

New York Herald
June 26, 1898

How Hamilton Fish and Allyn Capron Died, Fighting Bravely

Spaniards Caught the Rough Riders from an Ambuscade—The Young Sergeant Lured Down a Trail and Killed Instantly by a Bullet in the Heart—The Captain Lost His Way in the Chapparal and Was Brought Down by a Missile That Struck Him in the Left Side

WITH THE ROUGH RIDERS
NEAR SANTIAGO, FRIDAY
VIA PORT ANTONIO, JAMAICA, SATURDAY

The first fight of the invading army took place here this morning six miles from the coast. The First cavalry, known as the Roosevelt Rough Riders, were ambushed by receding Spaniards in a narrow wall with a barbed wire fence along its right side.

It was impossible to see more than twenty feet through it at any time. The first sign of the nearness of the enemy was the presence of a dead Cuban lying across the road and beyond him a Spanish outpost.

This was reported to Colonel Wood by the scouts, and he sent one company down the trail and another through the jungle to the left and right.

Death of Hamilton Fish

The Spaniards allowed the two scouts, who were of the First troop, and Sergeant Hamilton Fish, to pass down the trail unmolested, and then fired into the line of men as they ran forward in single file. The scouts were both wounded.

Fish was shot through the side on a line with his heart. He was killed instantly.

Meanwhile Captain Capron's men lost their way and swung to right, firing into their own men on that end. An order to cease firing was given and Lieutenant Colonel Roosevelt led the troops back to the left again, where the firing was fiercest.

Captain Capron's Death

It was here where Captain Capron was shot through the side over the heart and died in several hours. He was one of the most popular captains and one of the best officers in the regiment.

The men showed most splendid spirit and discipline although all conditions were absolutely against them. They could not see more than twenty feet away. The enemy was invisible.

Their Mauser rifle smoke was indistinguishable, and the men were falling on every side of them with no enemy to retaliate upon. It might have tried the spirit of any but the fine thoroughbred fighters that they are.

It is also to be remembered that it was the first time that a large per cent of the men were under fire.

The fight lasted two hours, during which time the ground covered was over half a mile in width and a mile in length. The Spanish fire was well directed, and as they knew the trail they could guess where to aim.

Edward Marshall, a Journal correspondent, was with Captain Capron, and was shot through the side in two places.

Stephen Crane, who, with J.P. Dunning, of the Associated Press, and myself, witnessed the ambush, and is looking after him. Mr. Marshall is badly hurt and may not live.

I found Fish's body lying across the trail, and I identified him by his silver watch, with H.F. and two crests upon it; also by a bundle of letters he carried in his breast pocket. I have them and will forward them as directed.

Fish was the first soldier of this war killed in battle.

Lieutenant Colonel Roosevelt led his men with a rifle he picked up from among the wounded, and charged the iron building in which the Spaniards had fortified themselves. It is now occupied by the Rough Riders.

Roosevelt Nearly Killed

Lieutenant Colonel Roosevelt was nearly killed by a bullet that passed through a tree adjacent to which he was standing.

Splinters entered Lieutenant Colonel Roosevelt's eyes and ears. Major Crosbie was shot through the arm, but the wound is not serious.

Captain McClintock was wounded through the leg seriously. I found one dead man with the name Legget on his haversack, and also a boy shot through the head and a New Testament in his pocket marked "Fielder Dawson, Nevada, Mo."

It is impossible to give the names of the wounded, as they are many.

Tiffany's Guns Unavailable

William Tiffany was unable to use his Hotchkiss guns, as the packer ran away with an important part of them, throwing it to the ground and breaking it. The packer was the only man in the outfit who did not behave with great courage under the unusual conditions.

Among those who are safe are Devereux, Cash, Channing, Donald Robinson and "Joe" Stevens.

Colonel Wood was at first reported killed, but he is unhurt.

Reinforcements of the One Hundredth and Ninetieth cavalry have arrived in this place. No loss among the Spaniards is reported.

It was an ambush with the advantages all on the side of the enemy.

General Chaffee has arrived. He complimented Colonels Wood and Roosevelt on the spirit with which their men stood up against a disastrous attack.

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