

# Texas Military History

You may be familiar with the phrase “Six flags over Texas,” which is more than just a theme park. The phrase represents the six nations that have ruled over the territory we now know as Texas, including a period as its own independent republic.

After being ruled by Spain, France and then Mexico, Texas finally won its independence in 1836. A decade later in 1845, it became the 28th State to join the United States of America. Only a year after the annexation of Texas the first major conflict of the new state occurred - the Mexican-American War. The conflict arose because Mexico felt that Texas was still part of their territory. Without Texas’ fighting spirit, the United States might be a much smaller place today. Texans led the charge, and the US Army eagerly helped the newest state of the union in their efforts to remain free of Mexican rule. The end result of the Mexican-American War was a very large gain in territory for the US, including present day California, Arizona, New Mexico, and of course, Texas.

Since the Mexican-American War, Texans have answered the call of every American conflict from the Civil War to current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Some notable Texans that you may be familiar with are: the Commander of the Pacific Fleet during World War II, Admiral Chester Nimitz from Fredericksburg; the Supreme Commander of the Allied forces in Europe, and later US President, Dwight Eisenhower from Denison; and modern-day hero, best-selling author, and Navy SEAL, Marcus Luttrell from Houston. Texas A&M University is the home of the Fightin’ Texas Aggie Corps of Cadets, which commissions more military officers than any Reserve Officers’ Training Corps unit in the nation. During World War II, Texas A&M outpaced the military academies by commissioning 14,123 officers.

If you have had the opportunity to get to know Texans on your train trip, you may have noticed that Texans speak of their beloved state with strong emotion. Ingrained in the culture of Texas is the fact that it was once its own independent republic before it became part of the United States. Many Texans view Texas’s independence as a great source of pride because the state was resilient and determined enough to fight for its own independence. If you have ever wondered why they call it the “Lone Star” state, well...that comes from this part in history, when the flag of the Republic of Texas had a lone star on it. Some say that the single star on the Texas flag was a sign of its desire to join the United States, and others claim that this single star represented Texas’ determination to uphold its rights, even as a state within Mexico in the 1820’s.

On the northwest side of Austin, the train passes Camp Mabry, the third oldest military installation in Texas and home to the Texas National Guard. The state of Texas hosts many US military installations, including Ft. Hood in Killeen, which is the largest Army base in the US, and Randolph Air Force Base in San Antonio. All total, there are 7 Air Force Bases, 4 Army Bases, and 4 Navy Installations, providing tremendous operations and support for the United States Armed Services.

So hopefully, next time you hear the phrase “Six Flags over Texas” you’ll recall that it IS more than just a theme park. It’s a representation of the long and rich military history of the state.

## Source(s):

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