

FIGHTING AT HOTEL BEGAN WITH DAWN

Traffic Diverted From Zone— Artillery and Tanks Are Brought Into Play.

MANY WATCH ON ROOFS

Colonel Batista Sets Up Field Headquarters and Directs Attack on Officers.

By The Associated Press.

HAVANA, Oct. 2.—Heavy firing broke out early today at the National Hotel, where 500 army and navy officers, opponents of the Grau San Martin régime, have been barricaded and besieged for weeks.

As dawn was breaking a sudden flurry of machine-gun fire occurred, both from and on the hotel. All traffic was diverted from the battle zone and a detachment of light artillery opened fire on the National at 7:10 o'clock, as the gunboat Patria moved through the heavy surf of the harbor to be nearer the hotel.

Three wounded or dead soldiers could be seen in the street at this time. At 7:35 this number was increased to seven.

One artillery shell struck the hotel at about the seventh floor.

Sporadic shooting broke out in the Vedado residential section, where many Americans live.

The Dollar liner President Taft entered the harbor at full speed when the battle was at its height.

An army airplane roared over the hotel and rooftop space was at a premium as groups watched the fighting.

In the heat of the battle, two armored tanks left the hotel and lumbered to the waterfront on an unexplained mission. Later they rumbled back and opened fire on the hotel with machine guns.

Fire Breaks Out in Hotel.

Fire appeared to have broken out in the hotel after an artillery shell whined through a window and exploded.

Another big shell shattered one of the main entrances and others smashed against the exterior with disastrous results.

Robert C. Lotspiech of London, Ohio, Havana manager for Swift & Co., was slain when struck by a stray bullet as he watched the fighting with scores of others from the Lopez Serrana apartments.

After envoys had reported to President Grau San Martin that there were no Americans in the hotel two more artillery detachments were ordered into the attack.

The Ford Motor Company Building was struck by an artillery shell. Stray bullets peppered the walls of the Castro Building, where an Associated Press observer was posted. Slugs occasionally whistled into the rooms, forcing the occupants to flatten themselves on the floor.

Two American newspaper men escaped through heavy fire to safety when bullets began piercing the walls of the America apartment house, where a number of Americans live.

Colonel Fulgencio Batista, commanding Cuba's "enlisted army," set up field headquarters in the district and personally directed the attack.

The battle, which had raged for hours, assumed the appearance of real warfare as the Red Cross established a first-aid station a half block away from the hotel.

Ambulances Race Through City.

A steady stream of ambulances carried the wounded to the hospitals. The hospitals are situated in several parts of the city and suburbs. With telephone lines down in some places, the compilation of accurate lists of casualties was rendered difficult.

Two detachments of soldiers were rushed into the city from the nearby Camp Columbia.

Soldiers were placed in the grounds around the home of former Provisional President Carlos Manuel de Cespedes, two blocks from the hotel. They placed a field gun in the front yard and started firing toward the hotel.

Dr. de Cespedes, whose return to the Chief Executive post had been demanded by the embattled officers, was not at home.

The artillerymen's aim had improved as the morning progressed and they scored a number of hits on the tall hotel building. One of the shells ripped away a large part of a balcony on the sixth floor.

Smoke ceased to pour from the windows of the hotel shortly before noon and observers took this as an indication that the officers had put out the fire started earlier.

Wives of the officers visited the United States Embassy at 11 A. M. and asked the American authorities to intervene. Upon leaving, they said Sumner Welles, the Ambassador, had informed them that only President Roosevelt was authorized to order intervention.

The artillery ceased its firing upon the hotel at noon, but the tanks still rattled away with machine-gun fire.

Throughout the morning, many Cubans telephoned The Associated Press office asserting the time had come for the United States to intervene.

Mr. Welles left his hotel early in the afternoon for the embassy. In the meantime, Colonel Thomas Gimpering, military attaché at the embassy, and a Cuban official arranged for a conference with Mr. Taylor.

As fighting continued it became even more spectacular—some artillery shells exploding in mid-air and others ripping holes in the earth.

Just after 2 o'clock this afternoon a truce was arranged and leaders agreed to cease firing until 3 o'clock.

The truce was effected after representatives of the United States consulate, accompanied by armed guards, visited Colonel Batista's

headquarters and urged a temporary cessation of hostilities to permit the removal of endangered Americans.

A few minutes before the firing ceased, some observers said they saw an officer tumble, fatally wounded, from a sixth-floor window of the hotel.

An official close to President Grau San Martin told reporters the officers fired on the group which, as a truce commission, attempted to arrange a parley.

White Sheet Is Raised.

A white sheet was raised atop the National Hotel late today.

Despite the raising of the sheet the firing continued, but in diminished volume.

The signal of apparent surrender appeared a few minutes after heavy artillery fire had been directed against the hotel in a resumption of bitter hostilities terminated by a brief period of truce.

Only a moment before the triumphant shouts of the soldiers greeted the appearance of the white flag, it was reported that in answer to demands they surrender the officers had said:

"We are not surrendering. They will find our bodies under the ruins of this hotel."

The officers' spokesman hurled his defiance to the besieging military forces by wadding the message into a shotgun shell and discharging it out of a window. A woman picked up the communication and handed it to commanders of the troops.

Thirty-five Americans were removed from the zone of fire during the truce, but others refused to leave. Fears were expressed that looting might take place in the evacuated zone after nightfall.

During the hour's truce the wife of Colonel Julio Sanguily, former army Chief of Staff, left the hotel, where she said she had been trapped during the battle. About fifteen officers had been wounded, she said, but she declared she saw no dead in the hotel.

Arrangements for Surrender.

It was learned that Colonel Batista consented to allow the officers to leave the hotel in unarmed groups, with the provision they be arrested and held pending final disposition of their cases.

A 75-millimeter gun was drawn up to the front entrance of the hotel prior to the declaration of the truce, blocking the roadway. Student members of the so-called Caribbean Army, formed some time ago to support the régime of President Ramon Grau San Martin, cruised in motor cars about the hotel grounds surveying the situation.

Prior to the renewed outbreak, a truckload of officers arrived at the Luz docks under heavy guard to be transported across the harbor to Cabana Fortress, and two truckloads of men, apparently officers, passed the Chibas apartment building in the direction of Principe Fortress.

The second truce, declared at 4:20 P. M., had been in effect only about an hour when soldiers outside the hotel fired into the air in attempting to disperse a mob which apparently was bent upon looting the hostelry.

The officers still remaining in the building returned the fire, thereby renewing the battle.

The officers had accepted the terms of surrender. Soldiers then entered the building and began carrying out loot, including stores of wine. The cellars were completely sacked. One private came out carrying so much wine he had to ask a civilian to carry his rifle for him.

Thereupon the riotous crowd of hoodlums appeared and the soldiers fired in the air to disperse them, later making a sabre charge. This brought about the renewal of hostilities.

ABC and Communists Blamed.

Chief of Police Uliceno Franco, who holds an army Lieutenant's commission, said he believed the firing which followed upon the officers' surrender and spread over the city was between adherents of the ABC and Communists.

Franco said the soldiers had been prepared to attack the officers since 2 o'clock Sunday morning.

"We decided last night to settle this problem once and for all," he declared. "The officers at the hotel were daily provoking unpleasant incidents and their defiant attitude made a showdown necessary."

Soldiers from the Dragones and other barracks went wild with joy upon the signing of the ineffectual truce. Shouting, embracing each other and waving their rifles in the air, they emerged upon the streets.

Radical agitators gathered in the streets near the hotel and harangued all who would listen, shouting that the officers should be dragged through the streets. The temper of the crowd was obviously dangerous.

The crowd cheered the soldiers and jeered the officers, some of them crying, "Throw them to the sharks!"

After about twenty minutes the firing died down again and the soldiers resumed evacuation of the officers who had surrendered. The prisoners were taken in trucks along the Malecon between cheering lines of soldiers who raised their rifles and shouted.