



7th Grade Winner

Battleship USS Texas: A Gift of Defense

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What ship was always there for the United States in the face of battle? What ship performed its duties no matter what it took? What ship deserves a plentiful amount of appreciation for its services? That ship would be no other than the USS Texas battleship, BB-35. Honored as one of the greatest battleships of its time, the battleship, named after the state of Texas itself, is a symbol of resilience no matter the circumstance and “resilient” is something that the state of Texas should always be known for. This ship is the perfect relic of Texas history that we need to continue preserving. Texas saved our soldiers’ lives, so she is an indispensable artifact that should be treasured by everyone.

The USS Texas was equipped with a multitude of arms and had many new and vital features on it that no other ship had ever received at the time, making it one of the most powerful ships the United States had ever built. USS Texas cost about \$5,830,000 to make. The ship was launched on May 18, 1912 and was decommissioned on April 21, 1948. She was a New York class battleship with a length of 573 ft, and a speed of about 24 MPH. According to worldwar2facts.org, the ship was equipped with 10x14 inch 45 caliber guns, 21x5 inch 51 caliber guns, 4x3 inch powder guns, and 4x21 submerged torpedo tubes. It was one of the first ships with a radar and was later armed with a Number 3 main turret, an astounding addition, for it was pretty much unheard of at the time, making the BB-35 quite unique against the rest of the fleet. These features made USS Texas well positioned to defend itself when it fought in WWI, D-Day, and other battles during WWII such as Iwo Jima and Okinawa. In fact, USS Texas fired the first American shots in WWI.

Examples of BB-35 honoring the Texas name can be found in every single one of its battles. During the events of D-Day (June 6, 1944) the ship played a crucial part in the success of the battle. Andy Smith, the manager of the Battleship Texas, said, “At one point over the period of 34 minutes, she fired over 250 rounds of 14-inch shells from her large guns.” She heroically blasted away at the enemy ships, providing back up support, and even served as a hospital to the injured soldiers. The battleship made history during WWII when it partially submerged itself for the starboard torpedo blisters to be raised two degrees higher, so the ship could reach the necessary range. It was used again to assist the soldiers by taking on the German fleet’s most powerful gun battery. After its services in WWII the ship earned a total of five battle stars. The United States owes so much to this ship for the way it was always leading our battles to victory.

USS Texas kept persevering even after taking some hits. During WWI on September 27, 1917, USS Texas underwent a bit of damage. Captain Victor Blue and his navigator had an issue that confused them with the location of the shore lights and a channel resulting in the ship being steered straight onto Block Island. The ship was pulled back to safety



three days later and had to undergo repairs in New York, forcing the crew to turn back. Captain Blue, however, was still in charge of the ship with the help of some connections with the Secretary of the Navy, Joseph Daniels, and he had the longest command of USS Texas out of any of the other twenty-six officers. The military cared deeply for Texas and were always modernizing and repairing their beloved ship no matter the condition of it.

Battleship Texas was the defender of our soldiers in times of battle and earned itself the nickname “Mighty T.” After the ship was decommissioned, it was moved to San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site for people to learn about it. Because people nationwide are now coming to see and explore it, the ship contributes to the economy and allows everyone to marvel at this historical treasure. USS Texas recently came close to being scrapped, but it was then decided that it would be moved to Galveston for repairs. It is important that we never dispense of this artifact that is rich with the history of Texas. The ship held the name of Texas through all of its battles, scarring, and achievements. It held its stamina until it was one of the only battleships remaining from the wars and holds all its history from the years it was used in battles. USS Texas put soldiers in awe back then and should be able to continue to do so for everyone else in the future. It is clear that the worth of this ship is priceless to us and deserves to be continuously preserved for generations to come so it can serve as a monument of all the achievements of the United States and Texas. After all, it is the best “thank you” we can give to the ship that stood by our side whenever battle called for the finest of battleships.

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