

TEXAS HEROES DAY

Honoring Texas Military, Past and Present

The Daughters of the Republic of Texas will recognize Texas military heroes on September 18 with Texas Heroes Day. The DRT has designated the day to honor and preserve the memory of the volunteer soldiers who died defending the Republic of Texas and her independence, and to pay tribute to the men and women of the military, both past and present, who serve Texas. Special emphasis is placed on honoring those of the 1842 Dawson Massacre and Mier Expedition.

September 18 is a day of multiple significance in Texas History. On September 18, 1842, thirty-six volunteer Texan soldiers were killed on the field of battle in the Dawson Massacre. The battle took place near Salado Creek, a few miles northeast of San Antonio, during a second invasion of the Mexican army. Three survivors escaped to tell the story, and fifteen others were taken prisoner by Mexican soldiers and marched to Perote Prison in Veracruz, Mexico. Events which followed led to the failed Mier Expedition, whose fate was determined by the "Black Beans of Death" lottery ordered by Santa Anna. Seventeen volunteer Texas soldiers were executed. In 1847-48, efforts to retrieve the remains of these soldiers was successful and they were returned to Fayette County.

On September 18, 1848, the remains of those who died in the Dawson Massacre, Perote Prison, and others who drew the "Black Beans of Death" in the Mier Expedition were buried at Monument Hill, a site in Fayette County overlooking the Colorado River. Sam Houston and other dignitaries were among more than 1,000 people who attended the ceremony, where the remains were buried with full military honors.

For more than 160 years, descendants of these brave Texans have returned to Monument Hill on the Saturday closest to September 18 to honor these fallen heroes and commemorate the anniversary of September 18 events. Since 2005, Monument Hill State Historic Site in LaGrange has celebrated Texas Heroes Day on the weekend closest to September 18. The annual celebration has grown with the efforts of the Texas Parks personnel, supported by The Daughters of the Republic of

Texas, Monument Hill Chapter, and Sons of the Republic of Texas. Activities during the celebration now include artisan demonstrations, re-enactors, and musicians. The Monument Hill Historic Site is located one mile south of La Grange, Texas near U.S. Highway 77. For more information, call (979) 968-5658 or visit the Texas Parks website: <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/calendar/texas-heroes-day-1>.

Texas Heroes Day is one of twelve Texas Honor Days celebrated by DRT. Others include Mirabeau B. Lamar Day, January 26; Texas Statehood Day, February 19; Texas Independence & Flag Day, March 2; Alamo Heroes Day, March 6; Goliad Heroes Day, March 27; Texas History Month, March 1-31; San Jacinto Day, April 21; Texian Navy Day, 3rd Saturday in September; Gonzales Day, October 2; Stephen F. Austin's Birthday, November 3; and The DRT Founder's Day, November 6. For more information about Texas Honor Days, visit the DRT website: www.drinfo.org.