



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Perry's Victory and
International Peace Memorial
Ohio

Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial

*... 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 the bloodshed ...*

—Illinois Governor Louis Emmerson, 1931



Rising above Lake Erie, Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial commemorates the lasting peace between nations once at war—the United States, Great Britain, and Canada. In the decades following the Revolutionary War, the young American republic and the British empire remained uneasy neighbors in North America. This unrest led to a second conflict, "a forgotten war"—the War of 1812—with the British, British Canada, and their American Indian allies. The War of 1812 fixed the northern limit of our nation's frontier, allowed for westward expansion, and drew the outline of our national identity as Americans. Yet there was no clear victor because the 1814 Treaty of Ghent that ended the war put most things back as they were before the war, *status quo ante bellum*.

The Memorial also honors all who fought and died during the Battle of Lake Erie on September 10, 1813 and the War of 1812. During this inland battle, Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry captured the entire British squadron and raised the now famous "DONT GIVE UP THE SHIP" flag onboard the U.S. Brig *Niagara*.

This naval battle helped turn a war toward the founding of a lasting peace that today enables close cooperation between the United States and Canada on environmental and other important challenges facing both nations along our mutual border.

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 U.S. 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 U.S. Navy, this was its first fleet action—and it began badly. The U.S. 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 a very unpopular war.

Master Commandant Oliver Hazard Perry's victory over the British fleet on Lake Erie—an inland naval battle—enabled Harrison's U.S. forces to invade Upper Canada and to defeat the allied forces of Great Britain and the Indian confederacy led by Tecumseh. This victory improved the U.S. 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 were immigrants from the United States. They did not support the war, but as time went on the United States became their enemy. Had the war not happened, they may later have favored annexation by the United States. However, the war rendered 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

- North
0 100 200 Kilometers
0 100 200 Miles
- War of 1812 battle/skirmish
 - British fort
 - United States fort
 - American Indian village
 - United States or British settlement

MEXICO

Battle of New Orleans Gen. Andrew Jackson's resounding victory over the British on January 8, 1815, in New Orleans was the last major battle of the last war ever fought between Great Britain

and the United States. The victory preserved America's claim to the Louisiana Territory, prompted a wave of migration and settlement along the Mississippi River, and restored American pride and unity.

BRITISH NORTH AMERICA



British Blockade Throughout the War of 1812, the British engaged in a naval blockade of all major U.S. ports. Many New England merchants opposed the war, and they smuggled supplies to British troops in North America and Europe. When Napoleon abdicated as the emperor of France 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 SARECKI

Many and Diverse Were They

Some 20 percent of early U.S. naval crews were African American, and Perry's Lake Erie squadron was no different. Black sailors served before, during, and after the war in most U.S. seaports. Desperate for men, Perry sought volunteers from General Harrison's army, and some 130 soldiers volunteered to fight with him. U.S. soldiers, marines, and enslaved men served with former mounted Kentucky riflemen, Yankee sailors from New England, and Pennsylvania, New York, and Virginia militiamen. Many of these landsmen had limited sailing experience, and few had witnessed the horrors of naval warfare.

Tour the Memorial and the Visitor Center

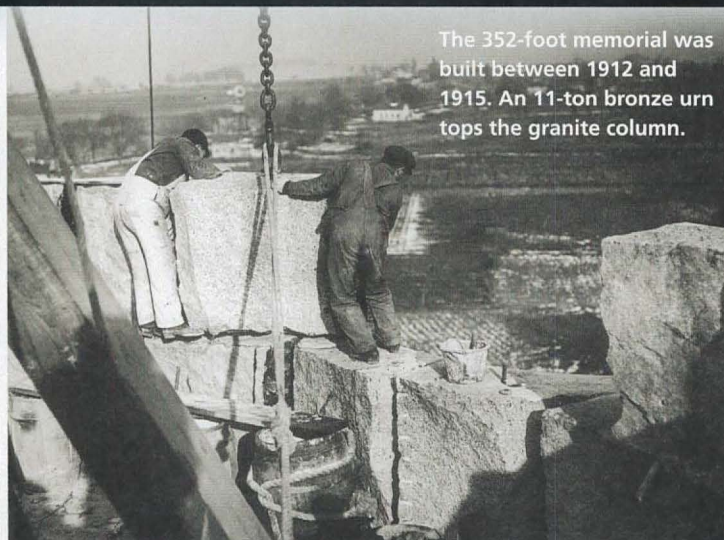
The only international peace memorial in the National Park System was designed by Joseph Freedlander and Alexander Seymor and built by a commission of nine states and the federal government from 1912 to 1915. The remains of three British and three American officers killed during the battle lie under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

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

9 am to 7 pm, Memorial Day to Labor Day, and 10 am to 5 pm the rest of the season. The Visitor Center is closed mid-November to April 1. The Visitor Center is accessible, and service animals are welcome. For regulations about firearms please visit www.nps.gov/pevi.

For your safety please obey all signs and use caution near the seawalls.

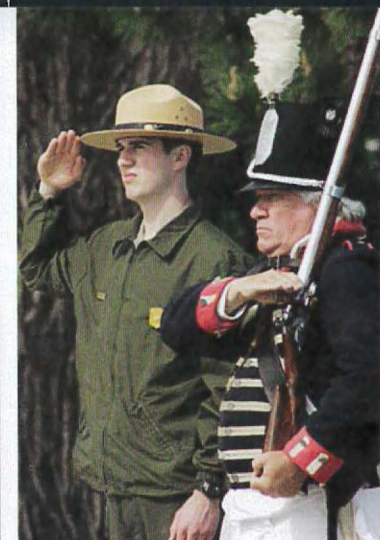
Rangers lead programs daily in summer, with musket firing demonstrations on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.



Workers build the memorial column, 1914

NPS

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



Commemorating Perry's Victory

PHOTO COURTESY MARY M. BECKFORD

More Information
Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial
P.O. 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 390 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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