

Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial

Perry's Victory and
International Peace Memorial
Ohio

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



*As we gaze on this great
monument of stone
erected to the cause of
peace, we find renewed
hope that eventually
nations, like individuals,
may learn to sit around the
council table and settle their
differences without
resorting to bloodshed*

Illinois Governor Louis Emmerson, 1931

Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial rises above Lake Erie to honor all who fought and died here on September 10, 1813. In a decisive naval battle of the War of 1812, Master Commandant Oliver Hazard Perry's small fleet captured an entire British squadron. Perry's ship flew a battle flag with the motto, "Don't give up the ship."

The memorial also commemorates lasting peace between the United States and the United Kingdom. The unrest that continued after the end of the Revolutionary War ignited a second conflict, the War of 1812. The fighting went on even after the warring nations signed the Treaty of Ghent. They eventually fixed the border between the United States and Canada, then a British colony. Within 33 years after the War of 1812 ended, our nation's 29 states and 5 territories had been extended west to the Pacific coast. For the next century, westward expansion became a focus of national policy and helped forge the United States' national identity.

PHOTO © ROMAN SAPECKI

We have met the enemy and they are ours

On September 10, 1813, Oliver Hazard Perry scrawled these memorable words on the back of an envelope and sent them to Maj. Gen. William Henry Harrison at the end of a dramatic naval battle on Lake Erie.

Throughout the late summer of 1813, the US Navy's Lake Erie squadron, anchored at Put-in-Bay, effectively cut off British supplies to their forces in the Detroit River valley. The British were now at a crossroads: either retreat and abandon their Indian allies, or strike from their own naval base at Fort Malden/Amherstburg. They chose to attack.

For the young US Navy, this was its first fleet action—and it began badly. The US Brig *Lawrence* became so disabled after two hours of fighting that Perry abandoned it and boarded its sister ship *Niagara*. He then resumed the fight, and in the span of 15 minutes forced a British surrender.

Never before had the Royal Navy suffered the capture of an entire squadron. The Battle of Lake Erie made Oliver Hazard Perry a national hero and gave the United States a much-needed morale boost in the midst of an unpopular war.

Master Commandant Oliver Hazard Perry's victory over the British fleet on Lake Erie—an inland naval battle—enabled Harrison's US forces to invade upper Canada and defeat the allied forces of Great Britain and the Indian confederacy led by Tecumseh. This victory improved the US bargaining position during treaty negotiations in Ghent, Belgium.



PERRY PORTRAIT BY GILBERT AND JANE STUART
TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART

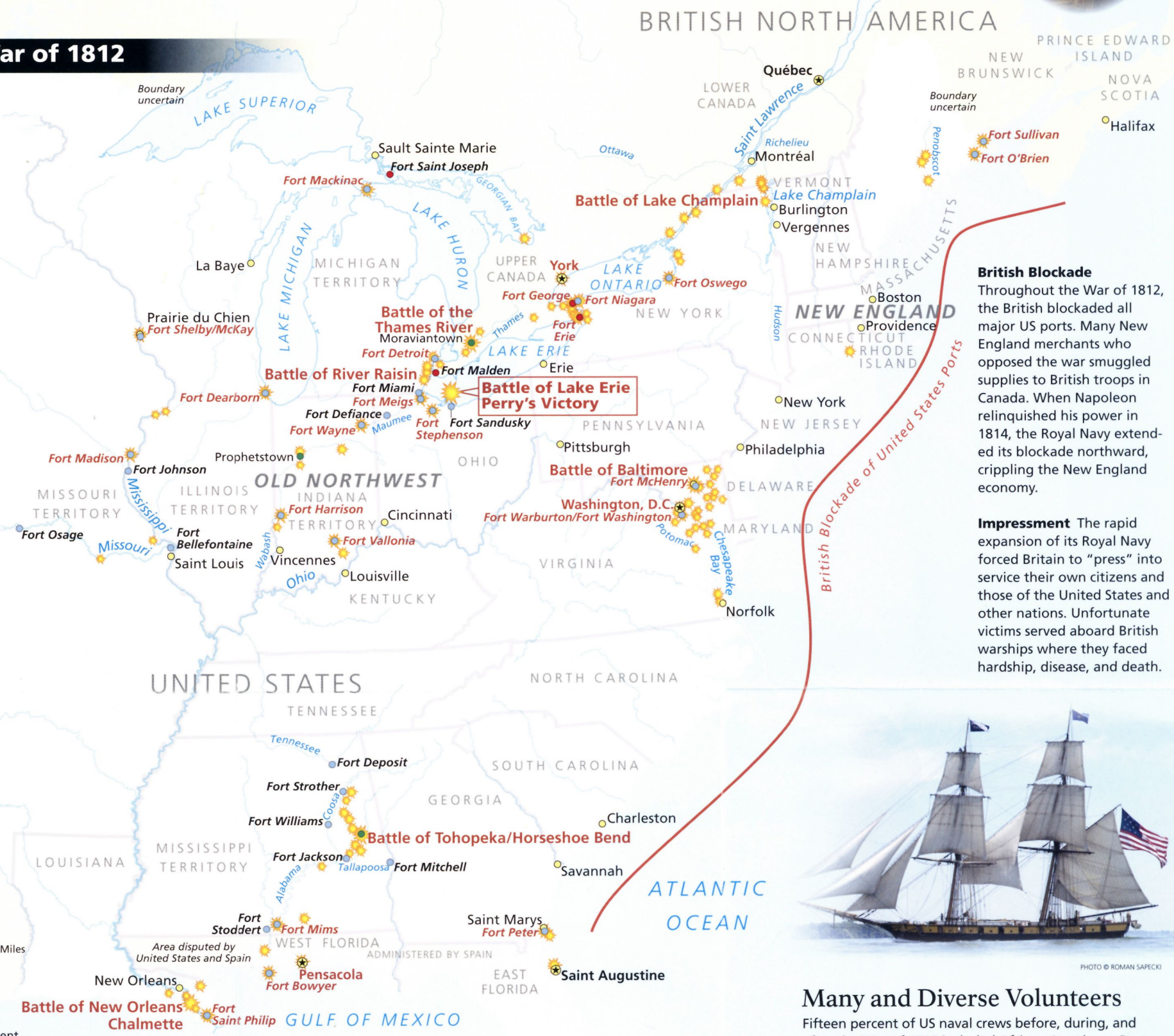
Mapping the War of 1812

British North America In 1812 many residents of upper and lower British Canada had emigrated from the United States. They did not support the war. Over time they became enemies of the United States. Had the war not happened, they may later have favored annexation by the United States. However, the war made annexation unthinkable.



Tecumseh's Indian and British Alliance Shawnee leader Tecumseh sought to create a confederation of Indians ranging from British North America to the Gulf of Mexico. His influence reached from the Creek Indians in Alabama to the Indians in British Canada. They would unite to create a new homeland in the Great Lakes region. The British viewed the potential Indian confederation as a tool for controlling further American expansion.

TECUMSEH IMAGE OHIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY



British Blockade Throughout the War of 1812, the British blockaded all major US ports. Many New England merchants who opposed the war smuggled supplies to British troops in Canada. When Napoleon relinquished his power in 1814, the Royal Navy extended its blockade northward, crippling the New England economy.

Impressment The rapid expansion of its Royal Navy forced Britain to "press" into service their own citizens and those of the United States and other nations. Unfortunate victims served aboard British warships where they faced hardship, disease, and death.



PHOTO © ROMAN SAPECKI

Many and Diverse Volunteers

Fifteen percent of US naval crews before, during, and after the War of 1812 included African Americans. Perry appealed for volunteers from General Harrison's army, and raised 130 men. Enslaved and freedmen served in the US military and served with former mounted Kentucky riflemen, sailors from New England, and Pennsylvania, New York, and Virginia militiamen. Many of the landsmen had limited sailing experience, and few had witnessed the horrors of naval warfare.

Tour the Memorial and the Visitor Center

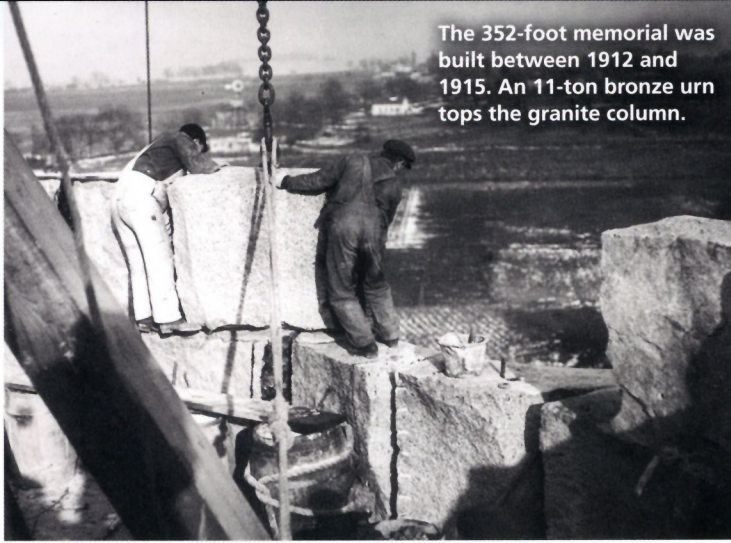
The only international peace memorial in the National Park System was designed by Joseph Freedlander and Alexander Seymor and built by a commission of nine states and the federal government from 1912 to 1915. The remains of three British and three American officers killed during the battle lie under its rotunda.

The Memorial on South Bass Island is reached by ferries from Catawba Point, Port Clinton, and Sandusky from April through November.

Accessibility We strive to make our facilities, services, and programs accessible to all. For information go to a visitor center, ask a ranger, call, or check our website.

Safety Obey all signs and use caution near the seawalls. For firearms regulations visit www.nps.gov/pevi.

Rangers lead programs daily in summer, with musket firing demonstrations on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.



Workers build the memorial column, 1914.

The 352-foot memorial was built between 1912 and 1915. An 11-ton bronze urn tops the granite column.



Commemorating Perry's Victory.

More Information
Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial
PO Box 549
Put-in-Bay, OH 43456
419-285-2184
www.nps.gov/pevi

Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial is one of over 400 parks in the National Park System. Learn more about national parks and National Park Service programs in America's communities at www.nps.gov.

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