

Commodore John Barry Memorial

National Mall and Memorial Parks
National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior
Washington, D.C.



*The first of patriots-
the best of men.*

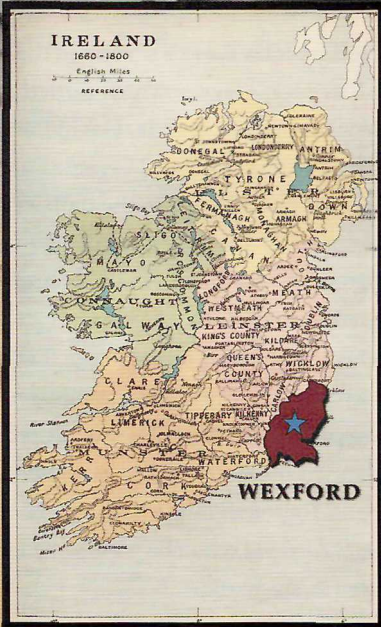
Author Tim McGrath

Barry's Early Life



Philadelphia circa 1750.

John Barry (1745 - 1803), a native of Wexford, Ireland, was born to farmer James Barry and his wife Ellen Kelly Barry. John went to sea as a boy in the merchant trade and after many voyages the young John Barry arrived in Philadelphia before the Revolutionary War. By 1775, Barry had established himself as a successful merchant master in the West Indies Trade.



Wexford, Ireland.

Barry's Naval Service During the Revolution

With the outbreak of war between Great Britain and her rebellious American colonies, Barry offered his services to the Continental Congress. Congress commissioned Barry a captain in the infant Continental Navy and gave him command of the brig *Lexington* of 14-guns. On 7 April 1776, off the Virginia Capes, *Lexington* engaged the armed tender *Edward*. After a desperate fight, lasting over one hour, Barry and his crew captured *Edward* and brought her into Philadelphia as a prize. By October 1776, Barry and the crew of *Lexington* would capture several British privateers.



Lexington versus Edward.

With this success, Congress gave him command of the Continental frigate *Effingham*, which was being built in Philadelphia. Barry oversaw her construction. However, Barry's new command had to be burned to prevent her from being captured when the British occupied the city in September 1777.

With the city in British hands, Barry was given command of several row galleys that operated in the lower reaches of the Delaware River. In March 1778, Barry's squadron captured the armed schooner *Alert* of 20-guns and two other ships loaded with supplies for the British occupation force in Philadelphia.

Barry Against Superior Odds

Later in 1778, Barry travelled to Boston to assume command of the Continental frigate *Raleigh* of 32-guns. He sailed from Boston on 25 September and on the 27th three British men-of-war sighted *Raleigh*. After a running fight lasting nine hours, Barry ran *Raleigh* aground on an island near the mouth of the Penobscot Bay in Maine. Barry and most of his crew made their escape. Although he lost his ship, Barry was commended for his gallantry against a superior force.



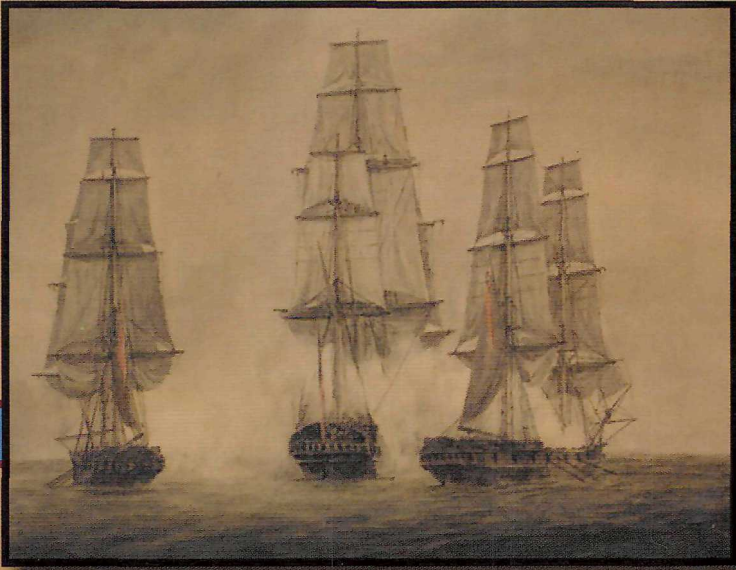
Alliance under sail.

Barry Takes Command of the Frigate "Alliance"

In November 1780, Barry took command of the Continental frigate *Alliance* of 32-guns, and carried John Laurens, Special Commissioner to France. On the east bound voyage, Barry captured the British privateer *Alert* of 20-guns. On the return voyage, Barry captured two other British privateers, *Mars* of 26-guns and *Minerva* of 10-guns.

A Desperate Fight

In May 1781, while cruising off the coast of Nova Scotia, Barry in *Alliance* met two smaller British warships, the sloop HMS *Atalanta* of 20-guns and the brig HMS *Trepassey* of 14-guns. Becalmed, *Alliance* was at their mercy, because the two British warships used their oars to manoeuvre themselves on either side of *Alliance*. Barry and his men were now in a desperate situation. Barry was then wounded in the right shoulder, but he continued in command. Finally, *Alliance* was able to catch the wind and in doing so, Barry skilfully manoeuvred her against his assailants, capturing both men-of-war.



Alliance battles HMS Atalanta and HMS Trepassey.

Barry's Last Fight

Barry recovered from his wound. Throughout 1782, he continued in command of *Alliance*, capturing numerous prizes. In March 1783, Barry fought his last action of the Revolutionary War, when *Alliance* fought and captured HMS *Sybil* of 28-guns. At the time, Barry was escorting *Duc de Lauzun*, which was carrying money and supplies from the West Indies to the Americans.

Barry Returns to Civilian Life

With the winning of the colonies' independence, Barry returned to civilian life and picked up his career as a merchant to include the fitting out of the merchant ship *Asia* for the China Trade. He sailed *Asia* to China in December 1788 and returned to Philadelphia 18 months later with an exotic cargo that sold at a great profit, restoring Barry's personal fortune that was lost during the Revolutionary War.



A reproduction of *Friendship of Salem*, a typical East Indiaman similar to *Asia*.



The trading factories at Canton, China, 1780.

Barry Returns to Naval Service as Number 1 Captain



United States Navy Commodore John Barry.

With the Congress passing the Naval Act of 1794, the building of the United States Navy was authorized. In addition to the creation of the nation’s first six frigates, Barry was appointed number 1 on the list of captains. President Washington signed his commission on 27 February 1797.

Barry also supervised the building of one of the six frigates, USS *United States* of 44-guns and was assigned as her first captain. As the most senior officer, Barry was directed by the Secretary of the Navy to select the first officers for the new Navy.

Stephen Decatur Jr., Charles Stewart, Richard Somers and James Barron were among the first of group of Navy’s lieutenants selected and they joined Barry on board *United States*. During the naval war with France (the Quasi War), 1798-1801, Barry would lead the fledgling United States Navy from USS *United States*, against French warships and privateers in the Caribbean. With the end of hostilities, Barry was selected to command the first Mediterranean Squadron to combat the Tripoli Pirates, but he was too ill to assume command. He died at Strawberry Hill, his country residence near Philadelphia on 12 September 1803.

Barry’s Legacy (Barry’s Boys)

Commodore John Barry’s service in the Continental Navy and the early years of the United States Navy left a legacy which carried on in the men whom he trained. Among these men Captain Stephen Decatur, Jr., David Porter, Charles Stewart, Richard Dale, James Barron and Lieutenant Richard Somers, became famous officers and heroes of the early Navy. Decatur and Stewart gained fame in the Barbary Wars. Both were successful frigate captains during the War of 1812; Decatur commanded *United States* when it captured HMS *Macedonian*, while Stewart was the most successful fighting captain of USS *Constitution*. Stewart emulated his old captain by capturing two British ships in one engagement. David Porter also gained epic fame as commander of the frigate USS *Essex*. Porter wrecked the British whaling industry when he captured numerous whaling ships in the Pacific. Richard Dale commanded the first permanent American Squadron in the Mediterranean after the war. James Barron commanded the sloop-of-war *Warren* during the naval war with France, as well as the frigates *Essex* and *President* in the Barbary Wars. Lieutenant Richard Somers bravely commanded the ketch *Intrepid* when he took her into Tripoli Harbor and died with his crew when their craft exploded in the harbor.

Barry’s reputation had a powerful influence on the United States Navy and his fame extended far into the future as an example of skillful seamanship and patriotic dedication to the cause of American freedom and independence.

Commodore Barry is considered to be one of the founders of the United States Navy .



Barry’s flagship USS *United States*.



USS *Constitution*.

U.S. Navy Names Ships After Barry



USS *Barry*, DD-2.



USS *Barry*, DD-248.



USS *Barry*, DD-933.



USS *Barry*, DDG-52.

Four destroyers have been named in honor of Commodore Barry. The first USS *Barry* (Destroyer No.2) was commissioned in 1902 and she served the next thirteen years in the Far East. In 1917, this destroyer served in European waters on convoy escort duty, and returned to the U.S. after the November 1918 Armistice. The first *Barry* was decommissioned in 1919.

The second *Barry*, DD-248, was commissioned in 1920 and spent the first twenty years with both the U.S. Navy’s Atlantic and Pacific Fleets. When the U.S. entered World War II, she served on convoy escort duties and then as part of an anti-submarine task group that sank eight German U-boats. In 1944, *Barry* was converted to a high-speed amphibious troop transport and then she participated in the Southern France landings. In mid-May 1945, while off Okinawa, *Barry* was heavily damaged by a Kamikaze aircraft. On 21 June 1945, Barry’s unmanned hulk was sunk by another Kamikaze attack.

Commissioned in 1956, the third *Barry*, DD-933, operated with the Sixth Fleet on eight deployments to the Mediterranean Sea. In 1962, *Barry* participated in the Cuban Missile Crisis and saw Vietnam combat service. Between 1972 and 1975, she was home ported in Greece. In 1979, *Barry* joined the Middle East Force in the Persian Gulf. *Barry* was decommissioned in 1983. She now serves as the Navy’s display ship at the Washington Navy Yard where she serves as a distinctive attraction for visitors to the historic yard as well as the setting for many ceremonial events.

Commissioned in 1992, the fourth USS *Barry*, DDG-52, is the second *Arleigh Burke* class destroyer. *Barry* joined the Atlantic Fleet and was commanded by Commander Gary Roughead, a future Chief of Naval Operations. Since her commissioning *Barry* has taken part in several operations to include Operation Support Democracy - the enforcement of a Haiti arms and petroleum embargo; support to NATO forces conducting a No Fly Zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1994 and several deployments to the Persian Gulf. In 2006, *Barry* joined another *Burke* Class destroyer in providing cover for the evacuation of American citizens during the Israeli-Lebanon conflict. In March 2011, *Barry* joined NATO forces to protect innocents caught up in the Libyan uprising. *Barry* fired cruise missiles to suppress Libyan air defenses and later engaged the Libyan Coast Guard which was firing on merchant ships.

The Irish Connection



Unveiling the dedicated Barry Memorial, 16 May, 1914.

The Sculptor, John J. Boyle (1851-1917)

Sculptor John J. Boyle was born in New York City. He studied in the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia, and in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris. He was particularly successful in the portrayal of Indians. Among his principal works are: “Stone Age,” Fairmount Park, Philadelphia; “The Alarm,” Lincoln Park, Chicago, and a third study in primitive culture, the two groups, “The Savage Age” at the Pan-American Exposition of 1901. His work also includes the seated “Franklin,” in Philadelphia and “Bacon” and “Plato” in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.. His sculpture of Commodore John Barry, located at Franklin Park in Washington, is considered his last important work.



For More Information
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