

Santiago Surrender Tree Memorial



The Santiago Surrender Tree Memorial is located in Santiago de Cuba near the San Juan Hill Historic Park.

BACKGROUND

On July 1, 1898 U.S. and Cuban troops fought to seize El Viso Fort, the town of El Caney and San Juan Heights, and San Juan Hill. These victories opened the way to Santiago de Cuba.

Negotiations between the opposing forces led to the Spanish surrender under the Ceiba tree on July 17.

Nearly a century later, the original tree died. The Cuban government planted a new tree in 1998 during the centennial ceremonies.



The Surrender Tree on San Juan Hill as it appeared in 1901, before the memorial was built around it.

The memorial area is surrounded by an iron fence, which is made up of barreled Spanish Mauser rifle actions. They are surmounted by cast reproduction triangular bayonets. The tree is flanked by large bronze plaques that resemble open books.

Four 18th century Spanish cannons interspersed with four siege mortars flank the walkway around the memorial.

The Santiago Surrender Tree Memorial was dedicated in mid February 1906. By an Act of Congress, it became the responsibility of ABMC on July 1, 1958.



Eight bronze tablets (each 3 feet X 5 feet) honor and commemorate individuals and units participating in the Santiago Campaign.



One of the four siege mortars (Model 1861) emplaced around the Memorial, along with four Spanish cannons.

cover photo: The brochure cover is a 1957 photo of the Surrender Tree within the memorial, showing it retained its distinctive shape.



Santiago Surrender Tree Memorial

GPS N20 1.356 W75 48.076

The Santiago Surrender Tree Memorial is on the south side of the Avenida Raul Pujols, and just east of the Santiago de Cuba Zoo. A street sign with the legend *Arbol de la Paz* points to it.

American Battle Monuments Commission

This agency of the United States government operates and maintains 26 American cemeteries and 29 memorials, monuments and markers in 16 countries. The Commission works to fulfill the vision of its first chairman, General of the Armies John J. Pershing. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Forces during World War I, promised that "time will not dim the glory of their deeds."

For more information on this site and other ABMC commemorative sites, please visit: www.abmc.gov



American Battle Monuments Commission
2300 Clarendon Boulevard
Suite 500
Arlington, VA 22201
USA



Santiago Surrender Tree Memorial

American Battle Monuments Commission



★ ★ ★ SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR IN CUBA, 1898

Beginning in 1895, Cuban revolutionaries ("Mambises") resumed the fight for independence from Spain. American sentiment favored the Cubans.

FEBRUARY 15, 1898: The battleship USS Maine was sunk by an explosion in Havana harbor.

APRIL 19: The U.S. Congress passed a resolution for war with Spain. Spain reciprocated. The nations were at war. President William McKinley ordered a naval blockade of Cuba. Spanish authorities ordered Admiral Pascual Cervera to sail his fleet to Santiago de Cuba.

MAY 19: Admiral Cervera's fleet entered Santiago Bay.

MAY 27: Admiral William T. Sampson's U.S. Navy fleet blocked Santiago Bay.

JUNE 10: U.S. Marines landed at Guantanamo.

JUNE 14-20: Major General William R. Shafter and 17,000 soldiers sailed from Tampa, Florida aboard scores of vessels. U.S. Navy ships escorted the convoy to Cuba.

JUNE 22: General Shafter's forces began landing at Daiquiri. Units moved westward toward Santiago de Cuba.

JUNE 24: Brigadier General Joseph Wheeler's U.S. forces defeated Spanish units at Las Guasimas.

JUNE 25-26: More U.S. troops, plus 3,000 Cuban troops, landed at Siboney. The combined forces continued to the heights east of Santiago de Cuba.

JULY 1: General Shafter's forces attacked three vital Spanish positions. Brigadier General Henry Lawton's units seized El Viso Fort and El Caney. Brigadier General Wheeler's dismounted cavalry seized Kettle Hill. Brigadier General Jacob Kent's infantry charged up San Juan Hill.

JULY 2: Cuban General Calixto Garcia's forces attacked Spanish positions northwest of Santiago de Cuba.

JULY 3: Admiral Cervera's fleet tried to leave Santiago Bay. The U.S. Navy squadron destroyed the Spanish ships. On land and sea, the Spanish faced complete defeat.

JULY 17: After several days of negotiations the Spanish capitulated. Spanish General Jose Toral made the formal surrender to General Shafter at 9:30 a.m. under the Ceiba tree.

After the Spanish capitulation, diseases such as malaria, typhoid, and yellow fever caused more casualties among the U.S. forces. Clara Barton and her Red Cross colleagues assisted with care of the wounded and sick.

DECEMBER 10: U.S. and Spain representatives signed the Treaty of Paris.

JANUARY 1, 1899: Spanish forces left Cuba.

Results. Cuba received its independence. Spain ceded Puerto Rico and Guam to the U.S., and sold the Philippines to the U.S. for \$20 million.

THE SANTIAGO CAMPAIGN

KEY:  Spanish Fort  Battle Site



U.S. Army soldiers cheering upon hearing the news of the Spanish surrender of Santiago de Cuba, July 17, 1898.



Soldiers of the 16th Infantry in San Juan Creek, under fire from the Spanish on San Juan Hill, July 1, 1898.

Photo: Library of Congress



Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt (center) and troopers of the 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry (The "Rough Riders") after the battle on Kettle Hill and San Juan Hill, July 1, 1898.

Photo: Library of Congress



American war dead were interred in temporary graves on San Juan Hill after the fighting was over. They were transported to the United States in 1899.

Photo: Library of Congress