

The Day Book

Volume 4, Issue 5

July-August 1998

A Newsletter for the Supporters of the Hampton Roads Naval Museum

“A Fitting Tribute to America’s Soldiers and Sailors”

Hampton Roads’ Spanish-American War Victory Parade

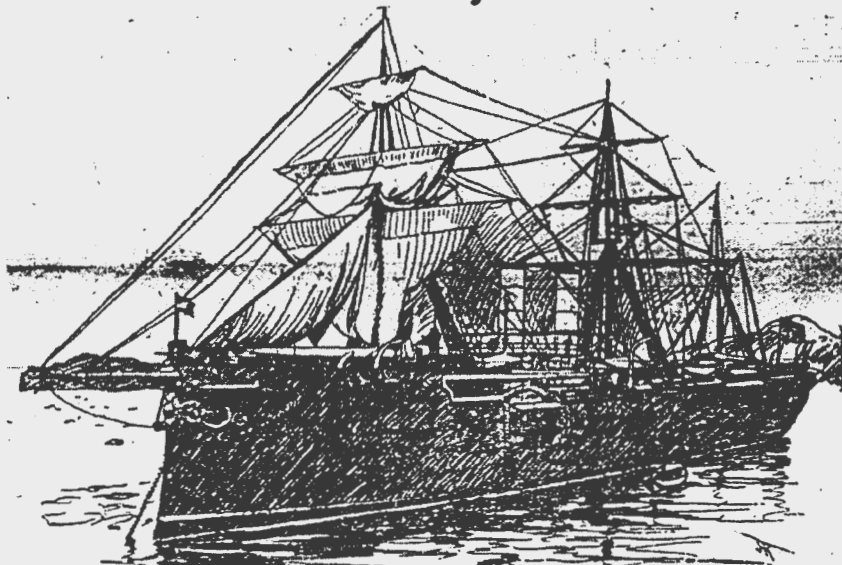
by Becky Poulliot

Norfolk’s bid for a naval ship to instill patriotism, increase tourism and prime the local economy predates the battleship *Wisconsin* by almost a century. On May 29, 1899 thousands on both sides of the Elizabeth River witnessed a massive parade of ships honoring the arrival of the newest addition to the

100th Anniversary The Spanish-American War 1898-1998

fleet, the *Reina Mercedes*. *Reina*’s story-and how she came to Hampton Roads-has all the makings of a suspense novel, with happenstance and politics determining the final outcome.

The *Reina Mercedes* began her career in 1887 as a Spanish unprotected cruiser. Named for the recently deceased Queen Mercedes and rigged as a schooner, *Reina* like its early American counterparts (i.e. the American “ABC” cruisers) could move



The *Virginian-Pilot* produced and published this drawing of the Spanish unprotected cruiser *Reina Mercedes* in 1899. Captured and successfully salvaged in late 1898 by the U.S. Navy, the cruiser was an obsolete ship and had little combat value, even to the Spanish. Her arrival in Hampton Roads, however, sparked a large parade to celebrate America’s decisive victory over the Spanish. (May 6, 1899 drawing from the *Virginian-Pilot*)

under steam or sail. She and two sister ships, *Alfonso XII* and *Reina Cristina*, were designed by the Spanish Brigadier of Naval Engineers, with *Reina* being built at the Cartagena shipyard. The ship was obsolete by the time her service began. As early as 1890, a Royal Decree found her “unfit for modern warfare.” Prior to the outbreak of the Spanish-American War, the *Reina Mercedes* served as the Santiago guard ship and patrolled Cuban and Puerto Rican coasts to prevent smuggling of weapons to the

insurrectionists. With the outbreak of the war the Spanish fleet needed every vessel, no matter how dilapidated. Statistically, the steel-hulled *Reina Mercedes* displaced 3,090 tons, ran under steam propulsion power and was outfitted with 22 guns of various caliber. Her crew numbered 300.

May, 1898 found her steaming into Santiago Harbor with Admiral Cervera, not as a combat ship per se, but as a block ship should the U.S. Navy make
Victory parade continued on page 6

Inside The Day Book

The Director’s Column.....	2
Spanish POW’s at the Hospital...3	
The Museum’s Newest Exhibit....4	
Volunteer News & Notes.....	10
The Museum Sage.....	11

No Lazy Days of Summer at the HRNM

The Director's Column

by Becky Poulliot

We have been busy providing and preparing for an array of programs.

First, a recap of the 5th Annual Docent Cookout that occurred on June 11. It was great! Thanks to all who came and most certainly hope you had a wonderful time. Special thanks to Ray Cabanos, manager of the Galley Restaurant, who catered the event. I would also like to thank **Marta Nelson** and **FC1 Mike Rosa** for setting up the decorations, and **Ofelia Elbo** for serving as M.C. for the door prizes.

Lt. Col. Charles Jones presented the first Dunderfunk of the summer by recalling a veteran group's visit to the island of Iwo Jima 50 years after the infamous battle. His moving presentation was given before an audience that included original participants in the 1945 battle. Our next Dunderfunk will be on **August 27** when **Col. Ed Condra (Ret.)** discusses combat art and its residual impact on American culture. Col. Condra has served as an



Retired FBI Special Agent Robert Hunter speaks about the Walker Spy Ring on July 16, 1998. Call 322-2992 to make reservations.

engineering officer and as public affairs officer for both Atlantic and Pacific Fleet Marine Forces. He is currently a professional artist.

July 9 is the quarterly docent meeting. We continue the Spanish-American War theme with a meeting at 10 a.m. at the MacArthur Memorial. After the meeting, we will receive a

guided tour of its exhibit on the Philippine theater of the war and the subsequent Filipino insurrection. On **July 16**, retired FBI Special Agent **Robert Hunter** will speak about the Walker spying at Pier 26 at 11:30 a.m. Special Agent Hunter worked on several counterintelligence cases, including the Walker case, and will provide a backstage look at one of the most infamous espionage rings in American history. To make reservations for this talk or for the Dunderfunk, please call (757) 322-2992.

Bob Matteson, our educator, is already working on a speaker line-up for the 1999 luncheon series. Please call him at (757) 322-2986 if you have any suggestions. Also, we are planning a docent training course for 1999 as well, so be on the lookout for any prospects.

I hope to see you at some of the above events and if you have not viewed the museum's Spanish-American War exhibit, please do so. We have received some great press coverage for the exhibit and it is being received very well. Hope you have a great summer!

Becky



Local History. World Events.

About *The Day Book*

The Day Book is an authorized publication of the Hampton Roads Naval Museum (HRNM). Its contents do not necessarily reflect the official view of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, the U.S. Navy or the U.S. Marine Corps and do not imply endorsement thereof. The HRNM is a museum dedicated to the study of 220 years of naval history in the Hampton Roads region. The museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free.

The Day Book's purpose is to educate and inform readers on historical topics and museum related events. It is written by the staff and volunteers of the museum. The newsletter takes its name from a 19th century Norfolk newspaper.

Questions or comments can be directed to the Hampton Roads Naval Museum editor. *The Day Book* can be reached at (757) 322-2993, by fax at (757) 445-1867, e-mail at bpoulliot@cmar.navy.mil, or write *The Day Book*, Hampton Roads Naval Museum, One Waterside Drive, Suite 248, Norfolk, VA 23510-1607. The museum can be found on the World Wide Web at <http://naval-station.norfolk.va.us/navy.html>. *The Day Book* is published bi-monthly with a circulation of 1,200.

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Tending to Friend and Foe Alike

The Naval Hospital in the Spanish-American War

by Gordon Calhoun

The Navy achieved its greatest victory of the Spanish-American War on July 3, when elements of the combined American squadrons engaged the Spanish squadron off the coast of Santiago, Cuba. The battle was fairly one-sided as the American ships picked off and destroyed each of the six Spanish ships. When the dust settled, the Spanish suffered over 600 casualties, while the Americans had suffered only a handful. The Spanish sailors and officers who survived the American shells promptly jumped ship and tried to swim to shore. Instead of relief from their misery, the surviving Spaniards found themselves under attack by hungry sharks and angry Cuban insurgents who fired on them from shore.

100th Anniversary The Spanish-American War 1898-1998

American warships picked up as many of the Spanish survivors as they could. Among the survivors was Adm. Cervera, the Spanish squadron's commanding officer, his son who was serving as his aide, and Cervera's chief-of-staff, Capt. Concas. The Spanish captain was badly wounded and immediately transferred to the *Solace*, technically called the *Ambulance Ship Solace*, for recovery.

Solace was the Navy's first official hospital ship. Technically speaking, she was the first U.S. Naval vessel to fly the Geneva Red Cross which granted ships tending to wounded servicemen legal protection against enemy attack during a war. *Solace* was originally the Newport News-built passenger steamer *Creole*. When it looked like war might break out with Spain, the Navy's Surgeon General requested that a ship be purchased to be used as a hospital ship. Superiors within the department agreed with his arguments about the need for on-site medical care and the need to get



Pictured here is the Ambulance Ship Solace. Formerly the passenger ship Creole, Newport News Shipbuilding converted her into the Navy's first official hospital ship. The ship helped the Navy's Medical Corps save more lives by allowing patients to be tended to immediately in a clean environment. In late July 1898, the ship brought 57 wounded Americans and 47 wounded Spanish sailors from Cuba to the Naval Hospital in Portsmouth, VA. (1899 Naval Historical Center photograph)

wounded servicemen out of the Caribbean as quickly as possible to avoid yellow fever infections. The department purchased *Creole* in April 1898 from a New York shipping company. Soon after her purchase, the Navy brought her down to Newport News Shipbuilding to convert her into a hospital ship. The shipyard outfitted the vessel with an operating room, a steam disinfecting apparatus, an ice machine, a laundry room, and other necessary medical equipment. After 21 days of work, the ship was ready to be manned. Four surgeons, eight nurses, two specialty trained laundrymen, and, if the worst should happen, "a skilled embalmer" were among the staff members assigned to the ship.

Relatively speaking, American Naval casualties in the Spanish-American War were pretty low. However, *Solace's* staff was kept quite busy tending to servicemen wounded during the actions around San Juan and Guantanamo. Fifty-seven sailors were received during the

first two months of the war and quickly brought to the Norfolk Naval Hospital (now called the Portsmouth Naval Hospital) for long-term care. The hospital ship returned to Cuba just in time to tend to sailors wounded in the Battle of Santiago. Wounded American sailors from the armored cruiser *Brooklyn* and additional Marines wounded around Guantanamo were brought on board, as well as all wounded Spanish sailors. Fifty-three Spanish sailors in all were received, among them Capt. Concas and some of his staff. Non-wounded Spanish sailors were put aboard the auxiliary cruisers *St. Paul* and *Harvard* and eventually shipped up to Portsmouth, NH. Spanish officers, including Adm. Cervera, were sent to the Naval Academy where they were interned.

The hospital ship arrived in Hampton Roads a week later and anchored right off of Hospital Point in the Elizabeth River, where she was met by the Navy

POWs continued on page 9


The Museum's Spanish-American War Exhibit Now on Display

The Hampton Roads Naval Museum officially opened "Cuba Libre!: The Spanish-American War in the Caribbean" on May 14. This exhibit showcases the U.S. Navy's role in the Cuba theatre during the Spanish-American War.

The exhibit has several important and interesting artifacts including the builder's model of the battleship USS *Maine* (BB-2/c, ex-ACR-1), the jack that flew on the battleship, and the first public viewing of noted maritime artist

A.C. Stuart's painting of the warship.

Other artifacts on display include a torpedo from the Spanish armored cruiser *Vizcaya*, a solid brass vernier-type caliper from the armored cruiser *Cristóbal Colón*, and a commemorative flag from the battleship USS *Oregon* (BB-3).

The exhibit also displays several prints and photographs to a complete the picture of the Navy's role in the Caribbean. The exhibit closes Nov. 15, 1998. 



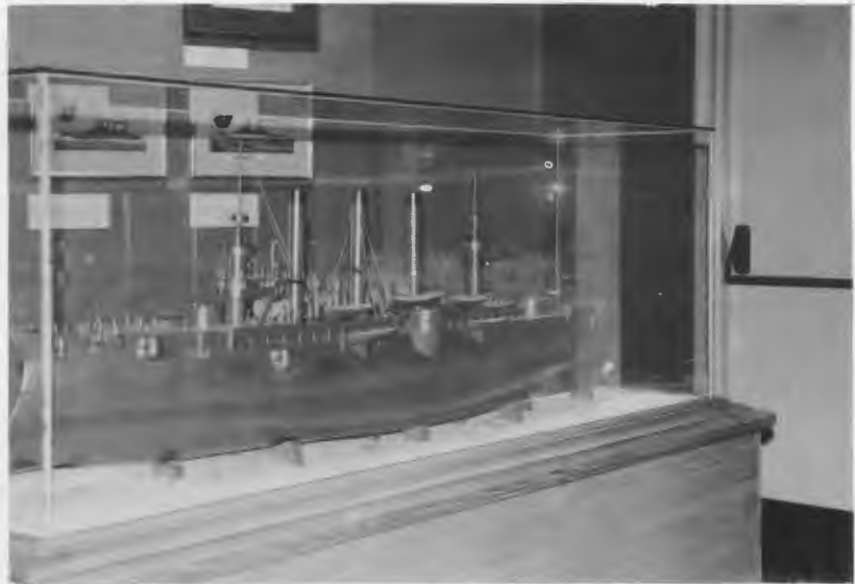
Acting Rear Adm. William Sampson, commander of the North Atlantic Squadron, gave orders during the Spanish-American War that any time an American warship encountered a Spanish warship, the American warship was to raise the signal flags shown above. The flags spell out in international signal code "Remember the Maine!" This signal flag set greets visitors at the entrance to the museum. (Graphic adapted from the Pictorial Atlas Illustrating the Spanish-American War)



The centerpiece of the exhibit is the 1884 builder's model of the battleship USS *Maine* (BB-2/c, ex-ACR-1). On the other side of the model is the 1898 Alexander C. Stuart painting of the battleship and the jack which flew on the battleship during the Feb. 15, 1898 explosion. (HRNM photo)



When the *Maine* exploded, corporate America turned out hundreds of items to mark the event. (Photo by Gordon Calhoun)



Shown here is a contemporary model of the armored cruiser USS *Brooklyn* (ACR-3). *Brooklyn* was Commodore Windfield Scott Schley's ship and the flagship of the Hampton Roads-based Flying Squadron. (Photo by Gordon Calhoun)



Shown here are the hat and uniform of Coxswain Nils Magnus Nilsen of the protected cruiser USS New Orleans, and the sea chest of Midshipman T.H. Truxtun. (Photo by Gordon Calhoun)

Spanish-American War Centennial Exhibits

"Cuba Libre: The Spanish-American War in the Caribbean," an exhibit about the U.S. Navy and the drive to liberate Cuba, is now on display at the Hampton Roads Naval Museum through Nov. 15, 1998. Call 757-322-2987 for more information.



"Pacific Empire: The United States in the Philippines, 1898-1902," an exhibit on America's Rise in the Pacific, is currently on display at the MacArthur Memorial until April 2, 1999. Call 757-441-2965 for more information.



MacArthur Memorial




Anchoring the second part of the exhibit is this German-made torpedo that was removed from the Spanish armored cruiser Vizcaya. The torpedo is a copy of the widely used English-designed Whitehead torpedoes. (HRNM photo)

Other Spanish-American War Exhibits to See

The Naval War College Museum in Newport, R.I. currently has on display a Spanish-American War exhibit of its own. Titled "The Navy in 'The Splendid Little War'," the War College's exhibit focuses on the strategy and tactics of the two major naval battles, Manila Bay and Santiago.

The exhibit displays several artifacts including the builder's model of the battleship USS *Oregon* (BB-3), the uniform and watch of Capt. Charles Gridley, commanding officer of the protected cruiser USS *Olympia* (C-6), the battle flag of Commodore George Dewey, and the original war plans that the War College produced several years before the actual war was fought.

The Naval War College Museum is located in Founder's Hall on Coasters Harbor Island in historic Narragansett Bay. The museum is open from 10-4 Monday through Friday and 12-4 on the weekend. For further information on this exhibit or about the museum call (401) 841-4052. 

Victory parade continued from page 1

its move for the city. Four of her 6.3-inch Hontoria guns, together with one six-pounder revolver and one three-pounder revolver, were removed from the ship to reinforce the city's ground defenses. Sailors girded *Reina*'s hull with chains and made ready for the inevitable attack. On June 6, 1898 the fireworks began at 7:41 a.m. A Spanish lieutenant described the three hour bombardment led by Sampson as "one prolonged thunder" and as a day that the "inhabitants of Santiago would never forget." The *Reina Mercedes*, nearest to the harbor's entrance, bore the brunt of the attack. She took 35 hits, caught on fire in several places, and lost her executive officer and five sailors. Second Cmdr. Emilio de Acosta y Eyerman, by all accounts a gentlemanly officer, spent the last half hour of his life trying to extinguish the fire. A shell had shaved his leg off at the hip and removed his right hand. In an ironic twist, just two days before the attack Acosta had held Hobson and his crew onboard the *Reina Mercedes* after their daring attempt to scuttle the collier *Merrimac*. (See Vol. 4, Issue 4 of *The Day Book*.)

Like the *Merrimac*, *Reina* would be scuttled to block the harbor, this time to prevent the entry of the U.S. fleet. And like *Merrimac*, plans went awry. On the night of July 4, *Reina*'s captain and a small crew of sailors took the ship out for the operation. U.S. battleships *Texas* and *Massachusetts* (BB-2) immediately trained their searchlights on the ship and commenced firing. The *Reina* went down ignominiously, about 250 feet off shore outside the designated scuttle location in the channel. Part of her deck remained exposed as a testimony to Spain's utter defeat.

A series of mishaps soon changed the *Reina Mercedes*' future. With the conclusion of the war, Americans celebrated at a feverish pitch. Downtown New York City held two glorious parades, one for the combined Atlantic squadrons and one for the Asiatic Squadron. Naval figures like Dewey, Sampson, Schley, and Hobson became heroes overnight and entered American folk culture. Their images emblazoned housewares, knickknacks, and all types

of kitsch. This patriotic ground swell demanded an ultimate trophy—a Spanish battleship raised and rebuilt. Norfolk led the clamor. The city wanted its time in the spotlight. After all, it was Hampton Roads not New York City that housed the Flying Squadron and was one of the centerpieces of Naval activity during the war. The captured vessel belonged here, where a parade the likes never seen before in the area would demonstrate the region's patriotism. Another factor, just as important, and mentioned in the local

It was not the *Colón*, though, but the unprotected cruiser *Reina Mercedes* that became Norfolk's visit ship. *Reina* and the *Merrimac* wrecks were navigation hazards. The U.S. Navy exploded the *Merrimac*, but seeing that the *Reina* had no holes in her bottom, determined to salvage her. Enter the Merritt and Chapman Wrecking Company out of New Jersey, the same firm that had supervised the salvage of the ill-fated *Infanta Maria Teresa*. Capt. Chittendon and his crew arrived Dec. 29, 1898.



How *Reina Mercedes* looked in the Santiago channel after she was sunk by the battleships *Texas* and *Massachusetts*. (National Archives photo)

newspapers was the economic impact. A recovered Spanish warship would provide work at the Navy Yard for many months.

The search began for the suitable trophy. The armored cruiser *Infanta Maria Teresa*, former Spanish flagship of Cervera, was actually raised and en route to Norfolk when she sank on Nov. 1, 1898 off Watling's Island, Bahamas in 2,600 fathoms of water. The chilling story of the shipwreck served as a "bitter disappointment to the people of Norfolk" said the *Norfolk Landmark* since preparations had been made for tourist excursions to the ship. The ship would have also guaranteed at least 18 months of work for the Navy Yard as well. In the same breath, the Nov. 6, 1899 article said that perhaps another Spanish vessel, the armored cruiser *Cristóbal Colón*, could be raised.

Thirty-five men went to work three days later, plugging the shell damage and constructing a cofferdam to bring the well decks and open hatches above water. By March 1, 1899, *Reina Mercedes* could float on her own, although water in her holds measured 12 feet deep. Merritt and Chapman persevered, draining the water in a wrecking feat described by the *Norfolk Landmark* as "the greatest ever accomplished." Four days later on March 5, *Reina* was towed to the middle of Santiago Harbor. The *Rescue*, reputed to be "the most powerful wrecking tug in the world" would see her safely off to Norfolk. In another quirk of the *Merrimac-Reina Mercedes* coincidence, the Spanish ship was outfitted with the American collier's forward wheel.

Reina Mercedes departed on May 13, bound for Norfolk. The Norfolk Board
Victory parade continued on page 7



After much haggling, negotiating, and exchange of threats, Reina Mercedes finally arrived in Hampton Roads on May 26, 1899. She was accompanied by a parade of 32 ships and observed by thousands of people from the shore. After 18 months of repair work at the Navy Yard, she proceeded up to the Naval Academy and served as the Academy's station ship. (Norfolk Kirn Library photo)

Victory parade continued from page 6

of Trade and Business Men's Association contacted both the Norfolk Navy Yard Commandant Rear Adm. N. H. Farquhar and Secretary of the Navy Long to find out the arrival date in order to put together a suitable reception and parade of ships under the direction of "Commodore of the Fleet" Capt. John Twohy.

Upon hearing from the Navy of *Reina's* pending arrival, the *Pilot* set up what one could call a "Reina Watch." The *Pilot* sent a reporter down to Cape Hatteras, N.C. to keep a lookout for the ship. If the reporter spotted what he thought was the cruiser, he was to immediately send back a message to Norfolk. On a few occasions, the over eager reporter sent back messages that *Reina Mercedes* had been spotted, only to discover later that the ship in question was not the captured Spanish cruiser. The reports put the general public a little on edge as they were eager to see the ship. The paper itself began to get a little restless and published a few cynical articles wondering aloud if the Navy was ever going to get its act together. By late May, however, the *Pilot* happily

reported that there had been a confirmed sighting of the cruiser.

One downtown Norfolk businessman sought to exploit the tense situation. Norfolk developer E.L. Dashiell (no relation to museum foundation board member, docent, and long time Norfolk resident David Dashiell) ran a series of newspaper ads that started off with the words "REINA MERCEDES'S ARRIVAL" in huge 1-inch typeface. After the reader was hooked into thinking the column was a newspaper story about *Reina Mercedes*, the ad then went on to talk about all the fabulous real estate opportunities that South Hampton Roads had to offer.

As the Spanish warship approached the region, a controversy raged that threatened *Reina* from coming here at all. On May 25, while she made her way past Cape Hatteras, the president of the Norfolk Board of Health presented a letter to Dr. F. S. Hope, Quarantine Officer of the Port of Norfolk, objecting to the arrival of the *Reina* at Gosport until after frost time, due to the threat of yellow

fever. In a blistering reply, Dr. Hope went on the record in the *Pilot* stating that in his position he always considered public safety first, and that no threat existed concerning yellow fever. Hope found it unbelievable that these "spectre chasers" would wait until the last minute to raise concern. Furthermore, should *Reina* be unable to dock, the "responsibility (shall be) placed just where it belongs." Hope called for a conference set at noon May 26 to see how public leaders felt. The overwhelming response called for the docking of the *Reina Mercedes* at Portsmouth as quickly as possible. While all this disaffection was ongoing, the New York Board of Aldermen reportedly put together an application to welcome the *Reina Mercedes* to their port. The Navy publicly threatened to take New York up its offer if Hampton Roads did not allow the ship to dock in Portsmouth. The Navy commented that it was not about to wait until winter to begin repair work.

Fortunately, all was resolved rather
Victory parade continued on page 8

Victory parade continued from page 7

quickly in Hampton Roads' favor. The loss of the ship would equal the loss of thousands of dollars, a fact noted in the *Landmark*. The Navy did not change its original plans or timeline, although both the U.S. Surgeon General and Assistant Secretary of the Navy Allen became involved. *Reina* anchored at Old Point Comfort as scheduled for temporary quarantine. She was examined by both the U.S. quarantine officer and the Norfolk Navy Yard quarantine officer before a crowd of invited media

"In the days of old, captives with bowed heads were led by the captors; but in these days of American courage and American courtesy to a fallen foe, such a proceeding would be eminently out of place." -Norfolk Landmark's comment on how tastefully the victory parade was done.

members, to ensure that newspapers reported the ship's cleanliness. The *Norfolk Landmark* reported sarcastically that no germs of yellow fever had made their appearance. At 11:20 a.m., the *Reina Mercedes* left Old Point for the approximate two hour journey to the Navy yard.

The official parade, although hastily put together in just two days, produced public pandemonium. Thousands of people lined the Elizabeth River shouting until they became hoarse. A flotilla of 32 vessels all covered in bunting surrounded the ship of honor. A barge and excursion steamers carried the region's VIPs. The Seaboard Airline Band aboard the barge *Portsmouth* regaled the *Reina* with the "Star Spangled Banner" and other patriotic songs. An improvised whistle aboard the *Reina* tooted at regular intervals during the trip. Portsmouth's own Grimes Battery also aboard the barge began firing as soon as the flotilla rounded Lambert's Point.

The *Landmark* noted that the victory parade was done in the best of tastes. The paper proudly commented that, "in the days of old, captives with bowed heads were led by the captors; but in these days

of American courage and American courtesy to a fallen foe, such a proceeding would be eminently out of place."

Newspapers also commented that no past event could compare, a comment that seemed to be frequently written after each big Hampton Roads event. It was a "glorious day in the cities by the sea," stated the *Landmark*. The official turnover by Merritt to the Navy proceeded upon docking. *Reina* remained at Simpson's Dry-dock for 18 months with visitors coming by daily to

look at her.

On August 24, 1900 she sailed with tugs to Portsmouth, NH. *Reina*'s connection to Hampton Roads does not end there. This amazing ship with more lives than a lucky cat returned to the Navy Yard for overhaul and refit in 1912, 1916, 1927, 1932, 1939, and 1951.

Reina fulfilled several functions during the 57 years that followed her initial departure from the Norfolk Navy Yard. Her longest tour of duty was at the U.S. Naval Academy, where she served as station ship and erstwhile brig for misbehaving middies. It was there she became known as "the fastest ship in the Navy" due to being stuck "fast" to the pier at the Severn River. The *Reina* prevailed decade after decade, despite a collision with the destroyer *Simpson* in 1920 and a bout with Hurricane Hazel in 1954. In 1957, the U.S. Navy acknowledged her obsolescence, and found her too unseaworthy to be returned to Spain as an historic vessel. America's trophy ship died a second time, this time to the Boston Metals Company of Baltimore, where she was scrapped, an inglorious end.

One can find a postscript to the *Reina*


The Reina Mercedes' Arrival

Is creating a great deal of excitement. But we are creating more in the eyes of those who are looking for real bargains in Real Estate. I can furnish you with the choicest

Real Estate

on the easiest terms imaginable, either in City or Suburban property.

Norfolk developer E.L. Dashiell took full advantage of the public's eagerness to see Reina Mercedes arrive in Hampton Roads by running the above ad every day for weeks. (May 1899 Virginian-Pilot)

Mercedes today at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard's Trophy Park. Two of her 1898 torpedoes are on permanent display as a reminder of the Hampton Roads connection to the "splendid little war." 

POWs continued from page 3

Yard's tug *Alice*. *Solace's* arrival caused somewhat a stir as over 600 people lined the shores of Norfolk and Portsmouth to get a glimpse of the wounded. Over the next few days, the wounded veterans at the hospital became something of a tourist attraction, as thousands of curious people arrived at the grounds. Extra Marine guards were called in to handle the crowds. The Marines allowed the general public to wander about the grounds of the hospital but did not admit anyone in the building who was not there on official business. A reporter with the *Norfolk Landmark* hinted that the Marines might have been getting impatient with the crowds, as he and his friend were arrested by the Marines when they stood in one place near the hospital

"Fortunately it has come to the notice of no one that in consequence of my having remarked that I liked flowers, number of ladies of Norfolk added that of making my room a veritable garden; without thinking at the time that in consequence of this I was guilty of an act of high treason."

-Capt. Concas, chief-of-staff of the Spanish squadron destroyed at Santiago and patient at the Norfolk Naval Hospital, 1898.

experienced first hand, or had been told horror stories about the region's 1855 outbreak. Dr. Hope made a promise to the *Landmark* that "no one will be allowed off the ship if there is the slightest hint of disease." Fortunately, all the wounded were cleared of any disease and were admitted to the hospital. As an additional precaution, all the Spanish and American wounded had their old uniforms removed and burned.

Capt. Concas asked *Solace's*

Cleburne for similar relief from the newspaper reporters. Rebuffed in their attempts to get interviews with the Spanish, the reporters did what they could to get information out of the American sailors assigned to *Solace*. The *Landmark's* reporter noted that the Spanish sailors had "a hunted look and they seem suspicious and very apprehensive that something is soon yet to happen. They are a wild looking set."

The Naval Hospital's staff at this time was assisted by six nuns from the Catholic Sisters of Charity. The sisters' presence went a long way in calming down and reassuring the prisoners that they were not going to be harmed. The order provided a more valuable medical service when it was discovered that no one at the hospital spoke Spanish. A request was quickly put in for a translator. Sister Victorine Salazar soon arrived from Emmitsburg, Maryland to assist the doctors with translation problems. Father Bradley of Norfolk's St. Paul's Catholic Church also was called in to assist with the spiritual and religious needs. The Spanish officers and sailors' spirits were also lifted when their commanding officer Adm. Cervera came to see them. The Navy had allowed the admiral to leave his imprisonment in Annapolis so that he could visit his wounded men. He made two trips to the hospital during the course of their stay.

Concas was very pleased with the hospital's treatment. "The people in general could not have treated us better. [Dr. Cleburne and his staff] did all in their power to alleviate our physical and mental suffering. They treated us with the greatest of kindness, showing us every attention and consideration."

He was also pleasantly surprised to find no anger or hostility among the

POWs continued on page 10



The Norfolk Landmark commented that the Spanish sailors had "a hunted look and they seem suspicious and very apprehensive that something is soon yet to happen." Pictured here are some of the Spanish sailors held at the Norfolk Naval Hospital (now called the Portsmouth Naval Hospital.) Three of the sailors died from wounds or disease while in the hospital and were buried in the hospital cemetery. (Naval Historical Center photograph)

grounds for longer than a couple of minutes.

The Surgeon-General of the Navy Dr. Van Reypen and the region's quarantine officer Dr. E.F. Hope met the hospital ship. The fear of another yellow fever epidemic breaking out in Hampton Roads was always in the forefront of peoples' minds and the Surgeon-General arrived to personally put the fears to rest. The general public in Norfolk and Portsmouth more than likely had

commanding officer, Cmdr. Dunlap, to personally escort him and his men into the hospital. Concas was afraid that he and his men would be received with hostility by the general public. Dunlap agreed to personally accompany him and called on three Marines to escort them. The *Landmark*, *Star*, and *Ledger* all sent reporters to cover Spanish prisoners' arrival and stay. Concas asked Dunlap and the hospital's director Dr. Christopher

Volunteer News & Notes

Time Travellers Program

Docents should be aware that the Time Travellers' history program has started up again this summer. This program is being run state wide and has been very successful in the past in



getting grade school children interested in history.


For those of you who are not familiar with the program, Time Travellers was started as a part of Virginia's History Initiative. The program encourages students and their families to become more familiar with local, regional, and national heritage by visiting participating museum and historic sites throughout the commonwealth. Currently there are over 120 participating institutions. Enrolled students carry a passport with them to each of the places they visit.

Once they complete the assigned task given to them by a particular site, their passport is stamped. After six stamps, they are entitled to a Time Travellers' t-shirt and a certificate from Virginia Gov. James Gilmore. Students with completed passports are also eligible to enter a drawing for various prizes.

Our museum's "challenge" for students is the ever increasingly popular scavenger hunt. We have several blank passports for visitors who are unfamiliar with the program or do not have one in hand. The passports list of all the participating sites and more specific

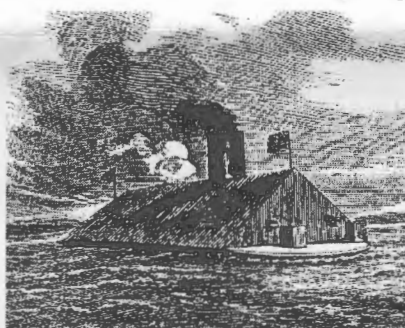
instructions. Docents should encourage all students, Kindergarten through 12th grade to participate. See Bob if you have any questions.

Reminder

Docents are reminded that when a museum visitor requests historical information from the library, the requestor's name and the information needed must be recorded. The information is written down in a notebook in the library titled "History Hotline." The notebook is located next to Ofelia's desk. If you have any questions about this, please ask any staff member. 

Ship's Company of CSS Virginia

July 26



Visit with this living history troupe at the Hampton Roads Naval Museum on Saturday July 26 between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. The crew will display Civil War items such as weapons, medical equipment, and uniforms. Call 757-322-2986 for more information.

POWs continued from page 9


citizens of Hampton Roads. He was somewhat shocked by how kind the locals were to him and his men. The Norfolk chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.) were among the many local groups that sent flowers and letters of sympathy to the Spanish prisoners.

Concas later noted that he probably should not have accepted the gifts of flowers given to him. "Fortunately it has come to the notice of no one that in consequence of my having remarked that I liked flowers, number of ladies of Norfolk added that of making my room a veritable garden; without thinking at the time that in consequence

of this I was guilty of an act of high treason," he wrote in his journal. The Norfolk D.A.R. sponsored several fund raising and food drives throughout the region to collect items and money to help the Spanish sailors.

One would think that the Spanish captain might have known the people of Hampton Roads a little better as this was not his first time to the region. He was one of the senior officers in the Spanish squadron in the 1893 Hampton Roads Naval Rendezvous. His squadron brought relics from Christopher Columbus' ships, a major highlight of the festival.

The hospital's foreign "guests"

stayed for two months. The passenger steam ship *City of Rome* arrived in the Elizabeth River on Sept. 13, 1898 to pick up the Spanish prisoners and subsequently moved them to Annapolis and Portsmouth, NH. Three sailors died at the hospital, one of disease, more than likely malaria, and two of their wounds. Six died on board *Solace* en route to the hospital and were buried at sea. All three of the sailors who died at the hospital were buried at the hospital's cemetery. Their grave markers can still be seen today. 

The editor would like to thank Capt. T.H. Conaway, MC (Ret.) and Charles Devine, M.D. for their assistance with this article.



James Barron Hope Goes on the War Path

Of all the ships built and/or stationed in Hampton Roads that participated in the Spanish-American War, the Norfolk-built "second-class" battleship USS *Texas* was probably the region's most beloved darling. She was the first steel hull battleship ever constructed for the U.S. Navy and all in Hampton Roads were proud of her.

The battleship, unfortunately, had the reputation of being cursed. Production and design problems delayed her construction. Throughout the ship's life, several accidents plagued her and many sailors were injured. She soon earned the nickname "The Old Hoodoo."



James Barron Hope, editor of the *Norfolk Landmark*, and defender of Hampton Roads' ships everywhere.

James Barron Hope, founder and editor of the *Norfolk Landmark*, rose to the battleship's defense in a July 19, 1898 editorial. He was particularly insulted by a *Washington Post* story and a *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* story that both discussed the Battle of Santiago and then dumped on *Texas*. He wrote:

"The *Landmark* does not like to harp

The Museum Sage



The Norfolk-built and based battleship USS *Texas* She had many little mechanical problems and accidents which led people to label her "The Old Hoodoo." (U.S. Naval Institute photograph)

on a subject, and it maybe that has already been discoursed to the point of weariness about the battleship *Texas*. But, we cannot help commenting upon the apparent reluctance with which certain contemporaries admit the gallant ship's effectiveness. Of course the *Texas* has so thoroughly demonstrated her value by actual service that it makes little difference whether or not her former critics confess them or not. The people will understand the situation and it will never again be possible to make them credit the familiar charges of faulty construction, defective machinery, and so on.

"[In the *Post's* story] there is a brief sketch of Captain Phillip (*Texas's* commanding officer) and the *Texas* is passed by with evident relief. In describing the other vessels of the squadron, the *Post's* writers lavish praise of their achievements, their beauty, and their all-around fine qualities. Stress is laid upon the service performed in the conflict with Cervera; but the *Texas*, although she had an important and distinguished share therein, comes in for the usual dissertation on misfortune and nothing else. We are surprised that such a paper as the *Post*, which undoubtedly tried to be fair, should countenance such a thing as this.

"It is much surpassed, however, by the injustice done to the good ship in a sketch of Captain Phillip which appeared a few days ago in the *St. Louis Globe-*

Democrat: 'When the captain first assumed control of the *Texas*, she was one of the most incorrigible vessels in the navy. But a few months under his direction surmounted all of her difficulties and brought out her good points.'

"In other words, Captain Phillip has remodeled, reconstructed, and thoroughly regenerated the *Texas*! His presence has made the ship a fine sailor, has given her a steady gun-deck and powerful accurate guns and has overcome the constitutional defects with which she is so honeycombed. We would not detract one iota from the credit due to Captain Phillip for his ability as a commander, but we do not think that he would relish this claim that he and not his ship engaged the Spanish fleet and forts.

"As we have said, it makes very little difference whether these omniscient critics are willing to acknowledge their mistake or not. The public has seen what the *Texas* can do, and the much abused vessel is destined now to be one of the country's pet as she ought to have been from the first."

The Sage would only add that of all the ships in the Spanish-American War, *Texas* achieved one of the highest marksmanship percentages (in a war where most ships were such atrocious shots they might as well been shooting at the Moon) and is credited with an outstanding combat record. 🚩