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February 15 is an important date in history because many significant events took place. A famous philosopher and astronomer who made contributions in the fields of astronomy, mathematics, and philosophy was born.

A naval ship exploded, resulting in devastating ramifications. The explosion also increased tensions between two countries and was a factor in the start of a war. A United States president was gaining supporters in a parade rally when a man fired shots and killed a mayor in an assassination attempt on the soon-to-elected president. In the midst of a war, an island who was a stronghold of the British surrendered to a powerful country in Asia. A group of talented United States athletes were headed to the world championships of their sport when they were in a tragic crash.

On February 15, 1564, Galileo Galilei was born in Pisa, Italy to Vincenzo Galilei and Julia Ammanati (Geymonat 5). Galileo went to the University of Pisa to study medicine, but after four years he decided to focus more on mathematics and philosophy. When he made this decision, he left the university without a degree in 1585 ("Galileo"). In 1583, Galileo made his first discovery in the world of physics, which was when he first began to fully study mathematics. He discovered "that the beating of a pendulum takes place in equal times" (Geymonat 8).

Galileo became a professor at the University of Pisa in 1589 and spent three years teaching. During this time, it was reported that he pointed out the errors of Aristotle, a philosopher, and demonstrated them to his students. He dropped two objects that weighed different amounts off the Leaning Tower. This showed "the error of Aristotle's belief that speed of fall is proportional to

weight” (“ Galileo”). After teaching at the University of Pisa, Galileo was chosen as the chair of mathematics at the University of Padua in 1592 (“ Galileo”). In order to conduct experiments and do research, Galileo constructed a shop in his house in Padua.

During this time, he created different instruments used in mathematics. One of these was a compass. The compass had already been invented, but Galileo was able to use the already constructed compasses and make them more useful. This compass was used for rapid calculations and based on the idea of proportional magnitudes (Geymonat 26). One of Galileo’s most famous discoveries is the telescope. In August of 1609, Galileo created a telescope and presented it to the doge of Venice. Galileo kept working on his telescopes and soon built a telescope that had twenty times magnification.

This amount of magnification helped him discover mountains and craters on the moon. With the help of his newly built telescope, Galileo discovered Jupiter’s four largest satellites and found that the Milky Way consisted of stars. Galileo also discovered sunspots, the phases of Venus, lunar mountains and valleys, and the laws of falling bodies (“ Galileo”). The USS Maine was first docked in Havana, Cuba at Havana Harbor on January 25, 1898 by Captain Charles D. Sigsbee (Hearn 44). The day before, January 24, United States President William McKinley made orders to send the naval ship to Havana Harbor from Key West, Florida, where it had been residing. In order for the ship to be sent to Cuba, President McKinley had to speak with the government officials in Madrid, Spain.

After being very hesitant, the government in Spain allowed for McKinley to send Maine to Havana Harbor ("The Destruction"). There were many Americans whose lives were in danger as a result of Cuba's revolt against Spain and the USS Maine's purpose was to protect the well-being of those American citizens (Hearn 44). On February 15, the USS Maine exploded. The explosion killed 253 of the 358 men aboard the ship. After several weeks of investigations and examining the ship wreckage, it was concluded that the cause of the explosion was a mine that went off beneath the ship by Captain William T. Sampson (Hearn 44). In 1911, the United States Navy Department began a second investigation on the cause of the explosion.

This investigation discovered a six-inch magazine and came to the conclusion that a mine exploded under the magazine, causing the ship to also explode. There were people that did not agree with either of these conclusions. Admiral Hyman G. Rickover conducted investigations and published his findings in a book. He concluded that the explosion was a result of combustion of coal next to the magazine ("The Destruction"). The American people quickly became angered and blamed everything on the Spanish government.

According to Hearn, "Americans became enraged, shouting, 'Remember the Maine! To hell with Spain!'" (46). By April 25, the United States Congress had declared war on Spain, beginning the Spanish American War. The explosion of Maine did not directly cause the declaration of war by America, but it was a facilitator in the actions taken by the United States Congress ("The

Destruction”). On February 15, 1933, president-elect Franklin Delano Roosevelt arrived in Miami, Florida to attend a rally.

The rally was to be held at Bayfront Park. When Roosevelt arrived, an estimated 25, 000 people surrounded the stage in any way they could (Piket). These thousands of Americans gathered in anticipation of hearing the soon-to-be-elected president Franklin Delano Roosevelt speak.

There was one person who was there for a completely different reason. Giuseppe, or Joe, Zangara attended with the intention of shooting and killing Roosevelt. Zangara traveled to Miami from Paterson, New Jersey.

As George McJimsey describes, “ he stood in the crowd wincing at the stabbing stomach pains that had tormented him for years and nursing a hatred for all those who held political power” (27). Zangara carried two things with him. He carried the weapon, a . 12-caliber revolver which he bought for eight dollars at a Miami pawnshop (27).

He also carried a newspaper clipping which described what Roosevelt would be doing and where he would be during his time in Miami. Zangara was a short man, just over five feet tall. He was dressed casually, wearing brown pants and a brown shirt (Piket). Because of the thousands of people in attendance, Zangara was only able to make his way to a few rows from the front.

When he arrived at his row which consisted of benches, many people stood in front of him which blocked his view of Roosevelt. Roosevelt began to give his speech, which was short and straight to the point. As Roosevelt made his final

points, the crowd began to sit down. This gave Zangara the perfect time to take his shots. Roosevelt was in the middle of talking to reporters and Anton J.

Cermak, the mayor of Chicago, came up to Roosevelt to have a short conversation. At this point, Zangara took a shot. A woman realized what was happening and took Zangara's arm, but with his strength, he was able to let a total of five shots off. Each bullet struck someone. He hit two people in the head, one person in the abdomen, one on the hand, and struck Cermak in the chest. Cermak was rushed to the hospital, with Roosevelt by his side, and died nineteen days later (McJimsey 28; Pickett). Ever since the nineteenth century, Singapore had been a colony belonging to the British and was considered a stronghold of the British.

Singapore is an island that is the capital of the Straits Settlement of the Malay Peninsula. The Japanese made their intention to take over Singapore by telegraphing the British in July of 1941. While the Japanese were getting ready to attack Pearl Harbor, they also sent 24, 000 members of the Japanese army to the Malay Peninsula.

After they sent troops, the Japanese attacked Singapore from the air and killed a total of 61 Singapore civilians during this one air attack ("February 15"). The Japanese forces and British forces continued to battle throughout December and January. These battles killed hundreds more innocent civilians in the process. The constant Japanese attacks resulted in the British being forced to leave many of their positions in the island of Singapore. On February 8, the Japanese placed 5, 000 more members of their forces on the

island. The Japanese began to drop leaflets that contained pro-Japanese propaganda which highly encouraged the British to surrender the island to the Japanese.

Singapore's main defensive weapons were their coastal guns. These guns were destroyed by the Japanese on February 13. Many miscalculations and bad communication by the British caused the British to slowly have less and less defense tactics ("February 15"). On February 15, the seventieth day after the invasion began, Singapore surrendered to the Japanese forces. Before Singapore officially surrendered, the Japanese had surrounded Singapore City from three sides of the island. Domei, a Japanese news agency, reported "that Lieut. General Arthur E.

Percival, British commander, signed the unconditional surrender dictated by Lieut. General Tomoyuki Yamashita, Japanese commander..." ("World News"). After Singapore surrendered, 62,000 Allied soldiers were kept as prisoners. An estimated more than half of these prisoners eventually died. As a result of the surrender of Singapore, the British lost their foothold in the East ("February 15").

On February 15, 1961, the United States figure skating team was headed to Prague for the 1961 World Championships. The figure skating team boarded the Boeing 707 ready for their chance to win the championships, not knowing what would happen to them next. While attempting to land in Brussels, Belgium, the Sabena Flight 548 crashed. The crash killed all seventy-two people who were on the plane, and one farmer who was on the ground in the fields of the airport. Of the seventy-two people on the plane, thirty-four of

them were members of the United States figure skating team (Ford).

The cause of the plane crash was easy to find. There was poor communication between the ground control members and the crew on the plane.

According to Bonnie D. Ford, “for some unknown reason the pilot retracted the plane’s landing gear on his initial approach.” Although there was no person who survived the tragic crash, there were many possessions that were found at the scene of the crash.

There were airplane tickets, jackets with the United States of America patches sewn on them, and the latest issue of Sports Illustrated. The magazine featured Laurence Owen who was just sixteen years old, the United States ladies champion, and a victim of the plane crash. There were many great American athletes and citizens killed during the crash. Some include: Laurence Owen, her sister and mother, Eddie LeMaire, a figure skating judge, Larry Pierce, thenational ice-dancing champion, his partner, Diane Sherbloom, and Doug Ramsay are just a few of the many who lost their lives (“Accidents and Disasters”; Ford).

After the devastating crash, the International Skating Union cancelled the World Championships that were to be held in honor of the skaters who lost their lives in the crash. There were many people who were supposed to be on the plane, but certain circumstances allowed them not to be. Lorraine Hanlon was supposed to be traveling to Prague, but her school would not allow her to miss any more days of class.

The coach could not afford airfare for two skaters, Bob and Pat Dineen. Tim Brown became ill and could not travel to Prague. After the accident, the “United States figure skating executives issued a mandate that still stands: No team traveling to an international competition would ever fly together again” (Ford).

Everyone of these events makes February 15 an important date in history. Each event changed how people would see the world and how the world works. Galileo Galilei was born and made important contributions to the fields of mathematics, physics, and astronomy. The explosion of the USS Maine was a stepping stone in the declaration of war leading to the Spanish American War.

Chicago mayor, Anton J. Cermak, was shot and killed by Giuseppe Zangara who had the intentions of shooting and killing the president-elect Franklin Delano Roosevelt who went on to get America out of the Great Depression. Singapore fell to Japan, which gave Japan more land and power and caused Britain to lose its foothold in the East.

Part of the United States figure skating team was killed in a plane crash which changed the lives of their families, other figure skaters, athletes of any sport, and the fans of figure skating.