

# The BATTLE REPORT

1836 1945

## San Jacinto Battleground/Battleship TEXAS State Historic Site

Report for April 16, 2007 through April 22, 2007 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

Now on the web at [www.usstexasbb35.com](http://www.usstexasbb35.com) & [www.texianlegacy.com](http://www.texianlegacy.com)

*“The purpose of this newsletter is to communicate the site’s day-to-day natural and cultural resource management activities. Our goal is to inform and educate our staff, partners, and friends – and those we have yet to meet – Welcome!”*



### COMMANDER’S CALL:

- ❖ The week of the official San Jacinto Day commemoration began in a classy style early this week, with the debut of the San Jacinto, Texas Historic District. The Port Economic Alliance and Harris County Pct. 2 Commissioner Sylvia Garcia envisioned the “new” district as part of their “Project Stars” theme. The debut involved the unveiling of Epic Art on Monday afternoon, on a tank located at the Lyondell Refinery in Pasadena, along the Texas Independence Highway (225 East). Featured below are two stories from the Pasadena Citizen – one prior to the unveiling – and one on the day it happened. We also have a link to an actual video of the unveiling (view link before it goes away!) per KHOU-TV at: [http://www.khou.com/topstories/stories/khou070416\\_jj\\_portart.16b0ac1b.html](http://www.khou.com/topstories/stories/khou070416_jj_portart.16b0ac1b.html).

## PASADENA The Citizen



By Bob Bartel, 04/11/2007

### The Dream Begins

*It was the first of many that will rise as Gateway Advance Stars in the San Jacinto Historic District—a part of Project Stars. Project Stars is a collaboration of the visions of Pct. 2 Commissioner Sylvia Garcia, and Economic Alliance President Jan Lawler to highlight the 5th largest historic district in Texas, and the largest in Harris County.*

*From its origins in Harrisburg, the original capitol of the Republic of Texas, Project Stars will blaze a trail eastward along SH 225 towards its destination at the San Jacinto Monument. The focal point of this trail of stars will be gigantic Epic Art displays portraying the battles for Texas' independence and other subject matter generic to Texas. This art will be prominently displayed on storage tanks lining the Pasadena freeway and throughout the east Harris County community. Some of the art will refer to specific events relevant to the community in which it appears. The first of these artistic dioramas began with an application of the special photographic film to a storage tank just east of the Allen Genoa exit on SH 225 on April 10. The tank is part of the Lyondell Houston Refinery located at 12000 Lawndale. A grand unveiling of the project will be done on April 16 at 1 p.m.*

*This Epic Art display, entitled "Destiny," will be 40 feet high and 70 feet long. It represents a master plan, two years in the making. The installation is being done under the guidance of Gary Forman, of Native Sons Productions, using a special film technique developed by Robert Eng in his million dollar California studio. In the panel, a Texian is pointing the way toward the San Jacinto Battleground, symbolizing both the choice of where Sam Houston's army would engage General Santa Anna*



*and his troops, and pointing the pathway of Project Stars. "This has never been done before," said Forman of the technical nature, materials and thematic concepts used to create Epic Art. "Destiny will be composed of 34 panels each one about 4 feet wide by 20 feet high. We used an H3D39 Hasselblad digital camera with a 39 megapixel resolution to take the photo. This is the kind of camera used by NASA in the space program. Reinactors were clothed in historically accurate garments tailored by Steven Abolt. Bill Hamilton out of San Antonio did the graphic design."*

*Eng uses a special 3 mil plastic film developed by 3M Company to print the photos in his shop. The technique was used by the National Park Service four years ago on a truck which carried a traveling show depicting the explorations of Lewis and Clark. "The display still looks like new," commented Lawler. "That's why we selected this process. It's unique." For Eng, this is the culmination of an art he has been developing for 20 years. He said, "I feel lucky to be a part of this project. I'm really excited."*

*While it has been in planning for some time, and has only been possible through the efforts of many people, the project could not have gotten off the ground without the fund-raiser held by Garcia in September. Because she was unopposed in the election, she dedicated over \$400,000 in what would have been campaign money toward Project Stars.*

*Garcia's efforts helped coordinate the efforts of many others. Forman said, "Every project needs a spark; a champion. Commissioner Garcia has been that champion." Garcia responded, "I'm committed to getting this done. Monday's unveiling is what we needed to show people that we're serious about this project. This will bring out the sunshine in Texas history again."*

*Lyondell spokesman, David Harpole spoke of Lyondell's part in the project. "They needed a clean, well-prepared surface for the application. We had just repainted this crude oil storage tank at a cost of about \$500,000. The tank is 48 feet high, and 180 feet in diameter, and it is well located for the project. We're delighted to be involved and the first to participate in this great historical project."*

*Lawler agreed that this first project was what was needed to get the ball rolling on Project Stars. "It took tremendous cooperation to get to this point. Gina Manlove and Wayne Oquin were co-leaders in pushing this forward. They never gave up. We needed a business to be the first to volunteer as the 'canvas.' Lyondell stepped forward there. It was in the perfect location to introduce Project Stars. Now several other businesses are stepping forward as they see how exciting this project is and how much it will contribute to the community."*

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## PASADENA The Citizen



### Epic Art Greets Travelers Along Highway 225

By Roy N. Kent, 04/16/07



**EPIC ART.** *A storage tank at the Lyondell Refinery in Pasadena now sports this photo of Texian pointing the way toward the San Jacinto Battleground.*

*The first epic art piece for Project Stars was officially displayed at the Lyondell Refinery near the intersection of Scarborough Lane and Highway 225 in Pasadena. This display, entitled "Destiny," is a 40-foot-high by 70-foot-long photograph. The installation was done under the guidance of Gary Foreman, CEO of Native Sun Productions. In the panel, a Texian is pointing the way toward the San Jacinto Battleground, symbolizing both the choice of where Sam Houston's army engaged Gen. Santa Anna and his troops, and pointing the pathway of Project Stars. "This is an exciting day," Foreman said. "This has been an interesting journey."*

*Foreman touted the efforts of Harris County Precinct 2 Commissioner Sylvia Garcia; Jan Lawler, president/CEO of Economic Alliance Houston Port Region; and Gina Manlove of the Economic Alliance Quality of Life Task Force to get Project Stars started. "Way back when (Garcia) said, 'it will happen,'" Foreman said. The art work is the "first of its kind in the world," he added. "The digital photography and digital printing worlds came together like the worlds were aligned," he said.*

*Master of Ceremonies Ron Stone spoke of the history of the day. "Today we salute our history and take charge of our destiny," he said. "Today we witness the birth of a historic district." This art will be displayed on storage tanks lining the highway and throughout east Harris County. Some of the art will refer to specific events relevant to communities in which it appears.*

*Hundreds of elected officials, dignitaries and well-wishers showed up for the ceremony. Mayors from across the region to show up included John Manlove (Pasadena), Wayne Riddle (Deer Park), Steve Don Carlos (Baytown), Joe Soto (South Houston) and Tom Reid (Pearland).*

*Jim Gilbert, chair elect of the San Jacinto Texas Historic District, spoke of the "collective thinking" which took place to make the district a reality. He pointed to the volunteers and civic leaders all the way to the historic district board and the Texas Department of Transportation as groups which helped the dream become a reality. "Our communities had a decision to make - like our ancestors - stay the same or choose to change our destiny," Gilbert said. "We chose to think big and plan big." The placing of epic art on the tank begins "a virtual museum without walls," Gilbert said. "Once improvements are made the epic art depicting the Battle of San Jacinto adorns our buildings and storage tanks, I am told that we have the single largest displays of public art in the world," he added.*

*Garcia spoke of the impact the art and Project Stars will have on the communities in her precinct. "This effort will not only affect the lives of nearly 1 million citizens who live, work, learn and play in Precinct 2, but also the lives of the many who will come to visit," she said.*

*Lyondell General Manager Bill Thompson exuded pride in the knowledge that one of his facility's tanks is home to the first piece of epic art. "Certainly, we are positioned at the gateway of the district, so, geographically this is where it should begin," he said. "Historically speaking, we sit just east of Harrisburg and west of San Jacinto and that offers additional significance to the events we are here to commemorate today."*

*Bringing focus to the rich history of east Harris County is a goal of Project Stars and that was not lost on Gina Manlove. "We acknowledged two years ago that we had lost focus somewhat that our region was the most historically significant in all of Texas and an influential region for our nation and the world," she said. "Our collective image had diminished. Today, as in 1836, we are turning the corner."*

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### **ON THE HORIZON:**

- Apr 16     Birthday of Battleground Park Ranger II, Bill Butts! Happy Birthday Bill!!!**
- Apr 16     Debut of San Jacinto, Texas Historic District at Lyondell Recreation Facility at 12:30 p.m.**
- Apr 17     Birthday of BB35 Historian/Restoration Planner, Rusty Bloxom! Happy Birthday Rusty!!!**
- Apr 17     Birthday of Battleground Park Ranger III UPO/Back-Up, Charlie Tyler! Happy Birthday Charlie!!!**
- Apr 18     Birthday of Monument Park Ranger II, Debbie Cormicle! Happy Birthday Debbie!!!**
- Apr 19     Birthday of Park Host Jay Chandler! Happy Birthday Jay!!!**
- Apr 18     San Jacinto Museum of History Association Annual Dinner**
- Apr 21     San Jacinto Day Ceremony, 10 a.m. at San Jacinto Monument**
- Apr 21     San Jacinto Day Festival & Battle Reenactment. Camps open at 10 a.m. Battle at 3 p.m.**
- Apr 21     Masonic Ceremony at Mason's statue at 2 p.m.**
- Apr 22     Battle of San Jacinto Triathlon**
  
- Apr 25     Houston "Click It Or Ticket" promotional campaign by TXDOT, at San Jacinto Monument - 9:30 a.m.**
  
- May 20     Bay Area Volkswagen Club's "Monumental Bug Bash"**

## TROOP MOVEMENTS:

- ❖ Although we were deeply engrossed in our heavy schedule of events related to the annual San Jacinto Day commemoration, Friends Group President Jan DeVault still managed to catch a few stories out in the press about state park funding and historic site transfers:

### House Panel Recommends Transfer of 18 Historic Sites

04/09/2007 - Associated Press

*A House committee has recommended transferring 18 historic sites from control of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to the Texas Historical Commission. The full House is expected to take up soon the recommendation by the House Culture, Recreation and Tourism Committee. Twelve state historic sites would remain with the parks department under the bill.*

*Proponents argued that the Historical Commission is better equipped to maximize state funding to develop and market the sites. Some groups critical of the proposal said transferring the sites is purely political and would provide no benefit to the state. They've also questioned whether the move is a step toward privatizing the land.*

*John Nau III, chairman of the Historical Commission, said the commission has the skills to "focus on a very unique consumer base — that's the heritage and cultural tourist. "Keep the places open when the consumer wants them to be and provide a visitors experience that causes them to come back to generate revenue for the communities that surround these places," Nau said*

*Committee chairman Harvey Hilderbran, R-Kerrville, said he's willing to remove historical sites from the list of 18 because of opposition to the plan. However, Hilderbran has also proposed using a portion of the sporting goods sales tax revenue to create a fund that would go specifically to those sites transferred to the Historical Commission. "The sites that transfer will want to show just how good it can be," Hilderbran said.*

*Committee member Rep. Donna Howard, D-Austin, voted against the bill. "Why are we even doing this in the first place? What was the process and the criteria used to make these decisions, and where's the plan?" she said. "There really weren't good answers to any of those questions."*

*Barry Duncan, member of a supporters group for Sebastopol House State Historic Site in Seguin, said opponents will fight the proposal in the Senate if the House approves it. He said his group trusts the Parks and Wildlife Department as the manager of historical sites. He predicted the Historical Commission will keep pushing to acquire state sites. "They want everything — San Jacinto, Battleship Texas, the Alamo. That's where I see this going," Duncan said. "If we give them an inch, they will take a mile."*

Information from: San Antonio Express-News: <http://www.mysanantonio.com>.

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### Historic Sites on House Transfer List

[By John Lowman](#)

The Facts

Published April 12, 2007

*Levi Jordan and Varner-Hogg plantations are still on the list, but the jury's still out on what that means. The House Culture, Recreation and Tourism Committee this week kept the two Brazoria County historical sites among 18 considered for transfer from control of Texas Parks and Wildlife to the Texas Historical Commission.*

*State Rep Dennis Bonnen, R-Angleton, isn't sure the change is a good idea. Or a bad one. "I'm trying to ascertain the advantages of transferring the sites from Parks and Wildlife to the Historic Commission," Bonnen said of House Bill 7, sponsored by Harvey Hilderbran, R-Kerrville. "We're still trying to gather the facts. If it's in the parks' best interest to be transferred, I'm for it. But we don't know that yet." A broader measure, HB12, also includes language about the transfer. Both bills are out of committee with the author attempting to place the more-specific HB7 on the legislative calendar.*

*Varner-Hogg volunteer president Betty Hodges polled her organization and its members believe the transfer would be positive. “The consensus is we feel like we should go with the Historical Society,” Hodges said of the plantation in West Columbia. “Because they are a historical agency, they might take better care of the plantation. However, we’re willing to work with either agency.”*

*The top floor of Varner-Hogg has fallen into disrepair and has been closed for about three years. The park still generates \$560,000 per year in payroll and income, Hodges said. A transfer would be a shot in the arm, she said. “We believe if the Historical Society has control of historic sites, we’ll get a major amount of funding for repairs of the plantation,” she said.*

*Dorothy Cotton, president of the Levi Jordan Plantation Historical Society, said her group opposes the change. “No one seems to give any rationale on creating another agency that does exactly the same thing as TP&WD,” Cotton said. “We don’t understand why they would use twice as much money to do the same job. Nobody has given us any rationale to this point to make us think people who’ve never done this type of work could do a better job than those who have.”*

*Frustration over funding is common to volunteers at both sites and money is a large consideration, Bonnen said. “I understand at this point there will be significantly more money available with the Historical Commission than if they stay with Parks and Wildlife,” Bonnen said. “Having the proper finances to manage and show off these parks is very important, but there are other factors which are equally important.”*

*Those include organization, attention from management and the level of marketing. Levi Jordan and Varner-Hogg can be a larger tourism draw than they are now, he said. “What is the Historic Commission going to do to show off these areas? They’re the great unknown,” Bonnen said. “It doesn’t mean they’re bad — they’re just unknown. I’m not impressed with the job Parks and Wildlife has done the past several years, but I’m not sure what the Historical Commission will do. “The jury’s still out for me.”*

*Rep. Mike O’Day, R-Pearland, believes funding will improve under the Historical Commission. If Parks and Wildlife receives full funding this legislative session, it likely would be enough to cover existing projects but not new ones, O’Day said. “The commission will be able to do things Parks and Wildlife has not been able to do,” said O’Day, a member of the Culture, Recreation and Tourism Committee. “Not that they’re not capable, but the Historical Commission will get some specific funding for sites that have value to the history of Texas, which Levi Jordan and Varner-Hogg especially would be.”*

*The Historical Commission might be better equipped to give sites time and attention which could be difficult for Parks and Wildlife to equal, he said. “We’re going to do whatever the citizens of the district want,” O’Day said. “My opinion is, currently, it would be the best thing to move these sites to the commission.”*

*Barry Duncan, a member of a supporters group for Sebastopol House State Historic Site in Seguin — which is not on the list — said opponents will fight the proposal in the Senate if the House approves it. He said his group trusts the Parks and Wildlife Department to manage historical sites. He predicted the Historical Commission will keep pushing to acquire state sites. “They want everything — San Jacinto, Battleship Texas, the Alamo. That’s where I see this going,” Duncan said. “If we give them an inch, they will take a mile.”*

John Lowman is a reporter for The Facts. Contact him at (979) 237-0151. BILL STATUS: Go to [www.house.state.tx.us](http://www.house.state.tx.us), click on “Bills” and enter HB7 or call (877) 824-7038

- ❖ **Many activities occurring on site and off this week are newsworthy, and yet we didn’t have adequate space in our first edition to include these stories. Without further ado, a brief glimpse at several stories, some related to the (then) upcoming San Jacinto Day commemoration, and others not:**



*Dianne Powell & Larry Spasic Speak To A Reporter April 19<sup>th</sup>  
Photo By Randy Billingsley*



*KTRK-TV (ABC) Interviews Living Historian Dennis Heckathorne (R). Photo By Randy Billingsley*

- ❖ On April 19, an explosion and fire that created dark, billowing smoke in close proximity to the site caused some concern to management and staff. Ksolv Chemical Company, located on the north side of the Houston Ship Channel from the site, had some tanker (trucks) explode at their location. The spectacle which ensued generated much interest by the media, but there were no reports of any real danger to our site, or any hazardous substances released into the atmosphere which may have been harmful. As in our lead story in Troop Movements about this year's Media Day, Randy Billingsley snapped the photos which appear with our story – thanks Randy!!!



*Smoke Rises Just North Of The Battleship BB35 Almost Seems Afire In Close-Up! Fire Boats (R) Spraying From Off Shore*

- ❖ Volunteer Coordinator/Interpreter Ken Grubb and Interpreter Tim Reeves teamed up this week with William B. Travis Jr. High students to provide a tour of the San Jacinto Marsh. Photos below:



*Tim Reeves (Far Left) Speaks To Class... Close-Up Has Tim With Dip Net Demo Ken Grubb Speaks At Viewing Platform*



*Resident Volunteer Don Ellis Is Latest To Join Our Ranks*

- ❖ Our latest Resident Volunteer arrived on Monday, April 16. Don Ellis, of Deer Park, Texas, is a former Marine who brings lots of skills and talents to our operation. He and his wife parked their rig right behind the park headquarters and went right to work, helping immediately with the San Jacinto Day preparations, and on “D-Day” on the grounds. Don helped the Grounds Crew while the Mrs. helped with the lunch program for the staff that day. Thanks for jumping in with both feet and helping us out - welcome aboard!

❖ The end of our week, Sunday, April 22 wasn't a lazy day post-San Jacinto Day. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Battle of San Jacinto Triathlon, produced by the City of La Porte closed out a very busy weekend. The event starts with participants swimming to Sylvan Beach in La Porte, from a distance off shore. Once they hit the beach, they head to San Jacinto Battleground by bicycle, then corral their two-wheeled steeds at the Monument, and then run the San Jacinto Marsh trail to the finish line. Organizers on site and off worked very hard to make this athletic event another big success. In our feature photos, we did not get full names....



*Runner Crosses The Finish Line*



*Runners Cross Marsh Boardwalk*



*East Monument Circle Is Bicycle Corral*



*La Porte EMS & Fire Department Bike Teams Along With Guests With A Friendswood Team*



*(L) Bridget (Female Duathlon Winner) & Peggy (Female Triathlon Winner) 2007!*



*(L) Dana (Male Duathlon Winner) & The Male Triathlon Winner, James – 2007!*



*Lisa & Jerry Finished Last....*

**QUOTE OF THE WEEK:**

*Winners take time to relish their work, knowing that scaling the mountain is what makes the view from the top so exhilarating. - - Denis Waitley*

**SHIP STORE SHOWCASE:**

This week's special at the BB35 Park Store is a sailor shirt koozie! This clever little ditty is designed especially for the bottle consumer, but it can be used for cans (as shown). Its asking price is only \$4.99 each, and if you're looking for a conversation piece that's sure to be the life of the party, pick up a few of these and give them a try. Not responsible for failure to be life of the party due to lack of social skills, or overindulgence of certain beverages consumed. Please read warning label if driving or operating heavy machinery.



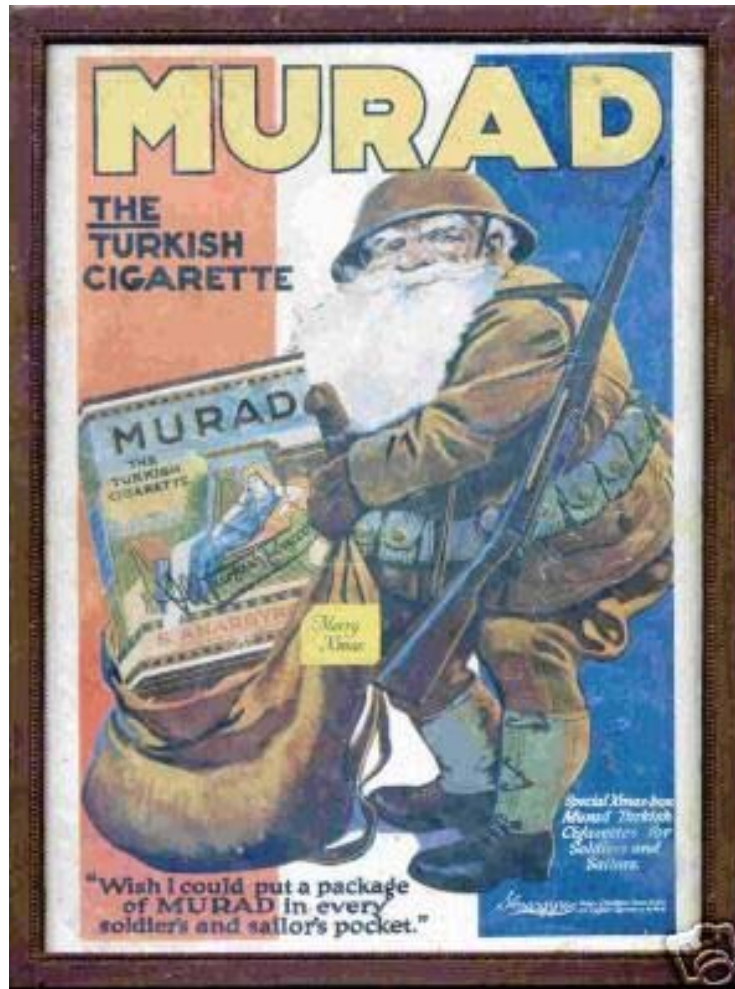
*Sailor Shirt Koozies Are Just Waiting For You!*

**COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE:**

Immediately following this year's big event, we understand that Maintenance Supervisor Jack Burris took a little bit of time off. Clyde Abernathy, Lead Battleground Ranger, offered the following theory:

*Russ, I found out what Jack has been doing at his moon lighting job.*

*Slim*



*Jack Moonlighting For The Turks? Say It Ain't So Jack!!!*

## **THIS WEEK IN HISTORY:**

- Apr 17 Texas A&M is created in 1871**
- Apr 17 TEXAS keel-laying at Newport News, Virginia in 1911**
- Apr 18 The American victors capture Santa Anna's wooden leg in 1847 after the battle at Sierra Gorda**
- Apr 18 BB-35 had 8 radio electricians aboard in 1918**
- Apr 19 "Deaf" Smith, the messenger for William B. Travis about the Alamo, was born in 1787**
- Apr 19 Sam Houston appeals to help to fight the war in 1836**
- Apr 19 BB-35 is moored at San Jacinto Battleground in 1948**
- Apr 20 Germans form a society to aid German immigration to Texas in 1842**
- Apr 20 An Indian battle at Howard's Well leads to the Gov. cancellation of hunting permits for Indians in 1872**
- Apr 20 BB-35 had 8 Pharmacist mates and 9 Hospital apprentices aboard in 1918**
- Apr 21 The Texans defeated the Mexican army at San Jacinto Battleground in 1836**
- Apr 21 BB-35 is decommissioned in 1948, after 12,459 days as USS TEXAS**
- Apr 22 The Coronado Expedition sets out for Texas in search of the seven cities of Cuba in 1540**
- Apr 22 The first class graduates from the University of Texas Medical School in Galveston in 1892**
- Apr 22 BB-35 had 16 Ship's Cooks aboard in 1918**

## **PARTING SHOT:**

**This closer for this week's 2<sup>nd</sup> edition features a visit to BB35 by Bruce and Carolyn Carmichael. Mr. Carmichael was an Ensign Aviator who flew a Kingfisher Float Plane off USS TEXAS during WW II. Volunteer Coordinator/Interpreter Ken Grubb lead a guided tour for the couple, with assistance from BB35 Maintenance Technician V, Colt Ricketts. A job well done gentlemen!**



*Bruce & Carolyn Carmichael, Colt Ricketts On A Guided Tour*



*Mr. Carmichael Stands By A Kingfisher Interpretive Panel*