



Texas Navy Association

Historical Article



The Brutus and The Invincible

The Texan navy, on leaving Galveston in May, proceeded to the mouth of the Mississippi, but, failing to find any of the enemy there, after a cruise of seven or eight days, turned to the coast of Mexico. The Texans made some small prizes about the island of Mugere, and thence proceeded to Yucatan, where they cannonaded the town of Sital for some three hours, but with little effect. The Texan schooner Invincible took, and sent into port as a prize, the Mexican schooner Alispa, of eighty tons; and the Brutus captured and sent in the schooner Telegraph. The Texans also made repeated landings along the coast, and burnt eight or nine towns. Another vessel, the Eliza Russell, of one hundred and eighty tons, belonging to English subjects, which was taken by the Invincible off the Alicranes, and brought into Galveston, not being freighted with a contraband cargo, was afterward restored, with damages, by the Republic.

Colonel John H. Wharton, desirous of making an effort to release his brother from the prison in Matamoras, obtained permission and a flag, and proceeded with thirty Mexican prisoners to that town, to make an exchange. But on landing, he was made a prisoner, and confined in a dungeon. After an imprisonment of six days, he made his escape and returned to Texas. In the meantime, his brother, William H. Wharton, through the aid of the well known Captain Thompson, of the Mexican navy, also escaped and reached home. It was intended that Thompson should desert the enemy's service, and leave with him; but Thompson's departure was precipitated by some information given to the Mexican authorities, and he arrived in Texas before either of the Whartons.

On the 25th of August, the Brutus and the Invincible arrived off the bar at Galveston, having in tow a Mexican armed schooner, which they had captured near the banks of Campeachy. On the same evening, the Brutus and the prize entered the harbor, but the Invincible could not get in. On the following morning the latter was attacked by two of the enemy's armed brigs. The Brutus, in attempting to go out to her aid, ran aground ; so the Invincible was obliged to continue the 'unequal contest alone during the day. Toward evening she attempted a retreat, but struck on the breakers near the southeast channel. The crew landed in safety, but during the night the vessel went to pieces. The Invincible was a favorite craft in the Texan navy, and her loss much regretted.

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