Ferdinand Magellan Essay, Research Paper

Ferdinand Magellan was born in 1480, in a stone farm house in Portugal. His father’s name was Dom Ruy Magellan, and his mother’s name was Donha Alda De Mesquite. His father was a Portuguese nobleman and owned a large amount of land. He was also a sheriff, an honorary position awarded for distinguished service to the crown.

Ferdinand’s brother was named Diago De Sousa, a name he took from his wealthy grandmother, his sister was named Isabel Magellan. His family seemed to care about each other and respected one another. His family owned cows, sheep, hogs, and goats and fields of wheat, rye, corn and vineyards full of grapes. Ferdinand and his brother and sister had to help the tenants (people that rented and farmed the land), raise the animals and harvest the crops. Ferdinand went to school at a monastery.

Both his parents died when Ferdinand was only ten years old. At the age of twelve, he was sent to live at the court of Queen Leonora and John II of Portugal. His older brother, Diago, had gone to court two years earlier. His cousin, named Francisco Serrano also twelve years old, came at the same time as Ferdinand did. At court Ferdinand learned music, dance, horsemanship and how to handle weapons, in addition to academic subjects such as reading, writing and religion. Also he learned algebra, geometry, astronomy and navigation.

After he had worked at court for a few years, he started checking the supplies for the ships going to India. This was work for the India House, run by the monarchy. India house was the agency for overseas trade. Magellan heard reports of new discoveries brought back by returning ships. It was here that Magellan learned practical aspects of navigation from the sailors and by helping outfit the ships he learned about rigging, repairing, armaments and supplies.

In 1495, John II died, and his brother-in-law, Duke Manuel became king. Duke Manuel did not like Ferdinand, so even though Ferdinand wanted to sail, it was not until 1505 that he finally got his chance.

In 1505 Magellan sailed to India under the leadership of Captain General Almeida, and set up Naval Bases along the way. They set their first base up at Kilwa, and the chief there had promised to be nice to sailors coming through, and said each time sailors came through, he promised to give some gold to the King of Portugal. However he broke the promise, so the Captain General sent 500 sailors to take over the village of over 1,200 people. The sailors climbed the wall surrounding the village, and fought their way to the palace. The chief fled and a new leader was put in his place. This was Magellan’s first battle for his country.

Then the Portuguese took over trading posts and sailors guarded them for almost two years. By early 1509, the Portuguese had control of several trading posts.

A few years later, after he had gotten his command for a ship, he secretly sailed eastward without permission, and his command was taken from him and he returned home. Once home, he expected a high place, and good pay, because he had done a lot of good service for his country. However, he was given a lowly place, not much better than when he was a boy, and lowly pay. When Magellan went to the king to ask for a higher place in the king’s court, the king said no, and when Magellan asked if the king cared if he went into the service of another king, the king said he didn’t care where Magellan went, or what he did. When Magellan knelt down to kiss the king’s ring, the king turned his back on Magellan.

In 1517, he left Portugal, and he went to Spain. Soon after he arrived in Spain, he married a lady named Beatriz, who was a Spanish cousin of his friend named Duarte Barbosa.

Magellan was certain that he could find the Spice Islands by sailing west, and in 1508 he asked King Charles I for some ships. King Charles I gave him five ships: the Trinidad, San Antonio, Victoria, Conceptio, and the Santiago. In 1519 he set sail for the Spice Islands, first stopping at the Canary Islands.

His second stop was Rio De Janeiro, and they traded a lot with the natives there. Later on they stopped at Rio De La Plata for supplies. When nearing the tip of South America, they looked for a strait which connected the Atlantic Ocean with the South Ocean that had been seen by a sailor in 1513. After they found the strait, some people wanted to turn back but Magellan was convinced the Spice Islands were not much further. Once the other captains tried to take over all the ships, but didn’t succeed. One was killed but the others were put into hard labor. Magellan named the South Ocean the Pacific Ocean because Pacific meant calm. A lot of men died of scurvy because there wasn’t enough fruit and vegetables.

Success had made Magellan a very religious man, so he tried to convert some Islanders to become Christian, and succeeded in turning a tribe Christian, but made a fatal mistake by agreeing to help the tribe fight an enemy tribe. Magellan was killed in the fight against the natives, and another man called Juan Sebastian finished the voyage and was given all the credit for sailing around the world. Out of the five ships only two ships, the Trinidad and the Victoria, made it to the Spice Islands.

Magellan’s crew had made the first voyage around the world! Because of Magellan, it was proven that the world was a sphere, and can be circumnavigated. Magellan was the first to see that the oceans are all one.

His voyages changed the people he met by getting rid of the bad Arab leader, making the coast of Africa safer for Portuguese traders, and turned some natives into Christians. Magellan made it possible for his crew to sail around the world. He found a strait going through the tip of South America now called the straight of Magellan.

Magellan proved that brave people could sail around the world. He sailed for three long years, and suffered many hardships so he could be the first person to sail around the world.