At frame 18 the vertical keel is broken in two, and the flat keel bent into an angle similar to the angle formed by the outside bottom plating. This break is now about six feet below the surface of the water, and about 30 feet above its normal position.

In the opinion of the court this effect could have been produced only by the explosion of a mine situated under the bottom of the ship at about frame 18, and somewhat on the port side of the ship.



REAR ADMIRAL SICARD.

6. The court finds that the loss of the Maine, on the occasion named, was not in any respect due to fault or negligence on the part of any of the officers or members of the crew of said vessel.

7. In the opinion of the court the Maine was destroyed by the explosion of a submarine mine, which caused the partial explosion of two of her forward magazines.

8. The court has been unable to obtain evidence fixing the responsibility for the destruction of the Maine upon any person or persons.

W. T. SAMPSON,  
Captain U. S. N., President.  
A. MARIX,  
Lieutenant Commander, U. S. N., Judge Advocate.

The court, having finished the inquiry it was ordered to make, adjourned at 11 a. m. to await the action of the convening authority.

W. T. SAMPSON,  
Captain U. S. N., President.  
A. MARIX,  
Lieutenant Commander, U. S. N., Judge Advocate.

United States Flagship New York, March 23, 1898, off Key West, Fla.

The proceedings and findings of the court of inquiry in the above case are approved.

M. SICARD,  
Rear Admiral, Commander-in-Chief of the United States Naval Forces on the North Atlantic Station.



FITZ-HUGH LEE.



CAPTAIN SIGBEE.

#### THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

Thinks Spain's Sense of Justice Will Dictate a Course of Action.

Washington, March 28.—The president today sent the following message to congress:

To the congress of the United States: For some time prior to the visit of the Maine to Havana harbor our consular representatives pointed out the advantages to flow from the visit of national ships to the Cuban waters in accustoming the people to the presence of our flag as the symbol of good will and of our ships in the fulfillment of the mission of protection to American interests, even though no immediate need therefor might exist.

Accordingly on the 24th of January last, after conference with the Spanish minister, in which the renewal of visits of our war vessels to Spanish waters was discussed and accepted, the peninsular authorities at Madrid and Havana were advised of the purpose of this government to resume friendly naval visits at Cuban ports, and that in that view the Maine would forthwith call at the port of Havana. This announcement was received by the Spanish government with appreciation of the friendly character of the visit of the Maine, and with notification of the intention to return the courtesy by sending Spanish ships to the principal ports of the United States. Meanwhile the Maine entered the port of Havana on the 25th of January, her arrival being marked with no special incident besides the exchange of customary salutes and ceremonial visits.

The Maine continued in the harbor of Havana during the three weeks following her arrival. No appreciable excitement attended her stay; on the contrary, a feeling of relief and confidence followed the resumption of the long interrupted friendly intercourse.

So noticeable was this immediate effect of her visit that the consul general strongly urged that the presence of our ships in Cuban waters should be kept up by retaining the Maine at Havana, or in the event of her recall by sending another vessel there to take her place.

At 40 minutes past 9 in the evening of the 15th of February the Maine was destroyed by an explosion, by which the entire forward part of the ship was utterly wrecked. In this catastrophe two officers and 264 of her crew perished, those who were not killed outright by her explosion being panned between decks by the tangle of wreckage and drowned by the immediate sinking of the hull. Prompt assistance was rendered by the neighboring vessels anchored in the harbor, aid being especially given by the boats of the Spanish cruiser Alphonse XII and the Ward line steamer City of Washington, which lay not far distant. The wounded were generously cared for by the authorities of Havana, the hospitals being freely opened to them, while the earliest recovered bodies of the dead were interred by the municipality in the public cemetery in the city. Tributes of grief and sympathy were offered from all official quarters of the island.

The appalling calamity fell upon the people of our country with crushing force, and for a brief time an intense excitement prevailed, which in a community less just and self controlled than ours might have led to hasty acts of blind resentment. This spirit, however, soon gave way to the calmer processes of reason and to the resolve to investigate the facts and await material proof before forming a judgment as to the cause, the responsibility, and, as the facts warranted, the remedy. This course necessarily recommended itself from the outset to the executive.

for only in the light of a dispassionately ascertained certainly could it determine the nature and measure of its full duty in the matter.

The usual procedure was followed, as in all cases of casualty or disaster to national vessels of any maritime state. A naval court of inquiry was at once organized, composed of officers well qualified by rank and practical experience to discharge the duty imposed upon them. Aided by a strong force of wreckers and divers, the court proceeded to make a thorough investigation on the spot, employing every available means for the impartial and exact determination of the cause of the explosion. Its operations have been conducted with the utmost deliberation and judgment, and while independently, pursued no source of information was neglected, and the fullest opportunity was allowed for a simultaneous investigation by the Spanish authorities.

The finding of the court of inquiry was reached after 23 days of continuous labor, on the 21st of March, and having been approved on the 22d by the commander-in-chief of the United States naval force on the North Atlantic station, was transmitted to the executive.

It is herewith laid before the congress, together with the voluminous testimony taken before the court.

Its purport is in brief as follows: When the Maine arrived at Havana she was conducted to the regular government pilot buoy No. 4, to which she was moored in from five and one-half to six fathoms of water.

The state of discipline on board and the condition of her magazines, boilers, coal bunkers and storage compartments are passed in review, with the conclusion that excellent order prevailed, and that no indication of any cause for an internal explosion existed in any quarter.

At 8 o'clock in the evening of Feb. 15 everything had been reported secure, and all was quiet. At 40 minutes past 9 o'clock the vessel was suddenly destroyed.

There were two distinct explosions, with a brief interval between them. The first lifted the forward part of the ship very perceptibly; the second, which was more open, prolonged and of greater volume, is attributed by the court to the partial explosion of two or more of the forward magazines.

The evidence of the divers establishes that the after part of the ship was practically intact and sank in that condition a very few minutes after the explosion. The forward part was completely demolished.

Upon the evidence of a concurrent external cause the finding of the court is as follows:

At frame 17 the outer shell of the ship, from a point 11½ feet from the middle line of the ship and six feet above the keel when in its normal position, has been forced up so as to be now about four feet above the surface of the water; therefore, about 34 feet above where it would be had the ship sunk uninjured.

The outside bottom plating is bent into a reversed V shape, the after wing of which, about 15 feet broad and 32 feet in length (frame 17 to frame 25), is doubled back upon itself against the continuation of the same plating extending forward.

At frame 18 the vertical keel is broken in two and the flat keel bent into an angle similar to the angle formed by the outside bottom plates. This break is now about six feet below the surface of the water and about 30 feet above its normal position.

In the opinion of the court this effect could have been produced only by the explosion of a mine situated under the bottom of the ship, at about frame 18, and somewhat on the port side of the ship.

The conclusions of the court are: That the loss of the Maine was not in any respect due to fault or negligence on the part of any of the officers or members of her crew.

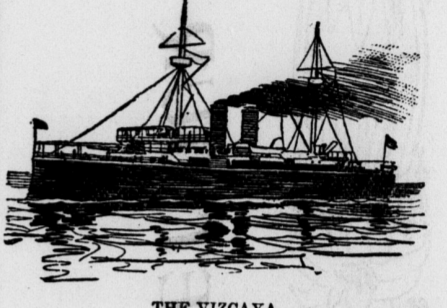
That the ship was destroyed by the explosion of a submarine mine, which caused the partial explosion of two or more of her forward magazines, and that no evidence has been obtainable fixing the responsibility for the destruction of the Maine upon any person or persons.

I have directed that the finding of the court of inquiry and the views of this government thereon be communicated to the government of her majesty, the queen regent, and I do not permit myself to doubt that the sense of justice of the Spanish nation will dictate a course of action suggested by honor and the friendly relations of the two governments.

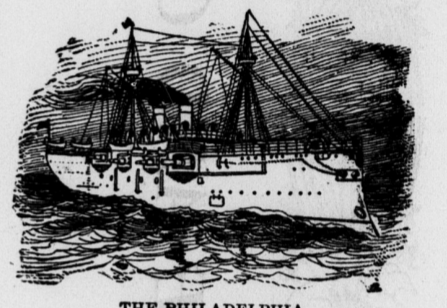
It will be the duty of the executive to advise congress of the result and in the meantime deliberate consideration is invoked.

WILLIAM M'KINLEY,  
Executive Mansion, March 28, 1898.

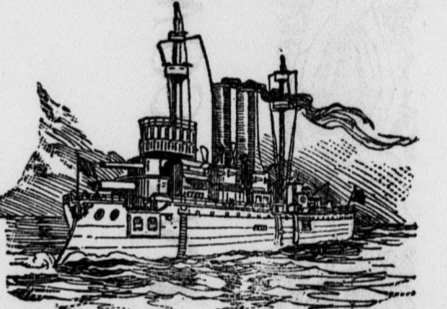
Some of the Boats That Will Have to Sustain Our Honor in Event of War.



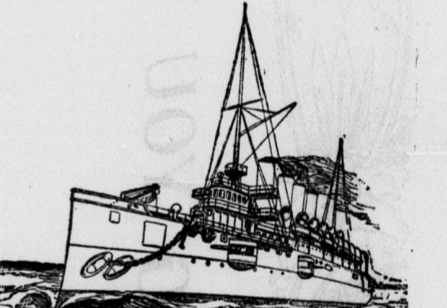
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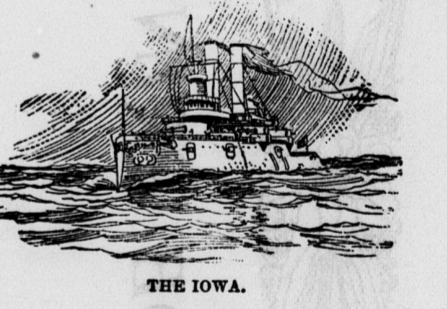
THE PHILADELPHIA.



THE KENTUCKY.



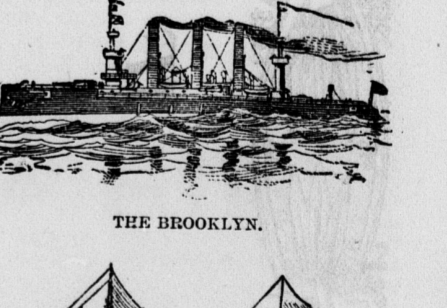
THE COLUMBIA.



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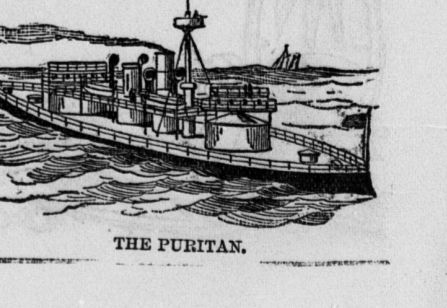
THE INDIANA.



THE BROOKLYN.



THE CINCINNATI.



THE PURITAN.