NAVAL HEROES AT SHORT RANGE.

How the Brightest Stars of Our Navy Impressed a Young Man Who Was Brought Into Close Daily Contact With Them.

BY ALBERT P. SOUTHWICK.

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The following recollections are of many gallant officers of the United States navy with whom as a boy I came in frequent contact more than 30 years ago and are consequently youthful impressions strengthened in several instances by personal knowledge of these gentlemen since that time. A strong friendship exists between some of them and the writer, and this article therefore has been prepared conscious.

The naval warrior who was, unfortunately for himself—and for the country he loves, as his patriotism is of the sterling kind—relieved from active duty as commander of the north Atlantic squadron, being incapacitated for prolonged illness from fulfilling the duties of the position, must have had additionally a saddened mental strain in knowing that his physical condition had forced him out of the post in which he gloried. Montgomery Sicard is a born fighter. His fearless record in the civil war proves that, and, though quiet, modest and unassuming, the roar of cannon and the hum of 12 inch guns are as pleasant music to his ears.

A century of a century ago he was of medium build, with large black eyes, heavy coarse black hair, full beard and a dark skin that showed his French ancestry. That he was born near Toulouse, France, seems, for he made the remark incidentally as to a summer spent on the Hudson in West Point the Greats went lacking across the Zephyr Fen.

A year admiral since April 6, 1897, and his retirement coming on the 26th of September next, he must feel sorely grieved that fortune snatched from his grasp the opportunity perhaps to duplicate Dewey's great stroke.

The man next to him in class rank, very small in stature and size, Rear Admiral Edmund O. Matthews, has always been sensible enough to avoid any attempt at rotundity of demeanor, for it would have subjected him to a storm of ridicule. He has held his present rank since June 15, 1897, and will be retired on Oct. 24 this year. As the chronicles of naval history relate, he did brave work from 1861 to 1865, but his subsequent record demonstrates that he never took any particular pains to get away from a fight. Perhaps his chances were greatly against him. He must have chafed in the position as commander of the Brooklyn squadron, where there was no hostile strife, and regretted that precedence at intervals sent him three thousand miles to the Pacific, for both he and Dewey were accounted sufficients for that ideal time for naval officers—cruising in the Mediterranean. Dewey is big and buff and reminds you of the Roman gladiator, while his heart is as tender as that of a child. He is now No. 1 on the list of commodores, but will become a rear admiral on Aug. 9.

George Dewey may or may not have lost the strong hold that the evidence of his deeds gave him in the affections of the investigating order, and on the first attempts of the government to develop the torpedo as an arm of war this fair haired, blue eyed youth in appearance, with scant fatty protection, was placed in charge of the experimental depot. He was then at the Naval academy, but later at the regular torpedo station at Newport, and has been at various times in control of different departments, his last command being as chief of the navy yard at Cavite and docks, Washington.

While Sicard was quietly good natured, Matthews was manifestly so and seemed to enjoy the very fact of being the possessor of the happy disposition that is given to so few.

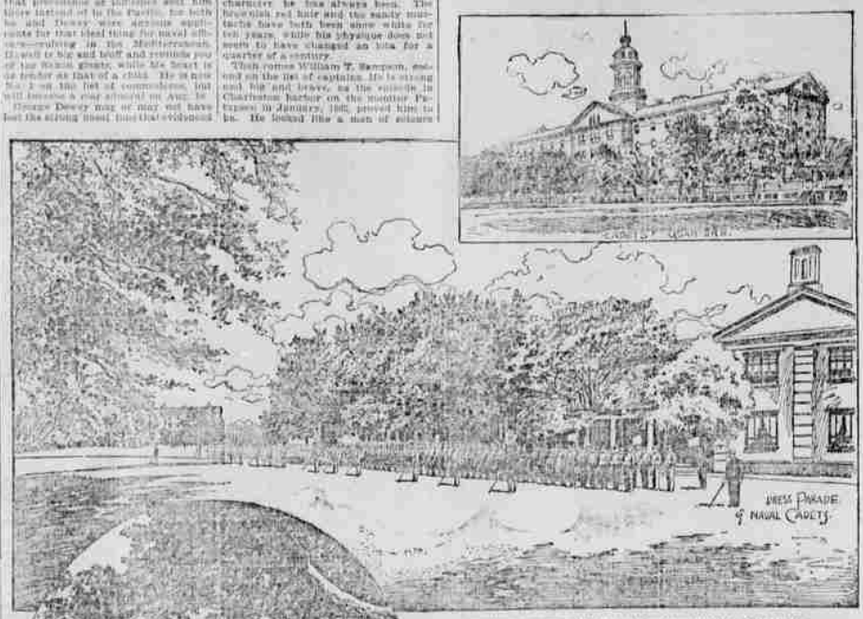
Rear Admiral Francis M. Ramsay is quite different from the other two. He is more "showy," has a more impressive personality and carries in his daily life the dignity of a naval chief, though he is the personification of bonhomie to his intimates. His term of office will be very short, as he attained his present rank in February and will be retired on Christmas day, 1898.

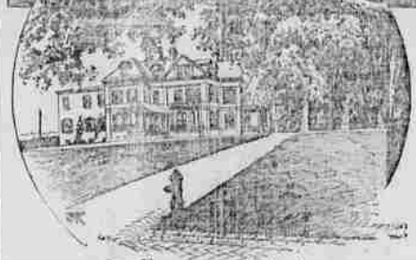
John A. Howell years ago impressed me as a "don't care, easy going" sort of fellow, free from thought of the morrow. Nevertheless he was a man who loved conflict with the enemy, and there isn't a better officer in the United States navy today.

Philip Cooper, brother of the famous General Casey of the corps of engineers of the army, who died a year or two ago, is now No. 1 in the grade of captain. He is the same stern, unbending character he has always been. The brownish red hair and the sandy mustache have both been snow white for ten years, while his physique does not seem to have changed an iota for a quarter of a century.

Then comes William T. Sampson, second on the list of captains. He is strong and big and brave, as the episode in Charleston harbor on the monitor Passaic in January, 1863, proved him to be. He looked like a man of science and had whiskers of exactly the same cut. Though he was taller and broader, with blue eyes and light fair complexion, he had the bearing of a Wall street financier, and the casual observer would never have suspected that he was one of the best officers in the best navy in the world. Admiral Lucas, despite his literary leanings, was easily approached and was very popular in Annapolis.

These were indeed a set of gentlemen of unusual kindness of heart and urbanity of demeanor, not one of whom ever exhibited the slightest pomposity or revealed the weakness of self conceit. Their cut fit to the midshipman and the full fledged ensign who were unduly impressed with their greatness. The superior officers of the United States navy may always be heralded as "a brave and kindly set of gentlemen."





SCENES ABOUT THE UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY.

SIDE ARMS OF THE ARMY AND NAVY.

"Sooner or later," said a well known military authority recently, "there will be an engagement at close quarters between the opposing warships in this Hispano-American contest, and then the fight will reveal the stuff our marines and seamen are made of. We must remember that in engagements of recent years has been at close quarters, and the action is based on enemy's ship always means the sharpest kind of fighting, the results being invariably a large number of casualties."

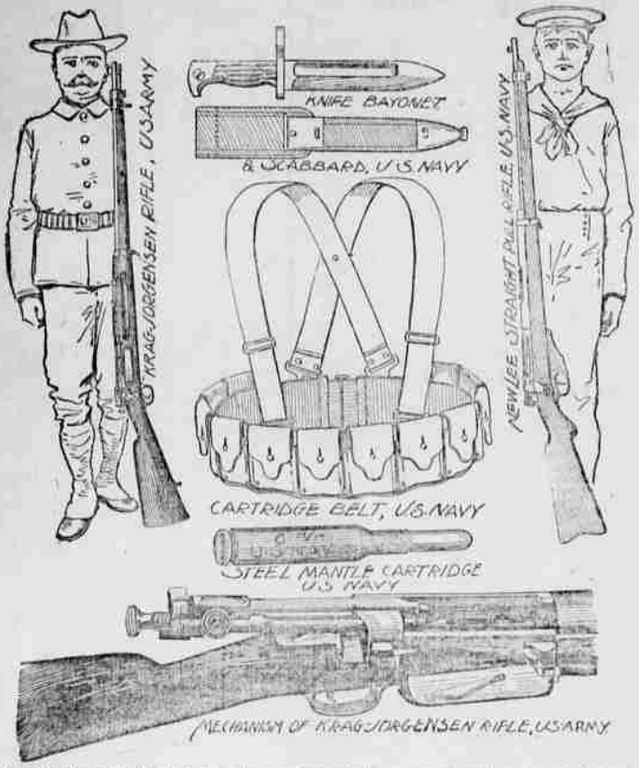
The question naturally arises, "Are we prepared for that style of encounter?" There is no sort of doubt about the preparedness of our men for any emergency.

The small arm now in use in the United States navy is the new Lee straight pull rifle, one of the most effective weapons of the age. This rifle was adopted by the navy in 1896, and the manufacturers commenced to furnish it to the men the following year. Twenty-five thousand were purchased by the government. With this weapon a mark may be hit at a distance of 2,500 yards, which is nearly two miles. The caliber of the gun is .236, and it employs a smokeless powder cartridge with a hardened lead bullet having a steel or copper jacket plated with tin and giving an initial velocity of 2,350 feet per second. The magazine holds five cartridges, which may be inserted separately or at one time, in which latter case they are placed in the magazine in a metal clip.

Among the superiorities of this gun is the fact that the operation of opening and closing is by a "straight pull," instead of the customary "up turn" and "pull back."

For the use of the marines when landing and marching some distance adjustable slings are provided, but the most important attachment is the sheath knife bayonet of the United States navy pattern, an effective and really murderous weapon. When unused, the bayonet is carried at the belt in a scabbard.

While the weight of the knife bayonet is only about 11 ounces and its length nearly 24 inches, the weapon is strong, and in the hands of skilled and brave American "jackies" it will prove practically irresistible. The weight of the gun without the bayonet, but with the sling, averages 8 pounds and 12 ounces, not too heavy for excellent results.



The 112 grain cartridge is charged with smokeless powder, which is now demanded on all small arms for the use of the navy. While the destructiveness of this small caliber bullet is not as great as that of the heavier and much larger bullets formerly used, the range and accuracy of the firing are greatly increased over anything heretofore made use of. All of these rifles which are used on the navy gunboats have been provided with the Lee military sight, a very effective attachment. Armed with this really and decorative weapon, our fighting men in the navy may be confidently expected to give a most brilliant account of themselves.

The Remington rifle now in use in the United States army is generally known as the Krag-Jorgensen gun, and it resembles that effective British implement of war, the Lee, improved and modified out of military new pattern. The weight of the cartridge is 216 grains, nearly double that of the Lee navy cartridge. The gun is of .30 caliber and has been in use since 1894.

The excellency of the Krag-Jorgensen cartridge is that the lead bullet is inclosed in a jacket or mantle of steel, which gives it additional penetrative force. This is similar to the bullet of the Lee gun, which has the steel mantle, and the screw cone of the projectile is filled in with lead, which gives it the necessary weight. The United States armory shops at Springfield, Mass., are working night and day to supply the increased needs.

GEORGE E. EARLIE.

Firing Big Guns.

Gunnery today is an intricate science requiring skilled and educated men to master it, and it has reached a state of development never dreamed of by the naval heroes of the past. A modern monster rifled cannon will hurl a huge projectile with tremendous force and frightful destructive possibilities through some 15 miles of space. This is much farther than the unaided eye can see clearly or aim a gun with anything like effective accuracy, for it is science that must supplement the eye and bring to its aid certain delicately adjusted instruments before the shots of those great guns can be made fruitful at long range. Assisted by these instruments, it is not only possible, but probable, that a skilled gunner would be able to hit an enemy's battleship at a distance of six miles or even farther from the muzzle of his gun.

The projectiles from these cannon do not travel in straight lines, but in curves, and their range or point of contact with the earth is determined by the angle of the elevation of the gun barrel. The required angle of elevation of each gun in order to throw a shot a certain distance is known to the gunner. Hence if the distance of a ship or other object from the gun is known the gunner has only to elevate his gun to the proper angle, aim it so that it will be in line with the target and then fire, and it certainly that his shot will strike the mark or near to it.

Thus it will be seen that the important thing is to determine quickly and accurately the distance of the object to be hit from the gun that is to do the hitting, and right here it is that science steps in with the range finder, the stadimeter, the range indicator, the range telegraph and other similar instruments. These instruments have been perfected until today the distance of an object from a given point can be determined from them with marvelous quickness and accuracy.

The Heart of a Warship.

The dynamo room of the modern warship is the throbbing heart, and the wires radiating from it are like veins through which flow the life and intelligence which direct the movements of both ships and men.

Innumerable globes light the cabins, engine rooms, magazines, searchlights, running towers and decks, operate telegraph, telephone and signal wires, guns, turrets and compartment doors. With a ship whose vitals are so full of vitality seen how one chance fortunate shot by the enemy will make some disengagement in the system. If a shot should happen to drop into the dynamo room, all means of offense would be destroyed. The guns could no longer be fired, and time would be lost until lights could be secured. In the meantime there would be a period of confusion, delay and uncertainty, during which the enemy would be pouring in her shot, and the result would be fearful to contemplate.

Of course the wires are protected as well as may be at vulnerable points, especially where they are concentrated, as in the conning tower, but the occasion of a shot striking the vessel may have the effect of rupturing the wires in unusual places or causing them to make connection with the metal work of the ship, thus diverting the current and rendering the plant inoperative.

To 1,000 persons only 1 reaches 100 years of life; to every 100, 8 reach the age of 65, and not more than 1 in 400 lives to 80 years.

FACTS ABOUT SPAIN.

Spain is rich in minerals, and the working of the mines is carried on under state supervision. There are in Spain 300 mines for the working of lead, about 20,000 people only being employed underground.

In 1473, when there was nearly a war between Spain and the United States, Don Carlos, the pretender, pressed a large amount of money for troops and the royal mint was placed in pawn to the United States. There does history repeat itself.

The most recent of Spain cannot only smile grim. Six objects in the shape of a cross, which rings about for minutes at the sublime meetings and overcome it by the act of authentic cigarettes.

Spanish bullets are so bad that they stations punctually that the time tables in many cases merely indicate the hour of departure and "a" and minutes—that is, a indefinite number of minutes after x.

The celebrated bullfighter, Reverte, an old veteran, after a triangular contest in San Sebastian, lit a cigarette with a French bank note for 1,000 francs to show his contempt for money in general and French cash in particular.

Goat's milk, fresh and in train, is very unwholesome in warm weather. Hence the following Spanish proverb: "March milk is good for your mother; April milk is good for your mother-in-law."

The manufacture of Spain life is a delightful state of doubt and uncertainty by respecting their pay. Their salaries are precisely in arrears, and a case was mentioned recently where a man discovered he had not received a farthing for 17 years. He lived solely on the pecific scrutiny from the sale of school-books to the children.

Some time ago Don Juan Gallado was arrested in Spain on a charge of forgery and falsification of public documents. He was convicted under 237 indictments and sentenced for each of the 237 offenses to 14 years' imprisonment, making for him the very formidable total of 3,318 years in prison. It is not yet decided how, when and where he will serve out his punishment.

In 1892 the vintage in Spain was an extraordinary year. There was such an enormous quantity of wine that the people did not know what to do with it. Good red wine was sold for 1½ cents a quart, and even at that price there were not enough purchasers to take it all, and in many places the wine growers simply threw it away because they had no casks to keep it. Near Lirda, in Valencia, a vineyard proprietor put out on the highroad a little cart with a barrel of wine on the top of it bearing the inscription, "Wanderer, drink as much as you like, but don't forget to turn off the tap!"