Magellan Essay, Research Paper

Ferdinand Magellan Explorer Who was the first explorer to circumnavigate the globe and cross the Pacific Ocean? Ferdinand Magellan did it on his famous voyage in search of a westward route to the Moluccas (now Melaka). This is one of the greatest Portuguese explorers to ever sail the ocean. Ferdinand Magellan was born in about 1480 in Sabrosa of a noble family, and he spent his years as a court page. He ran errands and helped out with general chores but he was still looking for something more. He wanted to see the world and find out what there was to explore. In 1506 he went to the East Indies, participating in many military and exploratory expeditions in Malacca and the Moluccas, know as the Spice Islands, and by 1510 he had been promoted to the rank of captain. He returned to Portugal in 1512 and in 1513 was stationed in Morocco, where he got wounds that maimed him for life. He requested an increase in his royal allowance but was rejected by Emanuel, king of Portugal, who didn’t agree with Magellan’s plan to find a westward route to the Moluccas. This made Magellan renounce his Portuguese nationality. In 1517 he offered his services to the king of Spain, Charles I (later Holy Roman Emperor Charles V). With his good salesmanship skills, Magellan convinced Charles to fund the expedition to find a westward route to the Moluccas. If Magellan could reach the Moluccas from the West, Spain’s wealth would surpass all other countries. On September 20,1519 Magellan started his great journey to the Moluccas from Sanlucar de Barrameda with five ships. In November of that year he reached South America. In February 1520 he explored the Rio de la Plata estuary, and on March 31, 1520 his fleet put in to port at San Julian. His fleet remained there for six months because of disease and complications. One ship was wrecked causing a mutiny. After the mutiny had been

settled, Magellan sailed the passage to the Pacific Ocean named after him, the Strait of Magellan, losing another ship by desertion, en route. After 38 days and traveling 330 miles, on November 28, 1520, his three great ships sailed into the ocean, which Magellan named “Pacific” because it was so calm. He reached the Marianas, or Ladrone, Islands on March 6, 1521, and ten days later he discovered the Phillipines. He landed on the island of Cebu on April 7. There he made an alliance with the ruler of the island and agreed to help him attack the neighboring natives on the island of Mactan. Magellan was killed on April 27, 1521 during the Mactan expedition. What happens to the crew now that their leader is dead? A young Spanish navigator named Juan Sebastian del Cano takes over. Meanwhile two ships escaped and the other one was burned. The last ship, Victoria, was commanded by del Cano through the Cape of Good Hope route to Seville on September 6,1522. Although Magellan did not live to make the journey home he did circumnavigate the globe by passing the easternmost point he had visited on an earlier voyage. The cargo of spices brought back to Spain on the Victoria alone paid for the expenses of the Expedition. The passage through the Strait of Magellan was too long and difficult to be a practical trade route from Europe to the Moluccas, however, and Spain sold her interests there to Portugal. The voyage laid a foundation for trade in the Pacific between the New World and the East. Though Spain did not recognize the importance of the Phillipines immediately, before the end of the century, Manila became the greatest Spanish trading center in the East. Ferdinand Magellan proved to the world and all those who rejected his ideas that one could circumnavigate the world. His discoveries and passages opened new doors to a larger world. He will always be remembered as the first man who sailed around the world.