If ships could talk, the 103-year-old Battleship Texas would say that she's tired. She'd say that she's fought the good fight and that she's ready to give in to the rust that is eating away her life. She'd radio: SOS! Emergency!

Texans are making the same pleas on the ship’s behalf. Gov. Greg Abbott, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and House Speaker Joe Straus need to listen and allocate funds in the upcoming special session to save this historic treasure. Texas must stop spending taxpayer dollars on patch jobs and water pumps for this battleship, the last of its kind that operated in two world wars. It’s past time to move this naval museum and piece of our heritage onto land.

The Battleship Texas Foundation has voted unanimously to pursue the dry berth option but lacks the funds to do so. Ultimate responsibility for the battleship lies with the state of Texas, and that responsibility comes with a price.

Except for two years in Galveston in the late 1990s, the USS Texas has been moored at the San Jacinto Battlefield since 1948. So far, a combination of public and private funds have kept the ship afloat through stop-gap measures like patching leaks and pumping water out of the hull. The ship is not only leaking continually, but the leaks are sprouting up more...
Save USS Texas continued

frequently now. Patch-and-pump is not a viable long-term strategy.

If the state of Texas fails to act, the ship could roll on its side. And the funding troubles still wouldn’t go away. The state would then need to pay the costs of cutting up the ship and hauling her away. In a salvage situation, the state would also need to cover the costs of storage and figure out an alternate display for the thousands of artifacts associated with the vessel.

By failing to act promptly, the state is risking a priceless piece of our national heritage. About 250,000 people visit the vessel each year. The ship inspires thousands of people of all ages from around the state and the world and reminds them of the sacrifices that so many have made and are making to keep our nation free.

With fewer than 1 percent of the nation serving as active military personnel, the symbolic value of this battleship increases every day, along with the cost of deferred maintenance. Every time the ship lists significantly to its side, the cost of dry docking increases. Delay adds zeroes to the invoice owed by the state and ultimately the taxpayer for preservation or dismantling.

If ships could talk, the Battleship Texas could regale us with stories about her service in Normandy, North Africa, Iwo Jima and Okinawa. Fortunately, 36 veterans, ages 84-102, who returned in 2014 with their families to celebrate the ship’s centennial were able to recount her stories for her. One told of an Air Force pilot dropping cold beer onto the hull of the battleship for a celebration on D-Day.

As conveyed by Bruce Bramlett, executive director of the foundation, another remembered getting chewed out by his commander for failing to write his mother for six months. The sailor promptly complied, writing, “Dear mom, whatever you do, don’t write the captain again.”

All confirmed their pride in serving on this 10-gun ship, in her day, the biggest and baddest battleship around.

“She’s a testament to our ingenuity and our engineering,” says Stephanie Croatt, curator of the battleship. Surely, with billions in its rainy day fund, the state of Texas has the ingenuity to figure out a way to save this historic vessel and to preserve this piece of naval history for future generations.
Restoration

The heat is on! The Houston summer is underway and a number of FTV members are taking a break from restoration and spending more time providing their interpretive skills to vacationers visiting the ship. However, work not requiring strenuous exertion or adherence to new safety requirements and accompanying certification continues.

The Movie Locker restoration project is shaping up nicely, although it is behind schedule. Detail work on its fixtures and furnishings are still to be accomplished.

The first elements of the Combat Information Center (CIC) insulation has been hung, but the “pause button” has been pushed on this work while the team learns more about how this phase is properly performed and other materials are ordered.

One team is defying the heat and working diligently on the two waist 40mm anti-aircraft mounts. The port mount is now completely primed and ready for its finish coat of paint; however, prior to doing so, the team is feverishly attempting to un-freeze the starboard mount, which currently will not elevate or depress. Apparently, something is jamming one of the several gear boxes controlling this movement. This mount is important as most children visiting the ship gravitate to this particular gun mount, and the Overnight Program also uses this mount for its orientation and interpretation. Therefore, FTV is doing its best to solve and repair the problem so that visiting kids and the Overnight Program can enjoy the experience just that much better.

Since the last edition of the Dreadnought, FTV’s maintenance team has descended upon the 2nd Deck and cleaned years of grime from the port passageway bulkheads in Officers’ Country.

The work order for priming the 3” anti-aircraft ammunition magazines has been completed and work should start in the near future on making these spaces presentable (although not restored) and ready to receive the 3” ammunition cans purchased a couple years back. A number of our restoration team members are looking forward to starting on this interesting project.

The other project on the horizon is the restoration of Stateroom D. This space, which used to be open for viewing, but was pulled from the list of active exhibits due to a few internal misce, will join Dr. McArdle’s stateroom as the two examples open for viewing.

Recent Activities

The final Hard Hat Tour of the season, held on May 20, was reasonably successful, earning FTV over $2,700.00. It was an enjoyable experience for everyone, docents and visitors alike.

The new season begins on October 21. Be sure to go to www.firsttexasvolunteers.org to learn more and reserve a space.
Battleship TEXAS Overnight Youth Education Program

By Kandace Trujillo

We are having a busy Summer at the youth overnight education program. We thank the 35 groups and 904 campers that participated through the months of May through July. In addition to our usual scout groups, we hosted many school groups. We hosted middle school groups from across Texas.

This Summer we hosted a group from the furthest distance we’ve ever had. We hosted a group from Jeju, South Korea. Jeju is 7,289 miles away from Houston. The North London Collegiate School brought a group of middle schoolers to tour the United States. One of their stops was Houston and they choose to spend the night aboard the TEXAS. We were pleased to host them. They had a great time aboard the ship learning about the TEXAS. Their only complaint was the heat.

The Overnight Program also hosted Troop 746 from Dallas on June 24th. While they were here they earned their Historic Trails Award. To earn this award you need to learn about an historic trail or site, hike and or campout at the site, and then create a public event to help the site. Troop 746 decided to host and take part in a park clean up.

Thank you Troop 746 for all your hard work. They picked up a lot of trash and the park looks great.

We are starting to book overnights for the fall. The fall season is our busiest season so book early. If you would like to book an overnight or check for available dates, please contact:

overnight@battleshiptexas.org
or (281) 542-0684 (office)
Two Promotions: A New Curator Takes Over…

I am pleased to announce that two TEXAS crewmembers have been promoted—Sarah Conlon and myself. As of June 1st, I will be the new Assistant Superintendent for the ship. Sarah Conlon threw her hat in the ring to fill the vacant Curator position, and was officially promoted to the position on July 1st. Sarah got her Bachelor’s Degree in English and History from Rice University, and her Master's Degree in Public History, with a certificate in Museum Management, from the University of South Carolina. Sarah came to Texas Parks and Wildlife from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, where she worked as a Collections Manager. Sarah Conlon has served as the Battleship TEXAS Collections Manager for the past three years. She has been instrumental in developing and refining the site’s core documents, caring for artifacts during emergencies, overseeing curatorial volunteer projects, and working tirelessly on collections organization and cataloging. As Curator, Sarah will continue to expand these efforts, and will be looking to train her replacement for the Collections Manager position. Additionally, Sarah will have a more intensive role in providing feedback and direction on restoration and preservation projects on the ship. The new Curator will also be involved in creating and expanding interpretive offerings, including rotating and special exhibits both on and off the ship.

We look forward to having Sarah in this new role, and seeing her continue positive impacts on curation of ship’s collections, interpretive programming, and overall operations. I hope you will join me in congratulating Sarah for her promotion.

Sarah Conlon served as the ship’s Collections Manager for the past 3 years, and has been promoted to Curator for the ship.
Mr. Erik R. Abrahamson  Mr. Jon Gamboa  Mr. Sean F Murphy
Mr. Scheiber L. Alfred  Mr. Sam Gelose  Gary Nelson
MSgt Daniel Attilio, USMC (Ret)  CAPT Edward P. Hermann USN (Ret.)  Mr. Kenneth North
Mr. Steven G. Bass  Hank Hilliard  Mr. Robert Perwas
CAPT Alan E .Bentz, USN (Ret)  Mr. William Huf  Mr. Robert Petter, Jr.
Mr. Bill B. Blaylock  Col. Richard M. Hutchins USAF Ret.  Mr. & Mrs. Larry E. Plunk
Mr. William T. Brockman  Mr. Mark Johnson  CDR Glenn H. Quiggle USN Ret
Dr. Deborah D. Bryan  Mr. Brent D. Johnson  Mr. Douglas Ress
Mr. Henry C. Carswell III  Mr. Bernard Kahn  Mr. Jack Rose
Mr. Philip G. Chapman  Mr. John Gilbert Kauffman  Mr. John M. Sardone
Mr. Douglas E. Clanin  RADM John Weldon Koenig, USN (Ret)  Lt. Col. Charles W. Seltzer, USAF (RET)
1 LT Barry Cohen USAF Veteran  Mrs. Patricia A. Langa  Mr. W. H. Sentesi
Mr. Billy G. Corley  MAJ Leonard P. Linkes  Mr. Steven W. Shay
Mr. Bill C. Davis  Mr. & Mrs. Brad and Annette Long  Ms. Kathryn A. Speer
Mr. Thomas A. Delamater  Mr. Kevin Loper  Dr. Dennis Spence
Mr. Gerald Dunklin  Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Loukas  CDR William E. Stepp USN (Ret)
GMCM SW Robert J. Eisenberg USN (RET)  LCDR Robert A. Maiellaro, USN (Ret)  Mr. Jeff P. Vista
Pat Ellebracht  Mr. & Mrs. Donald L. McClagherty  Mr. Donald R. Wagoner
Mr. Moses Ellis  Mr. Cyril J. McDermott  Col. Bruce Warren
Mr. & Mrs. Richard and Emma Flynn  Mr. & Mrs. Dud and Melba Morris  Lt. Col. William A. White, USA (Ret)
MSGT John S. Lowry Sr.  
Adolfe Hudec  
Alvin Sebesta  
CPT Robert Hoyice  
Mr. Jason Andrew Smith  
IHO A. B. Washington  
Charles Edward Cupples  
Ralph L. Ertman  
Oran Hughes  
CAPT Charles Alcorn  
Nancy Koenig  
IMO Rudy Cepuran  
IMO Ervin D. Pupkes USS TEXAS  
Henry T. Hilliard  
Dillard O. Hutte  
Corporal Walter L. Ress  
IMO Rudolph Cepuran  
James E. Barrett  
IHO Andrew P. Murphy Jr.  
William Robert Seltzer  
IHO Lt. Ruth M. Spence, USN  
Dr. J. Spence, USN  
CMDR Denver E Perkins  
Lt JG Edwin Duane Luallin  
Denver E. Perkins, Jr. MD  
Paul J. Jones  
W. R. Clough  
Alvin William Hall Jr.  
IMO Reuben B. Kihn  
IHO Arthur Loukas  
IHO Jesse Petty  
Billie F. Davis  
Col. Benjamin F. Delamater III and  
Lt. Anna V. Delamater  
IMO John C. Alberts  
(Served on Texas)  
Daniel Cohen  
L. Col Daniel Higgins,  
PFC John Higgins,  
SGT. Joseph Higgins  
G/M II Thomas Roccia  
B/M III Robert Frirdea  
CPL Wallace Ethredge  
CPL W.M Bryant  
MAJ B. Etheridge
Membership Application

I am pleased to support the USS TEXAS with my membership in the Battleship TEXAS Foundation, a 501 (c)(3) non profit organization.

☐ Individual $35.00
☐ Family $45.00
☐ Supporting $150.00
☐ Benefactor $500.00
☐ Corporate $2,000.00
☐ USS TEXAS Veteran $10.00

Name

Address

City State Zip

Phone Fax

Email

☐ Check here to receive your Dreadnought by email.

Membership Benefits

Individual. $35 Entry level membership entitles Member to receive a free subscription to the BTF quarterly e-mail newsletter “The Dreadnought” and a free subscription to TPWD’s bi-weekly e-mail newsletter “The Battle Report” (if you provide your e-mail address).

Family. $45 Everything above, plus invitations to San Jacinto Site activities and special events.

Supporting $150 Everything above, plus one (1) Hard Hat Tour.

Benefactor. $500 Everything above, plus two (2) Hard Hat Tours

Corporate. $2,000 Everything above, plus publication of your firm’s name in “The Dreadnought” and at special events held aboard the TEXAS.

USS TEXAS Veterans. $10 Benefits the same as for Individual Member.

Mail to:

BATTLESHIP TEXAS FOUNDATION
One Riverway
Suite 2200
Houston, Texas 77056

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