

# THE DEFEAT OF CERVERA

As Told in the Conquerors' Official Reports.

## COMMODORE SCHLEY'S MODESTY.

He Congratulates Sampson on the Great Victory.

## COMMANDERS EXTOL THEIR MEN

Schley, Clark and Evans Declare That They Never Served With Braver Sailors Than the Valiant Fighters Who Destroyed the Spanish Fleet Off Santiago in the Battle of July 3.

Washington, July 27.—The reports of Admiral Sampson, Commodore Schley and the commanders of the vessels of the North Atlantic squadron were given to the press last night. That of Admiral Sampson is addressed to the secretary of the navy, while the others are addressed to Admiral Sampson, as commander of the fleet. They are given below.

## COMMANDER'S REPORT.

He Refers But Briefly to the Work of Commodore Schley and Extols the Gloucester.

U. S. Flagship New York, off Santiago de Cuba, Cuba, July 15, 1898.

Sir: I have the honor to make the following report upon the battle with and the destruction of the Spanish squadron commanded by Admiral Cervera, off Santiago de Cuba, on Sunday, July 3, 1898.

The enemy's vessels came out of the harbor between 9:35 and 10 a. m., the head of the column appearing around Cay Smith at 9:51, and emerging from the channel five or six minutes later.

The positions of the vessels of my command off Santiago at that moment were as follows: The flagship New York was four miles east of her blockading station, and about seven miles from the harbor entrance. She had started from Siboney, where I intended to land, accompanied by several of my staff, and go to the front to consult with General Shafter. A discussion of the situation and a more definite understanding between us of the operations proposed had been rendered necessary by the unexpectedly strong resistance of the Spanish garrison of Santiago. I had sent my chief of staff on shore the day before to arrange an interview with General Shafter, who had been suffering from heat prostration. I made arrangements to go to his headquarters, and my flagship was in the position mentioned above when the Spanish squadron appeared in the channel. The remaining vessels were in or near their usual blockading positions, distributed in a semi-circle about the harbor entrance, counting from the eastward to westward, in the following order: The Indiana about a mile and a half from shore; the Oregon, the New York's place between these two; the Iowa, Texas and Brooklyn, the latter two miles from shore, west of Santiago. The distance of the vessels from the harbor entrance was from two and one-half to four miles, the latter being the limit of day blockading distance. The length of the arc formed by the ships was about eight miles. The Massachusetts had left at 4 a. m. for Guantanamo for coal. Her station was between the Iowa and Texas. The auxiliaries Gloucester and Vixen lay close to the land, and nearer the harbor entrance than the large vessels, the Gloucester to the eastward, and the Vixen to the westward. The torpedo boat Ericsson was in company with the flagship, and remained with her during her chase until ordered to disengage, when she rendered very efficient service in rescuing prisoners from the burning Vizcaya. I enclose a diagram showing approximately the positions of the vessels as described above.

The Spanish Vessels Appear. The Spanish vessels came rapidly out of the harbor, at a speed estimated at from eight to ten knots, and in the following order: Infanta Maria Teresa (flagship), Vizcaya, Cristobal Colon and the Almirante Oquendo. The distance between these ships was about 500 yards, which means that, from the time the first one became visible in the upper reach of the channel until the last one was out of the harbor an interval of only about 12 minutes elapsed. Following the Oquendo, at a distance of about 1,200 yards, came the torpedo boat destroyer Pluton, and after her the Furor. The armored cruisers, as rapidly as they could bring their guns to bear, opened a vigorous fire upon the blockading vessels, and emerged from the channel shrouded in the smoke of their guns.

The men of our ships in front of the port were at Sunday quarters for inspection. The signal was made simultaneously from several boats, "Enemy's ships escaping," and general quarters was sounded. The men cheered as they sprang to their guns, and fire was opened probably within eight minutes by the vessels whose guns commanded the entrance. The New York turned about and steamed for the escaping fleet, flying the signal "Close in towards harbor entrance and attack vessels." At 1:20 she gave up without firing another shot, hauled down her colors, and ran ashore at Rio Torquino, 45 miles from Santiago. Captain Cook, of the Brooklyn, went on board to receive the surrender. While his boat was alongside I came up in the New York, received his report and placed the Oregon in charge of the wreck to save her, if possible, and directed the prisoners to be transferred to the Resolute, which had followed the chase.

Commodore Schley, whose chief of staff had gone on board to receive the surrender, had directed that all their personal effects should be retained by the officers. This order I did not modify.

The Spanish vessels, upon clearing the harbor, turned to the westward in column, increasing their speed to the full power of their engines. The heavy blockading vessels, which had closed in towards the Morro at the instant of the enemy's appearance, and at their best speed, delivered a rapid fire, well sustained and destructive, which speedily overwhelmed and silenced the Spanish fleet. The initial speed of the Spaniards carried them rapidly past the blockading vessels, and the battle developed into a chase, in which the Brooklyn and Texas had at the start the advantage of position. The Oregon maintained this lead. The Oregon, steaming with amazing speed from the commencement of the action, took first place. The Iowa and the Indiana having done good work, and not having the speed of the other ships, were directed by me, in succession, at about the time the Vizcaya was beached, to drop out of the chase and resume blockading stations. These vessels rescued many prisoners. The Vixen, finding that the rush of the Spanish ships would put her between two fires, ran outside of our own column and remained there during the battle and chase.

### Praise for the Gloucester.

The skillful handling and gallant fighting of the Gloucester excited the admiration of everyone who witnessed it, and merits the commendation of the navy department. She is a fast and entirely unprepared auxiliary vessel—the yacht Corsair—and has a good battery of light rapid fire guns. She was lying about two miles from the harbor entrance, to the southward and eastward, and immediately steamed in, opening fire upon the large ships. Anticipating the appearance of the Pluton and Furor, the Gloucester was slowed, thereby gaining more rapidly a high pressure of steam, and when the destroyers came out she steamed for them at full speed, and was able to close at short range, where her fire was accurate, deadly and of great volume. During this fight the Gloucester was under the fire of the Socapa battery. Within 20 minutes from the time they emerged from Santiago harbor the careers of the Furor and the Pluton were ended, and two-thirds of their people killed. The Furor was beached and sunk in the surf; the Pluton sank in deep water a few minutes later. The destroyers probably suffered much injury from the fires of the secondary batteries of the battleships Iowa, Indiana and the Texas, yet I think a very considerable factor in their speedy destruction was the fire, at close range, of the Gloucester's battery. After rescuing the survivors of the destroyers the Gloucester did excellent service in landing and securing the crew of the Infanta Maria Teresa.

The method of escape by the Spaniards—all steering in the same direction, and in formation, removed all tactical doubts or difficulties, and enabled the duty of every United States vessel to close in, immediately engage and pursue. This was promptly and effectively done. As already stated, the first rush of the Spanish squadron carried it past a number of the blockading ships, which could not immediately work up to their best speed, but they suffered heavily in passing, and the Infanta Maria Teresa and the Oquendo were probably set on fire by shells fired during the first 15 minutes of the engagement. It was afterwards learned that the Infanta Maria Teresa's mainmast had been cut by one of our first shots, and that she was unable to extinguish the fire. With large volumes of smoke rising from their lower decks aft, these vessels gave up both fight and flight and ran in on the beach—the Infanta Maria Teresa at about 10:15 a. m., at Nima Nima, six and one-half miles from Santiago harbor entrance, and the Almirante Oquendo at about 10:30 a. m., at Juan Gonzales, seven miles from the port.

Increasing the Blockade's Vigilance. The Vizcaya was still under the fire of the leading vessels. The Cristobal Colon had drawn ahead, leading the range of some of the guns of the leading American ships. The Vizcaya was soon set on fire, and at 11:15 she turned in shore and was beached at Ascarederos, 15 miles from Santiago, burning fiercely, and with her reserves of ammunition on deck already beginning to explode. When about ten miles west of Santiago the Indiana had been signaled to go back to the harbor entrance, and at Ascarederos the Iowa was signaled to "resume blockading station." The Iowa, assisted by the Ericsson and the Hist, took off the crew of the Vizcaya, while the Harvard and the Gloucester rescued those of the Infanta Maria Teresa and the Almirante Oquendo. This rescue of prisoners, including the wounded from the burning Spanish vessels, was the occasion of some of the most daring and gallant conduct of the day. The ships were burning fore and aft, their guns and reserve ammunition were exploding, and it was not known at what moment the fire would reach the main magazines. In addition to this, a heavy surf was running just inside of the Spanish ships. But nothing deterred our officers and men until their work of humanity was complete.

There remained now of the Spanish ships only the Cristobal Colon, but she was their best and fastest vessel. Forced by the situation to hug the Cuban coast, her only chance of escape was by superior and sustained speed. When the Vizcaya went ashore the Colon was about six miles ahead of the Brooklyn and Oregon, but her spurt was finished and the American ships were now gaining upon her. Behind the Brooklyn and the Oregon came the Texas, Vixen and New York. It was evident from the bridge of the New York that all the American ships were gradually overhauling the chase, and that she had no chance of escape. At 12:50 the Brooklyn and the Oregon opened fire and got her range—the Oregon's heavy shell striking beyond her—and at 1:20 she gave up without firing another shot, hauled down her colors, and ran ashore at Rio Torquino, 45 miles from Santiago. Captain Cook, of the Brooklyn, went on board to receive the surrender. While his boat was alongside I came up in the New York, received his report and placed the Oregon in charge of the wreck to save her, if possible, and directed the prisoners to be transferred to the Resolute, which had followed the chase.

Commodore Schley, whose chief of staff had gone on board to receive the surrender, had directed that all their personal effects should be retained by the officers. This order I did not modify.

Several of the ships were struck, the Brooklyn more often than the others, but very little material injury was done, the greatest being aboard the Iowa. Our loss was one man killed and one wounded, both on the Brooklyn. It is difficult to explain this immunity from loss of life or injury to ships in a combat with modern vessels of the best type, but Spanish gunnery is poor at the best, and the superior weight and accuracy of our fire speedily drove the men from their guns and silenced their fire. The statements of prisoners, and by observation. The Spanish vessels, as they dashed out of the harbor, were covered with the smoke from their own guns, but this speedily diminished in

### Slight Injury to the Cristobal Colon.

The Cristobal Colon was not injured by our firing, and probably is not much injured by beaching, though she ran ashore at high speed. The beach was so steep that she came off by the working of the sea. But her sea valves were opened and broken, treacherously, an hour after her surrender, and despite all efforts she sank. When it became evident that she could not be kept afloat she was pushed by the New York bodily upon the beach, the New York's steam being placed against her for this purpose, the ship being handled by Captain Chadwick with admirable judgment, and sank in shallow water, and may be saved. Had this not been done she would have gone down in deep water and would have been to a certainty a total loss.

In regard to the complete and important victory over the Spanish forces as the successful finish of several weeks of arduous and close blockade, so stringent and effective during the night that the enemy was deterred from making the attempt to escape at night, and deliberately selected to make the attempt in daylight. That this was the case I was informed by the commanding officer of the Cristobal Colon.

It seems proper to briefly describe here the manner in which this warlike vessel, the harbor of Santiago is naturally a narrow one, and that a narrow one, and the deep water extending close up to the shore line presenting no difficulties of navigation outside of the entrance. At the time of my arrival before the port—June 1—the moon was at its full, and there was sufficient light during the night to enable any movement outside of the entrance to be detected, but with the waning of the moon and the coming of dark nights there was opportunity for the enemy to escape—for his torpedo boats to make an attack upon the blockading vessels.

It was ascertained with fair conclusiveness that the Merrimac, so gallantly taken into the channel on June 3, did not obstruct it. I therefore maintained the blockade as follows: To the battleships was assigned the duty, in turn, of lighting the channel. Moving up to the port, at a distance of from one to two miles from the Morro—depending upon the condition of the atmosphere—they threw a searchlight beam directly up the channel and held it steadily there. This lightened up the entire breadth of the channel for half a mile inside of the entrance so brilliantly that the movement of small boats could be detected. Why the batteries never opened fire upon the searchlight ships was always a matter of surprise to me, but they never did. Stationed close to the entrance of the port were three picket launches, and at a little distance farther out the small motor vessels converted into pickets—and when they were available, one or two of our torpedo boats. With this arrangement there was at least a certainty that nothing could get out of the harbor undetected.

Destruction of the Vizcaya. After the arrival of the army, when the situation forced upon the Spanish admiral a decision, our vigilance increased. The night blockading distance was reduced to two miles for all vessels, and a battleship was placed alongside the searchlight ship, with her broadside trained upon the channel in readiness to fire the instant a Spanish ship should appear. The commanding officers merit the greatest praise for the perfect manner in which they entered into this plan and put it into execution. The Massachusetts, which, according to routine, was sent that morning to coal at Guantanamo, like the others, had spent weary nights upon this work, and deserved a better fate than to be absent that morning.

In closure, for the information of the department, copies of orders and memoranda issued from time to time, relating to the manner of maintaining the blockade. When all the work was done so well it is difficult to discriminate in praise. The object of the blockade of Cervera's squadron was fully accomplished, and each individual bore well his part in it, the commodore in command of the second division, the captains of ships, their officers and men. The fire of the battleships was powerful and destructive, and the resistance of the Spanish squadron was, in great part, broken almost before they had got beyond the range of the main forts. The fine speed of the Oregon enabled her to take a front position in the chase, and the Cristobal Colon did not give up until the Oregon had thrown a 12 inch shell beyond her. The performance adds to the already brilliant record of this fine battleship, and speaks highly of the skill and care with which her admirable efficiency has been maintained during a service unprecedented in the history of vessels of her class.

The Brooklyn's westerly blockading position gave her an advantage in the chase, and she maintained to the end, and she employed her fine battery with telling effect. The Texas and the New York were gaining on the chase during the last hour, and had any accident befallen the Brooklyn or the Oregon would have speedily overhauled the Cristobal Colon. From the moment the Spanish vessel exhausted her first burst of speed the result was never in doubt. She fell, in fact, far below what might reasonably have been expected of her. Careful measurements of time and distance give her an average speed from the time she cleared the harbor mouth until the time she was run on shore at Rio Torquino, of 13.7 knots. Neither the New York nor the Brooklyn stopped to couple up their forward engines, but ran out the chase with one pair, getting steam, of course, as rapidly as possible on all boilers. To stop to couple up the forward engines would have meant a delay of 15 minutes, or four miles in the chase.

Our Ships But Slightly Injured. Several of the ships were struck, the Brooklyn more often than the others, but very little material injury was done, the greatest being aboard the Iowa. Our loss was one man killed and one wounded, both on the Brooklyn. It is difficult to explain this immunity from loss of life or injury to ships in a combat with modern vessels of the best type, but Spanish gunnery is poor at the best, and the superior weight and accuracy of our fire speedily drove the men from their guns and silenced their fire. The statements of prisoners, and by observation. The Spanish vessels, as they dashed out of the harbor, were covered with the smoke from their own guns, but this speedily diminished in

vessels were closer to your flagship, no doubt their part in the conflict was under your immediate observation. Lieutenant Sharp, commanding the Vixen, acted with conspicuous courage. Although unable to engage the heavier ships of the enemy with his light guns, he nevertheless was close in to the battle line under heavy fire, and many of the enemy's shots passed beyond his vessel.

Schley Extols His Officers. I beg to invite special attention to the conduct of my flag lieutenant, James H. Sears, and Ensign Edward McCauley, Jr., aide, who were constantly at my side during the engagement and who exposed themselves fearlessly in discharging their duties, and also to the splendid behavior of my secretary, Lieutenant B. W. Wells, Jr., who commanded and directed the fighting of the Fourth division with splendid effect.

I would commend the highly meritorious conduct and courage in the engagement of Lieutenant Commander N. E. Mason, the executive officer, whose presence everywhere over the ship during its continuance did much to secure the good result of this ship's part in the victory.

The navigator, Lieutenant A. C. Hodgson, and the division officers, Lieutenant T. D. Griffin, Lieutenant W. R. Rush, Lieutenant Edward Simpson, Lieutenant J. G. Doyle, Ensign Charles Webster, and the junior division officers were most steady and conspicuous in every detail of duty.

The officers of the medical, pay and engineer and marine corps responded to every demand of the occasion, and were fearless in exposing themselves. The warrant officers, Boatswain William L. Hill, Carpenter G. H. Warford and Gunner F. T. Applegate, were everywhere exposed in watching for damage, reports of which were promptly conveyed to me.

I have never in my life served with a braver, better or worthier crew than that of the Brooklyn. During the combat, lasting from 9:25 until 1:15 p. m., much of the time under fire, they never flinched for a moment, and were apparently undisturbed by the storm of projectiles passing ahead, astern and over the ship.

The result of the engagement was the destruction of the Spanish squadron and the capture of the admiral and some 1,300 to 1,500 prisoners, with the loss of several hundred killed, estimated by Admiral Cervera at 600 men.

The casualties on board this ship were: G. H. Ellis, chief yeoman, killed; J. Burns, fireman, first class, severely wounded. The marks and scars show that the ship was struck about 25 times, and she bears in all 41 scars as the result of her participation in the great victory of our force on July 3, 1898. The speed cone halliards were shot away, and nearly all the signal halliards. The ensign, at the close of the action, fell in pieces.

Schley Congratulates Sampson. I congratulate you most sincerely upon this great victory to the squadron under your command, and I am glad that I had an opportunity to contribute in the least to a victory that seems big enough for all of us.

I have the honor to transmit herewith the report of the commanding officer and a drawing in profile of the ship, showing the location of hits and scars; also a memorandum of the ammunition expended and the amount to fill her allowance.

Since reaching this place and holding conversation with several of the captains, viz., Captain Eulate, of the Vizcaya, and the second in command of the Colon, Commander Contreras, I have learned that the Spanish admiral's scheme was to concentrate all fire for a while on the Brooklyn, and the Vizcaya to ram her, in hopes if they could destroy her the chance of escape would be increased, as it was supposed she was the swiftest ship of your squadron. This explains the heavy fire mentioned and the Vizcaya's action in the earlier moments of the engagement. The execution of this purpose was promptly defeated by the fact that all the ships of the squadron advanced into close range and opened an irresistibly furious and terrific fire upon the enemy's squadron as it was coming out of the harbor.

I am glad to say that the injury supposed to be below the water line was due to a water valve being opened from some unknown cause and flooding the compartment. The injury to the belt is found to be only slight and the leak small.

I beg to enclose a list of officers and crew who participated in the combat of July 2, 1898.

I cannot close this report without mentioning in high terms of praise the splendid conduct and support of Captain C. H. Clark, of the Oregon. Her speed was wonderful and her accurate fire splendidly destructive. Very respectfully,

W. S. SCHLEY,  
Commodore United States Navy.

**CAPTAIN CLARK.**

The Commander of the Oregon Tells of His Share in the Great Battle.

United States Steamship Oregon, off Santiago de Cuba, July 4, 1898.

Sir: I have the honor to report that, at 9:30 a. m., yesterday, the Spanish fleet was discovered standing out of the harbor of Santiago de Cuba. They turned to the westward and opened fire, to which our ships replied vigorously. For a short time there was an almost continuous flight of projectiles over this ship, but when our line was fairly engaged, and the Iowa had made a swift advance as if to ram or close, the enemy's fire became defective in train as well as range. The ship was only struck three times, and at least two of them were by fragments of shells. We had no casualties.

As soon as it was evident that the enemy's ships were trying to break through and escape to the westward, we went ahead at full speed, with the determination of carrying out to the utmost, your order: "If the enemy tries to escape the ships must close and engage as soon as possible and endeavor to sink his vessels or force them to run ashore." We soon passed all of our ships except the Brooklyn, bearing the broad pendant of Commodore Schley. At first we only used our main battery, but when it was discovered that the enemy's torpedo boats were

following their ships we used our rapid fire guns, as well as the "6." Upon them with telling effect. As we ranged up near the sternmost of their ships she headed for the beach, evidently on fire. We raked her as we passed, pushing on for the next ahead, using our starboard guns as they were brought to bear, and before we had her fairly abeam she too was making for the beach. The two remaining vessels were now some distance ahead, but our speed had increased to 16 knots and our fire, added to that of the Brooklyn, soon sent another, the Vizcaya, to the shore in flames. Only the Cristobal Colon was left, and for a time it seemed as if she might escape, but when we opened with our forward turret guns and the Brooklyn followed she began to edge in towards the coast, and her capture or destruction was assured. As she struck the beach her flag came down and the Brooklyn signaled "cease firing," following it with "Congratulations for the grand victory; thanks for your splendid assistance."

The Brooklyn sent a boat to her, and when the admiral came up, with the New York, and Texas, and Vixen, she was taken possession of. A prize crew was put on board from this ship under Lieutenant Commander Cogswell, the executive officer, but before 11 p. m., the ship, which had been filling in spite of all efforts to stop leaks, was abandoned, and just as the crew left she went over on her side.

I cannot speak in too high terms of the bearing and conduct of all on board this ship. When they found the Oregon had pushed to the front, and was hurrying to a succession of the conflicts with the enemy's vessels if they could be overtaken, and would engage, their enthusiasm was intense.

As these vessels were so much more heavily armored than the Brooklyn they might have concentrated upon and overpowered her, and consequently I am persuaded that, but for the way the officers and men of the Oregon steamed and steered the ship and fought and supplied the batteries, the Colon and perhaps the Vizcaya would have escaped. Therefore, I feel that they rendered meritorious service to the country, and while I cannot mention the name of each officer and man individually, I am going to append a list of the officers, with the stations that they occupied, hoping that they may be of service to them should the claims of others for advancement above them ever be considered.

C. E. CLARK,  
Captain United States Navy.

## FIGHTING BOB EVANS

Tells How His Sturdy Fighters Became as Gentle as Women After the Victory.

The report of Captain Robley B. Evans gives the story of the part his vessel, the Iowa, took in the battle.

Captain Evans describes the approach of the Spanish fleet from the harbor, and the destruction of the torpedo boat destroyers by his vessel and the Gloucester, and the work done by the Iowa and the Almirante Oquendo. He describes the damage done to his ship by Spanish shells, declaring it trifling, and proceeds:

At 11 o'clock the Iowa arrived in the vicinity of the Vizcaya, which had been run ashore, and as it was evident that she could not catch the Cristobal Colon and that the Oregon, Brooklyn and New York would, two steam cutters and three cutters were immediately hoisted out and sent to the Vizcaya to rescue her crew. Our boats succeeded in bringing off a large number of officers and men of that ship's company, and in placing many of them on board the torpedo boat Ericsson, and the auxiliary dispatch vessel Hist.

There are no casualties among the ship's company to report. No officer nor men were injured during the engagement.

After having received on board the rescued crew of the Vizcaya this vessel proceeded to the eastward and resumed the blockading station, in obedience to the signal made by the commander-in-chief about 11:30.

We received on board this vessel Captain Eulate, the commanding officer, and 23 officers and men, of whom 24 were wounded. There were also received on board five dead bodies, which were immediately buried with the honors due to their grade.

The battery behaved well in all respects.

The following is an approximate statement of the ammunition expended during the engagement. A more exact statement cannot be given at this time: 21 12 inch semi-A. P. shells, with full charges; 581 eight inch common shell, with full charges; 231 four inch cartridges, common shell; 1,656 six pounder cartridges, common shell; 190 one pounder cartridges, common shell.

Upon arriving on the blockading station the Gloucester transferred to this vessel Rear Admiral Cervera, his flag lieutenant, and the commanding officers of the torpedo boat destroyers Furor and Pluton, and also one man of the Oquendo's crew rescued by the Gloucester.

Naval Cadets Frank Taylor Evans and John E. Lewis, and five men belonging to the Massachusetts were on board the Iowa when the enemy's ships came out. They were stationed at different points, and rendered efficient service.

The officers and men of this ship behaved admirably. No lot of men could have done more gallant service.

I take pleasure in stating to you, sir, that the coolness and judgment of the executive officer, Lieutenant Commander Raymond P. Rodgers, deserves, and will, I hope, receive a proper reward at the hands of the government.

The test of the executive officer's work is the conduct of ship and crew in battle. In this case it was simply superb.

The coolness of the navigator, Lieutenant W. H. Schuetze, and of Lieutenant F. K. Hill, in charge of the rapid fire guns on the upper deck, are worthy of the greatest commendation.

Other officers of the ship did not come under my personal observation, but the result of the action shows how well they did their duty.

I cannot express my admiration for my magnificent crew. So long as the enemy showed his flag they fought like Americans, but when the flag came down they were as gentle and tender as American women. Very respectfully,

R. B. EVANS,  
Captain United States Navy.