

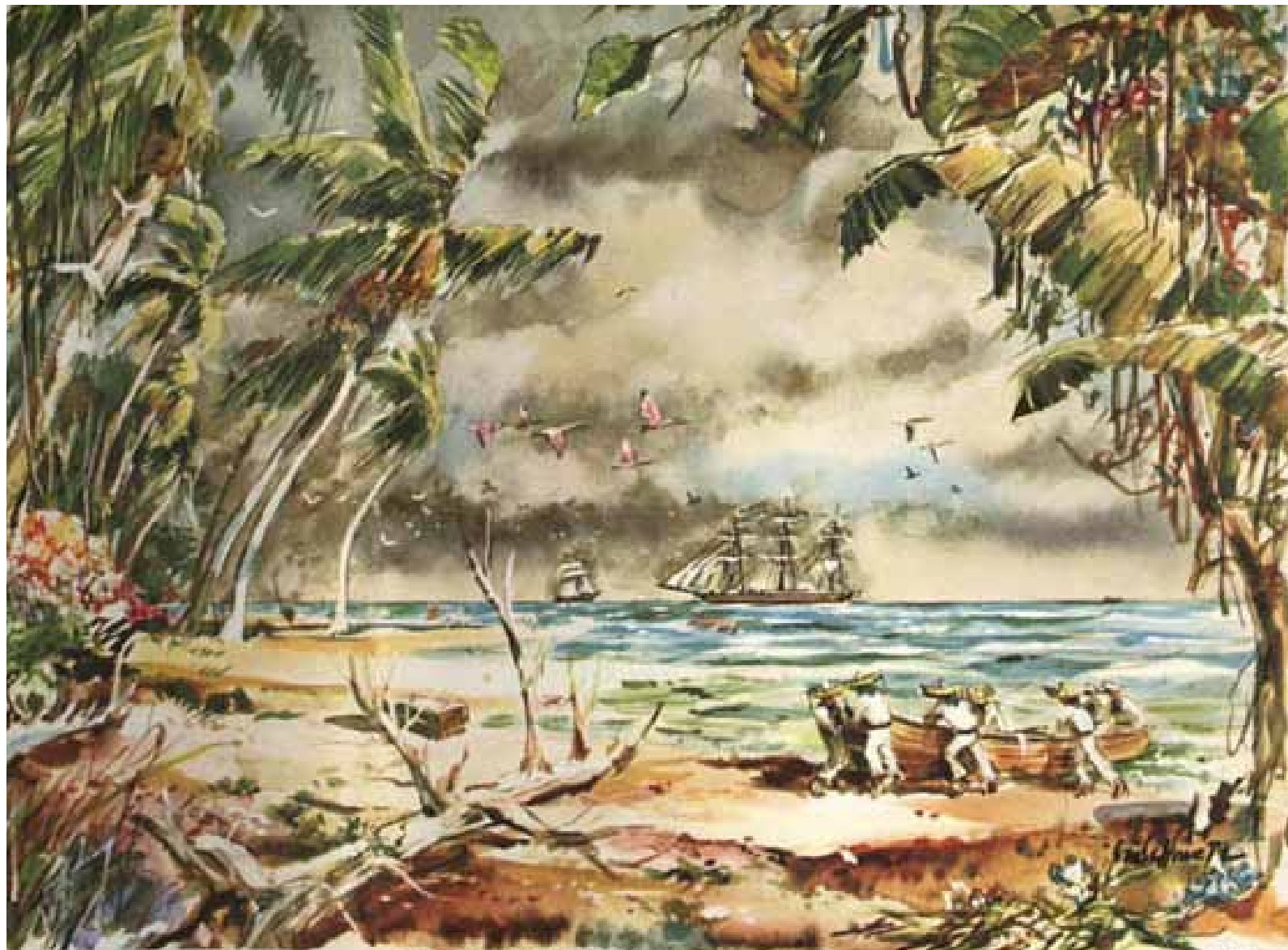


Texas Navy Association

Historical Article



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Texas Navy off Texas, 1811

E. H. Schlegel

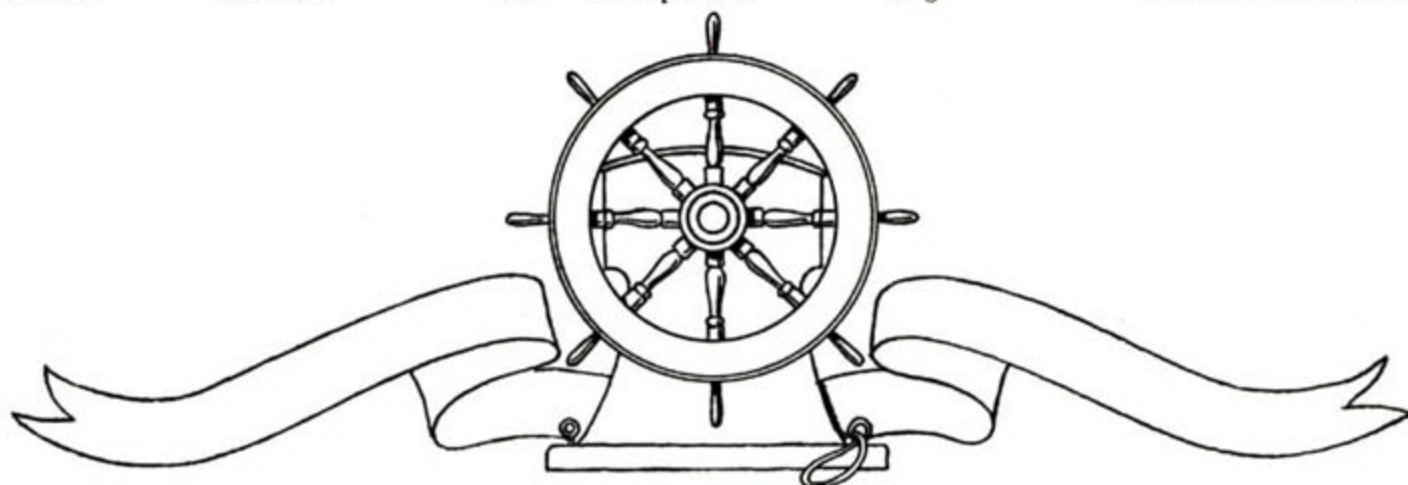
TEXAS SKETCHBOOK

A COLLECTION OF HISTORICAL STORIES FROM THE HUMBLE WAY



SHIPS OF THE TEXAS NAVY

	FORMER NAME	TONS	GUNS	CLASS	DISPOSITION
<i>Liberty</i>	<i>William Robbins</i>	60	4 or 6	Schooner	Sold, 1836
<i>Invincible</i>	*	125	2 18-pounders 2 9-pounders 4 6-pounders	Schooner	Wrecked, 1837
<i>Brutus</i>	*	125	8	Schooner	Wrecked, 1837
<i>Independence</i>	<i>Ingham</i>	125	6 6-pounders 1 long 9-pounder	Schooner	Surrendered, 1837
<i>Potomac</i>	<i>Potomac</i>	*	*	Brig	*
<i>Zavala</i>	<i>Charleston</i>	*	8	Steam Brig	Sold for scrap, 1844
<i>San Jacinto</i>	<i>Viper</i>	170	7 12-pounders 1 long 18-pounder	Schooner	Wrecked, 1840
<i>San Antonio</i>	<i>Asp</i>	170	7 12-pounders 1 long 18-pounder	Schooner	Wrecked, 1842
<i>San Bernard</i>	<i>Scorpion</i>	170	7 12-pounders 1 long 18-pounder	Schooner	Transferred to U. S. Navy
<i>Wharton</i>	<i>Colorado</i>	400	16 18-pounders	Brig	Transferred to U. S. Navy
<i>Austin</i>	<i>Austin</i>	600	16 18-pounders 2 medium 18-pounders 20 24-pounders	Sloop-of-War	Transferred to U. S. Navy
<i>Archer</i>	<i>Galveston</i>	400	16 18-pounders	Brig	Transferred to U. S. Navy





Firing a Broadside

by E. M. Schiwetz

THE TEXAS NAVY

PART I

Success of the Texas Revolution depended, more than is generally known, on the daring exploits of the Texas Navy

BATTLES and blockades of the Texas Navy during the revolution against Mexico are shrouded, and almost lost, in the mists of more than a century since San Jacinto. Mountains of manuscripts and books by the score tell stories of land campaigns. But one has to scratch deep among archives and libraries to find stirring sea tales of the small, but highly effective, Texas Navy.

As a result, every Texan proud of his state's history knows about the Alamo and San Jacinto; about Travis and Bowie and Sam Houston. But ask him about the *Independence* or Commodore Hawkins, and you are likely to draw a blank stare.

Those who know the full story of the Texas Navy declare, to a man, that it contributed largely to final victory on the battlefield of San Jacinto. Brigs and schooners, flying the Lone Star and manned for the most part by rag-taggle crews, mercilessly harried the Mexican coast. Tiny wasps with fearsome stings, they delighted in disrupting Santa Anna's ship-

ping and playing havoc with his efforts to reinforce and supply his troops in Texas.

Thanks to the Texas Navy, flour and gunpowder bound for the enemy often found its way, through capture at sea, into the stomachs and muskets of Houston's beleaguered Texans. Armed reinforcements by the thousands languished in Mexican ports for want of water transport, as Texas warships prowled the Gulf outside.

Letters of Marque

Actually, there was not one Texas Navy, but two. But before either came officially into being, ships sailed for Texas under Letters of Marque and Reprisal. It was, to be quite blunt, a sort of legalized piracy. Though Texas in 1835 was still subject to Mexican rule, the Provisional Government issued Letters of Marque and Reprisal to owners of sailing vessels, permitting them to blockade Mexican ports and prey on shipping bound to or from the enemy. Under the agree-

ment, the Texan government received a share, usually about one fifth, of any prizes taken. Ships and their commanders so commissioned were called *privateers*.

One of the first privateers was the *William Robbins* (later to become the *Liberty* of the first Texas Navy). After receiving a Letter of Marque on December 5, 1835, the skipper of the *William Robbins* proceeded at once, under rather unusual circumstances, to capture a sort of double prize.

The American schooner *Hannah Elizabeth*, carrying two cannon and munitions for the Texan army, had been captured near Pass Cavallo (Matagorda Bay) by the Mexican warship *Bravo*. Before the Mexicans could claim their prize, however, a stiff wind came up, forcing the *Bravo* to stand off. In this plight the Mexican prize crew was found on board the *Hannah Elizabeth* and forced to yield themselves and their erstwhile prize to the *William Robbins*.

Here was a touchy question for any admiralty court. The *Robbins'* questionable prize was a ship flying a neutral flag and laden with provisions for Texas troops! And the manner in which the cargo was disposed of muddled the waters still more. Half of it was sold on the spot to a passenger of the *Hannah Elizabeth*; the other half was advertised at auction. Before the air had cleared of claims and counter-claims, accusations and denunciations on both sides had cooled the provisional government's enthusiasm for privateering.

Before the official birth of the first navy, however, at least two other privateers made themselves heard from—the

Thomas Toby and the *Terrible*. The *Toby* insolently shelled the Mexican fort at Tampico, then sent a blithe challenge to the commandant there to "send out for a fight any vessel which might lie in port." The arrogant little *Terrible* baited Mexican shipping up and down the coast, taking prizes where she found them and always spoiling for a fight.

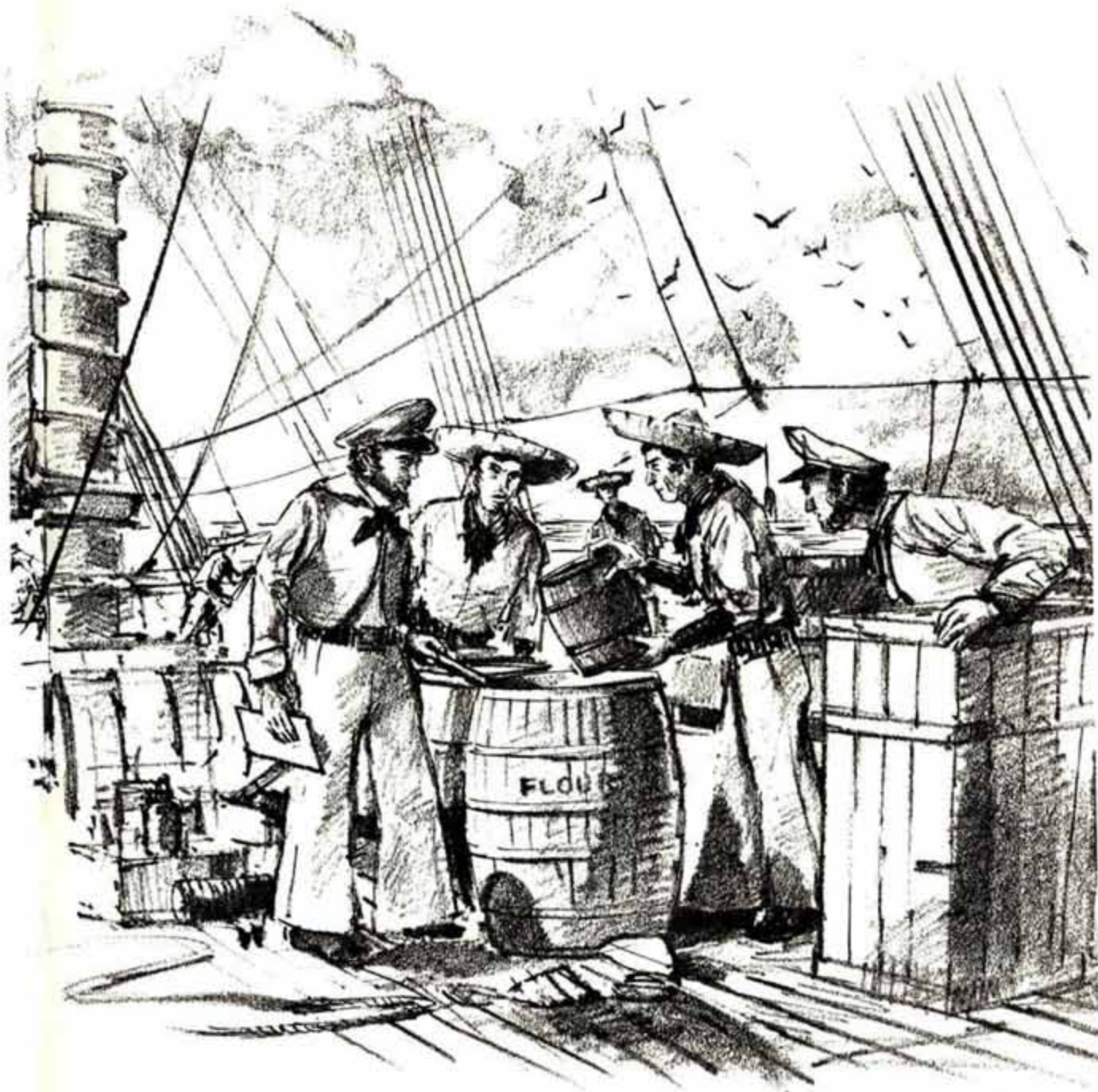
The First Navy

Early in 1836, the Texas Provisional Government set out to buy itself a navy. Naval agents were dispatched to New Orleans, where they found the former U. S. Revenue Cutter *Ingham* for sale. She was renamed the *Independence*, placed in command of Charles E. Hawkins, and before mid-January appeared off the Texas coast.

It was not the first fast promotion for the swashbuckling Hawkins. Tired of waiting for advancement in the United States Navy, he had resigned a junior officer's commission in 1826 and entered Mexican service. As commander of the *Hermon*, he distinguished himself off the Cuban coast in an engagement with a Spanish squadron. Hawkins resigned his Mexican commission in 1828, to serve later as a riverboat captain and a *filibustero*, or soldier of fortune, in Col. Mexia's Tampico expedition. He appeared reasonably well equipped, by experience and temperament, to command the new-born Texas Navy.

With the *Independence* at sea as the Texas flagship—she carried seven guns distributed over 125 tons of schooner—the





The Pelicano Prize

by E. M. Schiwetz

agents proceeded to buy the *Brutus*, another 125-ton schooner of eight guns. After much repair work and legal difficulties designed to prevent her sailing, the *Brutus* appeared off the Texas coast in February, 1836, commanded by a seasoned captain, W. A. Hurd.

Also early in January, the former privateer *William Robbins* was added to the fleet. Renamed the *Liberty*, the tiny 60-ton schooner mounting four to six guns was bought from the Matagorda Committee of Safety, her owners during privateering days. In command was Capt. William S. Brown.

Rounding out the first four-ship navy was the *Invincible*, another 125-ton schooner, bought from McKinney & Wil-

liams. Heaviest in her ordnance of eight guns were two 18-pounders, the deadliest and longest-range weapons the little fleet had to offer. Commanding the *Invincible* was Capt. Jeremiah Brown.

A complement of 20 to 50 men sailed on the *Liberty*. The *Invincible*, fastest in the navy, carried 70 men; the *Brutus* and *Independence*, 40 each. A fifth vessel, not officially part of the navy, was the *Flash*, sailing under Capt. Luke A. Falvel and a Letter of Marque.

Flour and Gunpowder

On land, the Alamo had fallen and Sam Houston was in

full retreat. At sea, Commodore Hawkins and the *Independence* patrolled the Mexican coast like an avenging angel. In the waters between Tampico and Galveston he destroyed numbers of small enemy craft, "with all material on board that could be used to the injury of Texas." Completing a cruise about mid-March, Hawkins turned back to New Orleans for refitting.

It was time for the *Liberty* to take the offensive. Early in March, finding the Mexican schooner *Pelicano* anchored in the roadstead off Sisal, Yucatan, Capt. Brown closed for action. After Capt. Perez had received a few telling shots and had his deck well raked with grapeshot, he thought it wise to strike the *Pelicano's* colors.

All went well until a Texan boarding party clambered over the rail and onto their captive's deck. At that moment, a young Mexican marine decided to make a name for himself. Levelling his musket, he was about to fire into the boarding party, but was cut down by an alert Texan's pistol. A wild melee followed, ending in the death of seven Mexicans. Others, who chose judiciously to run away and fight another day, leaped over the rail and made for shore. Poorer swimmers, perhaps men with no stomach for the shark-infested waters around, took refuge below decks.

Even at first hasty inventory, the *Pelicano* proved a fine prize. A closer inspection revealed that she was a windfall, indeed, for Houston and his army. Carefully cached inside casks of flour and other foodstuffs were smaller kegs of gunpowder! Houston was elated when he learned the news. It was stroke enough to deny Santa Anna vital food and powder; it was a double stroke to divert that material to the Texans' use.

Diplomatic howls went up at the *Pelicano's* capture and appropriation of her cargo. A false manifest showed the cargo to be the property of an individual in New Orleans, and it was well known that this same individual sometimes cooperated with the agent for Santa Anna's source of supplies there. Under such conditions, the Texans were in no mood for diplomatic niceties.

Shortly after the *Pelicano* affair, the valiant little *Liberty* put into New Orleans for repairs. That proved her undoing. When repairs were completed, the Texan government could not afford to pay for them, and the *Liberty* found itself on the auction block. Thus, the first ship lost in the Texas Navy surrendered to financial difficulties rather than to enemy fire.

Victory of the Invincible

To keep his eye on enemy movements and protect the flank of Sam Houston's retreating army, Commodore Hawkins kept most of his fleet at Matagorda Bay. Part of his job was to thwart Mexican reinforcement by sea. Thus it was, late in March, that the warship *Invincible* received orders dispatching it on patrol to Matamoras, near the mouth of the Rio Grande. Hawkins could not have made a wiser assignment.

In Matamoras, at that very time, 2000 troops were being mobilized and equipped to reinforce Santa Anna's army in Texas. They would go by sea to the Texas coast. Matamoras lay under embargo, and only supply or troop vessels escorted by warships were permitted to clear port.

When Capt. Jeremiah Brown's fast little *Invincible* arrived off Matamoras during the first week in April, 1836,



The Horse Marines

two Mexican ships were standing out of Matamoras and crossing the bar. One was the warship *Bravo*, Capt. Jose Maria Espino commanding. In his convoy was the *Correo Segundo*. At this point, fortune chose to favor the Texans. Crossing the bar, Espino lost his rudder and the *Bravo* lay helpless before the *Invincible*.

Capt. Brown must have subscribed to the theory that all is fair in love and war. Instead of breaking out his true colors, he ran up the Stars and Stripes, lowered a boat, and sent a party with Lt. William H. Leving in command to the stricken *Bravo*. Leving's job was to get what information he could of activity in Matamoras without revealing his true identity. Dressed as an American naval officer, and declaring



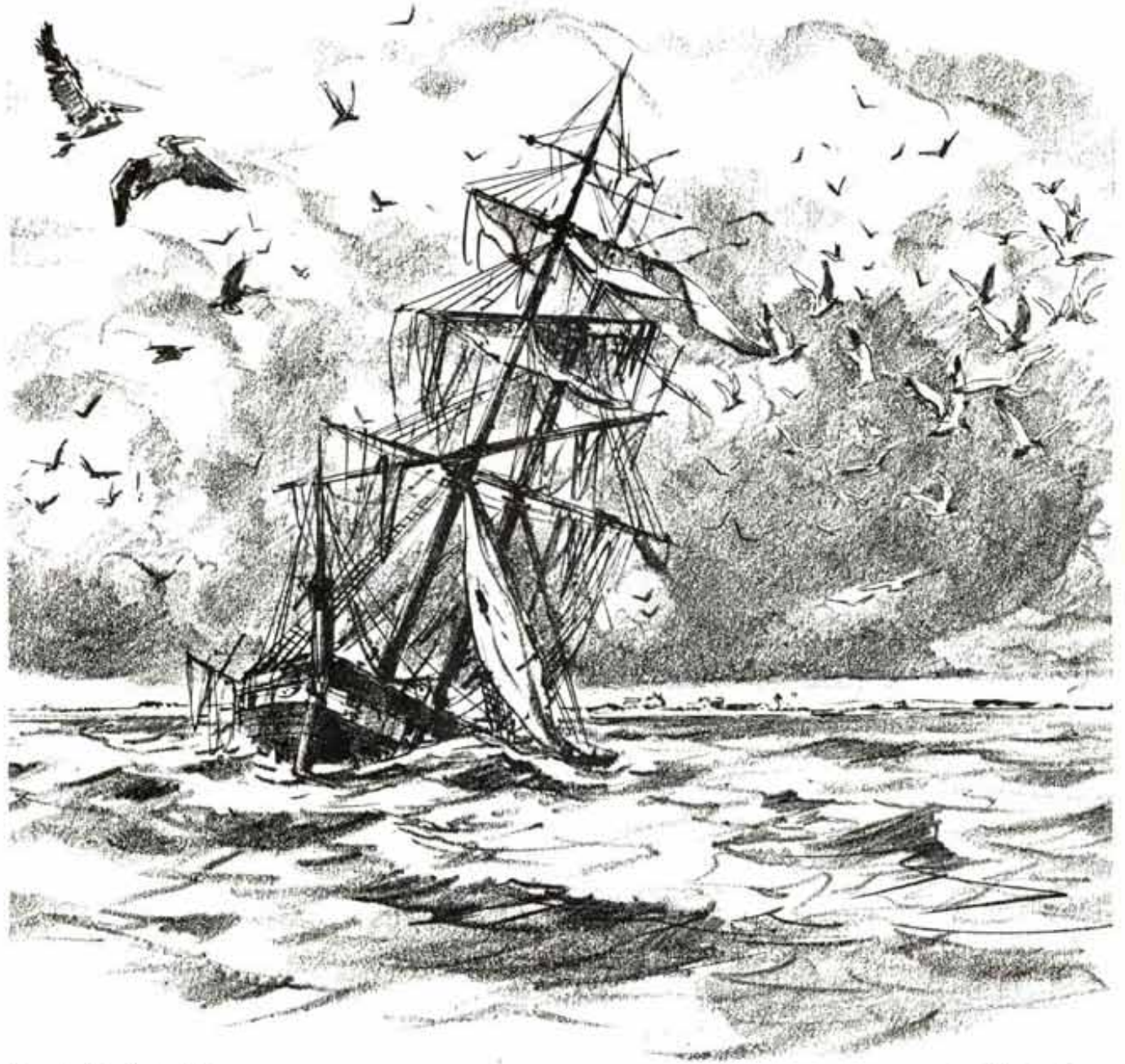
by E. M. Schiwetz

the *Invincible* was an American revenue cutter from Pensacola, Leving played the game as best he could. But now fortune shifted to the other side.

Using Brown's own tactics, Capt. Espino sent a boatload of his men aboard the *Invincible*. One, unfortunately, was a young junior officer who knew and recognized some of the *Invincible's* crew the moment he stepped aboard. Knowing the play was over and reality was at hand, Capt. Brown clapped the boarding party beneath hatches and opened up with a broadside against the *Bravo*. Espino, quite naturally, countered by arresting and confining Lt. Leving (later delivered before a firing squad in Mexico) and returning the fire.

The battle blazed for about an hour, without great damage to either ship. It might have continued but for the appearance on the horizon of bigger game for the *Invincible's* guns, the American-owned brig *Pocket*. Pulling out of its battle with the *Bravo*, the opportunist *Invincible* made for and took the latter prize. As it turned out, the *Pocket* carried contraband cargo and a false manifest, as usual. Actually, the *Pocket* was under contract to move Mexican troops from Matamoros to Copano Bay on the Texas coast.

Back to Matagorda hastened Capt. Brown with his valuable prize. Finding no ships there, he proceeded to Galveston, where he found great crowds wild with excitement. At Galveston aboard the *Flash* were Acting President David G.



Wreck of the Invincible

by E. M. Schiwetz

Burnet with his cabinet. All had, a few days before, narrowly missed capture by Santa Anna at Harrisburg. A major battle impended on land, and on it hinged the fate of Texas. Fleet headquarters had been moved from Matagorda to Galveston.

The *Invincible's* capture of the *Pocket* brewed a storm of controversy in New Orleans. The offended captain, Elijah Howes, hotly denounced everyone aboard the Texan warship as pirates. But Texan supporters and sympathizers in the Crescent City pointed out that the *Pocket* had asked for trouble when she carried contraband cargo whitewashed by a false manifest. Arguments flew on either side and the case

dragged along interminably. Finally in 1838, courting favor with the United States, the Republic of Texas agreed to pay, with interest, losses suffered by owners of the *Pocket*. A similar agreement was made to reimburse owners of the American brig *Durango*, which had fallen victim to the *Liberty*.

The Horse Marines

No account of the Texas Navy period would be quite complete without some recognition of the famous exploits of Major Burton and his "Horse Marines."

The major and a detachment of about 20 mounted rangers

were on reconnaissance near Copano Bay, early in June of 1836. Their job was to determine whether Mexican General Vicente Filisola was retreating to Mexico, as commanded by the captured Santa Anna.

Hearing that a suspicious-looking craft had been spotted offshore, Burton and his men hid themselves in the brush and, when the merchantman appeared, signalled it to send a boat ashore. No sooner had the boat touched land than Burton's men seized it. In a matter of minutes they had boarded and taken possession of the ship, which turned out to be the *Watchman*, laden with provisions for Filisola.

While the little group of rangers pondered over what to do with its suddenly acquired prize, two other ships dropped anchor in the bay. Flushed with victory, the audacious little band decided if one prize was good, three would be better. By sheer daring, they proceeded to decoy aboard the *Watchman* the commanders of the other two vessels. These two unfortunates, to their great chagrin, found themselves imprisoned and their ships taken by small parties of Burton's men. The three ships proved lawful prize, and Burton and his boys forever afterward enjoyed the lofty title of "Horse Marines."

Loss of the Independence

On April 10, 1837, the flagship *Independence* sailed from New Orleans for Texas. In command was Capt. George Wheelwright, for Commodore Hawkins had died in January of that year. Aboard was a distinguished passenger, W. H. Wharton, Texas Minister to the United States, who had just secured American recognition of his republic and was returning to accept the plaudits of his countrymen.

Early one morning a week later, off the mouth of the Brazos River, the *Independence* encountered two Mexican warships, the *Vencedor del Alamo* and the *Libertador*. These gave chase and a running cannonade ensued. At one time, the range between the *Libertador* and her quarry was reduced to a couple of cable's lengths, and some spirited fire was exchanged. Stiff winds and choppy seas kept both ships from inflicting serious damage on the other, however. The Texan craft lay low in the water, and the muzzles of her guns dipped under water as the ship rolled.

Meanwhile, the *Vencedor del Alamo* was catching up astern. Coming up with the *Independence*, the *Vencedor* presented a full broadside and received one in return, then veered off. Aboard the Texan flagship Capt. Wheelwright was wounded and carried below, leaving Lt. Taylor to fight the ship.

About noon, both Mexican warships overtook the *Independence*, squeezing her into such a hopeless position that there was little to do but surrender. It was the only Texas

warship captured during the life of the Texas Navy. The *Independence* was incorporated into the Mexican Navy; Wheelwright and Wharton were carried, prisoners, to Mexico. Both escaped later and made their way back to Texas.

End of the First Navy

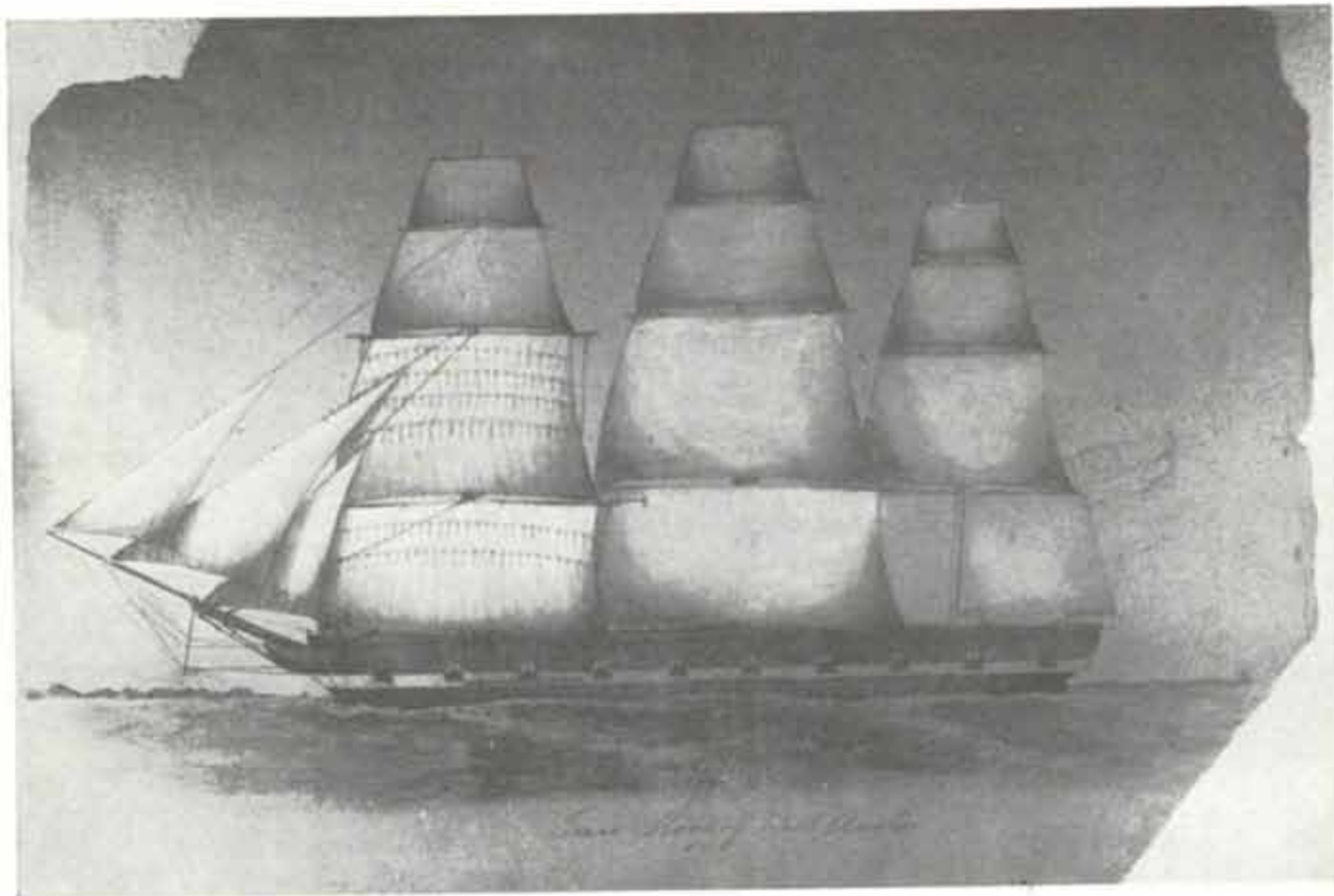
With the surrender of the *Independence*, the first Texas Navy was cut in half—and the end was near for the other two schooners-of-war. The *Invincible* was next to go, not a victim of enemy fire but of shipwreck almost within sight of Galveston on August 27, 1837. Only the *Brutus* remained, and she not for long. In October she followed the *Invincible* into shipwreck, and as the furious storm that beat her to pieces abated, the Texas Navy was no more.

From the fall of 1837 until the spring of 1838, Texas was without a ship to defend her interests on the Gulf. It might have been a serious situation, but for two fortunate circumstances. First, Mexico herself welcomed a chance to lick grievous wounds suffered at sea. The same storms that had proved the undoing of the *Invincible* and the *Brutus* had sent Mexican warships limping back into port for repairs. And of course, money to repair them was as short in Mexico as in Texas.

A second situation that favored Texas during that interim period between navies was the activity of the French fleet in the Gulf of Mexico. Ill will that had been brewing for some time between Mexico and France broke at last into open hostility. French Admiral Baudin took his fleet up and down the Mexican coast, paralyzing shipping and blasting seacoast towns. Better still, from a Texan standpoint, he seized and held the Mexican fleet. The French, moreover, did something the Texans had failed to do at San Jacinto—they inflicted bodily harm on Santa Anna.

Ever in the eye of shifting political hurricanes, Santa Anna led a charge against a French landing party—when he saw that it was already leaving the town, anyway, making its way back to the waiting ships. He had good reason to think he had timed his charge perfectly, and that the danger to his person was past—giving him a chance for glory at small risk. But he reckoned not with the covering fire from fleet batteries. One last salvo swept the town, so wounding Santa Anna in the leg that it had to be amputated. Even this stroke of ill luck he turned to his gain. A noble monument to the lost leg was erected in Mexico City, with burial ceremonies accompanied by the most florid eulogies!





The Flagship Austin

from an old drawing

THE TEXAS NAVY

PART II

The second Texas Navy had almost as much trouble with depleted treasuries and political storms as with an armed foe

LATE in 1837, Sam Houston, never much in favor of a Texas Navy or too respectful of the men who fought in it, reluctantly signed a bill appropriating money for a second fleet. But President Mirabeau B. Lamar, inaugurated the following year, favored a navy as strongly as Houston opposed it. Lamar's feeling was supported by the Texas Congress, whose Senate went so far as to pass a secret resolution that Texas buy the Mexican fleet captured by the French!

The first ship to take its place in the second navy was the brig *Potomac*, bought early in 1838. She never became a seaworthy fighting ship, and spent her days tied to a Galveston wharf, serving as a "receiving ship." Next was the brig *Charleston*, which steamed into Galveston harbor in March, 1839, and was promptly renamed the *Zavala*, in honor of Texas' first Vice President, Lorenzo de Zavala.

Five more ships were bought in 1839: the *San Jacinto* (formerly the *Viper*), a 170-ton schooner of eight guns; the *San Antonio* (formerly the *Asp*), a 170-ton schooner of eight guns; the *San Bernard* (formerly the *Scorpion*), a 170-ton schooner of eight guns; the *Wharton* (formerly the *Colorado*), a 400-ton brig of 16 guns; and the *Austin*, a 600-ton sloop-of-war of 38 guns—easily the largest and most heavily weaponed ship in the fleet.

The *Archer* (formerly the *Galveston*), a 400-ton brig of 16 guns, was bought in April, 1840, bringing the total to eight ships.

With the new fleet came a new commodore. A great many had been gracious enough to offer their services, but all were passed over in favor of 29-year-old Edwin Ward Moore, Lt., U.S.N. Entering the American Navy as a midshipman at the

age of 15, Moore had served for another ten years before winning his lieutenantcy. Fearful that he might well wait 25 more for his captaincy, Moore's bird-in-hand philosophy was pleased with the prospect of a commodore's post in the Texas Navy. Upon taking over in December, 1839, he immediately made the *Austin* his flagship.

Shifting Winds

The first Texas Navy had spent a good part of its time fighting an armed enemy on the high seas. The second whiled away a good part of its time in less spectacular fashion, fighting a less deadly, but more dogged, foe: financial troubles and the shifting winds of political storms.

By the spring of 1840, hostilities had broken out between Yucatan and Mexico. Texas quite naturally decided to supply what it could in aid and comfort to Yucatan. Once again, it appeared that the Texas Navy could limber its guns and clear its decks for action. Accordingly, a base was established for the fleet at the Arcas Islands, some 100 miles west of the port of Campeche.

The navy spent most of 1840 in what has been accurately termed "diplomatic cruising." Ships under Moore took some prizes, but few engagements could be dignified with the word "battle." On one occasion, being strapped for ready cash, Moore decided to take it where it was most conveniently available. Going upriver to the Tobascan coast town of San Juan Bautista, he levelled his guns on the place and exacted a tribute of \$25,000 from the fearful populace. The money came in handy; without that windfall the navy might have been on short rations!

Yucatan was pleased with the effectiveness of the Texas Navy, and in 1841 the Yucatan government made an agreement with President Lamar of Texas to rent the fleet for \$8000 a month.

Commodore Moore received these order in a sealed packet with instructions not to open it until he had put to sea. Lamar was obviously afraid of public disapproval of his agreement. After recruiting new men and revictualing his ships, Moore crossed the bar of Galveston Bay on December 13, 1841, and opened the mysterious packet.

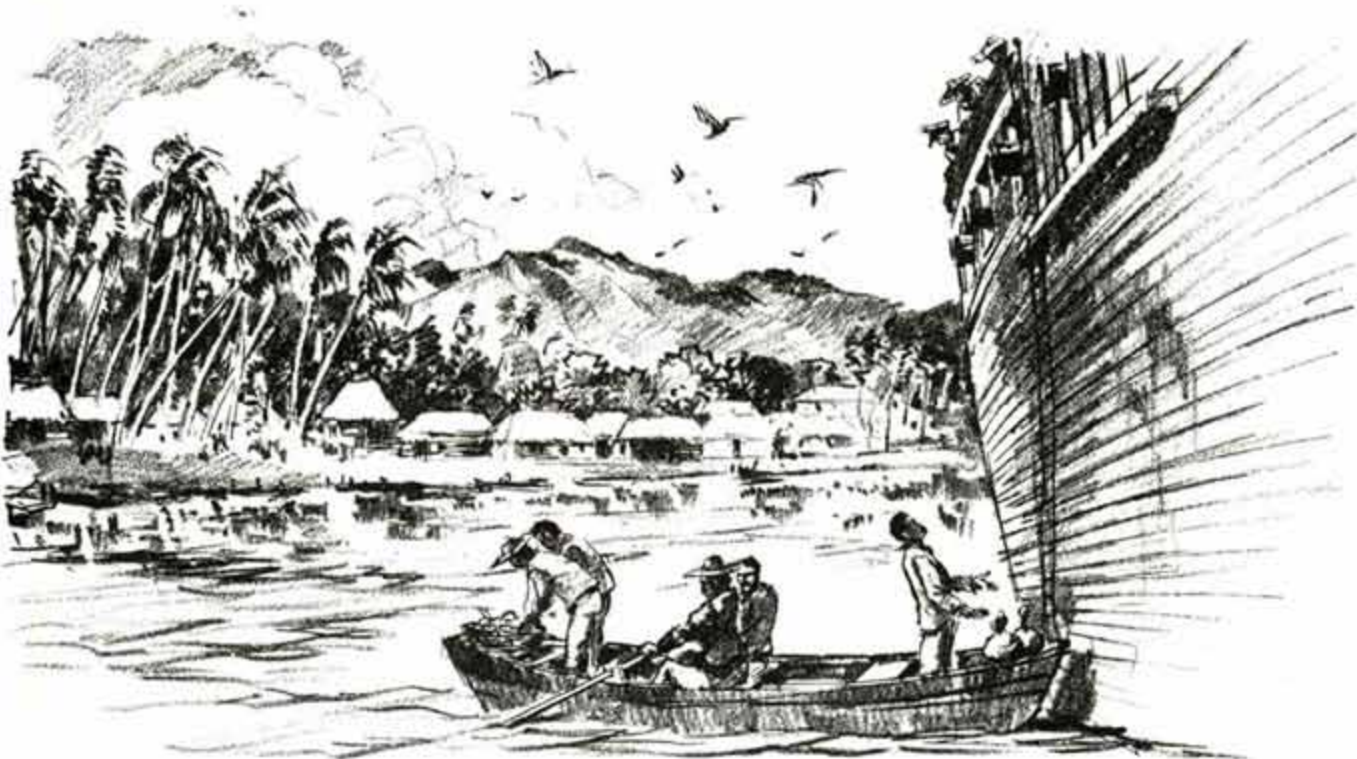
Moore, of course, found the agreement to his liking and proceeded at once to Yucatan. When he arrived he learned to his chagrin that the Yucatecos had made their peace with Mexico. After some dickering, however, Yucatan agreed to pay the rental for a few months and keep the Texas fleet on hand, just in case Mexico should fail to keep its promises. After a tumultuous five months, Yucatan yielded to Mexican pressure and a depleted treasury and cancelled the agreement. Moore and the fleet returned to Galveston in May, 1842.

Mutiny

The year 1842 saw the first and only mutiny in the Texas Navy. Actually, the plot had been hatched among disgruntled seamen off the Yucatan coast the year before. The smouldering conspiracy flared into open mutiny while the schooner *San Antonio* lay anchored in the Mississippi River off New Orleans on February 11, 1842.

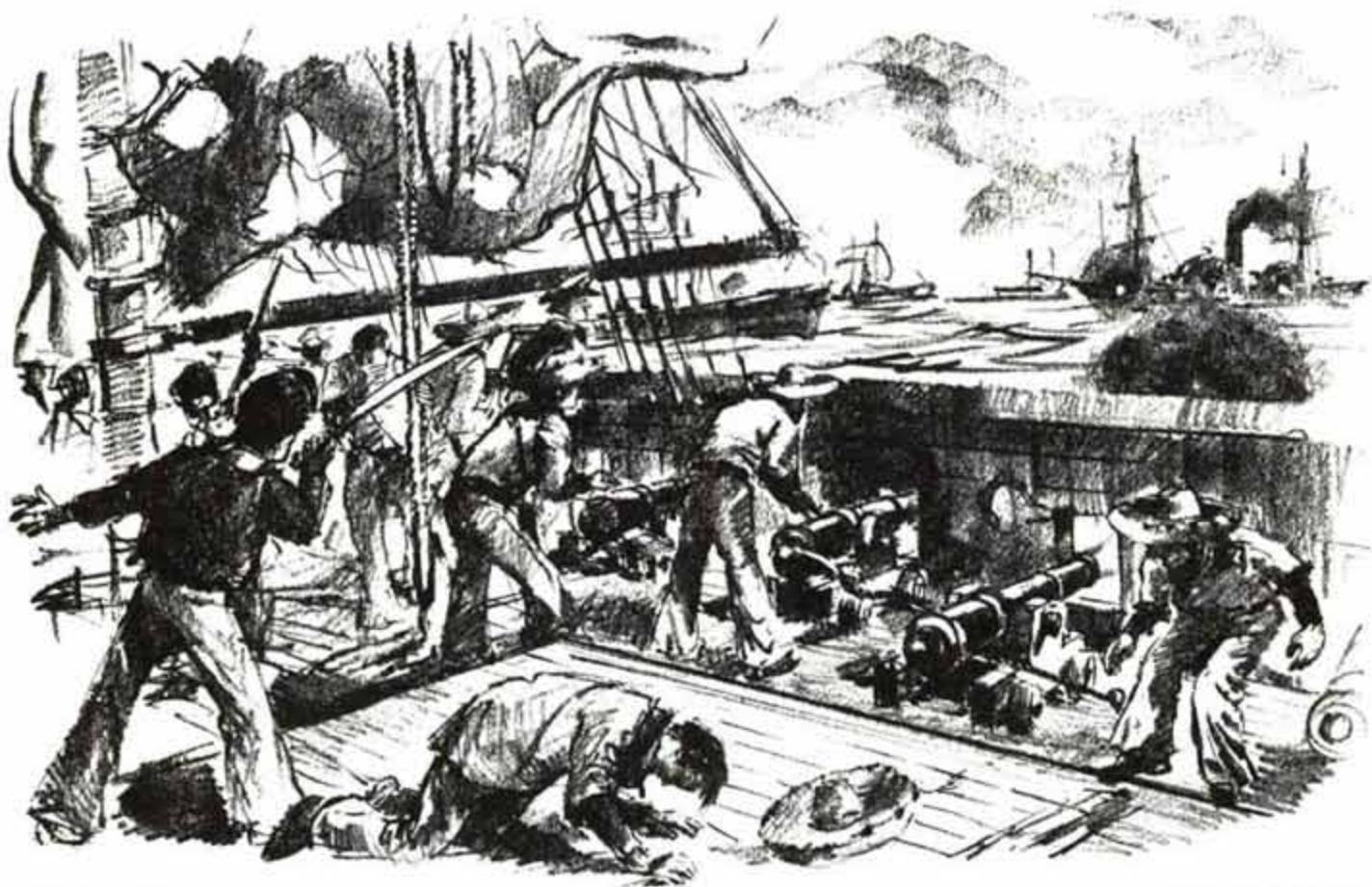
High ranking officers had gone ashore. Fearing desertions, they left orders that the crew be kept aboard. As might be expected, this brought on more than the usual amount of growling and grumbling in the forecabin.

Mutiny began to bud when, somehow, a few bottles of liquor were smuggled aboard, no doubt by someone less interested in the good of the ship than in turning a fast dollar. Fired with liquor, conspirators worked themselves quickly into an ugly mood. Marine Sergeant Seymour Oswald approached Lt. M. H. Dearborn and demanded shore leave for himself and his friends. Dearborn refused, and a bitter



Tribute from Tobasco

by E. M. Schiweitz



Battle off Yucatan

by E. M. Schiwelt

argument began. Lt. Charles Fuller, the *San Antonio's* ranking officer then on board, came up from below to investigate the trouble.

Fuller decided (unwisely, as it turned out) to nip what appeared to be incipient riot by turning out the marines under arms, detailing Sgt. Oswald to issue weapons. The psychology of placing Oswald in position to quell trouble he had been instrumental in starting should have worked—but it didn't. When he had the chance, Oswald issued arms not only to the marine guard, but also to his cronies. Into his own belt he thrust a pistol and a tomahawk.

Approaching Lt. Fuller as if to report that the guard was armed, Oswald suddenly struck viciously at the officer with his tomahawk, but missed. Out came Fuller's pistol, and a wild fight took place on deck. When the smoke cleared away, Fuller lay dead, two midshipmen were seriously wounded, and Dearborn had suffered the embarrassment of being knocked down the hatch and locked in.

Oswald and his mutineers lowered a boat and made a run for it. They had a short-lived "freedom." Cries from the wounded and imprisoned officers brought help from the nearby U. S. Revenue Cutter *Jackson*, which caught and returned some of the mutineers. Others were rounded up in New Orleans, where they spent a long time enjoying the hospitality of the local jail.

Mutineers Sentenced

When word of the mutiny reached Commodore Moore, he vowed to "mete out to the rascals the uttermost penalties of

the law." How well he kept his word is described, in an eyewitness account, by Midshipman Alfred Walke, who kept a journal written in clear, flowing script. Walke's journal, which reposes in the Texas State Archives at Austin, describes the sentencing of mutineers as it took place aboard the *Austin* in 1843:

"On board the *Austin*, April 21st, 1843: During the night of the 20th, the brig (*Wharton*) parted company with us . . . At 10:30 a.m. called all hands to witness sentence of court martial in the case of the mutineers of the Texas schooner of war *San Antonio*. When the Articles of War were read, the charges and specifications of charges also read against Frederick Shepperd (late boatswain of the *San Antonio*), who was acquitted and released, John Williams (seaman) who was not guilty of the 1st and 2nd charges but guilty of the 3rd but recommended to mercy and was pardoned and released from confinement, & William Barrington (seaman) who was guilty but in consideration of his informing Mr. Dearborn (Lt. on board the *San Antonio*) at the last moment that a mutiny was to take place his sentence was 100 lashes with the cats and told he would have it inflicted on him the next day at meridian. The charges were Mutiny, Murder or an attempt to Murder, and Desertion.

"April 25th, 1843: . . . At 11:30 called all hands to witness sentence of court martial in case of schooner *San Antonio* . . . against Edward Keenan who was guilty of the 3rd charge and punished immediately with 100 lashes with the cats & released and Antonio Landois (Marine), Wm. Simpson (Cpl., Marines), Isaac Allen & James Hudgins

(seaman) who were found guilty of all the charges and sentenced to be hung at the fore yardarm & given until meridian next day to prepare to die when the crew was piped down & the prisoners were secured on the quarter deck abaft No. 9 gun.

"April 26, 1843: . . . At 11:45 called all hands to execute sentence of court martial when they were addressed by Commodore Moore on the subject of mutiny. At 12:00 the prisoners were carried forward & placed upon the scaffold. After addressing the crew the ropes were placed around their necks. Until this time they appeared to believe they would be pardoned and did not evince much fear, but now the truth flashed upon them and they knew they had to pay the penalty of their crimes and commenced praying eagerly and piteously for pardon. At 12:30 the signal gun was fired & the four prisoners run up to the fore yard.

"April 27th, 1843: At 1:30 p.m. lowered the prisoners down & gave them . . . to prepare for burial. At 1:40 filled away. At 2:30 laid the main topsail to the mast and called all hands to bury the dead and after reading the funeral service over them their earthly remains were committed to the deep . . ."

Two of the leading mutineers were not aboard the *Austin* when sentence was carried out. Seymour Oswald, the mutinous sergeant, had escaped before the party was surrendered to Moore. Benjamin Pompilly had died in prison, confessing on his death-bed that it was he who had killed Lt. Fuller. Shepperd's (or Shepherd's) testimony during the court martial developed that the mutineers had plotted to seize the *San Antonio* and sell her to Mexico. Shepperd, though he escaped death by hanging, had not long to live. He was killed three weeks later by a shell fired in an engagement off Yucatan from either the *Montezuma* or the *Guadalupe*.

The Last Sea Battles

April 30, 1843, found the Mexican and Texan navies locked in the first major naval battle since the Texas Revolution. (War had broken out again between Mexico and Yucatan, and the Texas Navy had been rented again to Yucatan.) On that day, Moore, joined by a few tiny vessels of the Yucatecan flotilla, came upon the entire Mexican fleet, less one armed steamer. Commanding the Mexican warships *Guadalupe* and *Montezuma* were a couple of former officers of the British Navy, captains Charlewood and Cleveland.

A more cautious commander would have thought twice before closing with the formidable Mexican fleet, but not the stout-hearted Moore. Badly out-gunned (some of the enemy mounted 68-pounders, as opposed to the 24-pounders that were the heaviest guns in Moore's fleet), and with his ships manned by no more than half their full war strength, Moore closed and began a running brush with the Mexicans.

The enemy withdrew for a time, but bore down again later in the day. Ships drew close together and withering broadsides were exchanged. The *Austin* received a 68-pound shot which narrowly missed killing Commodore Moore. A shot received by the *Wharton* caused the only Texan casualties—two killed, four wounded.

It was learned later that the enemy casualties included Capt. Cleveland and 14 men killed aboard the *Montezuma*, with 30 men wounded. The *Guadalupe* had seven men killed



and several wounded.

Shortly before noon, the squadrons had become so separated that firing became ineffective. With a parting shot or two, the fleets parted, Moore and his fleet continuing on to Campeche.

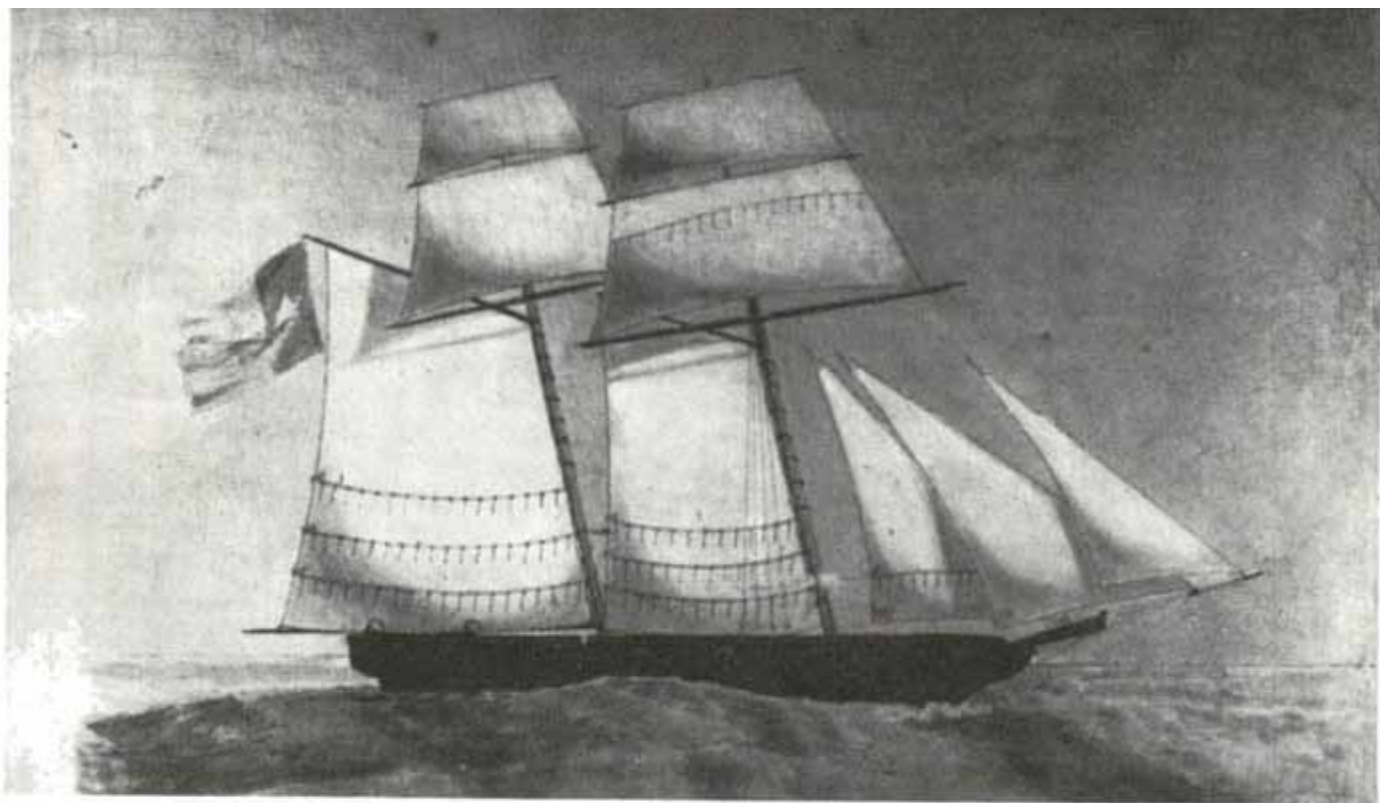
Two weeks later, Moore and the Mexicans were at it again. On May 16, the *Austin* and *Wharton*, with the small Yucatecan flotilla, set out to meet the enemy. Before noon that day, the two Texan warships were exchanging fire with the *Montezuma* and the *Guadalupe*, while lesser craft circled and fought in lesser orbits of battle.

In a 14-mile running fight, the *Austin* received so many hits in her rigging from the giant 68-pounders of the enemy that Moore was unable to close with the Mexicans. He had at one time, however, a chance to place his ship between the two principal enemy craft and give both a good blasting from his port and starboard batteries.

With his ship's rigging badly riddled, Moore had to turn back to Campeche, taking the *Wharton* with him. Both sides claimed a victory. Casualties aboard the *Wharton* were two men killed when a gun vent was not stopped properly, and none wounded. The *Austin* lost three killed, six severely wounded, and 17 slightly wounded. It was learned later from an Englishman who deserted the *Guadalupe* that his ship, completely riddled, had suffered 47 killed, 32 so wounded as to require amputation, and 64 badly wounded. The *Montezuma*, heavily damaged herself, lost 40 men killed or wounded.

Battle Witness

An interesting account of the second major battle off Yucatan is told in the journal of Midshipman George F.



The Schooner San Antonio

from an old drawing

Fuller, aboard the flagship *Austin*:

"A curious experience is that which comes by being shot at from a long distance. One sees the flash of the gun, then hears the whistling of the ball, and then the report, the ball out-traveling the sound.

"After a little study of the coming balls one could determine very nearly where they were going to strike. Two of them I shall always remember. Of the first one I said, 'This is going to pick a man from my gun's crew.' It struck just under the port between wind and water. As it was jammed between two of the timbers it was found impossible to drive home a shot plug.

"The other shot which announced its intention to become intimate struck the deck of the topgallant forecastle directly over my head (for I was at gun No. 1) and tip-tip-tipped overboard, simply denting the planks. Walker, who was master's mate of the forecastle, looked over, and with his

peculiar lisp, exclaimed, 'Fuller, that was devilish close.' "

End of the Navy

When the last shot was fired in the second engagement off Yucatan, the Texas Navy had engaged the enemy in mortal combat for the last time. The governments of Mexico and Yucatan, both tired and their treasuries emptied by the long struggle, made their peace. The Texas Navy sailed back to home ports and Commodore Moore for the next many months had a fight on his hands of a more personal nature. Besides being faced with a number of charges such as disobedience, neglect of duty, and misappropriation of funds, Moore was dishonorably discharged and relieved of command. Subsequent trials, however, cleared him of all charges.

As for the gallant Texas Navy, it found a permanent berth when it was absorbed in June, 1846, into the Navy of the United States.

