

LANDING FOR THE BATTLE OF PENSACOLA IN THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE.

A GREAT, HISTORIC AND VERY VALUABLE
PAINTING



THE HISTORY OF THIS PAINTING

Bernardo de Gálvez, the Spanish Governor of the entire Louisiana territory, during the War of Independence, managed to change the course of the war definitively in favor of the Colonies.

Indeed, in the first place he defeated and drove back to their bases an English army coming from Canadian lands, descending south through the Mississippi basin, to join the English army of the south, stationed in Florida, in order to unite with the troops of Charles Cornwallis, and make an invincible English Army Corps.

Not only would they have achieved victory at Yorktown, but they would have definitely defeated Washington, aborting the rebel flame. The thirteen colonies would not have achieved their freedom.

Secondly, Governor Gálvez not only defeated this English army from Canada, but aware of the danger posed by a union of the English army from Florida to that of Cornwallis, he went to Pensacola, where the bulk of this army was located.

Again, he achieved the victory and the surrender of this second English army. With this, the threat of achieving a large army corps under the command of Cornwallis was definitely eliminated.

From here, Cornwallis had to fight only with his army. Thanks to this, Yorktown was able to arrive.

The highlight of Governor Gálvez's campaign was the landing in Pensacola. The painting we present shows this critical moment in the history of the independence of the thirteen colonies, and consequently of the United States.

We can therefore affirm that this work captures one of the most important moments in the history of the United States of America.

In addition, there is no other painting that represents said landing action of Governor Gálvez's troops.

Bernardo de Gálvez, Honorary Citizen of the United States.

Bernardo de Gálvez was named honorary citizen of the United States of America, by Resolution of the Senate of December 8, 2014. Several days later, on December 16, President Barak Obama signed the Joint Resolution granting honorary citizenship to Bernardo de Galvez, for his contribution to the British defeat and his active participation in favor of the Continental Army.



The Resolution says, the following:

H. J. Res. 105

One Hundred Thirteenth Congress of the United States of America

AT THE SECOND SESSION

Begun and held at the City of Washington on Friday, the third day of January, two thousand and fourteen Joint Resolution Conferring honorary citizenship of the United States on Bernardo de Gálvez y Madrid, Viscount of Galveston and Count of Gálvez.

Whereas the United States has conferred honorary citizenship on 7 other occasions during its history, and honorary citizenship is and should remain an extraordinary honor not lightly conferred nor frequently granted;

Whereas Bernardo de Gálvez y Madrid, Viscount of Galveston and Count of Gálvez, was a hero of the Revolutionary War who risked his life for the freedom of the United States people and provided supplies, intelligence, and strong military support to the war effort;

Whereas Bernardo de Gálvez recruited an army of 7,500 men made up of Spanish, French, African-American, Mexican, Cuban,

and Anglo-American forces and led the effort of Spain to aid the United States' colonists against Great Britain;

Whereas during the Revolutionary War, Bernardo de Gálvez and his troops seized the Port of New Orleans and successfully defeated the British at battles in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Natchez, Mississippi, and Mobile, Alabama;

Whereas Bernardo de Gálvez led the successful 2-month Siege of Pensacola, Florida, where his troops captured the capital of British West Florida and left the British with no naval bases in the Gulf of Mexico;

Whereas Bernardo de Gálvez was wounded during the Siege of Pensacola, demonstrating bravery that forever endeared him to the United States soldiers;

Whereas Bernardo de Gálvez's victories against the British were recognized by George Washington as a deciding factor in the outcome of the Revolutionary War;

Whereas Bernardo de Gálvez helped draft the terms of treaty that ended the Revolutionary War;

Whereas the United States Continental Congress declared, on October 31, 1778, their gratitude and favorable sentiments to Bernardo de Gálvez for his conduct towards the United States;

Whereas after the war, Bernardo de Gálvez served as viceroy of New Spain and led the effort to chart the Gulf of Mexico, including Galveston Bay, the largest bay on the Texas coast;

Whereas several geographic locations, including Galveston Bay, Galveston, Texas, Galveston County, Texas, Galvez, Louisiana, and H. J. Res. 105—2 St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana, are named after Bernardo de Gálvez;

Whereas the State of Florida has honored Bernardo de Gálvez with the designation of Great Floridian;

and Whereas Bernardo de Gálvez played an integral role in the Revolutionary War and helped secure the independence of the United States:

Now, therefore, be it Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Bernardo de Gálvez y Madrid, Viscount of Galveston and Count of Gálvez, is proclaimed posthumously to be an honorary citizen of the United States.

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Vice President of the United States and President of the Senate.

Bernardo de Gálvez, considered one of the Founding Fathers of the United States.

Today, Bernardo de Gálvez is considered one of the founding fathers of the United States and his portrait figures with those of the rest in the founding room of the United States Congress.

On May 8, 1783, exactly two years after the capture of Pensacola by Bernardo de Gálvez, the Congress of the very recent United States approved a portrait painting of Bernardo on the walls of the Capitol.

But, for unknown reasons, the painting was never hung, and in fact it could never be located in the various Government Agencies.

Two centuries later, thanks to the work of several United States Senators, eager to fulfill the mandate of Congress.

And so, now, a painting of Bernardo de Gálvez hangs in the Hall of Honor of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, whose Chairman, Senator Bob Menendez, personally received the painting.

The Bernardo de Gálvez's painting now hangs next to the portraits of Presidents Wilson and Eisenhower.

The words of President Washington are frequently recalled, and recalled by Senator Menendez upon receiving the painting, describing the work of Bernardo de Gálvez, then Governor of Louisiana, as a "decisive factor" in the War of Independence in the United States.





INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to present you a valuable painting by the great British painter, Peter G. Power, the greatest exponent of hyper-realism.

Peter G. Power was born in England, in 1938. Peter spent his early career in the British Army, serving with the Airbone Forces, mainly in the Middle East. In 1965 Peter settled in a village near Guildford with his wife, Yvonne, and in his spare time, began to develop his interest in maritime painting, and also with the inspiration of the Surrey countryside around him, and received various assignments.

By 1977, having increased interest in his work and having accumulated a multitude of private commissions, 172 in fact, he decided to leave his work as an insurance claim adjustor and dedicated himself entirely to painting, and began specialising in marine painting with occasional landscapes. He is very well known, not only due to his brilliant artistic talent, but also for the historical and maritime expertise.

The “*Mary Rose Trust*” and “*Victory*” museums were so influenced by his work that they decided to reproduce a limited number of lithographies of great works such as “*The Mary Rose*”, “*Victory breaking the line*”, and “*Battle of Cape Trafalgar*”.

They are sold to visitors of these museums as well as the *Greenwich Maritime Museum*.

Solomon & Whitehead Fine, art publishers, have decided to publish and promote four other maritime themes.

The Royal National Lifeboat Institute will acquire a painting or lithography annually to be auctioned at their benefit congress in London.

In recent years, Peter G. Power has received commissions from clients in all parts of the globe and has awoken a great interest in well known personalities and important businessmen, even famous actors. *The British Commonwealth West Indies* has recently issued

a commemorative series of stamps of his paintings.

Encouraged by Rafael Pedroso Atienza, a Spanish collector, Peter started work in 1988 on six large oil paintings of Christopher Columbus's famous Voyage of Discovery to the New World; the final painting was completed in May 1990. This group of paintings combine Peter's outstanding artistic talent with historical and maritime accuracy. The six paintings, belonging to the private collection of Rafael Pedroso Atienza, are currently on loan to a Museum in Spain, with an option to purchase for around one million pounds (1.400.000 dollars, 1.160.000 euros).

The work of Peter is in private collections world wide, mainly.

This painting has always been the property of Rafael Pedroso Atienza, who has been Peter's friend, partner, representative and cliente for many years. The painting has never ceased to belong to Mr. Pedroso's private collection.

The high quality of his work and his attention to detail has always impressed and he must be considered as one of the finest marine painters of the late 20th century.



The John Chancellor's hyperrealist painting school.

Peter G. Power is the privileged and outstanding student of the hyperrealist painting school of John Chancellor. But for those who do not know, who is John Chancellor?



John Chancellor is one of the main British painters of the 20th century and one of the maximum representatives of hyperrealism in the whole world, and his paintings are highly valued throughout the world. Peter G Power is the main continuator and exponent of hyperrealism after Chancellor's death.

Chancellor and Power's school and style is based on a perfect combination of artistic prowess, with detailed historical research, into the vessels themselves, wide experience and acute observation of real sea conditions, sailing ships and barges, has established their paintings not only as superb examples of marine art, but as accurate documentation of Britain's seagoing heritage.

Both of them were immediately established not only as great artists, but also marine historians.

On the death of John Chancellor, it was Peter G Power who assumed the leadership of this school, gaining a huge reputation over time.

A beautiful and sobering story

When the great John Chancellor died in 1984, a very important painting was left unfinished, his painting “A pair of Lavant Schooners”.

Chancellor's family, aware of its enormous value, commissioned Peter G. Power to complete it.

On December 10, 1997, Peter successfully completed Chancellor's painting, to the full satisfaction of his family and the art world in general.

Here we see Peter posing in this photograph next to the finished painting.



Spanish landing at Pensacola, May 8, 1781.

Motivated by revenge for lost possessions Spain joined the French and Americans in war against Great Britain their main ambition being to regain control of British possessions, in East and West Florida. Under the command of the governor of Louisiana, Gen. Bernardo de Galves, Spain regained control of the Mississippi ports of Manchaca, Baron Rouge and Natchez.

In 1781 his troops took Mobile then prepared to crown their glory by taking Pensacola under the command of Brig. John Campbell, officer commanding the recently completed Fort George and with a compliment of nine hundred troops. In spite of having eight thousand troops at his disposal Galves was unable to take Fort George which was under siege from between March 9 until May 8, 1781, when, from information received, the Spanish gunners scored a direct hit on the magazine within Fort George and killing approximately one hundred men.

The follow up assault within the fort ground to a halt but with the good deployment of marksmen the British were unable to man their guns and so surrendered. In the painting, background, is the British brig Port Royal, 18 guns, which was captured during the final landing of Spanish troops whilst Mentor 20 guns and not in the painting, was destroyed by fire.

The ships were unable to defend themselves as the crews were employed moving the fort guns, owing to a shortage of artillery men. P.S. The flags and ensigns in the painting were introduced in 1785, the correct flags being white with a crest in the centre. I have left the flags as they are on account of the colour but will change them if required, however the colours will be lost and will people recognise the flag. The Spanish infantry wearing the white uniform with blue trimmings was the Louisiana Regiment whilst those wearing the red uniform were from the company of Free Blacks of Havana.

Words of Peter G. Power, the author.



***SPANISH LANDING AT
PENSACOLA – MAY 8,
1781***

Peter G. Power

Oil on Canvas

71 x 168 cm



“The Spanish landing at Pensacola” in the Exhibition of the Spanish Army and Casa América in Madrid.



“The Spanish landing at Pensacola” in the Exhibiton “Recovered Memories, Spain and the Support for the American Revolución”, en Washington D.C. (Embajada España) y New Orleans (The Cabildo, Louisiana State Museum)

Video of the historical context shown in the exhibition *“Recovered Memories, Spain and the Support for the American Revolution”*

<https://youtu.be/NyQUp-B8Zuk>

On the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the founding of the city of New Orleans, a video was made for the exhibition “Recovered memories” in the USA, in which the important role that Spain played in the independence of the United States of America is narrated. In it, it is intended to praise the figure of Bernardo de Gálvez, the Malaga commander who led the Spanish troops in the US and who was decisive in winning the battle against the English and that they therefore achieved independence.

Both the exhibition and the video have been sponsored by Iberdrola.





Recovered Memories: Spain and the Support for the American Revolution

Written by: Ann Dillon, President General

October 9, 2018



DAR was honored to be invited by the Spanish Embassy to attend the opening of the exhibit, *Recovered Memories: Spain and the Support for the American Revolution*, at the Former Residence of the Ambassadors of Spain here in Washington, D.C.

Many people are not fully aware of Spain's role in the American Revolution. In fact, even before the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the Spanish Crown had been providing money, arms and supplies to the Thirteen Colonies. Between 1776 and 1778, this aid took the form of largely-covert shipments from Europe, from Havana and also from the strategic port of New Orleans. Having declared war on Britain in 1779, Spain joined France in launching a series of major military operations on land and sea, not only in Europe but also in the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico. At the same time, Spain continued to send supplies and loans to Congress until 1783.

Recovered Memories: Spain and the Support for the American Revolution showcases this support from Spain for the American colonies prior to and during the Revolutionary War, and also highlights notable Spanish figures whose lives impacted the emerging new country. The exhibit takes the visitor on a chronological journey of Spanish-American relations beginning with Spain's own Age of Enlightenment during the reign of Charles III, through the times of European and American revolutions, and ending with the technological advancements at the turn of the 20th century.



Organized by Iberdrola and SPAIN arts & culture, the temporary exhibition is on display through November 18, 2018, at the Embassy of Spain's Cultural Office at 2801 16th Street NW. It features historical documents and works of art. Also on display are clothing of the period, musical instruments, maps of colonial America, and many other historical pieces.



We were especially excited to see some items in the exhibit that were loaned by the Espana DAR Chapter in Spain! On display in the "Women at Arms" section of the exhibit was a commemorative medal collection that the DAR engaged The Franklin Mint to design in honor of the Bicentennial. "The Great Women of the American Revolution" collection of pewter medallions depicts women who contributed to the fight for Independence and was loaned to the Embassy of Spain by the Espana Chapter for their exhibition.

The *Recovered Memories* exhibit is very insightful and well done. If you are in the greater Washington, D.C., area this fall I encourage you to see it or tell others about it. The exhibit is free and open Tuesday to Sunday from 10 am to 6 pm or you can contact the Cultural Office at the Embassy of Spain (contact@spainculture.us) to book a special tour date and time. The exhibition is open from September 28 until November 18. This would make for a marvelous chapter activity.

Thank you to the Embassy of Spain and their Cultural Center for hosting this engaging and carefully documented survey of Spain's contribution to the founding of the United States. Over the course of the exhibit, the cultural center plans to welcome nearly 1,000 students from multiple schools on field trips to learn more about the American Revolution and Spain's involvement. What a wonderful educational opportunity!

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De: Barbe Capdevila, Montserrat [mailto:mbarbe@iberdrola.es]

Enviado el: jueves, 30 de noviembre de 2017 12:23

Para: rpatienza@gmail.com

CC: jorge@htexpomuseos.com

Asunto: exposición Iberdrola "Recovered Memories. The support of Spain to the Independence of the United States"

Dear Mr. Pedroso

I am contacting you regarding the exhibition "Recovered Memories. The support of Spain to the Independence of the United States ", in relation to the loan of the oil painting" Picture **Desembarco en Pensacola** "by **Peter Power** to be exhibited at the show.

We are preparing the pertinent processing for the shipment of the piece to the United States.

I enclose a document with an authorization granted to HT EXPOSICIONES Y MUSEOS, the assembly company, to carry out the procedures that are necessary to obtain the necessary temporary export permits so that the uniform can be exhibited there, so that you please sign.

Once signed, you must send it to the following address: HT EXPOSICIONES Y MUSEOS, S.L., Calle Comandante Zorita, 13 (28020, Madrid).

Thank you very much for your help. All the best

Montse Barbé Capdevila

Secretary of the Board of Directors

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A SPANISH HERO IN THE AMERICAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

Juan I. Pinedo, MD, PhD

Academic of the Royal Spanish Academy of the Sea

Member of the Board of Directors of the Royal Spanish Naval League

Director of the Official Magazine of the Royal Spanish Naval League, and

Head of its Naval History Section

Lieutenant of the Complement Scale of the Spanish Navy

Yacht captain

Few times has Spain had such a magnificent and extraordinary hero, whose imprint left in history has been so important and significant, and has affected so much the history of at least four countries (the United States, Great Britain, Mexico and Spain) and so many thousands of people. His contribution was such that he contributed decisively to change the course of the War of Independence and save a young country. He never knew rest, discouragement, defeat, or giving up. He always emerged victorious from every company he undertook because of his talent, tenacity, determination and self-motivation that he put into everything he did. He also never really cared about being alone. So much so that he made it his motto. And it is that he counted on his fabulous self-confidence and his extraordinary gifts to exercise magnificent leadership.

His men truly followed him to hell itself. It is one of the dozen people in the entire history of the United States who has his honorary citizenship (and only Spanish). Of the four countries, two revere and honor his memory (The United States and Mexico), one hated him in the extreme, but it respected him enormously (Great Britain), and the other miserably forgot him (Spain).

The day of the victory parade of the troops of the thirteen already ex-English colonies in the American continent, to celebrate the end and triumph of their War of Independence over England, which had led them to be already a nation, and themselves to be free, the main architect of this feat, General George Washington, rode proudly at the head of his troops, although always with his serious demeanor and serious character that characterized him so much.

Along with him rode those whom he himself and the American Continental Congress considered to be great and necessary protagonists to achieve the success that had led them there that day. One of them was not an American and had never been an English subject. He wasn't French either, although there were several of them in the parade. In addition, his careful and striking placement to the right of Washington, and to whom he addressed himself very kindly and with great attention and deference, making comments at various times, gave him the character of a person selected in great detail, a character that did not enjoy the great most of those present.

Who, then, was this man and what had he done to be worthy of such honor and recognition?

In these lines we want to introduce this character, talk about his life and his character, and explain why he was that day in the victory parade, occupying one of the privileged places in it, and above all, say what it was that he did to deserve recognition and honor that the vast majority of Americans did not enjoy, and none of the French who had helped and contributed so much to the cause of independence, a man who has monuments in various cities in the United States, including the capital, and that, among other things, a city in that country bears his name, Galveston, which was for a long time an important cotton trading and financial center of the United States, one of its richest cities, and deserving of the name of the South Wall Street.

This man is Bernardo de Gálvez, and this is only part of his story.

Our character was born in 1746 in a small town in the Sierra de Málaga, Macharaviella, Spain, on the same day that King Felipe V died in Madrid, in the Palacio del Pardo. At the age of 16 we find him beginning his military career, after passing through the Military Academy of Ávila, participating as a volunteer in the war against Portugal, where he already began to suffer his first war wounds that, due to his character, caused him to have so many in his life.

At the age of 19 he embarked with General Villalba's troops who were leaving for America, thus initiating his first contact with those lands. Thanks to his military skills, his behavior and attitude in combat, and his skills as a diplomat and negotiator, which he soon displayed as well, allowed him to attract attention and climb positions in the military hierarchy, and so, a few years later. At the age of 24, he was already the General Commander of Nueva Vizcaya. It was here, in the lands of Sonora, where he began to be known and respected.

His first fights were fought against the Opata Indians, gaining authority, admiration and respect very early on. His pragmatism, desire for achievement and negotiating capacity, which he displayed all his life, demonstrated by reaching an agreement with them, beneficial for both parties, to fight and defeat the common enemy, the Apaches, whom he was already able to fight in a tough campaign in which he led his troops, taking them to the Pecos River, where he had to face an outbreak of mutiny, when a large part of his 200 men, given the hardships and suffering, and after the loss of practically all of their supplies, expressed their desire to return to their base in Chihuahua.

Gálvez, already showing signs of his character, and after haranguing his troops: «Compañeros, the day has come to make the last effort. Return to Chihuahua, with the shame of having wasted time and money, and of not having had Success in our company is not the conduct of men of honor. I will march alone if there is no one to accompany me. I will return to

Chihuahua with the skin of one of my enemies or I will pay with my life for the bread that I have eaten from the King. Become weak and fainthearted and those who have shared all sorts of setbacks with me follow me”.

He spurred on his horse, and without looking who was following him he crossed the river. His men, faced with such a display of true spirit and leadership, followed him in their entirety, and vowed to follow him to the death, achieving success by defeating the Apaches the next day.

Years later his "me alone" became famous in the Pensacola takeover. However, this was the result of a spirit, of a way of being, that had already starred in his first "me alone" crossing the Pecos many years before Pensacola. His behavior in this last action was nothing but the fruit of the way he always behaved, as he demonstrated years before in Mexican lands.

Half a year after his passage through the Pecos, Gálvez organized a second campaign against the Apaches, taking as guides part of the Indians he had taken prisoners in the previous campaign, such was the effect and attraction that the magnetism of his strong personality exerted of her inspiring leadership and superb negotiating skills, which turned former enemies into allies.

This time he managed to cement his fame even more when after defeating the Apaches again in their own territory, and managing to reach a definitive peace with them and some agreements of coexistence in common and

mutual collaboration after many years of wars, peace and agreements that so they were only broken when the Apaches clashed many years later with the North American colonists and their desire for expansion.

It is said that today is the day that the Indian tribes of northern Mexico and the southern United States remember Bernardo de Gálvez, and very carefully and respectfully preserve the agreements signed, bearing in their hearts the territorial distribution agreed with him, delimiting borders and conditions of peace, faithfully respected since then by the Indians, in proof of the authority, prestige and recognition that they granted to Gálvez, and that in the following centuries no one ever achieved it in such a way.

In fact, we find ourselves before an expert who knows Indian customs and laws, their lifestyle, character and culture, demonstrating great empathy and friendship, and exercising a remarkable authority and attraction over the Indian communities of the border, who they allowed him to reach not only many great agreements in the future, but also to abort existing agreements against Spanish interests, and even turning them around and obtaining the collaboration of former enemies.

Shortly after, in 1771, at the age of 25, Gálvez had to return to Spain. He took advantage of this circumstance to attend a French military academy in the neighboring country for a few years, where he perfected his military knowledge, and learned the French language and customs. He returned to Spain again in 1775, being 29 years old, just in time to go to the battle of

the capture of Algiers as Captain, under the command of General O'Reilly, where he was again badly wounded, wounds that were added to the multiple that received in his campaigns against the Indians.

After his time as a professor of War Art for a year at the Spanish Military Academy of Avila, he is called upon to direct the garrison of the New Orleans Regiment, urging him to provide the defense and development of the population and commerce of the province of Louisiana, a position of enormous trust and importance, and with an enormous administrative burden and a very important political significance, being de facto the assistant to the governor of Louisiana, Unzala, who was already so old that he advised his replacement. It was the year 1776, and the American colonies had just proclaimed their independence.

After the Treaty of Paris of 1763, which ended the Seven Years' War, and which was a shameful peace for France, it saw the opportunity for revenge in the war that was being maintained on American soil. Hence, in 1778 he reached an agreement with the North American colonists to help them in their confrontation with the English. It is true that the American troops fought with enthusiasm and value, but their meager supplies and weapons, their limited training, their poor financial resources, and some leaders who were not very expert in leading large armies (not even George Washington was, who was defeated and put to flight on numerous occasions) led them inexorably to certain defeat.

French economic aid, the sending of military equipment and trained combat troops, and an excellent work by its navy, both commercially and militarily, managed to balance the balance of the war quite a bit, but not definitively.

Something else was needed, new support, and this came from the hand of Spain, who until then had helped the Americans with money, arms and ammunition, but had avoided a direct and clear intervention, following the policy set by the count of Floridablanca, then Prime Minister of Spain.

However, it was taking shape in the Spanish court to achieve a double objective: on the one hand, to take advantage of these circumstances to expel the English from the shores of the Mississippi and the Gulf of Mexico, and achieve their complete disappearance of their settlements and commercial and political interests in Central America, mainly in Nicaragua, Honduras and Campeche, and to achieve the recovery of all of Florida; and on the other hand, achieve a series of concessions as an ally of the French in their support of the American cause, signing an alliance with France in support of the rebel cause.

To achieve this second objective, the Aranjuez treaty was signed on April 12, 1779, between France and Spain, forming part of the Family Pacts, in which Spain undertook to help France in its fight against the English and in support of the American colonies, and France promised to help Spain to recover Menorca and Gibraltar, mainly.

And to achieve the first objective, Spain had Bernardo de Gálvez.

To do this, that same year he was appointed Governor of Louisiana, a territory that from the Gulf of Mexico reached Canada (and that was made up of the current territories of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky, Arkansas, Tennessee, Mississippi, a part of Louisiana, and much of Texas), and bounded to the east with the thirteen American colonies.

Louisiana was a territory of great geopolitical and commercial importance, since the Mississippi River was the axis of commerce between Canada and the Gulf of Mexico and Cuba, and served to trade with the multiple Indian nations and the thirteen American colonies of New England.

For this colossal task entrusted, Gálvez had been preparing conscientiously, reinforcing his positions and alliances with the Indian nations, a factor of great importance given the scarce forces at his disposal, and making contact with the rebel colonists, at the hand of his predecessor, Unzaga, a true mentor of Gálvez, another great character in the history of Spain, and of course, as almost always, completely unknown.

However, the news that reached him from the English side could not be more alarming, since they were preparing a coup against Spanish Louisiana and launch a powerful attack to achieve three objectives: to end Spanish aid to the rebels, that until then it was covert but could become an official,

as was soon to happen by the treaty of Aranjuez, although at that time the English were unaware of it; to attack the rebel colonies from the south and west, an attack that they in no way expected precisely because they had this rear guard covered by Spain; and to conquer Spanish Louisiana, and thus expand its possessions in the area (England already had a part of Louisiana and all of Florida), which England had obtained from Spain in the Seven Years' War.

Gálvez, aware of the critical moment, decides not to defend but to attack first, and to do so without contemplation, the fruit not only of his mettle and character, but also of an unequaled and magnificent strategic vision, in which in an extraordinary way, he made him see clearly what had to be done to ensure a desired future.

To do this, he convenes a War Council where he communicates his decision to undertake an attack campaign, facing the opinion of the majority to defend New Orleans, the result in turn of the limited gifts of strategic vision of his interlocutors. Again, the Spanish hero was alone.

Gálvez made them see the importance of the offensive, and that this was the best way to defend their territory, and achieve the objectives that had been set for them, for which he ordered two attacks, one by land, which he would direct himself in person, and another by sea.

And it is that once again the leader came to light, his charisma, his skills for negotiation and to get others to convince themselves and follow him where necessary. The final conclusion, led by Gálvez, and which convinces everyone, is therefore not to defend but to attack first and without hesitation.

The column of land, led by himself in person, was made up of 1,450 men, of whom only 170 were veteran soldiers and 20 carabinieri, the rest being conscripts, French and German colonists, North American rebels, Indian warriors, his strongest allies and followers, as well as a party of blacks and mulattos, a mixed troop of cultures, races, religions, languages, interests and customs, which Gálvez, in a very short space of time, turned into a true regiment thanks to his leadership, to his character and a true spirit of which he displayed naturally, ready to face the regiments of experienced riflemen of the powerful English army.

After a hellish march, crossing swamps and bogs, amid torrential rains and atrocious weather, they reached Manchack on September 7, 1779, immediately taking the English fort by assault, hardly having rested and replenished strength, a victory that they had enormous resonance and moral significance.

After a short rest, and aware of the importance of speed in action, he prepared to take Baton Rouge, where there was a strong contingent of 600 English veteran troops, excellent infantrymen, and 18 guns, under the

command of Colonel Dickson, whom he managed to make surrender after a direct attack, without hesitation, making the forts of Panure and Natchez surrender in a chain, all of them defended by the English grenadiers, after which he began the return to New Orleans, to enjoy a well-deserved rest, after having aborted the possibilities of a surprise English attack on New Orleans by his troops stationed upriver, that is, north of his position.

This campaign had lasted 4 weeks, it had meant the surrender of 700 English veterans and eight ships, the Spanish domination of the entire southern Mississippi basin, and above all, definitively aborting the possibility of a displacement of the English army from Canada, preventing therefore an attack of the same to the rebellious colonies from the west and to the Spanish possessions from the north.

And that was the plan of the English, who wanted to move their Canadian army from their bases south, down the Mississippi basin, to the rear west of the rebel colonies, and carry out such objectives against the thirteen colonies and against the interests of Spain in Louisiana, a plan magnificently broken by Gálvez with his successful anticipated action.

Furthermore, due to this Spanish reaction against the English army from the west and from the south, surrendering its cover troops and definitively aborting the attack from Canada, it had left Gálvez free to attack towards the east, towards Florida, where there were two main objectives, and keys to the domination of the territory, Mobile and Pensacola.

Again Bernardo de Gálvez did not think about it and immediately seeing its transcendental strategic importance, he undertook the campaign by sea and by land against the English army in Florida, with which he would deliver a final blow that would leave England in the end without its armies from Canada and the South. With this, he was serving Washington a definitive military triumph and the thirteen colonies an unmatched and unique opportunity to achieve their independence.

To do this, he again devised a campaign by sea and by land, and again faced a hellish journey, due to the harshness of the territory and the weather, aggravated by the loss of the ship in which much of the supplies and food were traveling. As a result of his way of being, this did not daunt him in the least, and he knew how to transmit combat and victory morale to his men so that they could continue forward.

Gálvez continued to cross by himself again his particular “Pecos Rivers”, as happened so many times in his life.

As a result of all this, after four days of attacks, the Mobile Fort, defended by 300 highly experienced and first-rate English veterans, fell to the Spanish. It is October 14, 1780, and what was on many occasions one of the jewels of the Spanish crown and the viceroyalty of Mexico had been recovered.

It was then that Gálvez focused all his attention on Pensacola, the most strategic place for the control of the entire northern Gulf of Mexico, and also the key to the possession of Florida, defended by a magnificent contingent of 1,400 soldiers under the command of the General Campbell.

The importance of taking this enclave or not was such that if it remained in English hands and the Spanish failed, English rule would be consolidated not only in Florida but in the Gulf of Mexico and the entire Mississippi basin, returning to recover the enclaves that were Gálvez had just taken from them, as well as New Orleans, with terrible consequences for all of them.

In effect, Spain lost all this territory, which would pass into English hands, with a threat also to Mexico and Cuba; all trade from Canada to Central America would be under the control of England; the thirteen colonies would be trapped by the threat of attacks from the north, south and west, by their rear, completely surrounded, with a strong defeated ally, and with a definitive economic strangulation and a complete commercial disaster, with no way out, or entry of goods. France alone would be unable to help the colonists, as had happened before, and thus lose its economic and military stake in North America; and the American War of Independence would fail irretrievably.

On the other hand, if Gálvez triumphed and took Pensacola, Spain would recover Florida and the part of Louisiana that was in English power, consolidate its position in the Gulf of Mexico, facilitate the reconquest of

the territories of Central America from the English, and would secure his position throughout the Mississippi basin, driving the English out there, and taking control of all trade from Canada to Mexico through the great river basin, could trade with the thirteen colonies, and secure the flanks from these to the west and south, where there would no longer be an English military presence.

In addition, it would contribute decisively to the course of the War of Independence by preventing the English from launching a devastating and definitive combined attack against the rebel colonists from the west and from the south, with two magnificent and powerful armies, attacks that the colonial troops would see completely unable to stop and that would make them depose their independence attitude. After the failure in the Mississippi basin and with the loss of Pensacola, all this at the hands of the Spanish, England would have to attack the colonial army forgetting to do it from the west, with an army stopped and without a rear guard, instead having behind to Gálvez, and neither to do it from the south, with an army also defeated by the Spanish Governor.

Another negative element for England is that its beachheads on the Atlantic coast would begin to suffer seriously, thereby conditioning the supply of the English troops on land, all thanks to the Spanish and French navies that could now become owners of this part from sea. And, in addition, the English navy was very busy defending Gibraltar from Spanish attacks, a

mission to which it allocated half of its troops, which also contributed definitively to the course of the war.

Pensacola was thus the key to everything. And that is how Gálvez and Washington clearly saw it, the latter more concerned with observing the evolution of these events than in giving a battle to the English, which he knew would lose. For this reason, he continued with his plan to avoid a definitive battle as long as Bernardo de Gálvez's Spanish troops did not achieve victory against the English Army of the South, once the Canadian Army was stopped by the Spanish troops of the Spanish Governor.

However, the serious differences existing on the Spanish side on how to carry out the attack on Pensacola, were delaying operations, and giving the English precious time. Gálvez's plan was finally accepted, who received about 6,000 troops from the Governor of Cuba and the Viceroy of Mexico. But when this fleet set sail it encountered a terrible tropical storm that sank part of it, spreading the rest throughout the Gulf of Mexico.

Given the doubts of the Spanish authorities to continue with the plan, Gálvez told them the following: "The English who were heading to Charleston were surprised by a strong storm, because of which their ships were scattered to such an extent that some were dragged almost to England. This is what, more or less, happened to us. But the English were not discouraged. They reorganized and attacked Charleston, obtaining the fortunate results that we all know. Are we not capable of such a thing? Has

the military virtue that so characterized us attacking our enemies disappeared? Are we so cowardly and fickle that a mere tropical storm intimidates us in our glorious enterprise? This is what the English will think of us, defeated by a simple setback, unless we maintain a purpose of much greater importance ", achieving that three months later a new fleet set sail with 1,300 soldiers on board. It was February 13, 1781.

When arriving in Pensacola, the Spanish naval command thinks that it is better not to enter the bay, given its shallow depth, the ignorance of the tides and prevailing winds in the area, and above all, the great artillery defense of the square. and they advise an attack by land, they cannonade from the sea, to which Gálvez vehemently opposes, who was convinced of the failure of an attempt by land, and of the great possibilities of success if the entry into the bay was forced and attacked the square from there.

For this reason, he took the only two ships that were under his command, the "Valenzuela" and the "Galveztown", and holed the entrance to the bay, addressing these words to the rest of the fleet: "A 32-inch bullet collected in the camp, which I lead and present, is one of those distributed by the Fort at the entrance. Whoever has honor and courage follow me. I'm going ahead with Galveztown to take away their fear". After which he entered the bay supporting the heavy fire of the English artillery, but showing that the passage was possible.

Once again, Gálvez is crossing the Pecos River by himself.

Given this, and seeing the situation of the two Spanish ships that had already entered the bay, and that were still under enemy fire, the rest of the Spanish fleet follows them, in many cases making individual decisions by their commanders of Ships, before the paralysis of the command of the fleet, proceeding to cannonade the English defensive positions and also forcing the entrance passage, managing to disembark and establish a formidable beachhead. Gálvez secures the position and is waiting to receive the two reinforcement columns that he had requested from Mobile and New Orleans.

And on April 19, at the head of the 7,000 men that he had managed to gather, and with the determined support of a fleet of 20 ships recently arrived from Cádiz, bringing the best of the Spanish royal navy, the attack on Pensacola began, making progress and consolidating positions around the English defensive bastion.

On May 8, he ordered a strong artillery attack from well-chosen positions on the ground, and from the fleet, exploding the enemy gunpowder store, killing 100 English soldiers on the spot, ordering a massive melee attack, with a bayonet set, of such magnitude and fierceness that General Campbell has no choice but to raise the white flag and call for surrender.

The following day, May 9, 1781, the English signed the document of capitulation and surrendered Pensacola, all the forts located north of the

Gulf of Mexico and all of Florida, remaining under their control only the fort of San Agustín and the island of Jamaica. Likewise, the English troops were free but under promise of their immediate return to England and not to fight again on American soil, neither against the Spanish nor against the rebel colonists.

In all, more than 1,000 English soldiers surrendered, in addition to a large number of black mercenaries and Indian allies. The amount of weapons that remained in Spanish hands was enormous. The casualties of Gálvez's troops did not reach 100 dead. Gálvez himself guaranteed the rights of the families of the English soldiers, the civilian population and their personal property.

Gálvez immediately signed peace and collaboration agreements and treaties with the various Indian tribes in the region, which respected and maintained peace throughout the duration of the Spanish presence in Florida and on the northern coast of the Gulf of Mexico.

Likewise, the good news was sent to General Washington because of the transcendental significance of this victory for Spanish arms, which represented a serious setback for the army and the English interests in American lands, and which greatly weakened their positions and compromised for them the course of the war in a definitive way, as George Washington himself already knew, who now saw the moment and the opportunity to give the long-awaited final battle for the independence of the colonies.

The war did not last long, and in 1783 the Treaty of Paris, the Peace of Versailles, was signed, with the recognition of the United States as a country and of the conquests made by Gálvez. He became Governor of Cuba and Viceroy of Mexico, although shortly after, on November 30, 1786, due to a fatal illness, he died at the age of 40.

In this position were such his achievements, his fascinating and overwhelming personality, his determined support for the Indian population, his social works, that his memory has been engraved forever in those lands. However, in ours, there are very few who know him, and they know of his enormous feats and the importance of them, so vital for Spain and for the North American independence cause.

As has happened so many times in the history of Spain, before her death she had to face betrayal, foul play, bad envy and worse anger from her own country, much of it coming from the Royal House itself, that same one to the that he served with such honor and in such a magnificent and extraordinary way that it soured his last years of life. After his death, what he obtained was simply ingratitude and oblivion on the Spanish side, while his figure has been praised and always treated with honor, deep respect and superb recognition of his memory in the United States and Mexico.

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