

TEXIAN NAVY DAY

The third Saturday in September of each year is Texian Navy Day. Texans are encouraged to fly their Texas flags and observe the day in remembrance of the Texian Navy and the courage displayed by those at sea who played a vital role in securing and maintaining the independence of Texas.

The Texian Navy was mostly forgotten until 1954, when the Daughters of the Republic of Texas designated recognition and took the idea of state recognition to Governor Alan Shivers. In 1955, Governor Shivers proclaimed September 3 as Texian Navy Day. Governors since have proclaimed recognition of the Texian Navy, and in 2005, Texian Navy Day received permanent recognition by the Texas Legislature, to be observed each year with appropriate ceremonies and activities. Why is Texian Navy Day important? A bit of Texas history can explain.

Three Texas Navies have served Texans since 1835: the first established in November 1835; the second in 1839; and the third, a commemorative organization, in 1958. Though the fleets were very small and the time of service very short, the contributions made by the Texas Navy to the freedom and protection of Texans should not be overlooked.

The First Texas Navy was comprised of four ships: *the Liberty*, *the Independence*, *the Brutus*, and *the Invincible*. They protected the coastline and prevented the Mexican Army from landing soldiers and supplies on Texas soil. Much needed munitions were supplied by the Texan Navy to the Texan Army from captured Mexican vessels. Following Texas' independence on April 21, 1836, the navy continued until mid-1837, by which time all four ships had been lost: one sold, one captured, and two wrecked.

The Second Texas Navy was formally organized in March 1839 when the steamship, *Zavala*, was commissioned. Six new ships arrived to join the *Zavala* between June 1839 and

April 1840: *the San Jacinto, the San Antonio, the San Bernard, the Wharton, the Austin, and the Archer*. They patrolled the Gulf of Mexico for three years, protecting the Texas coastline and dominating the Mexican naval fleet. The Second Texan Navy remained until it was transferred into the United States Navy after annexation.

The Third Texas Navy was established on April 21, 1958, by Governor Price Daniel. He proclaimed the reactivation of the Texas Navy as a patriotic organization and an arm of the civil defense of the State of Texas. Now known as the Texas Navy Association, the organization is devoted to preserving the history of the three Texas Navies.

(Space reserved for: local information about ceremonies or activities for the current year in your area.)

Texian Navy Day is one of twelve Texas Honor Days designated by The Daughters of the Republic of Texas. The D.R.T. is the oldest women's patriotic organization in Texas and is dedicated to the preservation and education of Texas history. For more information, please visit the website at www.drinfo.org

Sources and Links:

The Daughters of the Republic of Texas, Texas Honor Days, www.drinfo.org; Texas Historical Association, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qjt02>; Linda Ericson Devereaux, *The Texas Navy* (Nacogdoches, 1983); Galveston and Texas History Center, Rosenberg Library, <http://www.gthcenter.org>; Stone Fort Chapter History, Stone Fort Chapter, Ancestor Biographies, Daughters of the Republic of Texas, Historical Publications, Inc., Austin, Texas; Samuel Murray Robinson, *A Brief History of the Texas Navies*, (Houston: Sons of the Republic of Texas) <http://www.texasnavy.com/History/TNAHistoricalGeneral.html#>; Texas Navy, Introduction, Texas State Library and Archives, <https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/exhibits/navy/index.html>; Legislative Reference Library of Texas, <http://www.legis.state.tx.us/billlookup/text.aspx?LegSess=79R&Bill=SB318>