

Dewey's Own Story of the Battle of Manila

Forty Years Ago Today He Defeated Spaniards

(Continued from page one.)
against so large a target as a ship. With batteries of searchlights they could easily locate us, while we could locate them only by the flash of their guns.

When we were ten miles from Boca Grande we judged, as we saw signal lights flash, that we had already been sighted either by small vessels acting as scouts or by land lookouts. El Fraile was passed by the flagship at a distance of half a mile and was utilized as a point of departure for the course up the bay clear of the San Nicolas shoals. When El Fraile bore due south (magnetic) the course was changed to northeast by north. We were not surprised to find the usual lights on Corregidor and Caballo Islands and the San Nicolas shoals extinguished, as this was only a natural precaution on the part of the Spaniards.

There were no vessels, so far as we could see, cruising off the entrance, no dash of torpedo launches which might have been expected, no sign of life beyond the signaling on shore until the rear of the column, steaming at full speed, was between Corregidor and El Fraile.

As we watched the walls of darkness for the first gun flash, every moment of our progress brought its relief, and now we began to hope that we should get by without being fired on at all. But about ten minutes after midnight, when all except our rear ships had cleared it, the El Fraile battery opened with a shot that passed between the Petrel and the Raleigh. The Boston, Concord, Raleigh, and McCulloch returned the fire with a few shots. One 8-inch shell from the Boston seemed to be effective. After firing three times El Fraile was silent. There was no demonstration whatever from the Caballo battery, with its three 6-inch modern rifles, no explosion of mines, and no other resistance. We were safely within the bay. The next step was to locate the Spanish squadron and engage it.

Once through the entrance, as I deemed it wise to keep moving in order not to be taken by surprise when the ships had no headway, and as, at the same time, I did not wish to reach our destination before we had sufficient daylight to show us the position of the Spanish ships, the speed of the squadron was reduced to four knots, while we headed toward the city of Manila. In the meantime the men were allowed to snatch a little sleep at their guns; but at 4 o'clock coffee was served to them, and so eager were they that there was no need of any orders to insure readiness for the work to come.

Signal lights, rockets, and beacon lights along the shore, now that we were sure of grappling with the enemy, no longer concerned us. We waited for dawn and the first sight of the Spanish squadron, which I had rather expected would be at the anchorage off the city of Manila. This seemed naturally the strong position for Admiral Montojo to take up, as he would then have the powerful Manila battery to support him. But the admiral stated in his report that he had avoided this position on account of the resultant injury which the city might have received if the battle had been fought in close proximity to it.

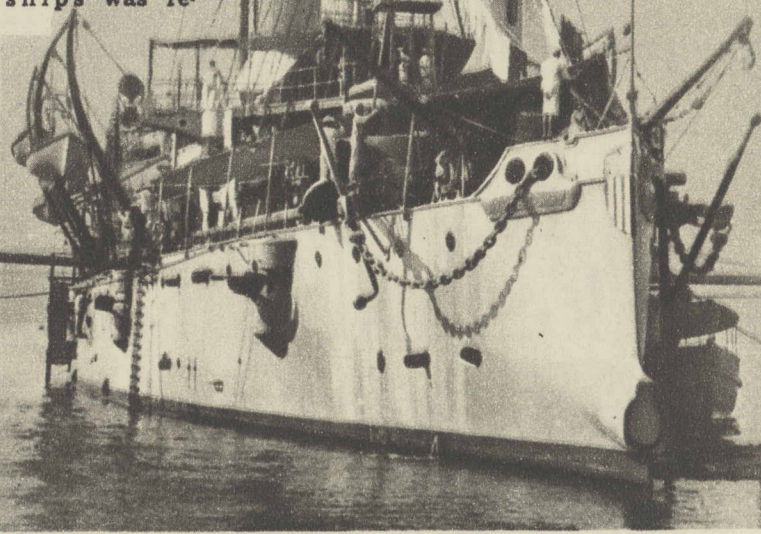
When we saw that there were only merchantmen at the Manila anchorage, the squadron, led by the flagship, gradually changed its course, swinging around on the arc of a large circle leading toward the city and making a kind of countermarch, as it were, until headed in the direction of Cavite. This brought the ships within two or three miles of shore, with a distance of four hundred yards between ships, in the following order: Olympia (flag), Baltimore, Raleigh, Petrel, Concord, and Boston.

About 5:05 (a. m.) the Luneta and two other Manila batteries opened fire. Their shots passed well over the vessels. It was estimated that some had a range of seven miles. Only the Bos-

Historic Scoop
After the American naval victory in Manila bay Dewey cut the cable linking Manila with the outside world. As a result America for six days had nothing but a fragmentary and inaccurate account of the battle. It was The Chicago Tribune which on May 7 gave it the first complete and truthful story of the historic engagement. Edward H. Harden, representing The Tribune and the New York World, witnessed the battle. When Dewey sent a dispatch boat to Hongkong on May 5 with his official report Harden went along. Dewey's report was put on the cable first, after which Harden's story was filed. The story, outdistancing the official report to Washington, reached New York too late for any regular edition, but, due to the enterprise of The Tribune's correspondent in the World office, it was in The Tribune's office in Chicago almost immediately. The Tribune thus obtained a historic scoop. Early editions were recalled from railway stations and replaced by a new edition telling the big news of Dewey's victory. The Tribune called President McKinley by long-distance telephone and gave the nation's executive the first detailed news of the battle.

ton and Concord replied. Each sent two shells at the Luneta battery. The other vessels reserved their fire, having in mind my caution that, in the absence of a full supply of ammunition, the amount we had was too precious to be wasted when we were seven thousand miles from our base. My captains understood that the Spanish ships were our objective and not the shore fortifications of a city that would be virtually ours as soon as our squadron had control of Manila bay.

With the coming of broad daylight we finally sighted the Spanish vessels formed in an irregular crescent in front of Cavite. The Olympia headed toward them, and in answer to her signal to close up, the distance between our ships was re-



duced to 200 yards. The western flank of the Spanish squadron was protected by Cavite peninsula and the Sangley point battery, while its eastern flank rested in the shoal water off Las Pinas.

The Spanish line of battle was formed by the Reina Cristina (flag), Castilla, Don Juan de Austria, Don Antonio de Ulloa, Isla de Luzon, Isla de Cuba, and Marques del Duero.

The Velasco and Lezo were on the other (southern) side of Cavite Point, and it is claimed by the Spaniards that they took no part in the action. Some of the vessels in the Spanish battle line were under way, and others were moored so as to bring their broadside batteries to bear to the best advantage. The Castilla was protected by heavy iron lighters filled with stone.

Before me now was the object for which we had made our arduous preparations, and which, indeed, must ever be the supreme test of a naval officer's career. I felt confident of the outcome, though I had no thought that victory would be won at so slight a cost to our own side. Confidence was expressed in the very precision with which the dun, war-colored hulls of the

squadron followed in column behind the flagship, keeping their distance excellently. All the guns were pointed constantly at the enemy, while the men were at their stations waiting the word. There was no break in the monotone of the engines save the mechanical voice of the leadman or an occasional low-toned command by the quartermaster at the conn, or the roar of a Spanish shell. The Manila batteries continued their inaccurate fire, to which we paid no attention.

The misty haze of the tropical dawn had hardly risen when at 5:15, at long range, the Cavite forts and Spanish squadron opened fire. Our course was not one leading directly toward the enemy, but a converging one, keeping him on our starboard bow. Our speed was eight knots, and our converging course and ever-varying position must have confused the Spanish gunners. My assumption that the Spanish fire would be hasty and inaccurate proved correct.

So far as I could see none of our ships was suffering any damage, while, in view of my limited ammunition supply, it was my plan not to open fire until we were within effective range, and then to fire as rapidly as possible with all of our guns.

At 5:40, when we were within a distance of 5,000 yards (two and one-half miles), I turned to Captain Gridley and said:

"You may fire when you are ready, Gridley."

While I remained on the bridge with Lamberton, Brumby, and Stickney, Gridley took his station in the conning tower and gave the order to the battery. The very first gun to speak was an 8-inch from the forward turret of the Olympia,

and this was the signal for all the other ships to join the action.

At about the time that the Spanish ships were first sighted, 5:06, two submarine mines were exploded between our squadron and Cavite, some two miles ahead of our column. On account of the distance, I remarked to Lamberton: "Evidently the Spaniards are already rattled."

However, they explained afterward that the premature explosions were due to a desire to clear a space in which their ships might maneuver.

At one time a torpedo launch made an attempt to reach the Olympia, but she was sunk by the guns of the secondary battery and went down bow first, and another yellow-colored launch flying the Spanish colors ran out, heading for the Olympia, but after being disabled she was beached to prevent her sinking.

When the flagship neared the five-fathom curve off Cavite she turned to the westward, bringing her port batteries to bear on the enemy, and, followed by the squadron, passed along the Spanish line until north of and only some 1,500 yards distant from the Sangley point battery, when she again turned and headed back to the eastward, thus giving the squadron an op-



Admiral Dewey on the bridge of his flagship Olympia at Manila, as depicted by an artist for Leslie's official illustrated history of the Spanish-American war.

portunity to use their port and starboard batteries alternately and to cover with their fire all the Spanish ships, as well as the Cavite and Sangley point batteries.

Three runs were thus made from the eastward and two from the westward, the length of each run averaging two miles and the ships being turned each time with port helm.

There had been no cessation in the rapidity of fire maintained by our whole squadron, and the effect of its concentration, owing to the fact that our ships were kept so close together, was smothering, particularly upon the two largest ships, the Reina Cristina and Castilla. The Don Juan de Austria first, and then the Reina Cristina, made brave and desperate attempts to charge the Olympia, but, becoming the target for all our batteries, they turned and ran back.

In this sortie the Reina Cristina was raked by an 8-inch shell which is said to have put out of action some twenty men and to have completely destroyed her steering gear. Another shell in her forecabin killed or wounded all the members of the crews of four rapid-fire guns; another set fire to her after orlop; another killed or disabled nine men on her poop; another carried away her mizzenmast, bringing down the ensign and the admiral's flag, both of which were replaced; another exploded in the after ammunition room; and still another exploded in the sick bay, which was already filled with wounded.

Though in the early part of the action our firing was not what I should have liked it to be, it soon steadied down, and by the time the Reina Cristina steamed toward us it was satisfactorily accurate. The Castilla fared little better than the Reina Cristina. All except one of her guns was disabled, she was set on fire by our shells, and finally abandoned by her crew after they had sustained a loss of 23 killed and 80 wounded. The Don Juan de Austria was badly damaged and on fire, the Isla de Luzon had three guns dismounted, and the Marques del Duero was also in a bad way.

Admiral Montojo, finding his flagship no longer manageable, half her people dead or wounded, her guns useless, and the ship on fire, gave the order to abandon and sink her and transferred his flag to the Isla de Cuba shortly after 7 o'clock.

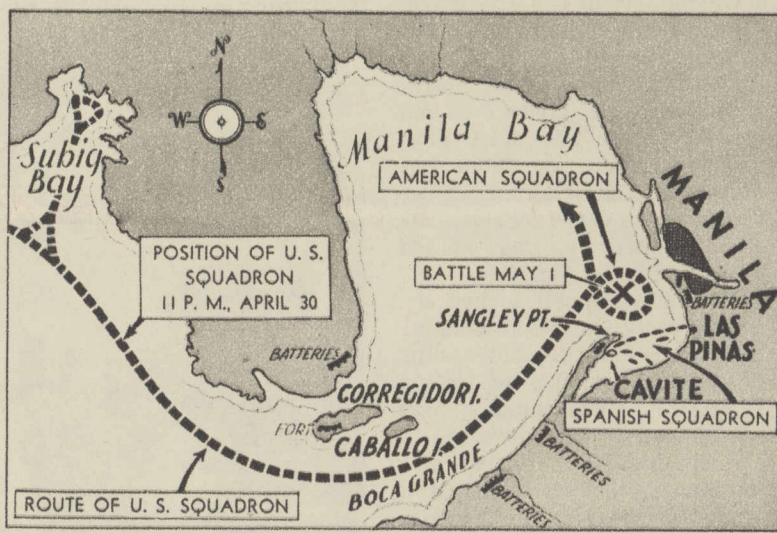
Victory was already ours, though we did not know it. Owing to the smoke over the Spanish squadron, there were

fired per gun, not that only fifty rounds remained.

Feeling confident of the outcome, I now signaled that the crews, who had had only a cup of coffee at 4 a. m., should have their breakfast. The public at home, on account of this signal, to which was attributed a non-chalance that had never occurred to me, reasoned that breakfast was the real reason for our withdrawing from action. Meanwhile I improved the opportunity to have the commanding officers report on board the flagship.

There had been such a heavy fight of shells over us that each captain, when he arrived, was convinced that no other ship had had such good luck as his own in being missed by the enemy's fire, and expected the others to have both casualties and damages to their ships to report. But fortune was as pronouncedly in our favor at Manila as it was later at Santiago. To my gratification, not a single life had been lost, and considering that we would rather measure the importance of an action by the scale of its conduct than by the number of casualties, we were immensely happy.

The concentration of our fire immediately we were within telling range had given us an early advantage in demoralizing the enemy, which has ever been the prime factor in naval battles. In the War of 1812 the losses of the Constitution were slight when she overwhelmed the Guerriere, and in the Civil war the losses of the Kearsarge were slight when she made a shambles of the Alabama. On the Baltimore two officers (Lieut. F. W. Kellogg and Ensign N. E. Irwin) and six men



Map indicating important features of the capture of Manila.

were slightly wounded. None of our ships had been seriously damaged, and every one was still ready for immediate action.

In detail the injuries which we had received from the Spanish fire were as follows:

The Olympia was hulled five times and her rigging was cut in several places. One 6-pound projectile struck immediately under the position where I was standing. The Baltimore was hit five times. The projectile which wounded two officers and six men pursued a most erratic course. It entered the ship's side forward of the starboard gangway and just above the line of the main deck, passed through the hammock netting, down through the deck planks and steel deck, bending the deck beam in a wardroom stateroom, thence upward through the after engine room coaming, over against the cylinder of a 6-inch gun, disabling the gun, struck and exploded a box of 3-pounder ammunition, hit an iron ladder, and finally, spent, dropped on deck. The Boston had four important hits, one causing a fire, which was soon extinguished, and the Petrel was struck once.

At 11:16 a. m. we stood in to complete our work. There remained only the batteries and the gallant little Ulloa. Both opened fire as we advanced. But the contest was too unequal to last more than a few minutes. Soon the Ulloa, under our concentrated fire, went down valiantly with her colors flying. The battery at Sangley point was well served and several times reopened fire before being

finally silenced. Had this battery possessed its four other 6-inch guns which Admiral Montojo had found uselessly lying on the beach at Subig, our ships would have had many more casualties to report. Happily for us, the guns of this battery had been so mounted that they could be laid only for objects beyond the range of 2,000 yards.

As the course of our ships led each time within this range, the shots passed over and beyond them. Evidently the artillerists, who had so constructed their carriages that the muzzles of the guns took against the sill of the embrasure for any range under 2,000 yards, thought it out of the question that an enemy would venture within this distance.



Admiral Montojo

The Concord was sent to destroy a large transport, the Mindanao, which had been beached near Bacoor, and the Petrel, whose light draft would permit her to move in shallower water than the other vessels of the squadron, was sent into the harbor of Cavite to destroy any ships that had taken refuge there. The Mindanao was set on fire and her valuable cargo destroyed. Meanwhile the Petrel gallantly performed her duty, and after a few shots from her 6-inch guns the Spanish flag on the government buildings was hauled down and a white flag hoisted. Admiral Montojo had been wounded and had taken refuge on shore with his remaining officers and men; his loss was 381 of his officers and crew and there was no possibility of further resistance.

At 12:30 the Petrel signaled



Part of a typical gun crew in Dewey's fleet.

Ships of Dewey's fleet as pictured on page one of this section are, left to right: Olympia, Baltimore, Raleigh, Petrel, and Concord.