

THE BATTLE OF SANTIAGO

Captain H.C. Taylor, USS INDIANA

Off Santiago de Cuba, 4 July 1898

I have the honor to submit the following report of the operations of the *Indiana* in the action of July 3, with the Spanish squadron off Santiago de Cuba.

At 9:37 AM, while the crew were at quarters preliminary to general muster, noted two guns fired from the *IOWA* and general signal, "enemy's ships escaping" flying. At once cleared ship for action and the crew were at the guns in a remarkably short time; all officers and men showing an alacrity that indicated clearly their pleasure at the opportunity offered them.

The Spanish squadron was seen emerging from the harbor and in a few moments a general action ensued. The leading ship, which proved to be the *INFANTA MARIA TERESA*, flying the flag of Vice Admiral Cervera, was followed by the other vessels of the squadron, as follows: *VIZCAYA*, *CRISTOBAL COLON*, *OQUENDO* and the torpedo boat destroyers *FUROR* and *PLUTON*. The enemy's vessels headed to the westward and our ships headed in the same direction, keeping as nearly abreast of them as possible.

The ship fired on all of them as they came out one by one and continued the action later by firing principally on the *TERESA*, *OQUENDO*, *FUROR* and *PLUTON*. Several of our shells were seen to take effect on these vessels. Our secondary battery guns were directed principally on the destroyers, as also were the six guns. The destroyers were sunk through the agency of our guns and those of the *GLOUCESTER*, which vessel had come up and engaged them close aboard.

About 10:15 AM, observed the *MARIA TERESA* and *OQUENDO* on fire and heading for the beach, the fire from their guns having ceased. We then devoted our special attention to prevent the escape of the destroyers, which appeared more than a match for the *GLOUCESTER*, she being the only small vessel near to engage them. They were soon seen to blow up, apparently struck by our "six" and six pounders. We now fired our large guns at the *VIZCAYA*, which was at long range. She made for the shore soon after, on fire, and battery silenced. These ships hauled down their colors as they made for the beach. The Spanish flagship hoisted the white flag as she grounded.

The *Colon* was observed well over the west horizon closely pursued by the *BROOKLYN*, *OREGON* and *TEXAS*, off shore of her. The flagship *NEW YORK*, steaming full speed to the westward as soon as the *VIZCAYA* surrendered signaled us "go back and guard entrance of harbor."

During this action we used no armor piercing shell, except the smokeless powder six pounders and the good effect of the common shell is shown by the fires on the enemy's ships and the short time taken to disable them without piercing their armor, and with almost no injury to ourselves.

Received also during the afternoon and night prisoners from the *GLOUCESTER* and *HIST*. In all seven officers and 217 men, which were to-day transferred to the *ST. LOUIS*.

The conduct of the officers and crew was in every respect commendable, coolness and good discipline prevailed, coupled with a marked enthusiasm.