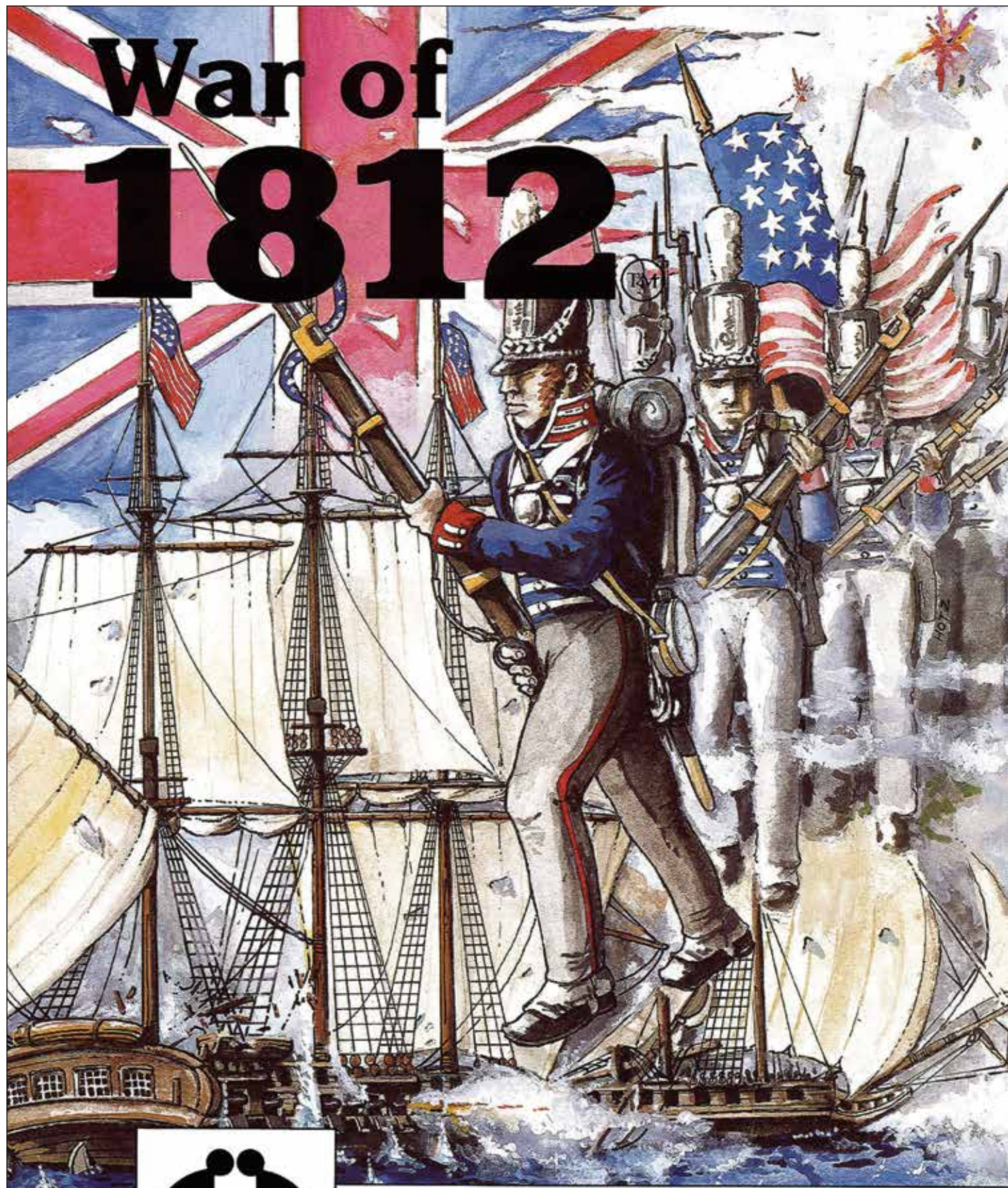


# War of 1812



COLUMBIA GAMES INC.

3002

# WAR OF 1812

## 1.0 MAPBOARD

### 1.1 TOWNS

There are 15 American towns (blue names) and 12 British towns (red names) defining each player's *Home Territory*.

Blue towns, even if vacant, are friendly to and controlled by the American player, except when enemy occupied.

Red towns, even if vacant, are friendly to and controlled by the British player, except when enemy occupied.

Towns have a value from 1-5. These values limit how many blocks can be supplied in that town over the winter. The values also determine victory points.

Army blocks move from one town to another via the roads/trails of the period.

### 1.2 LAKES

The mapboard has three main lakes on which warships may operate. Each player has one naval base per lake. Warships are located on a lake or in a lakeside town.

LAKE	BRITISH BASE	AMERICAN BASE
Erie	Amherstburg	Erie
Ontario	Kingston	Sacket's Harbor
Champlain	Lacolle	Plattsburg

## 2.0 ARMIES

The wooden blocks represent British (red) and American (blue) forces. There are twenty-five (25) blocks of each color.

One label must be attached to each block: British (tan) and Tecumseh (green) labels on the red blocks; American (light blue) labels on the blue blocks.

### 2.1 BLOCK DATA

Blocks have numbers and symbols defining movement and combat abilities.

#### 2.1.1 Strength

The current strength of a block is the number of pips on the top edge when the block is standing upright. Block strengths are only revealed to the enemy in battles.

Blocks have a variable strength of 4, 3, 2, or 1. For each hit taken in combat, the block's strength is reduced by rotating it 90 degrees counter-clockwise.

When a block is reduced below 1 strength, it is eliminated and returned to the draw pool.

#### 2.1.2 Combat Rating

The Combat Rating is indicated on the blocks. It is either F1 or F2. The number indicates the maximum roll to hit.

Strength determines how many six-sided dice (d6) are thrown for a block during combat. A block at strength 4 rolls 4d6 (four six-sided dice); a block at strength 1 rolls 1d6.

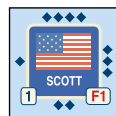
*Example: a block rated F1 only scores a hit for each "1" rolled, but a block rated F2 scores one hit for each 1 or 2 rolled.*

#### 2.1.3 Movement Rating

Movement ratings are shown in the lower-left corner of a block. This is the maximum distance a block can move.

## 2.2 BLOCK TYPES

### 2.2.1 Infantry



There are two types of Infantry: Regulars and Militia. Regulars have a US or British flag while Militia have crossed muskets. Infantry move one (1) town and have F1 combat.

US Militia sometimes refuse to enter enemy territory. See 10.0.

### 2.2.2 Dragoons



Dragoons have a crossed sabre symbol. They can move one (1) or two (2) towns and have F1 or F2 combat. They have deadly pursuit fire (2 dice @ F3) if unopposed by enemy dragoons. The American *Kentucky* Dragoon is militia.

### 2.2.3 Artillery



Both sides have 2 artillery blocks with F2 combat. Artillery move 1 town and cannot move amphibiously. Artillery has no pursuit fire.

### 2.2.4 Warships



Each player has 6 warships which operate on the three lakes. Warships only fight other warships with F1 combat.

### 2.2.5 Indians



The *Tecumseh* Indian block fights on the British side, but enters play only if Detroit is captured. See 9.0.

## 3.0 GAME SETUP

### 3.1 MAP SETUP

The American player faces north; the British player faces south.

### 3.2 STARTING FORCES

Remove the warships and the Indian block from the mix.

Each player places their remaining blocks face-down, mixes them together. The British player draws 10 red blocks; the American player draws 12 blue blocks.

Blocks begin the game at their maximum strength and are not revealed to the enemy player.

*Note: Surplus blocks are kept off the mapboard, and blocks eliminated during the game are also returned to this draw pool. These blocks will be available as future reinforcements.*

### 3.2.1 US Deployment

The American player deploys first. At least one block must be deployed in every American town rated at 2 or more supply value; the remaining blocks may be deployed as desired.

### 3.2.2 British Deployment

The British player now deploys in British towns under the same conditions as the Americans.

### 3.2.3 Warship Deployment

Each player deploys three (3) warships, one per naval base. Warships begin play at 1 Strength.

## 4.0 SEQUENCE OF PLAY

### 4.1 CAMPAIGN YEARS

The game is divided into three campaign years: 1812, 1813, and 1814. Each campaign year is divided into 10 Campaign Turns followed by a *Winter Turn* (Victory and Supply check).

### 4.2 CAMPAIGN TURNS

A Campaign Turn track is printed along the south edge of the mapboard; use a coin or other marker to record the passage of time.

#### 4.2.1 Initiative

Every Campaign Turn has two alternate Player Turns. To start **each** Campaign Turn, both players roll two six-sided dice (2d6). High total (re-roll ties) has the choice of first or second Player Turn for this Campaign Turn.

# WAR OF 1812

## 4.3 PLAYER TURNS

In each Player Turn, there are three phases, played in this sequence:

**Naval Phase:** A player either builds one step on a new or existing warship, **OR** makes one naval move. If a move brings opposing warships onto the same lake a naval battle is resolved in the Battle Phase.

**Army Phase:** A player can make one army move. If a player moves blocks to a town containing enemy blocks a battle is resolved in the Battle Phase.

**Note:** A Naval and Army Phase can be combined for one Amphibious Move.

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

## 5.0 NAVAL PHASE

### 5.1 NAVAL BUILDING

Build one step on a new or existing warship, **OR** makes one naval move. Building may only take place in one of a player's three naval bases, never in an enemy naval base even if occupied by friendly army blocks.

### 5.2 NAVAL MOVEMENT

Instead of building a warship, a player may elect to move any/all warships for one lake. Warships can move from lakeside towns onto the lake, or vice-versa.

**EXAMPLE:** *the American player has two warships in Sacket's Harbor, and one in Oswego. All three warships move onto Lake Ontario. If these warships were already on the lake, they can move to one or more **friendly** lakeside town(s).*

Warships can never move from one lake to another lake, nor move directly from one lakeside town to another lakeside town.

Warships can **never** move to an enemy town. They can move to (and control) an enemy lakeside town that is currently friendly, but see 7.12.

### 5.2.1 Lakeside Towns

**Lake Erie:** Amherstburg, Detroit, Sandusky, Erie, Buffalo, Fort Erie, Port Dover.

**Lake Ontario:** York, Dundas, Fort George, Fort Niagara, Oswego, Sacket's Harbor, Kingston, Smith's Creek.

**Lake Champlain:** Lacolle, Plattsburg, Ticonderoga.

## 6.0 ARMY PHASE

### 6.1 ARMY MOVEMENT

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

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

Dragoons and Indians can move two towns, but must stop in a town containing enemy blocks (even a warship).

### 6.1.1 Force-Marcher

Infantry and Artillery may attempt to Force-March one additional town. Dragoons and Indians cannot Force-March. Roll 1d6 for each block attempting:

**1-3:** Block does not move and loses 1 step.

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

### 6.2 AMPHIBIOUS MOVEMENT

Players may combine navy and army phases to make one amphibious move.

### 6.2.1 Prior Lake Control

Only warships **already** occupying a lake may take part in an amphibious move.

### 6.2.2 Infantry Only

An amphibious move consists of moving infantry (only) from one lakeside town directly to any other lakeside town (or towns) on the same lake. One infantry block may move for each warship **block** on the lake (regardless of warship strength).

**Note:** *the warships involved do not actually move; they stand in position to escort army transports.*

Amphibious movement of some army blocks and land movement of other army blocks from the **same group** is allowed.

Warships on the same lake, which are not involved in the amphibious move, can make any normal move.

**EXAMPLE:** *The British player controls Lake Ontario with three warships. Three Infantry blocks located at Kingston may move to any other lakeside town(s) of Lake Ontario. If only two army blocks move amphibiously, one warship can move normally.*

## 7.0 BATTLE PHASE

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.

### 7.1 NAVAL BATTLES

A naval battle occurs when one player moves warships onto a lake (Attacker) occupied by the enemy (Defender). Naval battles cannot occur in lakeside towns.

Naval Combat is resolved **simultaneously**. Each player rolls 1 die for each warship step in the battle. Warships have F1 combat so each "1" scores one hit on the opposing fleet, reducing it by 1 step. Hits are applied to the highest strength warship block (owner's choice with ties). A warship reduced below strength 1 is **permanently** eliminated from the game.

### 7.1.1 Warship Retreats

After each round of naval combat, the Attacker has the first option to retreat. If the Attacker chooses to stay, the Defender then has the option to retreat.

Warships retreat to any friendly lakeside town(s). If none exist, they may not retreat. Partial retreats are not allowed. Retreating warships are not subject to pursuit fire.

If neither player retreats, another round of combat is conducted.

### 7.1.2 Warship Capture

Warships may be captured when an enemy army moves to their lakeside town. The warships may not participate in army combat, but may seek to retreat before **every** friendly battle turn.

Roll 1d6 for each warship:

**1-3: Warship Docked.** Block fails to retreat. If alone in the town, it is captured. Exchange for a friendly Warship (same Strength), unless all friendly Warships are already in play.

**4-6: Warship Escapes** to the lake. If there are enemy warships on the lake a naval battle is resolved immediately.

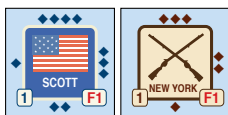
# WAR OF 1812

## 7.2 ARMY BATTLES

An army battle occurs when one player moves blocks into a town (Attacker) which is occupied by enemy blocks (Defender). Each battle is resolved in the following sequence:

- The Defender may accept battle or retreat all blocks and take pursuit fire (see 7.22). If battle is accepted, both players reveal the strengths of their blocks by tilting them forward (face-up) so that the current strength of each block faces the opposing player. Neither player may retreat at this time.
- The Defender fires each block by rolling dice equal to its current strength. Hits are scored on rolls equal to or lower than the block's Firepower (F1 or F2). For each hit the highest strength attacking block is immediately reduced by 1 step (owner's choice with ties).
- The Attacker now has the option to retreat or to fire all blocks in the same manner as the Defender.
- Alternating battle turns are repeated until one player takes his option to retreat, or until all blocks of one player are eliminated. When the battle ends, surviving blocks are stood upright at their current strength.

**EXAMPLE:** *Three British blocks attack two American (defending) blocks. The American player accepts battle and rolls seven dice for his 7 steps (all F1 combat).*



*If 1 hit is scored, the artillery (highest block) is immediately reduced by 1 step (now strength 2). If 2 hits were scored, the second hit could be taken on any block since all are now at strength 2.*

*The Attacker could now retreat (taking pursuit fire) or return fire by rolling for each block. The artillery and dragoons have F2 combat, the infantry F1.*

## 7.21 Army Retreats

A player must retreat before firing any blocks in a battle round. Determine pursuit fire and then retreat.

## 7.22 Pursuit Fire

The 'victorious' player gets Pursuit Fire, rolling **one die per block** at F3 (each 1, 2, or 3 rolled scores a hit). Indians pursue with 2 dice. Dragoons also pursue with 2 dice per block unless the enemy has dragoons. Artillery blocks have no pursuit fire.

## 7.23 Retreat Destinations

Blocks must retreat to the **same** town; no division of forces.

The Defender may retreat to any **adjacent** town, except to a town occupied by enemy blocks, a town containing an unresolved battle, or a town that the Attacker came from. If no such town exists, the Defender may not retreat.

Attacking blocks may only retreat to the adjacent town they came from. Dragoons and Indians may **not** retreat two towns. Blocks may never retreat off-board.

Except as noted in (7.31) players may not retreat by amphibious movement.

## 7.3 AMPHIBIOUS ATTACKS

In amphibious battles the Defender fires each block **twice** during the **first** round of battle (only).

A player conducting an amphibious attack may retreat to one friendly town amphibiously after taking double Pursuit Fire (roll twice), or to one *Friendly* lakeside town after taking normal Pursuit Fire.

## 8.0 VICTORY

After the 10th Campaign Turn is played, check if either player has 10 VPs **more** than the other (not just 10 VPs).

## 8.1 VICTORY POINTS

- 1 VP for each army block in play. Warships and Indians have no VP value.
- 2 VP for each Lake a player controls.
- The VP value of all Enemy towns occupied by Army blocks; warships cannot hold enemy towns for VPs. 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.

**Note:** *If neither player obtains the 10VP margin, play the Winter Turn and the next year. VPs are recounted in the next winter (1813 and 1814). If neither player wins after 1814, the game is a draw.*

## 8.2 WINTER TURN

### 8.21 Winter Attrition

The maximum number of army blocks which may winter in a town without penalty equals the numerical value of that town.

Excess blocks located in a town within their own territory are reduced by 1 step each. Excess blocks located in **enemy** towns are eliminated. The owner decides which blocks will be reduced or eliminated.

**Example:** *two army blocks winter in Sacket's Harbor; two in Utica. The Sacket's Harbor blocks are supplied, but one Utica block is not. If the Utica blocks are American, one block loses one step; if British, one block is eliminated.*

### 8.22 Warship Withdrawal

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

### 8.23 Reinforcements

The number of blocks each player receives for the next campaign year is printed on the mapboard where they enter play: Quebec (British); Albany and Pittsburgh (American). Reinforcements are drawn from the face-down draw pool and enter play at full strength. The American player may choose which reinforcements appear at Albany and which at Pittsburgh.

**Example,** *the British player receives three (3) blocks for 1813, all at Quebec. The American player receives 4 blocks in 1813: 2 at Albany, 2 at Pittsburgh.*

### 8.24 Reinforcement Delays

If a reinforcement town is occupied by enemy blocks, reinforcements may not enter play in the Winter Turn. They may use a future Army Phase to move into one entry town. If the entry town is still occupied by enemy blocks, this move starts a normal battle, except the Attacker has no retreat. Reinforcements that are still off-board at the next Winter Turn are forfeit.

# WAR OF 1812

## 9.0 INDIANS



The Indian block (*Tecumseh*) enters play at Detroit if the British player captures this town. Once in play, this block will only fight if accompanied by at least one British block. If alone, or if accompanying British blocks are eliminated in battle, the Indian block retires from the game (permanently).

The Indian block may not make an amphibious move.

The Indian block may **not** be rebuilt if eliminated. VPs are never awarded for this block, but it can hold and count VPs for an American town it solely occupies.

During battles the Indian block fights like any other block, but has deadly pursuit fire (2 dice at F3).

## 10.0 AMERICAN MILITIA



American militia were only required to fight on American soil and often refused orders to cross into Canada. The *Kentucky Dragoon* is militia.

The American player must roll one die for each **militia** block attempting to move into Canada. A roll of 1, 2, or 3 means that block refuses to move; otherwise it moves normally. The American player must complete the planned move with all blocks that do move.

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

## 11.0 SIMO-MOVE (Optional)

Simultaneous movement adds tension to the game, but requires writing orders.

### 11.1 WRITING ORDERS

For Campaign Turns both players write their army and naval moves and orders are revealed simultaneously. Orders written must specify which blocks are moving to which town or lake.

#### Examples:

(a) *Build warship at Kingston.  
2 Army: Montreal to Malone  
2 Army: Montreal to Lacolle.*

(b) *Warships: Kingston and York to Lake Ontario. All army blocks stand.*

**NOTE:** *Players must also record when Dragoons, Indians, or Artillery move.*

### 11.2 DEFENSE

With Simo-Move it often occurs that both players seek to enter the same town or lake at the same time.

If one player already has one or more blocks present, that player is the Defender

If both players move warships onto the same empty lake, the Defender is the player who wins a 2d6 roll.

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

If both players move blocks to a town each is moving from (e.g. American blocks in Sacket's Harbor and British blocks in Kingston move to each other's town) the player who wins a 2d6 roll decides where the battle is fought, the Defender being the player originally occupying that town.

If a player controlling a lake orders an amphibious move and his opponent orders his warships onto the lake, the naval battle is resolved first. Losing control of the lake cancels the Amphibious Move. If control of the lake is maintained, a player may cancel the amphibious move or continue with the attack as desired.

### 11.3 ORDER OF BATTLES

If there are multiple battles, both players roll 2d6. High roll gets to choose the order of battles.

## 12.0 STRATEGY NOTES

Some division of forces is necessary to control key towns such as naval bases, wintering and reinforcement towns, etc. However, it is generally better to concentrate forces. This allows a player to attack or defend in strength. 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 British reinforcements in 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.

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# WAR OF 1812

## HISTORY OF THE WAR

### 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. 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 seaman to serve in the Royal Navy - a result of overzealous 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, man 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 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 here 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.

# WAR OF 1812

## Campaign of 1813

Both sides received reinforcements in the spring of 1813. British strength increased to about 12,000, American strength to 18,000, 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.

Proctor, 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

## 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.

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.

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.

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.

## CAMPAIGN OF 1814

The balance of power now shifted to the British. With the Napoleonic 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 retreated back to Fort Erie, which they then destroyed and withdrew to Buffalo.

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.

## TREATY & PEACE

Throughout 1814, British and American diplomats met in Ghent, 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 secession, American diplomats came close to accepting British demands. However, news

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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, and French speaking culture in Quebec would have vanished as it did in Louisiana. 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 celebrated a victory at New Orleans and came to see the war as a successful defense of their Revolution. This fostered the isolationism of American foreign policy for the next century, during which the United States grew into a world power.

## 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 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 might 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 news of the peace had not yet reached the two armies.

## CREDITS

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