



# Historic Battleship Texas: The Last Dreadnought (Military History of Texas Series)

*John C. Ferguson*

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During the first quarter of the 20th century, the major naval powers of the world built hundreds of Dreadnought-style battleships. Today there is only one.

The battleship Texas was for a time the most powerful weapon on earth. When it was commissioned in 1914, the 14-inch guns were the largest in the world. This technological marvel of the time served with the British Grand Fleet in World War I and was the flagship of the entire U.S. Navy between the two World Wars. During the Second World War, an older Texas, past its prime, supported amphibious invasions in North Africa, Normandy, Southern France, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. The ship and her crew were preparing for the invasion of Japan when the war ended and the Texas came home.

No longer needed to defend her country, the Texas was saved from the scrap yard to become our nation's first historic ship museum in 1948. Now lying peacefully in her berth at the San Jacinto State Park near Houston, the battleship Texas is still serving her country—teaching instead of fighting.

The Texas is the only battleship remaining in the world today that served in World War I, and the only ship remaining of any type that served in both World Wars. This is the story of the battleship Texas and the brave men who walked its decks.

John C. Ferguson is park superintendent at Mission Tejas State Park and the former director of the San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site where Battleship Texas is located. He is the author of *Texas Myths and Legends* (McWhiney Foundation Press, 2003) and *Hellcats* (State House Press, 2004).

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