

= Battle of Goliad =

The Battle of Goliad was the second skirmish of the Texas Revolution . In the early @-@ morning hours of October 9 , 1835 , Texas settlers attacked the Mexican Army soldiers garrisoned at Presidio La Bahía , a fort near the Mexican Texas settlement of Goliad . La Bahía lay halfway between the only other large garrison of Mexican soldiers ( at Presidio San Antonio de Bexar ) and the then @-@ important Texas port of Copano .

In September , Texians began plotting to kidnap Mexican General Martín Perfecto de Cos , who was en route to Goliad to attempt to quell the unrest in Texas . The plan was initially dismissed by the central committee coordinating the rebellion . However , within days of the Texian victory at the Battle of Gonzales , Captain George Collinsworth and members of the Texian militia in Matagorda began marching towards Goliad . The Texians soon learned that Cos and his men had already departed for San Antonio de Béxar but continued their march .

The garrison at La Bahía was understaffed and could not mount an effective defense of the fort 's perimeter . Using axes borrowed from townspeople , Texians were able to chop through a door and enter the complex before the bulk of the soldiers were aware of their presence . After a 30 @-@ minute battle , the Mexican garrison , under Colonel Juan López Sandoval , surrendered . One Mexican soldier had been killed and three others wounded , while only one Texian had been injured . The majority of the Mexican soldiers were instructed to leave Texas , and the Texians confiscated \$ 10 @,@ 000 worth of provisions and several cannons , which they soon transported to the Texian Army for use in the Siege of Béxar . The victory isolated Cos 's men in Béxar from the coast , forcing them to rely on a long overland march to request or receive reinforcements or supplies .

= = Background = =

In 1835 , Mexico operated two major garrisons within its Texas territory , the Alamo at San Antonio de Béxar and Presidio La Bahía near Goliad . Béxar was the political center of Texas , and Goliad laid halfway between it and the major Texas port of Copano . Military and civilian supplies and military personnel were usually sent by sea from the Mexican interior to Copano Bay and then could be transported overland to the Texas settlements .

In early 1835 , as the Mexican government transitioned from a federalist model to centralism , wary colonists in Texas began forming Committees of Correspondence and Safety . A central committee in San Felipe de Austin coordinated their activities . The Texians staged a minor revolt against customs duties in June ; these Anahuac Disturbances prompted Mexican President Antonio López de Santa Anna to send additional troops to Texas . In July , Colonel Nicolas Condelle , led 200 men to reinforce Presidio La Bahía . The following month , a contingent of soldiers arrived in Béxar with Colonel Domingo de Ugartechea . Fearing that stronger measures were needed to quell the unrest , Santa Anna ordered his brother @-@ in @-@ law , General Martín Perfecto de Cos to " repress with strong arm all those who , forgetting their duties to the nation which has adopted them as her children , are pushing forward with a desire to live at their own option without subjection to the laws " . Cos landed at Copano Bay on September 20 with approximately 500 soldiers . Cos briefly toured the port at Copano Bay and the small garrison at nearby Refugio and left small groups of soldiers to reinforce each of these locations . The main body of soldiers arrived in Goliad on October 2 .

Unbeknownst to Cos , as early as September 18 , several Texians , including James Fannin , Philip Dimmitt , and John Linn , had independently begun advocating a plan to seize Cos at either Copano or Goliad . As soon as Cos 's warships were spotted approaching Copano Bay , Refugio colonists sent messengers to San Felipe de Austin and Matagorda to inform the other settlements of Cos 's imminent arrival . Concerned that a lack of artillery would make the presidio at Goliad impossible to capture , the central committee chose not to order an assault .

Although Fannin , Dimmitt , and Linn continued to push for an attack on Goliad , Texian attention soon shifted towards Gonzales , where a small group of Texians were refusing to obey orders from Ugartechea . Colonists eagerly rushed to assist , and on October 2 the Battle of Gonzales officially opened the Texas Revolution . After learning of the Texian victory , Cos made haste for Béxar . He

left with the bulk of his soldiers on October 5 , but because he was unable to find adequate transportation most of his supplies remained at La Bahía .

= = Prelude = =

On October 6 , members of the Texian militia in Matagorda convened at the home of Sylvanus Hatch . As their first order of business they elected George Collinsworth as their captain ; Dr. William Carleton was then named first lieutenant and D.C. Collinsworth became the unit 's second lieutenant . After appointing their leaders , the men decided to march on La Bahía . They intended to kidnap Cos and , if possible , steal the estimated \$ 50 @, @ 000 that was rumored to accompany him . The Texians sent messengers to alert nearby settlements of their quest . By afternoon , 50 Texians were ready to march from Matagorda . During the march , for unknown reasons the men fired Carleton and appointed James W. Moore as the new first lieutenant .

The following day the expedition stopped at Victoria , where they were soon joined by English @-@ speaking settlers from other settlements and 30 Tejanos led by Plácido Benavides . Although no accurate muster rolls were kept , historian Stephen Hardin estimated that the Texian ranks swelled to 125 men . Forty @-@ nine of them signed a " Compact of Volunteers under Collinsworth " on October 9 . These men pledged that they were loyal to the Mexican federal government and would harm no one who remained loyal to the federalist cause .

One of the new arrivals , merchant Philip Dimmitt , received a missive from the Goliad customs agent with news that Cos and his war chest had already departed La Bahía to travel to San Antonio de Béxar . Undeterred , the group marched out on October 9 . Ira Ingram led the vanguard , which halted 1 mile ( 1 @. @ 6 km ) outside Goliad . The events that follow are not very clear . According to the memoirs of Mexican General Vicente Filisola , who was not in Texas in 1835 , the Texians plotted to draw the presidio commander , Colonel Juan López Sandoval , and his officers from the fort . The Texians allegedly planned a dance in Goliad on October 9 and invited the Mexican officers . Although Sandoval , Captain Manuel Sabriego , and Lieutenant Jesus de la Garza briefly attended the dance , they suspected mischief and returned to the fort . No Texian source mentions such a plot . Several of the Texians , including Dimmitt , did enter the town that evening to try to find guides and support for the effort . Dimmitt 's efforts were successful , and several of the Tejanos who lived near Goliad joined the Texian force . They reported that Sandoval commanded only 50 men ? far fewer than the number necessary to defend the entire perimeter of the fort ? and provided directions to the fort .

The main body of Texian soldiers , under Collinsworth , became disoriented in the dark and wandered from the road . They were soon tangled in a mesquite thicket . While working their way back towards the road , the Texians met Ben Milam , a Texas colonist who had recently escaped from prison in Monterrey . Milam joined the militia as a private , and the group soon rejoined the vanguard .

= = Battle = =

As the combined Texian force prepared for battle , they sent a messenger to instruct the alcalde of the city to surrender . At 11 pm , the alcade responded that the town would remain neutral , neither surrendering nor fighting . Several of the locals did , however , supply axes to the Texian militia . The Texians divided themselves into four groups , each assigned a different approach to the presidio . In the pre @-@ dawn hours of October 10 , the Texians attacked . The lone sentinel managed to give the alarm but was immediately shot dead . The Texians quickly hacked through a door on the north wall of the fortress and ran to the interior courtyard . Hearing the commotion , the Mexican soldiers had lined the walls to defend the fort .

The Mexican soldiers opened fire , hitting Samuel McCulloch , a former slave whom George Collinsworth had freed , in the shoulder . Texians returned fire for approximately 30 minutes . During a pause in the fighting , a Texian spokesman yelled out that they would " massacre everyone of you , unless you come out immediately and surrender " . The Mexican garrison immediately surrendered

= = Aftermath = =

McCulloch was the only Texian soldier to be wounded , and he later claimed to be the " first whose blood was shed in the Texas War for Independence " . This distinction earned him a permanent home ; a later law prohibited any freed slave from residing in the Republic of Texas , but in 1840 the Texas legislature specifically excluded McCulloch , his family , and his descendants from its enforcement . The exclusion was reward for McCulloch 's service and his injury .

Estimates of Mexican casualties range from one to three soldiers killed and from three to seven wounded . Approximately 20 soldiers escaped . They warned the garrisons at Copano and Refugio of the advancing Texians ; those garrisons abandoned their posts and joined the soldiers at Fort Lipantitlán . Milam escorted the remaining Mexican soldiers to Gonzales , where the newly formed Texian Army was located . The Texian Army commander , Stephen F. Austin , later released all of the men , on the condition that they leave Texas and vow to stop fighting Texas residents . One wounded Mexican soldier was allowed to remain in Goliad , as was Captain Manuel Sabriego , who was married to a local woman . In secret , Sabriego began organizing a group of settlers in the Goliad area who sympathized with Mexico .

Texian troops confiscated the provisions they found at the fort . Although they found 300 muskets , most of them were broken and unable to be repaired . Dimmitt hired two gunsmiths who were able to bring the remaining weapons into service . The food , clothing , blankets , and other provisions were valued at US \$ 10 @, @ 000 . The new quartermaster at the fort , John J. Linn , reported that 175 barrels of flour were confiscated , along with a large supply of sugar , coffee , whiskey , and rum . For the next three months , the provisions were parceled out among companies in the Texian Army . The Texians also gained control of several cannons .

Over the next several days , more Texian settlers joined the group at La Bahía . Many of them were from Refugio , a sprawling settlement that was furthest from Matagorda . Historian Hobart Huson speculates that these men were the last to receive word of the planned attack . Austin ordered that 100 men remain at Goliad , under the command of Dimmitt , while the rest should join the Texian Army in marching on Cos 's troops in Béxar . Collinsworth returned to Matagorda to recruit additional soldiers , but on October 14 the remaining Texians at Goliad began the march towards Béxar .

The loss of Goliad meant that Cos lost his means of communicating with Copano Bay , the closest port to Béxar . The Mexican troops garrisoned at Béxar would now need to get supplies and reinforcements overland .