

## LA GRANADA



### March 2018



Order of Granaderos y Damas de Gálvez San Antonio Chapter

# Chapter Officers Sworn In

At the February Regular Meeting, Governor Joe Perez swore in a new slate of officers for 2018. Ricardo Rodriguez graciously stepped down from his position of Deputy Governor to better serve the chapter full-time as Drum Major where he will continue to improve and increase the number of the fifers and drummers in our Fife & Drum Corps. This left a vacancy in the Deputy Governor's position. Alex Zamora was voted in and sworn in as our new Deputy Governor, leaving a vacancy in the Treasurer's position. Manny Rodriguez was sworn in as Treasurer. Tim Thatcher graciously stepped down as Secretary to assist the Governor in training Granaderos on the infantry commands. This left a vacancy in the Secretary's position. Briana Perez was sworn in as Secretary, filling the position she previously held. We welcome our new officers for 2018. Our officers are shown below.

> Governor **Deputy Governor** Treasurer Secretary **Drum Major**

Joe Perez **Alex Zamora Manny Rodriguez Briana Perez** Ricardo Rodriguez

As committees are formed, the Governor will appoint chairs to those committees.



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A new exhibit at the San Antonio Museum of Art may

be of interest to members of our group. San Antonio 1718: Art from Viceregal Mexico tells the story of San Antonio's first century through more than one hundred paintings, sculptures, and decorative objects, many of them never before exhibited in the United States. The exhibit is on display this year from February 17 through May 13.



# Wednesday, March 7<sup>th</sup> La Fonda Restaurant

8633 Crownhill Blvd Dinner at 6:30 Meeting at 7:30

**Guest Speaker: Stella González** 

# Presentation: Juana Navarro Alsbury The Forgotten Story

We will go back in time more than a century and a half at our next meeting and meet Juana Navarro Alsbury who will tell us, firsthand, about the forgotten story of her life.



Saturday, March 24 10:00 am - 4:00 pm
We will staff a booth at the Pearsall History Festival



#### **March Babies**

March 2
Pauline Faz

March 3
Rueben Perez

March 15 Urban Urbano

March 19
Dale John Joseph Leppard

# San Antonio Chapter Officers:

Governor
Joe Perez

#### **Deputy Governor**

Alex Zamora

Treasurer
Manny Rodriguez

Secretary Briana Perez

**Drum Major**Ricardo Rodriguez

#### The Real Alamo - A Visual Quiz

By Joe Perez

The month of March brings many ceremonies remembering the siege of the Alamo on March 6, 1836. It also brings this visual quiz on the Alamo courtesy of La Granada.

The curved-shaped design (parapet) atop the Alamo chapel has become recognized worldwide. On a casual drive through San Antonio, you can see the design repeated on buildings, signs, billboards, theaters, logos and various other forms of advertising. But have you seen those structures whose designers went to great lengths to make their buildings look like the real Alamo? Take a look at the pictures below and see if you can tell which one is the "Real Alamo". All four structures are in San Antonio.

A



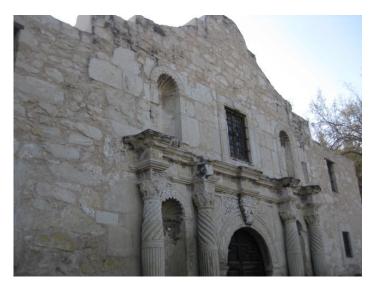
B



C



D



- A If you picked A, you may be riding solo. It's Alamo City Harley Davidson.
- B If you picked B, God bless you. You picked Saint Anthony de Padua Catholic Church.
- C If you picked C, you get credit but it's a former Alamo Federal Credit Union building.
- D If you picked D, congratulations, you remembered the real Alamo.

# Hurricane and Hardship The Taking of Fort Charlotte

By Joe Perez

By 1780, well into the American Revolution, the British were becoming increasingly fearful of a young Spanish upstart by the name of Bernardo de Gálvez. In the previous year, Gálvez had forced the surrender of three British forts....all in one month! After capturing forts at Manchac, Baton Rouge and Natchez, his troops were filled with confidence. However, Gálvez would soon find out that his campaign to rout the British completely out of the Gulf Coast was not going to be so easy.

His next target was mighty Fort Charlotte at Mobile. Gálvez knew he could not take it with the complement of soldiers he had at the time. He would need reinforcements from Havana. Gálvez requested seven thousand troops for his plan to capture Mobile and subsequently Pensacola. *But further modifications of the plan were necessary almost at once.*<sup>1</sup> On August 17, 1779, Gálvez had written his letter to Havana requesting additional troops. He and his men were eager to continue their campaign against the British and celebrate more victories. But Gálvez' plan was altered by the forces of nature. On August 18<sup>th</sup>, the day after sending his letter to Havana, a devastating hurricane slammed into New Orleans prompting Gálvez to write another letter to Havana, on the 19<sup>th</sup>, asking for even more troops than the number in his original request. However, officials were reluctant to send the necessary number of troops so as not to deplete the soldiers needed to guard the numerous prisoners in Havana.

Gálvez had to deal with the setback of a hurricane and now his request for more troops was being refused. He knew he had a solid plan to fight the British but now he was having to also fight his superiors in Cuba. The reluctance of Havana to send troops was finally overcome when officials there agreed to send 567 soldiers of the Navarra Regiment to aid Gálvez. In January of 1780, just three years after



Fort Charlotte

assuming the position of Governor of Louisiana, Gálvez sailed from New Orleans with a contingent of 754 men including Spanish soldiers, militia, free blacks, slaves and others. About a week later, they were joined by Continental (American) Marines under the command of Captain William Pickles with a crew of 58 men.

Gálvez was finally on his way toward Mobile to execute the capture of Fort Charlotte. But bad fortune cast its ugly shadow upon him once again. On February 6<sup>th</sup>, a violent storm scattered his contingent of ships. Fortunately, by the ninth, the fleet was able to join together at the mouth of Mobile Bay. However, things did not get any easier. While attempting to enter the bay, seven ships went aground and suffered the loss of supplies and artillery. In a rare moment of doubtfulness, Gálvez considered abandoning his plan and retreating with his nearly 800 men back to New Orleans by land. But in customary Gálvez fashion, he stayed the course and had his men using wood

from the wrecked ships to make ladders so they could scale the walls of Fort Charlotte. The Spaniard's good fortune continued when the promised reinforcements from Havana arrived at the mouth of the bay on February twentieth, bringing his fighting force to about 1,200 men. From then until the end of the month, Gálvez fired cannons upon the British as cover while establishing a camp a mile from the fort.

On March 1<sup>st</sup>, Gálvez and Captain Elias Durnford, the British Commander of Fort Charlotte, began corresponding in a manner that is lost to the ages among adversaries. Officers and gentlemen both, they extended cordialities and exchanged gifts. Gálvez pleaded with Durnford to surrender to his superior force and Durnford refused to do so out of a sense of honor. Durnford sent Gálvez wine, mutton and fresh bread while Gálvez returned the favor by sending Durnford wine, fruit, corn cakes and Havana cigars. So cordial was their correspondence that Gálvez offered to attack the fort from a side that would spare the nearby town from the ravages of war if the British would not burn houses near the fort to establish batteries. While their messages were polite and honorable, even in their disagreements, both men knew that, ultimately, they must achieve their goals of victory at all costs.

Even before Gálvez had entered the bay, Durnford had sent a letter to General Campbell in Pensacola to send reinforcements and Campbell responded with a promise to send help. Thus, Durnford's plan was

simply to hold off Gálvez until additional British forces arrived from Pensacola. Gálvez was aware of this and planned to hasten the capture of the fort. The race was on. After all of the struggles to get this far, could Gálvez force the surrender of Fort Charlotte before General Campbell arrived with his British troops from Pensacola?

Gálvez had a frigate anchored outside the bay on the lookout for any British ships coming from Pensacola and he sent parties to scout the territory for any British land troops. The Spanish soldiers immediately began building fascines, digging trenches and erecting a battery in preparation for the storming of the fort. This work was done under heavy bombardment from the British.

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, scouting parties returned to let Gálvez know that about 500 British soldiers from Pensacola were in the region and closing in. Gálvez had to hurry if he was to be victorious in this battle. By March 12<sup>th</sup>, the Spaniards commanded a battery with nine cannons, ready to release a barrage of firepower upon the fort. Gálvez unleashed the cannons, which were effective, however, the British responded with their cannons in equal measure. Throughout a lively exchange, Gálvez could see that his cannons were hitting their target and inflicting heavy



U.S. postage stamp, 1980

damages to the fort. However, Fort Charlotte was heavily equipped and whenever a British cannon was taken out of service, it was immediately replaced with another cannon. The battle continued throughout the day and the Spanish were slowly pounding the fort into submission. There was simply far too much damage done to the walls and it appeared that British reinforcements would not arrive in time to save the day. At sundown, the British sent out a white flag of truce asking for a cease-fire until terms of surrender might be arranged.<sup>2</sup> Durnford tried to delay discussion on the terms of surrender, hoping that reinforcements would arrive and the capitulation could be reversed. Gálvez was well aware of the tactic and gave the British commander only four hours to finalize the terms.

General Campbell from Pensacola had gotten within thirty miles of Mobile with over a thousand troops and heavy artillery but quick decisions by Gálvez and the perseverance of the Spanish troops resulted in another victory for Gálvez against the British during the American Revolution. As a result of this victory, Gálvez was promoted to Field Marshal and placed in command of all Spanish military operations in America.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> John Walton Caughey, 1991, *Bernardo de Gálvez in Louisiana 1776-1783*, Third Printing, Pelican Publishing Company, p. 172

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Robert H. Thonhoff, 1981, *The Texas Connection with the American Revolution*, Eakin Press, p.33

#### Order of Granaderos y Damas de Gálvez

# Minutes for the meeting held February 7, 2018 at La Fonda Restaurant Submitted by Briana Perez

#### Attendance:

George Aguayo, Joe Aguayo, Mike Aguayo, Monica Aguayo Johnson, Michael Aguilar, Rafael Cavazos, Richard Davila, Henry De Leon, Adam Dominguez, Stella González, Joe González, Bob Hancock, Priscilla Hancock, Walter Herbeck, Gus Martinez, Jimmy Peet, Briana Perez, Elizabeth Perez, Joe Perez, Manny Rodriguez, Tim Thatcher, Roger Valdez, Stephanie Vigil, Melissa Zamora, Alex Zamora, Joe J. Zavala

- The meeting commenced at 7:37 p.m.
- Henry De Leon gave the Invocation and Stella González led us in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Governor Joe Perez welcomed guests Richard Davila, Michael Aguilar and Stephanie Vigil.
- Treasurer Alex Zamora gave the Treasurer's Report for January. He reported that we had a Beginning Balance of \$2,146.15; Expenses of \$500.00 for the purchase of a musician's uniform; Income of \$1,318.23 from dues, the sale of Blazons, Damas Brooches and folding chairs as well as receipts from the Christmas party; leaving an Ending Balance of \$2,964.38. A motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as read was made by Walter Herbeck and seconded by Elizabeth Perez. After a vote, the motion carried.
- Joe then announced the birthdays for this month: Jesse O. Villarreal, Sr. on 2/4, Walter Herbeck also on 2/4 and Ricardo Rodriguez on 2/28. He then announced our participation in upcoming events such as the Pearsall History Festival on March 24, the Tejeda History Faire & Culture Fest on April 7 and the King William Fair & Parade on April 28.
- Governor Joe Perez conducted a vote for the position of Deputy Governor. Alex Zamora was the only nominee and no nominations were presented from the floor. A vote was taken and Alex was voted in unanimously as our Deputy Governor. Joe then announced his appointments of Manny Rodriguez for Treasurer and Briana Perez for Secretary. The new officers were sworn in by Governor Joe Perez.
- Joe then introduced Guest Speaker Gus Martinez who gave an excellent presentation on the Soldado de Cuera and the impact that the presidial soldier had on this part of Texas. He also talked about the uniform and role the soldado played in settling New Spain. His talk was very well received and Secretary Briana Perez presented him with a framed set of Bernardo de Gálvez postage stamps from 1980.



Secretary Briana Perez presenting a framed gift to Speaker Gus Martinez

- Joe announced that Dama Stella González will be the Guest Speaker at our meeting on March 7. Granadero Henry De Leon thanked the Governor for bestowing an Honorary Membership to him and the article about him in the newsletter.
- The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

