

Too Few Ships, Too Few Guns, and Not Enough Money: The Mexican Navy, 1846-1848

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With too few ships, too few guns, and not enough money, the Mexican naval and coastal defence forces between 1846 and 1848 made the US prolong its efforts during the Mexican War.¹ In prolonging hostilities, Mexico made the US expend men and materiel, escalating American costs and complementing Mexican negotiating strategies. And even though Mexico lost its entire fleet before the end of the war, effective coastal and inland naval defensive strategies enabled the country to maintain its sovereignty and most of its inhabited national territory.

While Mexican and American naval actions were clearly subordinate to the land conflict, the former were still critical to Mexican defence and to the success of the US army. No knowledgeable observers or participants imagined that Mexico's two schooners in Pacific waters, or seven schooners and three brigantines in the Gulf of Mexico, would be a match for the ship-of-the-line and thirty-three frigates, sloops-of-war, brigantines and steamers in the US Home Squadron and the dozen or so vessels in the Pacific Squadron.² Indeed, the Mexican navy did not prosecute an offensive naval war, instead adopting a defensive strategy in accordance with government policy. Still, during the armistice and treaty negotiations in late 1847, US Navy Secretary John Y. Mason lauded the accomplishments of the US Home Squadron, reporting to Congress that "Alvarado, Tuspan, Laguna, Fronteira, the mouth of the Goatzcacoalcos, and the city of Tobasco, eighty miles in the interior...were successively captured and occupied by our naval forces."³ In that comment Mason was referring to a few weeks of US naval activity during the spring and early summer of 1847. Such praise, however, could not have applied to the early conduct of the naval war in the Gulf of Mexico. A more accurate description of US actions would have had to include Commodore David Conner's communique of 17 October 1846, when "with feelings of deep mortification" he informed "the Department of the failure of another attempt to enter the river of Alvarado.'

The Mexican version of the naval war focuses on the defence of Alvarado, Tuxpan, and Villahermosa, ports that the USN did not take until after a combined army-navy assault on Veracruz in March 1847. Additionally, Mexican forces defended the coastal forts in Baja California, which also fell after the successful US army land campaign in the Valley of Mexico. In spite of the pride that Mexican naval and coastal defence units must have felt

through 1846 and the early months of 1847, however, Mexican popular attitudes toward the war were reflected in the inability of the government to recruit and field an effective army. Clearly, central Mexicans did not want to fight another war over Texas.'

Without a significant naval force, the Mexican armed forces under General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna had unsuccessfully resisted the Texas independence movement of the mid-1830s. Following that failure, Mexico strengthened its navy; and its army successfully campaigned against the Texas army and navy in 1842 and 1843, forcing the independent republic into diplomatic negotiations.⁶ The 15 February 1844 armistice with Texas had widespread support in Mexico; and the efforts to continue to wage war against the Texans proved unpopular later that year. The Anglo-American immigrant leadership in Texas, recognizing that they could not unilaterally defend the young republic, opted to negotiate for annexation to the United States, which the US Congress approved on 3 March 1845. But political opposition in Congress to territorial expansion prevented war until a skirmish in disputed territory in early May 1847 provided the expansionist faction with a viable excuse to declare a "just war."

The Mexican political response to the Texas annexation movement was direct and swift. Its envoys in Washington and foreign service bureaucrats in Mexico City pursued diplomacy. As well, Mexican naval officials dispatched their two iron-hulled steam frigates, *Guadalupe* and *Moctezuma*, for repair and refitting in New York.' These British-built steamers, the most modern warships in the western hemisphere, had helped the Mexican navy gain an advantage over the Texas navy in 1842 and 1843. For example, they had captured Texas vessels contracted for coastal defence which the Mexican navy then incorporated into its small fleet. Finally, the Mexican navy contracted Brown and Bell, New York shipbuilders, for at least five new vessels, two small shallow-draft side wheel steamers and three small schooners, which were intended to strengthen the small Mexican fleet in the Gulf of Mexico.'

Key to the annexation negotiations between Texas and the United States was a provision that the US army and navy would protect the Texas coast and its southern boundary until formal votes in the Senate and a Texas convention ratified statehood. Simultaneously, the US initiated negotiations with Mexico to settle the annexation issue; to formalize the southern boundary of Texas at the Rio Grande, rather than at the traditional border along the Nueces River; and to acquire Upper California and New Mexico. To strengthen its diplomatic efforts, which the Mexicans rejected, Secretary of War William L. Marcy in January 1846 ordered General Zachary Taylor to encamp along the Rio Grande. In addition, the USN's Home Squadron, long established to patrol the Caribbean, received orders to concentrate its vessels in the Gulf of Mexico. By the time the Senate voted to annex Texas on 3 March 1845, the Home Squadron had been on patrol in the Gulf for nearly a year. Within two weeks of the vote, the US also ordered its Pacific Squadron to concentrate its vessels in Mexican waters.¹⁰

Into the fall of 1845 US-Mexican negotiations continued, but stalled over boundary issues. The US insisted that the south Texas boundary extended to the Rio Bravo/Rio Grande. Mexico claimed its boundary extended to the Nueces River, long understood by Texans and Mexicans as the Texas/Coahuila boundary. Recognizing Mexico's disadvantages in a military confrontation with the US and preferring not to cede territory

without popular support, the administration of José Joaquín Herrera in November 1845 asked the various state legislatures to vote for or against a negotiated settlement." The communique to the states explicitly outlined American military and industrial advantages and Mexican weaknesses. But before the various state legislatures could vote, General Mariano Paredes y Arrillaga staged a coup. Paredes y Arrillaga, an outspoken opponent of a negotiated settlement, issued a direct condemnation of the government on 18 December 1845. The general, already risking a court martial for insubordination for refusing to turn over the command of the troops cantoned in San Luis Potosí to reinforce the army along the Rio Bravo/Rio Grande, put a definitive stop to public discussion of a negotiated settlement when he led the troops under his command toward Mexico City. To avoid a civil war, President Herrera resigned on 30 December."

Assuming the presidency in early January 1846, Paredes y Arrillaga announced that the Mexican national boundary extended to the Sabine River (the boundary between Texas and Louisiana). Unlike Herrera, Paredes y Arrillaga pursued military confrontation with the US, which obligingly the previous spring had ordered troops under the command of Zachary Taylor to establish a presence on the north side of the Rio Grande. After hostilities erupted between US and Mexican troops in early May 1846, the US declared war on Mexico on 13 May. That same day President James K. Polk ordered the USN "to blockade Mexican ports, to seize Mexican vessels, to capture any Mexican coastal towns." Five days later, Mexico's two steam frigates in Alvarado, repossessed by British creditors for nonpayment, sailed under the British flag away from the war. And in New York's Brown and Bell shipyard, the two steamers and three schooners contracted by the Mexican navy became property of the USN during the third week of May. Consequently, the Mexican navy's small two-coast fleet comprised but nine schooners and three brigs."

Despite Paredes y Arrillaga's preference for an offensive war against the United States, the Mexican Congress deliberated for several weeks. When it voted to declare war, it explicitly voted for a defensive war. The legislators knew that their army lacked men and materiel; and they knew that their navy could not defeat the USN.¹⁴ Recognizing that its navy could not effectively defend its traditional ports of entry, the Mexican congress on 10 July 1846 decreed the ports of Alvarado, Tuxpan, Coatzacoalcos, Soto la Marina and Tecolutla along the Gulf of Mexico and Manzanillo on the Pacific open to international shipping. The Congress also on 26 July 1846 issued regulations for privateers, which tacitly acknowledged that the underfunded and under-equipped Mexican navy could not defend all the towns and ports along the Gulf of Mexico, Gulf of Baja, and Pacific coastlines.¹⁵

With coastal defence management falling largely on the shoulders of the regional commandants, the commander in Veracruz ordered the Gulf of Mexico fleet to defend Alvarado. Mexican sailors did effectively defend and protect most of their craft in the Alvarado River and its vast inlet through 1846 and the first few months of 1847. For the Veracruz region and much of central Mexico, Alvarado offered significant logistic and strategic advantages for the provisioning and defence of the politically-vital interior. Long the centre of a major cattle ranching region, Alvarado had a low-water entrance, thus protecting it from the deep drafts of the major US naval vessels in the Gulf. Additionally, the mouth of the river opened directly onto the Gulf, where sandbars and the lack of seaward protection from the weather prevented blockading vessels from simply anchoring off shore.

Finally, Alvarado had an overland supply and communication route with the southern regions of the country, with Veracruz, and with the central valleys of the interior.¹⁶ Most of the Mexican Gulf of Mexico fleet anchored in Alvarado harbour.

To contest the small Mexican coastal protection fleet, by August 1846 the USN's Home and Pacific Squadrons included two ships-of-the-line, ten steamers, five frigates, fourteen schooners, fourteen sloops, eleven brigs and eight storeships. And the US also sent to the Gulf the five vessels that Brown and Bell had been building for the Mexicans. In terms of leadership, the USN had senior officers with battle experience going as far back as the War of 1812. It also had experienced seamen who had sailed in Mediterranean, African, Caribbean and Pacific waters. US commodores anticipated full command of the seas. But command of the seas did not mean command of the coasts."

The successful Mexican shore-based defence of Alvarado in 1846 and the inability of the Americans to prevent blockade runners and contraband trade persisted even though the USN remained on active patrol in the Gulf through the "northers" of the dry season (October-April) and the yellow fever of the rainy season (April-October). The US Navy initiated four assaults against Alvarado. The first effort failed before it even got started when one of the American steamers ran aground trying to get out of anchorage at Anton Lizardo. The second effort by nine US vessels and 1000 sailors on 8 August 1846 also failed. Reportedly, strong currents and a threatening norther led Commodores David Conner and Matthew C. Perry to withdraw their craft and return to a safe harbour.'\$

In response to the US attacks on Alvarado, and to protect the port's logistic and strategic value, Mexican forces under the command of Frigate Captain Pedro Diaz Mirk and Second Lieutenant Juan Lainé constructed new gun batteries at the entrance and along the banks of the river leading into the vast inlet. The Americans also understood the strategic value of Alvarado. In late September 1846, for example, the *New Orleans Picayune* urged that "[t]o end this war a more vital blow must be struck nearer the Mexican Capital; and that is, Vera Cruz should be taken by the way of Alvarado."¹⁹

The USN mounted a third assault against defenders of Alvarado on 15 October 1846. In that attack, eight vessels and 1000 sailors under the command of Commodore Conner "warred" with the three forts, two brigs, one schooner, and two gunboats manned by Mexican marines, sailors, and small units from the Alvarado, Tlacotalpan, Cosamaloapan, and Acayucan militia battalions.²⁰ Conner divided his craft into two columns. The lead vessel in one column ran aground attempting to cross the sandbar and volleys of cannon balls from the Americans fell on the sand.

With one US steamer temporarily aground and the other, which flew Commodore Conner's flag, and its towed vessels in range, Second Lieutenant Lainé, recognizing the limited potential of the firepower from his battery overlooking the mouth of the river, concentrated his fire on the vessel carrying Conner. That steamer, the *Vixen*, a small side wheel shallow-draft steamer, was one of the two steamers the Mexican navy had under contract in the Brown and Bell shipyard when the US declared war and bought it. Lainé's artillery hit *Vixen* twice, leading Conner, in spite of its captain's preferences to the contrary, to retreat out to sea. Failing to capture Alvarado or even to inflict damage on the Mexican defences, most of the US vessels returned to Anton Lizardo.²¹

Lainé's successful defence of the entrance to the Alvarado River further lowered the morale of the American officers and sailors. Writing before that assault, USN Chaplain Fitch Waterman Taylor had penned in his diary that "[a] second failure, would be suicide to the fame of a proud service." Conner's retreat led his men to view him as indecisive, perhaps even cowardly, according to Rev. Taylor. In response to lowered morale, Conner ordered Perry to sail with many of the same vessels to take Frontera and Villahermosa, two weakly-defended coastal and inland ports along the Tabasco River.²³ While Frontera and Villahermosa fell to Perry's guns when the Mexican forces withdrew, he did not remain, and the Mexicans returned as soon as Perry's vessels sailed back out into the Gulf

Along the rim of the Gulf of Mexico, artful negotiations by community leaders in Mérida and Campeche kept USN operations off the Yucatan to a minimum. The Yucatecans' "politics of neutrality," like ineffective assaults and retreats, further lowered the morale of the American sailors. Seth L. Phelps wrote his father that fall that:

It has been a matter of wonder to me for sometime that the U. States should permit such trifling, as in the case of the two provinces of Merida and Campeche, forming the government of Yucatan. It has been known for a long time that the sea towns along the coast held out neutrality; not because of friendly feelings, but because they had advantages of trade, and in that trade could furnish Mexico by overland transportation with the necessities of life of which our blockade deprived them.²⁴

Truth be told, the Home Squadron on patrol in the Gulf of Mexico did not effectively control the Mexican coast until after the fall of Vera Cruz on 27 March 1847. By then Commodore Perry had replaced Conner, who had stayed just long enough to oversee the unopposed landing of 12,000 men under General Winfield Scott, as the Home Squadron commander in the Gulf. Only after the land and sea bombardment and surrender of Vera Cruz did the USN initiate a new round of major assaults against the coastal defences at Alvarado, Tuxpan, and Villahermosa.²⁵

The Mexican inland waterway and land-based navy did not protect Alvarado after the fall of Vera Cruz in late March 1847. Rather, Diaz Mirón scuttled the few vessels remaining in the Mexican navy in the river to prevent the US from gaining access to the inlet. He and his men spiked and buried all the guns they could not carry, and then withdrew toward the interior. Under orders from the military commandant of the Veracruz region, Diaz Mirón subsequently joined the guerrilla fighters under the command of Tomas Marin and harassed the US army, which was supplied through the port of Veracruz.²⁶

While Diaz Mirón was planning and executing the abandonment of the Alvarado batteries, Perry, in an effort to strengthen morale, decided to redeem the good name of the US Navy. Along with Major General John A. Quitman, Perry planned a joint land-sea assault against Alvarado shortly after the fall of Veracruz. Word quickly circulated among the Americans, and certainly among the Mexicans as well, that Quitman and 2000 men were marching the thirty miles down the beach to take Alvarado by land.²⁷ To meet Quitman and force the surrender of Alvarado, Perry issued orders for most of the same vessels that had participated in the failed assaults August and October 1846 to pull anchor and sail again to

the mouth of the Alvarado River. Not to be embarrassed by failure again, Perry was going to use overwhelming force to erase the shame of August and October 1846.

To secure the entrance to the river, Perry ordered two vessels to stand guard at the mouth. One of these vessels had long been on patrol in the Gulf and the other was the newly-arrived *Scourge*, under the command of Lt. Charles G. Hunter.²⁸ When Hunter arrived at his destination he fired a couple of volleys from *Scourge's* guns. Almost immediately he spotted a white flag on the flagpole of the small fort at the river's mouth. In response, the young naval officer approached; and conversing with the few people in the fort, he learned that the Mexicans had evacuated. Consequently, Hunter accepted the surrender and raised the US flag on 1 April 1847. As planned, Quitman and Perry arrived later that day, but neither had received word of the surrender. Perry's attempt to boost morale had gone for naught. Infuriated at Hunter's actions, Perry court martialed and censured him for "exceeding orders."²⁹

Still smarting from the Mexican withdrawal, Perry took the Laguna and El Carmen islands off the Yucatan peninsula and the city of Tuxpan, north of Veracruz. Neither of those actions, though, stopped the blockade runners and contraband trade.³⁰ In still another effort to limit the trade that was supplying Mexico's interior, in June Perry sailed up the Tabasco River and bombarded Villahermosa for a second time. In response, the Mexican defence forces withdrew. Consequently, he ordered 250 men to hold Villahermosa and contain the contraband trade; the attacking "fleet" then returned to Anton Lizardo. As soon as Perry's vessels sailed back into the Gulf, the Mexican defenders promptly returned to blockade and harass the US sailors and marines. Unable to protect themselves against these guerrilla tactics, and after one-third of their forces had succumbed to tropical maladies, the Americans abandoned Villahermosa in late July.'

Unfortunately, Mexican naval and coastal defenders did not pen their thoughts and reactions to these various engagements as did their literate counterparts among the US forces. We have no diaries, for example, written by the defenders at Alvarado, where the Mexican navy made its stand until overwhelming odds and a significant turn in the war – the taking of Vera Cruz, San Juan de Ulua, and 5000 Mexican defenders – altered the trajectory of the conflict. Nor do we have memoirs by the defenders at Tuxpan and Villahermosa, where army and local militia contingents held out until June 1847. The few Mexican sources works we do have, though, complement the accounts kept at the time by American personnel. Those sources agree that the Mexican navy contested US aggression and naval domination.³² They also agree that the Mexican government complemented its naval strategy by encouraging blockade-running and by reducing tariffs. Indeed, the Mexicans forced the US to extend its blockade and defensive patrols along the western and southern rims of the Gulf of Mexico where weather, disease, and shallow waters took their toll on men and vessels.³³

Even though they were unable to win on the battlefield or on the seas, Mexican defenders along the coasts, like their counterparts in the interior, prolonged the war and increased its costs for the United States. In the process, they secured the political leverage their country needed to guarantee its sovereignty during the peace negotiations. In the United States, opposition to the war and to annexation of any territory, along with continued squabbling over the costs of the war, divided politicians at the same time that the US army

occupied Mexico City and the USN patrolled the Gulf of Mexico. Continued guerrilla raids led by Diaz Mirón between Veracruz and the US forces stationed inland in late 1847 and into 1848 further strengthened the Mexican position and increased US costs during a domestic economic downturn. In the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which Mexican and American negotiators signed on 3 February 1848, the US acquired its minimal territorial goals. And even though some Mexican congressmen continued to object to the loss of any territory, the Mexican negotiators convinced the majority of the legislators to recognize that sovereignty and national independence were preferable to persistent warfare against so powerful a foe.³⁴

With American budget deficits rising from over four million dollars for 1847 to fifteen million dollars in 1848, and a collapse in the European grain trade due to bountiful harvests on the continent in 1847, the American bond market would no longer supply cheap credit for the US army and navy.³⁵ And General Scott's efforts to make the Mexicans pay for occupation costs proved ineffective.³⁶ By war's end US costs exceeded \$63 million for military operations and borrowing had passed \$49 million. Prolonged occupation and patrols also increased the number of soldiers at risk from disease. Indeed, the 11,155 Americans who succumbed to disease exceeded the number killed and wounded in action by ten times.³⁷

The Mexican navy's role in escalating American costs was complementary rather than paramount or decisive. With very few ships, very few men, and virtually no budget, the Mexican navy offered just enough threat to American command of the Gulf of Mexico that the USN had to maintain patrols until diplomacy produced an armistice in February and a final treaty in late May 1848. By then Mexico had lost its entire navy and virtually all its merchant marine in defence of its coasts. The Mexican navy, though, unlike Mexican sovereignty, could and would be replaced after the US withdrew its troops and vessels.

NOTES

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1. There is a modest bibliography in English and Spanish on the Mexican and US navies during the 1846-1848 war. US sources are more abundant and the USN even has an online bibliography at <http://www.history.navy.mil/biblio/bibliol/bibliolj.htm>. The principal source in English on Mexico's naval war is Robert L. Scheina, "Seapower Misused: Mexico at War, 1846-8," *Mariner's Mirror*, LVII, No. 2 (1971), 203-214. In this brief article Scheina argued that Mexico failed

to use its navy to play for time and thus emerge victorious. In contrast, I perceive that Mexican political leadership recognized that it could not win and that its only recourse was to use its navy and coastal defence forces to delay US control of central Mexico, which they did for nearly a year. There are two Mexican articles on the defence of Alvarado, the principal focus of the USN: Enrique Hurtado y Nuño, "Ataque y defensa del puerto de Alvarado," *Revista General de la Armada de Mexico*, III (agosto 1963), 11-19 and (octubre 1963), 37-41. Further research into the primary documentation on the activities and role of the Mexican naval forces is severely limited because the Mexican naval archive burned a few years ago. For a complete listing of US naval vessels that took part in the various assaults during the war, see Robert Wilden Nesser, *Statistical and Chronologi-*

cal History of the United States Navy, 1775-1907 (2 vols., Kent, OH, 1996), I, 64-73.

2. On the USN in early 1846, see Justin H. Smith, *The War with Mexico* (reprint, 2 vols., Gloucester, MA, 1963), II, 189. The US expanded its fleets considerably during the war. For a complete listing of the vessels in the US and Mexican navies during the war, see K. Jack Bauer, *Surfboats and Horse Marines: US Naval Operations in the Mexican War, 1846-1848* (Annapolis, 1969); and Norman F. Tutorow, *The Mexican-American War: An Annotated Bibliography* (Westport, CT, 1981), 347-352.

3. Quoted in Samuel Elliot Morrison, "Old Bruin" Commodore Mathew C. Perry, *The American Naval Officer Who Helped Found Liberia, Hunted Pirates in the West Indies, Practised Diplomacy with the Sultan of Turkey and the King of the Two Sicilies, Commanded the Gulf Squadron in the Mexican War, Promoted the Steam Navy and the Shell Gun, and Conducted the Naval Expedition which Opened Japan* (Boston, 1967), 242.

4. A.D. Conner, Commander, Home Squadron, to Hon. John T. Mason, Secretary of the Navy, 17 October 1846, quoted in Fitch Waterman Taylor, *The Broad Pennant; or A Cruise in the United States Flag Ship of the Gulf Squadron during the Mexican Difficulties.. Together with Sketches of the Mexican War, from the Commencement of Hostilities to the Capture of the City of Mexico* (New York, 1848), 307-308.

5. Prior to the outbreak of hostilities, the Mexican government fully understood the extraordinary economic and military advantages of the US and actively promoted domestic support for a negotiated settlement. Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), Gobernación, Folletería, caja 10A, exp. 337, Comunicación circular que el Exmo Sr. Don Manuel de la Peña y Peña estendió en el año de 1845, como ministro de Relaciones sobre la cuestión de paz o guerra, según el estado que guardaba en aquella época; Gene M. Brack, *Mexico Views Manifest Destiny, 1821-1846: An Essay on the Origins of the Mexican War* (Albuquerque, 1974), 149-162; Jesús Velasco Marquez, *Le guerra de 1847 y la opinión pública (1845-1848)* (Mexico, DF, 1975), *passim*; and Reynaldo Sordo Cedeño, "México en armas, 1846-1848," in *En defensa de la patria* (Mexico, DF, 1997), 23.

6. Miguel A. Sanchez Lamego, *The Second Mexican Texas War, 1841-1843* (Hillsboro, TX, 1972): 51; and William A. DePalo, Jr., *The Mexican National Army, 1822-1852* (College Station, TX, 1997): 84. On naval activities in Yucatan in 1842 and 1843, see also Mario Lavalle Argudin, *La armada en el Mexico independiente* (México, DF, 1985), 80-82.

7. Alan Nevins (ed.), *Polk: The Diary of a President* (New York, 1929), 81-85; Eugene Irving McCormac, *James K. Polk, A Political Biography* (New York, 1965), 407; Edwin P. Hoyt, *James Know Polk* (Chicago, 1965), 134; James Morton Callahan, *American Foreign Policy in Mexican Relations* (New York, 1967), 158-159; David M. Pletcher, *The Diplomacy of Annexation: Texas, Oregon, and the Mexican War* (Columbia, MO, 1973), 386-387; Josefina Zoraida Vasquez and Lorenzo Meyer, *The United States and Mexico* (Chicago, 1985), 44; and Paul H. Bergeron, *The Presidency of James K. Polk* (Lawrence, KS, 1987), 75-76. For discussions of the "just-war tradition," see William V. O'Brien, *The Conduct of Just and Limited War* (New York, 1981), 12-36; James T. Johnson, *The Just War Idea and the Ethics of Intervention* (Boulder, 1993); and Donald A. Wells, *An Encyclopedia of War and Ethics* (Westport, CT, 1996), 250-259.

8. Robert L. Schema, "The Forgotten Fleet: The Mexican Navy on the Eve of War, 1845," *American Neptune*, XXX, No. 1 (January 1970), 48-50.

9. Bauer, *Surfboats and Horse Marines*, 25; and Bauer, *The Mexican War, 1846* (New York, 1974), 111-112.

10. DePalo, Jr., *Mexican National Army*, 92-103; Bauer, *Surfboats and Horse Marines*, 138; and Enrique Cardenas de la Peña, *Semblanza marítima del México independiente y revolucionario* (2 vols., Mexico, DF, 1970), I, 140. On the activities of the Pacific Squadron prior to and during the war, see J. Wade Caruthers, "The Seaborne Frontier to California, 1796-1850," *American Neptune*, XXIX, No. 2 (April 1969), 96-99; and Pletcher, *Diplomacy of Annexation*, 398.

11. AGN, Gobernación, Folletería, caja 10A, exp. 337, "Comunicación circular que el Exmo Sr. Don Manuel de la Peña," 1848.

12. *El Siglo XIX*, 31 December 1845; and Enrique

Olavarría y Ferrari, *Mexico Independiente, 1821-1855* (Mexico, DF, 1888), 34.

13. Bauer, *Surfboats and Horse Marines*, 18, 22 and 253-259; and Bauer, *The Mexican War*, 111.

14. The Mexican declaration of war on 7 July 1846 stipulated that its forces should repel the invading Americans. For editorials and debates concerning the declaration of war, see *Diario del Gobierno Mexicano*, 17 June-8 July 1846. Shortly after the declaration and the passage of the initial defence legislation, Paredes y Arrillaga left the presidency, ostensibly to assist in the land defence of Monterrey, Nuevo Leon; he went into exile when General Mariano Salas and the federalists regained the political upper hand in Mexico City.

15. The privateer regulations and letters of marque freely available throughout the Atlantic community proved totally ineffective. Scheina reported only one privateering action, and that was in the Mediterranean Sea. Recent studies on Mexico's privateering tradition and its diplomatic efforts during the Mexican-American War include Oscar Cruz Barney, *El régimen jurídico del marítimo el mundo indiano y el México del siglo XIX* (Mexico, DF, 1997), 285-306; and Raúl Esquer Figueroa, *La guerra de corso de México durante la invasión norteamericana, 1845-1848* (Mexico, DF, 1996), *passim*. Neither author suggests findings beyond those published by Scheina.

16. Bauer, *The Mexican War*, 113.

17. Smith, *War with Mexico*, II, 203-205; Scheina, "Seapower Misused," 213; Morrison, *Old Bruin*, 200-202; Jay Slagle, *Ironclad Captain: Seth Ledyard Phelps and the U.S. Navy, 1841-1864* (Kent, OH, 1996), 59; Sordo Cedeño, "México en armas," in Laura Herrera Serna (ed.), *México en guerra (1846-1848), perspectivas regionales* (Mexico, DF, 1997), 55-67; and María Eugenia Aras Gómez, "La defensa en el territorio tabasqueño," in Herrera Serna (ed.), *México en guerra*, 604-608.

18. Taylor, *Broad Pennant*, 248-250; Smith, *War with Mexico, II*, 198; Morrison, *Old Bruin*, 188; Lavalle Argudín, *La armada*, 102; and Nesser, *Statistical and Chronological History*, I, 65.

19. George Winston Smith and Charles Juda (eds.), *Chronicles of the Gringos: The US Army in*

the Mexican War, 1846-1848, Accounts of Eyewitnesses and Combatants (Albuquerque, 1968), 167.

20. José María Roa Barcena, *Recuerdos de la invasión norteamericana (1846-1848)* (3 vols., México, DF, 1847), 1, 252-253; and Bauer, *Surfboats and Horse Marines*, 45-47.

21. Taylor, *Broad Pennant*, 306; and Bauer, *Surfboats and Horse Marines*, 47.

22. Taylor, *Broad Pennant*, 288.

23. Nesser, *Statistical and Chronological History*, I, 66-67.

24. Slagle, *Ironclad Captain*, 59.

25. Lavalle Argudín, *La armada*, 102-104; Nesser, *Statistical and Chronological History*, I, 68-70; Slagle, *Ironclad Captain*, 65-66; Raphael Semmes, *Service Afloat and Ashore during the Mexican War* (Cincinnati, 1851), 147; Cardenas de la Peña, *Semblanza marítima*, 137-140; and Bauer, *Surfboats and Horse Marines*, 99-122.

26. Lavalle Argudín, *La armada*, 102; Jaime Sanchez, "El territorio tlaxcalteca y la guerra contra Estados Unidos," in Herrera Serna (ed.), *México en guerra*, 653-655; Carmen Blázquez Domínguez, "Presencia norteamericana en Veracruz durante el conflicto de 1847," in Herrera Serna (ed.), *México en guerra*, 666-668; and Morrison, *Old Bruin*, 240.

27. A number of participants wrote about the operation; reflective of the knowledge of non-participants was Thomas Tenney's diary entry of 2 April 1847: "We have heard this evening that General Quitman, on his way to Alvarado, met some of the enemy's forces on the twenty-first and defeated them." See D.E. Livingston (ed.), *The Mexican War Diary of Thomas D. Tenney* (Norman, 1970), 76. For a participant's account, see Raphael Semmes, *Service Afloat and Ashore During the Mexican War* (Cincinnati, 1851), 147; and Slagle, *Ironclad Captain*, 65.

28. Slagle, *Ironclad Captain*, 65.

29. The documentation on Hunter's court martial, defence and censure are in Semmes, *Service Afloat and Ashore*. Taylor, *Broad Pennant*, 387-392; and

Morrison, *Old Bruin*, 223, reported that President James K. Polk "quashed" Hunter's court martial and gave him another command.

30. Smith, *War With Mexico, II*, 204.

31. Smith, *War with Mexico, II*, 205; Morrison, *Old Bruin*, 238; and Bauer, *Surfboats and Horse Marines*, 129.

32. Olavarria y Ferrari, *Mexico independiente*, IV, 38; Lavalle Argudin, *La armada*, 103; and Cardenas de la Peña, *Semblanza marítima*, 138-139.

33. Taylor, *Broad Pennant*, 401-403; Morrison, *Old Bruin*, 189-190, 231-242; and 247; Bauer, *Surfboats and Horse Marines*, 123-131; and Smith, *War with Mexico, II*, 202-205.

34. Linda Arnold, *Política y justicia: La Suprema Corte mexicana (1824-1855)* (Mexico, DF, 1996), 199-200; *Exposición dirigida al Supremo gobierno por los comisionados que firmaron el Tratado de Paz con los Estados Unidos* (Querétaro, 1848); AGN, Suprema Corte de Justicia, caja 6, expediente 163, "Expediente instruido a solicitud de once señores diputados,

pretendiendo se suhete a la aprobación o reprobación de las legislaturas de los estados la aprobación del congreso general, de los tratadfos que celebró el Supremo gobierno ajustando la paz con el gobierno de los Estados Unidos de Norte;" Smith, *War with Mexico*, II, 264-266; and Sordo Cedeño, "Mexico en armas," 76-78.

35. *ibid.*, 11, 253-267 and 484-485 ff.

36. Thomas M. Davies, Jr., "Assessments during the Mexican War, An Exercise in Futility," *New Mexico Historical Review*, XLI, No. 3 (July 1966), 197-216.

37. The statistics on killed and wounded are widely available; perhaps the most accessible source is the US Department of Defense site at <http://web1.whs.osd.mil/mmid/m01/SMS223R.HTM>. The USN also has such statistics at <http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq56-1.htm>. Neither site has statistics about the men who lost their lives when their ships sank due to rough seas rather than combat engagements or the men who faced the yardarm after courts martial, instances mentioned in the memoir literature; see, for example, Taylor, *Broad Pennant*.