

TIMELINE

1898

JAN. FEB. MARCH APRIL MAY JUNE JULY AUG. SEPT. OCT. NOV. DEC.

Maine explodes, Spain blamed, 15 Feb.
 U.S.S. MAINE arrives in Havana, 25 Jan.
 U.S. declares war on Spain, 25 Apr.
 Spanish fleet arrives in Santiago, 19 May
 U.S. Navy blocks Santiago Harbor, 1 June
 Battle of Las Guasimas, 24 June
 Battle of Santiago Bay, 3 July
 Santiago surrenders, 17 July
 Manila surrenders after token resistance, 14 Aug.
 U.S. Navy locates Spanish fleet in Santiago Harbor, 29 May
 U.S. Army lands at Daiquiri & San Juan Hill, 1 July
 U.S. invades Puerto Rico, little resistance, 25 July
 Armistice signed, 12 Aug.
 Congress declares Cuba independent, 19 Apr.
 Battle of Manila Bay, 1 May

Treaty of Paris, 10 Dec. (Spain cedes Guam, Puerto Rico to U.S. U.S. buys Philippines from Spain Cuba gains independence.)

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The President decided that Cuba would have to be liberated by land forces, and to this end the Army scrambled to raise and train both volunteers and additional Regular troops. An enthusiastic citizenry filled recruiting depots, creating havoc on a organization designed to police Western Plains. Order was eventually imposed on chaos and Shafter sailed for Cuba with 17,000 men on 14 June 1893.

Both the Army and the navy were unprepared when hostilities began. The Navy quickly recovered, and within a week of the declaration of the war Dewey had destroyed the weak Spanish squadron in Manila Bay. Meanwhile, after briefly panicking over a possible Spanish attack against the East Coast, the American Atlantic Squadrons under Admiral Sampson clapped a blockade around Cuba, sealing Cervera's obsolescent squadron in Santiago Harbor.

The landings in Cuba were not opposed, and after some hesitation Shafter decided to take Santiago. A skirmish at Las Guasimas caused the Americans to underrate their foe and consequently, on 1 July 1898, Shafter's Corps launched bloody frontal assaults against strong Spanish fortifications at El Caney and San Juan Hill. Small unit leadership, the bravery of the American Soldier, and a significant numerical advantage secured these objectives, leaving the Spanish in an untenable position in Santiago.

Cervera's fleet tried to escape, and was sunk in a one-sided running engagement on 3 July 1898. General Toral recognized the hopelessness of his plight, and surrendered Spanish forces on Eastern Cuba on 17 July. American forces went on to take Puerto Rico by 9 August and the Spanish sued for peace on 12 August. The next day, unaware that an armistice had been signed, general Merritt's forces captured Manila after token Spanish resistance.