

# The Invincible

The Texas Navy Association Newsletter



## From the Helm by TNA President- Adm Jerry Patterson

Texas Navy Association Members,

I have news to share, all of it good. First, let me wish all hands a belated Merry Christmas and Happy, as well as prosperous, New Year.

It is our goal to make 2017 one of the most productive, rewarding, and entertaining years in the 43 year history of your Texas Navy Association.

We intend to grow the reach of the TNA outside of the coastal areas of Texas. The Texas Navy was homeported in Galveston during its 10 year existence and our quarterly board meetings are usually held at the historic Rosenberg Library in that city, not only because of the historic connection, but because the majority of our directors live nearby and we can easily make a quorum. Now that we've amended the bylaws to slightly reduce the number needed for a quorum, we were able to have our January 14th quarterly TNA BoD meeting in Austin. Those who attended were able to view firsthand one of our

sponsored projects, the Texas Navy exhibit at the Texas Military Forces Museum at Camp Mabry. Your TNA has contributed approximately \$20k to the exhibit.

It is my intention to have one of our remaining CY 2017 BoD meetings in the DFW area.

The TNA sponsored a 3 man Texas team in the currently ongoing "Race the Atlantic" ocean rowing race and we commissioned their rowing vessel "Anne" as an honorary ship in the Texas Navy. As I write this, Anne and her crew (all of whom are recently commissioned Admirals in the TN) have rowed over 2500 nautical miles across the Atlantic, while flying the Texas Navy ensign. This is likely the first time since 1845 that a vessel of the Texas Navy has been outside the waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

The "History of the Texas Navy" film project, headed up by past president Bill Turner, is progressing well. We have raised over \$100,000 and most of the film footage

is "in the can". Remaining to do are filming several scenes, script writing, narration, editing and selection of many hours of film, and buildout of the large space for the exhibit/movie theatre aboard the U.S.S. Lexington in Corpus Christi.

The effort to locate the flagship of the Texas Navy, The "Invincible", is currently focused on obtaining a search permit from the Texas Historical Commission, and obtaining a matching grant from the Texas Preservation Trust Fund to help fund a magnetometer search of the area where recent research indicate the ship may be located.

Now I have something to ask of you. As you can see above, your Texas Navy Association is fulfilling its' mission, and doing so costs money. Our primary sources of revenue to run your organization, and do the projects mentioned, comes from members dues, ships store sales, and project specific contributions. While the money for the History of the Texas Navy film project is solely from tax deductible contributions



specifically for the film, the \$20,000 funding the Texas Navy exhibit at the Texas Military Forces Museum in Austin came totally from our operating account whose sole source of revenue is dues and ships store sales.

I sincerely ask if you haven't renewed your membership for this year, or even if it's been several years-PLEASE RENEW NOW!

If you have renewed, make a purchase or two from the ships store, and if you've done both, consider making an extra contribution to the TNA. All of this can be initiated at [www.texasnavy.org](http://www.texasnavy.org)

Thank you for all you do to preserve Texas history, and more specifically for all you do to preserve the history of the little known, but heroic, Texas Navy.

Semper Fi,

Jerry Patterson  
President, Texas Navy Association

## “Honor, or Something Like It”

The Turbulent Life of Commodore Charles Hawkins by: [Adm Andy Hall](#)



When the newest squadron in the Texas Navy Association was commissioned in September 2016, it adopted the name of Charles Edward Hawkins, who is generally acknowledged to be the first Commodore of the historical Texas Navy in 1836- 37. With the exception of Edwin Moore, namesake of the TNA squadron in Austin, Charles Hawkins is probably the best-known officer of the Texas Navy, and is hands-down its most colorful and controversial.

Hawkins was born in New York in about 1802, and first was warranted as a Midshipman in the U.S. Navy on March 4, 1818. In July he sailed aboard U.S.S. *Guerriere* on an extended cruise in European waters, that took him first to St. Petersburg in the Baltic on a diplomatic mission, and then to the Mediterranean until *Guerriere's* return to the United States at Norfolk in October 1819. It must have been a singular introduction to the naval life for a young man like Hawkins.

*Guerriere* remained at Norfolk until November 8, 1820, when she was placed “in ordinary” (i.e., in reserve status) there. In late 1820 or early 1821, Hawkins was assigned to the 74-gun ship-of-the-line U.S.S. *Washington*, moored at the Brooklyn Navy Yard in New York. About that same time, on March 8, 1821, Hawkins married a woman named Mary R. DeHart in Manhattan. Whether or not Mary is the same Mrs. Hawkins to whom Charles was married to eight years later in Key West, or under what circumstances their marriage ended, is not clear.

Hawkins' new assignment could not have been more different from his days sailing the Mediterranean two years before. *Washington's* keel had been laid during the War of 1812 but was completed too late to see action in that conflict. Hawkins probably chafed at the dull routine of life spent aboard a stationary, inactive ship, riding to her moorings in harbor for years — “grounding on her own beef



bones,” in the parlance of the day. At one point Hawkins took a year’s furlough, without pay.

Sometime in 1824 Hawkins obtained a coveted berth aboard the new flagship of U.S. West Indies Squadron, U.S.S. *Constellation*, under Captain Lewis Warrington. By early 1825, Hawkins was serving aboard the small, 51-ton schooner *Ferret*, one of the small warships well suited to working close inshore among the bays and reefs of the Caribbean. Unfortunately, his service aboard *Ferret* was short lived — the schooner was blown onto a reef and capsized in a sudden gale near Matanzas, Cuba on February 4, 1825, and the vessel filled with water and began to sink. The crew clung to the wreck all night, before being picked up by U.S.S. *Jackal* the following day; five men had drowned during their ordeal. When he returned to the United States, Hawkins found himself once again assigned to New York, at the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

Warrington’s predecessor in command of the West Indies Squadron, David Porter, had been relieved after he had landed troops at Fajardo, Puerto Rico, and demanded an apology from local Spanish officials there for a slight made to one of his officers. Porter faced a court-martial, but had considerable sympathy among his fellow naval officers and the trial resulted in an official censure that was largely symbolic. But the injury to his pride at the hands of the U.S. Navy was more than he could bear. He accepted an offer to command the naval forces of the Republic of Mexico, that was continuing its long, drawn-out struggle against its former Spanish rulers.

Hawkins would have known Porter by reputation, and may have met him during his time with the West Indies Squadron. When Porter formally accepted the Mexicans’ offer, Hawkins decided to go with him.

He sailed with Porter for Mexico in the spring of 1826, although he did not officially resign his midshipman’s warrant until October 17 of that year, long after he had entered Mexican service. By the end of the year, Porter had put Hawkins in command of the

schooner *Hermón*.

The little vessel only mounted five guns, but under Hawkins she proved to be one of the most effective and aggressive warships in the Gulf of Mexico. Over the next two years, Hawkins and *Hermón* used Key West — a neutral, American anchorage -- as a base for making raids against Spanish coastal shipping and bringing in captured prizes and cargoes. For American officials there, Hawkins’ activities under the Mexican ensign were a continual, rolling diplomatic and legal crisis. There was an intensely personal dimension to it, as well, as the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida, William Allison McRae, allegedly began having an affair with Hawkins’ wife. Their dispute appeared to culminate in a duel at Key West in February 1829 when Hawkins and McRae exchanged shots, with each man being slightly wounded. But McRae’s illicit liaisons with Mrs. Hawkins allegedly resumed when Hawkins left Key West to make one last trip to Mexico as a commissioned naval officer of that government.

By this time the Mexican government had ceased paying Porter and his officers, and most of them, including Hawkins, resigned their Mexican commissions and returned to the United States. When Hawkins arrived in Key West in May 1829, he not only learned that McRae had again taken up with his wife, but that McRae, who had represented him in previous legal disputes, was now using his knowledge of Hawkins’ business affairs *in representing clients suing Hawkins*. He ambushed McRae, unloading both barrels of a shotgun into the district attorney on a Sunday evening in late May. McRae died a few hours later. Hawkins turned himself in to local authorities who immediately sent him to St. Augustine. Hawkins spent the next eighteen months in custody there before being released. One newspaper reported Hawkins’ killing of McRae with the headline, “Honor, or Something Like It.”

After his release, Hawkins reportedly served as a steamboat captain on the Chattahoochee River, that forms the border between Georgia and Alabama. By the fall of 1835, Hawkins was



in New Orleans, working with the former Mexican General José Antonio *Mexia* in organizing a filibustering expedition to ferment a coup to overthrow the current, centralist Mexican government. Hawkins helped *Mexia* recruit American, French, and German colonists with the promise of settling them in Texas, and only revealed the true intent of the expedition when their vessel, the schooner *Mary Jane*, arrived off Tampico. The attempted coup was a disaster. *Mexia*, Hawkins, and some of the others managed to escape and be rescued by a passing American vessel; the survivors captured by the Mexicans were executed. After this event the Mexican government issued an edict that henceforth all foreign combatants captured on Mexican soil “shall be treated and punished as pirates,” i.e., subject to execution. Santa Anna would later cite this document as justification for his order to shoot Colonel James Fannin and his men at Goliad.

Hawkins landed at Brazoria, where just before Christmas 1835 he offered his services to the provisional Texian government, that sent him on to New Orleans, where commissioners were working to assemble a naval force. The commissioners – Stephen F. Austin, Branch T. Archer, and William H. Wharton – had bought a former U.S. Revenue Cutter, *Ingham*, and renamed her *Independence*.

Through the spring of 1836, Hawkins and *Independence* cruised the Texas coast, making several small captures. After the Battle of San Jacinto in April, the Texian Navy continued to patrol the coast, keeping a close watch in particular on the anchorage at Brazos Santiago near the mouth of the Rio Grande, where a second Mexican invasion force was widely rumored to be in the process assembling. By the winter of 1836-37, Hawkins’ little squadron was badly in need of refit and repair, as well as new recruits. He took both *Independence* and *Liberty* to New Orleans, where he contracted smallpox. He died in New Orleans on February 12, 1837, and was buried with military honors in the Girod Street Cemetery, near the site of the present-day Superdome.

He was only about 34 years old.

Charles Hawkins was a difficult and flawed man who, according to one person who knew him, “put on a great deal of style, and always appeared in naval uniform. He was a handsome man, and fully conscious of the fact.” Terms used to describe Hawkins included “ostentatious,” “haughty,” and “obnoxious.” “Aristocratical arrogance” was another. He had a quick temper with (perhaps) a cruel streak, and on one occasion had his fellow Texian Navy Captain, Jeremiah Brown, arrested and placed in irons. Hawkins’ hard hand extended to his crews, as well; Samuel W. Cushing, who served aboard the Texian schooner *Liberty*, recalled “the yells of the poor fellows undergoing the punishment of the cat-o’-nine-tails on board of the *Independence*. . . which were heard daily” in March 1836, during Hawkins’ command.

And yet, for all his limitations and personal demons, Hawkins was a fighter. He fought pirates in the Caribbean, he fought the Spanish, and he fought the Mexicans, all with much the same vigor that he brought to bear against his personal enemies. He lived hard, and probably did more living in his thirty-four years than most men given twice that long on this earth. Driven inexorably to toward conflict and adventure, Charles Hawkins found his way to Texas in a moment when the fledgling Republic – in fact, not yet a Republic – needed a man of just his sort. When Texas needed him, Charles Hawkins was there.

Following photos provided by  
Admiral Andy Hall



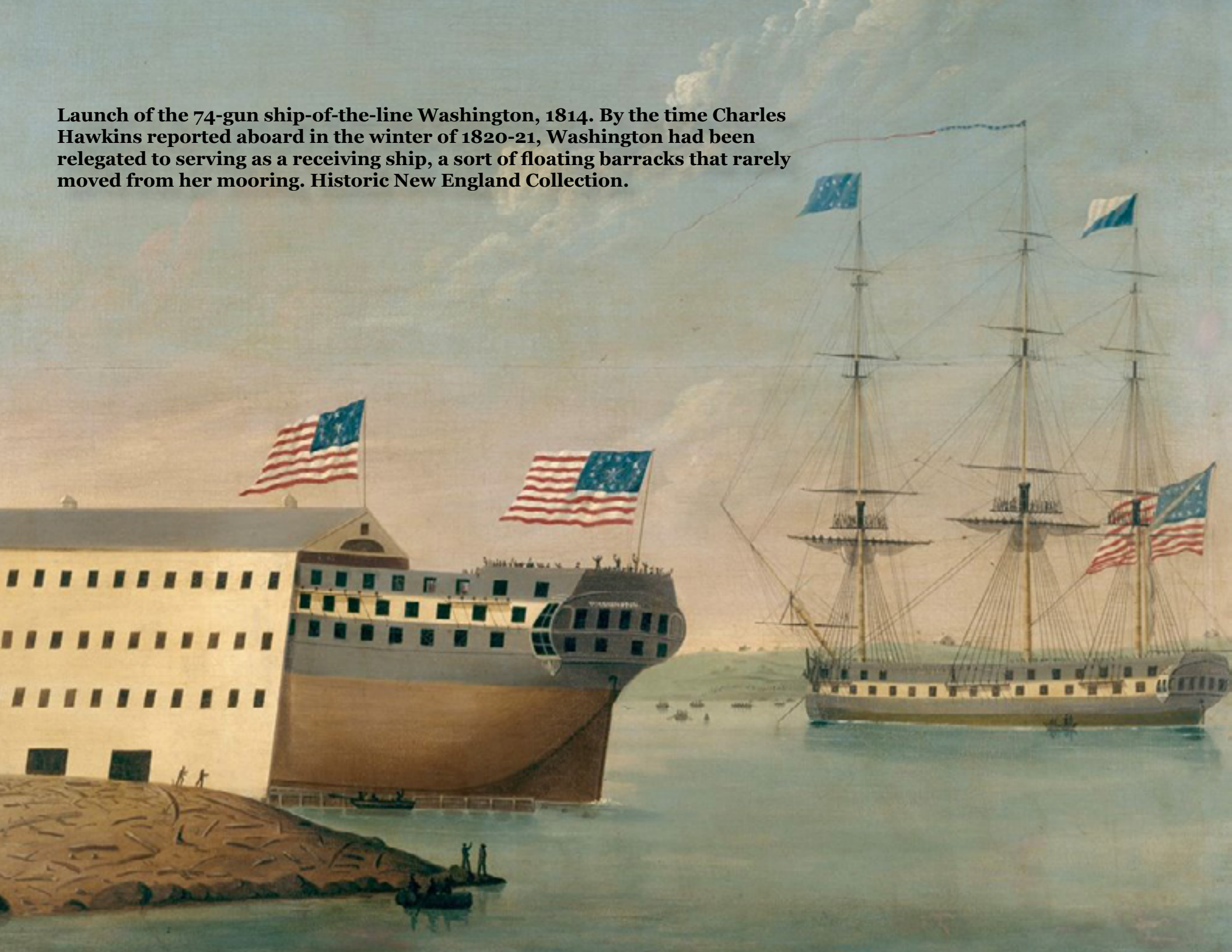


In the 1820s, the only prospect for action for an ambitious American naval officer was an assignment to the U.S. West Indies Squadron, that was active in suppressing piracy around Cuba, Hispaniola and Puerto Rico. Hawkins' brief time there gave him an introduction to naval combat and small-ship warfare that would guide the rest of his naval career. Here the U.S. schooner Grampus (r.) engages the pirate brig Palmyra in 1822, prior to Hawkins' tenure. Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly, January 1890.





**Launch of the 74-gun ship-of-the-line Washington, 1814. By the time Charles Hawkins reported aboard in the winter of 1820-21, Washington had been relegated to serving as a receiving ship, a sort of floating barracks that rarely moved from her mooring. Historic New England Collection.**





**Commodore David Porter, a hero of the War of 1812, resigned from the U.S. Navy in 1825 and accepted an offer to command the Mexican navy. Porter took several American naval officers with him, including Hawkins, who Porter soon put in command of the schooner Hermón. U.S. Naval Academy Museum, Annapolis, Maryland.**



INTERESTING ACCOUNT

OF THE

LIFE AND ADVENTURES

OF ONE OF THOSE

**Unfortunate Men,**

WHO WAS

**SHOT AT TAMPICO,**

With Twenty-Seven of his Companions,

DECEMBER 14th, 1835,

WITH A LIST OF ALL THEIR NAMES,

TOGETHER WITH THE

LETTERS

*Which were Written by the Sufferers.*

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"The moving accident is not my trade;  
To freeze the blood I have no ready arts;  
'Tis my delight alone in summer's shade  
To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts."

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By the fall of 1835, Hawkins was in New Orleans, helping exiled Mexican General José Antonio Mexia organize a filibustering expedition to overthrow the centralist Mexican government. Many of those Hawkins helped recruit were told that they were going to settle in Texas, and did not know the nature of the expedition until they arrived at Tampico. Hawkins and Mexia escaped, but more than 20 survivors were captured and executed.



**The last eighteen months of Hawkins' life were centered in New Orleans, where he helped organize the Tampico expedition, and brought the schooner Independence in the winter of 1836-37 for refit. He died there of smallpox in February 1837, and was buried at the Girod Street Cemetery. Library of Congress.**





# Houston-area rowboat crew completes 49-day voyage across Atlantic

By Harvey Rice, Houston Chronicle | February 2, 2017 | Updated: February 3, 2017 10:49am



Photo: Harvey Rice

Mike Watson, David Alviar and Brian Krauskopf at Clear Lake on their custom rowboat Anne.

**GALVESTON** - The three-member crew of Texans on the rowboat Anne had slogged 44 days through nearly 3,000 miles of the vast Atlantic Ocean when the freak wave struck from the side, nearly capsizing the vessel.

The wave hit when the crew was least prepared, just as it changed shifts, nearly tossing 32-year-old Michael Matson of Missouri City into the sea. Matson saved himself by grabbing the jackstay, but his foot caught a line and gave his ankle a savage twist.

The boat rolled 90 degrees, sending loose gear and provisions overboard before the crew counterbalanced it with their weight. The close call left Matson unable to row, shifting the burden of propelling the craft to Brian Krauskopf, 38, and David Alviar, 31, both of Houston.



Rowers David Alviar, Brian Krauskopf and Mike Matson (Left to right) celebrate their arrival.

Their hands chafed and raw, their backsides covered with sores from the constant rocking of the rowing motion, they despaired of catching the boat ahead in the Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge. "It put a funk on the push and we kind of lost morale," Krauskopf said.

Then they saw whales.

"Five days to go and we saw those whales and it was just a special moment and it got our morale back up," Krauskopf said. "It helped us put things in perspective."

The Anne crossed the finish line at about 9:30 p.m. Wednesday, with Krauskopf and Alviar popping red flares and Matson holding the U.S. flag aloft. They had won the three-person crew division and become the first triple-crewed boat to complete the race.





They also became the first Texans to finish, having been dubbed admirals in the Texas Navy before the race by the Texas Navy Association.

The Anne completed the voyage in 49 days, 14 hours and 4 minutes, achieving the crew's goal of crossing in under 50 days.

The crew set out Dec. 14 from San Sebastian de La Gomera on the island of Santa Cruz de Tenerife in the Canary Islands, off the coast of North Africa.

Calling themselves the American Oarsmen, the crew ended their voyage at Nelson's Dockyard English Harbour, Antigua and Barbuda.

The Anne finished fourth out of 12 boats.

Matson, a U.S. Naval Academy graduate and crew captain, said the crew rowed in two-hour shifts. He rowed alone on one shift and the other two rowed and slept at the same time for the entire voyage.

The voyage was toughest on Krauskopf and Alviar because of their close proximity on the 22-foot craft, built for two.

"Eventually you are going to grind and find some friction point," Alviar said. Yet they always were able to put their differences aside. "It's just realizing you can always work through a problem," he said.

The other mental challenge was the tedium. "It was definitely one of the hardest things I've been through, not only as a physical challenge but just as much mental," Krauskopf said.

The Anne ran into a storm early on, but for Krauskopf and Alviar, the worst part of the trip was the misery from the unexpected cold. Even though they were in warm latitudes, they were soaked by intermittent rain, then chilled by the wind. At times it was

so bad that Krauskopf and Alviar abandoned the oars and huddled toward the bow. "We had a few rainy nights and storms so cold and debilitating you would not be able to row," Alviar said.

Said Krauskopf, "You had your smoldering hot days followed by the darkest, coldest days you could imagine."

Matson spoke with his crewmates at shift changes, but spent most of the day alone. "I had waterproof headphones, podcasts and books on tape," he said.

At the end of each shift they were exhausted and sleep came easily.

I think the most difficult for all of us was just sitting," Matson said. "Sitting 12 hours a day, the bottom of your hip joint rubbing into the seat. You get sores on your backside. One of the toughest things was just getting out of bed and sitting."

The suffering was counterbalanced by the moments of beauty as they encountered giant sea turtles, dolphins and, on three occasions, whales.

The gazed in wonder at the sunrises and sunsets, coal-black nights filled with more stars than they had ever seen and a sea at times as placid as a pond. Once during a squall, the clouds cut off every beam of light.

"It was the blackest I've ever seen in my life," Matson said. "That was pretty amazing."

Krauskopf said there were so many moments of beauty he could not recall them all.

"It was amazing that we got to see the things we did," he said. When the Anne finally hove into the dock at English Harbour, the three crewmates could barely walk as they struggled onto the dock.



Matson's wife, Sami, his daughter Morgan, 7, and his son Cooper, 6, were waiting for him. He wobbled up to Morgan like a drunken sailer and took her in his arms, fulfilling his promise to give her his first hug.

Alviar made his way unsteadily to his boyfriend, Stanley Lewis, dropped to one knee, and proposed. Then he slipped onto Lewis's finger a ring made of carbon fiber and silver, symbolizing the carbon fiber used in paddles and rowboats that are a part of both of their lives.

There was no one to greet Krauskopf and he tottered to a barricade holding back onlookers. One of them handed him a cold beer, a pleasure he had been fantasizing about during the entire voyage.

All three say they are glad they made the passage, but are unlikely to repeat the experience, at least not in the Atlantic.



Harvey Rice  
Galveston Bureau Reporter, Houston Chronicle

## New Admirals!



Congratulations to Robin Sabo (r.) on her recent commission as an Admiral in the Texas Navy. Adm. Sabo is the Secondary Social Studies Coordinator at Clear Creek ISD, and former President of the Texas Social Studies Supervisor's Association. Shown presenting her commission on January 5, 2017 are (c.) Adm. Richard B. Hatch, Vice President of the Texas Navy Association, and (l.) Adm. Chester F. Barnes II, Commander of the Hawkins Squadron. Publish by: Adm Andy Hall



One of the TNA's newest members is shown receiving his Admiral commission from (l.) Past President, Admiral Bill Turner. (r.) Admiral Phillip Barnes is Curator of the Texas Maritime Museum, in Rockport. Several items in the museum's Texas Navy collection have been photographed for inclusion in our Texas Navy documentary. Congratulations Admiral Barnes.

Published by: Adm Dick Hatch - TNA Vice-President





# Affiliated Squadrons

## **Charles E. Hawkins Squadron**

If you live in the Galveston or south Houston area and are interested in joining a Squadron you may contact Squadron Commander Chester Barnes at [cfbbarnes2@hotmail.com](mailto:cfbbarnes2@hotmail.com)

## **Chester W. Nimitz Squadron**

If you live in the Dallas area and are interested in joining a Squadron you may contact Squadron Commander Admiral Tim Weiland [e7aviation@att.net](mailto:e7aviation@att.net)

## **Commodore Edwin Ward Moore Squadron**

If you live in the Austin area and are interested in joining a Squadron you may contact Squadron Commander Admiral Admiral Wayne Courreges [wcourreges@icloud.com](mailto:wcourreges@icloud.com)

## **Sam Houston Squadron**

If you are a Texas Navy Admiral and a member of Lakewood Yacht Club or a reciprocal club to Lakewood Yacht Club and are interested in joining the Sam Houston Squadron, please contact the Sam Houston Squadron Commander, Adm Mike DeHart [mikedeht@msn.com](mailto:mikedeht@msn.com)

## **Samuel May Williams Squadron**

If you live in the San Antonio area and are interested in joining a Squadron you may contact Squadron Interim Commander Admiral Amy Jo Baker [amyjobaker@satx.rr.com](mailto:amyjobaker@satx.rr.com)

## **The Mirabeau B. Lamar Squadron**

If you are a Texas Navy Admiral and a member of the Houston Yacht Club and are interested in joining the Mirabeau B. Lamar Squadron, please contact Squadron Commander Admiral Robert Williams [apachenite@aol.com](mailto:apachenite@aol.com)

## **Tom Toby Squadron**

If you live in the Houston area and are interested in joining a Squadron you may contact Squadron Commander Admiral Ron Brown - [ron@ronwbrown.com](mailto:ron@ronwbrown.com)

## **New Squadrons Forming**

A new Squadron is in the beginning stages of forming. If you live in **Corpus Christi** and have an interest in joining please contact Admiral Dick Hatch at [rhatch@texasnavy.com](mailto:rhatch@texasnavy.com)

If you would like a Squadron to form near you please let us know. Contact Admiral Dick Hatch [rhatch@texasnavy.com](mailto:rhatch@texasnavy.com)





# Charles E. Hawkins Squadron

## COMMANDER'S ANNUAL MESSAGE 2016

### GREETINGS:

The year 2016 has been an exciting year for the TNA and especially the Charles E. Hawkins Squadron. From the first time I contacted Admiral Richard Hatch about forming a Galveston squadron through the lunch meeting after the San Jacinto Day ceremony at the Monument Inn restaurant when I agreed to form the squadron, lots has happened in just eight short months.

Having a squadron formed in Galveston made sense for the simple reason that it was the base of operation for the first two Texas Navies. From day one, the TNA Board of Directors, especially Admirals Patterson and Hatch offered assistance in forming the squadron. Special thanks to Admiral Beth Fisher who offered her expertise and contacts to the newly elected officers. A very special “thanks” to Admiral Butch Spafford for his great leadership and dedication. Additional special thanks to Admirals Andy Hall, Stephen Duncan, Dennis Miller, Lawren Hall, Jim Earthman, Bill Rouse, and Commander Brian Hatch.

The quality of officers and members of the Hawkins Squadron is outstanding. We have experts in Texas Navy history, Republic of Texas history, a currency expert, historians and more. Admiral Bill Rouse and wife, Judy, were recently named “Sailors of the Year” by Sailing magazine as voted by their international readership. Admiral Mike Matson and his crew of the Anne are finishing their rowing adventure across the Atlantic Ocean participating in the Talisker Challenge. The superb quality of members is second to none.

As we look forward to this next year, let's review what's on-going and in the planning stages:

1. We established our Lecture Series on Texas Navy history and related topics. The first of this series was a very professional presentation in November by Admiral James Bevill on the “The First Texas Navy”. The second, in January, was a narrative on the life of our own namesake, Commodore Charles E. Hawkins, presented by Admiral Andy Hall. Continuing in this series will be presentations about The Talisker Challenge from Admiral Mike Matson, current TNA projects from various Admirals along with guest speakers.
2. Established a Founding Members program for those members who joined prior to 12/31/16. Each member received a framed certificate stating their joining as a “Founding Member”.
3. Initiating the Texian Navy Day events move to Moody Gardens. Admiral Hatch initially mentioned his grand scope of the event which would require a much larger venue. The event will include a golf tournament, commemorative ceremony, dinner, dance, and silent auction. We are asking all organizations related to Texas History to be a part of this grand event.
4. In 2017, we will kick off a major fund raising event for the TNA. I have been working on a “sustainable” program to raise substantial funds for Hawkins and the TNA. We hope other squadrons will join in with Hawkins to make this effort a big success. Details to follow.
5. Partnering with the Lafitte Society of Galveston to establish an Essay Contest for secondary school students who can participate to win selected prizes including a scholarship. There are still many details to be worked out. Our Squadron has approved this program and will be moving forward in the first quarter of 2017.





6. Continuing our membership growth with our newest Admirals Robin Sabo, Jamie White, and Marisa Hegyesi along with our 100% commitment with the state Texas Navy Association affiliation.

I am looking forward to our next meeting on March 2, 2017, Texas Independence Day. It will feature a presentation by Admiral Mike Matson. He will report on the ANNE and her crew's Talisker Challenge. This event featured three TNA members rowing across the Atlantic Ocean. I encourage each of you to take a guest to each

meeting to introduce them to the rich history of Galveston and the Texas Navy Hawkins Squadron. As always, our meetings are open to the public.

We are looking forward to 2017. It will be an exciting year for the TNA and the Hawkins Squadron.

Admiral Chester F. Barnes ,II  
Commander

Admiral Butch Spafford  
Deputy Commander

## The TNA now has a Speaker's Bureau!



The purpose of the [Speakers Bureau](#) is to promulgate the history of the Texas Navy. The information on how [to request a speaker](#) and lecture material is on the TNA website. At this time, the presentation will be a lecture or video of the general Texas Navy history.

The group or organization wanting to obtain a speaker can go to the TNA website and make the request. There is no fee to obtain a speaker.

Help us get the word out to the various organizations that would like to know about the history of the Texas Navy.

[Admiral Fount McKee](#)  
Chair - Speakers Bureau

## The Texas Navy Association



# Needs You!

Join Now!



# For Your Information

March 1st, 2017, marks the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Sunda Strait, one of World War II's most dramatic and deadly surface battles in the Pacific. The battle "starred" the sister ships, USS Houston and HMAS Perth, which sailed into the narrow waterway believing it was free of enemy ships. Instead, they were met by a Japanese destroyer squadron, and despite a valiant fight, both the USS Houston and HMAS Perth were sunk, each ship losing more than half its crew. The ships' survivors then endured years as POWs, many of them working on the Japanese "death railway" to Burma, and many succumbing to torture, malnutrition, and disease. Their story only came to light only after the surviving POWs were released in the waning days of World War II.

The friendships formed by American and Australian POWs were an important factor not only in the foundation of the Houston-Perth sister city relationship, formed some 35+ years ago, but also in the strengthening of the US-Australian alliance.

Thursday, March 2nd, the Australian National Maritime Museum

(ANMM) will open its exhibition, "Guardians of the Sunda Strait: The Wartime Loss of HMAS Perth and USS Houston," at the Julia Ideson historic library building, 550 McKinney St, Houston, TX 77002, in downtown Houston. The exhibition is comprised of 55 historic documents, photographs and artifacts. The exhibition is open to the public Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, 10 am – 6 pm, Wednesday, 10 am – 8 pm, and Saturday, 10 am – 5 pm, and is free. After closing in Houston June 30, 2017, the exhibition will return to ANMM in Sydney for display, and then travel to Perth.

Saturday, March 4th, at 3:30 pm, the USS Houston Survivors' Association and Next Generation will hold its annual Memorial Service at the USS Houston Monument in Sam Houston Park, 1000 Bagby Street. Other anniversary events include a screening of "Bridge on the River Kwai," the iconic film about POWs and the horrors of building the Burma railway, and a lecture on the marine archaeology and preservation of the wrecks of USS Houston and HMAS Perth, both hosted by the Archaeological Institute of America/Houston at the Houston Museum of Natural Science.

Many thanks to our Ships Store Sponsor!



If you would like to become a Ships Store Sponsor and have your Logo in the upcoming issues of the newsletter with a link to your website, please contact our Marketing Director/ TNA Vice President, Admiral Richard "Dick" Hatch at [richardbhatch@gmail.com](mailto:richardbhatch@gmail.com)



**In Memory Of**

[Commander Thomas J. Hamilton](#)

[Admiral John Vance](#)

*Fair Winds and Following Seas*

