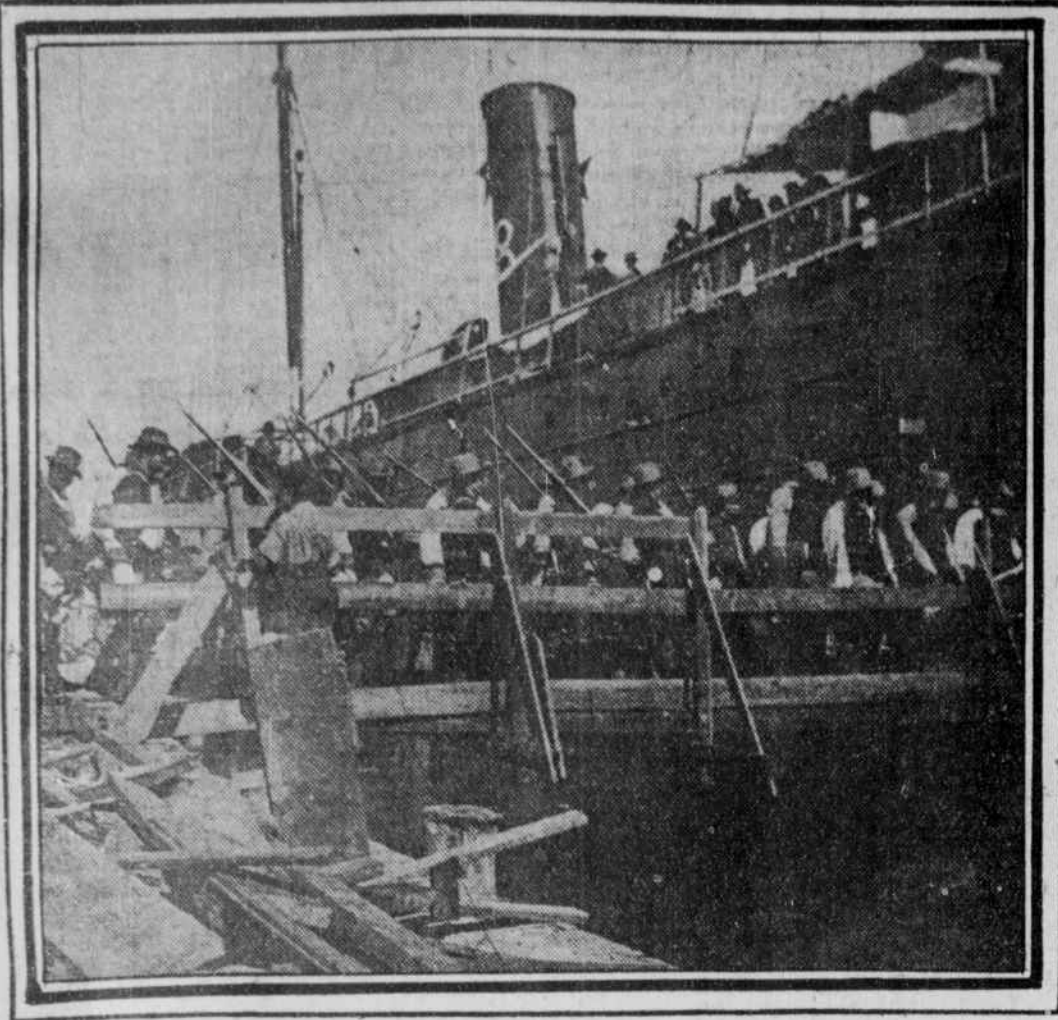




# A BOY WHO HELPED MAKE HISTORY at SANTIAGO

### The Pen Picture of the Crushing of Cervera and of Preceding Incidents, Which This Young Middy Sketched on the Spot, Brings Out Tragedy and Comedy in High Relief.



SCENE AT TAMPA WHEN THE ARMY EMBARKED FOR SANTIAGO

A naval officer who while a "middy" at Annapolis in 1898 managed to gain assignment for the Cuban campaign in the Spanish war, wrote an account of the campaign and of the battle of Santiago in letters home. His story, boyishly naive and chatty, gives a most vivid narrative of the defeat of Cervera and the crushing of Spain's power in the Western Hemisphere. It will be presented in two instalments, the subjoined being the first.

By Lieut.-Com. D. Pratt Mannix. FOREWORD.

THE battleship Maine was destroyed in Havana Harbor on the night of February 15, 1898. When the news of that disaster reached Annapolis all boys and other amusements were suspended indefinitely and for three months the student body was kept in a constant state of excitement and anticipation, which culminated when war was declared between the United States and Spain on April 25. The first, or "senior" class of midshipmen were at once ordered to sea and the other three classes granted four months' leave of absence to visit their homes. The writer was at that time a member of the second, or "junior" class. Wishing to participate in the historical events, then in the near future, he made an urgently worded official application for orders to any ship in the navy. The reply he received constitutes the first of the series of letters composing this article. They are by no means intended to be a history of the Spanish War, or even of the Santiago campaign, but simply what was seen and heard by a nineteen-year-old midshipman during two momentous months in which an empire, established by Pizarro and Cortez, and enduring through four hundred years of aggression and strife, was swept utterly and forever from the Western Hemisphere.

LETTERS AFLOAT. Containing the Experiences of an Annapolis Second Class Man While on Leave from the Naval Academy. Navy Department, Washington, May 26, 1898.

Sir: You are hereby detached from the United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md., will proceed, immediately, to Key West, Fla., or to such other port as the U. S. S. Indiana may be, and report to the senior officer present for duty on board that vessel, temporarily.

You will regard yourself detached from duty on board the U. S. S. Indiana at such time as the Commander in Chief may designate, in order that you may return to Annapolis by September 30 next, and you will so return and report to the superintendent of the Naval Academy not later than the date specified.

Report to the commandant at Key West for the necessary transportation beyond that port. Respectfully, (Signed) JOHN D. LONG, Secretary.

FOURTEEN HOURS IN AN AWFUL FLORIDA TRAIN.

U. S. S. Indiana, Off Key West, June 2.

Here I am at last; you know I bought my ticket for Tampa, but I found that the other fellows were going to Miami, which is on the other side of the peninsula. As it would have cost me \$15 more to go with them I decided that I couldn't afford it and, changing cars at some little town in Florida, had fourteen hours in an awful train. We stopped about every mile, generally some accident, and once the conductor stopped to chop wood. He told me I could get a boat at Tampa and get to Key West as soon as the Miami people.

Several people spoke to me on the train, and one old fellow from Minnesota told me everything I wanted to know. He said there was no boat that night and told me where all the hotels are. The Tampa Bay is one of the best hotels in the South, but as it costs \$5 a day I went to the Arno, where there were fair accommodations.

Tampa is filled with soldiers going around in their shirt sleeves, with side arms on, and they are a tough looking crowd; all last night I could hear shouts and howls, while rifles and pistols were being off all over the place. There are also some of the Rough Riders here wandering around with loaded revolvers in their belts. The streets are about three feet deep in sand and every vacant lot is crowded with tents, mostly "dog tents." I started in Tampa from 8 o'clock on

Tuesday until 8 o'clock on Wednesday, then I took the train to Port Tampa, where the boat leaves.

We got there about 10 o'clock in the evening and went on board the Mascote. I had an upper berth, and in the lower was a bag with "U. S. N." on it. Pretty soon my roommate came up and introduced himself; he was a plebe paymaster, just appointed and from Washington, a very pleasant fellow. There was also a man from New Orleans, not in the service, who I could see was a gentleman. He had with him a volunteer army surgeon, a crazy Dutchman, who could speak a half dozen languages; he kept us laughing the whole trip. He was an immensely strong man, and his eating capacity was marvellous. He said that he drank very moderately, but I kept tally, and he actually drank eighteen bottles of beer in one day.

The food was poor, but we were so hot that all we wanted was iced tea, and we kept the darkeys hustling providing that. Altogether we had a very jolly time, especially at meals, when the doctor was getting in his work. There were about 500 enlisted men of the Naval Reserves on board, and at our table were three of their officers; they sat up like plebes, with their hands in their laps, and didn't say a word during the entire trip.

At Key West I saw the midshipmen from the fleet, forty of them, standing by to go to Tampa to join the army transports; they will act as signal officers during the army's trip to Cuba. A few are still waiting at the hotel, and the rest are on ships in the harbor. I reported to the naval commandant, Commodore Reamy, and had my orders indorsed, but was unable to get out to my ship, which, being a battleship, is a long way from shore. There are over 100 vessels in the harbor, many of them prizes.

ON BOARD THE INDIANA WITH TRUNK AND VALISE.

We had supper in a very poor Cuban restaurant, where we were eaten up by mosquitoes. K—'s ship, the Massachusetts, is somewhere off the coast of Cuba and he is stranded at the hotel.

The next morning I saw T—, with side arms on, parading up the street with two of the Maine's survivors, who were to be identified; he told me that the Indiana's launch was in at the dock, so I had my trunk and valise taken down and embarked.

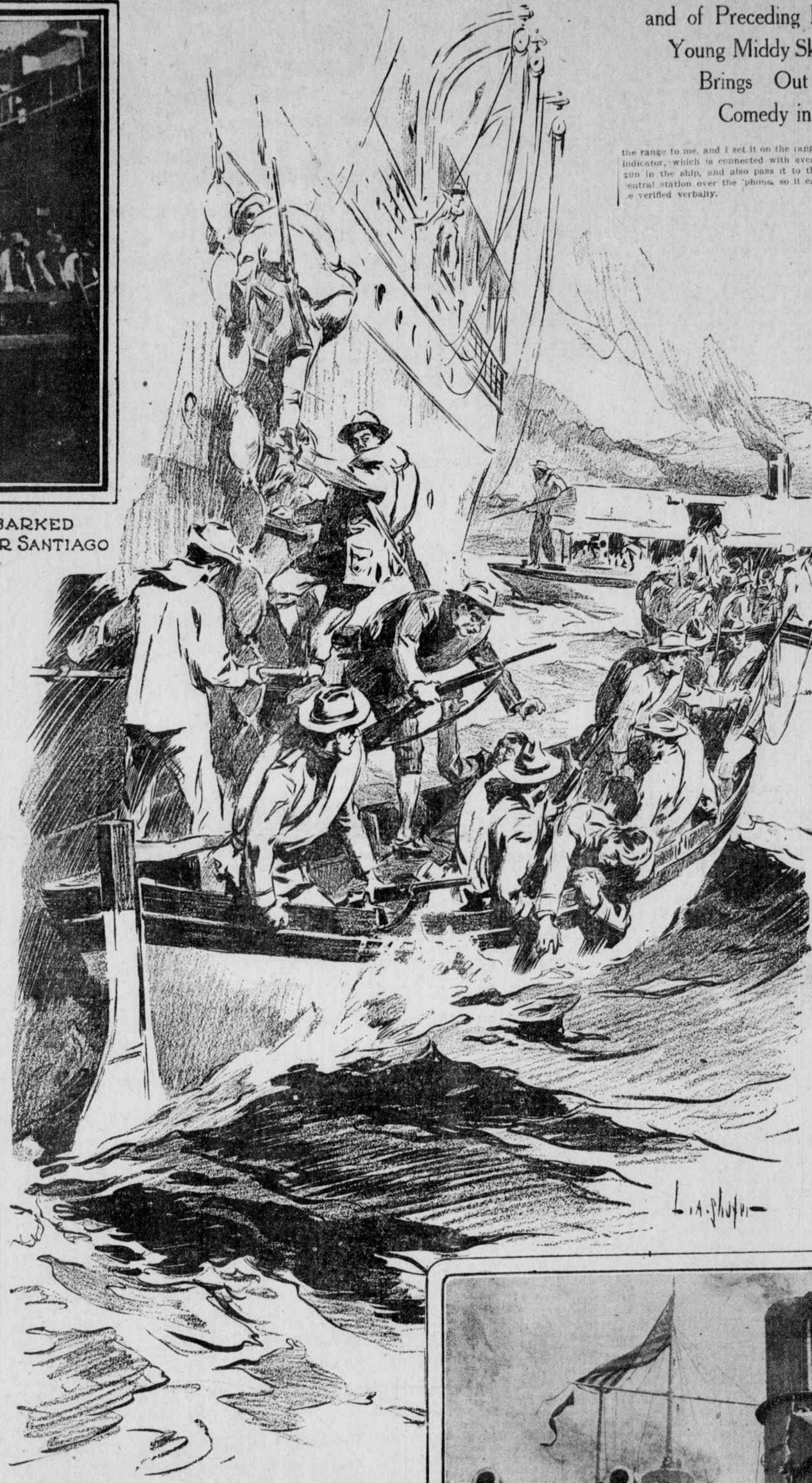
She is a fine ship, and I know lots of the people on her. Captain Taylor is splendid, when I reported he shook hands and said he was glad to see me and was very sorry that the junior officers' mess was so crowded, but that we must expect to rough it in war times, and that he would do all he possibly could. After being "cussed out" at the academy it is a pleasant change to be treated like a gentleman.

We wear practically anything we want to; no one thinks of wearing collars, cuffs or shorts—a handkerchief around the neck takes the place of the first named. The steerage is awfully crowded; there are twenty junior officers quartered there. Some have bunks, some going in hammocks, some sleep on the transoms, and two are on the table.

I have been assigned to the navigator's division; the other midshipman of that division is M—, of '97; he says it is a snap; that he works only fifteen minutes a day and won't do that since I've come. I certainly appreciate the way we have been received by the officers.

SOME WEATHER NOTES IN THE DYNAMO ROOM.

Friday. I was very busy to-day correcting charts under M—'s supervision; it was easy enough work, but very hot. We have general quarters twice a day, and all hands run up on deck to their stations with side arms on. My station is on the bridge, to look out for signals; all the navigator's division will be very busy as soon as we get to sea. Went down in the dynamo room to-day, where the temperature is 150; the thermometer was so hot it couldn't be handled. Wonder what it will be when we have steam



DISSEMBARKING FROM THE TRANSPORTS

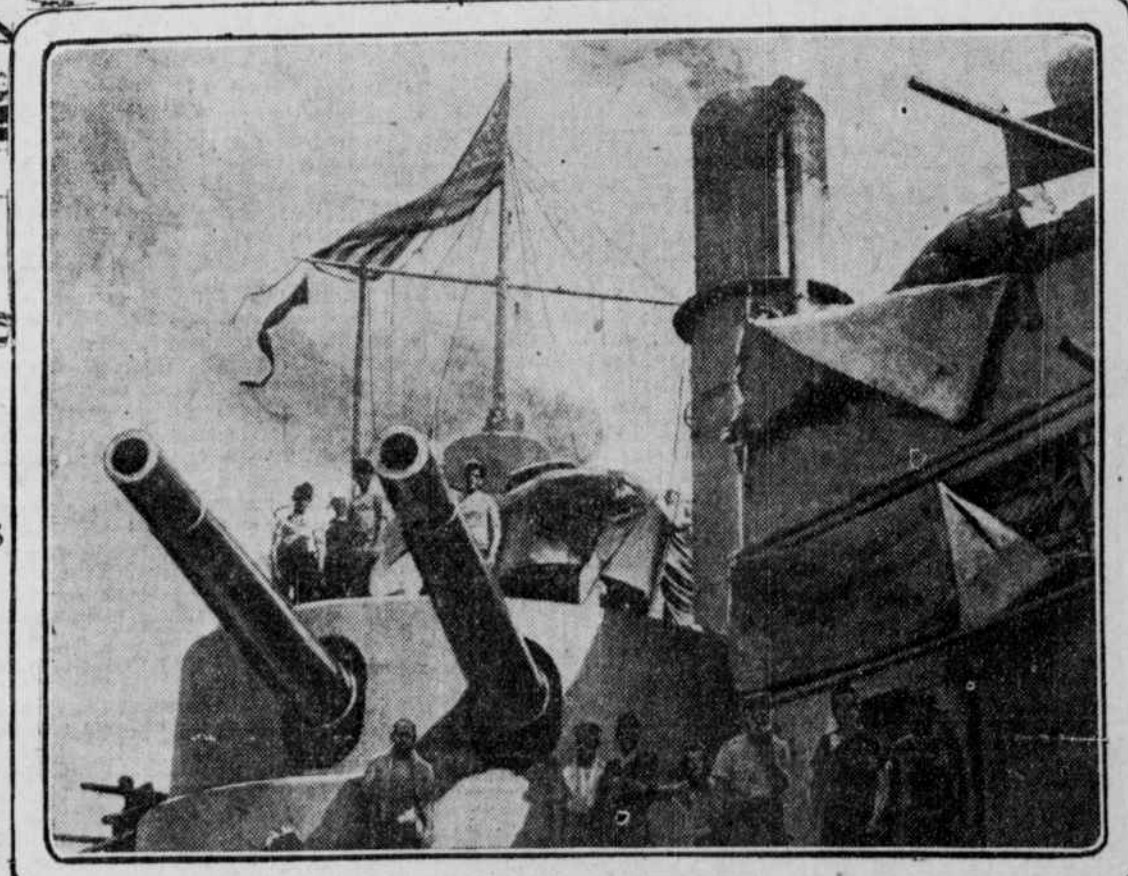
up. The Yosemite came in this evening and signalled us; there is a rumor we are to sail on Sunday, but no one knows anything definite.

Off Key West, June 6th. We expect to get out of here to-morrow; all hands are coaling, and the navigator's division cleaned out the forehold this morning, in consequence of which we are all completely exhausted. I am standing watch now, as one of the fellows is on the sick list; had the mid-watch last night, and about 3 a. m. the Minneapolis got under way; we don't envy her, as she is going to Hampton Roads.

The evenings here are very pleasant. The officers all gather aft on the poop, the midshipmen sit just abaft the after turret and the men are forward. We have eight lookouts, and the crews of the secondary battery sleep at their guns, which have ammunition ready by them. All the officers carry revolvers at quarters, and the sentries' rifles are loaded. They say that at San Juan, where the forts were bombarded, Captain Taylor

sat on the bridge in an easy chair smoking a cigar; but the gunner, who doesn't seem to admire the captain, told me that he was darned sure he wouldn't be hit. We will all be glad when this monotony is changed; there is no shore liberty, and it gets tiresome. The divers finished scraping the ship's bottom yesterday, and the captain went ashore this morning, which is a good sign. We sent our wash ashore and will get it when we come back. If we convoy those troops we ought to see some service.

We dress entirely in white, and most of the midshipmen sleep on deck, the only objection to this being that they scrub decks every morning at 4 o'clock, and, of course, every one has to turn out or get wet. I do most of my work in the chart house, which is on the forward bridge. It is made of wood, and is covered with a rope net, so that if struck by a shell the splinters will not scatter. The captain's emergency cabin is built on the same plan aft. We have forty-eight guns mounted on board and about six hundred officers and men—quite a colony. Just now we are filthy dirty, as we have been



READY FOR ACTION ON THE INDIANA

coaling for the last three days. We will probably go first to the Dry Tortugas and there have another tiresome wait for the army; but, of course, no one knows where we are going, and can only guess. My station in action is in the counting tower with the navigator. There are electric bells and telephone and voice pipe connections to every part of the ship, including the military top. My billet is to stand by the voice pipe. M—, in the top with the range finder, passes down

at 5. The army transports will meet us there, and we will convoy them to Santiago. The regular time for our departure was last night, but something delayed us. I was junior officer of the deck this morning and had charge of the mail boat. There was a heavy sea running, and we were ordered to take the mail to a tug. I nearly fell overboard getting into the boat from the sea ladder. One of the other midshipmen lost his sword in the same way last week. We delivered the bag and got pretty wet doing it. Had general quarters this morning; the drills are getting tiresome; as one of the mess said: "We eat, then have general quarters, then eat again and then have general quarters." The only way we recognize Sunday is by the fact that we generally coal ship on that day and everybody gets dirty. You ought to see the fire room watch when they come off duty! They sent our clothes back from Key West; they weren't able to wash them, as they didn't have enough fresh water. Fine place! I have arranged with one of the men to wash mine with salt.

EXTRA HAZARDOUS RISKS IN-CIDENTAL TO WAR.

There were some pretty Cuban girls at the hotel ashore, but we didn't have time to meet any of them. The flies are something fierce. The best place to sleep is on the operating table, and the crowd is scrapping now to see who will occupy it. We have a sort of progressive euchre arrangement—no man sleeps in the same place two successive nights; the best berth is on the table and the worst is two trunks. I prefer to swing in a hammock, as the roaches crawl over anything stationary. It is really wonderful how sweat—it isn't perspiration; it has no that stage.

The executive officer came down yesterday, and when he saw the steerage he

body, instead of following her up, we simply stopped our engines and waited an hour, as if we expected her to come out and attack us. The fat carpenter ironically suggested that it might help matters if we ran in closer and shouted in chorus, "Come out and let us blow yez up." The midshipmen all think the captain is too cautious.

I didn't turn in until 3 a. m., the whole navigator's division being kept on the bridge nearly all night; most of the time I was up in the top, looking for lights. This morning several of us went ashore on duty, but Key West is an awful place. We stopped at a hotel which is quite respectable and is filled with officers and came off to the ship in the 3 o'clock boat. All hands got wet to the skin by a heavy sea we shipped.

It is very pleasant on the bridge, but in the steerage it is frightful. When we wake up in the morning the sheets are dripping wet with perspiration, and as the water has a temperature of 100 there is no relief in taking a bath. It is impossible to keep clean; simply going on the bridge makes your hands perfectly black. We all hope to get imperative orders to go to Santiago or some place where we will see service. The men are as black as Spaniards.

The Winslow, the torpedo boat on which Bagley and six men were killed, passed us this morning; also the Hudson, the tug that got her out under fire. None of us see how the people who have been ordered to Schley's fleet will ever get there. At present they are on board the smaller ships in the harbor. The roaches are simply frightful; all our trunks are full of them, so you may expect me to express home a select assortment. "The New York Journal" has a big bulletin just off, posite the hotel and war scares are being continually flashed on it.

Off Key West, June 15th. We leave for Rebecca Shoal to-morrow at 5. The army transports will meet us there, and we will convoy them to Santiago. The regular time for our departure was last night, but something delayed us. I was junior officer of the deck this morning and had charge of the mail boat. There was a heavy sea running, and we were ordered to take the mail to a tug. I nearly fell overboard getting into the boat from the sea ladder. One of the other midshipmen lost his sword in the same way last week. We delivered the bag and got pretty wet doing it.

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