



# Texas Navy Association

Historical Article



## A Brief Overview of the Texas Navy

In 1836 when Texas proclaimed its Independence from Mexico , the small nation was immediately faced with invasion on land and sea by overwhelming forces from Mexico ---a power having many times the population and military resources of the infant Republic of Texas .

The first Texas Navy, consisting of four hastily purchased and minimally equipped small sailing vessels, was headquartered at Galveston , and prevented the Mexican government from landing a second army on the Texas coast. Had this army landed, it would have trapped General Sam Houston and his small command.

The Army of Texas finally triumphed over its larger and much better equipped foe at San Jacinto , and historians now agree that one of the most important elements in that great victory was the brief but furious maritime activity of the Texas Navy.

Shortly after that triumph, the first Texas Navy was disbanded; its task completed.

Mexico refused to acknowledge Texas' independence, and in 1839 began to organize a new and much larger expedition against the struggling and nearly bankrupt Texas Republic . With six hurriedly acquired vessels, the second Texas Navy was sent to sea under the command of young Commodore Edwin Moore.

Sometimes nearly starving, and often maintained by the personal credit of its commander and that of Secretary of the Navy, S. Rhodes Fisher, the Texans repeated the tactics of the first Texas Navy, except

on a larger scale.

The second Texas Navy harassed the Mexicans from the Rio Grande to Yucatan for three years, and dominated the Mexican fleet which was largely commanded by mercenary officers on furlough from Britain's Royal Navy.

Finally, defeating a much larger Mexican naval force off Yucatan in what has come to be know as the Battle of Campeche ---a battle unique because it marked the only occasion on which a sailing war ship engaged and defeated a war steamer---the exploits of the sea-going Texans forced the abandonment of the Mexican invasion plans. The second Texas Navy maintained the sovereignty of the Republic until Texas joined the United States in 1845. The Texas Navy was then absorbed by the United States Navy.

The story of the hardship and savage fighting of those small fleets of battered ships and intrepid seamen was largely forgotten until the third Texas Navy was established as a commemorative organization by Governor Price Daniel in 1958.

In 1973, the 63rd Texas Legislature passed a resolution that ratified the Texas Navy as an official state organization, devoted to preserving the history of the three Navies of Texas.

Today, Texans are honored with Commissions as Texas Navy Admirals for noteworthy service to the State of Texas, and the United States of America.

**Originally written by Admiral Nass, and revised in 2006 by Admiral Dick Brown.**

Note: This text is often used at Texas Navy Commissioning Ceremonies