



# SAN DIEGO SHIP MODELERS GUILD

## Show and Tell Information Form

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**Ship's Name: USS TEXAS (BB 35) - 75<sup>th</sup> D-Day Anniversary**

Model Builder: Frank Dengler

### 1. Ship's History

a. Type/Class: Battleship / NEW YORK (BB 34)

b. Namesake: State of Texas

c. Shipbuilder & Location: Newport News Shipbuilding, Newport News, VA

d. Date Commissioned/In-Service: 12 March 1914

e. Characteristics: Displacement: 28,822 tOns full load\*, Length 573 ft, Beam 95 ft, Draft: 29 ft 7 in full load \*, Propulsion\* 14 × Babcock & Wilcox coal-fired boilers, 2 × vertical triple-expansion steam engines, 28,737 shaft horse power, 2 × screws, Speed: 21 kts, Range: 7,060 nm at 10 kts, Complement\*: 1,042, Armament\*\*: 10 × 14"/45 in 5 twin turrets (firing 1,400 lb armor-piercing rounds up to ≈13 mi/11 nm), 6 × 5"/51 in casements, 10 × 3"/50, 10 × 40mm quad, 42 × 20mm single gun mounts. Notes: Asterisk \* indicates as of 1914. Double asterisk \*\* indicates as of 1944.

f. Operations:

Pre-World War I - In April 1914 Mexican troops detained 9 U. S. Navy sailors from the gunboat USS DOLPHIN buying gasoline in Tampico, Mexico. RADM Frank Friday Fletcher, USN, demanded the sailors' release, an apology, and a 21-gun salute to the U. S. flag. The apology was provided, but not the salute, and President Woodrow Wilson ordered the U. S. Navy to prepare for action pending Congressional approval. It was learned that the German cargo ship YPIRANGA was delivering arms and ammunition to Veracruz, Mexico intended for troops under José Victoriano Huerta Márquez, a general who had taken the Mexican Presidency in 1913. President Wilson ordered the arms and ammunition seized and RADM Fletcher sent a naval landing party ashore 21 April 1914. This force was augmented as the "Veracruz Incident" escalated and TEXAS assisted the forces ashore and evacuation of U. S. citizens May to November 1914. In 1916 TEXAS became the first U. S. battleship with anti-aircraft (AA) guns (3"/50s atop crane king-posts), gunfire control directors, optical rangefinders, and analog gunfire control computers.

World War I - After numerous submarine attacks and other provocations, the U. S. declared war against Germany 6 April 1917. To minimize exposure to submarine attacks, TEXAS and other battleships were based in the York River, VA where they trained Naval Armed Guard gun crews to defend merchant ships against surfaced submarine and raider attacks. During pre-deployment operations TEXAS ran aground on Block Island in Long Island Sound on the night of 27 September 1917. With the crew chanting "Come on TEXAS!", the ship's engines and those of 6 tugs enabled TEXAS to float clear after off-loading ammunition, coal, anchors, boats, and pumping tanks on 30 September 1917. Following repair, TEXAS joined Battleship Division 9 (6th Battle Squadron, Britain's Grand Fleet) on 11 February 1918. This force operated from Scapa Flow in the Orkney Islands and the Firth of Forth in Scotland escorting convoys and conducting operations in the North Sea. During this period the German High Seas Fleet seldom forayed from anchorages in the Jade and the Ems Rivers and there were no battle fleet engagements. At the same time U. S. and Royal Navy units laid about 70,000 mines between the Orkney Islands and Norway to deter German submarines from getting to the Atlantic, although there were encounters between Battleship Division 9 and "Unterseeboots" or "U-boats". After the Armistice ended hostilities 11 November 1918, TEXAS oversaw the German Fleet transit to surrender anchorages and escorted President Woodrow Wilson embarked in the liner GEORGE WASHINGTON to Brest, France in route to the Paris Peace Conference where he advocated formation of a League of Nations to mediate international disputes and thereby avert future wars.

1919-1941 - On 10 March 1919 TEXAS became the first U. S. battleship to launch an aircraft, a Sopwith Camel biplane piloted by LCDR Edward McDonnell, USN, pioneering use of aircraft for area reconnaissance and observation of ship's gunfire impacts and radioed adjustments to strike targets. In May 1919 TEXAS served as a plane guard and navigation reference during the first trans-Atlantic flight by the U. S. Navy flying boat NC-4. In July 1919 TEXAS became part of the Pacific Fleet and was designated BB-35 under the new classification system. TEXAS returned to the Atlantic in 1924 where she trained Midshipmen and sank the incomplete battleship WASHINGTON (BB 47) 25 November 1924 under the terms of the 1922 naval arms limitation treaty. On 31 July 1925 TEXAS began modernization in the Norfolk Navy Yard that included replacing coal with oil fired boilers, eliminating one stack, replacing cage masts with tripods, upgrading and repositioning gunfire control systems, moving her 5"/51 gun mounts up to the main deck from hull casements that were subject to sea encroachment, and augmenting her anti-aircraft battery. After this overhaul, TEXAS became flagship of the U. S. Fleet. TEXAS was the first ship to show the crew movies with sound in 1927. In 1928 TEXAS embarked President Calvin Coolidge for transit to Havana, Cuba for the Pan-American Conference. TEXAS returned to the Pacific for operations out of San Diego and San Pedro/Long Beach 1931 to 1937 less April to October 1934. After returning to the Atlantic in 1937, TEXAS received two quad 1.1"/75 AA gun mounts. In December 1938, TEXAS received a CXZ radar by Radio Corporation of America (RCA) while here sistership USS NEW YORK (BB 34) received an XAF radar by the Naval Research Laboratory (NRL). RCA incorporated features of these initial prototypes in CXAM radars installed on several cruisers, battleships, and carriers in 1940/41.

As tension between the U. S. and the Axis powers increased in the late 1930s, TEXAS helped convoy Lend-Lease materiel to the United Kingdom. On 1 February 1941 the First Marine Division was activated aboard TEXAS and ADM Ernest J. King, USN, made TEXAS his Atlantic Fleet flagship. On 19 June 1941 the German submarine U-203 sighted TEXAS while the battleship on a Neutrality Patrol about 800 miles SSE of Iceland. The submarine stalked TEXAS for about 20 hours but never got into position to launch torpedoes.

World War II - After the Japanese 7 December 1941 attack on U. S. forces in and around Pearl Harbor, TEXAS escorted convoys to England, the Panama Canal, and West Africa against potential attacks by German warships. TEXAS' AA battery was initially augmented with 2 x quad 1.1"/75 mounts and then all these were replaced by 40mm and 20mm mounts in June 1943. In October 1942 TEXAS participated in Operation Torch landings on Port Lyautey, French Morocco firing on "Vichy" French positions and helping to clear ships scuttled to block the harbor. During the ship's return to Norfolk, fledgling reporter Walter Cronkite, who had been embarked aboard where he was unable to transmit stories to his editors, was flown ashore on one of TEXAS' OS2U Kingfisher float planes, enabling him to "scoop" other correspondents and thereby launch a long and successful career.

On 29 April 1944, TEXAS, NEVADA (BB 36), and ARKANSAS (BB 33) moved to Belfast Lough, Northern Ireland staging for Operation Neptune, the naval element of Operation Overlord, the invasion of France's Normandy coast. GEN Dwight D. Eisenhower, USA, came aboard 19 May 1944 and spoke to the crew. TEXAS was Bombardment Force Flagship for Omaha Beach, supporting the U. S. 29th Infantry Division and the U. S. 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Ranger Battalions at Pointe du Hoc. TEXAS commenced fire at 0550 on "D-Day" 6 June 1944 targeting German artillery atop Pointe du Hoc (later found to have been withdrawn), U. S. troop routes inland from Omaha Beach, German positions around Vierville, and enemy reinforcement routes. In order to help U. S. troops trapped by German fire on Omaha Beach, TEXAS closed to within about 3,000 yds, as close as water depth would allow, and fired its main and secondary batteries at sniper, machine gun, mortar, and artillery positions. On 7 June, TEXAS sent provisions and ammunition via landing craft to the Rangers at Pointe Du Hoc, extracted 35 wounded for medical treatment and 27 prisoners, struck German positions around Formigny and Trévières, and fired on German aircraft. On 8 June, TEXAS hit German positions near Isigny and an artillery battery. After rearming at Plymouth, TEXAS resumed firing until troops had moved so far inland that the battleship had to flood its starboard torpedo blister causing a list that enabled the guns to elevate enough to strike targets that would otherwise have been out of range. According to <http://navsource.org/archives/01/035/013533j.jpg>, TEXAS expended 690 14-inch and 272 5-inch rounds supporting Omaha Beach landings. On 25 June, TEXAS and other ships engaged Battery Hamburg, four 24 cm (9.4 inch) guns that were part of the German defenses preventing allies from using port facilities on the Cherbourg peninsula. At 1233 TEXAS was straddled by German shells. At 1316, a German 24 cm shell skidded across the top of TEXAS conning tower and exploded wounding several and killing helmsman Christen Christensen. At 1447, a 24 cm shell struck TEXAS forward but failed to detonate. During the 3-

hour engagement, German fire hit or nearly struck TEXAS about 65 times and TEXAS expended 206 rounds, destroying one of Battery Hamburg's guns.

At the outset of Operation Dragoon, the 15 August 1944 assault on German positions near Saint-Tropez on the French Riviera, TEXAS fired on a battery of five 15 cm (5.9 inch) guns. When allied troops moved inland beyond the range of naval gunfire, TEXAS ceased firing and withdrew, departing the Mediterranean for New York in September 1944.

Shifting to the Pacific, TEXAS provided naval gunfire support for Operation Detachment, the assault on Iwo Jima, and Operation Iceberg, the assault on Okinawa. TEXAS arrived off Iwo Jima 16 February 1945 and hit assigned targets until three Marine Corps Divisions hit the beach on the 19<sup>th</sup>, after which the battleship responded to call for fire requests from Marine forward observers (FOs) until 21 February. On 21 March 1945 TEXAS began 6 days of prelanding bombardment of Okinawa. When U. S. Marine and U. S. Army units landed 1 April 1945, TEXAS provided gunfire support until 14 May while defending against kamikaze suicide aircraft attacks. TEXAS shot down 1 aircraft and assisted in destruction of 3 others. On 17 May, TEXAS arrived off Leyte, Philippine Islands and began training for the invasion of Japan until 15 August 1945 when the Japanese ceased hostilities. TEXAS helped carry veterans home then proceeded to Baltimore, MD for transfer to the Atlantic Reserve Fleet 18 June 1945.

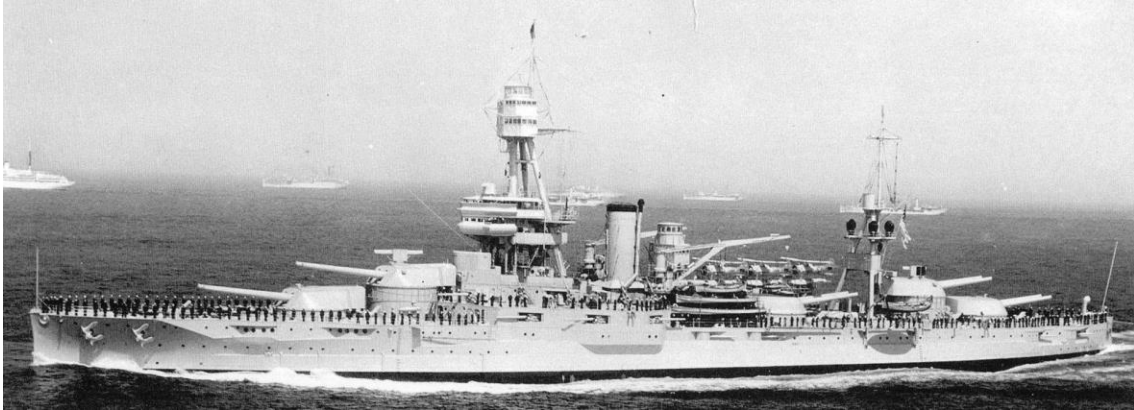
g. Fate: On 21 April 1948, the 112<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1836 Battle of San Jacinto in which Texans under Sam Houston defeated Mexican forces under GEN Antonio López de Santa Anna, the battleship TEXAS was turned over to the State of Texas and established as a memorial museum at the San Jacinto Battleground Park in La Porte, roughly 25 miles from Houston, TX. TEXAS was struck from the Naval Vessel Register on 30 April 1948. TEXAS was designated a National Historic Landmark by the National Park Service in 1976.

h. Awards: Mexican Service, World War I Victory Medal, American Campaign Medal, American Defense Service Medal, Europe, Africa, Middle East Campaign Medal with 3 Battle Stars, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with 2 Battle Stars, World War II Victory Medal, Navy Occupation Service Medal. TEXAS merited the subsequently created Combat Action Ribbon that did not exist during World War II.



TEXAS Circa 1917 from <http://www.navsource.org/archives/01/013688.jpg>

Note armored conning tower aft of 14"/50 Turret Two, 5"/51s in hull casements, two stacks, cage masts, and hydro-dynamic bow sloping forward towards the foot at the stem. TEXAS foremast search lights were mounted vertically while NEW YORK's were side-by-side; a feature enabling differentiation of the sister ships.



TEXAS in 1928 After Modernization from <http://www.navsourc.org/archives/01/013572a.jpg>  
Note five twin 14"/50 turrets (2 forward, 2 aft, 1 amidships), 5"/51s moved to main deck, single stack, tripod masts, catapult atop Turret 3. TEXAS' "V" shaped bridge differentiated it from NEW YORK.



TEXAS in 1944 from <http://www.navsourc.org/archives/01/013529b.jpg>  
Note Measure 22 Camouflage with hull below main deck painted blue to blend with sea and upper works painted gray to blend with overcast sky when viewed from surface ship or submarine periscope. The ship has received numerous 3"/50, 40mm, and 20mm gun mounts and fire control systems for AA defense.



Museum Ship TEXAS 28 July 1990 from <http://navsource.org/archives/01/pdf/013541.pdf>

Note Measure 21 Camouflage with blue on vertical surfaces to reduce detection by kamikaze aircraft in 1945. The ship is returning from overhaul in Galveston and refitting, including installation of 40mm gun mounts and Mark 51 Gun Directors, at Green's Bayou on the Houston Ship Channel. Frank Dengler was the ship's Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) Superintendent. TEXAS appeared in the movies "Pearl Harbor" and "Flags of Our Fathers."

## 2. Model

a. Materials: Iron Shipwrights resin kit

b. Scale: 1:350

c. Era & Configuration Depicted: 1944 (See 3<sup>rd</sup> photo above.)

d. Model Construction Period: ≈2 months

e. Techniques: A few modifications were made involving 20mm mounts, antennas, rafts, and directors to represent the 1944 configuration. Note that OS2U Kingfisher aircraft were not embarked or operated from the ship during the Normandy landings due to their armament, speed, and maneuverability limitations relative to German fighters.

f. Issues & Solutions: Thread used to represent long wire radio antennas between the masts was too thick, but it was never replaced.





Model of battleship USS TEXAS (BB 35) Port Beam

Note the foretop upper-tier main battery control surmounted by Mk 3 Fire Control Radar, mid-tier lookout station, and lower-tier secondary battery control and the similar upper-tier main battery control and lower-tier secondary battery control station aft of the stack



Model of battleship USS TEXAS (BB 35) Port Quarter

Note the flat surface on that aft side of the mid-ship control stations on which crew movies were projected and the ships galley forward of Turret Three