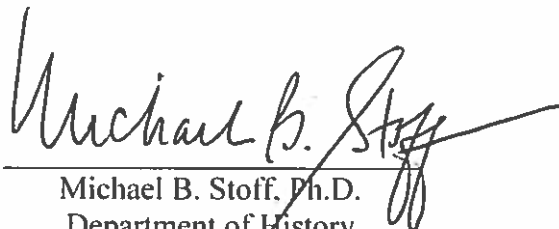


THE "BIG E" AND THE "MIGHTY T": SHIP MEMORIALS IN AMERICAN WAR MEMORY, 1945-1958


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ABSTRACT

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This thesis explores attempts to create war memorials from two retired American warships, the USS *Texas* and the USS *Enterprise*, in the decade following the end of the World War II. It attempts to answer the question of why the former, a relatively unknown ship that played a small role in both World Wars, became a memorial while the latter, one of the most celebrated ships in US naval history, did not. This question bears upon larger themes related to memory and memorialization, specifically the interplay between the past and present in creating a memorial's appeal.

I provide narratives of each ship's history with emphasis on the efforts to preserve the vessels as memorials after the war's conclusion. Focusing on the individuals and groups charged with leading the efforts to preserve the ships, I offer comparative analyses of the intended memorial purposes of each, the levels of organization involved in each effort, and the practical and financial issues associated with the planned memorials. The success of the *Texas* preservation efforts and the failure of those to save the *Enterprise* illustrate the importance of practical concerns, such as organization and monetary goals, as well as memorial concerns, such as the ability to connect an audience with the recalled past. In general, my findings support the conclusion that war memorials reflect more upon the context in which they are created than the history they represent.

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PREFACE

This project began long ago. My father first brought me to see the USS *Texas* when I was three years old. Family photos show me grinning as only little boys do, sitting in the gunner's seat and turning the wheels of an anti-aircraft gun on the ship's deck. Doing so had become something of a family tradition, for my oldest brother posed for similar pictures on the same gun fifteen years earlier, as had my father twenty years before him. I expect that pictures of my own children on the same old, rusty cannon will adorn my desk by the time I reach my father's age.

I remember the sense of astonishment that overcame me when I first laid eyes on the old battleship. It had not occurred to me that human beings could build something so enormous, especially something that could also travel faster than I could run. I was fascinated by large machines as most young boys are, but in scale and power the *Texas* dwarfed even the combines and tractors on my grandparents' farm. The ship was a floating city, at once imposing and beautiful, threatening and graceful. It reeked of the mystery and romance of that permeate nautical adventure stories but with a sense of a realism that made its mystique all the more alluring.

As I grew older and began to read more about the battles in which ships such as the *Texas* took part, a sense of historical awe augmented the boyish fascination of my childhood. I began to see warships not simply as impressive pieces of machinery but as places where the drama of history had *actually* played out. During World War I men had stood aboard the *Texas* and watched as torpedoes from a German submarine sped past their ship. During World War II a younger generation manned the ship's guns and supported the US Marines as they splashed ashore at Iwo Jima. The waters of the mid-Atlantic are far away and Iwo Jima even farther, but

stepping aboard the *Texas* seemed to transport me to these places, standing on the same decks walked by the men who had been there.

Having grown up in the State of Texas, I saw the battleship *Texas* as *our* ship, a living connection to the past with which I had become so enchanted. It was a piece of the cultural identity of my state, tied to our history by its name and its moorings at the San Jacinto Battleground, where in 1836 a group of Texas rebels defeated the Mexican army and secured their young nation's independence. I felt that having grown up in Texas, I somehow was entitled to the ship and therefore possessed a stake in its past. It allowed me to draw myself closer to the men who had escorted convoys aboard the ship during World War I as well as those who had fired upon Iwo Jima during World War II.

My interest in war stories peaked in high school, where I rushed to class to read a few more paragraphs about one battle or another before lecture began. In particular, the Pacific Theater of World War II fascinated me, both because of its naval focus and the strangeness of such a modern, industrial war set in a place that I perceived to be a tropical, primeval paradise. I devoured book after book about fights in far-off places with exotic names like Guadalcanal and Truk and attempted to put myself in the shoes of both admirals and privates alike. I even made it a project to read at least one book on every major engagement in the Pacific to form my own conclusions about the prosecution of the war on both sides.

As part of this project, I began to notice a name that seemed to persevere through every defeat and to preside over every victory on the American side of the conflict. Mention of this one ship permeates the history of the Pacific War with a frequency usually reserved for the protagonist of an adventure novel. It avoided destruction during the Pearl Harbor attack in 1941 by mere hours, participated in the first American offensive raids of the war, took part in every

major naval battle save one, and ended its combat career just months before the war's end at the hands of a young Japanese suicide pilot. The ship was the USS *Enterprise*, an aircraft carrier that rightly deserves then Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal's appraisal as "the one vessel that most nearly symbolizes the history of the navy in this war."¹

Having read so much about the ship's record and the exploits of its crew and pilots, I began to wonder why I could not walk aboard it as I could aboard the *Texas*. I felt a sense of regret that I could not stand where Admiral "Bull" Halsey had stood when he heard the news of the Pearl Harbor attack or wander across the hangar deck where a young Alvin Kernan had feverishly worked to prepare torpedo planes for their fateful sortie at the Battle of Midway. In my mind, the *Enterprise* represented a tangible place where many of the most hallowed moments in American naval history occurred. Though no doubt an important naval relic in its own right, the *Texas* could not match the record of the *Enterprise* or lay claim to an aura of historic importance of the magnitude that many assign to it. Unlike the *Texas*, the *Enterprise* did not survive as a memorial but rather succumbed to the scrapper's torch and hammer fifteen years after the end of the Second World War. It is no surprise that others before me have found this conclusion counterintuitive. How could we have let such an important piece of our national heritage disappear while preserving another not nearly as significant?

The question reflects my keen interest in military history, but at its core, this project is not military history in the conventional sense of chronicling battles large and small, on the battlefield and off. It seeks rather to place a military history topic within a broader context that extends beyond the actions of soldiers, sailors, and airmen. It is about the way we remember and commemorate their actions and the relics of war and what that tells us about who we think we

¹ Edwin P Stafford, *The Big E: The Story of the USS Enterprise* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2002), 543.

are and who we actually are. As David Blight observes in his study of Civil War memory, *Beyond the Battlefield*, people will continue to microscopically analyze the decisions of this general in that battle, “but the boundaries of military history are fluid; they connect with a broader social, cultural, and political history in myriad ways. In the long run, the meanings embedded in those epic fights are what should command our greatest attention.”²

In a general sense this thesis asks how people take from military history the “meanings” that Blight mentions, and how these “meanings” surface in social, cultural, and political spheres after the guns have fallen silent. I do not concern myself primarily with the history of the events that form the subject of memory, but rather the history of a specific instance in the formation of memory. My analysis offers little in the way of evaluating the actions of individuals during times of war. It does, however, provide insight into the actions of those seeking to *remember* war. In other words, I explore the insights to be gained from the success or failure of warship preservation to learn more about “the meanings embedded in those epic fights” like The Second World War.

² David Blight, *Beyond the Battlefield: Race, Memory, and the American Civil War* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), x.

INTRODUCTION

According to James Mayo, a war memorial “is, at its simplest, a social and physical arrangement of space and artifacts that keep alive the memories of those who were involved in a war. As an artifact a memorial helps create an ongoing order and meaning beyond the fleeting and chaotic experiences of life.”³ This definition hints at the two major components that combine to form the cultural significance assigned to any war memorial: the recalled past and the contextual present. In other words, memorials represent past figures and events for the interpretation of present audiences.

Both aspects weigh heavily upon the appeal of a given war memorial and affect the meaning individuals derive from them. On the surface, it seems that by evoking the past to “create an ongoing order and meaning beyond...the experiences of life,” the past would prove more consequential than the present in forming a spectator’s impression of a war memorial. This thesis tests that assumption by asking the following questions: in what ways do war memorials act as a medium through which the past and present interact? Which component of war memorials, the past or present, appeals most to contemporary audiences?

We approach these questions using two case studies of warships that became the focus of preservation efforts in the decade following the Second World War. The first, the battleship USS *Texas*, participated in both World Wars without achieving any major distinctions and ended its career as a war memorial in its namesake state. The second, the aircraft carrier USS *Enterprise*, served in the Pacific Theater of World War II and became one of the US Navy’s most decorated warships. Despite several attempts to raise money for the ship’s preservation, “the Big E” met its fate at a New Jersey scrapyard in the late 1950s.

³ James Mayo, *War Memorials as Political Landscape* (New York: Praeger, 1988), 1.

The *Texas* and the *Enterprise* serve as fitting examples for a number of reasons. By comparing failed and successful preservation attempts, we can gain a more informed picture of what went right and what went wrong in each case. The service records of the two warships also contrast strongly with one another, allowing us to analyze the effects of the recalled past, both epic and mundane, in generating contemporary appeal. If the history of a specific relic acts as the signal component in creating meaning for viewers, how is it that a warship as notable as the *Enterprise* failed to win enough public support to escape the scrapyard while the *Texas*, a much less notable ship, successfully became a war memorial? By exploring this contradiction, we answer the more general questions raised above.

Both examples share a chronological context that further increases their utility. The years in which the *Texas* went to Houston as a memorial and in which *Enterprise* went to New Jersey as a hulk, 1947 and 1958, respectively, both fall within the decade and a half following the Second World War. As Michael Kammen observes in his monumental study of memory in American history, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, the immediate postwar period distinguishes itself in the history of American memory not only through the increased “interest in the American past throughout the populace at large” that resulted from the war, but also because “the wartime frame of mind helped to enhance an almost reverential regard for the history of the United States.”⁴ Furthermore, Kammen explains, the contrast with totalitarianism abroad led to an increased focus on democratic institutions at home during the immediate postwar period. The years after 1945 were thus characterized by “a pronounced sense of discontinuity between the past and present.”⁵ In order to rebuild a sense of continuity with the past and to confirm a national identity in the face of new international threats, Americans increasingly emphasized

⁴ Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory* (New York: Knopf, 1991), 531-532.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 533.

collective memory over the decade or so following the end of war.⁶ All of these characteristics place both the *Texas* and the *Enterprise* within a critical period for the formation of memory in the United States, further increasing their value as telling examples for the purposes of this study.

In order to use our examples to understand how war memorials influence and reflect the formation of war memory, we will address the topic in two stages. The first will consist of narratives that recount the stories first of the *Texas* and then of the *Enterprise*, emphasizing their postwar fates and the efforts to preserve them as memorials. Because many books that cover the service histories of each ship and the battles in which they took place already exist, the discussion of each ship's wartime activities relies primarily upon secondary sources. In contrast, no secondary accounts specifically covering the postwar fates of the *Enterprise* and the *Texas* exist. For this reason, the sections of the work that deal with this topic draw exclusively from archival sources. After describing the events leading up to each ship's fate, we reach the second stage, which involves a comparative analysis. The final part of the thesis compares and contrasts the preservation efforts surrounding each ship and draws conclusions from their examples.

Having outlined the major factors that contributed to the success of the *Texas* memorial and the failure of the *Enterprise* memorial, we find that both our initial assumption as well as the principle on which it rests require revision. The underlying principle of our inquiry, namely that the success or failure of a given war memorial relies primarily on the interplay of past and present to create meaning, fails to take into account the practical concerns involved in projects as large as warship preservation. Regardless of the emotional appeal of any memorial, those hoping to successfully generate the publicity and financial support necessary to "adopt" a retired

⁶ *Ibid*, 532-533.

battleship or aircraft carrier must first consider the more practical problems of cost, location, legality, and organizational infrastructure.

The assumption that followed from the above principle, that the recalled past of a given warship plays a larger role than the contemporary circumstances surrounding its memorialization in creating popular appeal, also fails to hold up under close scrutiny. Practical concerns eventually prevented those responsible for the final and most significant *Enterprise* fundraising drive from testing the power of the ship's record in producing enthusiasm for the ship's memorialization. In the case of the *Texas*, however, we find that the ship's memorialization efforts succeeded in part because of the ship's ability to act in the present both as a societal model and a connection between the Texan identity and the larger, international historical narrative of the Second World War. The recalled past assumed secondary importance.

In the end, the postwar sagas of the *Texas* and the *Enterprise* support the conclusion that war memorials reflect more upon the context in which they are created than the history they represent.

CHAPTER 1

“At all these places “Old T” was ferocious...”

Steve Wilhelm, Radio Commentator, September 15, 1947⁷

On a bright, sunny day in mid-May, 1912, a crowd gathered around one of the large slips at the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company in Virginia. A bright array of flags strung up for the occasion fluttered madly in the wind. An enormous metal shape surrounded by elaborate wooden scaffolding towered over the onlookers. Like a great beached whale, the newest dreadnought of the United States Navy lay poised, ready to slide into the water for the first time.

As the ceremonies unfolded, Miss Claudia Lyon, dressed in white and clutching a festive bouquet of flowers, ascended the steps to the top of a wooden platform situated adjacent to the steel hull. The young daughter of a prominent Republican National Committee member from Texas, she gazed uneasily over a sea of bowler hats and bunting as all eyes focused on her. Wrapping her arm around the champagne bottle that hung precariously from above, she posed for a number of photos before going about the task at hand. Fifteen thousand spectators, among them Texas governor Oscar B. Colquitt, waited restlessly for the ship’s launch. Motion picture cameras, then a relatively new invention, spun into action to capture for the first time the launch of an American battleship. After much fanfare, Miss Lyon swung the champagne bottle against the ship’s bow. The bottle shattered, spraying the bow with champagne in a ritual already old. The metal monster then slid down the ways and met the water with a crash before it slowly

⁷ “KPRC & TQN: Battleship Texas Program” script, September 15, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

floated free. Consistent with the Navy's tradition of naming battleships after states, the Secretary of the Navy had decided that the new vessel would honor the country's 28th state. The United States Ship *Texas*, soon to be the most powerful battleship on Earth, had been launched.⁸

The *Texas* represented the latest embodiment of a tradition that had characterized naval warfare for centuries. Since the 16th century, the backbone of most navies consisted of large ships of the line armed almost exclusively with naval artillery. Though the introduction of metal hulls, steam propulsion, and ever-larger guns in the mid-nineteenth century replaced these craft with huge battleships – later called “dreadnoughts” - the nature of naval combat remained the same even through the First World War.⁹ Navies trained their men and built their ships to pound opposing fleets into submission with a deluge of gunfire in battles conducted in neat, orderly lines much like a board game.¹⁰ With main batteries of ten 14-inch naval cannons, the *Texas* and its sister ship, the *New York*, each possessed more firepower than any ship afloat when they entered service.¹¹

Following the its final completion nearly two years later, the *Texas* rested alongside a pier in Norfolk, Virginia. At half past noon sailors hoisted the colors, officially marking the ship's entry into the US fleet. Though most newly commissioned ships undergo a lengthy “shakedown” period of tests, training, and repairs directly after their commissioning, the *Texas* enjoyed no such luxury. International events intervened, and the ship's crew found itself heading

⁸ John C. Ferguson, *Historic Battleship Texas: The Last Dreadnought* (Abilene: State House Press, 2007), 17-19. Hugh Power, *Battleship Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1993), 7.

⁹ The name given to the type of battleship that followed the design of the HMS *Dreadnought* of 1906. These ships had heavy armor and a unified main battery of large caliber naval artillery. For more information, see Robert Massie, *Dreadnought: Britain, Germany, and the Coming of the Great War* (New York: Ballantine, 1991), 468-497.

¹⁰ Robert L. O'Connell, *Sacred Vessels: The Cult of the Battleship and the Rise of the U.S. Navy* (Boulder: Westview, 1991), 9-189.

¹¹ Ferguson, *Historic Battleship Texas*, 17.

towards the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico. US President Woodrow Wilson had sent a number of warships to Mexican waters in response to a military coup in that country that began the previous year. As the nation's newest and most powerful battleship, the *Texas* would provide a telling show of strength to deter any threats to US interests in Mexico. The ship and its crew saw no action, but they remained on station in Mexico periodically for several months before returning to New York for repairs in December 1914.¹²

In early November 1914, the ship visited its namesake state for the first time. Texans had agitated for months to host the battleship, though its busy schedule had so far prevented any visit. The powers-that-be finally consented, however, and on Friday, November 6, at 6:00 in the morning, the ship anchored in Bolivar Roads near Galveston. For six days the jubilant city hosted the *Texas* and its crew.¹³

"Galveston is in gala attire," one columnist wrote on November 7. "By day the streets are gay with flags and hurrying crowds...by night thousands of city lights gleam out toward the harbor roads, where can be seen the answering gleam of hundreds of lights festooned about the giant body of the great fighting machine – the dreadnought Texas."¹⁴ Texans from all over the state, including the same Governor Colquitt who had witnessed the launch of the ship, as well as delegations of school children, flocked to catch a glimpse of the enormous vessel. Special offers ran in local newspapers to transport people between Houston and Galveston by train, while Galvestonians threw open their doors to accommodate the flood of visitors. Pleasure craft made a

¹² *Ibid.*, 35-38. Power, *Battleship Texas*, 11.

¹³ "Battleship Texas Reaches Galveston," *Galveston Daily News*, Galveston, November 7, 1914, Texas Newspaper Collection, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, the University of Texas at Austin (hereafter cited as DBCAH).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

handsome profit shuttling people to and from the *Texas* as officials worked to organize special events for the crew.¹⁵

Elaborate balls and ceremonies centered upon the presentation of two silver service sets, to be used by the officers aboard ship. One of the sets, funded chiefly by donations from a young men's club in Waco, Texas, featured pieces specially etched with scenes from Texas history. The other, endowed by subscriptions from Texas school children, consisted of pieces from the silver service of the original battleship *Texas* as well as some crafted specifically for the event.¹⁶ The sets represented the connections felt by so many Texans to the ship and its role as an expression of American might. The *Texas* was 'their' ship, and it was cast as an extension of their state's history.

As an army officer present during the festivities remarked, "It is too bad that our units are not named after states, as the Texas Regiment, the New York Regiment, etc. Then we would 'belong' as do the men of the battleship *Texas*. [sic] That is why the people of the state are taking such an interest in this battleship and her visit to Galveston. They have a personal interest in it."¹⁷ No other ship and crew could have generated the level of public enthusiasm as that enjoyed by the *Texas* in November 1914.

From Galveston the ship returned to Mexico, and then to months of peacetime training and maneuvers along the Atlantic Coast. International events intervened once again, and the

¹⁵ *Ibid.*; "Lone Star State Greets Namesake," *Galveston Daily News*, Galveston, November 6, 1914, Texas Newspaper Collection, DBCAH.

¹⁶ "Silver Services Given Battleship," *Galveston Daily News*, Galveston, November 8, 1914, Texas Newspaper Collection, DBCAH. The original battleship *Texas*, built in the 1880s, served in the Spanish-American War. The Navy renamed the older ship in order to make the name "Texas" available for its newer successor. "USS *Texas* (1895-1911), later renamed *San Marcos*," *Naval History and Heritage Command*, Accessed March 20, 2016, Available at <http://www.history.navy.mil/our-collections/photography/us-navy-ships/battleships/texas.html>.

¹⁷ "Battleship *Texas* Reaches Galveston," *Galveston Daily News*, Galveston, November 7, 1914, Texas Newspaper Collection, DBCAH.

ship's crew prepared feverishly following the entry of the United States into World War I in April 1917. After months of training and repairs, the *Texas* arrived at Scapa Flow, the principle base of the British Grand Fleet in the North Sea, on February 11, 1918.¹⁸ The ship joined four other American dreadnoughts that US naval command had sent to augment the British battleship force. For most of the year, the *Texas* and the rest of Admiral Hugh Rodman's 6th Battleship Division accompanied the Grand Fleet in its almost constant forays to search for and guard against the German High Seas Fleet. The American crews, unaccustomed to the cold and violent conditions of the North Sea, worked enthusiastically to make up for their lack of experience compared to their British counterparts.¹⁹

After the Battle of Jutland in 1916, during which the combined forces of both the British and German fleets had severely but inconclusively bloodied one another, no major fleet engagements took place in the North Sea. What little contact the *Texas* and its companions had with the elusive German foe in 1918 was limited to U-boat encounters. On February 16, a *Texas* lookout spotted what seemed to be submarine periscope, prompting one of the ship's secondary gun crews to let loose the first salvoes the ship had ever fired in anger. Almost exactly two months later, on April 17, the ship's crew breathed a sigh of relief as a German torpedo passed harmlessly between the *Texas* and another American battleship. Again the secondary gunners aboard the *Texas* fired shots at the fleeing U-boat in what proved to be her last engagement of the war. Indeed, the two incidents constituted all of the action the *Texas* would see during the war, and the ship spent the remainder of its time in European waters training and patrolling. After the

¹⁸ Ferguson, *Historic Battleship Texas*, 41-44.

¹⁹ Robert K. Massie, *Castles of Steel: Britain, Germany, and the Winning of the Great War at Sea* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2003), 756-761.

German surrender in November 1918, the American squadron returned to New York on Christmas Day.²⁰

The period between the two World Wars saw much activity for the *Texas* and its crew. The ship gained the distinction of becoming the first battleship in the US Navy to launch an airplane from its decks (this at Guantanamo, Cuba, in 1919), after which the *Texas* occupied itself with routine duties for several years. The seasoned ship underwent a major modernization in 1925-1926 and emerged as the fleet flagship on November 23, 1926, a status it would hold almost continuously until the mid-1930s. The ship and its crew operated in both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans and gained notoriety within the fleet after winning several fleet athletic and engineering competitions. Despite many modifications to keep pace with naval technology, the *Texas* began to show its age, and naval authorities soon regarded it as past its prime. By the late 1930s, the ship's assignments consisted of training exercises for new personnel entering the fleet.²¹

The outbreak of war in Europe in September 1939 changed the fate of the *Texas*. Rather than being mothballed, the ship spent the majority of 1940 and 1941 conducting "neutrality patrols" in the North Atlantic, escorting convoys to a point at which the British Royal Navy would assume the task. Just as in World War I, the ship had several encounters with German submarines during this period, almost falling victim to an enemy torpedo on at least one occasion in 1941.²²

News of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, reached the men of the *Texas* while the ship was anchored in Maine. Now at war, the patrolling, escorting, and training continued, though

²⁰ Ferguson, *Historic Battleship Texas*, 46-51.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 53-64.

²² Alan F Pater, *United States Battleships: The History of America's Greatest Fighting Fleet* (Beverly Hills: Monitor Book Company, 1968), 226.

under the real threat of attack. The ship kept up the routine and avoided any major incidents until October 1942, when the *Texas* sailed from Virginia to take part in the Allied invasion of North Africa, known as Operation Torch. The guns of the *Texas* would not be used to attack enemy battleships as their designers had envisioned, but rather would serve as a massive artillery battery to support the American troops going ashore.²³

On November 8, 1942, over 28 years after the ship joined the fleet, the 14-inch rifles that had awed the world upon their completion opened fire on an enemy for the first time. To cover units tasked with capturing an airfield north of Casablanca, the ship fired 59 rounds of main battery ammunition at enemy positions, over one third of which failed to detonate. The *Texas* remained in the area for several days, providing more fire support and serving as a floating radio broadcast station before returning to the United States on November 27. The short-lived excitement soon faded as the crew resumed the familiar duties of escort and training, escort and training.²⁴

After another year and a half, the *Texas* departed American waters and pointed its bow towards Europe. This time the ship would lend its firepower to help crack Hitler's "Fortress Europe" in support of Operation Overlord, the Allied invasion of Normandy. In the early morning hours of June 6, 1944, the *Texas*'s guns unleashed a barrage against the enemy once more. The target was a German battery supposedly located atop a set of cliffs west of Omaha Beach known as Point Du Hoc. Though the Germans had relocated their guns elsewhere just before the invasion, the *Texas*'s fire devastated the remaining German positions and softened the resistance awaiting the Army Rangers attempting to scale the cliffs. The ship acted as a floating

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Ferguson, *Historic Battleship Texas*, 90-97.

field hospital during the second half of that famous day and remained on station until June 18, when American forces had advanced beyond the range of its guns.²⁵

The last week of June 1944 saw the *Texas* off Cherbourg in a duel with German shore batteries. During the action on June 25, the *Texas* came under enemy gunfire for the first time. At 1:16 in the afternoon on June 25, a German shell struck one of the bridge supports and detonated, ripping apart both man and metal. A quartermaster who had been at the ship's helm directly over the point of impact died within minutes. Though the explosion wounded many others, the unfortunate helmsman became the ship's only combat fatality during its long period of service. Another shell struck the ship an hour later but failed to explode. Having sustained enough damage from the first hit, the ship steamed back to England early the next morning. In a few weeks the *Texas* sailed to the Mediterranean, where it again provided artillery support for American troops landing ashore, this time in southern France. Combined with the virtual destruction of the German fleet by this point, the end of major amphibious operations in Europe signaled that the *Texas* and its guns could be of better use elsewhere, and the ship headed home in September 1944.²⁶

The final stages of the *Texas*'s service life played out far from Europe in the rolling blue swells of the Pacific Ocean. The nature of the fighting in the Pacific as well as the determined resistance of the Japanese meant that more invasions and more battleships to support them would be needed. After several months of rest, refitting, and training, the *Texas* sailed through the Panama Canal and reached Pearl Harbor, where the crew celebrated both Christmas and New Year's Day. Having enjoyed the Hawaiian hospitality, they soon found themselves heading towards a porkchop-shaped island in the western Pacific known as Iwo Jima. For three weeks

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 98-118.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 118-125.

during February and March 1945, the ship stayed in position off the miserable island, blasting Japanese positions at point blank range while the US Marines bled and died ashore. Though the ship itself never came under enemy fire, spotter planes from the *Texas* flew constant sorties, often barely making it back. The continuous threat of air attack exhausted the crew, for one moment of relaxation could allow the Japanese to attack unnoticed and lead to disaster.²⁷

An even longer and more exhausting assignment followed, as the *Texas* sailed for Okinawa to support the final major amphibious operation of the war. Between March 25 and May 14, 1945, the crew of the *Texas* assumed their familiar role as a floating support battery. During the battle for the island, the *Texas* had its first experience with the terrible Japanese weapon known as the Kamikaze. Having witnessed the destruction inflicted by suicide planes on other ships and having seen his ship narrowly avoid similar blows, Captain Charles A. Baker kept his anti-aircraft crews at their stations for fifty straight days. Sailors from the *Texas* had the satisfaction of taking one of the downed Japanese pilots as a prisoner on March 29, though soon afterwards they settled back into their grim routine. Once again the ship's planes bore the brunt of the damage inflicted on the *Texas* during the battle, one of which returned so damaged that it had to be sunk by gunfire.²⁸

After Okinawa the ship saw little action, and the end of its second and final war found the *Texas* conducting patrols and maneuvers in Philippine waters. The ship returned to California in October 1945 to participate in the Navy Day Celebrations in San Pedro, after which it made three runs to Pearl Harbor as part of Operation Magic Carpet, returning servicemen and women to the United States.²⁹ Old, worn-out, and obsolete, the *Texas* sailed to Norfolk, Virginia, in February

²⁷ Pater, *United States Battleships*, 229; Ferguson, *Historic Battleship Texas*, 136-150.

²⁸ Ferguson, *Historic Battleship Texas*, 151-160.

²⁹ Pater, *United States Battleships*, 230.

1946. There, in the same port where it had become a part of the US Navy 32 years earlier, the ship underwent deactivation work before being towed to Baltimore in June to await whatever fate had in store for it.³⁰ The USS *Texas* had participated in both of the most cataclysmic wars in modern history, had fought across two of the world's largest oceans, and had survived the transition from the steam age to the atomic age during its service in the US Navy. The "Mighty T" had not changed history, but it had born witness to some of history's most transformative moments. What would become of the ship now?

³⁰ Ferguson, *Historic Battleship Texas*, 166.

CHAPTER 2

“The entire affair seems to have been quite a success....”

William McGill, Executive Secretary to Texas Governor Beauford Jester, April 23, 1948³¹

Events that would prove consequential for the *Texas*'s fate were set in motion even before the Navy had retired the ship. The end of the war meant that much of the enormous military and naval buildup that had occurred over the past six years was no longer necessary. Changing strategic and tactical concerns as well as a drastically reduced budget meant that the Navy had to discharge millions of personnel and dispose of an enormous amount of surplus equipment. Ships constituted a large portion of this surplus and the Navy scrambled to rid itself of old, obsolete vessels that could no longer meet its needs. The rise of aircraft carriers and submarines in naval doctrine meant that modern navies had little use for fleets of gun-toting battleships, especially those such as the 32-year-old dreadnought *Texas*.

Many in the United States had already begun to recognize the monumental historic importance of the events through which their country had just passed. The beginning of the post-war period in the United States brought a strong interest in the past fueled by the recognition that the country had just witnessed a turning point in national and world history. Furthermore, the continued contrast with a totalitarian opponent at the beginning of the Cold War encouraged Americans to remember the war as a victory of capitalist, democratic institutions.³² Such an environment proved fertile for the establishment of memorials to express American memory of

³¹ William McGill to Paul Wakefield, April 23, 1948, Records, Texas Governor Beauford H. Jester, Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission (hereafter cited as “Governor Jester Records, TSLAC”).

³² Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 531-533.

the war, and retired military equipment seemed the obvious choice for representing an American triumph of arms.

On November 1, 1945, while the old battleship shuttled servicemen and women home from Pearl Harbor, David Walsh, a US Senator from Massachusetts, introduced Senate Bill 1547. Formally entitled “A bill to provide for the disposition of vessels, trophies, relic, and material of historical interest by the Secretary of the Navy, and for other purposes,” S. 1547 would allow the government to transfer war relics to local or private entities for memorial purposes if the transfers would not incur any costs for the government.³³ Walsh had foreseen the impetus towards memorialization that began after the war, and his bill suggested that surplus ships could fulfill similar purposes if the government permitted it. Walsh’s senatorial colleagues agreed with his general premise, and S. 1547 passed into the law on August 7, 1946.³⁴

Texans had not forgotten the sentiments expressed at Galveston in 1914. Their connection to the *Texas* prompted much agitation upon the announcement that the ship would be retired. Many felt that rather than going to the scrap heap, the “Mighty T” should come home as a memorial. The protests prompted then Texas Governor Coke Stevenson to request a hold on the ship’s status in January 1946. Pending the passage of S. 1547, which would allow the US government to place the ship under state ownership, the state could then go about the business of accepting the *Texas*.³⁵

Stevenson followed his request by sending J. Russell Wait, General Manager of the Port of Houston, to Washington to discuss the specifics of the transfer with Navy representatives in March 1946. Wait met for three days with various officers and worked out details concerning the

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal to Texas Governor Beauford Jester, April 10, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

necessary steps for accepting ownership of the *Texas*. They included cost estimates of things such as maintaining the ship and preparing it for exhibition, constructing a berth for the ship in Texas, and moving the ship to its new home. The meetings also concerned various practical considerations that would have to be addressed before the Navy would agree to a transfer, such as establishing minimum maintenance standards and a division of responsibility between state and national governments.³⁶

Wait returned to Houston at the beginning of April. In Washington he had explained to the Navy that no authority in Texas besides the legislature could accept the battleship on behalf of the state. The Navy agreed to wait until the next meeting of the legislature in January 1947 to gain the state's official approval. Wait promised to push a decision concerning the ship's fate as soon as possible after the legislature convened. Meanwhile, the Navy would expedite the work required to prepare the ship for exhibition.³⁷ Wait continued to correspond with Navy officials until June, at which point they reached an understanding concerning most of the details of the transfer. After two months of discussion, Wait wrote to Stevenson, concluding, "It is evident now that it will cost a considerable sum of money to properly dock the vessel, and there is a question as to who is going to put up the money and who will administer the vessel after it is docked." Wait promised to meet with local interests to learn who might accept the ship and how.³⁸ Despite numerous internal calls to use the *Texas* as a nuclear test target or sell it for scrap

³⁶ J. Russell Wait to Texas Governor Coke Stevenson, April 5, 1946, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC; Captain B.V. Russell, US. Navy, to J. Russell Wait, April 3, 1946, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC; Bureau of Ships report to Chief of Naval Operations, US Navy, April 2, 1946, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

³⁷ Captain B. V. Russell to J Russell Wait, April 3, 1946. Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

³⁸ J. Russell Wait to Texas Governor Coke Stevenson, June 4, 1946, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

over the following months, the Navy kept its word and patiently awaited the decision of the Texas legislature for the remainder of 1946.³⁹

While Wait represented official efforts to accept the ship on behalf of Texas, smaller local and private organizations in the state began a series of decentralized efforts to raise money for and awareness of the *Texas*. For over a year beginning in May 1946, Joseph B. Hutchison, commander of a Veterans of Foreign Wars post in Houston, met with numerous city, state, and national officials to organize fundraising efforts for accepting and maintaining the ship in Houston. Assuming the title “The Battleship Texas Fundraising Committee” in April 1947, Hutchison and his associates made valuable contributions to the preservation efforts, especially as lobbyists in the state legislature in early 1947.⁴⁰ Local communities all over Texas also began fundraising campaigns on their own initiative in 1946 and early 1947, with towns such as La Porte and El Campo doing their best to “bring [the *Texas*] back home.”⁴¹

Despite the earnestness and sincerity of the various grassroots movements, a project of this scale required centralized, state-level organization if it hoped to succeed. In order to bring the *Texas* back home, Texas Senator Lacy Stewart introduced Texas HB 623 to the state House of Representatives in March 1947.⁴² Several weeks of debate at the capitol addressed the major issues of contention, including whether the state should appropriate public funds to help finance the adoption and maintenance of the ship, where the ship should be berthed, and which patriotic

³⁹ Captain B.V. Russell, US. Navy, to J. Russell Wait, October 21, 1946, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

⁴⁰ Joseph B. Hutchison to Texas Governor Beauford Jester, April 24, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

⁴¹ H.B. Harrison to Texas Governor Beauford H. Jester, April 10, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC; Jim Felkner to Texas Governor Beauford H Jester, March 21, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

⁴² Joseph B. Hutchison to Governor Jester, April 24, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

and historic groups should be on the committee tasked to oversee the effort.⁴³ Ultimately, the state decided to accept the transfer, stipulating that a berth would be constructed as part of the San Jacinto Battleground Park in Houston. The law set aside no funds, and instead formed the Battleship Texas Committee (BTC) to facilitate statewide public subscription efforts for the ship's berthing and other costs. The governor of Texas would appoint the nine committee members, including two members of the general public and one each from organizations such as the Sons and Daughters of the Republic of Texas, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the American Legion, and so on.⁴⁴

The bill provided for the establishment of the *Texas* at San Jacinto, one of the state's most sacred historic sites, as "a fitting and lasting permanent memorial commemorating the participation of our State in the Second World War."⁴⁵ The intended effects of the chosen location were not accidental, for berthing the *Texas* next to the famous battlefield made a strong statement connection between the ship, World War II, and Texas history. The importance that the ship would hold as part of the memorial landscape did not escape members of the many patriotic, historical, and veteran organizations of the state, leading to, in the words of one observer, "some great jockeying for position" among them to secure appointments to the BTC.⁴⁶ The groups did not want to miss out on the prestige that would no doubt accompany the successful conclusion such a momentous project. In any case, the bill passed both houses on April 17 and gained Governor Jester's approval on May 1. Due to the sense of "emergency and public necessity" imposed by pressing Navy budget concerns, lawmakers suspended the usual

⁴³ William McGill to Colonel Paul Brown, April 12, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

⁴⁴ *An Act Authorizing the acceptance of the Battleship "Texas,"* 50th Legislature, Regular Session, chapter 139, 1947, *General and Special Laws of Texas*, Accessed March 22, 2016, Available at http://www.lrl.state.tx.us/scanned/sessionLaws/50-0/HB_623_CH_139.pdf

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ William McGill to Colonel Paul Brown, April 12, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

requirement that laws go into affect ninety days after their passage. HB 623 went into action as soon as Governor Jester signed it.⁴⁷

The progress of the bill through the state Legislature generated considerable publicity for the ship, prompting many members of the public to express their opinions regarding its memorialization. A primary memorial function envisioned by many in the state was to preserve the memory of the Texas men who had served in the armed forces, especially the Navy, during the Second World War. Veterans and their families expressed the hope that by bringing the *Texas* to rest in their state, they would gain a public means by which to permanently honor the sacrifices of their comrades and loved ones.⁴⁸ The *Texas* would serve not only to perpetuate honor, but also to educate future generations about the legacy of their forefathers and inspire them to take up arms in defense of the same democratic values for which so many Texans had sacrificed their lives.⁴⁹

Jester, who succeeded Stevenson as governor of Texas in early 1947, initially hoped the City of Houston and the surrounding area would spearhead the fundraising efforts. This met with much opposition in principle as well as for practical reasons. One concerned citizen wrote to Jester in March and framed a key question:

It does not seem logical to expect some individual or some group of individuals in Houston to undertake the financing of a project of this nature. If the ship is brought to

⁴⁷ An Act Authorizing the acceptance of the Battleship “Texas,” 50th Legislature, Regular Session, chapter 139, 1947, *General and Special Laws of Texas*, Accessed March 22, 2016, Available at http://www.lrl.state.tx.us/scanned/sessionLaws/50-0/HB_623_CH_139.pdf

⁴⁸ Harry Armistead to Texas Governor Beauford H. Jester, April 12, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC; Mrs. E. R. Donnel to Texas Governor Beauford H. Jester, August 8, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC; Mrs. Harry Lee Olson to Texas Governor Beauford H. Jester, July 9, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC; Colonel C. H. Fitzgerald to Texas Governor Beauford H. Jester, March 28, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

⁴⁹ Vice Admiral (retired) Adolphus Andrews to Texas Governor Beauford H. Jester, March 11, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC; Mrs. E. R. Donnel to Texas Governor Beauford H. Jester, August 8, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

Texas it would be for the benefit of the whole people of Texas...It seems to me, therefore, that the whole question resolves itself into whether or not the people of Texas want to preserve the Battleship Texas as a shrine for its people, the schoolchildren, and future generations; or let it be scrapped by the Navy Department.⁵⁰

Whether the ship would come to Texas and what it would represent had clearly become an issue in which every Texan had a stake. Some voices did oppose the efforts, especially when it seemed that the state would appropriate public funds to bring the *Texas* down from the East Coast and maintain it in Houston.⁵¹ Regardless, it seemed that a strong enough incentive existed to raise the necessary funds.

During the summer of 1947 members of the Texas government worked frantically to prepare for a massive statewide drive. This involved the selection and appointment of prominent state figures to the BTC as well as the fending off of threats by the Navy to scrap the ship if the state failed to meet certain deadlines. The most important appointment Jester made to the committee was that of Lloyd Gregory, a member of the VFW, as chairman on May 15.⁵² It was no coincidence that Gregory also worked as the vice president and general manager of the *Houston Post*, a major newspaper at the time. His skills as a publicist, his energy, and his connections would prove to be deciding factors in the coming campaign.

On June 20, 1947, Captain Charles McVay, acting commandant of the 8th Naval District, wrote to Jester to obtain an estimate for a date of transfer. "Due to reduced appropriations and shortages of personnel the early turnover of this ship becomes a matter of the utmost urgency,"

⁵⁰ O.H. Carlisle to Texas Governor Beauford H. Jester, March 13, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

⁵¹ A Rogers Mielly to Texas Governor Beauford H. Jester, March 16, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC; Lois Perry to Texas Governor Beauford H. Jester, September 15, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC

⁵² Lloyd Gregory to Texas Governor Beauford H. Jester, May 15, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

he explained.⁵³ A month later, the Chief of Naval Operations told McVay that unless the Navy received a definite time commitment from Texas before September 1st, “other means of disposal will be considered.”⁵⁴ In other words, the Navy would sell the *Texas* as scrap. Chairman Gregory responded swiftly. On August 11, he informed the Chief of Naval Operations and fellow Texan Chester Nimitz that despite the Navy’s financial concerns, “I feel we are entitled to a fair chance to raise the money [to bring the *Texas* to Houston] by public subscription. Please let us know your decision at once, as we are rather stymied until we know if the Navy will give us the time necessary to put on our campaign.”⁵⁵ Nimitz, who had previously shown his support for memorializing the *Texas*, moved the deadline back to October 15.⁵⁶

Given a reprieve, the BTC made the necessary arrangements to begin its drive on September 15, 1947. The organizers looked back to the ship’s visit to Galveston in 1914 for inspiration. The *Texas* had promoted great interest across the state on that occasion, and it seemed that similar methods could work again. One of the silver service sets donated to the ship in 1914 came about as a result of fundraising efforts by a young men’s group in Waco, which foretold the heavy emphasis upon patriotic and veteran organizations for this new effort. The second set, an enlarged version of the service used aboard the original battleship *Texas*, came from the small donations of schoolchildren across the state. The success of that venture was not lost on the committee members, influencing their decision to wait until September, “when the

⁵³ Captain Charles B. McVay to Texas Governor Beauford H. Jester, June 20, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

⁵⁴ Captain R. K. Wells to Lloyd Gregory, August 4, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

⁵⁵ Lloyd Gregory to Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, August 11, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

⁵⁶ Chief of Naval Operations to Commandant, 8th Naval District, November 7, 1947, Folder BB35 1947, Box 226, Unclassified Central Correspondence 1946-66, General Records, Records of the Bureau of Ships, 1794-1972, Records of the Bureau of Ships, Record Group 19, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as “BuShips Records, NA”).

heat wave will be broken, the vacation season over, and the children back in school,” to begin their drive in earnest, as Gregory explained. “We have counted heavily on the pennies and nickels of the school kids.”⁵⁷

No doubt a result of Gregory’s prompting, the *Houston Post* ran a front-page article on August 15 to announce the date on which the BTC would kick off its fundraising efforts. The article set the goal for the drive at \$225,000, including \$175,000 to construct the *Texas*’s berth at San Jacinto and \$50,000 to provide for the first year of maintenance. Wait’s prediction about the “considerable sum” required to memorialize the *Texas* had proven correct, but the members of the BTC remained undaunted. “I am confident that the loyal people of the Lone Star state will be generous in their contributions for this patriotic purpose,” Gregory noted. “The commission hopes that people in all walks of life will contribute, from school children in the first grade to our wealthiest patriots. Pennies, nickels, dimes will be welcomed and accepted in the spirit in which they are given.”⁵⁸ In other words, the commissioners decided to institute a “shock-and-awe” campaign, relentlessly canvassing for donations and financial support from all levels of society.

The BTC began its fundraising drive on September 15, 1947. Broadcasting throughout the state from the Texas Quality Network’s Houston studios, Gregory brought together an impressive group of advocates, including politicians, admirals, and celebrities, for a radio program to urge Texans to contribute to the cause. Patriotic songs such as “Stars and Stripes” and the “Eyes of Texas,” as well as version of “My Heart Sings” specially arranged for the occasion, played throughout, punctuating the emotional appeals of the speakers. The *Texas* became much more than a ship as the hosts elevated it to the status of a human veteran. They

⁵⁷ Gregory to Nimitz, August 11, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

⁵⁸ “Battleship Texas Drive Opens Sept. 15,” *Houston Post*, Houston, August 15, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

treated “her,” read the script, as a “heroine [and] a veteran of two great wars and countless campaigns, now ready for retirement with the highest honors a grateful state and nation can bestow.” The issue no longer concerned efforts to preserve a ship, but rather a dire struggle in which “a valiant lady fights for her life.” By contributing to the cause of bringing the *Texas* to San Jacinto as a memorial, grateful Texans would invite the old veteran to “come on home to rest.”⁵⁹

Governor Jester appealed to the strong sense of identity that characterizes the state of Texas. “This is a typically Texas project,” he explained. “It was conceived in Texas patriotism, born of Texas pride and will grow lustily from the spirit and support of Texans.” By underwriting the efforts to preserve the old battleship, Texans could prove to the rest of the world that they finished what they started, that the pride they professed for their state was no idle boast. Jester depicted the memorial project as a great link between the state’s glorious past and its recent efforts in a global struggle. Both the ship itself and the state’s efforts to adopt it would make powerful statements to those at home and abroad about the strength of the Texan identity and its historical roots. “I am happy to be here,” he concluded, “and have a part in this program of Texas patriotism, of Texas spirit and Texas appeal.”⁶⁰

Each speaker mentioned the ship’s war record, noting that its participation in two world wars merited its preservation. “Her record in World War Two is remarkable!” noted one of them, “She was at Casa Blanca [sic]! At Gibraltar! At Morocco! At Normandy! At all these places ‘Old T’ was ferocious.” Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, who prepared a statement for the program, noted that, “The Texas [sic] has lived up to the traditions for which it was named. It is

⁵⁹ “KPRC & TQN: Battleship Texas Program” script, September 15, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

⁶⁰ Texas Governor Beauford H. Jester, radio program script draft, undated, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

being identified with the cause of liberty and freedom in two wars. It has left a great and honorable record.” Jester mentioned his own pride in taking part in the efforts to preserve the ship, “instead of permitting the proud Battleship Texas with its superb fighting record in World Wars I and II to be junked, as an over-aged battlewagon.” Its status as a veteran of both world wars meant that the ship had become a symbol of freedom, comparable to the USS Constitution and the Alamo. Preserving such a symbol constituted a worthy use of private donations, or so its proponents argued.⁶¹

The looming Cold War figured heavily into calculations of the proponents. Having served in battle on several occasions, the *Texas* now had a way to continue its service in the country’s newest conflict. William McGill, Jester’s executive secretary, stressed to the governor that, “the public is now thinking of food campaigns, high prices, and Vishinsky [sic] and is little interested in war relics.”⁶² Andrey Vyshinsky, then Soviet Ambassador to the United Nations, had been on the cover of the September 29, 1947, issue of *Time* Magazine. The story warned readers of Soviet obstructionism in the UN General Assembly, developments made all the more ominous by reports in the same issue of communist aggression on the Italian border.⁶³ The BTC and its allies hoped to harness the public preoccupation with the Cold War to promote their cause rather than distract from it. “I believe you have a great opportunity to render patriotic service [by donating to the *Texas* drive],” Gregory argued, for “we hear a lot now about the threat of Communism to our free American institutions and I don’t know any greater way to meet the

⁶¹ “KPRC & TQN: Battleship Texas Program” script, September 15, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

⁶² William McGill to Texas Governor Beauford H. Jester, October 20, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

⁶³ “The Kremlin’s Vishinsky: Which world do Russia’s masters believe in?” *Time*, September 29, 1947, 29-32, Accessed March 22, 2016, Available at <http://time.com/vault/issue/1947-09-29//>

challenge than to keep reminding our children of their great American heritage.”⁶⁴ In their eyes, the retired battleship was not only relevant to the Cold War. It was essential in providing future generations with the inspiration to carry on the struggle against a new totalitarian threat.

Despite the remarkable fanfare surrounding the drive’s launch, the BTC soon ran into trouble. Donations did not come flowing in as the committee members had expected, and many began to wonder whether they could meet the Navy’s October 15 deadline. Writing to Jester on October 10, Gregory explained that the situation looked “desperate” and noted his concern that, “Unless we can make some substantial progress in raising a fund to carry in a state-wide campaign, I believe that the Battleship Texas Commission at its next meeting will ask the governor to relieve it of its responsibility.”⁶⁵ With a cruel sense of irony, it seemed that Nimitz’s optimistic September prediction that “this campaign will turn out to be one of the shortest on record in Texas or anywhere else” might come true, though for different reasons than he and others had expected.⁶⁶

The Navy’s October 15 deadline, after which “other means of disposal will be considered,” came and went, and the BTC still could not provide a concrete date at which it would accept ownership of the *Texas*.⁶⁷ Would the ship end up on the scrap heap after everything the organizers had done? Keenly aware of the seriousness of the situation, Gregory managed to stay the Navy’s axe for several more days. On October 18, Jester received a letter from Frank Butler, Jr., President of an organization known as the “Texas Jaycees,” short for the Texas Junior

⁶⁴ “Jaycees to Spark Campaign to Get U.S.S. Texas Home,” *Houston Post*, Houston, November 20, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

⁶⁵ Lloyd Gregory to Texas Governor Beauford H. Jester, October 10, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

⁶⁶ “KPRC & TQN: Battleship Texas Program” script, September 15, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

⁶⁷ Captain R. K. Wells to Lloyd Gregory, August 4, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

Chambers of Commerce. A service organization comprised mostly of veterans, the Jaycees had connections in hundreds of cities across the state and had extensive experience conducting large-scale fundraising. Butler had offered his organization's services to the BTC before but received no reply. Concerned that the *Texas* drive had stalled, Butler reaffirmed to Jester that, "The Jaycees have the energy and enthusiasm to put the job over and we are respectfully requesting that you designate our organization to lead the campaign and to raise the funds."⁶⁸

Here was an opportunity that Gregory and Jester could hardly ignore. The Jaycees would provide the urgency, enthusiasm, organization, and boots on the ground that the BTC could never muster on its own. Perhaps as a response to Butler's offer, McGill warned the governor of the power of everyday concerns in distracting the public from the cause. The *Texas* drive would be hopeless, McGill concluded, "unless it was undergirded with the most comprehensive organization."⁶⁹ If Butler's offer were sincere, the Jaycees constituted the solution to the BTC's fundraising problems.

Three days later, Gregory accepted Butler's offer. Noting that the governor shared his appreciation, Gregory happily concluded, "I can't tell you how gratified I am that the JC's have agreed to spearhead this campaign; I feel your action assures its ultimate success."⁷⁰ In just five days, the gloomy prospects of the *Texas* had seemingly been reversed. Gregory met with Navy representatives at the end of October with newfound confidence and arranged for a new deadline of January 1, 1948, by which time the state had to arrange a concrete date of delivery for the old

⁶⁸ Frank Butler, Jr., to Texas Governor Beauford H. Jester, October 18, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

⁶⁹ William McGill to Texas Governor Beauford H. Jester, October 20, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

⁷⁰ Lloyd Gregory to Frank Butler, Jr., October 23, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

battleship.⁷¹ This was the state's last chance to save the ship, but Jester and the members of the BTC felt that they now possessed the means to do it.

Starting in November 1947, Butler and his organization began preparations to raise the thousands of dollars still needed to finance the transfer. Using their connections with Parent Teacher Associations and School Boards across the state, the Jaycees coordinated a massive appeal to Texas schoolchildren in the possibly naïve hopes that their contributions would provide a significant portion of the necessary funds, as had been the case with the *Texas's* silver service set in 1914. In response to a request by Gregory and Butler, Jester named December 7th, 1947, the 6th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack, as Battleship Texas Day.⁷² This provided an occasion on which teachers and administrators across Texas would ask their students to donate spare change to the cause.⁷³

In addition to the boost provided by the Texas Jaycees, the BTC gained another powerful organizational ally in early December. Karl Hoblitzelle, head of a large network of movie and vaudeville theaters across the state known as Interstate Theaters, notified all of his city managers that they would host a “midnight show in every town and city where we have theatres” on January 24, 1948, the proceeds from which would go to the drive to preserve the *Texas*. On his own initiative, Hoblitzelle coordinated Interstate's efforts with the Jaycees, who would help to

⁷¹ Chief of Naval Operations to Commandant, 8th Naval District, November 7, 1947, Unclassified Central Correspondence 1946-66, BuShips Records, NA.

⁷² Texas Governor Beauford H. Jester to Senator Fred Harris, December 2, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

⁷³ “Jaycees to Spark Campaign to Get U.S.S. Texas Home,” *Houston Post*, Houston, November 20, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

promote the event, and the American Guild of Variety Artists, who would assist in providing talent, free of charge.⁷⁴

Jester's confidence soared. "With the support which Interstate Theatres are giving it and with the other plans which your State organization has developed," he noted, "I anticipate the full success of the Battleship Texas Fund-Raising Campaign."⁷⁵ The BTC shared Jester's optimism, so much so that on December 30th, two days before the Navy deadline and nearly a month before the Interstate shows were scheduled to take place, Gregory requested that the ship be delivered to Texas on April 21, 1948, 112 years after Sam Houston's victory at San Jacinto.⁷⁶ The Navy had the concrete commitment they had sought since the summer of 1946. All signs indicated that the *Texas* would come "home" after all.

Texas would get its battleship, but the task remained to raise the outstanding funds necessary to construct the ship's berth. Throughout the winter and spring of 1948, the BTC and the Jaycees redoubled their efforts. More events were held, and Gregory's *Houston Post* frequently provided updates on the ship's status, requesting more donations with every column. Despite new estimates that reduced the goal of the drive to \$100,000, the committee's coffers still fell some \$20,000 short by the end of March 1948.⁷⁷ They continued fundraising even as the ship made its voyage down the East Coast and into the Gulf of Mexico, ultimately receiving some \$15,000 less than they had hoped. This left enough money on hand to prepare the ship's

⁷⁴ Karl Hoblitzelle to Interstate Theaters city managers, December 8, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC. For more information on Hoblitzelle and Interstate Theaters, see "The Hoblitzelle & Interstate Theater Collection," *The Harry Ransom Center Online*, Accessed December 21, 2015, Available at <http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/collections/film/holdings/interstate/>

⁷⁵ Texas Governor Beauford H. Jester to Frank Butler, Jr., December 22, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

⁷⁶ Commandant, 8th Naval District to Chief of Naval Operations, December 30, 1947. Folder BB35 1947, Box 226, Unclassified Central Correspondence, 1946-66, BuShips Records, NA.

⁷⁷ "Battleship Texas Fund Boosted by V.F.W. Gift," *Houston Post*, Houston, March 25, 1948, Texas Newspaper Collection, DBCAH.

berth, though subsequent maintenance costs would have to come from admission tickets and concession sales.

The *Texas* departed Norfolk Navy Yard under tow on March 18, arriving at Bolivar Roads, where the ship had anchored on its visit to Galveston some three decades before, on March 28.⁷⁸ Tugs nudged the old battlewagon up the Houston Ship Channel several days later, and as it waited at a dock across the channel from its future berth, dredgers from the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific Company worked feverishly prepare the ship's new home.⁷⁹ On April 19, just two days before its dedication as a memorial, the *Texas* eased into its newly constructed slip under the shadow of the towering San Jacinto Monument.⁸⁰

Wednesday, April 21, 1948, marked the end of a saga that began with conclusion of World War II in 1945 and led to dedication of the United States' first ever battleship memorial. After over two years of hard work, the BTC and other state authorities made sure to commemorate the occasion with extraordinary fanfare. Journalists from around the country came to report the occasion, while numerous radio and television stations broadcasted the proceedings over major networks. Bands provided by the Navy and other organizations filled the air with patriotic music, and a flyover made by more than 100 Navy and Air Force planes gave visitors a once-in-a-lifetime spectacle. Veteran's and patriotic groups held celebratory luncheons at the battleground, where dozens of politicians and naval officers gave speeches. A large police force kept watch over the thousands of visitors who attended. The most dramatic moment of the day

⁷⁸ "U.S.S. Texas on the Way to San Jacinto Battleground," *Houston Post*, Houston, March 18, 1948, Texas Newspaper Collection, DBCAH; "Texas to Reach Bolivar Roads This Afternoon," *Houston Post*, Houston, March 28, 1948, Texas Newspaper Collection, DBCAH.

⁷⁹ "Texas to Reach Bolivar Roads This Afternoon," *Houston Post*, Houston, March 28, 1948; "The Texas Comes Home to Wait for Berth," *Houston Post*, Houston, April 1, 1948, Texas Newspaper Collection, DBCAH.

⁸⁰ "Big T to Move to Permanent Home Monday," *Houston Post*, Houston, April 18, 1948, Texas Newspaper Collection, DBCAH.

occurred during the flag-raising ceremony that officially decommissioned the *Texas* from the US Navy and made it the flagship of the “Texas Navy.” Admiral Chester Nimitz, commissioned on the spot as an Admiral of the honorary organization, presided over the transfer. “It is particularly fitting,” he observed, “that this day and place have been chosen by the state of Texas for the enshrinement of this fine old battleship...Now she will continue to serve, not only as a war memorial to all those gallant Texans who went down to the sea in ships, but also as a reminder to future Texans of their proud naval heritage commenced 112 years ago.”⁸¹

Two days later, able to rest easy at least, Secretary McGill wrote declared, “The Battleship Texas [sic] is, I trust, secure in its new berth; 17 admirals have one more speech to add to their service records; and I am suffering from a perfectly dreadful case of the sunburn. However, the entire affair seems to have been quite a success....”⁸² The BTC and its allies had succeeded in raising the large sum needed to bring the *Texas* to rest as a memorial. Gregory, the principle architect of the drive’s success, noted upon the ship’s dedication that, “This has been a victory of state pride over the weariness that follows a great war.”⁸³

The ship became a successful tourist attraction, drawing over one million visitors during its first five years in Texas.⁸⁴ When neglect and deterioration became critical in the late 1960s, additional fundraising drives over the next two decades sent the ship to drydock and allowed for major repairs. Designated a National Historic Landmark by the US National Park Service in

⁸¹ “Battleship Texas Hoists Flag,” *Houston Post*, Houston, April 22, 1948, Texas Newspaper Collection, DBCAH.

⁸² William McGill to Paul Wakefield, April 23, 1948, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

⁸³ “Battleship Texas Hoists Flag,” *Houston Post*, Houston, April 22, 1948, Texas Newspaper Collection, DBCAH.

⁸⁴ “Ever Wanted a Battleship? Hutchison Did – and Got It,” *Chance Vought News*, August 1955, Subject File: USS Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William Frederick Halsey Papers, Naval Historical Foundation Collection, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C (hereafter cited as “William F. Halsey Papers, LOC”).

1977, the *Texas* rests to this day in its place next to the San Jacinto Battlefield.⁸⁵ In 2008, the Texas Legislature appropriated \$25 million towards the completion of a major construction project that will place the ship out of the water in a new dry berth in several years.⁸⁶ Now, as in 1948, the USS *Texas* stands as a lasting memorial to the role of the United States and, more specifically, Texas in the successful conclusion of two world wars.

The *Texas* became the first instance after World War II in which a large American ship that had participated in the conflict became a war memorial. The promoters of the drive benefited from the name of the ship and its resonance in a state with an uncommonly strong local identity. A number of contextual factors, such as the beginning of the Cold War and a relatively low monetary goal, also contributed to the cause. In other words, the *Texas* seemed to set a pattern in which contemporary concerns outweighed the specifics of the ship's past in creating its appeal. Meanwhile, as Gregory, Jester, Butler, and others simultaneously worked to secure a permanent home for the *Texas*, efforts to preserve another, more famous ship, had already begun.

⁸⁵ Ferguson, *Historic Battleship Texas*, 169-173.

⁸⁶ "Battleship Texas Dry Berth Project: Preserving an Invaluable Place in History," *Texas Parks and Wildlife*, last modified January 2015, <http://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/parks/battleship-texas-dry-berth-project>.

CHAPTER 3

“She’s the best, she’s the champ...”

Captain O.B. Hardison, US Navy, November 1942⁸⁷

Speaking on the floor of the US Senate on November 11, 1945, Senator David Walsh of Massachusetts introduced a bill “to provide for the disposition by the secretary of the Navy of vessels, trophies, and relics of historical interest.”⁸⁸ His bill would eventually pass into law and allow for Texans to begin their earnest efforts to bring “their” ship to San Jacinto. Despite the relatively general and wide-reaching implications of this piece of legislation, Walsh’s statements that day focused on a more specific issue: the preservation of the aircraft carrier USS *Enterprise*. Just two months after the end of the World War II, Walsh sought to pass a law to transfer the ship to the State of New York as a war memorial. According to the senator, “There is no ship in the United States Navy whose log is such a complete summary of the naval war in the Pacific...I know of no better way of honoring the honored dead of the *Enterprise*, indeed, the honored dead of the Navy, than by preserving the aircraft carrier *Enterprise* as a national memorial to the magnificent job done by the men of the Navy in the war against Japan.”⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Burns, *Then There Was One*, 174.

⁸⁸ *Congressional Record*, Vol. 91, Part 8, November 1, 1945, p. 10250, Accessed 23 January 2016, Available at [HTTP://congressional.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/congressional/docview/t19.d20.cr-1945-1101?accountid=7118](http://congressional.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/congressional/docview/t19.d20.cr-1945-1101?accountid=7118).

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

Walsh was not alone in placing the *Enterprise* on the highest of pedestals. Others echoed his sentiments at the time and for years afterward.⁹⁰ No ship before or since ever accrued the number of honors heaped upon the *Enterprise* and the men who fought aboard the ship. Indeed, one would find it difficult to compare the history of any other ship to the astonishing saga of the *Enterprise* during World War II. Despite such accolades, the ship would meet a very different fate from that of the *Texas* after the war.

In 1933 the United States lay in the depths of the great Depression, prompting President Franklin Roosevelt to press for the passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA). A central piece of the president's "New Deal," the NIRA aimed to stimulate the economy by providing funds for public works, establishing new regulatory agencies, and setting standards for labor conditions and bargaining rights. Congressman Carl Vinson from Georgia, long a naval advocate and the principal legislative force behind the massive US naval buildup before and during World War II, sensed an opportunity and convinced the president to include the construction of two aircraft carriers in the bill. The ships would satisfy the needs of the Navy and provide jobs for the Norfolk area.⁹¹ Roosevelt, long interested in naval affairs, consented. On June 16, 1933, the NIRA became law, and, thanks to Vinson, two new aircraft carriers entered the planning stages.⁹²

⁹⁰ See Edwin P Stafford, *the Big E: The Story of the USS Enterprise*, (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2002), 543; Alvin Kernan, *Crossing the Line: A Bluejacket's Odyssey in World War II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 25.

⁹¹ John C. Walter, "Congressman Carl Vinson and Franklin D. Roosevelt: Naval Preparedness and the Coming of World War II, 1932-40," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 64, No. 3 (Fall, 1980): 297, Accessed 23 January 2016, Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40580647>; Barrett Tillman, *Enterprise, America's Fightingest Ship and the Men Who Helped Win World War II* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013), 8.

⁹² *An Act to Encourage National Industrial Recovery, to Foster Fair Competition, and to Provide for the Construction of Certain Useful Public Works, and for Other Purposes*, Public Law 73-67,

The carriers authorized by the bill, which eventually became the USS *Yorktown* (CV-5) and its nearly identical sister, the USS *Enterprise* (CV-6), were to be the latest and most modern additions to the US Navy's fledgling carrier fleet. Following the transition from makeshift flying platforms erected aboard existing vessels to purpose-built, aircraft-carrying ships, the Americans competed with the British and the Japanese to develop a naval air arm during the 1920s and 1930s.⁹³ Larger and more capable ship designs appeared in succession, but even by the beginning of World War II little agreement existed as to the proper place for aircraft carriers in a naval battle. Since their inception, the new vessels occupied an auxiliary role.⁹⁴ As had been the case in world navies for centuries, the real firepower of the Navy was thought to lay with the *Texas* and its cohorts, fleets of heavily armed and armored battleships. By the end of the war's first year, it had become painfully apparent that aircraft carriers had completely eclipsed the battleship as the Navy's primary means for destroying the enemy at sea. In a few short years, the traditional picture of naval battles had transformed from long, orderly lines of heavy ships pounding their enemies with enormous naval cannons to hordes of quick and agile naval aircraft sallying forth from their carriers with bombs and torpedoes for unseen enemies hundreds of miles away.

One ship distinguished itself above all others in this new form of warfare, a calling for which it arrived just in time. Jovial fanfare, patriotic decoration, and a sea of onlookers similar to that which had witnessed the birth of the *Texas* 24 years earlier set the scene as the hull of the United States Ship *Enterprise* slid down the ways to meet the water for the first time on October

US Statutes at Large 48 (1933): 195-211, Accessed April 5, 2016, Available at <http://legisworks.org/sal/48/stats/STATUTE-48-Pg195.pdf>.

⁹³ Norman Friedman, "U.S. Carrier Evolution, 1911-1945," in Douglas Smith, ed., *One Hundred Years of US Navy Airpower* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2010), 156.

⁹⁴ Robert L. O'Connell, *Sacred Vessels: The Cult of the Battleship and the Rise of the U.S. Navy* (Boulder: Westview, 1991), 283.

3, 1936. Built at the same shipyard as the *Texas*, the *Enterprise* dwarfed the old battleship, measuring 827 feet long and displacing 25,500 tons of water. The new carrier had a crew of just over 2,000 officers and men, and could carry its compliment of seventy or more aircraft at speeds of over thirty knots, or almost forty miles per hour. The ship received its name from a long line of US Navy ships called *Enterprise*, the first of which served in the Continental Navy during the Revolutionary War. Designated CV-6, the seventh *Enterprise* would become the most famous of all.⁹⁵

The new carrier entered service in May 1938, after which it spent a year conducting training cruises in the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico. Having participated in exercises to prepare the fleet for a European war, the *Enterprise* entered Pacific waters for the first time in April 1939.⁹⁶ There it could bolster the Navy's presence against another perceived threat, the Imperial Japanese Navy. In the early 1930s, the Empire of Japan had embarked on an aggressive effort to "liberate" Asia from the West and create what its leaders called the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere." Japan's call for "Asia for Asians" soon became Asia for the Japanese. By the end of the decade, Japan had captured Manchuria and turned it into a client state, declared war on China, and begun to look toward the Pacific. Militarists, now in control of the government, hoped to create a defensive perimeter to protect against the possible intervention of the United States.⁹⁷ With time split between California and Hawaii during the next two years, the crew of the *Enterprise* and the rest of the Pacific Fleet cast weary eyes to the west.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Tillman, *America's Fightingest Ship*, 1-13.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 13-20.

⁹⁷ Alan Schom, *The Eagle and the Rising Sun: The Japanese-American War, 1941-1943, Pearl Harbor Through Guadalcanal* (New York: Norton, 2004), 44-85; John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon, 1986), 262-290.

⁹⁸ Tillman, *America's Fightingest Ship*, 18-25.

On November 28, 1941, the *Enterprise* passed through the narrow channel leading out of Pearl Harbor and, accompanied by a small escorting force, headed to sea. The ship was on its way to deliver a Marine fighter squadron to the remote American outpost on Wake Island before returning to base. The jeopardized state of US-Japanese relations weighed heavily on Rear Admiral “Bull” Halsey, who had made the carrier his flagship. Halsey recognized that peace could turn to war in an instant and, with dramatic flare, issued his famous “Battle Order Number One” to the men of the *Enterprise*. “The ENTERPRISE is now operating under war conditions,” he wrote, urging that, “At any time, day or night, we must be ready for instant action...Steady nerves and stout hearts are needed now.”⁹⁹ After the ship delivered the Marines to Wake without incident, it seemed that the Admiral had been too cautious. Halsey turned his ships for home, though heavy seas forced them to delay their arrival by one day. According to the new schedule, the *Enterprise* would return to Pearl Harbor on the morning of Sunday, December 7.¹⁰⁰

On that fateful morning while the ship steamed toward Hawaii, the *Enterprise* began launching its planes to reach the island ahead of the carrier and land at various airfields around Oahu. On their way in, many of these planes found themselves under attack by swarms of Japanese aircraft. The unexpected attackers, launched from six carriers lurking north of Hawaii, made up the first enemy wave on its way to wreak havoc on the American ships and installations at Pearl Harbor. Many of the surprised *Enterprise* aviators escaped, though several were shot down, and the ship experienced its first casualties of the war. Halsey reacted quickly and angrily to the news. With his remaining planes, he went off in search for a fight. Luckily avoiding an

⁹⁹ Eugene Burns, *Then There Was One: The U.S.S. Enterprise and the First Year of War* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1944), 7-8.

¹⁰⁰ Tillman, *America's Fightingest Ship*, 32.

encounter with the vastly superior Japanese force, he soon realized that he could not catch the enemy and returned to Pearl Harbor the next day.¹⁰¹

The scene that met them as they sailed into Pearl Harbor scarcely resembled the one they had left only ten days earlier. The attacks had destroyed dozens of ships, wrecked numerous facilities, killed thousands of Americans, and launched the country into war. Smoke filled the air, and oil coated the surface of the water as the ship pulled into its familiar berth. With most of the Pacific Fleet's battleships resting in the mud at the bottom of the harbor, US commanders pondered their next moves.¹⁰²

The main source of the Navy's power lay blasted and sunken at Pear Harbor but those in command resolved to carry on the war with the forces at hand. This meant that the *Enterprise* and its carrier consorts would become the nucleus of US naval strategy in the Pacific, at least until the rest of the fleet could be rebuilt. Between January and May 1942, the small US carrier fleet did what it could to bring the war to the Japanese. Following its participation in strikes on enemy garrisons in the central Pacific during February and March, as well as the famous Doolittle Raid on Tokyo in April, the *Enterprise* barely missed the first carrier engagement of the war in late May. The Battle of the Coral Sea, as it became known, was the first naval battle in history in which the opposing fleets never sighted each other. Loss of the *Lexington* to Japanese bombs and torpedoes in the battle brought the Americans down to just five available "flattops,"

¹⁰¹ Stafford, *The Big E*, 14-34.

¹⁰² Alan Zimm, *Attack on Pearl Harbor: Strategy, Combat, Myths, Deceptions* (Havertown: Casemate, 2011), 156-171; Samuel E. Morison, *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II, Vol. III: The Rising Sun in the Pacific, 1931-April 1942* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1984), 220.

not all of which could be available at any one time. With many carriers still at large, Japanese strength seemed overwhelming.¹⁰³

The *Enterprise* returned to Pearl Harbor amidst a whirlwind of feverish activity. Having learned of a pending attack on the US base on Midway Island, Admiral Chester Nimitz, the supreme commander of the Navy in the Pacific, rushed to set up an ambush. Unfortunately, Halsey, who had been with the ship for the duration of the war, had come down with a severe case of dermatitis on the ship's last cruise. Showing considerable displeasure and fatigue, he left the *Enterprise* and was replaced by Rear Admiral Raymond Spruance. In a few days the ship sailed, and by June 2, Spruance, with *Enterprise* and *Hornet*, joined Rear Admiral Frank Fletcher in *Yorktown* northeast of Midway and to await the Japanese.¹⁰⁴

The ensuing Battle of Midway became one of the most storied victories in US naval history. On the morning of June 4, 1942, planes from *Enterprise* and *Yorktown* surprised the Japanese fleet north of the island. With little time to react, the Japanese carriers shuddered under a hail of American bombs, leaving three of the four "flattops" fatally crippled in mere minutes. The destruction of the fourth Japanese carrier followed that afternoon. The Americans had evened the strategic odds in the Pacific, and the *Enterprise* played a crucial role. The battle was a resounding success, though not without loss. Many American pilots never returned to their ships, and the *Yorktown* went down on June 7, after several devastating bomb and torpedo attacks.¹⁰⁵

The *Enterprise's* aircrews had suffered losses before, but the almost complete annihilation of the

¹⁰³ John B. Lundstrom, *Pacific Naval Air Combat from Pearl Harbor to Midway* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 60-77, 111-121; Stafford, *The Big E*, 83-88; Tillman, *America's Fightingest Ship*, 56-59; Kernan, *Crossing the Line*, 43-47.

¹⁰⁴ Tillman, *America's Fightingest Ship*, 61-65.

¹⁰⁵ Craig L. Symonds, *The Battle of Midway* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 273-281, 295-305, 328-335, 350-356.

ship's Torpedo Squadron Six during their morning attack on the Japanese fleet hit especially hard. "The loss was unimaginable," Alvin Kernan later wrote.¹⁰⁶

After a brief respite in June and July 1942, the now veteran carrier and its crew underwent preparations for the first American strategic offensive of the war, the capture of an island in the Solomons known as Guadalcanal. The campaign dragged on for six months, and cost both sides dearly. While the US Marines struggled to hold on ashore, near constant naval activity led to two large-scale carrier engagements, the Battle of the Eastern Solomons in August and the Battle of Santa Cruz in September, followed by the titanic land, air, and sea engagement in November known as the First and Second Naval Battles of Guadalcanal. The *Enterprise* and its planes played crucial roles in each battle, time and again helping to halt Japanese attempts to retake the island. The ship suffered severe damage for the first time during the campaign, taking numerous bomb hits on two occasions. The carrier's squadrons also suffered heavily, eroded by daily attrition and frequent battles.¹⁰⁷

The fall and winter of 1942 proved to be a defining moment in the history of the *Enterprise* in World War II. Halsey recalled later that, "if I were going to design a shoulder patch for the South Pacific [Campaign,] I would have a motif of a rusty nail and a frayed shoestring."¹⁰⁸ The Navy had been stretched to the breaking point. After the destruction or disabling of all other US carriers in the Pacific in August and October, the *Enterprise* stood as the final such unit in the theater for a period of several weeks. It was during this stretch as the only carrier in the Pacific that the ship helped to halt the final large-scale Japanese counter-attack

¹⁰⁶ Kernan, *Crossing the Line*, 62.

¹⁰⁷ Tillman, *America's Fightingest Ship*, 88-147; Stafford, *The Big E*, 126-265.

¹⁰⁸ William F. Halsey to David I Wright, undated, General Correspondence March-April 1957, Box 11, General Correspondence 1910-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

of the campaign. Enemy efforts in the area lasted until early February 1943, but by then the crucible of the previous year had passed.

The end of the most serious phases of the Guadalcanal campaign brought with it a recognition of the *Enterprise*'s achievements since Pearl Harbor. On a hot, sunny, and cloudless November day in the harbor of Nouméa, the capital of French New Caledonia in the South Pacific, Captain O.B. Hardison recognized an opportunity to decorate his veteran crew and ordered the men to the ship's enormous flight deck to receive medals and decorations for their impressive service. Chafing in their uncomfortable dress uniforms, the ship's crew and airgroup could not hide their pride from being a part of the Navy's most illustrious fighting unit. Captain Hardison remarked upon the ship's exploits and applauded his men's achievements. "Your record has never been approached by any ship of this or any other navy," he told them. "Other carriers may come and go, and good ones they are, but the *Enterprise* – she's the best, she's the champ."¹⁰⁹ The war was not even a year old.

After all the chaotic activity that had characterized 1942, the following year proved to be the most peaceful of *Enterprise*'s wartime career. Larger and newer ships, the long-awaited fruits of the massive naval buildup that began in 1938, began to arrive in the Pacific at the beginning of the year, and the men of the *Enterprise* enjoyed some sorely needed rest. During a May stop in Pearl Harbor, the ship received the coveted Presidential Unit Citation, signed by Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox on behalf of the president, "For consistently outstanding performance and distinguished achievement during repeated action against enemy Japanese forces in the Pacific War Area." Echoing sentiment that would surface again in the future, the citation noted further that the ship's "aggressive fighting spirit and superb combat efficiency are a tribute to the

¹⁰⁹ Burns, *Then There Was One*, 173-174.

officers and men who so gallantly established her as a solid bulwark in the defense of the American Nation.”¹¹⁰ Soon after the award ceremony, the ship continued on to Bremerton Navy Yard, near Seattle, returning stateside for the first time since September 1939.¹¹¹

The end of 1943 saw the *Enterprise* sailing to war once more. In November it helped to support Operation Galvanic, the invasion of the Gilbert Islands in the Central Pacific.

Afterwards, the ship joined its newer cousins as a member of the “Fast Carrier Task Force,” arguably the most powerful naval force ever assembled. The success of the *Enterprise* and its consorts in 1942 had finally convinced authorities that carriers, not battleships, had become the foundation of the Navy’s power. In demonstration of this new concept, the fast carriers ranged across wide swathes of the Pacific between January and May 1944, hitting fortified Japanese island bases with a speed and nimbleness unimaginable only two years earlier.¹¹²

During the second half of 1944, the Imperial Japanese Navy came out in strength for its final push of the war. The American invasion of the Mariana Islands in July 1944 forced the Japanese to unleash the remnants of the carrier force they had carefully husbanded since the Guadalcanal debacle. The resulting engagement, known as the Battle of the Philippine Sea, ended in the virtual annihilation of the Japanese at little cost to the Americans. In contrast to the three carriers sunk and over four hundred Japanese aircraft downed, the US Navy lost no major ships and only twenty planes. Only five *Enterprise* aircraft failed to return, and most of their crews were later rescued.¹¹³

In October, the enemy appeared in force for the last time, when separate Japanese surface forces and a decoy carrier unit attempted to disrupt the American landings on Leyte Island in the

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 175.

¹¹¹ Tillman, *America’s Fightingest Ship*, 148-162.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 169-183.

¹¹³ Stafford, *The Big E*, 400-417.

Philippines. Despite some close calls and considerable US losses, the Japanese once again suffered near total destruction. *Enterprise* planes contributed to each of the battle's major phases, scoring numerous bomb and torpedo hits on the enemy and helping to destroy one of the two largest battleships in the world, the *Musashi*. Afterwards, the remnants of the Japanese fleet scattered and spent the rest of the war hiding in various ports across the Empire, hunted relentlessly by US carrier planes and submarines. The Battle of Leyte Gulf, as it became known, also saw the first organized use of Kamikaze attacks, in which groups of Japanese suicide planes sortied with the express intent of crashing into US ships. These tactics horrified many in the Navy and would have serious consequences for the *Enterprise*.¹¹⁴

At Pearl Harbor in December 1944, the *Enterprise* embarked with a reduced complement of aircraft designed specifically for night operations. The ship became the fleet's first large night carrier and remained in that role for the rest of the war. With the Japanese fleet either destroyed or in disarray, the year 1945 saw the ship supporting various amphibious landings and undertaking the bulk of the fast carrier forces' nocturnal defense duties. As part of a massive air and sea armada, *Enterprise* planes, along with the guns of the *Texas*, helped support the Marines in their famous efforts to capture the island of Iwo Jima in February and March 1945. Two weeks after their departure from Iwo Jima, the men of the *Enterprise* found themselves hitting airfields on Kyushu, the southernmost Japanese home island, in preparation for the massive amphibious landings that would soon occur on Okinawa, to the south. On March 20, a lone Japanese plane scored the first bomb hit on *Enterprise* since the Battle of Santa Cruz two and a

¹¹⁴ Tillman, *America's Fightingest Ship*, 210-222; Stafford, *The Big E*, 458-483.

half years earlier. Ten sailors perished, but the damage was slight, and the ship returned to action at the beginning of April.¹¹⁵

Between April 5 and May 15, 1945, the *Enterprise* participated in what would become the final battles of the veteran carrier's career. While the fleet remained near Okinawa area, the *Enterprise's* night squadrons flew in the now familiar roles of amphibious support and fleet defense. Hordes of Kamikazes attacked in a last ditch effort to undermine American naval might. On a clear morning in mid-May, at around seven o'clock, a single Japanese suicide plane broke through the American fighter defenses and plunged toward the *Enterprise*. Men everywhere heard cries of "Hit the deck!" as the Kamikaze smashed into the ship just behind its number one elevator. The ensuing explosion blew the fifteen-ton metal platform, used for bringing aircraft up to the flight deck, over four hundred feet in the air. The ship shuddered and damage control teams rushed to douse the ensuing fires. In less than twenty minutes, the ship was out of serious danger. Dozens of men had been killed and wounded, and with damage that necessitated a stateside shipyard, the ship was permanently out of the war.¹¹⁶

The World War II journey of the USS *Enterprise*, which had carried the ship over 275,000 miles to all corners of the Pacific and led to the destruction of 911 enemy planes, the sinking of 71 enemy ships, and serious damage to 192 more, was over. The *Enterprise* had received twenty "battle stars," one for each of the major actions in which it had participated. No ship ever received more.¹¹⁷ After a long journey to Pearl Harbor and then to Bremerton, the *Enterprise* underwent repairs and modernizations until September 1945. By then Hiroshima and

¹¹⁵ Tillman, *America's Fightingest Ship*, 223-239; Stafford, *The Big E*, 484-519.

¹¹⁶ Stafford, *The Big E*, 528-538.

¹¹⁷ Kernan, *Crossing the Line*, 25; Tillman, *America's Fightingest Ship*, 250. Stafford, *The Big E*, 400-417.

Nagasaki lay in ruins, and the war that provided a purpose for the *Enterprise*'s existence had ended.

The cessation of hostilities allowed the ship to assume more peaceful duties. Orders sent the carrier on several trips to return thousands of servicemen and women to the United States as part of Operation Magic Carpet. The Navy could find little other use for the ship and dispatched the by now aging vessel to join the Atlantic Reserve Fleet at Bayonne, New Jersey, in January 1946. There the *Enterprise* awaited its fate.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁸ Tillman, *America's Fightingest Ship*, 250-254.

CHAPTER 4

“No feeling for a dead item...”

Michael M. Mooney, PR&R, Inc. Publicist, December 6, 1957¹¹⁹

The end of World War II left the US Navy in an inflated state. Without clear enemies, the United States had little use for much of the vast stores of materiel it had produced to fight the largest war in history. The country began to shift its gaze towards a peaceful postwar future, and the Navy lost the funding it had needed to help win the war. Ships like the *Texas*, obsolete and worn out, were quickly stricken from the Navy's register and lined up for disposal. The *Enterprise*, priceless during the war, had long been surpassed by larger and more capable carriers. Predicting a future dominated by jets and nuclear weapons, naval officers could find little use for a ship that now symbolized a passing era of naval combat.

Before the Navy had made up its mind about what to do with the *Enterprise*, word reached the public's ears that the ship might be sold and broken up for scrap. The news struck a nerve. Many Americans reacted in a way that had become typical during times of national distress: they wrote their representatives. Beginning in October, the Secretary of the Navy and the Navy's Bureau of Ships received a barrage of complaints. Senators and representatives from states such as Washington, California, Michigan, and Illinois reported that their constituents had protested the pending decision to scrap the *Enterprise*. Typical was the letter of Representative Ellis Patterson of California. "I feel, along with my constituents," he wrote, "that this carrier

¹¹⁹ Michael M. Mooney to Osborne B. Hardison, December 6, 1957, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

stands as a shrine to American courage and is a living symbol of our country's unconquerable love for freedom."¹²⁰ Some concerned citizens bypassed their congressmen and wrote directly to the Navy to voice their concern. Mrs. Ethel J. Engel of New York, writing to Secretary Forrestal in mid-October, predicted that, "If Uncle Sam could afford to pension this old gal I'm sure public sentiment and money will do so."¹²¹ The number of letters reaching the Secretary's office forced Forrestal to prepare a stock reply, which voiced sympathy and encouragement but offered no commitments.

Lawmakers took notice of their constituents' concern. In the fall of 1945, a series of legislative efforts aimed to prevent the Navy from scrapping the *Enterprise* and to preserve the ship as a war memorial. As early as September, Representative John Lyle of Texas introduced HR 4157, "To Preserve as a National Memorial the U.S. Aircraft Carrier 'Enterprise.'" The proposed bill emphasized the fact that aircraft carriers had played a central role in the Pacific and that *Enterprise* best represented this role. It provided for the establishment of the ship as a *national* war memorial with appropriations to effect its provisions. In October, President Harry Truman approved the ship for transfer out of government service, and in December the bill received the endorsement of the Navy.¹²² There was hope that the *Enterprise* might be saved after all.

¹²⁰ Ellis E. Patterson to James Forrestal, October 31, 1945, Folder CV6 (Vol. 21) From 8/12/45, Box 722, General Correspondence, 1940-1945, BuShips Records, NA.

¹²¹ Ethel J. Engel to James Forrestal, October 16, 1945, Folder CV6 (Vol. 21) From 8/12/45, Box 722, General Correspondence, 1940-1945, BuShips Records, NA.

¹²² Acting Secretary of the Navy H. S. Hensel to Carl Vinson, Statement to the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs, *An Act to Preserve as a National Memorial the U.S. Aircraft Carrier 'Enterprise,'* H. R. 4157, Committee Print, December 6, 1945, Accessed April 5, 2016, Available at [HTTP://congressional.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/congressional/docview/t21.d22.cmp-1945-nah-0092?accountid=7118](http://congressional.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/congressional/docview/t21.d22.cmp-1945-nah-0092?accountid=7118); Secretary of the Navy John L. Sullivan to Harry S. Truman,

As a “national memorial,” the old carrier seemed destined to rest in Washington, DC. The Navy accordingly instructed the Bureau of Ships and other relevant internal offices to investigate the possibility of bringing the *Enterprise* to Washington in early 1946. Because the upkeep of the ship was expensive, the Chief of Naval Operations considered the matter “urgent.”¹²³

Unfortunately, practical concerns effectively shut out any possibility that the ship would find a permanent home in the nation’s capital. The Bureau of Ships cited prohibitive costs, while the Bureau of Yards and Docks found that both proposed sites for the ship failed to meet minimum requirements for public accessibility. Furthermore, the Bureau argued, the large vessel with its tall profile would hinder air traffic from a nearby military installation.¹²⁴ The Navy’s hydrographic office stated that the channel in which the *Enterprise* would rest was simply too shallow to accommodate such a large vessel.¹²⁵ The matter was effectively closed. No more mention of HR 4157 appears in Congressional records after the beginning of 1946.

More local options still existed. It was at this point that Senator Walsh introduced a bill in November 1945 that provided for the transfer of the famous carrier to the State of New York. “There is no ship in the United States Navy whose log is such a complete summary of the naval war in the Pacific,” Walsh argued, echoing a common recognition of the ship’s signal historic

November 1 1948, Folder C-CV6, Box 28, Confidential General Correspondence 1948, BuShips Records, NA.

¹²³ Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Logistics W.S. Farber to Chief, Bureau of Ships, and Chief, Bureau of Yards and Docks, January 17, 1946, Folder CV6; Box 508, Confidential General Correspondence 1946, BuShips Records, NA.

¹²⁴ Chief, Bureau of Ships, to Chief of Naval Operations, February 25, 1946, Folder CV6, Box 508, Confidential General Correspondence 1946, BuShips Records, NA; Chief, Bureau of Yards and Docks, to Chief of Naval Operations, February 25, 1946, Folder CV6, Box 508, Confidential General Correspondence 1946, BuShips Records, NA.

¹²⁵ G.S. Bryan to Chief of Naval Operations, January 30, 1946, Folder CV6, Box 508, Confidential General Correspondence 1946, BuShips Records, NA.

significance.¹²⁶ Like HR 4157, the Walsh bill also foundered for practical reasons. For one thing, the *Enterprise*, unlike the *Texas*, had no name associated with its destination. This eliminated the possibility of carrying out fundraising and publicity drives that could focus on appeals such as the ship's connection to the state. For another, New York officials deemed the project simply too expensive. Walsh's bill promptly lost all consideration. Other localities such as Baltimore made inquiries concerning the adoption of the ship, but by 1948 the Navy admitted that in all cases "suitable arrangements could not be successfully completed because no state or municipality would assume the high cost involved [in preserving the ship]."¹²⁷

Lacking a willing and financially able recipient for the *Enterprise*, the Navy suspended its efforts to release the ship for memorial purposes. Tensions with the Soviet Union had begun to mount since the conclusion of the war, and by 1948 the Navy decided to retain the veteran carrier "for the time being, in readiness for further duty if required."¹²⁸ Truman approved of the Navy's decision, and plans were drawn up for the ship's conversion and modernization in case the need for its services arose.¹²⁹ Considering the high cost of reactivation, the Navy's own financial concerns, and the previous judgment of the old carrier's obsolescence, sentimentality may have entered into the decision.¹³⁰ In the end, important naval officials could not condemn such a historic ship to destruction.

¹²⁶ *Congressional Record*, November 1, 1945, 10250.

¹²⁷ Secretary of the Navy John L. Sullivan to Harry S. Truman, November 1 1948, Folder C-CV6, Box 28, Confidential General Correspondence 1948, BuShips Records, NA.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ Chief of Naval Operations memorandum, November 18, 1948, Folder C-CV6, Box 28, Confidential General Correspondence 1948, BuShips Records, NA.

¹³⁰ One report judged that at least \$3,500,000 would be necessary to return the ship to service, followed by an extra \$10,000 for every year it remained active. H.P. Webster memorandum, November 4, 1948, Folder C-CV6, Box 28, Confidential General Correspondence, 1948, BuShips Records, NA.

Thus ended the first wave of efforts to preserve the USS *Enterprise* as a memorial. The ship had achieved great fame during the war, and rumors of its demise provoked a national outcry. A recognition of the ship's historical importance permeates the discussions of its value as a "relic" or "shrine" that could honor the country's dead and represent the nation's triumph at an historic moment. In spite of this recognition, no party stepped forward to champion the ship's cause. All the same, the efforts to preserve the *Enterprise* between 1945 and 1948 were plagued with problems, each of which increased the severity of the others. The lack of a coordinated administrative organization, the inability to designate a final resting place, and the high costs of the undertaking condemned the project to failure. Fortunately for the *Enterprise*, redemption remained in reach.

For seven years between 1949 and 1956, the famous aircraft carrier languished at its berth in Bayonne, New Jersey. Apart from several trips to the Brooklyn Naval Shipyard for maintenance, the *Enterprise* simply accumulated rust and fell into disrepair. Worse still, the old ship continued to drain the Navy's financial resources. Naval officials, no longer able to ignore the expenses incurred by the obsolete vessel, began stirring for the ship's disposal. Beginning with a request in January 1956 that the Board of Inspection and Survey conduct a "material inspection" of the *Enterprise*, officers hoped to determine the cost of modernization "in proportion to the value of the vessel."¹³¹ The request set a chain of events in motion over the course of the year that ended on October 2, 1956, when Secretary of the Navy Charles S. Thomas declared, "ENTERPRISE is unfit for further Naval Service and shall be stricken from the Navy

¹³¹ Chief of Naval Operations to President, Board of Inspection and Survey, January 17, 1956, Folder CVS-6 1956, Box 329, Unclassified Central Correspondence 1956, BuShips Records, NA.

Register.”¹³² The ship had again started on the road to destruction, but Americans again ensured that it would not go quietly.

When the Navy released news of its decision, citizens once more took up their pens. Congressman from states such as Indiana and Georgia soon reported protests against the ship’s destruction, prompting one legislator to write the Bureau of Ships that, “The magnificent record of the *Enterprise* warrants preserving of this aircraft carrier. Urge your assistance to stop plan to scrap the *Enterprise*.”¹³³ Just as in 1945, individuals on their own initiative wrote to various naval officials to object to or at least inquire about the ship’s disposal. As before, memory of the ship’s unique history and status prompted Americans from across the country to request that it remain a part of their national heritage. Clearly, a feeling surfaced in 1945 and again in 1956 that this ship was special, that to break it up for scrap would constitute the loss of an important and irreplaceable piece of history. However, establishing and maintaining a memorial the size of an aircraft carrier or battleship requires more than public outcry. Efficient administration and large-scale organization are also necessary, a fact demonstrated during the drive to preserve the *Texas*. At least initially, it seemed that the *Enterprise* would enjoy some of the same advantages that had brought the old battleship to San Jacinto.

“The U.S.S. ENTERPRISE ASSOCIATION is planning a reunion...[and] the main desire of the organizing committee is to have you as the principal guest speaker,”¹³⁴ wrote Chauncey Stillman, a member of the Association, in May 1956. His addressee was Fleet Admiral William F. Halsey, USN (retired). At 74, he had lost none of the fiery temper and scrappy

¹³² Chief of Naval Operations to Secretary of the Navy, September 26, 1956, Folder CVS-6 1956, Box 329, Unclassified Central Correspondence 1956, BuShips Records, NA.

¹³³ Homer E. Capehart to Chief, Bureau of Ships, October 18, 1956, Folder CVS-6 1956, Box 329, Unclassified Central Correspondence 1956, BuShips Records, NA.

¹³⁴ Chauncey Stillman to William F. Halsey, May 3, 1956, General Correspondence June-July 1957, Box 11, General Correspondence 1910-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

stubbornness that had endeared him to both the service and the nation. To many, he still embodied the country's fighting spirit during the Pacific War. After the conflict he retired from active service, and by 1956 he still lived with as much energy as before, despite his age.

Stillman had reason to expect that Halsey would accept the invitation. The Enterprise Association, consisting of veteran officers and men that had served aboard the famous carrier, had its first reunion in 1954. Two years later, with a membership of five hundred former shipmates, the Association hoped the reunion that year would surpass those of years past. Accordingly, the organizing committee reached out to Halsey in the hopes that his fame and prestige would make the reunion a truly memorable occasion. "Your presence is needed as much to boost a festal reunion," Stillman wrote, "as it was in wartime to keep the Big E in there swinging."¹³⁵ Despite his many commands and flagships during the war, Halsey revered the *Enterprise*, a ship that occupied a sentimental place in his mind. On receiving Stillman's letter, he enthusiastically accepted the Association's invitation. The reunion took place in New York on Labor Day Weekend and included a visit to the *Enterprise* itself in Bayonne. At one point during the scheduled events, the Association made the decision "to incorporate and formally adopted as a program the preserving of the *Enterprise* as a national monument."¹³⁶

Scarcely one month after the close of festivities, the Navy announced that it would put the ship up for sale. Members of the Association remembered their pledge, keenly felt the urgency of their situation, and began raising money for the ship's preservation. They struggled to devise a plan for raising the \$1 million deemed necessary to memorialize the carrier. The relatively large size of the *Enterprise*, its more advanced state of deterioration, and a Navy that

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ "The Association's Plans for Preserving the U.S.S. Enterprise as a National Memorial," undated, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, William F. Halsey Records, LOC.

had grown less generous with the passage of a decade probably accounted for the costs of preservation. Undaunted, the Association contacted Halsey once more to request his assistance in achieving its goal. Halsey accepted, and with the added weight of the old admiral's fame they set out to do with the *Enterprise* what the Battleship Texas Commission had done with the *Texas* ten years earlier.¹³⁷

Unlike their predecessors, the Association at first lacked a defined program for achieving their fundraising goals. For six months between October 1956 and March 1957, the efforts to save the *Enterprise* consisted largely of piecemeal and uncoordinated press and radio appeals for donations. It was hoped that appearances and interviews by Halsey would generate enough publicity to jumpstart the drive, after which it might ride a wave of national enthusiasm based on a public support.¹³⁸ Money began to trickle in with contributions from small-scale donors, but it soon became clear that the *Enterprise* would need a torrent rather than a trickle of money if the Association was to succeed.

Meanwhile, the Navy took the necessary steps for the disposal of the old carrier. Like vultures picking clean the remains of their prey, various parties from within the Navy began removing whatever useful equipment still remained aboard the *Enterprise*.¹³⁹ In February 1957, the Chief of Naval Operations directed the responsible bureaus and offices to expedite the ship's final disposal.¹⁴⁰ Halsey and the Association realized that they were running out of time, as several scrapping companies had already contacted the Bureau of Ships to begin preliminary

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ Chief, Bureau of Ships to Commandant, Third Naval District, January 31, 1957, Folder CVS-6 1956, Box 329, Unclassified Central Correspondence 1956, BuShips Records, NA.

¹⁴⁰ Brooklyn Naval Medical Materials Office to Bureau of Medicine, Brooklyn, February 2, Folder CVS-6 1956, Box 329, Unclassified Central Correspondence 1956, BuShips Records, NA.

negotiations for the ship's sale.¹⁴¹ Without a serious reconsideration of the task at hand and the steps necessary for achieving their goal, the Association would fail, and the Navy would surely send the *Enterprise* to the breakers.¹⁴² Halsey now agreed to lead the fundraising drive, and in March the Association redoubled its efforts.¹⁴³

The *Enterprise* veterans knew they lacked the expertise and resources for conducting a nation-wide fundraising drive. They turned to PR&R Inc., a New York publicity firm, for help. On March 29, 1957, Halsey and several other Association members met with PR&R representatives to determine a course of action. The resulting plan followed a three-phase approach to raise the necessary \$1 million. The first phase consisted of building a network of large and corporate sponsors to build a foundation for the drive, while the second phase involved "a wider solicitation of individuals, corporations, civic and patriotic groups" to widen the drive's financial and organizational base. Finally, in the third phase, the Association would initiate "a climax promotional effort to attract as many small gifts as possible within the limits of reasonable costs."¹⁴⁴

PR&R's three-phase plan differed considerably from the earlier drive to save the *Texas*. Rather than seek a corporate base from which to launch a mass appeal for public donations, the BTC had aimed to complete both stages simultaneously. The BTC efforts that had officially

¹⁴¹ Francis T. Greene to Chief, Bureau of Ships, January 15, 1957, Folder CVS-6 1957, Box 369, Unclassified Central Correspondence 1957, BuShips Records, NA.

¹⁴² "The Association's Plans for Preserving the U.S.S. *Enterprise* as a National Memorial," undated, U.S.S. *Enterprise* Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, William F. Halsey Records, LOC.

¹⁴³ Osborne B. Hardison, "Statement At Beginning of Conference to be Held on 27 January 1958 In the Office of FADM Halsey, 90 Church St. New York, N.Y.," January 27, 1958, U.S.S. *Enterprise* Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

¹⁴⁴ "The Association's Plans for Preserving the U.S.S. *Enterprise* as a National Memorial," undated, U.S.S. *Enterprise* Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, William F. Halsey Records, LOC.

commenced on in mid-September 1947 appealed to any and all Texans who might be willing to contribute, from school children to the wealthiest members of society. Though they would keep the ship in public consciousness with occasional press announcements, the Enterprise Association resolved not to initiate any coordinated attempt to solicit public donations until they had sufficient corporate support. With the limited time available, the plan placed considerable faith in the willingness of large-scale donors to back a venture with no promise of economic returns. Whereas the frantic efforts of the BTC and the Texas Jaycees to raise as much money as possible from the start indicate an acute awareness of fast-approaching deadlines, the Association's careful and measured approach seems to call for time it simply did not have. The miscalculation proved fatal.

From the beginning those attempting to establish the *Enterprise* as a war memorial hoped to broaden the ship's appeal. During their meeting on March 29, Association members and PR&R representatives agreed that, "The appeal for funds cannot be based only on the emotional response evoked by the history of the ship and the record of her crew." Rather than a glorification of a single unit, "the ship, as a national monument to a vital part of the American epic, must be the focal point for a program of activities that make a contribution to American life today and which might well be participated in by local community groups, national patriotic organizations, corporations engaged in defense work, and by the Navy itself as part of its public relations program."¹⁴⁵ In a form letter meant for circulation among potential corporate sponsors, the Association argued that the *Enterprise* should become a memorial first because of "its unparalleled record" and second because it "can serve as a focal point for a broad program of

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

activities of value to all our citizens, particularly our young people.”¹⁴⁶ Similar to the role envisioned for the *Texas*, an *Enterprise* memorial could invoke the country’s recent triumph of arms to inspire and encourage “imaginative, well-trained, dedicated, [and] educated young” people and condition the nation for its ongoing Cold War struggle.¹⁴⁷ Throughout the campaign the Association would emphasize that “an ENTERPRISE Memorial should be, [sic] not a tribute to an individual ship, but...should enshrine” a spirit of resoluteness and the national ideals “which have kept us free, and which must be the cornerstone of our future freedom.”¹⁴⁸

Such arguments illustrate a contradiction between the justifications for preserving the *Enterprise* in particular and the planned social and memorial functions the ship would fulfill. While the glorious record of the *Enterprise* seemed to grant the ship status as an historical relic, its memorial would pay homage to the larger and more general triumph of the US armed forces in the Pacific during World War II. The Association realized that it must paint the ship as an indicator of something larger than itself if it hoped to generate the enthusiasm, the support, and, most important, the money, that would stay the cutter’s torch. To accomplish this Halsey and his fellow veterans looked to the Cold War, which dominated the American consciousness at the time. They would remobilize the *Enterprise* to recall past victories and inspire future Americans to repeat those victories. In practice, however, the veterans never abandoned their emphasis on the specificity of the ship’s record. Too often, the Association’s appeals reflected an attempt to

¹⁴⁶ William F. Halsey, open letter draft, undated, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

¹⁴⁷ Michael M. Mooney to Osborne B. Hardison, December 6, 1957, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

¹⁴⁸ Robert B. Garney, open letter draft, December 18, 1957, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

veil with lofty social and political purposes a simple effort by a group of veterans to preserve an item of great sentimental importance to them and perhaps a few others.

In April 1957, the flaws inherent in the Association's drive had not yet become apparent, and Halsey forged enthusiastically ahead to realize the goals of PR&R's plan. Before he and the other Association members could even begin the first phase of their efforts, the appeal to corporate sponsors, they first had to accomplish a number of preliminary steps. These included working with the Navy to obtain cost estimates and establish deadlines, expanding the drive's administrative and organizational apparatuses, determining a permanent site for the ship's berth, clearing the project with relevant government entities, and securing the approval of Congress. Several of these steps proved relatively painless, but others gave Halsey and his subordinates more trouble than they expected.

Halsey wasted little time in securing the cooperation of the Navy. In April, the retired admiral arranged a meeting with the Secretary of the Navy, who agreed to move the Association's deadline to November 1, 1957. By that time, they would have to demonstrate ability to assume financial responsibility for the ship.¹⁴⁹ In May, Captain Ivan Monk, representing the Navy, traveled to New York to discuss the logistics of the project with Halsey. The two determined that at least \$500,000 would be necessary to prepare the ship for exhibition and that the Association should have an adequate reserve to cover the estimated \$50,000-\$100,000 annual maintenance costs for several years after accepting the transfer. In contrast to the Navy's generosity in providing the towing service to transport the *Texas* to San Jacinto, Monk informed Halsey that the Association must be responsible for bringing the *Enterprise* to its

¹⁴⁹ Thomas M. Gates to William F. Halsey, April 17, 1957, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

final berth, wherever that might be.¹⁵⁰ Pending the Association's demonstration of its ability to assume the associated costs, the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Navy approved Halsey's arrangements in July.¹⁵¹

With the official approval of the Navy and the breathing room provided by the November 1 deadline, the Association worked to secure the approval of Congress. By May, Halsey had contacted senator Warren Magnuson of Washington, who himself had served aboard the *Enterprise* with the admiral, to request that he introduce a bill in the Senate that would allow for the establishment of the *Enterprise* as a memorial in Washington, DC. Magnuson complied, and on May 22, he introduced Senate Joint Resolution 96, which "provides that the *Enterprise* shall be released by the Navy and shall be acquired by the Enterprise Association, a nonprofit association, and its leader, Fleet Admiral Halsey, and shall be established in the Nation's Capital as a national shrine, at no expense to the United States."¹⁵² The bill expressed the Government's approval of the Association's efforts and extended the Navy's deadline to March 1958. Members of the House Armed Services Committee judged that an extra six months might not be enough time and wondered whether an extra year would be better. Halsey's confidence convinced them that such measures were unnecessary for the Association to accomplish its goals.¹⁵³ With the

¹⁵⁰ L. V. Honsinger, "Memorandum for the Secretary of the Navy," June 5, 1957, Folder CVS-6 1957, Box 369, Unclassified Central Correspondence 1957, BuShips Records, NA.

¹⁵¹ E.C. Stephan to Percival F. Brundage, July 1, 1957, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

¹⁵² *Congressional Record*, Vol. 103, Part 6, May 22, 1957, p. 7353. Available at [HTTP://congressional.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/congressional/docview/t19.d20.cr-1957-0522?accountid=7118](http://congressional.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/congressional/docview/t19.d20.cr-1957-0522?accountid=7118). Accessed 12 February 2016.

¹⁵³ House Committee on Armed Services, *Joint Resolution to Establish the United States ship Enterprise (CV-6) in the Nation's Capital as a national shrine*, S. J. 96, Hearing, August 20, 1957, Accessed 12 February 2016, Available at [HTTP://congressional.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/congressional/docview/t29.d30.hrg-1957-ash-0063?accountid=7118](http://congressional.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/congressional/docview/t29.d30.hrg-1957-ash-0063?accountid=7118).

approval of both houses, SJ 96 passed into law on August 29 with a fateful deadline spun from little more than belief.

Conspicuously absent from the resolution was a specific site in Washington for the establishment of an *Enterprise* memorial. As this had been one of the Association's primary goals, the omission constituted a major setback for the preservation efforts.¹⁵⁴ On several occasions over the summer, Halsey reiterated his pledge that he could not begin a mass subscription drive until he could assure potential donors that the ship had a permanent home.¹⁵⁵ The decision to designate Washington, DC, as the destination city brought with it the same practical concerns that had hampered efforts to move the *Enterprise* there in 1946. Furthermore, any potential location in the District of Columbia fell within the overlapping jurisdictions of several government agencies, including the Department of the Interior, the National Capital Planning Commission, the Department of Commerce, the Fine Arts Commission, the Smithsonian Institution, and the DC Board of Commissioners.¹⁵⁶ At least two of the agencies, the Department of the Interior and the Smithsonian, expressed their misgivings or outright disapproval of the proposal for any *Enterprise* memorial in Washington at all.¹⁵⁷ As late as

¹⁵⁴ U.S.S. Enterprise Association to William F. Halsey, July 22, 1957, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*; William F. Halsey to Joseph F. Brown, undated, General Correspondence March-April 1957, Box 11, General Correspondence 1910-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

¹⁵⁶ House Committee on Armed Services, *Joint Resolution to Establish the United States ship Enterprise (CV-6) in the Nation's Capital as a national shrine*, S. J. 96, Hearing, August 20, 1957, Accessed 12 February 2016, Available at [HTTP://congressional.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/congressional/docview/t29.d30.hrg-1957-ash-0063?accountid=7118](http://congressional.proquest.com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/congressional/docview/t29.d30.hrg-1957-ash-0063?accountid=7118).

¹⁵⁷ J.E. Graf to Percival F. Brundage, July 22, 1957, Folder Proposed Museums, Box 86, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 50, Smithsonian Institution, Office of the Secretary, Records.

November 1957, the Association had yet to overcome these obstacles, and the *Enterprise* remained homeless.¹⁵⁸

The spring and summer of 1957 also witnessed efforts to expand the organizational reach of the *Enterprise* drive. Halsey and the Association realized that *Enterprise* veterans alone could never constitute a strong enough presence to undertake a fundraising drive of the scale stipulated by their plans. Through press appeals and personal contacts, they encouraged the establishment of committees across the country to champion the ship's cause at the state and city levels. Several such committees began operations in places such as Hawaii, North Dakota, Georgia, Florida, and Seattle, though few other localities answered the call.¹⁵⁹ The Association also attempted to secure the support of established organizations such as the American Legion, with hopes of utilizing their existing infrastructure to carry the *Enterprise*'s message to a wider audience.¹⁶⁰ Despite these efforts, Halsey and his subordinates never attained the level of organization achieved by the BTC through the support of the Texas Jaycees and Interstate Theatres group. This hampered the Association's ability to conduct a grassroots campaign in any single location similar to the BTC's statewide drive to raise money for the *Texas*.

¹⁵⁸ Michael M. Mooney to Osborne B. Hardison, November 22, 1957, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

¹⁵⁹ William F. Halsey to George Vanderbilt, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC; "Enterprise Association, Admiral Halsey Luncheon, Suggested Agenda," May 7, 1957, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC; George W. Beck to Shepard Broad, undated, General Correspondence March-April 1957, Box 11, General Correspondence 1910-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC; Horace W. Port to William F. Halsey, April 30, 1957, General Correspondence March-April 1957, Box 11, General Correspondence 1910-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

¹⁶⁰ "Enterprise Association, Admiral Halsey Luncheon, Suggested Agenda," May 7, 1957, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

The waning summer months, marked by the passage of the *Enterprise* resolution in August, had brought hope, but still the Association had made little progress since arriving at a defined plan of action in March. No specific site had been approved or even designated for the *Enterprise*, little nationwide promotional infrastructure had been established, and the solicitation of large-scale, corporate donors had yet to begin or had largely failed.

All of these problems loomed like storm clouds over the *Enterprise* drive when at the end of July 1957, lightning struck. For the better part of four months, Halsey had worked tirelessly to raise awareness for the *Enterprise* and promote the Association's cause. He had been hospitalized for illnesses associated with his age as recently as November 1956, but since then had shown few signs of diminishing energy.¹⁶¹ Then, on July 30, 1957, "Bull" Halsey suffered a minor stroke that again landed him in the hospital.¹⁶² Despite rumors of his death in the press, the incident posed little threat to Halsey's life.¹⁶³ Still, it forced him to realize that he could no longer assume an active leadership role in the drive to save the *Enterprise*. On August 19, he informed the Association of his decision. "I am convinced that the ENTERPRISE still has a great service to render to the country and that her scrapping would be a national disgrace," he wrote. "You have my full backing in all that you will do to save this symbol of our national heritage."¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ William F. Halsey to Henry V. Wildman, November 19, 1956, General Correspondence March-April 1957, Box 11, General Correspondence 1910-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

¹⁶² "'Bull' Halsey Suffers Stroke," *Sun* (Binghamton, N.Y.), July 30, 1957, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

¹⁶³ Jacques A. Arrouet to William F. Halsey, July 31, 1957, General Correspondence June-July 1957, Box 12, General Correspondence 1910-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

¹⁶⁴ William F. Halsey to Harrison J. Welton, August 19, 1957, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

Halsey's presence had been the driving force behind the Association's campaign. Since the reunion in 1956, it was Halsey who had made television and radio appearances and given numerous press interviews on behalf of the *Enterprise*. It was Halsey's efforts in Washington that had gained the extension of the Navy's deadline and the approval of the *Enterprise*'s transfer. His lobbying efforts had ensured the passage of SJ 96. By July 1957, Halsey had become the public face of the Association and its fundraising drive. Though he would stay on in a symbolic role, he knew that his departure would leave a vacuum. In the weeks following his stroke, he contacted one of the only men he could count on as his successor - Vice Admiral (retired) Osborne Bennett Hardison.

Hardison was no stranger to the *Enterprise*. Coming aboard in October 1942, he served as captain for just over a year, during which the ship became "the only carrier in the Pacific" and weathered the bloodiest days of the Guadalcanal campaign.¹⁶⁵ It was Hardison who had stood before his men on that sunny day in November 1942 and offered the heartfelt praise that, "Other carriers may come and go, and good ones they are, but the *Enterprise* – she's the best, she's the champ."¹⁶⁶ Halsey knew of the vice admiral's remarkable administrative talents and in September called on him to lead his old ship through its final test.¹⁶⁷ Hardison hesitantly accepted the position of Chief of Staff for the drive in October 1957, his admiration for the old admiral overriding his concerns about the feasibility of the project.¹⁶⁸ As he would soon

¹⁶⁵ Tillman, *America's Fightingest Ship*, 112, 159.

¹⁶⁶ Burns, *Then There Was One*, 173-174.

¹⁶⁷ Osborne B. Hardison to William G. Neville, September 20, 1957, General Correspondence August-September 1957, Box 12, General Correspondence 1910-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

¹⁶⁸ Osborne B. Hardison, "Statement At Beginning of Conference to be Held on 27 January 1958 In the Office of FADM Halsey, 90 Church St. New York, N.Y.," January 27, 1958, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

discover, the new assignment called for as much energy and luck as anything he had experienced during the war.

Hardison took control of the drive with realism and pragmatism. Even before officially accepting the job, he met with Association members and recommended immediate measures be taken to secure a suitable site for the memorial, obtain accurate cost estimates for all aspects of establishing the ship there, establish official contact with other museums, and prepare for exhibits, still unplanned, to be placed aboard the *Enterprise* as part of its new role.¹⁶⁹ After assuming his new position, Hardison, in his words, “at once set about finding out what was going on, cleaning up bad spots such as the donor mail situation, and planning the future.”¹⁷⁰ This included further consultation with government agencies for procuring a venue, establishing an infrastructure for replying to a backup of donor correspondence, and, most importantly, establishing corporate and industry contacts to begin PR&R’s “phase one” of the drive.¹⁷¹ Hardison knew that the time preceding the Navy’s March 1958 deadline would be the most difficult for the *Enterprise*, and the disarray he encountered upon taking up his duties did not

¹⁶⁹ Osborne B. Hardison to William G. Neville, September 20, 1957, General Correspondence August-September 1957, Box 12, General Correspondence 1910-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

¹⁷⁰ Osborne B. Hardison, “Statement At Beginning of Conference to be Held on 27 January 1958 In the Office of FADM Halsey, 90 Church St. New York, N.Y.,” January 27, 1958, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*; Osborne B. Hardison to William F. Halsey, October 4, 1957, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

bode well.¹⁷² “The personnel working in this entire program,” he reported, “presently consist of myself, the Admirals [sic] Aide and one yeoman.”¹⁷³

Months passed and those responsible for the *Enterprise* drive found little cause for encouragement. Though they had pledged not to begin a public subscription campaign before finding a location for the ship, the Association canvassed for private, large-scale donations throughout the fall. Halsey, Hardison, and the PR&R representatives exhausted their list of corporate and industry contacts in an effort to secure the initial donations. By November 1957, it had become clear that the focus on high-level donors to jump-start the campaign had been a mistake. “Industry was cool,” Hardison noted, while the PR&R reported to have found “no feeling for a dead item” and concluded that, “Outside of ‘E’ men and one-half of Navy [sic], [the] campaign has no ‘heart’... [and] lacks endorsements.”¹⁷⁴ Of over 80 corporate leaders contacted, fewer than ten had responded favorably to the Association’s inquiries.¹⁷⁵ Those responsible for the drive began to lose hope. In a report dated November 22, 1957, PR&R frankly admitted that, “We believe that it is not possible for you to raise \$1 million either through

¹⁷² Osborne B. Hardison to William G. Neville, September 20, 1957, General Correspondence August-September 1957, Box 12, General Correspondence 1910-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

¹⁷³ William F. Halsey to Charles F. Greber, July 12, 1957, General Correspondence June-July 1957, Box 12, General Correspondence 1910-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

¹⁷⁴ Osborne B. Hardison, “Statement At Beginning of Conference to be Held on 27 January 1958 In the Office of FADM Halsey, 90 Church St. New York, N.Y.,” January 27, 1958, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC; Michael M. Mooney to Osborne B. Hardison, December 6, 1957, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

¹⁷⁵ Michael M. Mooney to Osborne B. Hardison, November 22, 1957, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

our initial plan or any other plan by March 1. We suggest that you consider trying to save only part of the ship – the superstructure, the bridge, etc.,” or find a less expensive alternative.¹⁷⁶

As had been the case in March, PR&R’s recommendation forced yet another reconsideration of the Association’s task. On December 5, the firm forwarded a revised campaign strategy to the Association, outlining its estimate of the situation and their proposals for adapting to it. As opposed to the \$1 million necessary for preserving the entire ship, the new plan set a monetary goal of \$300,000 to encourage donors and still preserve a small part of the *Enterprise*, if possible. Most important, the campaign shifted its emphasis from large to small donors. The tiny staff made a list of steps necessary for establishing the infrastructure to carry out a large-scale drive similar to the one created for the *Texas* a decade earlier.¹⁷⁷ Public, not corporate, agitation had followed in the wake of the Navy’s announcements to scrap the *Enterprise* at the end of the war and now again a decade later. Unfortunately, the Association’s window of opportunity had largely closed.

After formally agreeing upon the new course of action in December, “in order to give time for consideration, and at the same time because it was felt that the Holiday season was no time to launch such a campaign,” Hardison, his assistants, and their PR&R contacts resolved to wait until January to implement the new plans. Another month passed, and still no action was taken, largely the result of the indecision surrounding the future of the campaign. Over the holidays, the Association suffered another setback: Halsey officially withdrew from his

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁷ PR&R Inc., “Enterprise Association Plan of Campaign,” December 5, 1957, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

¹⁷⁷ Osborne B. Hardison to William G. Neville, September 20, 1957, General Correspondence August-September 1957, Box 12, General Correspondence 1910-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

participation in the *Enterprise* drive citing reasons of health.¹⁷⁸ The Navy then poured salt on the wound with the announcement that the preservation of the *Enterprise* would require over \$800,000 more than had previously been estimated. The problem of a final location for the *Enterprise*, moreover, had yet to be solved. Hardison and his associates sensed that the end was near and decided to hold a final meeting late in January to decide upon the fate of their beloved *Enterprise*.¹⁷⁹

The meeting, held in Halsey's office in New York, signaled the death knell for the campaign. In a long opening statement, Hardison recounted his efforts since signing on in October 1957 and discussed in detail the numerous problems he had encountered. In his eyes, the disorganized state of affairs that he had inherited, the misguided focus on corporate donors, and the failure to secure a site for the *Enterprise* presented obstacles so serious that they could not be overcome before the March 1st deadline.¹⁸⁰ Those present determined finally to end the drive to save the ship in its entirety, instead pledging to save a small piece of it to be placed atop the soon-to-be-named "Enterprise Gate" at Annapolis's Memorial Stadium. Furthermore, Hardison noted, the Secretary of the Navy agreed to name the Navy's first nuclear aircraft carrier

¹⁷⁸ "Admiral Halsey Steps Out of Enterprise Drive," January 9, 1958, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

¹⁷⁹ Osborne B. Hardison, "Statement at Beginning of Conference to be Held on 27 January 1958 In the Office of FADM Halsey, 90 Church St. New York, N.Y.," January 27, 1958, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

Enterprise after its famous predecessor.¹⁸¹ Hardison then formally announced his decision to “to retire to ‘private life,’ and [to] subside into silence.”¹⁸²

The campaign to save the *Enterprise* was effectively over. The Association, deprived now of both Halsey and Hardison’s leadership, struggled to regroup and failed even to raise the money necessary to save the ship’s mast. After the passage of the March 1 deadline, a relieved Navy resumed its efforts to rid itself of a financial burden it had patiently shouldered through two waves of preservation efforts. By July, it found a buyer for the old carrier, a New Jersey demolition firm known as Lipsett and Co.¹⁸³ On August 21, 1958, the ship began its final journey to the scrapyard, a scene contrasting sharply with the celebrations that had welcomed the *Texas* at San Jacinto in April 1948. “Tugs pull and guide the carrier,” reported the *New York Times*, and “with paint peeling and hull rusting and mast dismantled it heads for the Federal Shipyards [sic] in Kearny N.J., where the final indignity will be inflicted upon her.”¹⁸⁴ By May 1960, jackhammers, acetylene torches, and cranes had accomplished what the Imperial Japanese Navy could not, and the great ship *Enterprise* ceased to be.¹⁸⁵ Today only a few artifacts, including the ship’s bell and a small stern plate, remain of the most decorated ship in US naval history. In the case of the *Enterprise*, memory turned out to be all too short.

¹⁸¹ Osborne B. Hardison to William F. Halsey, January 31, 1958, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

¹⁸² Osborne B. Hardison, “Statement At Beginning of Conference to be Held on 27 January 1958 In the Office of FADM Halsey, 90 Church St. New York, N.Y.,” January 27, 1958, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

¹⁸³ William G. Neville, memorandum, July 11, 1958, General Correspondence June-July 1957, Box 12, General Correspondence 1910-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

¹⁸⁴ “Anchor’s Away to Oblivion,” *Journal-American* (New York, N.Y.), August 21, 1958, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

¹⁸⁵ Richard F. Dempewolf, “The ‘Big E’ Dies with Her Boots On,” *Popular Mechanics*, May 1960, 65-70, 236, 238.

CONCLUSION

*“[C]ollective memory conceives the past as a social construction that reflects the problems and concerns of the present.”*¹⁸⁶

-Barry Schwartz, Sociologist, 1996

A strong irony characterizes comparisons between the fates of the USS *Texas* and the USS *Enterprise*. One ship, an old battlewagon that saw little combat in World War I and had all but outlived its usefulness by World War II, came “home” to San Jacinto and was enshrined with great fanfare. The other ship, a relatively new aircraft carrier that saw almost continuous action in the Pacific Theater of World War II, single-handedly dealt strategic blows to the Japanese Navy, and became the most decorated vessel in US history, unceremoniously met its end at a New Jersey scrapyard.

The stark contrast between service record and fate in the two cases begs the question: Why did Americans preserve the less famous, less decorated ship as a memorial while allowing its much more celebrated counterpart to be junked? As Kammen notes, “Clear-cut patterns are hard to find in the American postwar scene.”¹⁸⁷ No simple answer to this question emerges from either narrative, leading us to consider the wide range of factors that contributed to the memorialization efforts. Those factors fall roughly into two categories. Perhaps the more obvious of the two relates to memory and invokes appeals to “honor,” “sacrifice,” and “inspiration.” By their nature, war memorials represent the past and its connection to those living in the present. It

¹⁸⁶ Barry Schwartz, “Memory as a Cultural System: Abraham Lincoln in World War II,” *American Sociological Review* 61, No. 5 (Oct., 1996), 909, Web, Accessed March 10, 2015, Available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2096461>.

¹⁸⁷ Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 545.

therefore seems intuitive that the specific events or figures recalled by a given memorial would play the most important role in creating its appeal. The cases of the *Texas* and the *Enterprise* remind us, however, a second category comes into play where large-scale campaigns to generate publicity and funds for high-priced artifacts such as warships are concerned: the very practical issues of cost, administrative and organizational strength, fundraising strategies, and a fair amount of luck. Because of the prevalence of these factors in each case, we begin our comparisons with the practical considerations that arose in the efforts to preserve the *Texas* and the *Enterprise*.

The most pressing concerns of both the Battleship Texas Commission and the Enterprise Association centered on one thing: money. In retirement as in service, warships require considerable financial resources to maintain. Neglect brings rust and deterioration, turning the most attractive vessels to painful eyesores in just a few years. The Navy recognized this possibility, and as soon as agitation for preservation began, it demanded that any organization hoping to assume responsibility for a former US vessel demonstrate its ability to provide for the ship's maintenance. As memorials, both the *Texas* and the *Enterprise* would reflect on the Navy, and no naval officer wished that the name of the service be publicly tied to rusted and neglected artifacts.

The Navy's demands gave rise to the most important advantage the *Texas* held over the *Enterprise* during the preservation efforts. While initial estimates stipulated that the BTC raise \$225,000 for the ship's preservation, berthing, and initial maintenance costs, this number was later lowered to \$100,000.¹⁸⁸ Between the summer of 1947, when donations started to arrive, and

¹⁸⁸ "Battleship Texas Fund Boosted by V.F.W. Gift," *Houston Post*, Houston, March 25, 1948, Texas Newspaper Collection, DBCAH; "Battleship Texas Drive Opens Sept. 15," *Houston Post*, Houston, August 15, 1947, Texas Newspaper Collection, DBCAH.

April 21, 1948, the day of the dedication ceremonies at San Jacinto, only \$84,941.18 of public subscriptions had entered the BTC's coffers.¹⁸⁹ The Navy generously provided for a number of expenses, including the ship's towing from Baltimore, and allowed the BTC to assume responsibility for the ship without the vast financial reserves originally agreed upon.

Ten years later, the Navy stunned the Enterprise Association with initial estimates that at least \$1 million would be required before releasing the carrier.¹⁹⁰ By the beginning of 1958, that sum had increased to \$2 million.¹⁹¹ The monetary goals laid out for the Association thus exceeded those with which the BTC had to contend by at least tenfold, even accounting for inflation. The higher costs associated with the *Enterprise*'s preservation resulted from the ship's larger size, a more advanced state of deterioration, more work needed to construct the ship's berth, and less willingness by the Navy to provide financial assistance or free services. This not only gave the Association a much less attainable goal, but also forced them to convince the public to contribute to a cause that seemed wildly out of reach.¹⁹² One could argue that the national scope of the *Enterprise* campaign gave the Association a larger base of donors than the statewide drive to commemorate the *Texas*, which could have made up for the disadvantage imposed by the huge sum required to preserve the carrier. As we will see, however, the national appeal of the *Enterprise* proved to be one of the Association's chief obstacles.

¹⁸⁹ "Battleship Texas Hoists Flag," *Houston Post*, Houston, April 22, 1948, Texas Newspaper Collection, DBCAH.

¹⁹⁰ "The Association's Plans for Preserving the U.S.S. Enterprise as a National Memorial," undated, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, William F. Halsey Records, LOC.

¹⁹¹ Osborne B. Hardison, "Statement at Beginning of Conference to be Held on 27 January 1958 In the Office of FADM Halsey, 90 Church St. New York, N.Y.," January 27, 1958, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

¹⁹² PR&R Inc., "Enterprise Association Plan of Campaign," December 5, 1957, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

To raise money on the scale needed for the *Enterprise*, advocates required effective management, meticulous organization, and enterprising ambition even to hope for success. As Kammen notes, memorial efforts such as the “Freedom Train,” which successfully toured the country with a number of sacred documents from the National Archives during the late 1940s, were able to succeed largely because “the...initiative and execution resulted from very careful planning at the highest levels, public and private, and [because] media co-operation has never been more effusive in response to any such enterprise in all of American history.”¹⁹³ Simply put, the *Texas* enjoyed such advantages while the *Enterprise* did not.

From the beginning, the efforts to preserve the old battleship received direct and active support from the Texas state government, private patriotic, veteran, and commercial organizations, and prominent media outlets. In 1946, Texas Governor Coke Stevenson convinced the Secretary of the Navy to defer scrapping until the state legislature convened the following year, while his successor, Beauford Jester, energetically lobbied for the ship’s preservation and joined in the fundraising efforts for two full years.¹⁹⁴ The Battleship Texas Commission, an official body appointed by Jester, ultimately shouldered the administrative burden imposed by the fundraising drive and bears much of the responsibility for its success. Private interests also played a part, with groups such as the Texas Jaycees, the American Legion, and Interstate Theatres working at the grassroots level to generate enthusiasm in local communities across the state. The drive benefited from heavy press coverage, with news outlets such as Lloyd Gregory’s *Houston Post* publishing stories about the ship almost weekly during the final desperate months leading up to the *Texas*’s dedication at San Jacinto.

¹⁹³ Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 579.

¹⁹⁴ James Forrestal to Beauford Jester, April 10, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

The Enterprise Association never achieved a comparable level of institutional and organizational support. Though technically a national organization with members from across the country, the group had little presence at state or city levels. Much of the local activity consisted of informal meetings between friends and old shipmates rather than purposeful deliberations about fundraising or other official matters. Halsey and his associates succeeded in establishing a small number of local chapters in 1957, though these lacked the necessary leadership and central coordination to achieve the results witnessed during the efforts to preserve the *Texas*. The Association simply lacked the infrastructure to take advantage of the *Enterprise's* wider national appeal.

The *Texas* also benefited from having a designated resting place. Texas House Bill 623, passed into law on May 1, 1957, demanded specifically that the BTC “provide a proper berth for the Battleship ‘Texas,’ [and] select a location adjacent to, or on, the San Jacinto Battleground for such [a] berth.”¹⁹⁵ The location offered a number of advantages, including a means by which to tie the battleship and the history of the Second World War to the grand narrative of Texas history, direct proximity to a prominent waterway, and existing visitor facilities. The BTC could thus assure potential donors of a defined destination for the ship and offer their message with confidence.

For its part, the Association never secured a specific location for the ship’s berth. After efforts to transfer the *Enterprise* to various states and municipalities failed in the 1940s, the Navy explored the possibility of creating a national memorial out of the *Enterprise* in Washington, DC. Practical concerns arose that made the prospect of an *Enterprise* memorial in Washington

¹⁹⁵ An Act Authorizing the acceptance of the Battleship “Texas,” 50th Legislature, Regular Session, chapter 139, 1947, *General and Special Laws of Texas*, Accessed March 22, 2016, http://www.lrl.state.tx.us/scanned/sessionLaws/50-0/HB_623_CH_139.pdf

impossible. The issue was dropped, and the ship returned to reserve status for almost a decade. As time passed, memories of the Second World War diminished in luster and freshness. During the second round of *Enterprise* preservation efforts, Halsey, the Association, and various legislators ignored the earlier precedent and pushed forward a bill that provided for the ship's establishment generally "in the nation's capital," hoping to sort out the specifics once the drive began in earnest. The obstacles that had previously barred the possibility of berthing the ship in Washington, including shallow waterways, lack of visitor facilities, and proximity to busy military air facilities, still remained.¹⁹⁶ To make matters worse, the Association ran afoul of numerous agencies with overlapping jurisdictions in the capital, and the veterans' agitation to move the old carrier there prompted protests from the Smithsonian, the Department of the Interior, and others. These issues frustrated advocates of preservation, and the inability to designate a site constituted one of the primary reasons for halting the drive in early 1958.¹⁹⁷

Compounding the Association's difficulties was a flawed focus on high-level corporate donors, as opposed to the more populist approach of the BTC. Beginning at their initial meeting with PR&R in March 1957, Halsey and the Association held fast to the publicity firm's notion that a base of corporate and industry support must precede any efforts to solicit public donations.¹⁹⁸ The old admiral, followed by his replacement, canvassed their industry contacts for donations throughout the summer, fall, and winter of 1957 and repeatedly met with "cool"

¹⁹⁶ Chief, Bureau of Ships, to Chief of Naval Operations, February 25, 1946; Chief, Bureau of Yards and Docks, to Chief of Naval Operations, February 25, 1946; G.S. Bryan to Chief of Naval Operations, January 30, 1946.

¹⁹⁷ Osborne B. Hardison, "Statement At Beginning of Conference to be Held on 27 January 1958 In the Office of FADM Halsey, 90 Church St. New York, N.Y.," January 27, 1958, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

¹⁹⁸ "The Association's Plans for Preserving the U.S.S. Enterprise as a National Memorial," undated, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, William F. Halsey Records, LOC.

responses.¹⁹⁹ They ignored the facts the Navy had temporarily suspended steps to scrap both the *Texas* and the *Enterprise* as a result of public outcry and that the majority of the funding for the *Texas* drive came from small-scale donors. Hardison realized the folly of the corporate approach at the end of 1957, but by then it was already too late.

The BTC did not make the same mistake. Inspired by the *Texas*'s 1914 Galveston visit, during which citizens presented the ship's officers with silver service sets funded by schoolchildren from across the state and a local drive by a Waco men's club, Gregory and the other committee members carried on their efforts as publicly as possible. From the September 15 launch on the Texas Quality Network, to the *Houston Post*'s close coverage of the drive's progress, to Governor Jester's many public statements regarding the ship, to the Jaycees' efforts to bring the ship's cause to as many localities as possible, the efforts to preserve the *Texas* focused on spreading a message quickly, widely, and loudly.

Though Kammen argues that most successful postwar memorialization efforts arose first from the dedicated efforts of sentimental, wealthy individuals rather than public agitation for "memorials to heroes or abstract idealizations of United States history," the case studies outlined above lead to different conclusions.²⁰⁰ On the one hand, it could be argued that the infrastructural advantages of the *Texas* drive, as well as its relatively small monetary goal, probably contributed to the BTC's confidence in massive public subscription. The Enterprise Association, on the other hand, lacked these advantages and spent valuable time attempting to secure a corporate base that they hoped would make public subscription campaign possible. Yet the fact remains that the

¹⁹⁹ Osborne B. Hardison, "Statement at Beginning of Conference to be Held on 27 January 1958 In the Office of FADM Halsey, 90 Church St. New York, N.Y.," January 27, 1958, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

²⁰⁰ Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 565.

Association never truly began large-scale efforts to secure small-scale donations and failed, while the BTC made such a drive its primary focus and succeeded. The comparison reaffirms a notion of war memorials as objects of more value to individuals interested in memorial function rather than corporations interested in making a profit.

Despite the importance of these considerations, each episode also involved a considerable amount of luck, both good and bad. The *Enterprise* drive suffered a severe blow in July 1957, when Halsey's stroke effectively removed him from the preservation efforts. Despite Hardison's best efforts during the fall, Halsey's fame and energy had provided much of the Association's force and direction. His absence crippled further efforts. The *Texas* campaign experienced better fortune in the year leading up to its preservation, as exemplified by the Jaycees' offer to assume leadership just as Gregory and Jester were ready to accept defeat. These factors vastly improved the ship's prospects, but the greatest moment of good fortune came occurred years earlier, when the Secretary of the Navy decided to name the ship "Texas."

An army officer at Galveston on the occasion of the *Texas*'s visit to the port in 1914 noted that, "It is too bad that our units are not named after states, as the Texas Regiment, the New York Regiment, etc. Then we would 'belong' as do the men of the battleship Texas. That is why the people of the state are taking such an interest in this battleship and her visit to Galveston. They have a personal interest in it."²⁰¹ His frank observation offers a convenient introduction to the second category of factors that contributed to the success of the *Texas* memorial and the demise of the *Enterprise* - memory.

The cultural significance of war memorials arises from the interplay of two vectors: the events of the past that they recall and the contemporary circumstances surrounding their creation.

²⁰¹ "Battleship Texas Reaches Galveston," *Galveston Daily News*, Galveston, November 7, 1914, Texas Newspaper Collection, DBCAH.

The power of any given war memorial derives from its ability to connect those in the present with events or figures in the past. Historian David Blight hints at this link with his observation “the boundaries of military history are fluid; they connect with a broader social, cultural, and political history in myriad ways.” As a result, he notes, “the meanings embedded in those epic fights are what should command our greatest attention.”²⁰² War memorials thus serve as a medium through which “meaning” arises from those “epic fights”.

With the disparity present in comparisons between the war records of the *Enterprise* and the *Texas*, this study originally intended to compare the relative importance of the “contemporary” and the “historical” sides of a memorial in creating appeal in its intended audience. In the case of the *Texas*, the contemporary circumstances contributed more to the ship’s appeal than the specific events that constitute its record. It was not specifically that the battleship bombarded Point Du Hoc or Iwo Jima, for example, that made it such a viable candidate for preservation and memorialization. Rather, a general recognition of the *Texas*’s participation in a significant national event validated Texans’ adoption of it for their own contemporary purposes. In this instance, the contemporary context enhanced the possibilities for saving the *Texas*.

For its respective audience, the *Texas* offered far more than the *Enterprise* as a memorial. Texans possess an unusually strong, state-centered identity. Many residents of the “Lone Star State” see themselves first as Texans and then as Americans, proudly citing a cultural and historical heritage unique among the states in the Union. As a memorial, the *Texas* allowed people across the state to place themselves within a larger narrative that concerned more than the state itself. Numerous examples of this phenomenon exist in the letters written to Jester during

²⁰² Blight, *Beyond the Battlefield*, x.

the fundraising drive. In March 1947, one TC Dunn of San Jacinto wrote that, “The heroic record made by the battleship Texas is the sacred heritage of all Texans,” and that the ship’s past represents “glories which belong to all Texans.”²⁰³ Another citizen explained that the ship “is to be a monument to all the people of Texas and the past glories of this famous battleship,” implying a direct connection between the two.²⁰⁴ In September 1947, Texas Senator Fred “Red” Harris emphasized that, “Each and every one of us can always look with pride toward the fact that she is ours, an ever-living symbol of the sacrifice that we’ve paid in the two great World Wars in which she has so capably performed.”²⁰⁵

A columnist for an unidentified newspaper identified the source of the power of the *Texas* in that role, explaining, “The ship has no direct historical significance to Texas, except that...she bore the name of the Lone Star State in some of the major invasions of the war.”²⁰⁶ The fortunate name of the ship, rather than the specific campaigns in which it took part, allowed Texans to adopt the ship as their own, even though neither the ship or its crew bore any other connection to the state. Texans then created meaning for themselves that they validated by the understanding that the ship simply took part in the World Wars. In other words, they used the ship’s name to connect themselves with the ship’s history, expanding that history to represent the larger triumph of American arms in the wars as a whole and the vital part played by Texans in them. To the many Texans who contributed to the ship’s preservation, the battleship *Texas* formed another piece in a grand chronicle that begins at San Jacinto and, through the ship’s memorial function,

²⁰³ O.H. Carlisle to Texas Governor Beauford H. Jester, March 12, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

²⁰⁴ Garland Armstrong to Texas Governor Beauford H. Jester, March 13, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

²⁰⁵ “KPRC & TQN: Battleship Texas Program” script, September 15, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

²⁰⁶ “Bargain in Battleships,” March 14, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

runs through the successful conclusion of the Second World War. The ship's name helped it to serve as a tangible link to the past, allowing those who identify as "Texans" to draw themselves emotionally closer to events that occurred on a scale larger than a state-centered identity could encompass.

Augmenting the contemporary appeal of a *Texas* memorial was the ability of the ship to serve a societal model. In his discussion of Abraham Lincoln as a subject of memory during World War II, sociologist Barry Schwartz notes that collective memory can act both as a model *of* society, "a reflection of its needs, problems, fears, mentality, and aspirations," and a model *for* society, "a program that defines its experiences, articulates its values and goals, and provides cognitive, affective, and moral orientation for realizing them."²⁰⁷

The efforts to preserve the battleship and bring it to San Jacinto reveal this dual function. Against the backdrop of a new international threat, the Soviet Union, and the onset of the Cold War, many saw the ship as a model *for* society, a representation of American courage and democratic values, towards which future generations should strive to meet the challenges presented by the new world order. As noted above, BTC Chairman Lloyd Gregory argued that "[we] hear a lot now about the threat of Communism to our free American institutions and I don't know any greater way to meet the challenge than to keep reminding our children of their great American heritage [with memorials like the *Texas*]."²⁰⁸ Mrs. E.R. Donnell of Dallas argued in August 1947 that a "more fitting memorial for our Texas heroes lost at sea, [sic] during World War II" "would mean much to [the] future and education" of Texas children.²⁰⁹ Those children

²⁰⁷ Schwartz, "Memory as a Cultural System," 908 – 927.

²⁰⁸ "Jaycees to Spark Campaign to Get U.S.S. Texas Home," *Houston Post*, November 20, 1947, Texas Newspaper Collection, DBCAH.

²⁰⁹ E. R. Donnell to Texas Governor Beauford H. Jester, August 8, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

quickly understood, as the student government of Denton High School observed in a letter to Governor Jester. Through a memorial to the battleship, they wrote, “the students of Texas would profit in both a patriotic and educational way.”²¹⁰ Aptly summarizing the ship’s role as a model *for* society, Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal pointed out that the *Texas* would provide “a visible reminder to all Americans...that if we are to preserve our liberties, we have to be ready to fight for them.”²¹¹

Despite the focus on the battleship’s function as a model *for* society, many felt that the ship would also serve as a model *of* society. Some argued that the ship would constitute “a symbol of the fighting spirit of Texans,” while others saw the ship as “a permanent memorial reflecting the greatness of the state of Texas.”²¹² In an attempt to convince Jester of the ship’s worth, one veteran appealed to the governor’s own state identity in claiming that the *Texas* “epitomizes all the finest traditions and attributes of *your* [emphasis added] great state.”²¹³ These examples demonstrate the ship’s ability to shape people’s identity as Texans. It made a statement not only about how Texans hoped meet the challenges of the future, but also about how they saw themselves individually and as a group with shared attributes and values.

As a counterpoint to the *Texas*, the *Enterprise* serves our purposes both because of its greater success in wartime *and* its conspicuous failure in peacetime. Aside from the practical concerns noted above, a ship with a record as historic as “The Big E” would seem to have few problems generating popular support. Yet on two separate occasions between 1945 and 1958, the

²¹⁰ Denton High School Student Body and Class Presidents to Texas Governor Beauford H. Jester, March 18, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

²¹¹ “KPRC & TQN: Battleship Texas Program” script, September 15, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

²¹² Bargain in Battleships,” March 14, 1947, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.; Central Lions Club of Houston, Texas, resolution, undated, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

²¹³ Richard P. Axten to Texas Governor Beauford H. Jester, November 29, 1946, Governor Jester Records, TSLAC.

veteran carrier failed to do so. We can never know how a coordinated promotional effort to publicize the *Enterprise*'s record and solicit public donations on a large scale for its preservation might have turned out because none ever took place. It is true that various radio interviews and press articles concerning the ship's cause appeared between October 1956 and March 1958 and announced the Association's intent to save its ship. After the Association realized that its focus on corporate donors had proven a mistake, however, they abandoned the fundraising drive before ever launching it. As a result, insufficient evidence exists to draw conclusions concerning the power of an *Enterprise* memorial's "historical" component in generating mass appeal.

What we do know is that within its contemporary context, the intended *Enterprise* memorial never enjoyed the same advantages as the *Texas*. Association leaders hoped to paint the carrier as both a model *of* and *for* society similar to what the *Texas* became. Like their predecessors a decade earlier, Halsey and his associated realized the urgency of the Cold War in the minds of many Americans. The *Enterprise* could both embody American values and inspire future generations against the communist threat, or so they argued. Despite these lofty claims, they never escaped an emphasis on the ship's record as the primary justification for its preservation. Noting the need to provide a link between the memorialized past and the present, PR&R argued from the outset that, "the appeal for funds cannot be based only on the emotional response evoked by the history of the ship and the record of her crew." Rather than a glorification of a single vessel, "the ship, as a national monument to a vital part of the American epic, must be the focal point for a program of activities that make a contribution to American life today...."²¹⁴ The efforts to effect such a transformation never went any further. In an attempt to solicit donations from high-rolling sponsors, Halsey justified the campaign first with mention of

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

the ship's "unparalleled record" and second with the argument that it could "serve as a focal point for a broad program of activities of value to all our citizens, particularly our young people."²¹⁵

Despite these and other similar claims, the origins of the campaign lay in the sentiment characterized by Secretary Forrestal's claim that the ship's unique status made it "the 'one vessel that most nearly symbolizes the history of the Navy in [The Pacific War],'" and Senator Walsh's argument that, "There is no ship in the United States Navy whose log is such a complete summary of the naval war in the Pacific..."²¹⁶ The final drive to memorialize the *Enterprise* began as an attempt by a relatively small group of veterans to preserve an object of great sentimental importance to them and never really became anything more.

The strength of the *Texas* as a memorial lay in its name and its resulting ability to connect its contemporary audience, Texans all, with their past, both symbolic and historical. The power of the planned *Enterprise* memorial resulted primarily from the ship's importance as an historic relic, despite claims that it would fill larger but ill-defined social and memorial roles. The practical advantages of the *Texas*'s situation allowed the BTC and its associates to capitalize on the ship's potential appeals, ultimately generating enough enthusiasm to provide for its preservation. Unfortunately for the Enterprise Association, factors that bore no relation to the ship's memorial appeal converged and prevented Halsey and Hardison from testing the power of the ship's record to generate the enthusiasm that saved the *Texas*. Beyond the practical concerns, however, the cultural significance of memorials that allowed Texans to adopt and appropriate

²¹⁵ William F. Halsey, open letter draft, undated, U.S.S. Enterprise Association 1956-1958 and Undated, Box 23, Business and Social Correspondence 1918-1959, William F. Halsey Papers, LOC.

²¹⁶ Stafford, *The Big E*, 543; *Congressional Record*, November 1, 1945, 10250.

“their” ship without emphasizing the ship’s achievements did not bode well for the preservation of the *Enterprise*.

As Schwartz argues, “collective memory conceives the past as a social construction that reflects the problems and concerns of the present.”²¹⁷ American war memorials in the immediate postwar period, at least in these two instances, reveal far more about the historical context in which they originate than the past they supposedly represent. As it turned out, that context was far more complex, involving as it did local, national and even international factors as well as cultural, economic and organizational elements, than the advocates of both the *Texas* and the *Enterprise* ever imagined.

²¹⁷ Schwartz, “Memory as a Cultural System,” 909.

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