LA QUASINA BATTLE

Details of the Fight Where Rough Riders Suffered Severely.

CAUGHT IN AN AMBUSCADE.

Spaniards Laid a Clever Trap for Wood's and Roosevelt's Men.

AMERICANS WON A DECIDED VICTORY.

Under a Storm of Bullets They Scored a Great Triumph—Wonder All Were Not Slaughtered.

JAMAICA, Cuba, June 25.—(Per Associated Press Dispatch boat Dandy, via Kingston, Jamaica, June 26.—Copyrighted, 1898, by the Associated Press.)—The initial fight of Col. Wood's rough riders and the troopers of the First and Tenth regular cavalry will be known in history as the battle of La Quasina. That it did not end in the complete slaughter of the Americans was not due to any miscalculation in the plan of the Spaniards, for as perfect an ambuscade as was ever formed in the brain of an Apache Indian was prepared and Lieut. Col. Roosevelt and his men walked squarely into it.

For an hour and a half they held their ground under a perfect storm of bullets from the front and sides and then Col. Wood at the right and Col. Roosevelt at the left led a charge which turned the tide of battle and sent the enemy flying over the hills toward Santiago.

It is now definitely known that fifteen men on the American side were killed while sixty were wounded, and that the Spanish loss could be ascertained only by the careful preparations they had made for burying their dead, which were found on a hill, on the sparsely wooded slopes of which had been erected a rude shelter, under which there are indentations of stone and fallen trees.

At the bottom of these hills run two roads, along which Lieut.-Col. Roosevelt's men and eight troops of the First and Tenth were ambushed by about four hundred advanced. These roads are but little more than gullies, rough and narrow, and are hardly passable, in some places, for the light cavalry.

Nearly half a mile separated Roosevelt's men from the regulars, and between them and on both sides of the road in that thick underbrush was concealed a force of Spaniards that must have been large, judging from the volume and constant fire they poured in on the Americans.

The fight was opened by the First and Tenth cavalry, under Gen. Lawton. A force of Spaniards was known to be in the vicinity of La Quasina, and Lieut. Col. Roosevelt and Col. Wood, who had joined his forces, had started out on the preceding day from their camp at Sevilla, with the purpose of following up the Spaniards on their right flank. Gen. Young at the same time taking the road at the foot of the hill.

Lieut. Col. Roosevelt had sent out from Sibney, near Cubita, breathless and excited, rushed into the camp with the announcement that the Spaniards were but a little way in front and strongly entrenched.

Quickly the Hotchkiss guns, set in the front were brought to the rear, while a strong scouting line was thrown out. This cautiously and at slower pace than they had proceed until a bend in the road disclosed a hill where the Spaniards were located. The guns were hurriedly brought up and placed in position, while the men crowded in the road, waiting impatiently to get to the front, and the Gatlings were set on the little trail along the crest of the ridge, ready to get up.

At 7:30 a. m. the Ten Thousand gave the command to the men of the Hotchkiss guns to open fire. The command was the beginning of a fight that for either side was the most serious from which to start the Hotchkiss guns were fired, the bullets commanding the road over which the men in rear from the Massacre of the Spanish.

"Don't shoot until you see something to shoot at," called Gen. Young, and the men, with set lows and gleaming eyes, obeyed the orders.

Dwelling upon the edge of the road and protecting themselves as much as possible from the fearful fire of the Spanish, the men, some of them stripped to the waist, watched the base of the hill, and when any part of a Spanish breastwork showed they fired and aim for an instant did they falter.

One lucky marksman of the Tenth cavalry, with a keen eye, had taken up a position and knelt behind a rock, loaded and firing, and when told by one of his comrades that he was wasting ammunition and said "Oh, that's all right. There's been three for some time."

In the meantime, away off to the left, was heard the crack of the rifles of Col. Wood's men and the rumbling, deeper-toned volley firing of the Springfields of the regulars, the American boys were the greatest.

Col. Wood's men, with an advance guard well out in front and Capt. Luna strike before them, but concretely with no thinkers, went upon Sibney and Sevilla, and for the Spaniards, and only the unfortunate courage of the men in the face of a fire that would have been a terrible equal proved what might easily have been a disaster. As it was, troop L, the advance guard, was cut off from the main body and, with Capt. Luna and Capt. Capron, were all surrounded, and but for the reinforcements hurriedly sent forward would have been probably have been killed or wounded.

"There must have been nearly 1,000 Spaniards in front and on the sides of us," said Lieut. Col. Roosevelt later when discussing the fight. "They had the advantage of the ground, and we had to come up in the face of a fire that was the most severe we have ever been in. Our advance forward drove the men in ambush and from there out, for half a mile, Capt. Luna, Capt. Thomas and about fifteen men killed or wounded.

"The Spanish fire was accurate, so accurate indeed, that it worried me, and their firing was fearfully heavy."

"I would say we had 500 men engaged," continued Lieut. Col. Roosevelt, "every officer and man did his duty in the battle. Not a man flinched."

From another officer who took a prominent part in the fighting comes the following account: "When the firing began," said he, "Lieut. Col. Roosevelt led the right wing, with troops L and K, Capt. Luna, Capt. Capron, Lieutenants Jenkins and Jackson, and myself in charge of Capt. Luna, who was wounded in the first fire, and Lieut. Col. Wood and Maj. Brodie took the left wing and advanced in open order on the Spanish right wing. Maj. Brodie was wounded before the troops had advanced 50 yards. Col. Wood then took the right wing and rushed out. Roosevelt in the left.

"It is questionable the fire of the Spaniards had increased, so severe, indeed, was the fire, and with a yell, the men rushed forward. Two companies of regulars had joined us, and the Spaniards were driven from their ambush and fled in disorder. Two companies of regulars, and, charging and yelling, we drove the Spaniards from the position they had held for a mile. The Spaniards were driven from the bushes and ran like a herd of deer as soon as we came in sight. Our men were very severe.

"On the road from Cuba, Maj. Mecklin had left his command with a troop of cavalry and, with four troops of cavalry, had gone around the hill to the rear of the Spaniards. Capt. Luna, of troop L, had left his command and, with a few men, had gone around the hill to the rear of the Spaniards, but was cut off by the Spaniards, and was surrounded by them. Capt. Luna, with two men and the flag, fought his way through the Spaniards and brought out his troop. Another soldier of troop L, concealing himself in a tree, remained there all day and was able to be close to a wounded comrade, and a moment or two later was himself a prisoner."

Sergt. Bell stood by the side of Capt. Capron when the latter was mortally hit. He had to be carried, and, fighting against terrible odds, but never flinching, "Give me your arm, a side," said he to the sergeant, and, kneeling down, he deliberately aimed and fired two shots in quick succession. He saw the Spaniard who had shot Capt. Capron fall in the chaparral, and, with a dead comrade's gun and both bullets his aim had fired around.

When Capt. Capron fell he gave the sergeant a leather memorandum book and pencil and told the sergeant good-bye in a cheerful voice, as if was then leaving for a furlough.

Personal Hamilton Fish Jr., was the first man killed by the Spanish fire. He was shot through the middle while at forward from the troop and into the ranks of the Spanish ambuscade. He was carried back to the hospital tent in the cover of a dozen pitch of blankets. When a bullet struck his breast bone and he said, "Oh, I'm hit," and fell back dead in Capt. Capron's arms over him shooting, and others rallied around the dead and wounded. The ground this afternoon was thick with empty shells where Fish fell, and the Spanish bullets in its grave a small pile's hunting—one which from his feet to a mountain so is bad support.

With the exception of Capt. Capron, all the rough riders killed in yesterday's fight were buried this afternoon in the Sevilla cemetery. Their bodies were laid in one long trench, each wrapped in a blanket. Palm branches and the trees around and were placed in position, while the men crowded in the road, waiting impatiently to get to the front, and the Gatlings were set on the little trail along the crest of the ridge, ready to get up.

At 7:30 a. m. Gen. Young gave the command to the men of the Hotchkiss guns to open fire. The command was the beginning of a fight that for either side was the most serious from which to start the Hotchkiss guns were fired, the bullets commanding the road over which the men in rear from the Massacre of the Spanish.

"Don't shoot until you see something to shoot at," called Gen. Young, and the men, with set lows and gleaming eyes, obeyed the orders.

Dwelling upon the edge of the road and protecting themselves as much as possible from the fearful fire of the Spanish, the men, some of them stripped to the waist, watched the base of the hill, and when any part of a Spanish breastwork showed they fired and aim for an instant did they falter.

One lucky marksman of the Tenth cavalry, with a keen eye, had taken up a position and knelt behind a rock, loaded and firing, and when told by one of his comrades that he was wasting ammunition said, "Oh, that's all right. There's been three for some time."

In the meantime, away off to the left, was heard the crack of the rifles of Col. Wood's men and the rumbling, deeper-toned volley firing of the Springfields of the regulars. The Americans boys were the greatest.

Col. Wood's men, with an advance guard well out in front and Capt. Luna strike before them, but concretely with no thinkers, went upon Sibney and Sevilla, and for the Spaniards, and only the unfortunate courage of the men in the face of a fire that would have been a terrible equal proved what might easily have been a disaster. As it was, troop L, the advance guard, was cut off from the main body and, with Capt. Luna and Capt. Capron, were all surrounded, and but for the reinforcements hurriedly sent forward would have