

A Brief History of the Organization of the Texas Navy Association

Many Texas Governors in the past have given commissions in the Texas Navy to various people as a means of honoring them for doing a service to Texas. Governor James V. Allred in 1936 may have been the first Texas Governor in giving a commission as an Admiral in the Texas Navy to dancer Ginger Rogers when she appeared in Dallas at the opening of the new Texas State Fair Grounds in Dallas which opened the Texas Centennial celebration of independence from Mexico. She was most probably the first woman , or anyone for that matter to be so honored.

In 1958 Governor Price Daniels formed what was the first successful attempt to form a “Third and Honorary” Texas Navy. Their headquarters were established in Houston and they held Annual Admiral Balls at the Houston Yacht Club and the Governor would review the fleet each year at the San Jacinto Monument. The fleet consisted of every conceivable type of vessel from a luxury cruiser to a canoe in the days of Governor Daniels. All who applied were made Admirals in the Texas Navy. This organization was intended to be a type of coastal surveillance service to the State of Texas in its defense.

Governor Daniels has most of the records of the early days of the Texas Navy at his museum and library, the Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center, in Liberty, Texas. Also, the correspondence on all of those commissioned by him as Admirals in the Texas Navy.

The first Chief of Naval Operations for the Texas Navy Association was Stephen Walter and the second was Dr. John Theil, M.D. and the records of the organization during this time will be found at the Rosenberg Library in Galveston, Texas. These records were placed here to insure their security and availability to future generations of Texans.

The Texas Navy, Inc., now the Texas Navy Association, was formed by an act of the 63rd Texas Legislature becoming effective on August 27, 1973**. The act was sponsored by Senator “Babe” Schwartz of Galveston, Texas. We are a non profit 501(c)3 organization devoted to preserving the history of the three Navies of Texas. The Governor of Texas is still our Honorary Commander-in-Chief as has been the case since the act was passed by the Texas Legislature and the Governor still appoints one member to the fifteen member Board. We are most fortunate that Governor Rick Perry chose Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson as his appointee. As Land Commissioner, Jerry’s assistance in our search for the Invincible was most necessary as his office approves off shore searches such as this.



Later in 1973, Governor Preston Smith moved the Texas Navy Headquarters from Houston to Galveston, Texas where it remains today and is the headquarters for the Texas Navy Association.

We are currently looking for the wreckage of the Invincible. The Invincible was one of the four ships that comprised the first Texas Navy and was wrecked on a sand bar while two Mexican men of war were pursuing her.

The web site you are now viewing has been a source to disseminate the deeds of the Texas Navies and to preserve their memory in the ships of the Honorary Third Texas Navy.

Texas history is taught in the public schools in Texas in the seventh grade. The Texas Navy web site is not only an attempt to bring out little known facts about the heroic history of our two navies of the Republic of Texas in a proper way by bibliographies, web site sources of information and documents to show what has sadly been mostly forgotten or neglected by historians of today.

The public school text books, dating from Pennybacker's "History of Texas" in the 1890's showed little more than a paragraph on this part of Texas history that has gone unnoticed in even current histories of Texas. Few, if any, even mentioned the presence of any naval forces of the Republic, yet the Gulf of Mexico with its long shores has always been there. At long last, thanks to the efforts of Admirals Win Greiner, Jerry Patterson, Jerry Drake, and Wayne Gronquist, and Steve Cure of the Texas State Historical Association, and all others who participated to make this happen, the Texas school system now includes an entire chapter on the Texas Navy. The Association hopes to bring forth documentation of the deeds of the first and second Texas Navies as they are scarcely mentioned in all of the histories of the Republic of Texas.

This history prepared by Admiral Walter Nass. Last Paragraph amended by Admiral James Tyson to reflect the work our members did in getting Texas Navy history taught in our schools.

** This statement is based on a common misunderstanding about the origins of the Texas Navy, Inc. The TNA was actually incorporated by three Admirals from Galveston in October, 1972, as is evidenced by the Secretary of State filing. Viewable [HERE](#).