

# Spanish-American War



The United States pre- World War I

# Today's Learning Goals

1. Describe the causes of the Cuban War for Independence
2. Identify the role of Jose Marti in the Cuban War for Independence
3. Describe American involvement in the war
4. Explain what happened as a result of the Spanish-American War
5. Identify Spanish territories lost to the U.S. on a map

\*Bonus: Explain the story of Roosevelt and the Rough Riders

# Background

What was going  
on?

By the end of the 1800s, Spain had lost all of its New World colonies except Cuba and Puerto Rico.

Many Cubans did not wish to be under Spanish rule, so they fled to Florida and other parts of the United States.

At the same time, however, they still remained loyal to Cuba.



Jose Marti, a Cuban writer living in New York, came to Tampa to gain supporters to help Cuba fight for its independence from Spain.

Jose Marti was the leader of the revolution, but he was killed when he went back to Cuba to fight in it.

Tomas Estrada Palma became the new leader and later the President of Cuba.

# What happened, exactly?

The United States watched with interest as Cuba struggled for independence. The United States had millions of dollars invested in businesses in Cuba and there were many U.S. citizens in residence there. The U.S. also traded goods with Cuba.

In 1898, the United States assisted in war to protect its citizens and businesses in Cuba. This war was known as the Spanish-American War. The United States declared war on Spain after the U.S. warship, the Maine, exploded and sank on February 15, 1898 while visiting Havana, Cuba. No one really knows what caused the warship to explode, but the United States blamed Spain. Thousands of United States troops fought in Cuba. The cities of Tampa, Jacksonville, Fernandina, Lakeland, Pensacola, Key West, and Miami were used as military bases for the American troops.

Although most of the fighting took place in Cuba, the first major battle was not fought there. It was fought half way around the world in the harbor of Manila. Manila is located in the Philippine Islands, which were then ruled by Spain. The U.S. fleet, led by Commodore George Dewey, defeated the Spanish fleet there.

# Spanish Territories ceded to the United States:

Territories ceded:

1. Puerto Rico,
2. Guam,
3. Phillipines

\*Cuba- became “independent”

The Spanish-American War lasted only a few months and was over when Spain signed a peace treaty giving the United States control of Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippine Islands, and Guam.

Cuba, however, became an independent country rather than a U.S. territory.

**So who was Jose Marti?**

And why did he  
matter?

# Jose Marti

Sometimes called the Apostle of the Cuban Revolution, José Martí was born in Havana in 1853. He showed a talent for writing and revolutionary politics at an early age.

First exiled from Cuba in 1871, Martí spent much of his life abroad. In 1895, he returned to Cuba to fight for its independence and died on the battlefield.

Through his life and writings, Martí served as an inspiration for revolutionaries around the world. Martí is now considered a national hero in Cuba and is honored by a memorial statue in the Plaza de la Revolución in Havana as well as the international airport there that bears his name.



# Jose Marti- before the War

José Martí was born to poor Spanish immigrant parents in Havana, Cuba, on January 28, 1853. Demonstrating natural artistic abilities from an early age, he originally pursued studies in painting before turning his energies to writing. By the time he was 16, his poetry and other work were appearing in print.

At the same time he was developing his literary talents, Martí was forming his political consciousness as well. Martí's criticism of Spanish rule led to his arrest. He was initially sentenced to six years hard labor, but in 1871 he was released and deported to Spain.

By 1875, Martí had moved to Mexico, where he continued to campaign for Cuban independence. He contributed to several newspapers there and became involved in Mexico City's artistic community. But he soon became disenchanted with the country's government and moved to Guatemala in 1877. Martí became a professor at the Universidad Nacional, where he taught literature, history and philosophy.

# Jose Marti- the War for Independence

Marti eventually returned to Cuba. Martí initially attempted to practice law, but the government would not allow it, and he was forced to find work as a teacher instead. However, the following year, after farmers, slaves and others clashed with Spanish troops in Santiago de Cuba, Martí was arrested and charged with conspiracy, once more forcing the revolutionary writer to leave his homeland. He eventually settled in the United States.

In 1892, Martí became a delegate of the Cuban Revolutionary Party and began to develop plans to invade his homeland. Among his ideas for a new Cuban government, Martí sought to prevent any one class or group from taking total control of the country. He also wanted to overthrow the existing leadership quickly, to prevent the United States from intervening in the matter. While he admired much about the United States, Martí had concerns that Cuba's northern neighbor would try to take over the island.

Martí soon joined forces with two nationalist generals from the Ten Years' War, Máximo Gómez and Antonio Maceo, and raised funds from Cuban exiles and political organizations to support their efforts. On January 31, 1895, Martí left New York City to make his way to Cuba, where he and his supporters arrived in on April 11 to begin their fight. Martí was shot and killed by Spanish troops in Dos Ríos on May 19.

**How did the United States get involved?**

# The start of war

The United States was simply unprepared for war. What Americans had in enthusiastic spirit, they lacked in military strength. The navy, although improved, was simply a shadow of what it would become by World War I. The UNITED STATES ARMY was understaffed, under equipped, and undertrained. The most recent action seen by the army was fighting the Native Americans on the frontier. Cuba required summer uniforms; the US troops arrived with heavy woolen coats and pants. The food budget paid for substandard provisions for the soldiers. What made these daunting problems more manageable was one simple reality. Spain was even less ready for war than the United States.



Americans aboard the Olympia prepare to fire on Spanish ships during the Battle of Manila Bay, May 1, 1898.

# Battle of Manila Bay

Prior to the building of the Panama Canal, each nation required a two-ocean navy. The major portion of Spain's Pacific fleet was located in the Spanish Philippines at MANILA BAY.

Under orders from Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt, ADMIRAL GEORGE DEWEY descended upon the Philippines prior to the declaration of war. Dewey was in the perfect position to strike, and when given his orders to attack on May 1, 1898, the American navy was ready.

Those who look back with fondness on American military triumphs must count the BATTLE OF MANILA BAY as one of the greatest success stories. The larger, wooden Spanish fleet was no match for the newer American steel navy. After Dewey's guns stopped firing, the entire Spanish squadron was a hulking disaster. The only American casualty came from sunstroke.

The Philippines remained in Spanish control until the army had been recruited, trained, and transported to the Pacific.

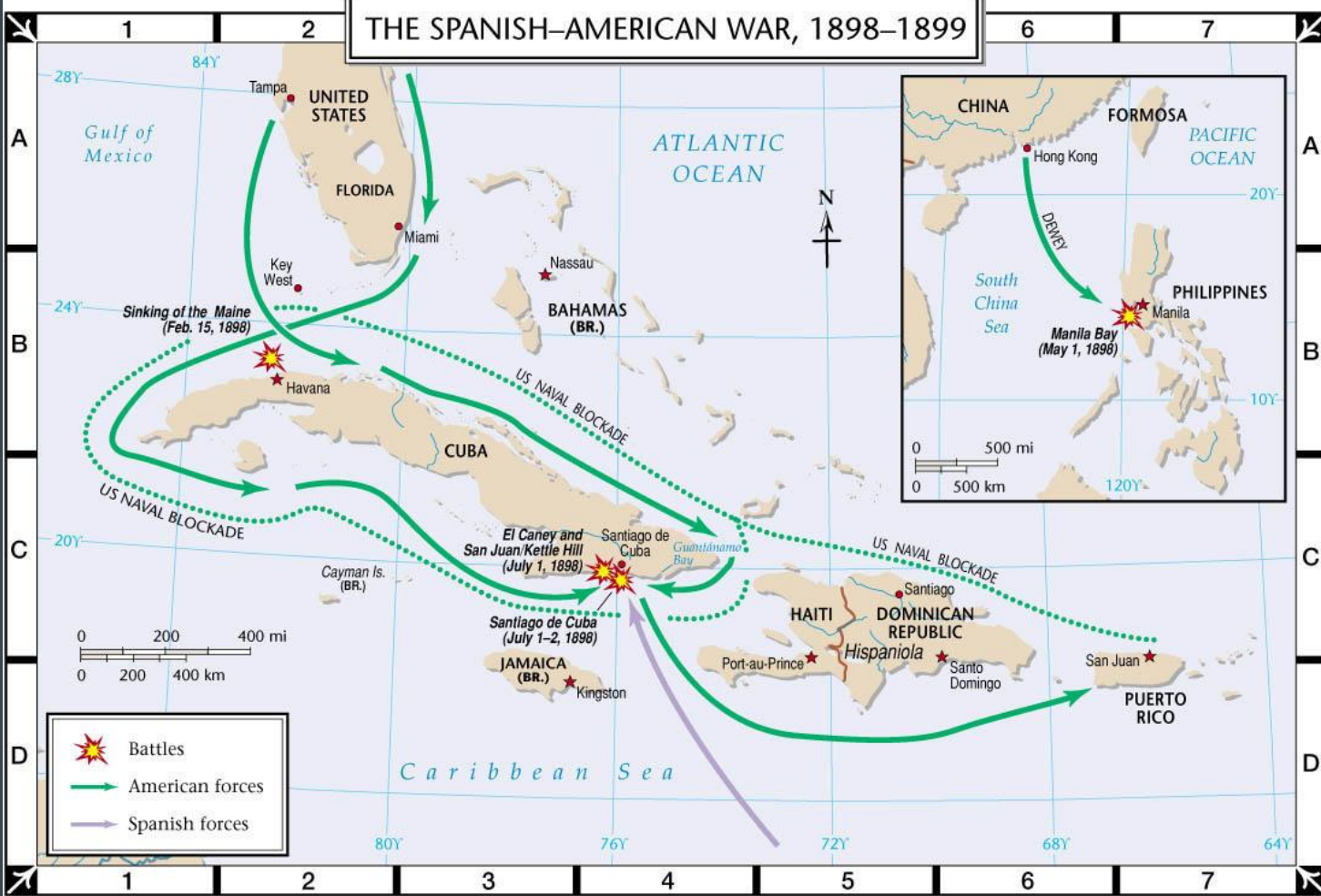
# Invading Cuba

The situation in Cuba was far less pretty for the Americans. At the outbreak of war the United States was outnumbered 7 to 1 in army personnel. The invading force led by GENERAL WILLIAM SHAFTER landed rather uneventfully near SANTIAGO.

The real glory of the Cuban campaign was grabbed by the Rough Riders. Comprising cowboys, adventurous college students, and ex-convicts, the Rough Riders were a volunteer regiment commanded by Leonard Wood, but organized by Theodore Roosevelt.

Supported by two African American regiments, the Rough Riders charged up SAN JUAN HILL and helped Shafter bottle the Spanish forces in Santiago harbor. The war was lost when the Spanish Atlantic fleet was destroyed by the pursuing American forces.

# THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR, 1898-1899



# The Treaty of Paris

The TREATY OF PARIS was most generous to the winners. The United States received the Philippines and the islands of GUAM and PUERTO RICO.

Cuba became independent, and Spain was awarded \$20 million dollars for its losses. The treaty prompted a heated debate in the United States. ANTI-IMPERIALISTS called the US hypocritical for condemning European empires while pursuing one of its own. The war was supposed to be about freeing Cuba, not seizing the Philippines.

Criticism increased when Filipino rebels led by Emilio Aguinaldo waged a 3-year insurrection against their new American colonizers. While the Spanish-American War lasted ten weeks and resulted in 400 battle deaths, the PHILIPPINE INSURRECTION lasted nearly three years and claimed 4000 American lives. Nevertheless, President McKinley's expansionist policies were supported by the American public, who seemed more than willing to accept the blessings and curses of their new expanding empire.





# The Rough Riders

The "Rough Riders" was formed from men from the western frontier of the United States - men who were used to life in the saddle and to the use of firearms - and from some eastern high-class young men who were athletic and also skilled in horsemanship and the use of guns...but for entirely different reasons. In addition there were men from almost everywhere else! The unit included miners, cowboys preachers, tradesmen, writers, professors, athletes, and clergymen. Remarkably, there were men from each of the forty-five states then in existence, the four territories and from fourteen countries! There were even sixty Native Americans on the roster. The unique combination reflected the interesting contrasts in one of the men who was one of the driving forces behind the unit – [Theodore Roosevelt](#), the man who was initially the regiment's lieutenant colonel and later its colonel.

When word went out that [Roosevelt](#) and Colonel Leonard Wood, were raising a regiment, volunteers from all over appeared. Twenty-three hundred men volunteered in the first twenty-four hours, of which only a small percentage could be accepted. Even the future creator of Tarzan, [Edgar Rice Burroughs](#) tried to enlist.

The unit was mustered into service between May 1 and May 21, 1898 in various locations in Texas, New Mexico and what was then termed "Indian Territory" (Arizona and Oklahoma). At the time of muster in, the unit consisted of 47 officers and 994 enlisted men. The uniqueness of the regiment, the bombastic energy of [Roosevelt](#) (until recently the assistant secretary of the navy) and [Roosevelt](#)'s gift for public relations and self-promotion brought the unit much publicity even before its worth was proven in battle.

For only being in existence for 133 days, the unit won its place in history, and has since passed into legend.

From San Antonio, Texas, the unit was ordered, on May 27, to Port Tampa, Florida, for the [invasion of Cuba](#). At Port Tampa, things were in great disarray, and the [Vth Corps](#), of which the Rough Riders were now a part, was highly disorganized. In the confusion of embarking on the [transports](#), several regiments were assigned to the same [transport](#), the [YUCATAN](#). [Roosevelt](#) got his men aboard, realizing that once aboard, would probably not be forced to disembark. The Rough Riders stayed aboard, to the chagrin of the other regiments. Sadly for some, because of a lack of room in the army [transports](#), only eight of the regiment's twelve troops (troops A, B, D, E, F, G, K, and L) went to [Cuba](#), with the other four (troops C, H, I, and M) remaining behind in Florida. Also, the regiment had to leave its horses behind in Florida, and essentially served in Cuba as an infantry regiment.

In [Cuba](#), the regiment fought at [Las Guasimas](#), and then at the famous San Juan and Kettle Hills. The regiment proved its worth and truly lived up to all of the publicity it had already received. For his efforts to lead in the assault at Kettle and San Juan hills, [Roosevelt](#) would eventually be awarded the Medal of Honor (an honor he truly earned, but which, for political reasons, he would not receive until over eighty years after his death).

After the fighting ended and the summer wore on, disease among the troops began to rise. Eventually the War Department was embarrassed into bringing the battle-worn troops back home, to be replaced by other, fresh troops. The Rough Riders arrived back in the U.S. on August 15, three days after an armistice had been declared, and went into camp at Montauk Point, Long Island ([Camp Wikoff](#)), New York ([click here](#) to read about their time at Camp Wikoff).

The unit was mustered out of service on September 15, 1898 at [Camp Wikoff](#). At the time of muster out, the unit consisted of 52 officers, and 1,185 enlisted men. During its term of service, the unit lost two officers and 21 enlisted men killed in action; and three more men died of wounds received in battle. Nineteen more men died of disease, and twelve men deserted. Additionally, seven officers and 97 enlisted men were wounded. The Rough Riders had the highest casualty rate of all of the regiments involved in the actions in Cuba.