

surveillance continued to make an occasional get-away for Cuba.

\*The Three Friends and the Dauntless were fast boats for their day. Soon after war was declared the Three Friends was chartered by the New York World and used as a dispatch boat between the war zone and Key West. The Dauntless was the dispatch boat of the Associated Press in Southern waters during the war.

The Bermuda sank in Delaware River in 1900. The Dauntless is now in service running on Chesapeake Bay, and the Three Friends still plies the waters of her home, the St. Johns River.

By the summer of 1897 the Cuban revolution had reached a low ebb as a result of the inhuman policy of the Spanish Governor Weyler. Day after day for months the American people had read about the horrible conditions in Cuba and public sentiment had reached a state that the United States was about ready to intervene when the announcement came in January, 1898, that Weyler had been recalled and a new form of limited self-government promised the Cubans. The Cubans rejected it and the fire of revolution broke out afresh. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee, U. S. Consul-General at Havana, asked that an American warship be sent to Havana to protect American interests if necessary. The battleship Maine was sent and while anchored in Havana harbor was destroyed by an explosion at 10 p.m. February 15, 1898, resulting in the death of 2 officers and 264 men. The finding of the board of investigation that the explosion originated on the outside of the ship made war with Spain unavoidable, and on April 25, 1898, President McKinley issued a proclamation that war with Spain existed.

In less than a week after the Maine was sunk, and two months before war was declared, Florida began her preparations for war. On February 20, 1898, among the first, if not the first order of a military nature, bearing on the impending crisis, was issued from Tallahassee to the Jacksonville Naval Militia in part as follows:

Lt. A. R. Merrill, Lt. J. H. Bland, Ensigns Miller and Gibbons, with such petty officers and signalmen from the Third Division of Florida Naval Militia, Jacksonville, as may be necessary, are detailed to make a reconnaissance of the Atlantic coast as far as practicable with a view to locating proper sites for signal stations and to secure such other data as may be obtained and be of value from a military standpoint.