



Newsletter  
Spring 2013

# The Invincible

**Preventing a San Jacinto  
Rematch:** By Jonathan Jordan



**Admiral Sterling's Band:  
Getting Gigs!**

# Preventing a San Jacinto Rematch

By Jonathan Jordan

**A**n oft-overlooked point about the Battle of San Jacinto is just how close Texas came to having to fight the battle a second time, on terms clearly more advantageous to Mexico. On April 25, 1836, Sam Houston's 800-man army lay within striking distance of the main elements of the Mexican Army under veteran General Vicente Filisola. Filisola's forces numbered some 2,800 men, and Mexico held a 10-3 advantage in cavalry, an 8-3 advantage in artillery, and a 2,000-man advantage in overall strength not taking into account Sam Houston's need to dispatch 50 or so men to guard the 600 Mexican prisoners he took during the battle of April 21.

So why did Filisola not attack? First and foremost, his men were out of food and supplies, having no viable means of supply over the long wastelands of South Texas. The only realistic way to feed and supply his men was by sea, from the Mexican port of Matamoras, at the mouth of the Rio Grande.

Enter the Texas Navy, led by the war schooner *Invincible*. On April 3, Captain Jeremiah Brown sailed *Invincible* to the Rio mouth under a United States flag. There he spotted the Mexican warships *General Bravo* and *Correo Segundo*, as well as the supply ships *John M. Bandel* and *New Castle*. These vessels were awaiting the arrival of another merchantman, and the group was to convoy food and supplies to the Mexican Army.

Sending a trusted lieutenant aboard the *Bravo* in an American uniform, the Texian's cover was soon blown, and a furious gun battle broke out between *Invincible* and *Bravo*. In the course of the engagement, *Bravo* broke off and was run aground, and *Invincible* quickly captured an approaching merchant brig, the *Pocket*, as she blundered her way into cannon range of the Texas warship. Captain Brown sailed home with his rich prize, and the resupply

mission from Matamoras was scrubbed.

The lack of supplies was to plague Mexico's *Ejercito de Operaciones* after its winter march through the barren South Texas scrublands, and became the primary reason Filisola obeyed an invalid order from the captured *Santa Anna* to retreat to the Nueces River. Additionally, Filisola fretted to his superiors that, with command of the northern Gulf, the Texas rebels could move troops by ship along the Gulf Coast, then up the Brazos River, where they could cut off any hope of retreat. In this way, the Texas Navy kept Sam Houston from having to fight a Second Battle of San Jacinto- one which he most likely would have lost.

Over a hundred years later, as World War 11 was raging around him in the Pacific, U. S. Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz looked back on the Texas fleet's exploits during the spring of 1836 and remarked that the Texas Navy "controlled the sea approaches to Texas, blocked reinforcements to *Santa Anna*, and contributed in large part to many victories which beset the Mexican Army in its long overland march to the Alamo, Goliad and San Jacinto Battles of 1836. So it was that Texas established a brilliant naval tradition to stand alongside its military record achieved on land."

*Article originally posted in 2002 Invincible: You can visit Jonathan's website to read his Bio and books published by him.*  
<http://jonathanwjordan.com/>



# Texas Navy Association Admirals Attend

114th Annual State Conference

of the Texas Society Daughters of the American Revolution

The Texas Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) held their 114th Annual State Conference at the Hyatt Regency downtown Houston on Thursday March 14th. Admiral Judy Fisher representing the Texas Navy Association accepted the invitation from their State Regent Pamela Wright to attend the opening ceremonies on Thursday night. State Regent Wright recognized each of the 40 or so guests as they were introduced to the 195 DAR Chapters from around the State of Texas.

Admiral Diane Dyess who is a member of the Texas Navy Association Board attended the opening ceremonies as the Delegate for her DAR Chapter, the Six Flags Chapter of Fort Worth. Admiral Dyess had the distinct honor of carrying the Chapter flag at the beginning of the opening ceremonies. All of the elected Chapter Delegates from around the State of Texas processed in carrying their Chapter flag. Admiral Dyess also attended the Friday night Convention Dinner with her Chapter sisters.



Admiral Diane Dyess



(L) Land Commissioner Admiral Jerry Patterson, Susan Rouse, DAR State Regent Pamela Wright, Sandy Turner, and TNA President Admiral Bill Turner

Texas Navy Association Admiral Bill Turner representing the TNA accepted the invitation of State Regent Wright to attend the Friday night Awards Dinner. TNA President Admiral Turner and his wife Sandy were introduced to the attending DAR members. The key note speaker for the Friday night event was Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson who is a Texas Navy Admiral and a Board member of the TNA. Admiral Patterson was accompanied by his fiancée Susan Rouse.

## Admiral Paints With Texas Navy In His Heart

For years TNA Admiral Perry Ellis has painted whimsical and imaginative art for children who are hospitalized around the world. His art can be found in Children's Hospitals such as Shriners Children Hospital, Cook Children's Hospital, University of Maryland Hospital for Children and St. Jude's Hospital among others. He also has painted for individuals such as: Prince William and Kate, Prime Minister of England et al. Admiral Ellis signs his paintings as "Adm. Perry Ellis Texas Navy" and in EVERY painting he uses the colors of the Texas Navy (Red, White and Blue). He has been recognized by U.S. Presidents and Heads of State for his thoughtfulness in trying to cheer up the most precious of all...our children.

Here are a few of his wonderful FUN and Just for Kids paintings. As you can see the one on the left was painted January 2013. Keep up the great work Admiral!





# TNA Admiral Formed Invincible Eagle Band Gets USS Houston Gig

When Admiral Sterling was asked how he came to form his band he said.

“I formed the Invincible Eagle Band in April 2003 in Liberty. The city was having a "Troop Salute" in downtown Liberty, and wanted to know if we could get a little band to play some patriotic stuff. I put the word out, and FORTY of 'em showed up! It went over so well, they all asked if we could continue. Now, we play several times a year, for local things like Fourth of July (on the 3rd) in the park, USS Houston ceremony in March, Battleship Texas (BB-35) for Pearl Harbor ceremony in Dec, and other events. I knew "The Invincible Eagle March" by J.P. Sousa, a march he thought would be "America's March," but, instead, it turned out to be Stars & Stripes Forever.”



Sandra Sue Sterling and  
Admiral Jim Sterling

Admiral Sterling named his band with J. P. Sousa in mind. Admiral Sterling's wife, Sandra helps with all of the Invincible Eagle Band gigs, from being Principal Flautist, and helping sort music, scheduling, etc. The Invincible Eagle Band performed at the annual USS Houston (CA-30) Memorial Service at Sam Houston Park, downtown Houston, Saturday 16 March 2013.



At the USS Houston Bell Monument



At the Pearl Harbor Ceremony on the USS Battleship Texas

## Sam Houston Squadron Hosts Social

By: Admiral Tom Taylor

On Friday March 22, the Sam Houston Squadron of the Texas Navy held a Docktales & Dinner Party at Lakewood Yacht Club in Seabrook, Texas. Everyone, especially old sailors, can truly spin a yarn when there's a little rum flowing, and there were great mojitos! Reciprocal yacht club guests included, from Houston Yacht Club, Texas Navy Association Board Members Admirals John Nicholson, Fount McKee, Jim Tyson and



(L) Adm. Alice Thomas, Adm. Fount McKee and Adm. Jack Thomas



(L) Adm. Marsha Taylor, Adm. Don Genitempo, Ruth White, Jamie White, Adm. John Broderick

their wives. Everyone shared tales of days on the waters of Galveston Bay and beyond. Despite the 20 knot or so southerly breezes which ravaged hairdos and table linens, the steel drum band kept spirits high with their lilting melodies. It seemed just like The Islands, Mon!

The evening continued with a tropical dinner in the LYC Ballroom, where Jamie White, Director of the Texas Seaport Museum and his wife, Ruth, joined the group. Jamie gave a fascinating presentation and led an interesting discussion regarding the recent restoration of the Elissa, the Tall Ship of Texas, which as you know, is docked in Galveston. Stay tuned for more to come from the Sam Houston Squadron.

## Newly Formed Austin Squadron

On Saturday April 13th several Austin Admirals, assisted by leaders of Dallas' Chester W. Nimitz Squadron, gathered to form the Commodore Edwin Ward Moore Squadron.

Congratulations Admirals!



(L) Admirals: Gordon Kelso, Bob Callanan (Nimitz Squadron), Dick Brown (Nimitz Squadron), Chris Barbee, Larry Schroeder, Bruce Marshall, Sam Rogers, John Vance, Bill Benker, Pat McEnroe (Nimitz Squadron)



# Recognized by Texas Army

By: Admiral Michael Thompson



(L) TNA Admiral Michael Thompson and  
his daughter TNA Lieutenant Gail Thompson

**L**ieutenant Gail Thompson (Texas Navy), a reenactor of Texas Rev events, usually on "detached service" with the Texas Army had a wonderful time April 21st at the San Jacinto reenactment and the commemoration. After the new Colonels were commissioned Texas Navy Lieutenant Gail Thompson was presented with a special certificate for Meritorious Service from the Texas Army. Also honored was TNA Admiral Michael Thompson who was made a Knight of Texas.

## Captain Jeremiah Brown Squadron

If you live in the Fort Worth area and are interested in joining a Squadron please contact Admiral Jim Sutton at [jim@suttonsonline.com](mailto:jim@suttonsonline.com)

## Chester W. Nimitz Squadron

If you live in the Dallas area and are interested in joining a Squadron please contact Micki Sander at 972.662.1818 or [micki@thegolfspot.com](mailto:micki@thegolfspot.com)

## Nautical Quiz

You have been sailing south through day after day of heavy overcast and fog, and are thus unable to use your sextant to determine your latitude (and you have no GPS). How can you tell when you have crossed the equator?  
(Answer on Page 10)

## Great Mother's Day Gift From TNA Ships Store



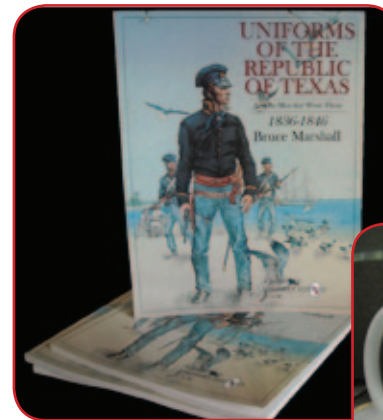
### Don't forget Mom on Mother's Day

**B**eautiful Goldtone pin with enamel finish. "TXN" initials down the left side in Swarovski Crystals and another Swarovski Crystal in the middle of the star on the TXN Flag. This pin/pennant is a Pamela Wright Collection pin especially made for the Texas Navy Association. It makes a great gift for our Lady Admirals or the spouse of Admirals. It comes with a jewelry pouch and a Pamela Wright gift box. Size is 2 1/8" wide x 2 1/4" tall.

Visit our Ships Store today. [Click Here](#)

## Commission Certificate Contest

When Were You Commissioned?  
Oldest Date on Certificate Wins!



*Winner Gets a Beautiful Book, "Uniforms of the Republic of Texas" by Admiral Sir Bruce Marshall AND a TNA coffee mug to enjoy your coffee while looking through this most interesting book.*

### **Do I need to be a TNA member to participate?**

NO anyone who has a commission as Admiral in the Texas Navy can participate. However, the winner must be living. No Deceased Admiral Certificates allowed.

### **What do I need to do to win?**

Send us a photo or scan of your Commission Certificate along with your contact info. Please don't forget the contact info so we can send you your prize if you are the lucky winner. Just Click on this link and send in a copy of your certificate by May 15, 2013 .

**[Click Here To Send](#)**



# The Texas Navy Time Line

1837

**August 26:** Invincible and Brutus, towing the captured ship Abispo, arrive at the Galveston bar. The Brutus and Correo cross the bar safely, but the deeper Invincible has to wait outside the bar until high tide the next day. The following morning, the Mexican brigs Vencedor del Alamo and Libertador arrive at the harbor, chasing the Texas ship Sam Houston into port. The two brigs begin shelling the Invincible, which makes a run for the harbor but gets grounded on a sandbar, helpless. The Brutus rushes to the aid of her sister ship, but she gets stuck on a sandbar and loses her rudder, and is of no help. The Mexican brigs pound the Invincible until her captain and crew abandon ship, then move off. That night, the Invincible is beaten to pieces by the hammer blows of the Gulf's waves. It would be over 150 years before traces of the Invincible were found by nautical archeologists.

**Early September:** Captain J.D. Boylan of the Brutus continued efforts to salvage the wreck of the Invincible, grounded and wrecked on August 29 after a battle with the Mexican brigs Urrea and Vencedor del Alamo. He also worked on retrieving the Brutus' rudder, which was stuck in the mud on the Galveston bar, rendering the Brutus useless as a warship.

**September 4:** A "large and respectable" meeting of the leading citizens of Houston was held, and passed a resolution honoring Navy Secretary S. Rhodes Fisher for his actions in sending the Texas Navy to take the war to the Mexican coast. These citizens' opinion differed markedly from the city's namesake, President Sam Houston, who promptly sacked Fisher for disobeying orders to keep the fleet off the Texas coast.

**September 15:** With the destruction of the Invincible and severe damage to the Brutus, President Sam Houston declares that the practice of issuing letters of marque and reprisal to privateers,

discontinued after the opening weeks of the Texas Revolution, will be reinstated. No privateers answer Houston's call to arms. That same day, the Navy Department asked Captain Alexander Thompson, formerly a cartographer with the U.S. and Mexican navies, to begin drafting plans for a Navy Yard on Galveston. Captain Thompson's plans would result in a large Navy Yard and naval anchorage on Galveston's north shore, near present-day 29th Street.

**September 16:** Charges are brought against Captain Henry L. Thompson of the Invincible by several junior officers for "oppressive conduct," "ungentlemanly and unofficerlike conduct," embezzlement, "tyranny" and drunkenness. Captain Thompson died before court martial proceedings could be commenced.

**September 20:** The brig Phoenix was surveyed by a Texas Navy lieutenant to determine whether it should be purchased by the government for use as a war vessel, to replace the loss of the Invincible. The captured schooner Correo (no relation to the Correo Mexicano of the San Felipe incident) was also judged to be a lawful prize later that month, and was inspected to see whether it could be converted into a man-of-war.

**September 28:** The Texas Senate begins an investigation into the conduct of Navy Secretary S. Rhodes Fisher. A trial ultimately results in the Senate upholding Houston's decision to relieve Fisher, but praises his patriotism and bravery in defending the Republic.

**September 30:** Acting Navy Secretary William Shepherd recommends that Texas purchase the privateer Tom Toby to replace the Invincible. The following month, before any action could be taken, the Tom Toby was destroyed in a deadly storm that devastated Galveston and destroyed the Brutus.

## USS Battleship Texas

For a complete update on the USS Battleship Texas Dry Berth Project please click on this link:

<http://www.dryberthtexas.com/>

Adm. Will Fisher, IV

## Nautical Quiz Answer

Water going down a drain swirls counterclockwise in the Northern Hemisphere and clockwise in the Southern Hemisphere. So just put some water in the galley sink and watch after you pull the plug. This is called the Coriolis effect, which also influences ocean and wind currents.

## Buy Your Texas Navy Plate Today

You can help support the TNA by buying a personalized license plate proudly displaying the Texas Navy Association Logo.

[www.myplates.com](http://www.myplates.com)

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*Choose a category:* Luxury Series

*Select:* Texas Navy plate in the "Sponsored Organizations"



## *In Memory Of*

Admiral Marie Russell  
Admiral Kenneth Hamilton

*Fair Winds and Following Seas!*



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