



# Invincible

Newsletter  
2023

## HOLIDAY WISHES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Texas Navy Association Admirals, Members, Families and Friends,

I hope that each of y'all had a wonderful Thanksgiving Holiday and that y'all are all preparing to remember celebrating the Birth of Our Lord, Jesus Christ! I also hope that each of y'all created wonderful lasting memories with your Family & Friends during your Thanksgiving Holiday and, I hope that y'all will also create holy & spiritual long lasting wonderful Christmas Celebration memories with your Family & Friends!

As we approach the year end of 2023 and we are making planning for the first quarter Board of Directors meeting in 2024. This meeting is scheduled for January 13th in Galveston. This meeting will be focused on the annual transition, adjustments and reaffirmation of leadership positions on the Executive Committee. It has been the tradition of the President's position to rotate every 2 years, which brings my two year traditional term to fulfillment and time to transition to the Advisory Board position of that of Past President at this coming January meeting.

I must say that I am very pleased to have been granted

the opportunity to serve the Texas Navy Association as President. It has been a great honor to have worked so closely with y'all to help Promote and Preserve the History of the Texas Navy! I still plan to be an active member and offer my full support as best as I can.

I am also very pleased to inform y'all of the potential transition of Admiral Scott Powell, our current Vice President, to the office of President at the Board meeting of January 13, 2024. Admiral Powell has been a tremendous help and support not only to myself but the entire Executive Committee as well as the Board of Directors. Admiral Powell has a tremendous amount of experience in many aspects of his professional career all of which will be useful and beneficial to the Texas Navy Association! I trust this transition will occur at the Board of Directors meeting for 2024 to be held on January 13th in Galveston.

Very Respectfully,  
Admiral David F. Wetzel, President

## **MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW!**

**The Texas Navy Association's 1st Quarter Board of Directors Meeting is scheduled for 13th January 2024, and has been arranged to meet (In person) at the Rosenberg Library (Fox Room). The Rosenberg Library address is: 2310 Sealy Ave., Galveston, TX 77550.**

**Phone # (409) 763-8854.**

**This meeting will commence @ 1:00pm and will continue until 4:00pm.**

**Following this meeting, the Texas Navy Association has made dinner reservations at Gaido's Seafood Restaurant. Gaido's address is: 3828 Seawall Blvd., Galveston, TX 77550. Phone # (409) 761-5500. Cost of this dinner is "Dutch Treat."**

## HOLIDAY GREETING

from the desk of TNA Vice President

Admiral Scott Powell



**A**s we approach the close of 2023, I want to extend best holiday wishes from myself and my family. Thanksgiving brought families together and allowed time for reflection on the building of our great Nation, a Nation that without the Texas Navy would not be what it is today. The TNA is charged with the protecting and preserving the Texian and Texas Navy history to the best of our ability through research, presentation and archiving for current and future generations to understand and enjoy.

With the approach of the New Year, I look back on my time as Vice President working in a support role and meeting many of our members

and friends of the TNA. I have had the pleasure of participating in the recognition of newly commissioned Admirals, working to expand our ranks with additional Commodores and Associate members who hold the same passions as all members in the TNA and planning for the next steps in the exciting future of the TNA including participating in the inauguration of the newest Squadron associated with the TNA located in Matagorda. We, as a whole, have identified the most important paths to anchor the future of the TNA by mission alignment and Membership desires. I have enjoyed engaging in positive and meaningful Member discussions and exploring various methods for improving and

growing the TNA such as has been clearly shown by the dedication and final results of the production of our video collections that help to tell the historic contributions achieved. What a great year!

As we quickly approach the Christmas and New Year holiday season it brings home the realization of just how short each passing year is. Each and every Member of the TNA deserves to be recognized for their collective contribution that makes the TNA a great association worthy of the time and effort that we all put forth. I realize it's not easy balancing personal priorities and time requirements yet we still find

the time to support both the TNA and our local Squadrons! Thank You!

May you and your families have a safe and joyful Christmas and New Year.

As I remember the many Christmases that I have personally spend at sea and isolated from family and friends, it makes me think about the hardships of our original sailors of the Texian Navy ships so I have included the following poem describing what it was like at Christmas for sailors of the 1800's along with a simple Christmas treat recipe from 1845. Enjoy and may you enjoy the many blessing of the coming year.

### Christmas at Sea

*By: Robert Louis Stevenson 1850 – 1894 \*Available in the public domain\**

The sheets were frozen hard, and they cut the naked hand;  
The decks were like a slide, where a seaman scarce could stand;  
The wind was a nor'wester, blowing squally off the sea;  
And cliffs and spouting breakers were the only things a-lee.

They heard the surf a-roaring before the break of day;  
But 'twas only with the peep of light we saw how ill we lay.  
We tumbled every hand on deck instanter, with a shout,  
And we gave her the maintops'l, and stood by to go about.

All day we tacked and tacked between the South Head and the North;  
All day we hauled the frozen sheets, and got no further forth;  
All day as cold as charity, in bitter pain and dread,  
For very life and nature we tacked from head to head.

We gave the South a wider berth, for there the tide-race roared;  
But every tack we made we brought the North Head close aboard:  
So's we saw the cliffs and houses, and the breakers running high,  
And the coastguard in his garden, with his glass against his eye.

The frost was on the village roofs as white as ocean foam;  
The good red fires were burning bright in 'long-shore home;  
The windows sparkled clear, and the chimneys volleyed out;  
And I vow we sniffed the victuals as the vessel went about.

The bells upon the church were rung with a mighty jovial cheer;  
For it's just that I should tell you how (of all days in the year)  
This day of our adversity was blessed Christmas morn,  
And the house above the coastguard's was the house where I was born.

O well I saw the pleasant room, the pleasant faces there,  
My mother's silver spectacles, my father's silver hair;  
And well I saw the firelight, like a flight of homely elves,  
Go dancing round the china-plates that stand upon the shelves.

And well I knew the talk they had, the talk that was of me,  
Of the shadow on the household and the son that went to sea;  
And O the wicked fool I seemed, in every kind of way,  
To be here and hauling frozen ropes on blessed Christmas Day.

They lit the high sea-light, and the dark began to fall.  
"All hands to loose topgallant sails," I heard the captain call.  
"By the Lord, she'll never stand it," our first mate Jackson, cried.  
...It's the one way or the other, Mr. Jackson," he replied.

She staggered to her bearings, but the sails were new and good,  
And the ship smelt up to windward just as though she understood.  
As the winter's day was ending, in the entry of the night,  
We cleared the weary headland, and passed below the light.

And they heaved a mighty breath, every soul on board but me,  
As they saw her nose again pointing handsome out to sea;  
But all that I could think of, in the darkness and the cold,  
Was just that I was leaving home and my folks were growing old.

## [1845] Christmas Cookies

Take one pound and a half of flour, three quarters of a pound of sugar, half a pound of butter, half a cup of milk, and two spoonfuls of caraway seeds; melt the butter before you put it in. It is rather difficult to knead, but it can be done. Roll it out and cut it in hearts and diamonds, and bake it on buttered tins."

---*New England Economical Housekeeper and Family Receipt Book*, Mrs. E. A.

Howland [E.P. Walton:Montpelier]



# THE CASTAWAYS AT CHRISTMAS

By Andy Hall

At the end of October 1840 the Texian schooner SAN JACINTO was caught in a gale while at anchor in the Arcas (now Cayos Arcas), a tiny grouping of sand islands in the Bay of Campeche that the Texian Navy used as a staging and resupply station while operating in the southern Gulf of Mexico. Despite the heroic efforts of her First Lieutenant, Alfred Gray, SAN JACINTO went hard aground on the rocks, holed below the waterline, and heeled over on her starboard side. By the time Commodore Moore arrived with AUSTIN two days later, Lieutenant Gray had gotten SAN JACINTO's crew ashore safely, along with much of the ship's stores and gear. But the schooner herself remained stranded and full of water.

Moore set to work with all available men from both AUSTIN and SAN JACINTO to attempt a salvage of the schooner. With great effort and ingenuity, they managed to haul SAN JACINTO over on her other side, getting the damaged bow above the water and making a thorough inspection. They got the schooner pumped out and re-floated, although additional materials would be needed to make SAN JACINTO seaworthy. Moore, who at the time was

trying to coordinate a delicate alliance with the rebels in Tabasco, sailed again on November 6 after leaving water, flour, and other supplies for a small group of SAN JACINTO's crew who remained behind.

Moore was finally able to return to the Arcas just after New Year's Day 1841, only to learn that another recent storm had finally sunk the disabled SAN JACINTO. But as historian Jonathan W. Jordan noted, the men left temporarily stranded there remained "in surprisingly fine spirits," perhaps because of, well, spirits. To celebrate Christmas 1840 on their little island, Midshipman Alfred Walke of San Jacinto later wrote that the men had combined seagulls' eggs, whiskey, and other stores to concoct a suitable libation for the season. "Spent this day very pleasantly indeed, quite a Paradise in the Dear Arcas. I shall never forget it. At 3 Oc'k set down o'er a kid of very good Egg Nogg. Drank all my absent friends healths and retired at 10.30 in a perfect state of happiness. Harrah for the Arcas!"

Walke

Schooner San Jacinto  
Galveston 19<sup>th</sup> May 1840:  
Received from J. Stephens Purser Party  
three Dollars in account of pay due me  
for services in the Navy as Midshipman  
previous to 31<sup>st</sup> March 1840  
Alfred Walke

Pay receipt signed by Midshipman Alfred Walke for service aboard the Texian schooner SAN JACINTO, dated 19 May 1840. Texas Adjutant General Files.

Sources:

Jonathan W. Jordan, *Lone Star Navy: Texas, the Fight for the Gulf of Mexico, and the Shaping of the American West* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2006).

Tom Henderson Wells, *Commodore Moore and the Texas Navy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1960).

## HAWKINS SQUADRON

### AT TALL SHIPS GALVESTON 2023

The year 2023 was an active one for the Charles E. Hawkins Squadron in Galveston. One notable event was Tall Ships Galveston 2023, organized by the Galveston Historical Foundation on April 13-16. Several Hawkins Squadron members served as volunteers during the festival, including Adms. Dick Martin, Scott Dick, and Andy Hall.

The festival was also an opportunity to present Hawkins Fleet Commissions to several of the visiting vessels. Ships presented with Hawkins fleet commissions included ERNESTINA MORRISSY (1894), the NOAA Research Vessel THOMAS JEFFERSON, and (in conjunction with the Sam Houston Squadron from Lakewood Yacht Club) PRIDE OF BALTIMORE II. Presentations included a framed commissioning certificate and an 1836 Texas Navy Ensign. A Texas Navy Ensign was also presented to the master of NAO TRINIDAD; that vessel had previously been inducted into the Hawkins Fleet while sailing under the name SANTA MARIA in April 2021. (Photos on next page)



*Left Image - Presentation to Lieutenant Commander Jim Europe, Commanding Officer of the NOAA Research Vessel THOMAS JEFFERSON, by (l. to r.) Adms. Paula Morris, Dick Martin, Chester Barnes, and Bill Rouse.*

*Right Image - Texas Navy Ensign flying aboard NAO TRINIDAD at Tall Ships Galveston 2023.*





## DIDJA KNOW?

As many TNA members know, 2023 marked the 75th anniversary of the battleship TEXAS (BB-35) being presented to the State of Texas, and Governor Jester's designation of the ship as flagship of the Texas Navy.

Lots of folks also know that former U.S. Pacific Fleet Commander and Chief of Naval Operations Chester Nimitz, himself a native Texan, helped preside over the ceremony at the San Jacinto Battleground on April 21, 1948. But did you know that for the occasion Fleet Admiral Nimitz wore an original Texas Navy button on his uniform jacket? He did.



Admiral of the Fleet Chester W. Nimitz (r.), with Assistant Secretary of the Navy Mark Andrews (c.) and an unidentified U.S. Navy officer at the presentation ceremony aboard USS TEXAS, April 21, 1948. U.S. Naval Historical Center photo.



Original Scovill-manufactured Texas Navy button worn by Admiral of the Fleet Chester W. Nimitz during ceremonies for the transfer of USS TEXAS to the State of Texas for use as a museum, April 1948. U.S. Naval Historical Center photo.



Merry Christmas  
and  
Happy Holidays to All!

# 2024 QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER PUBLICATIONS

*Submissions and articles due date*

|                |                 |                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>January</b> | <b>February</b> | <b>March</b><br><i>All articles and submissions must be in no later than the 14th.<br/>Newsletter to be published no later than the 29th.</i>     |
| <b>April</b>   | <b>May</b>      | <b>June</b><br><i>All articles and submissions must be in no later than the 13th.<br/>Newsletter to be published no later than the 28th.</i>      |
| <b>July</b>    | <b>August</b>   | <b>September</b><br><i>All articles and submissions must be in no later than the 16th.<br/>Newsletter to be published no later than the 26th.</i> |
| <b>October</b> | <b>November</b> | <b>December</b><br><i>All articles and submissions must be in no later than the 16th.<br/>Newsletter to be published no later than the 21th.</i>  |