

Editorial: The Bicentenary Continues ...

By John R. Grodzinski

Welcome to the twentieth edition of the War of 1812 Magazine. We hope you find this issue, which comes in the middle of the commemorations of the bicentenary of the War of 1812, interesting and informative.

In Canada, considerable attention was given to commemorating the military events that occurred during the first six months of the war. In many ways, the military struggle known as the War of 1812 did not commence until 1813. In that year, rejuvenated U.S. land forces, operating alongside the navy, struck repeatedly at the Canadas, and challenged the British, Canadian and Native defenders in a way that was impossible at the opening of the conflict. In Upper Canada, amphibious operations were conducted against York and the Niagara Peninsula, while further to the west, a new American army was being raised to regain Michigan and Detroit. At American naval bases on Lakes Erie and Ontario, new warship rose in the stocks, and would threaten the British position on both lakes. Later that year, the opposing naval squadrons on Lake Ontario would clash in three indecisive actions, while a fourth, known as the Burlington Races, nearly provided the Americans with an important victory. A decisive American victory followed on Lake Erie, that through the course of time, achieved the American goal of isolating the Western Confederacy from their British allies.

Before the new campaign season commenced, the British, aware of the dangers, had augmented their forces in British North America with troops from other locations. More significant, was the arrival of the Royal Navy on the Great Lakes, sent to replace the Provincial Marine, which was found wanting.

In the autumn, the largest American offensive of the war, against Montreal, would be checked, while both sides also struggled for the dominance of Lake Champlain. Further afield, a British attempt to draw American forces away from the northern theatre began with the opening of a blockade and the first predatory raids in Chesapeake Bay.

Operations on this scale were impossible in 1812, and this was just the beginning of the first full year of the War of 1812 ...

An Overview of a Few Commemorative Events



In America and Canada, commemorations of these and other wartime events continue. Parades, re-enactments, commemorations, concerts, symposia, television specials and other activities, such as a recent parade held in Kingston, Ontario, commemorating the 1,100 km march of the 104th Regiment of Foot from Saint John, New Brunswick to Kingston during the winter of 1813, are planned. Ensure you consult the websites of local historical sites, societies and bicentenary commissions to learn more.



Early morning, at the War of 1812 Memorial, Sackets Harbor Battlefield State Historic Site, Sackets Harbor, New York, where commemorative events will take place during 2013 (Courtesy New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation-Bureau of Historic Sites-Rich Clauss). <http://www.sacketsharborbattlefield.org/>



The Bicentenary of the War of 1812 provided the theme for the 2013 Canadian Army Ball, held in April 2013 at Gatineau, Québec. Before the 1,000 guests, General Tom Lawson, CMM, CD, the Chief of the Defence Staff, along with the Commander of the Canadian Army and a Minister from the Government of Québec (the latter two are not visible in this view), present the Canadian Armed Forces War of 1812 Commemorative Banner to members of three militia regiments. To their left is a contingent of War of 1812 re-enactors (photo by the editor). The evening also

included a light-hearted look at wartime events from 1813, and the performance of period songs and ballads by the Army Choir.

A description of the Canadian Armed Forces War of 1812 Commemorative Banner can be found at:

<http://www.cmp-cpm.forces.gc.ca/dhh-dhp/gal/cm-bc/index-eng.asp>



On 27 April 2013, in conjunction with the commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the American amphibious assault on York, now Toronto, Upper Canada, His Royal Highness, Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh, the Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Canadian Regiment, presented new colours to the 3rd Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment in Toronto. As with a number of other army regiments, The Royal Canadian Regiment, or rather, several units that it perpetuates from the period, was recently awarded battle honours for the War of 1812.