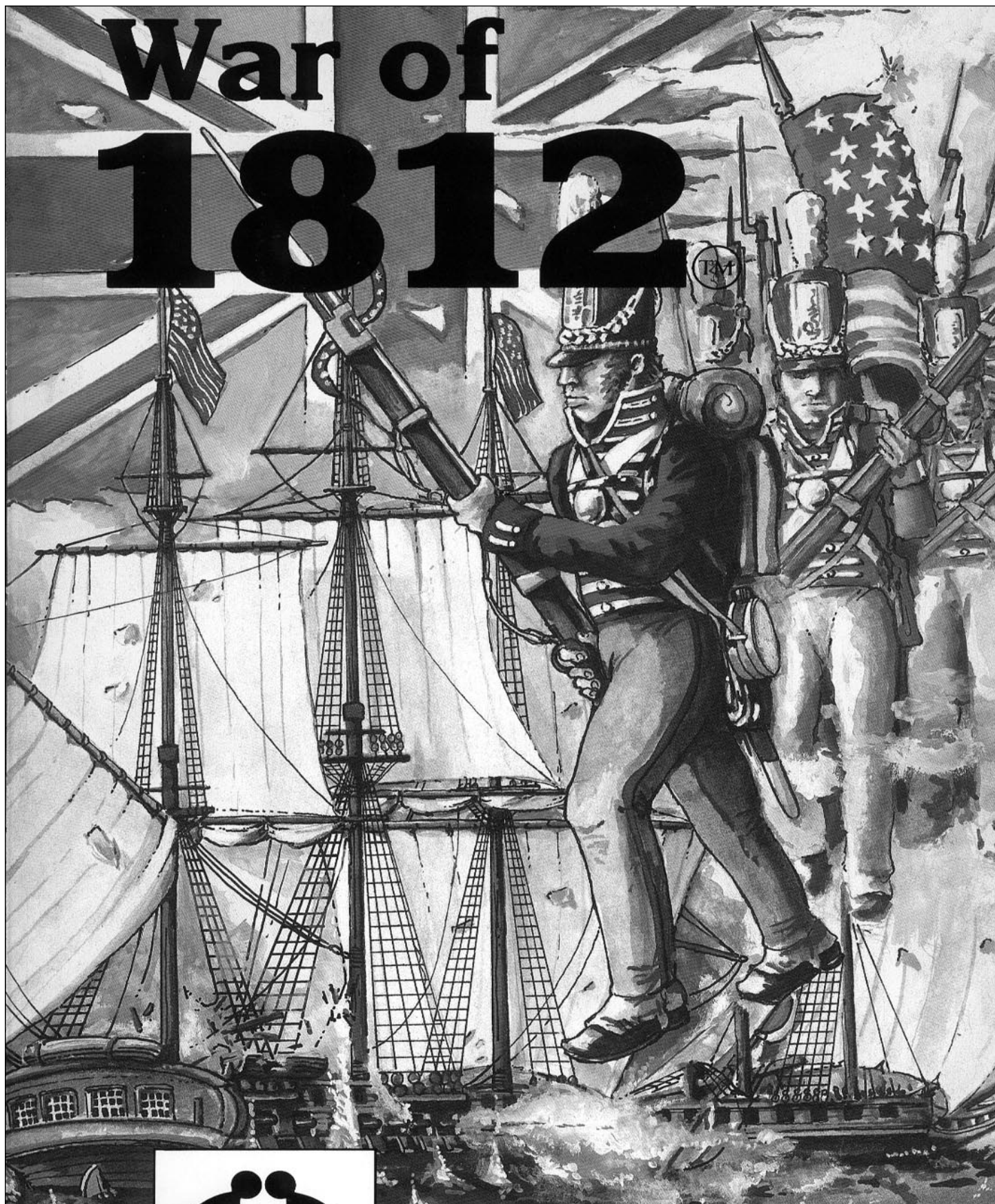


# War of 1812



**COLUMBIA GAMES INC.**

# WAR OF 1812

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## 1.0 MAPBOARD

1.1 The mapboard depicts the major theatre of operations during the War of 1812. On it are 15 American towns (blue names) and 12 Canadian towns (red names) defining the Home Territory of each player.

Each town has a numerical value (e.g. Kingston at 3) which is a supply/victory points factor. The towns are connected by roads/trails of the period. Army units in play are located in towns to indicate position, and move from one town to another via the roads/trails. Naval units in play are located on the lakes or in lakeside towns.

1.2 A friendly town is any town in your home territory not occupied by enemy unit(s), or any town in enemy territory that is occupied by your unit(s). An enemy town which you have captured, but have left vacant, is not friendly; you must maintain a garrison of at least one army unit (not a naval unit) for an enemy town to remain friendly.

1.3 The mapboard has three main lakes on which naval units may be located; two towns on each lake (one British and one American) are naval bases.

Lake	British Base	American Base
Erie	Amherstburg	Erie
Ontario	Kingston	Sacket's Harbor
Champlain	Lacolle	Plattsburg

Later in the rules you will find references to "lakeside" towns. These are simply towns on a lake as opposed to towns inland. Detroit, Sandusky, Erie, Buffalo, Fort Erie, Port Dover, and Amherstburg are all lakeside towns on Lake Erie; London and Pittsburgh are not.

*Williamsburg is not a Lakeside Town.  
 York is a Lakeside Town.*

## 2.0 UNITS

2.1 The game contains 50 units: 25 blue (American) and 25 red (British). One label from the die-cut sheet enclosed must be attached to the face of each unit; red labels on the red blocks, blue labels on the blue blocks.

2.2 Army units in play stand upright, labels facing the owning player. This system portrays fog of war with no muss or fuss.

2.3 Army combat values (CV) are designed for step-reduction. Each unit begins play with its maximum CV along its top edge. This CV remains constant until reduced in battle, recorded by turning the unit counter-clockwise until the lesser CV is on the top. Thus a 4cv unit can be reduced to 3cv, 2cv and 1cv as it sustains casualties. A unit reduced below 1cv is removed from the board, but can be rebuilt as a Reinforcement. Players may not transfer CV from one unit to another.



2cv



1cv



2.4 The ships each side can build have different silhouettes, reflecting the variety of vessels employed by both sides, but they are all considered equal. Naval units have no CV value. They are played face-up on the mapboard when in play.

## 3.0 SETTING UP THE GAME

3.1 Lay the mapboard out on a table between both players. The American player faces north; the British player faces south.

3.2 Remove the naval units and the Indian unit from the mix. Place the remaining units face-down and mix together. The British player draws ten (10) red units; the American player draws twelve (12) blue units. The CV values drawn are not revealed to opponents. Units begin the game at their maximum CV.

3.3 The American player deploys his 12 units first. He must deploy at least one unit in every American town rated at 2 or more supply value; the remaining units may be deployed as desired.

3.4 The British player now deploys his 10 units in British towns under the same conditions. The American player may not alter his deployment once the British player begins to deploy.

3.5 Finally each player deploys three (3) operational naval units, one per naval base.

***Note:** Surplus units are kept to one side off the mapboard, and units eliminated during the game are also returned to this surplus group. These units will be available as future reinforcements.*

## 4.0 SEQUENCE OF PLAY

4.1 The game is divided into three campaign years which represent the years 1812, 1813, and 1814. Each campaign year is divided into 10 Campaign Turns followed by a *Winter Turn* during which players prepare for the next campaign year.

4.2 A Campaign Turn record is printed along the south edge of the mapboard; use a coin or other marker to record the passage of time. Every Campaign Turn consists of two alternate player turns; an American turn and a British turn. To determine which player has the first turn

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in each Campaign Turn, roll 2d6; player with the higher total has the option to play first or second. After the 10th Campaign Turn has been played, players check to see if either has won (see: 18.0). If not, the marker is placed in the space marked Winter, supply attrition (if any) is deducted, and reinforcements are added. The marker is then returned to the beginning of the track and the next campaign year is played as before.

4.3 In each player's turn, there are three phases, played in this sequence:

**Navy Phase:** A player either builds/repairs one naval unit, **or** makes one naval move. If this move brings opposing naval units into contact on the same lake a naval battle occurs.

**Army Phase:** A player may make one army move. If a player moves units to a town containing enemy army units a battle occurs.

**Battle Phase:** Naval battles are resolved, followed by army battles.

4.4 A player may do nothing in his turn, but may not accumulate any part of his turn for future use.

**Note:** *players may combine Army & Navy Phases for an amphibious move (see: 12.0).*

## 5.0 NAVAL BUILDING

5.1 In any naval phase a player may build/repair one naval unit. This activity may only take place in one of a player's three naval bases, never in an enemy base even if occupied by friendly army units.

5.2 A naval unit is built in two stages. First, a unit is placed face-down at the desired naval base. A subsequent naval phase may then be used to make this unit operational, turning it face-up to indicate this status.

## 6.0 NAVAL MOVEMENT

6.1 Instead of building a naval unit, a player may elect to move naval units in his naval phase. Any number of naval units (including non-operational units) located at one or more lakeside towns may be moved onto the lake, or vice-versa.

**Example:** *the American player has two naval units in Sacket's Harbor, and one in Oswego. He moves all three units onto Lake Ontario. If these naval units were already on the lake, they may be moved to any one or more friendly lakeside town(s).*

6.2 Naval units may not attack land units (or vice-versa) and may only occupy friendly lakeside towns. See also 8.4.

6.3 Naval units may never move from one lake to another lake, nor move directly from one lakeside town to another lakeside town.

6.4 A player controls a lake when he has one or more naval units on the lake. Naval units never control lakeside towns.

## 7.0 NAVAL BATTLES

7.1 A naval battle occurs when one player moves naval units onto a lake (the Attacker) occupied by his opponent (the Defender). A naval battle can not occur in a lakeside town.

7.2 Naval battles are resolved simultaneously. Each player throws two dice for each of his Operational naval units engaged; non-operational units may not fire. Each "6" thrown scores one hit on the opposing fleet. For each hit, an enemy operational unit is turned face-down (non-operational) or a non-operational unit may be sunk, at the option of the firing player.

## 8.0 NAVAL RETREATS

8.1 After each round of combat, the Attacker has the first option to retreat. If he chooses to stay, the Defender then has the option to retreat. If both players elect to keep fighting, another simultaneous round of combat is conducted, repeated indefinitely until one player does retreat. **If one side has only non-operational naval units, that side **must** retreat. If both sides have only non-operational naval units, the attacker (only) must retreat.**

8.2 A player electing to retreat must withdraw all naval units; partial retreats are not allowed. The retreating player may withdraw his naval units to any friendly lakeside town(s). If none exist, they may not retreat. Unlike army units, retreating naval units are not subject to pursuit fire.

8.3 Naval units can be eliminated as a result of naval combat (7.2), capture (8.4), or Wintering (13.3). Eliminated naval units are permanently removed from the game.

### 8.4 Naval Unit Capture

**Naval units may only occupy friendly lakeside towns. If such a town is occupied by enemy Army units, Naval units may try to escape. Roll 1d6 for each naval unit:**

**1-3: Unit is captured. Exchange for a friendly Naval unit, unless all friendly Naval units are already in play.**

**4-6: Unit escapes and moves on to the Lake. A Naval battle may occur.**

## 9.0 ARMY MOVEMENT

9.1 Each Army Phase a player can move any/all units in any **one** town to one or more adjacent towns that are connected by a road/trail. There is no limit to the number of units which may be located in any one town.

**IMPORTANT:** All movement must be completed before combat.

**Example:** *A player with army units in Kingston may move any number of them to one or more of Smith's Creek, Prescott, or Sacket's Harbor.*

**9.2 Force March:** units may attempt to Force-March one additional town. Roll 1d6 for each unit attempting. Modify the die roll, British units +1, Indian +2.

**1-3: Unit does **not** move **and** loses 1cv.**

**4-6: Unit completes move with no loss.**

## 10.0 ARMY BATTLES

10.1 When one player moves units into a town (the Attacker) which is occupied by units of the other player (the Defender) a battle occurs. All battles are resolved in the Battle Phase as follows:

(a) The Defender may accept battle or retreat and take pursuit fire (see: 11.0). If he accepts battle, both players reveal the CV of their units by tilting them forward (face-up) so that the current CV of each unit faces the opposing player. Neither player may retreat at this time.

(b) The Defender (who always has first fire) adds up the total CV of his force and throws one die per CV. For each "6" thrown, a hit is scored, and the Attacker's force is immediately reduced by 1 CV.

(c) The Attacker now has the option to retreat or to fire his units in the same manner as the Defender.

(d) Alternate battle turns are repeated until one player takes his option to retreat, or until all units of one player are eliminated. When the battle ends, surviving units are again stood upright at their current CV.

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**Example:** Three British units (5cv) attack two American (defending) units. The American player accepts battle and rolls seven dice for his 7cv. Assuming a hit is scored, the attacker's force (his choice of units) is immediately reduced to 4cv. Hits are recorded by turning unit(s) counter-clockwise until their new lower CV faces the opposing player. The Attacker could now retreat (taking pursuit fire) or return fire by rolling 4 dice. He elects to fire and scores one hit, reducing the defender to 6cv.

10.2 If there are several battles, they are resolved in **any** order the **Attacker** wishes, but each battle must be resolved (including retreats) before starting another.

## 11.0 ARMY RETREATS

11.1 A player choosing to retreat must do so before firing any units in his battle turn. The 'victorious' player is then given Pursuit Fire, rolling **one die per unit** with each 4, 5, or 6 thrown (50% chance) scoring a hit. A player must then retreat all units which survive to the same town; division of forces is not allowed in a retreat.

11.2 The Defender may retreat to any adjacent town along a land route, except to a town occupied by enemy units, a town containing an unresolved battle, or to the town that the Attacker came from. If no such town exists, the Defender may not retreat and must remain in the battle. The Attacker must always retreat his units back to the town they came from. Units may never retreat to an off-board location.

11.3 Except as noted in (12.4) players may not retreat by amphibious movement.

## 12.0 AMPHIBIOUS MOVEMENT

12.1 A player may combine his navy and army phases to make one amphibious move. Only operational naval units occupying a lake may take part in an amphibious move. Amphibious movement of some army units and land movement of other army units from the same group is allowed.

12.2 An amphibious move consists of moving army units from one lakeside town directly to any other lakeside town (or towns) of the same lake. One army unit may move for each operational naval unit on the lake. Note: the naval units involved do not actually move; they stand in position to transport army units. Naval units on the lake which are not involved in the amphibious move, or naval units in lakeside towns of the same lake can simultaneously make any normal move.

Example: The British player controls Lake Ontario with three operational naval units, he may move up to three army units located at Kingston to any other lakeside town(s) of Lake Ontario.

12.3 Amphibious Attacks: If an amphibious move is used to attack enemy units, the Defender in such battles receives double fire on his first battle turn, firing each unit twice at the landing army units. On subsequent battle turns, the Defender fires his units normally.

12.4 Amphibious Retreats: A player attacking by amphibious movement must retreat by amphibious move, subject to all normal retreating and pursuit fire rules.

## 13.0 WINTERING

13.1 After the 10th Campaign Turn of a year is played, if neither player has accumulated enough victory points (VPs) to win the game, the Wintering Turn is played. During this turn, players must take winter attrition (if any) and then deploy their reinforcements. Movement is not permitted during the Winter Turn.

13.2 The maximum number of army units which may winter in a town without penalty equals the numerical value of that town. For example, two army units may safely winter in Sacket's Harbor; one may winter in Utica. Excess units located in a town within their own territory are reduced by 1 CV each. Excess units located in enemy towns are eliminated. The owner of units decides which of them will be reduced or eliminated.

13.3 All naval units on lakes must be withdrawn to friendly lakeside town(s) during the winter turn. If none exist, the naval units are eliminated.

## 14.0 REINFORCEMENTS

14.1 The number of units each player receives for the next campaign year is printed on the mapboard where they enter play: Quebec (British); Albany and Pittsburgh (American). For example, the British player receives three (3) units for 1813, all at Quebec. Reinforcements are drawn randomly from the face-down surplus group, entering play at their maximum CV.

14.2 If a reinforcement town is occupied by enemy units, reinforcements may not enter play at this time. They may, however, be brought into play at their appropriate entry town as a player's army phase on any future Campaign Turn. If the reinforcement town is still occupied by enemy units at this time, this move will create a battle, fought like any other land battle, except the Attacker has no retreat since this would be off-board.



## 15.0 INDIANS

The Indian unit enters play at Detroit if the British player captures this town. Once in play, this unit will only fight if accompanied by at least one British unit. If attacked by itself, or if accompanying British units are eliminated in battle, the Indian unit retires from the game (permanently). During battles the Indian unit fights like any other unit, but has double pursuit fire (2 dice hitting on 4, 5, or 6). The Indian unit may not make an amphibious move. The Indian unit may **not** be rebuilt if eliminated. It does not count in Victory Conditions as an Army in play. VPs are not awarded for the Indian unit.



## 16.0 CAVALRY

Each player has one dragoon (mounted infantry) unit.

- Movement:** Cavalry can move two towns (to an adjacent town and then to another adjacent town). They cannot make amphibious moves.
- Battles:** Cavalry fight like infantry in battles. Cavalry have double pursuit fire (2 dice hitting on 4, 5, or 6) unless the defender also has cavalry. Cavalry may retreat 2 towns.

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## 17.0 AMERICAN MILITIA

American militia were only required to fight on American soil and habitually refused to cross into Canada when ordered to do so. To reflect this, the American player must throw one die for each army unit attempting to move into Canada. For each "6" thrown, one American unit (chosen randomly by the British player) does not move. The American player may not cancel his proposed move as a consequence of this rule. If all units fail to move, the American player may not make another move and his turn ends.

**Note:** *the militia rule does not apply to amphibious movement, to units already in British territory, or to units moving back to American territory.*

## 18.0 CONDITIONS OF VICTORY

18.1 At the end of each campaign year (before wintering) players check to see if either has accumulated enough victory points (VPs) to win the game. A player wins if he has 10 or more VPs than his opponent (not just 10 VPs) at this time. VPs are scored as follows:

- 1 VP for each army unit in play. Naval units have no VP value.
- 2 VP for each Lake a player controls.
- The VP value of all Enemy towns occupied by Army units; naval units can not hold enemy towns. For example, American occupation of Kingston would give that player 3 VPs, and British occupation of Detroit would give that player 3 VPs. Do not count VPs for towns in Home Territory.

18.2 If neither player succeeds in obtaining the 10VP margin before the third campaign year ends, the game is a draw.

## 19.0 SIMO-MOVE (OPTIONAL)

19.1 For Campaign Turns both players write their army and naval moves and orders are revealed simultaneously. Examples:

- (a) Build naval unit at Kingston.  
2 Army Montreal to Malone  
2 Army Montreal to Lacolle.

- (b) Naval units Kingston and York to Lake Ontario. All army units stand

19.2 If one player moves units to a town occupied by the other player, the player with units already there is the Defender.

19.3 If both players move units to the same vacant town, the American player is the Defender in American towns and the British player is the Defender in British towns.

19.4 If both players move units to a town each is moving from (e.g. American units in Sacket's Harbor and British units in Kingston move to each other's town) each player throws two dice to decide (highest total has choice) were the battle is fought, the Defender being the player occupying that town.

19.5 If one player moves naval units onto a lake occupied by the other player, he is the Attacker. If both players move units onto the same empty lake, the Defender is the player who wins a 2d6 roll.

19.6 If a player controlling a lake orders an amphibious move and his opponent orders his naval units onto the lake, the naval battle is resolved first. A player may cancel his amphibious move if any of his ships are damaged/sunk (damaged ships cannot transport men) but he can do nothing else in that turn. If control of the lake changes, the amphibious move is automatically canceled.

Orders written must specify which units are moving to which area when splitting a group.

## 20.0 STRATEGY NOTES

Generally, it is better to concentrate forces. This allows a player to attack or defend in strength. But some division of forces is necessary to control key towns such as naval bases, wintering and reinforcement towns, etc. Beware of wintering attrition, especially in enemy territory.

The burden of attack generally falls on the American player in 1812. It is best for him to concentrate his efforts on one or two of the four major fronts: Detroit, Niagara, Kingston, and Champlain. Trying to mount an attack on three or four fronts simultaneously is usually futile. During 1813, the American must make decisive gains because of the large number of reinforcements the British receive for 1814.

The British player is usually forced to remain on the defensive, at least until mid-1813. However, some limited offense to force the American to respond, such as an aggressive western campaign with the assistance of the Indians may buy valuable time. Protection of Montreal and Quebec is crucial since they are worth 9 VPs. Control of the lakes is often decisive.

# WAR OF 1812

## HISTORICAL NOTES

### Background to War

On Christmas Eve 1814, American and British diplomats signed the Treaty of Gent. This brought an end to a thirty month struggle known as the War of 1812, the result of which has been disputed ever since.

The British, fighting against Napoleon at the time, tend to forget the war ever occurred. When they do remember, they see it as a minor colonial affair they won handily. True, the Americans did win a small naval engagement or two, but the Royal Navy still dominated and easily imposed a naval blockade that brought chaos to a prosperous economy. The Americans, on the other hand, regard the war as a successful defense of their Revolution, but since their primary objective, in a war they declared, was to invade and annex the British territory now called Canada, to see the war as a defense of anything is very interesting. It should also be noted that the famous American victory, The Battle of New Orleans, actually took place two weeks after the war ended.

The United States declared war on Britain on June 18th 1812. The main grounds for the declaration were stated to be a violation of American neutrality caused by British interference with their commerce and shipping. This was the result of a British decree intended to prevent neutral countries from trading with France in the Napoleonic Wars. A secondary excuse was British impressment of a few dozen American seamen to serve in the Royal Navy - a result of over-zealous attempts by the undermanned British navy to recapture deserters who had enlisted on American ships.

Nationalist and expansionist politicians from the southern and western states argued for war not in defense of maritime rights, but because the British supported the Indian resistance to American expansion. This and other long standing territorial disputes dating back to the Revolution are unquestionably the real motives for war. Unlike the pro-war West and South, New England (which had most to lose by British naval policy) was anti-war and voted against it.

Neither side was prepared for the ensuing struggle. On paper, the U.S. army

had a strength of 36,700 regulars, but less than 12,000 had been raised and more than half of these were raw recruits. Although the American militia had an impressive theoretical strength of 400,000 men, rarely were 10,000 available at any one time, and these were always untrained and undisciplined.

The British were equally unprepared. Committed to the struggle against Napoleon, they had less than 4,000 regulars in Canada in 1812. However, for man, these troops were far superior to anything their opponent could put in the field at the time. This strength was augmented by about 2000 Canadian regulars and the same number of "embodied militia" who had a minimum of 90 days training. Although there was a potential militia strength of 60,000, the few thousand raised saw very little action.

The obvious battleground for the war was British North America, a vast and sparsely settled land now called Canada. At the time this territory was divided into three administrative areas: Upper Canada (now Ontario); Lower Canada (now Quebec); and the Atlantic Colonies. The latter area was relatively safe from attack because of British sea-power and the antipathy of the New England States to the war. Hence Sir George Prevost, Governor and Military Commander, only had to worry about Upper and Lower Canada, where he committed his forces to a strategy of defense. Two thirds of his army was deployed in Montreal and Quebec. The remaining one third (about 3000 men) had the task of defending the vulnerable frontiers of Upper Canada.

The basic American war-aim was to annex British North America. American strategists decided on an invasion of Upper Canada. It was widely believed that numerous American settlers in the area would welcome U.S. troops as "liberators". The pro-war west also saw greater opportunity for expansion in the west than in the more densely populated, mainly French-speaking Lower Canada.

### Campaign of 1812

American strategy for 1812 called for attacks in three areas: Lake Champlain (a feint); the Niagara frontier; and the Detroit frontier. On July 12th an American force of 2000 men led by the aging general William Hull crossed the Detroit River and occupied Amherstburg. General Isaac

Brock, the military commander of Upper Canada, reacted quickly to the invasion by reinforcing the west from Fort George. Hull, plagued by supply problems, chose to avoid battle by retreating back to Detroit. Brock then took the initiative by surrounding Detroit and managed to bluff Hull into surrender on August 18th. It was an important victory for the British. The western Indians, who had numerous grievances against American expansionism, now gave their support to the British cause.

The conflict then focused on the Niagara frontier. General Brock, flushed with his success at Detroit, prepared to mount an offensive across the Niagara River before the Americans could build up strength in the area. To his disgust he found that Prevost, not anticipating the British success at Detroit and seeking to buy time, had negotiated a truce with the Americans which lasted two months. Brock could only watch the Americans build up strength on the opposite bank of the river and prepare for their inevitable invasion.

The attack came on October 13th. About one half of an American force of 6000 crossed the river at Queenston (near Fort George). Brock quickly brought reinforcements to the scene and a fierce battle developed. Brock was killed early in the battle and the demoralized British defenders were hard pressed to hold their position. At the critical moment, British reinforcements arrived while the American militia, the remaining half of the American army, refused to cross the river, claiming they were only required to fight on American soil. This refusal to move resulted in a total defeat for the Americans.

Later that month, the Americans launched their third campaign when General Dearborn led a force of 6000 regulars and militia from Plattsburg against Montreal. The advance proved to be a fiasco. Again the American militia refused to invade Canada and Dearborn had no choice but to retire to winter quarters without a shot being fired. This ended American activity for 1812. They had failed due to poor generalship, unreliable militia, and poor planning: it is generally conceded that a concentrated attack in one area rather than on three fronts would have been a better American strategy.

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## Campaign of 1813

Both sides received reinforcements in the spring of 1813. British strength increased to about 12,000, American strength to 19,000, although many of these were new recruits.

Brooding over their failure of 1812, the Americans planned a more ambitious campaign for this year. General Harrison (a future president) fought a British advance from Detroit to a standstill at Sandusky. In September, a naval squadron commanded by Captain Oliver Perry won a decisive battle over the British Lake Erie squadron.

Procter, the British general in the west, cut off from lake-borne supplies, decided to retreat. Harrison was then able to recapture Detroit and overtook the retreating British at Moraviantown (near London). The resulting battle was a decisive victory for the Americans. Tecumseh, the brilliant Indian leader, was killed in the battle and the discouraged Indians deserted the British cause. Harrison did not follow up his victory but returned to Detroit with the west completely under his control.

The second American objective - to capture York (now Toronto), Kingston, and the Niagara Peninsula was less successful. During a temporary naval supremacy on Lake Ontario a force of 1800 Americans attacked York in April. The outnumbered British garrison promptly retreated to Kingston after a brief resistance. Before departing the Americans burnt part of the town including the Parliament Buildings of Upper Canada. Kingston was not attacked, however, because the Americans believed it to be too strongly guarded.

On the Niagara front the Americans moved on Fort George which they occupied after the British retreated to Dundas. This effort was soon wasted when the same American force advancing towards Dundas was surprised by a night attack. Two American generals were captured and their army retreated in confusion back to Fort George. The Americans then withdrew to Sacket's Harbor to take part in an assault on Montreal. The British quickly recaptured Fort George, attacked and captured Fort Niagara, and laid waste to Buffalo in retaliation for the destruction of York.

Meanwhile the third American objective, Montreal, was to be attacked by

an ambitious plan. One force of 6000 men led by General Hampton (an alcoholic) was to advance down the Chateauguay River from Malone. Another force of 8000 men led by General Wilkinson, whose greatest claim to fame was that he never won a battle but never lost a court martial, was to simultaneously advance down the St. Lawrence River from Sacket's Harbor. As was now becoming customary, most of the militia under Hampton's command refused to cross into Canada. Undaunted, Hampton pressed on and blundered into a British force halfway down the Chateauguay River. After a brief skirmish the Americans retreated back across the border.

## Struggle for the Lakes

Throughout the War of 1812 poor land communications meant that the prerequisite to a successful campaign was control of the Lakes. This was clearly demonstrated on Lake Erie where British control in 1812 gave them mastery of the West and American control in 1813 reversed this situation.

To this end, naval commanders on both sides evolved similar strategies; to out-build opponents, seek battles when stronger, and avoid them when not. On Lake Ontario in particular this translated into a classic arms race which escalated until the British launched at Kingston in 1814, HMS St. Lawrence, a three deck 112 gun ship-of-the-line bigger than Nelson's flagship at Trafalgar.

In any event, the fleet that was temporarily inferior generally remained in port. Both naval commanders were unwilling to gamble because a severe loss would be catastrophic; wood was plentiful, but guns and seamen were not. The crucial American naval victories on Lake Erie in 1813 and on Lake Champlain in 1814 occurred mainly because British naval officers were hounded into action by army officers who outranked them.

Wilkinson met a similar fate. His army crossed the St. Lawrence River at Prescott and advanced along the north bank towards Montreal. He was pursued by a British force from Kingston. They overtook the American rear guard and defeated it at the Battle of Chrysler's Farm. Wilkinson now had a British army in his front, another in his rear, and had little choice but to retreat back across the border. With

the exception of the west, American strategy had again been foiled, and as it turned out, they had also lost the opportunity to win the war decisively.

## Campaign of 1814

The balance of power now shifted to the British. With the Napoléonic Wars in Europe winding down, thousands of British troops and dozens of ships became available for service in North America. Nearly 16,000 Peninsula veterans disembarked at Quebec, bringing total British strength to about 25,000. The problem for the United States was no longer the conquest of Canada, but the defense of its own territory. Fortunately, capable American officers had replaced the incompetents of 1812 and 1813.

The campaign opened with a successful British amphibious attack on Oswego. The Americans quickly retaliated on the Niagara Peninsula when a force of 5,000 men captured Fort Erie and defeated a nearby British force at Chippewa. The retreating British were reinforced, however, and in the bloodiest battle of the war at Lundy's Lane near Niagara Falls, fought the invaders to a standstill. The Americans were obliged to retreat back to Fort Erie, and soon retired to Buffalo, blowing-up the fort as they withdrew.

All that remained to be settled now was the British threat from Montreal. In early September Sir George Prevost led 11,000 British regulars into American territory. At Plattsburg he waited idly for a supporting naval squadron to secure his flank. Instead, the British squadron was annihilated by an American fleet and with his communications exposed, Prevost timidly retired back to Montreal.

## The 'Atlantic War'

During 1814 the increased availability of British troops and the dominance of the British navy produced two amphibious operations of note that were designed primarily to ease pressure on the Canadian frontier. The first of these, in August, saw a force of 4000 British regulars sail into Chesapeake Bay and attack Washington. 5000 militia turned out to meet the invasion, but at the Battle of Bladensburg most of them fled in panic after the first British volley, hotly pursued by the redcoats in the "Bladensburg

# WAR OF 1812

Races". Washington was then occupied and several public buildings set on fire. The White House owes its name to this event when its fire scarred walls were later covered up with a coat of white paint.

The British thrust soon faltered. A naval attack on Baltimore was canceled after it became apparent its defenses were too strong. The British then timidly withdrew to Jamaica. Inspired by this repulse, Francis Scott Key, a young Baltimore lawyer, wrote the words of what later became the U.S. National Anthem - "The Star Spangled Banner".

Later in 1814, a major assault by 7000 regulars was launched by the British against New Orleans. Led by General Packenham (brother-in-law of Wellington), a prompt assault on the city probably would have succeeded, but this was not done. The Americans, led by a future president, Andrew Jackson, were given time to prepare a strong defensive position. On January 8th, 1815, Jackson inflicted a crushing defeat on the advancing British which cost Packenham his life and forced the British to retreat "down the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico". Ironically, the treaty ending the war had been signed in Europe two weeks before the battle, but the treaty had not been ratified by the two governments, nor had news of the peace reached the two armies.

## Treaty & Peace

Throughout 1814, British and American diplomats met in Gent, Belgium, to work out a peace. Both sides demanded territorial concessions. The American economy by this time was in danger of total collapse. Faced with rumblings of New England succession, American diplomats came close to accepting British demands. However, news of the American victory at Plattsburg undermined the British position. The Americans pressed for a return to the pre-war situation to which the war-weary British agreed.

And so this dirty little war ended with nothing settled, nothing changed. Maritime rights were not even mentioned in the treaty. But the indirect results of the war were significant, far more significant than many people realize.

Had the pre-war influx of American settlers into Upper Canada continued for a few more years, it is likely that this territory, and all of western Canada, would have drifted into political union with the United States. But as a result of the war, hostility towards the United States prevailed in the north for many years, and reinforced the British connection. This attitude was buried in time, but not before it gave birth to an independent Canada. Pragmatically, the Americans came to see the war as a successful defense of their Revolution. This fostered the isolationist tone of American foreign policy for the next century, during which the U.S. grew into a world power.

## CREDITS

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