

The Bandera PROPHECY

June 3, 2021

Today in Texas history

By Bandera Spirits of Texas

On this day in 1836, a mounted ranger company in the service of the Texas revolutionary army captured a Mexican ship. The rangers, under the command of Maj. Isaac Watts Burton, had been dispatched by Gen. Thomas J. Rusk to watch a stretch of the Gulf Coast south of San Antonio Bay.

When they heard of a suspicious vessel in Copano Bay, the rangers hid on the shore and sent up distress signals. The ship responded first by hoisting American and Texan signals, which were ignored.

Only when the ship raised Mexican signals did the rangers respond.

Thus tricked into thinking the supposedly distressed soldiers were Mexican, the captain came ashore and was captured. With him as hostage, 16 rangers rowed out, boarded the Watchman, and seized its cargo of provisions for the Mexican army.

Burton and his men employed this decoying tactic twice more on June 17, when they captured the Mexican ships Comanche and Fanny Butler. For these unlikely captures at sea, the mounted rangers were dubbed "Horse Marines."